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2014/05



NIGHT & DAY

THE ALTER EGOS OF BEIJING MUSICIANS

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What's Happening: The most important dates this month

Stat: No Rain, No Gain

Best of the Blog: What got people clicking on thebeijinger.com last month?

Going Underground: Tongzhou Beiyuan, Batong Line

Scene & Heard: Go on, take a look at yourselves, you beautiful people

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They're cocksure talents by night, but Beijing's musicians also live by day, usually with pretty average day jobs. We caught up with a handful for this month's cover feature.

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What's New: Brasserie 1893, Matta, Yuan Yi, Spoonful of Sugar Cafe, Barista Coffee, Swagat, 5f, Jian Archery Club, The V Bar

Dining Feature: A look at the fried chicken spots of Wangjing

Just Desserts: The Zacapa Sweet Pairing, Migas

Last Orders: Lee Maxwell-Simpson, CCTV presenter and voice artist

Taste Test: Salsa

Back For More: S.T.A.Y

Alleyway Gourmet: Fengzhua Chuanqi

Dining Q&A: David Ness, The Westin Beijing Chaoyang

Wikipedia: W is for ... *wok, wotou, weijing and wawa cai*

Drinks Feature: We hung out with some of the more dapper dressers on the Beijing bar scene

Iron Bartender: Three city bartenders are challenged to create something drinkable from something unthinkable

Made in China: A *baijiu* brief

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Inspect a Gadget: Aural Armor

What's New Venues: Prime Fitness, Blakk

Page Turners: *The Lighter Side of China* by Scott Kronick

Feature: Restaurant interiors designed by Phil Dunn

Get Out: Qingdao

Feature: Getting glasses and contacts in Beijing

Feature: The sounds of the summer reviewed

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George pens an open letter to the thief who snaffled his iPhone

NEXT MONTH: BARS & CLUBS

JUNE EVENTS DEADLINE: MAY 14

This month's cover features Helen Feng, lead singer of Beijing rockers Nova Heart. It was shot by Mitchell Pe Masilun.



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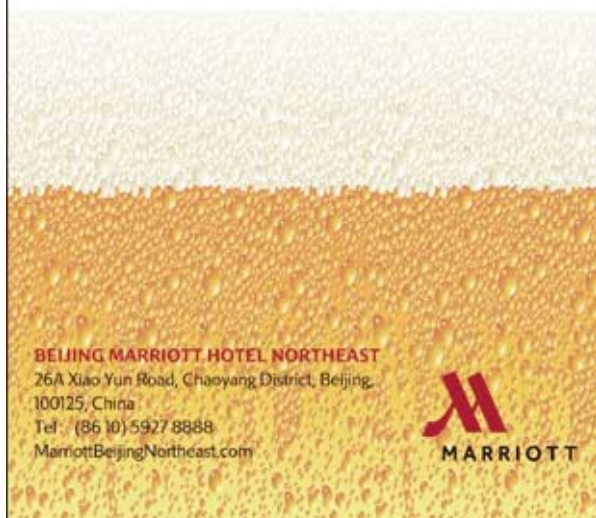


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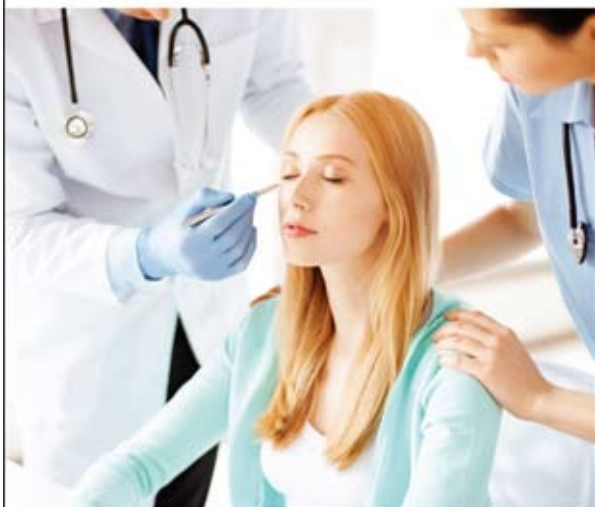
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The most important dates this month

WHAT'S HAPPENING



MAY 1-3

STRAWBERRY MUSIC FESTIVAL

This year's edition brings big name international acts, like Cut Copy (pictured) and Justice together with top acts from the Chinese independent music scene. Don't miss out on this superbly curated collection of live performances.

MAY 11

MOTHER'S DAY AT KERRY HOTEL

May is for mothers at Kerry Hotel. Every mother could use a little pampering after years of bagged lunches and dirty laundry. Show your mother some love with a delicious spread of fine dining.



MAY 17

TORTOISE

This post-rock group has been getting more and more funky with age. Since their debut in the early '90s, they have proved to be as prolific and important now as they were twenty years ago.

MAY 30

MOS DEF

After a last-minute cancellation two years ago, Mos Def is booked again and ready to rock the mic with his tasty signature jams for Beijing hip-hop appreciators. You wanted the best, well here it is.



Visit www.thebeijinger.com for even more events and details.

For more events, see p73.



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CITY SCENE

TONGZHOU BEIYUAN // BEST OF THE BLOG // SCENE & HEARD

A BEI WITHOUT



Perched on the edge of the Gobi desert, water shortage is an increasingly problematic issue for Beijing city-planners. But how bad is the problem?

Light snow on February 7 ended Beijing's **second-longest drought** since records began. The capital had seen no precipitation for 107 days.

The scarcity of Beijing's water resources means it is **only able to supply 40 percent** of the city's population.

Beijing emerged from a **13-year long emergency water shortage** following the deadly storm in 2012.

The city **currently diverts water** from the nearby

provinces of Hebei and Shanxi to deal with shortage.

The water level of one of two aquifers underneath Beijing **drops by three meters every year** as it is drained so often.

Available per capita water usage in Beijing has **dropped to around one-tenth** of the internationally-recognized warning level.

A planned desalination plant east of Beijing will supply the capital with **a third of its water** by 2019.

Sources: Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, American Meteorological Society, China Rain, Xinhua, stanford.edu

PEKING PICS



This month's Peking Pics were crowned winner and runner-up of the recent Hutong Hustle photography competition.

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF CHRISTOPHER CHERRY, GONZALO MUÑOZ ROBLEDILLO, IGERSBEIJING

LETTER FROM AN EDITOR

We've had it pretty good in recent years. Sure, we're still too often left exposed to the caprice of some of the more temperamental Beijing-bound performers (we're looking at you, Ben Folds) and we have some catching up to do, but on the whole, it's fair to say that Beijing is slowly readying itself to take its place at the top table of internationally relevant music cities.

The two mainstream festivals hosted in the capital are firmly established on the calendars of anyone with even the most fleeting interest in live music. If you head along to Tongzhou Canal Park or wherever Midi Festival is eventually held most years, even just for a place to hang out with friends in the sunshine, it's a safe bet that you'll enjoy a grand day out. And that's before we even consider the more esoteric gatherings such as Hanggai Festival, the JZ Festival in Beijing, The Great Wall Music Festival, or the hugely successful and increasingly tantalizing live music arm of JUE Festival. Each of these gatherings improve each year. The message is clear: Beijing music festivals are more attractive than they were just a few years ago.

Even away from the festival set-up, the city is making strides. The arrivals of bona fide superstars like Bruno Mars, The Killers and Justin Bieber in the last 12 months is a sure sign that Beijing is, at the very least, a consideration for promoters and big tour organizers these days. We live in the capital city and that presents unique difficulties in itself. Still, the progress has been slow but definite in recent years and, provided we can avoid another Icelandic pixie outburst/Reg Dwight tirade, it should continue to develop in the coming years.

The next step would probably be the ability to attract some of the huge names that our southern brothers in Hong Kong and even a little closer to home in Shanghai attract.

For the here and now, this month sees another high-end bunch of foreign imports destined for our shores. Deafheaven (who we managed to grab a quick word with, p70) and the legendary Mos Def (fingers crossed) are two of the standouts we can look forward to seeing in the next few weeks. Add to that performances from the likes of Suede, Justice and Afrojack and you have a series of highlights that would be the envy of most capital cities.



Paul Ryding
Managing Editor



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BEST OF THE BLOG

Every month we tally the hits from thebeijinger.com and bring you the top five most viewed blogs from our website.



BEIJING RANKED EIGHTH IN GLOBAL CITY INFLUENCE INDEX

The 2014 A.T. Kearney Global Cities Index, a measurement used to evaluate a city's global influence, ranked Beijing eighth in the world. The top spots went to New York, London, and Paris. It was the first time Beijing has appeared in the top ten. Every two years the GCI ranks countries based on their global engagement in business, human capital, information exchange, cultural experience and political engagement.



FIRE GUTS RESTAURANTS ACROSS FROM HOUHAI

On April 3, five fire department teams and 18 engines responded to a restaurant fire. No injuries were reported, but several restaurants were gutted by the flames. The blaze originated at 45 Di'anmen Xi Dajie across from Houhai on the south side of the street.



HUGE SINKHOLE EMERGES NEAR SHUANGJING

A huge sinkhole emerged near Shuangjing on Friday, April 4, leaving a crater measuring 20sqm and shutting down traffic on Guangqu Lu. The hole, estimated to be 10m deep, is along the construction route for Line 7 of the Beijing Subway and close to the busy Carrefour and B&Q stores east of Shuangjing.

CHINESE TOURIST, HOTEL EMPLOYEE KIDNAPPED BY GUNMEN IN EAST MALAYSIA

On April 2, a group of armed men arrived by boat, and captured hotel guest Gao Huayun and a Filipino staff member from a diving resort on the island of Borneo in East Malaysia, according to The South China Morning Post. The kidnappers are demanding an 11.3 million USD ransom for the safe return of the 28-year-old Chinese national.



BEIJING POLLUTION ISN'T GETTING WORSE

Beijing's pollution hasn't gotten worse over the last five years, that's according to analysis of five years of US Embassy data released by The Wall Street Journal. The average reading of PM 2.5 for the total period from 2008 until now is 100. That level is still four to six times higher than levels considered normal.

For these stories and more, check out thebeijinger.com/blog

TONGZHOU BEIYUAN, BATONG LINE

Those of you gearing up for the Strawberry Music Festival: Read closely because this could alter your experience during the antsy hours leading up to that epic music event out at Tongzhou Canal Park. Sitting on the edge of Chaoyang District, Tongzhou is way more spread out than its western neighbour with considerably more public space to enjoy.

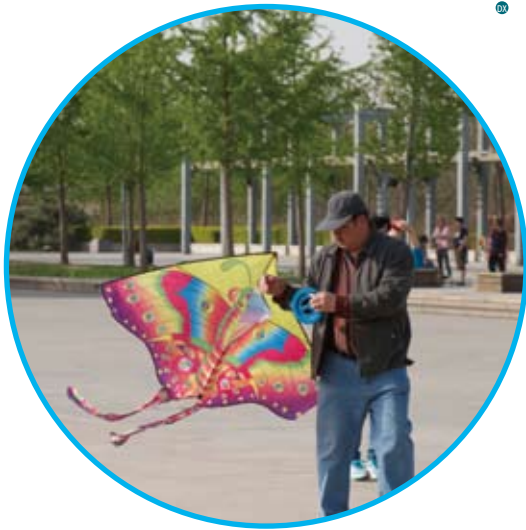
Experience

Look out for the produce markets near the station and pick up a fresh coconut to fix your electrolyte levels for a long afternoon of music appreciation. Next, head west to Jixiang Road and take in the Sheli Pagoda at the majestic Sanjiao Temple. Restored to its original glory in 1985, the structure stands 50m high and is great for a spot of Instagramming with its classic Chinese architecture and serene surroundings.



Eat

Go back one street south of Xinhua to West Street and hit up the excellent Dongbei restaurant Golden Chef for a delicious feed at a pocket-pleasing price. Pig out on dishes like pork shank, cold glass noodles with minced pork and fried corn. This lunch spread came to just RMB 75. Golden Chef has an excellent reputation in these parts and you can see why.



Relax

After lunch grab a rickshaw and tuk-tuk across Tong Hu Bridge to the Canal Park and bask in the grass. Enjoy Tongzhou's kite flying enthusiasts and if you're lucky, you might just catch a fierce battle between an airborne squid and a long-tailed pentagon. Under Tong Hu Bridge, witness one of the finest displays of group synchronized tango that you might ever see.



SCENE & HEARD



The Cleaver Quarterly's Ice Cream Shakeup

The Local, Apr 12. Photos courtesy of The Cleaver Quarterly



This Is Sanlitun Beijing Film Launch and Party

Kokomo, Apr 12. Photo courtesy of Da Peng and Simon Lee



Lindeman's Launch Party

Renaissance Beijing Capital Hotel, Apr 11. Photos courtesy of Renaissance Beijing Capital Hotel



Wild Wild West Party

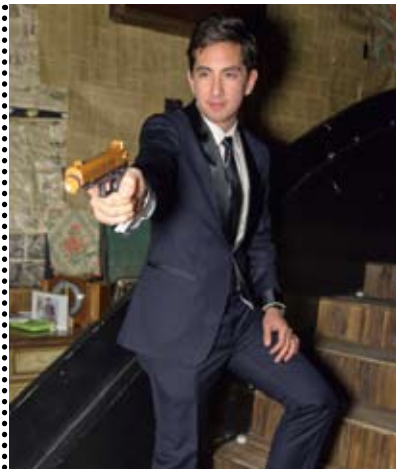
Xiu, Mar 28-29. Photos courtesy of Xiu



CJ Foodworld Qianmen Store Grand Opening

CJ Foodworld, Apr 7. Photos by Nan Nan of Soho China





Hatsune @ Kerry Opening Party
Hatsune, Mar 19. Photos courtesy of Hatsune



Vintage Bike Ride
Serk, Mar 29. Photos by Frank Yu



James Bond 007 Party
Parlor, Mar 22. Photos by Laurent Hou



Mykki Blanco
Dada, Apr 11.
Photos by Jessica Rapp

MAKING ENDS MEET

BEIJING MUSICIANS
AND THEIR DAY JOBS

They may be kick-ass and strutting by the night, but by day, they're just like you and me. Beijing's musicians have bills to pay like the rest of us, and when they're not tearing up dance floors, shredding chords or hammering skins, they're to be found at regular (or not so regular) day jobs like anyone else.



**Aloyse
de La Ronde**

Visual arts ambassador and singer,
We Are Not Invited



Zhao Kai
Sex toy distributor

DAY



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NIGHT



Thomas Gaestadius
Manager, Stuff'd

DAY



NIGHT

DJ Donald Summer



Liu Xinyu

Subway ticket machine repairman

DAY



SCHOOL
LIVE BAR

BLACK EIGHT
8
Hand Crafted

NIGHT

Experimental musician

A photograph of Helen Feng, a woman with dark hair, wearing a blue and white patterned short-sleeved shirt. She is standing against a background of red and white abstract, splattered paint or ink. Her hands are resting on a dark surface in front of her.

HELEN FENG

ON HARD WORK AND
HOW IT PAYS OFF

“IF I WEREN'T A MUSICIAN, I WOULD BE A WRITER, A FILMMAKER, OR A CULT LEADER,”

She's the female face of Chinese rock, but she's taken the long way around to making the festival billings. From company mailrooms to the MTV screens, it's been a long journey for Helen Feng before making it with her hugely popular band Nova Heart. We asked her to describe the route.

Previously I worked in accounting and as a salesperson. I also worked as a receptionist, and as a mailroom clerk before becoming a script writer and then a reporter for MTV. I've hosted radio shows, a TV show and freelanced as a fixer in film before too.

DJing was by far the best job I ever had. I could play whatever I wanted – it was great. Occasionally I could put things on the air that would never be heard anywhere else on Chinese radio. It was a fun job.

I loathed my jobs in accounting and as a salesperson. I learned a lot about the industry, but I hated learning how to be manipulative and false. That's all it really was for me. Every day I dreaded putting on my suit and going to work. When I quit, I dyed my hair orange and made a bonfire of my suits.

At age three or four I wanted to do Peking Opera. I performed in my first musical around that age. I was a

communist chicken. I had over-rouged cheeks and way too much make-up on. I couldn't keep up with the routine and disgraced the Party, but I knew I loved performing from that point.

I wanted to be a writer at one time. Then I wanted to get into business because I didn't want to be poor anymore. In college, I wanted to produce films. I really wanted to be a director, but I always thought I wasn't talented enough.

As a musician, you can either go the session route and become untouchably good at your instrument, or be inventive and create new sh*t.

Get skills. Stop listing who you consider to be unskilled musicians that “made it,” because those artists were great poets, great performers, just damn lucky, or all three.

Don't expect people to notice your genius because there is only one in every million people who *think* they're genius. The chance that it's going to be you isn't good. Stop being disappointed at the world for ignoring you – start working and playing your ass off. You can't just expect people to come find you – press the palms, do the footwork.

Check out Nova Heart at this year's Midi Music Festival on May 1.

Sip, nibble, gulp, chew, guzzle, savor, feast

FOOD & DRINK

FRIED CHICKEN // ZACAPA SWEET PAIRING // SALSA // STYLISH BARTENDERS



A special lady deserves a special feast. Treat your mom right with Mother's Day brunch at Café Swiss on May 11.

NIBBLES AND SIPS

OPENINGS

Xingfucun Zhonglu has welcomed yet another bar that's dripping with old-fashioned class: **BBC (Bottle, Boot & Cigar)**. The intimate space features a collection of quality spirits and cigars, and while one is puffing away on a stogie, they can go so far as to receive a boot shine and a shave.

A new **Tube Station Pizza** opened in Lido on Fangyuan Xilu, and it is massive. The main dining area is two sprawling floors, but the space also has an anteroom with seating as well as expansive ground-floor and second-floor patio areas. It seems the realization of something that was meant to be – Beijing's biggest pizza parlor for "Beijing's biggest pizza."

HAPPENINGS

Modo Urban Deli is really embracing the warm weather vibe with the introduction of set picnic packages. Besides the food, you'll cop a cool map of the best spots for picnicking around Beijing, plus one of Modo's chic tote bags.

Great Leap's Third Annual Beijing Craft Beer Festival is parking in Wangjing Soho this June 6 and 7. Look for new Chinese craft brews this year, and the usual spread of homemade fare and flair.

Funk fans breathed a sigh of relief as **4corners** narrowly avoided closing down this month. Expect additional changes in the floor plan to appease the landlords, but otherwise this party hub isn't going anywhere.

Panda Brew is on track to leave behind its Wudaoying tasting spot and open a new location that will feature pub food, more space, and more craft beer. Stay tuned to *the Beijinger* website as we get more information.

NEW BRUNCHES AND DINNERS

Agua debuted their "Infinity Brunch" with unlimited dishes that can be ordered from a menu of twenty options. Plus, if you're looking to get a little messy, tack on free-flow wine, sangria or bubbles.

Kerry's Kitchen has brought brunch to dinner with their new concept "Feast-ival." Appetizers and dessert are offered buffet-style while dinner mains are prepared-to-order, but also offered in unlimited quantity.

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SALMON DEGUSTATION

PHOTOS: KEN

WHAT'S NEW RESTAURANTS

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 350m southwest of Dengshikou station (Line 5)

An all-gold everything encourages a certain level of expectation and when it comes under the storied brand of Waldorf Astoria, anticipation is heightened.

The brasserie in the newly opened hotel with the gold façade has splashed onto the scene with aplomb. The menu (add 15 percent to all prices) is largely continental with starters of pan-fried scallops with broccoli puree, cubes of beetroot and Pommery mustard foam (RMB 228) and a marbled *foie gras* terrine with Parma ham, fig chutney and toasted brioche (RMB 258). In the salmon degustation (RMB 228), the kitchen illustrates how versatile the fish can be – an opulent opal ingot of it smoked, half a dozen spheres of caviar served on a dollop of cream, the loin poached and rolled in herbs, and a sheer sheet of the fish replacing the skin of a ravioli.

Executive Chef Reiner Lupfer has remixed their signature salad for the Middle Kingdom's capital. The Waldorf salad (RMB 128) is served "Beijing-style," with three ample squares of duck leg confit alongside a light mix of julienned apples, caramelized walnuts and celeriac puree.

In keeping with the starters, mains arrive as works of art – beautiful, challenging and sublime. The long bones of two cutlets crossing elegantly above delicate tortellini stuffed with lamb in the Australian Organic Lamb Two Ways (RMB 318). A heaving hunk of Atlantic cod (RMB 298) is particularly outstanding, perched on its island of sautéed spinach and a spicy sweet corn *étuvée*, above the fray of a dill *beurre blanc* and lone soldiers of carrot, pea and a broccoli tip. *Cat Nelson*

Also try: Chapter, Feast (Food by EAST)




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WHAT'S NEW RESTAURANTS



SALTED DUCK BREAST

MATTA ITALIAN RESTAURANT

FIRST-RATE ITALIAN HITS GONGTI

Mon-Fri 6pm-2am, Sat-Sun 11am-2am. Gongti Xilu (inside Gongti West Gate), Chaoyang District (6553 9949)
朝阳区工体西路（工体西门院内北侧）

 1.2km southeast of Dongsishitiao station (Line 2)

It can be hard to take anything in Gongti seriously when inundated with the deluge of Vics and Mix, adolescents tottering around in short sequined skirts and towering heels, and million-dollar sports cars squealing through the parking lot. But Matta is not something to be dismissed, as oddly placed for a good Western meal as it may seem.

Tucked just inside the west gate of Gongti behind a grove of pines, the space is startlingly tranquil. In the tradition of a Southern California beach mansion, it is sprawling and low-slung with floor-to-ceiling glass windows and ample patio seating just in time for Beijing's brief spring and lolling summer.

The menu is expansive, leaning heavily on the ocean, but with other land creatures and fowl well-represented. The tender roast veal with saffron tuna sauce and black truffle flavor (RMB 98) arrives a jumble of field and forest drizzled with the sea. Crisp, young leaves of arugula tangle with thinly sliced veal and a showering of black pepper and black olives. It seems cruel to eat something

one might speak with, but you'll lose all misgivings when your fork pierces the slow-cooked ox tongue (RMB 48) and it falls apart.

But the ocean is what you should come for. Tender French blue mussels (RMB 138) are served with "croutons" – thin rounds of butter-soaked toast to dip in the olive oil and parsley broth. The showstopper is the *Acqua Pazza* (market price). For a restaurant whose name means "crazy kitchen," it is right that the crown jewel of the menu be a dish called "crazy water." The exceptional Sicilian-style braised fish is exactly that: chaos. It's the seas dismantled and then reconstructed by the chef tableside. "Mussels, squid, crab, scallops, octopus, clams," he calls out as he adds each alongside the fish into an olive oil broth seasoned with capers, olives and tomatoes. It is extravagance in its truest form and you'd be crazy to leave any remaining. *Cat Nelson*

Also try: Sureno, Cepe

WHAT'S NEW RESTAURANTS

YUAN YI

GULOU GAINS MORE PIZZA AND PASTA

Daily 11.30am-10pm. 24 Heizhima Hutong (off Nanluogu Xiang), Dongcheng District (6408 7997)
院意新意大利餐厅: 东城区南锣鼓巷黑芝麻胡同24号

 325m northeast of Shichihai station (Line 8)

These days, Black Sesame Hutong is bubbling with new eateries and at the far end of it a new local Italian restaurant faces tight competition. Unfortunately, whoever did the decorations was perhaps a little too heavy-handed, and the place's garishness might reduce foot traffic from more minimalist-minded wanderers.

Fortunately, the food is more restrained. The menu is well priced and covers all the basics. We started with Caprese salad (RMB 32), which was fresh and simple, though the shredded basil would have been nicer if left as whole leaves. The *salmon affumicato* fettuccine (RMB 42) was perfectly cooked, had the right amount of bite, and enough creamy dressing to coat but not drown the pasta.

The low point was the *prosciutto e funghi* pizza (RMB 54) – underdone and with a base that flopped beneath the weight of the ingredients. The local ham, julienned and amply scattered on top, was a little too sweet for our taste and clashed with the mushrooms and cheese. To finish we had the tiramisu (RMB 35) – a reasonable but not especially memorable rendition of the dish.

Overall the dishes were satisfying and the prices, including very drinkable wine by the glass for just RMB 29, make it a passable option for a quick Italian fix. *Shannon Aitken*

Also try: Eatalia, Impasto Pizza



PHOTO: MITCHELL PE MASILUN



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Into the fryer



THE WORLD OF FRIED CHICKEN IN WANGJING

by Cat Nelson

Fried chicken and beer? You may think of the American South, but some of the best is to be found in Korea. The Korean two-step frying technique results in lighter, thinner crust with extra crunch on the outside and tender, juicier meat on the inside.

In Beijing, the place to head for this timeless combination is the Mecca of all things Korean: Wangjing. But when the hottest spots are hidden in the back of empty malls, in a maze of a residential compound or up a staircase above Tous Les Jours, how do you find your way?

KSTAR



For the directionally challenged. The second venture from the team behind Suutak's Chicken, it's a far simpler location to find than most, the space is larger and if you want a steak with your fried chicken, they've got you covered.

Varieties: Original, soy sauce, hot sauce, chili sauce, sweet "red sauce"

Other dishes: All of the original Suutak's menu, plus a variety of Western fare including pasta, burgers and other mains.

How to get there: On the ground floor of Kirin Place next to Wangjing Soho, the restaurant is easy to spot from the street.

Daily 10am-2am. B106/7, 1/F, 11 Kirin Place, Fu'an Xilu, Chaoyang District (5738 9301) 朝阳区阜安西路11号麒麟社新天地1层B106/7

SUUTAK'S CHICKEN AND WORLD BEER



For the seeker of hidden gems. Tucked into the residential compound of Wangjing Xiyuan San Qu, Suutak's is an intimate joint serving first-rate fried bird. Go early or very late to avoid a long wait.

Varieties: Original, soy sauce, hot sauce, chili sauce, sweet "red sauce"

Other dishes: barbecue chicken, "fusion chicken" (cheese chicken *chuan'r*, bacon-wrapped chicken salad, fried chicken salad, grilled teriyaki salad), seafood soups, kimchi *okonomiyaki*.

How to get there: Enter the west gate of Area 3, Wangjing Xiyuan, off Wangjing Jie. Go 50m until the sign for parking lot #326 and turn left. Building 320 will be ahead of you. Follow signs for Suutak's. The shop is to the left of the covered parking lot entrance.

Daily 11am-1am. Bldg 320, Wangjing Xiyuan San Qu, Wangjing Jie, Chaoyang District (8472 6745) 朝阳区王京街望京西园3区320号

BARSAK CHICKEN AND WORLD BEER



For the beer drinker. Very good, though not exceptional chicken – come here for the extensive beer selection, including Guinness on draft, and pounding Korean Top 40 beats.

Varieties: Original, sweet, garlic, soy sauce, sweet cheese sauce

Other dishes: tempura, *chuan'r*, seafood stews, bibimbap and instant noodles cooked in military bowls.

How to get there: The Korean Food City building is on the east side of Guangshun Bei Lu, just south of Wangjing station (line 15). Find the entrance to the second floor on the left of Tou Les Jours. Signs for Barsak (some of which read "Basak") are displayed outside as well as the restaurant delivery bikes.

Daily 10am-2am. 2/F, Korean Food City, Bldg 423, Wangjing Xiyuan Si Qu, Guangshun Beilu, Chaoyang District (6475 5754) 朝阳区顺北路望京西园4区423号韩国美食城2楼



Guangshun Beidajie



Wangjing Jie



Futong Xidajie



Fu'an Xilu



FLYPIZZA & HOODADAK CHICKEN

For the hip. A bit out of the way but well worth the trip – outstanding fried chicken with inventive twists and excellent pizza.

Varieties: Original, sweet and spicy, sweet soy sauce, garlic, Sichuan spicy, curry, spring onion, carbonara

Other dishes: Pizza (choose from thin, sweet potato-stuffed, or cheddar crust) and pasta.

How to get there: Go to the north building of Liubaiben Mall (north of Lijin Jie and Guangshun Dajie intersection). The restaurant is inside the mall on the ground floor towards the back of the building tucked away from the other businesses.

Daily 11.30-midnight. A-29/32, 1/F, North Bldg, Liubaiben Mall, 17 Guangshun Beidajie, Chaoyang District (8472 2811/5341) 朝阳区广顺北大街17号六佰本北区1层A-29/32



JIKAOKA

For the hole-in-the-wall enthusiast. Fried chicken served in an unassuming setting.

Varieties: Original, "tiaowei," soy sauce, spring onion

Other dishes: Seafood stews, kimchi fried rice, rice cakes and other Korean standards

How to get there: Enter the north gate of Area 3, Wangjing Xiyuan. Pass the Bank of Communications and go 100m. The restaurant is on the left side (east) of the street across from a primary school. Signage is only in Chinese and Korean.

Daily 11am-2am. Bldg 306, Wangjing Xiyuan San Qu, Guangshun Beilu, Chaoyang District (8471 9252) 朝阳区广顺北路望京西园三区306号

SPOONFUL OF SUGAR CAFÉ

UPCYCLE CAFÉ PUSHES
FORWARD DASHILANR



WHAT'S NEW RESTAURANTS

Daily 9.30am-6.30pm. 59 Tieshu Xiejie, Dashilanr,
Xicheng District (6308 3971)
西城区大栅栏铁树斜街59号

🚶 850m southeast of Hepingmen station (Line 2)

From drinks to food to atmosphere, the creative drive and enthusiasm of the Spoonful of Sugar team is palpable. Based on the concept of "upcycling," Lin Lin Jacobs and her design firm Jellymon have repurposed a former factory for electrical relay devices into a cafe space where the food is imaginative and ever-changing.

The organic coffee menu offers the standards but also specialties like the ginger mocha (RMB 33), which has a welcomed zing, and options with an alcoholic punch like the Irish Lover (RMB 45). The team from Migas has swung south from Sanlitun to captain the kitchen, from which lighter food options are available in the form of sandwiches, quiches, omelets and toast sets. Visionary minds are hard at work here, though there are some kinks to be smoothed out. The bread is made in-house, but suffered from a touch of staleness when served cold on The Jew Yorker (RMB 45), a sandwich of smoked salmon with pickles, cream cheese and capers. It fared far better on The Mighty Duck (RMB 40) where the warmed baguette cradles duck breast and pickled green peppers with a blanket of melted cheese and a smear of superb, intriguing kumquat star anise jam.

Cookies (RMB 3-6), cakes (RMB 20) and chocolate bonbons (RMB 6) are provocative and challenging, with flourishes of star anise, beer and goji berry.

But if you want to mainline sugar, grab a handful of the white chocolate with chili and mandarin (Hot Chicks) or dark chocolate with Erguotou (Gan Bei) bonbons.
Cat Nelson

Also try: Backyard Cafe, Moka Bros



Fish Uni

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Norwegian Wild Scallop

Choose one: Sashimi or Teppanyaki
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WHAT'S NEW RESTAURANTS



SINGLE-ORIGIN COFFEE AND HOMEMADE MANGO CHEESECAKE

BARISTA COFFEE

SPILLING THE BEANS ON A GOOD CUP OF JOE

Daily noon-10pm. 47 Wudaoying Hutong, Dongcheng District (6416 2575)
东城区五道营胡同47号

 500m west of Yonghegong station (Lines 2 and 5)

There's something legitimate about the fact one has to switch off each individual bulb that hangs over the bar at Barista Coffee to keep the place from overheating. For 21-year-old owner Alex, opening a cafe is all about details like these. He takes great pains to keep the atmosphere consistent with a local Western coffee shop, from his jazzy music all the way down to the handwriting on the chalkboard menu – which is why he's practicing cursive. Then, of course, there's the steam-made coffee. He prepares it with precision, fondly drizzling a steady stream of hot water as if the carafe of his single origin grounds were his garden. The polished result is well worth the RMB 45 a cup because this isn't a coffee you grab while you're headed off to work. This is all about the experience.

"The first cup of coffee traditionally has to be drunk by the maker," Alex says. This is not only because he takes pride in his coffee, but because this lone barista with slicked back hair cares about the customers – if the

coffee isn't satisfactory, he'll make you another one. If you trust him, and you order one of the non-Italian, natural varieties, then you're in for a complex brew that's different every time. Alex orders roasts from countries like the US, Costa Rica and Ethiopia, and his selections frequently change according to his taste and the season. Once he's gone through the three or so bags of each flavor, they're gone forever.

Alex is on his feet all day, sharing with his regulars this intimate coffee culture that's only just starting to take off in Beijing. Every few days, a neighbor stops in to whip up desserts to jive with the java, so expect snacks like mango cheesecake (RMB 35), tiramisu (RMB 25) and warm croissants (RMB 12). Perhaps surprisingly, Alex is also talented at mixing a single cocktail: the mojito, which is on offer in case caffeine isn't enough. *Jessica Rapp*

Also try: Soloist Coffee, Picture My Cup

WHAT'S NEW RESTAURANTS

SWAGAT

AROMATIC CURRIES IN CBD

Daily 11am-10pm. Rm 127, Guanghua Lu Soho,
22 Guanghua Lu, Chaoyang District (6561 9349)
诗华印度餐: 朝阳区光华路22号光华路Soho127室

🚶 550m north of Yong'anli station (Line 1)

Until my recent trip to Swagat, it had been a while since I'd been out for an Indian curry. These days this kind of meal usually comes to me on the back of an electric bike, but my visit to this new restaurant reminded me of how nice it was to eat Indian from a plate, rather than a plastic container.

The downside of Swagat is that its location doesn't really elevate your expectations. It's set inside Guanghua Lu Soho, one of the less inspiring Soho complexes, which outside of the lunch hour can feel a little like a deserted bowling alley.

The experience, however, was decidedly better than what we had anticipated. The friendly manager, a long-term Beijing resident from Calcutta, warmly introduced the menu and keen to try his recommendations we had the tandoori fish (RMB 80), the *palak paneer* (RMB 55), some saffron rice (RMB 40), the garlicky *lasooni naan* (RMB 22), and finally the syrupy sweet *gulab jamun* (RMB 25).

Nothing we took had much of a heat kick to it, but everything was aromatic and delicious. If we wanted to be critical we could say that the *palak paneer*, though wonderfully creamy, could have had a higher ratio of cheese to spinach, and the salmon was a tad overcooked, but our attention was drawn away from this by its delicious fragrant marinade of Indian spices. Yet in the end, we were happy and left planning a return trip to explore the menu further. *Shannon Aitken*

Also try: Moti Mahal, Three Colours Lotus

CHICKEN CURRY



PHOTO: SUI

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MIGAS

THE ZACAPA SWEET PAIRING

Daily noon-2.30pm, 6-10.30pm. 6/F, Nali Patio, 81 Sanlitun Lu, Chaoyang District (5208 6061)

朝阳区三里屯路81号那里花园6层

🚶 900m northwest of Tuanjiehu station (Line 10)

The earrings of Migas' young pastry chef, Pol Anter, don't match. In an earlier era, this small black plug and silver ring would be a statement of controversy, and though this is not so anymore, they hint still at a proclivity for provocation. Anter's desserts only reinforce this – challenging, though not aggressive – as does the impish grin which he flashes generously.

But for a man who refuses to match, he certainly knows how to pair. He demonstrates this with artistry and grace in The Zacapa Sweet Pairing (RMB 58; RMB 108, served with a glass of Zacapa rum) where flavors and textures tumble in the form of pineapple, cake and salted caramel across dark chocolate netting and billows of cream.

A pairing though it is, this is the dialectics of dessert –

an argument of texture and flavor worked out through conversation. Anter's too deliberate, meticulous and mischievous to leave the pineapple plainly a pineapple. It's a far more complex world than that. He's infused the fruit with Zacapa rum and tonka bean – the simple bright flavor of the tropics instantly matured by smoky undertones of vanilla and cocoa. These rich notes now embedded into the tropical fruit are complemented by those of caramel and salt, and this totality by one beguiling scoop of tart rosemary-lemon ice cream.

But if this sounds too challenging, rest assured it is not. What words make cumbersome and overwrought, by taste is nuanced, elegant and successful. And anyways, if this is still too overwhelming, to hell with the thoughtful pairing: Down the glass of rum and get on with demolishing the dessert. *Cat Nelson*



LEE MAXWELL SIMPSON

CCTV PRESENTER AND VOICE ARTIST

After four years in Beijing, CCTV Culture Express editor, writer, and presenter Lee Maxwell Simpson is taking his vocal talents back to London. Before he departs, he plans what could be his last meal in the capital.

The venue

While it may not be a restaurant per se, **Contempio** is stunning – a 600-year-old temple in the middle of the hutongs. It couldn't really be any more Beijing, albeit gentrified to the maximum. The room at the back of the bar, with the temple looming large next to you, is amazing and would be apt for my last supper extravaganza.

The starters

I've recently been gorging myself on all things Yunnan, so I would have to get the marvelous team from **Hani Gejiu** to work their magic. A selection of starters would include the potato balls with delectable dipping sauce along with mountains of their mint and tofu skin salad, which is quite frankly unbelievable. Their lemon chicken salad is also mouth-watering. All of this will be washed down with a Dali beer.

Main course

Not shy of the theatrical, I'm going to ask the **Haidilao Hot Pot** folk to come by and boil up a treat for us. They could also bring along Connect Four and their manicurists, which would provide some light relief between courses. Then we would all don bright red aprons and throw all manner of meats and knobby mushrooms into the broth as it spits searing oil all around us. The hand-pulled noodle show is truly excellent and will get everyone oohing and aahing.

Dessert

I'd go Western with **Mercante's** panna cotta with raspberry. That will have my guests whimpering with their eyes rolling back in their heads. I'd follow that up with **Capital M's** pavlova if we can handle it. If there's any room left, we'll take after-dinner cheese from **Le Fromagerie de Pekin**, accompanied by an Old Fashioned from **Mao Mao Chong**.

Music

I want Ludacris' "Move B*tch" on loop while we eat to evoke some nostalgia for his legendary 2011 Black Rabbit Music Festival performance before a bemused Chinese crowd. I'm a big fan of getting everyone involved on the dance floor, so the Hutong Yellow Weasels would come along so we can have a good ol' hoedown after dinner and do-si-do all night long.

For more information on the venues Lee mentioned, head along to the Beijinger website.



AYE QUE SALSA

MEXICAN SAUCE WAR

by Kipp Whittaker



La Costena (RMB 23.50)

"This is just chunky tomato water. There is literally nothing else in this."

"This is like being forced to lick clean a Mexican wrestler that repeatedly got body slammed on a bed of tomatoes. Tomato flavored *lucha libre*."

"It says 'Made in Mexico', but my guess is that it was made with imported Mexican tap water."

Cinco de Mayo is actually an American holiday. And though it's observed mostly with margarita sipping and taco pounding, no May 5 would be complete without chips and salsa. This month we explore the processed form of this delicious snack.



Tostitos Chunky Salsa Hot (RMB 29.90)

"This was made in a lab so that you could be scientifically satisfied with the taste, but it lacks the soul of a salsa made by a true *mamacita*."

"Not bad, but probably your last decent resort. All of your reputable salsa dealers are closed, so you swing by the gas station and pick up this crap."

"My grandmother kicks harder than this. This jar doesn't deserve the hot tag."



La Preferida Thick 'n' Chunky Salsa Hot (RMB 26.80)

"This should just be called Mexican ketchup. Then it should be destroyed for being absolutely disgusting."

"I taste nothing. Dump the rest down the drain. Probably the worst salsa ever created."



Newman's Own Salsa Medium (RMB 35.90)

"This one is *numero uno*. Charity never tasted so good. Well, never in salsa form."

"Weird how this is the second spiciest of the group but it is labeled a 'medium'."

"Super chunky, and you can see all of the ingredients listed. A pleasant sight for these salsa-weary eyes."



VERDICT

There was a clear winner in the Newman's Own, though the Pace Chunky Salsa was a decent alternative. We came to the conclusion that though there is a small amount of convenience that comes with buying a jar of salsa, none of these actually compare to the real thing. You're much better off just picking up a Rick Bayless cookbook and making it happen.

Pace Chunky Salsa Hot (RMB 27.60)

"It's the spiciest of the bunch, but still without the kind of kick you want in a salsa."

"The salsa equivalent to grunge rock – appropriate for a certain period in your life, but ruined by the creation of the internet."

"This one is passable to the casual consumer, but would probably get you killed if you served it to El Guapo or Malverde."



BACK FOR MORE

S.T.A.Y.

A REASON TO TRAVEL TO WEST THIRD RING

Tue-Fri 11.30am-2pm, 5.30-10pm, Sat-Sun 11.30am-3pm, 5.30-10pm. Valley Wing 1/F, Shangri-La Hotel,
29 Zizhuyuan Lu, Haidian District (6841 2211 ext 6727)

海淀区紫竹院路29号北京香格里拉饭店新阁一层

🚶 1.3km northwest of Huanyuanqiao station (Line 6)

“Do you like snails?” the young chef asks and you bluff. “Yes, I must ... I’ve had them once, I think ... Well, I don’t remember not liking them.” And if they were anything like these, then you surely are a lover of that terrestrial gastropod. The grilled Burgundy snails (RMB 98) arrive chaperoned by a cloud of potato foam, delicate cubes of the tuber, lightly sautéed leaves of spinach and crisps of ham.

The kitchen at S.T.A.Y. largely serves simple classics and from them you learn why the canon is as it is. A brilliantly vermillion *wagyu* beef *carpaccio* (RMB 298) hides beneath shavings of black truffle, dainty rings of chive and translucent curls of *tomme* cheese. For value (this is a hotel – add 15 percent to all prices), there is a four-course “gourmet” degustation menu for RMB 528 as well as a six-course “epicurean” menu for RMB 1,188. A three-course lunch set (RMB 288) offers an excellent and

accessible entry point to the restaurant which includes options such as roasted duck breast, served in three slices varnished with a slick of apicius sauce.

But sweets are the crowning jewel here. Their Pastry Library is a misnomer as you won’t want to return anything you take. In keeping with the savory, the desserts are of the cannon – chocolate cheesecake, a caramel bar, a poached pear. But these are elevated. Exceptional cheesecake comes encased in a chocolate shell and oozing a core of *dulce de leche*; the decadent caramel bar has a tropical twist of banana in a passion fruit glaze; the gorgeous poached pear has been colored a sheer red by mulled wine and flecked with gold leaf. A volume of dessert can be ordered for RMB 128 each or served with S.T.A.Y. signature presentation of a ribbon of dessert – four to a half-meter (RMB 438) or a full meter (RMB 898). Go for the full meter. *Cat Nelson*



WAGYU BEEF CARPACCIO



FENGZHUA CHUANQI

FANGJIA'S LEGENDARY CHICKEN LEGS

Daily noon-midnight. 46 Fangjia Hutong, Dongcheng District (6400 8388)

凤爪传奇：东城区方家胡同46号

 800m southeast of Andingmen station (Line 2)

If you thought *chuan'r* in Beijing can only mean chunks of fatty lamb blasted with hot air from the grill man's tired hair appliance, then think again. At Fengzhua Chuanqi, that sheep has sailed, and it has been replaced by chicken.

It's a lively restaurant at the entrance to Fangjia 46 that draws hungry patrons from nearby Hot Cat Club and El Nido with its six varieties of crispy wings (RMB 6). Black pepper, cumin, two levels of "hot and spicy," and an addicting sweet slather of sauce drives the menu, and a wide variety of vegetables, tofu and fruits (yes, we said fruits) play supporting roles. If only there were a bit of ranch dressing or extra barbecue sauce for dipping and a game on the television. But hey, we didn't say this was a sports bar.

For the fact that Fengzhua Chuanqi is all about the semi-barbaric act of gnawing appendages clean, it's a surprise no bones sneak to the floor. The space is kept

spotless. Its picnic table seating and glass walls overlook a patio shared with a longtime hotspot for Yunnan cuisine. Sure, it's nothing compared to roasting a leg of lamb in an alleyway, but with a few Tsingtaos or trips to the neighboring liquor store for vodka and iced tea, you won't even notice the difference.

Must-haves include the tofu skin rolled like a cigar and generously spiced with red pepper flakes, *kao mantou*, plump round mushrooms, *gedatang* (dumpling soup), and grilled apples and bananas, all for RMB 2-3 a skewer. Avoid the "roasted bread" unless you like buttered Bimbo (and if you do, then order the boiled hawthorn for a Chinese-style jam and toast).

Most importantly though, we've discovered that a trip to Fengzhua Chuanqi is your chance to get peer pressured into eating chicken feet and hearts. Those finger-licking good wings left us too full (cough, cough) to try other bird bits, but don't let that stop you. *Jessica Rapp*

IN THE CLUB

DAVID NESS, GENERAL MANAGER, THE WESTIN BEIJING CHAOYANG

by Cat Nelson

Hailing from Down Under, David Ness is an old hand at the hotel business. After a stint in Tianjin and then in Qingdao, he has arrived in the capital to steer the good ship of The Westin Beijing Chaoyang. He tells us here about memories of Vegemite and eating club sandwiches for life, plus gives us the scoop on what to eat at his hotel.

After one month on the job, what's your favorite item on the menu at The Westin Chaoyang restaurants?

There are so many choices, so it's really difficult to choose. The teriyaki chicken at Mai restaurant is one of my favorites.

What has surprised you most about Beijing since moving here?

I've been surprised by the continued development. The city keeps evolving in all aspects whether it be restaurants and bars, the art district, or the cultural elements.

What has been the most unexpected thing about Chinese food in China for you?

I am amazed by the huge selection during a Chinese dinner – courses seem to continue forever. It is also very interesting to hear many of the dishes are chosen for their health element.

We hear you enjoy playing football. Do you plan on joining a local football team in Beijing?

Yes, I love playing football and have recently joined the Vintage Vikings team. We play in a social league on Wednesday evenings. I am looking at opportunities to play on the weekends, and we may even form a team at The Westin Beijing Chaoyang as many of my associates are passionate footballers.

What was the first thing you remember eating as a child?

Vegemite on toast.

What Australian specialty do you miss most? Have you found a substitute in China?

A good Australian BBQ and yes, I have found char-grilled Australian beef at The Grange Grill. The great thing is that I only have to travel to the second floor at The Westin Beijing Chaoyang to experience this.

What's the most unusual and delicious food that you would suggest people try?

It's not the healthiest, but I do enjoy *dongpo rou*, I tasted this in Hangzhou and have been a big fan ever since.

Lastly, if you could only eat one dish for the rest of your life what would it be?

The club sandwich.

Stop by The Westin Beijing Chaoyang until May 11 for Tastes of Korea, a special promotion at Seasonal Tastes featuring visiting chefs from Seoul.



PHOTO: COURTESY OF THE WESTIN BEIJING CHAOYANG



W IS FOR ...

... wok 锅 (guo)

Wok is a Cantonese pronunciation of the word for pot. The *guo* is a high-sided iron skillet with a wooden handle, almost always black (it certainly will be before too long), and used daily in the average Chinese kitchen. The metal used to make it is relatively thin to allow it to heat up quickly, preferably over a gas flame. The higher sides allow for more stirring during frying, especially as liquid ingredients such as soy sauce or sesame oil are added to the mix. Be nice to your wok: wash it only with hot water throughout its lifespan, and avoid using soap if possible.

... wotou 窝头

Literally "nest" or steamed cornbread, *wotou* are traditionally bland teepee-shaped snacks that were allegedly all the rage with Empress Cixi back at the beginning of the 20th century. Typically much smaller and far less sweetened than their cornbread cousins from the US, *wotou* is served as a staple alongside saucy, salty northeastern dishes.

... weijing 味精

Roughly translated as "the essence of flavor" or known a lot less affectionately in the West as monosodium glutamate, MSG is almost as common as its equally troublesome cousin sodium chloride (aka table salt) in Chinese cooking. Its poor reputation is news to many Chinese, who use the additive – known for its flavor-enhancing properties. Some even classify *weijing* as its own fifth taste alongside sweet, salty, sour and bitter. MSG, like salt, is a naturally-occurring substance and is less toxic to humans than its table cousin, although some people do react negatively to its use.

... wawa cai 娃娃菜

Better known to the Western diner as *bok choy*, the cousin of cabbage is more popular in China's south than here in Beijing, but it is still popular especially in warmer months. Many cooks prefer the waxy leaf over its bigger northern cousin because it slices, boils, and stir-fries more easily and quickly.



5F

**GOOD VIBRATIONS
AT THE PLACE**



WHAT'S NEW BARS & CLUBS

Daily 9pm-late. 5/F, Tower A, 9 Guanghua Lu, The Place, Chaoyang District (186 1817 0076)

朝阳区光华路9号世贸天阶A座5层

🚶 900m south of Dongdaqiao station (Line 6)

My ears are still ringing as I write this. The newest club to hit The Place, 5f, might be better described if this so-called prose was blasted through what might very well be the loudest sound system to ever grace a Beijing dance floor. I don't know why on earth I anticipated that a night at 5f might include donning a skin-tight dress and high heels, ordering a classic RMB 60-80 cocktail from attentive bartenders, and carrying a conversation that wasn't: "I THINK I'M HAVING HEART PALPITATIONS. AM I GETTING TOO OLD FOR THIS?!"

Save for the speakers, 5f is not a bad destination if you've reserved one too many tables in Gongti. There's something decidedly glamorous about, for once, climbing up instead of descending underground. This time it's towards The Place's famed sky screen in a glitzy glass elevator. If that's not enough, 5f is getting a handful of high ranking DJs this summer (Sander van Doorn, Ferry Corsten), and they have incredible bathrooms. Within, they are a spacious maze of mirrors, lasers and fancy hanging faucets that could keep you entertained even if you aren't hoarding bottles of champagne and bowls of fruit.

Back on the roomy dance floor, you might find violet-mohawked, banana-headphoned, leopard print-jacketed DJ Noodles. DJ director Noodles' namesake pulsates and twirls on an IMAX-sized screen behind him, one which can majestically open up to a live stage. As if DJ Noodles in all her glory wasn't enough. We can't wait to see what that stage will bring in coming months. *Jessica Rapp*

Also try: LIV, Elements



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WHAT'S NEW BARS & CLUBS



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朝阳区工体北路8号三里屯Soho商场3 B1-308

 400m west of Tuanjiehu Station (Line 10)

Would you like a convenient, non-physical way to weaponize your inner wimp? How would you survive a hunt-or-be-hunted scenario where you are pitted against a predator in a duel to the death? Well, the recently opened Jian Archery Club is a decent option to develop those survivalist instincts in the pleasant atmosphere of patrons imagining their bosses at the other end of a graphite arrow.

Upon entering you notice a range of targets and esoteric killing machines, besides which there isn't a whole lot that differentiates it from your standard bar room. Art created by the proprietor adorns the walls, including one piece with an obvious likeness to Piet Mondrian, and a couple other interesting pieces with a more dated aesthetic. There is your standard cocktail selection at decent prices (RMB 30), domestic and imported beers (RMB 25), and coffee (RMB 30).

As for the bow play: they offer a quick tutorial to get you started. Just as well, *pjiu* and projectiles seldom mix well in the hands of a novice. The sight wasn't properly calibrated on my bow, I swear, so I resorted to looking down the length of the shaft, which would have worked fine if it wasn't for the ear-splitting top 40 music blasting through the speakers. That was a surefire concentration buster that I'm sure Robin Hood never had to deal with.

RMB 120 gets you an hour – not exactly cheap, but they do allow you to pause to refuel whenever you want. There's also a discounted membership deal (RMB 500 per year) which allows you to play William Tell for half price, leaving you with no excuse to not add another string to you bow. *Kipp Whittaker*

Also try: Dongfang Julong Archery Club, Beijing City Archery Club

PHOTO: KEN

WHAT'S NEW BARS & CLUBS

THE V BAR

FLASHY FLOP IN WANGJING

Mon-Sat noon-1am. Bldg 5, B/1, Baoxing Huating (near Wangjing Soho), Wangjingfu Anxi Lu and Futong Xi Dajie Intersection, Chaoyang District (6413 9335)
朝阳区望京阜安西路和阜通西大街交叉口, 宝星华庭5号楼底商 (近望京Soho)

🚶 650m southeast of Wangjing station (Line 15)

This review is brought to you by the letter "V." "V" is the Roman numeral for five, and coincidentally, The V Bar is the latest in a series of bars (The V, V Plus, V Bar, or VA Bar) to be heralded by the worn-out letter. Note that it isn't just any V bar – apparently it is *the* V bar, so we took a look to determine just how deserving it is of that definitive article.

V is for vacant. Aside from a couple of late-night diners and the staff, the place was completely empty at midnight on a Friday. Nevertheless, Suzie Wong alumni took our orders, and even though we caught them looking up the ingredients, the cocktails were mixed at an acceptable standard. As it turned out, The V Bar can deliver a refreshingly proper shochu cocktail. We settled on the Oolong High (RMB 42). The earthy bitterness of the black tea overpowered the subtle bite of the shochu, a reprieve from a stinging mojito (RMB 58).

V is for varnish, or the lack thereof – the décor is drab, inappropriate, and could only be redeemed by its former karaoke stage. We probably won't V back. *Reed Russell*

Also try: V Bar, Rock and Roll



PHOTO: KEN

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DRINKS FEATURE

STYLE TIPSY

by Jessica Rapp

Mixologists who can pair a whiskey sour with a waistcoat never fail to impress, but these four bar personalities are raising the bar when it comes to fashion.

Aluss

Amilal

Aluss' hutong bar is known for its deals on hard-to-find whisky pours and a decorative touch of ornaments from his native Inner Mongolia. Amilal also doubles as a private studio where Aluss features his own photography. You'll often find him there donned in retro clothing plucked from Beijing's vintage shops.

Personal style: retro and rustic

Drink of choice: Caol Ila Whisky. "I like the smoky taste of a single malt."

PHOTO: KEN



Kevin Song
d lounge

"Everyday I dress differently. During the week, I dress in a more classic style, but during the weekend, I have more fun with it."

Style mantra: Every bartender uniform at d lounge is different because every person is different. So if one bartender likes to wear a certain color, I let them do it. I want the staff to be known by name, and you remember a person by what they're wearing."

Drink of choice: Miss Lou, a cocktail dedicated to his girlfriend. It's Tanqueray Gin, lemongrass, lime peel and rosemary syrup, fresh lemon, lychee water, and muddled lychee and cucumber garnished with a twist of lemon peel.

Guilty pleasure garment: Suspenders. I own four different pairs.

What he's wearing: Custom-made suit from Yashow and a locally-designed watch from I.T.



Dale Irons **8-Bit**

DJ, writer, and bartender, Dale Irons is a man of many talents. One of those is knowing how to create an atmosphere for Beijing's first bar dedicated to video games, which is why he keeps three large beakers of Skittles Vodka behind the bar – Ms Pacman (lemon), Yoshi (lime), and Super Mario (strawberry). "It's fun, lighthearted, and a bit childish."

Personal style: A little nerdy and a little sporty, perfect for a go at Mario Tennis on the N64

Drink of choice: Pickleback (a shot of whiskey chased by a shot of pickle juice). "It's scientifically proven to have electrolytes in it, and it's tasty."

Favorite place to shop: Taobao

What he's wearing: A Ben Sherman polo shirt and jacket fitted with a Mod pin. His glasses were custom-made in Andingmen.



**Rain
Cellar Door**

"I wore a suit when I worked as a receptionist at an international hospital. But they wanted me to wear black shoes without high heels so that I wouldn't make any noise. One day, I wore a pair of white shoes I really liked that matched my shirt, and they got really pissed off at me. I prefer working at a cafe or bar where I can have more freedom."

Drink of choice: Beer

Personal style: "Safe and simple"

Favorite place to shop: Zara

Guilty pleasure garment: "Socks and tights. I own 100 pairs."

IRON BARTENDER



Three bar masters. Three “secret” ingredients. One judge. Would Beijing’s cocksure mixologists fumble when faced with an unusual condiment or unfamiliar fruit? Or can they concoct a drink to impress

one tough taster? In the spirit of Iron Chef, we put our bartenders to the test by announcing a secret ingredient, giving them ten minutes to conceive of and create a mix, and finding out just how creative a cocktail can get.

THE CONTESTANTS



LOREN HEINOLD
Q Bar/Q Mex

Kentucky-native Loren is a longtime bartender and expert cocktail drinker – his college dorm room even doubled as a bar. The former Luga’s consultant and current co-owner of Q Bar and Q Mex is in his element when he’s meticulously preparing a mint julep (after all, he shares the cocktail’s home state), and enjoys an old fashioned.



CICI FENG JOHNSTON
Trouble Bar

Cici has been in the bar business with her husband for five years, but it wasn’t until they launched Trouble Bar last year she began to experiment with mixology. She prefers drinks that are sweet and simple to make, like the 京A cocktail, made with 京A’s Oatmeal Vanilla Velvet Stout syrup and a dash of Goslings Black Seal 150 proof rum.



JACK ZHANG
Main Street

Jack Zhang likes fire. So it’s no surprise the 11-year bartender can whip up a Flaming Lamborghini no problem. When asked which ingredient he hoped would be included in Iron Bartender, he said he prefers a different kind of fire: *la jiao*. When he’s not mixing, he’s guzzling the more spirited classics, like the Long Island and Zombie.

THE JUDGE



PETER LIU
Cicada Ultralounge

Peter Liu has bartended in Sanlitun-area restaurants for five years. His Pasion Cubana (on Cicada’s new spring menu) won second place in the Pernod Ricard Bar Legends Havana Club China Tour. His mantra: “It’s important that your cocktails are not just good, but that they fit with people’s tastes. You have to know your customer.”

ROUND 1

Cici



Dark rum, lime juice, root beer, over crushed ice with a slice of lemon

Jack



Cherry brandy, lime juice, passion fruit juice, root beer, garnished with lime and a cherry

Loren



Dark cherry sauce, root beer, Grand Marnier, milk, garnished with cherries and a cinnamon stick

SECRET INGREDIENT

ROOT BEER



Verdict: Cici's cocktail proved too simple and Loren's substitution of milk for ice cream in his version of a classic float proved to look unattractive. Jack took first place for a more complex cocktail with an appealing presentation.

ROUND 2

Cici



Midori, muddled vodka and pickles, pickle juice and salt around the rim

Jack



Bombay Sapphire gin, Martini dry, pickle juice around the rim, pickle garnish

Loren



Martini dry, gin, lime juice squeezed into pickle juice, strained chilli seeds, chilli pepper and pickle for garnish

SECRET INGREDIENT

PICKLE JUICE



Verdict: Cici's is a strange combination of sweet and sour ingredients, but it boasts a pleasing color and tastes good. However, Loren's meal-like martini won for its nod to the Bloody Mary. Its hint of citrus was nearly enough to temper the pickle juice for the weary.

ROUND 3

Cici



Gin, Luxardo Maraschino liqueur, dark cherry syrup, lime juice, tea, Campari, and crushed ice, topped with nutmeg

Jack



Light rum, dark rum, pineapple juice, apricot brandy, dash of grenadine, tea, and orange peel as garnish

Loren



Vodka, vanilla liqueur, orange bitters, and egg whites shaken together, topped with a fire-lit candied lemon

SECRET INGREDIENT

CHRYSANTHEMUM TEA



Verdict: While Loren took honorable mention for creativity, his was too light on the liquor. Jack's was too strong. Cici's fragrant creation looked great and tasted refreshing. However, she was advised use less ice – clearly Peter couldn't get enough.



BAIJIU BRIEF

GETTING FAMILIAR WITH THE WHITE SPIRIT

by Jim Boyce

Haterz gonna hate, wrote Li Bai or Tao Qian or some other ancient deep thinker/drinker on the topic of *baijiu* bashers. Thing is, some haters end up drinking more and hating less. And some even start liking.

Such was the case with Derek Sandhaus, whose introduction to *baijiu* came via those *ganbei* sessions that blur vision and slur speech, sear the throat and shock the liver, and leave a telltale aroma wafting from the pores for a day or two. Too many bottoms ups typically leave one curled under the table with a growing resentment of the booze responsible.

But unlike many of us with nightmarish experiences of a given alcohol – I know a small city's worth of people who gag at a mere whiff of tequila – Sandhaus utilized his spare time in China to embrace the liquid demon and create a blog called 300 Shots at Greatness. The title of the blog, which led to his book *Baijiu: The Essential Guide to Chinese Spirits* being published last month by Penguin, refers to a supposed threshold of drinking that ultimately determines whether one becomes a lover or hater of this spirit.

It turns out Sandhaus began to appreciate *baijiu* by shot sixty. Not everyone can say the same or display a

fraction of his interest.

Case in point, I took the overnight train to Shanghai last June to ensure early arrival at a 10am trade tasting of eighty-plus *baijus* he organized. My fear of supplies running dry were unfounded as only one other person arrived before lunch. But those were hours well spent given the *baijius* were arranged by fermentation method and thus easy to compare and contrast. Instead of the usual one-dimensional experience of knocking back shots, I took my time sniffing and sipping and finding an impressive range of aromas and flavors – from cooked rice, bean paste and fresh bread to chamomile, pineapple and dried plum to peppercorn, anise and solvent to vegemite, blue cheese and stinky tofu.

When Sandhaus spoke at the Bookworm Literary Festival last month he faced a full room of 50 people, who wanted not only to learn more about *baijiu* but also to sample the four bottles on hand. It was as close to a *baijiu* love-fest as I've seen.

You can find upwards of 80 options in Sandhaus' book, an especially handy volume for those unable to read Chinese characters since it includes photos of the *baijiu* bottles and thus makes shopping easy.

P.S. WE ATE YOU

Every month, we like to shine a spotlight on the most delicious dishes we've stumbled upon recently. Dig in!



stir-fried beef with deep fried dough and soy beans

HK O'Man Restaurant, RMB 52

Beef and deliciously crunchy fried dough is mixed with soy beans, cloves of garlic and sliced ginger in a pale white sauce. There are so many ingredients, and the complex combination of textures and flavors make this a very easy dish to devour. Pair it with one of their delicious sweet ice teas and you have a party in your mouth.

anti-social burger

Temple, RMB 55

This is an instant classic on the Temple burger menu, with caramelized shallots, fried onions, bacon, and bleu cheese. Perfectly sized so it fits in your mouth with ease. Served with a side of fries and the usual wallop of pure unadulterated rock'n'roll.

homemade shrimp dumplings

Jin Ding Xuan, RMB 26.8

The quality of dishes at this restaurant never really seems to deviate. You could arrive at any time of day or night and anything you order is guaranteed to be amazing. These suckers come out on their tray sweating from their steamy bath.

k-town fries

Palms LA Kitchen and Bar, RMB 25

A must-order side at the new hutong hot spot. These fries are served tossed in a flurry of red pepper flakes and Sriracha cream sauce for dipping. They are delightfully messy and light up your mouth with a tolerable spice. Before you've finished the platter your hands and mouth will be covered in those little flakes.

paleo salad

Gung Ho! Pizza, RMB 79

If you are looking for a healthy and hearty alternative to your usual weekday lunch, you should order one of these satisfying belly busters. Chock full of steak, walnuts, tomatoes, cucumbers, spinach, and lettuce, this fella is certain to fill you up without weighing you down.

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For those prepared to rock, get off on May 1-3 at this year's MIDI Music Festival. Three days of raucous tunes for Beijing's cultural deviants.

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Aural Armor

by Joey Guo and Kipp Whittaker



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 600m southwest of Hujialou station (Lines 6 and 10)

A number of fitness centers have opened up in the past year, giving people more or less the same options in terms of machinery and classes available. Usually the main concern is, “Does it have a swimming pool?” Prime Fitness sets itself apart by providing a primeval approach to high intensity training with quality instructors in a highly personalized setting.

The style of workout here is called primal because it is short (usually 30-minute bursts) and is an intense program based on the hunter-gatherer lifestyle of our ancestors. You can expect a lot of lunging, throwing, pushing and pulling. This may all sound a little antiquated, but if you desire that cage fighter physique, then it’s probably the best option in town.

There is limited use of machines because the trainers believe that style of training to be limiting and neglectful

of essential muscle groups. One of the aims of this method is to leave you informed about a natural way to train your body and how to sustain it with a healthy diet.

A large percentage of the classes they do at Prime are one-on-one. There are also group classes that are capped at eight people so you never have to worry about overcrowding. There are no membership fees, but there is a minimum amount (RMB 1,500) that you must put down as credit to participate in either individual or group sessions. Each group class will set you back RMB 150 and each one-on-one class is RMB 450. If this is out of your price range, but you still want a more focused experience, there is a “couple” option where you and a friend can feel the burn together for RMB 350. *Kipp Whittaker*

Also try: Kerry Sports, Pulse Fitness

BLAKK

SPACE AGE HUTONG ART PORTAL

Daily 3-10pm. 34 Jiadaokou Beisiantiao, Dongcheng District (139 1100 6765)

东城区交道口北三条34号

 1km southeast of Andingmen station (Line 2)

As you mosey down Jiadaokou Beisiantiao hutong in flâneur fashion, trudging through the goo goo muck of Dongcheng, you eventually happen upon Blakk, the new cat in the clowder specializing in handmade clothing and art paraphernalia from Beijing's creative elite. The facade of this sleek, space age boutique is black, just like the name would suggest. Breaking up the absence of color are tessellating, obsidian tiles and a sliding glass door that whips open anytime someone scurries past.

While Blakk's owners' main objective is to provide emerging artists and designers an opportunity to display their work, the store itself does not specialize in any one thing. Their inventory traverses many disciplines including, but not limited to fashion, art, and music.

They have a nicely curated selection of blouses, jackets and hand-printed T-shirts. These exquisite threads are mainly for the ladies, but possibly unisex, depending on how fashionably adventurous a dude might be. Lining

the walls are various accessories including beautiful silk scarves, bracelets, chic loafers and art books. They also have a decent selection of LPs, though not all are for sale.

Every month, Blakk highlights a designer. Currently on display is Punk 'N Pearls, a solo exhibit of punk-themed jewelry from German art star Souzihass. Incorporating safety pins and chains, these necklaces are dangerous and brimming with punk attitude (RMB 2,000). Carsick Cars are currently on tour, but when they return frontman Zhang Shouwang will exhibit a collection of photographs in the next exhibition.

There seems to be a lot of potential with the space, though part of me wishes they had more for the guys in the clothing department. That seems to be a common problem, or perhaps I'm just looking in all the wrong places. *Kipp Whittaker*

Also try: Concertino, Jiali Gallery



PHOTO: MITCHELL PE MASILUN

SCOTT KRONICK LOOKS ON THE BRIGHT SIDE

BEIJING VETERAN ON LIFE IN THE CAPITAL

by Steven Schwankert

Seems like people in the public relations industry in Beijing need other outlets to express themselves. Will Moss and David Wolf were both popular bloggers until their departures in 2013. Kaiser Kuo formerly wrote the regular “Ich Bin Ein Beijinger” column for this magazine before co-founding the Sinica podcast with Jeremy Goldkorn. And in 2012, Scott Kronick, president and CEO of Ogilvy Public Relations, Asia Pacific, took readers of *the Beijinger’s* blog to “The Lighter Side.”

The Lighter Side of China, a compilation of those columns, pokes fun at just about everyone involved in the China experience. Kronick would know: he is approaching his 20th year in China, and that’s after four years in Taipei, his wife is Chinese, and he is raising his children in a multicultural, multilingual home.

Everyone and everything gets the treatment at some point. Chapters, each only a few pages long, cover a range of topics: the Olympics, feng shui, food, Chinese medicine, raising children, travel, and marriage. Each gets highlighted for the unique set of challenges it poses, then roasted a bit for maximum comic value like a philosophical *chuan’r*.

Kronick chronicles an early encounter with the English names of Chinese colleagues: “I sought to understand everything about the Chinese and became fixated on the English names the Chinese gave themselves. I wondered why a colleague in our advertising office would call himself ‘Billboard’ Kwok. Or why my slightly heavyweight boss called himself ‘Beef’ Chen. Or why the advertising creative

team donned such names as ‘Jesus’ Yeh and ‘Devil’ Zhou and, in case you had a question, you could ask for the Creative Director ‘If’ Chen. For those who wonder where these names come from, there are a variety of influences.”

Here, he gets behind the wheel in Beijing: “More than

15 years ago, all it took to qualify for a license was driving 100 meters in a straight line. Interestingly, this all changed around the time that I decided to get my license. The year was 2003 and I think Beijing city officials felt the 100-meter drive was just not enough. I envision these folks sitting around in a smoke-filled office sitting on felt-covered seats, with mugs filled with green tea leaves and brainstorming how they could mess with people like me. The topic: ‘How to make sure drivers have the real skills to navigate the potential Armageddon that takes place on the roads everyday.’”

Cleverly illustrated, at about 110 pages in a format that lends itself more to take-out menu than novel, *The Lighter Side of China* is sufficiently light in both weight and content that it fits into any coat pocket. It’s too bad the book was released so early in the year – it will make a great stocking stuffer.

Regardless, it should do brisk

business among China veterans, business people, and visitors who were able to see the humor in the city and country in which we live.

Pick up a copy of *The Lighter Side of China* at [The Bookworm](#) or [amazon.com](#).



DUNN DEAL

ONE MAN'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE CHANGING LOOK OF BEIJING'S RESTAURANTS

by Cat Nelson

The tide is turning and Beijing is increasingly seeing the arrival of well-designed and deliberate interiors. While contributions from a varied cast of characters are driving the trend, one major player in the scene is Phil Dunn and his firm New Architecture Office (NAO).

While Dunn's portfolio includes everything from

private residences to art galleries to funeral homes, he has a particular fondness for establishments of food and drink – places that become more than simply a photograph in a portfolio, but integral parts of the community. Read on for a tour of Dunn's most recent work with words from the man himself.



OKRA



PAK PAK



HOME PLATE BAR-B-QUE

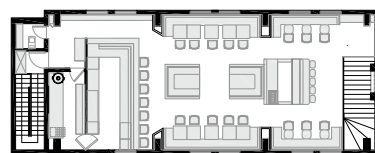


OKRA

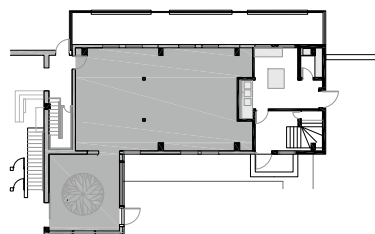
[sushi bar]

Location: 1949 Hidden City, Sanlitun

Project Date: Jan 2, 2012 to Aug 15, 2013



First floor plan

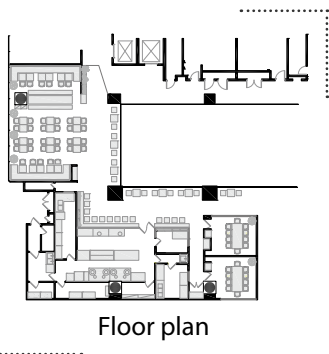


Second floor plan

"The project was initially planned to be built in conjunction with the now closed, neighboring Bar Veloce in the winter and spring of 2012. Owner Max Levy brought me into the two projects, and through him, I also began working with Leon Lee [of Bar Veloce, Apothecary, and Janes and Hooch]. As restaurant politics changed, so did the concept and size of the sushi bar and restaurant. Ultimately, in the summer of 2012, Sean Dix, a Hong Kong-based designer, and I agreed to collaborate on the design. Sean's furniture design strengths and factory connections allowed us to prefabricate many of the interior elements in Guangzhou and ship them up to Beijing.

The concept that most identifies the space was derived from the restaurant's name, Okra. Okra is a vegetable that when cut in cross section, has the pentagon shape that is picked up in the screens that divide the interior and act as a backdrop to the bar. Maintaining the connection with the vegetable, the color green was chosen for the fixed screens, wool banquettes, and other minor architectural elements."





PAK PAK

[Thai restaurant]

AREA
355m²

Location: Wangjing

Project Date: Sep 15, 2012 to May 15, 2013

"This project had its unique challenges, one of which was that the restaurant is in an office building directly above the Mercedes Benz Showroom in Wangjing and adjacent to an Annie's Italian Restaurant. Additionally, the main income was expected to be made during the lunch service.

I was charged with creating a Thai restaurant whose interior does not necessarily feel Thai. Conceptually, the challenge was to create a natural, warm interior that could be a lunchtime escape from the surrounding office environments. Pak Pak is an "L" shaped space, where open dining is the first leg of the L, and private dining is the back leg, so the joint between the two functions naturally became the open kitchen, which in turn, allows Thai cooking to be on display. The open kitchen acts as a center point for the design and a visual draw to bring visitors into the space."



HOME PLATE

[barbecue restaurant]

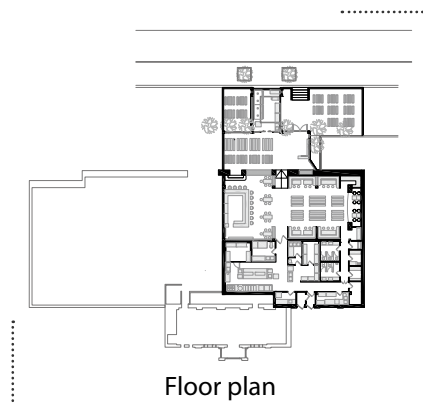
Location: Sanlitun

Project Date: May 1, 2013 to Nov 17, 2013



"American BBQ, as a genre of restaurant design, has countless great references which through owner Adam Murray's and my compiling led to a solid foundation for the design. But most importantly was Adam's desire to avoid the bourgeois feeling of trendy restaurants, which steered us clearly toward the BBQ joints of the southeast and southwestern US.

The space was divided into three major functions: small open dining, large open dining, and the bar, all of which are divided by screen walls of stacked wood, a feature that is in constant transformation as the wood is used in the two smokers imported from the US. It was important that the major design feature of the space be functional above all else. The idea of classic poultry, beef and pork graphics came out in the early stages of the project's design, but artist Stephen Gleadow, was able to translate that initial idea into iconic artistic murals which really tie the space together."



CHINA'S BEER CAPITAL IS IN SEASON

PLAN A BOOZY BREAK IN QINGDAO

by Steven Schwankert



Spring in Beijing lasted about four days this year, between the heat going off and first bare midriff being spotted in public. As summer may have arrived without regard for the calendar, it's time to think about the warm weather delights of a beer on the beach, and in China, no city does that better than Qingdao.

WHY

Qingdao was formerly a German colony, the only such German holding in China. The Tsingtao Brewery serves as a reminder of that period. Qingdao is a beautiful slice of China's coastline, gifted with beaches that are some of the most popular in the country.

WHAT TO DO

The dates vary each year, but the annual Tsingtao Beer Festival is the city's main attraction. Expect entertainment and giant tents for beer and food. Beyond that, make use of Qingdao's numerous public beaches.

WHERE TO STAY

If it's been a good year, then The Westin Qingdao (RMB 1,520 per night, including breakfast, excluding tax) is excellent. Tripadvisor.com has the Holiday Inn Qingdao

Parkview (RMB 560 per night, including breakfast) as its number one hotel in the city.

WHERE TO EAT

The China Gongshe communal building offers dining and entertainment with a menu that's heavy on the bounty of the sea. For a view, it's hard to beat the Sunset Lounge. The site was originally developed for its view – of far away galaxies as it was formerly the location of China's first modern astronomical observatory.

WHERE TO DRINK AND HANG

The Corner Pub on Minjiang Lu was a jazz club but it's the hot corner in the Shinan East neighborhood. Lennon Bar on Zhuhai Lu is one of the city's best live music venues.

GETTING THERE

Fast trains from Beijing South Station cost about RMB 550 one-way for second-class and take between four and a half to five hours. By plane, Qingdao is about an hour and 15 minutes from Beijing. Airfares can run as low as RMB 300 one-way but are usually closer to RMB 750-1,000. There are about 12-15 flights per day in total.



LET'S TALK ABOUT SPECS

DON'T BE SHORTSIGHTED – USE THIS GLASSES GUIDE NEXT TIME YOU NEED TO SEE AN OPHTHALMOLOGIST

by Jessica Rapp

YES

Use the same prescription

If you already have glasses and simply want new frames, then bring your specs into the glasses store with you. They can take your old lenses and determine your prescription before creating a new lens with frames. Just make sure to test them out as they're not always accurate the first time.

See an ophthalmologist (yǎnkē yīshēng, 眼科医生)

Unless you are concerned that you need to see a specialist (i.e., you need a glaucoma test), you don't have to book an appointment at a local hospital. Most glasses stores and markets have the equipment on hand to check your eyesight. Some places do not ask you to read an eye chart, which may result in an inaccurate assessment, so make sure you give the lenses a test before you commit. Once they've determined your prescription, be prepared to tell them what kind of glasses you want.

NO

UV coating (zǐwàixiàn mó, 紫外线膜) If you're buying cheap, plastic lenses, then be sure to ask if the clear UV coating has been applied. The more expensive polycarbonate lenses already block UV rays.

Scratch-resistant coating (fáng guā mó, 防刮膜) Because let's be honest – does anyone clean their glasses exclusively with that free lens cloth you get with your glasses case?

GLASSES



What kind of lens should I buy?

Thin lens (báo tòujìng, 薄透镜) (RMB 80-120). If you have a strong prescription, ask for these, unless you want to look like you're wearing goggles.

Anti-reflection coating (fáng fǎnshè mó, 防反射膜) (RMB 200-250). Late night at the office? Opt for this cosmetic addition if you don't want your glasses to reflect your computer screen.

Astigmatism correction (sànguāng jiǎozhèng, 散光矫正) The ophthalmologist will be able to tell if you have an astigmatism during the eye exam, and it should not cost extra for a special lens to correct it.

GLASSES or CONTACTS

Have you had your eyes checked?

CONTACTS

Are you on a budget?

NO



YES

Do you like markets?

NO



YES

Beijing Glasses City

Head down to Panjiayuan for Beijing's hub for cheap frames, just be prepared to bargain. Markets on both sides of the street contain hundreds of shops, but if you dig, you're bound to find a few special spots. They're fast too – preparing the glasses only takes about 30 minutes.

Baodao Glasses (宝岛眼镜)

Compared to Glasses City, Baodao may take longer to make your glasses, but this popular local chain is a reliable operation with a large, stylish selection.

Do you like vintage frames?

YES



Delia

Proving it's okay to wear vintage frames with the lenses intact, this Hong Kong-owned boutique stocks a decent selection of imported specs from all across Europe.

NO



Coterie

Hong Kong fashionistas bring in some of the world's trendiest eyewear at this multi-brand frames shop.

CHairEYES

If you're worried about finding the right glasses for your face shape, local artist Zhou Yuan may have you covered with retro frames designed specifically for Asian bone structure. Available at Dong Liang Studio and BNC.

American Apparel

Remember when you thought Steve Urkel from Family Matters was the cat's pajamas? Whoever designed American Apparel's typically colorful set of vintage frames does.



Have you had your eyes checked?

YES

If you need the same prescription, make sure you buy a new box with the same base curve (BC) and prescription. Both numbers are important, but the salespeople won't always ask you for your BC. Bring your old box in as a sample if you're unsure.

Where to order

Just about every glasses store carries contacts behind the counter in Beijing, but because contacts are not as common, most venues only carry one or two brands. You can also try these options:

Lens Proxy

www.lensproxy.com



Can't see beyond your front door? You don't need to when you use Lens Proxy. This Hong Kong-based online store stocks an exhaustive selection of brands and styles to meet your needs, whether you prefer short-term wear or toric lenses, at competitive prices, and will deliver them to your door at almost no cost.

Beijing Glasses City

Most of the frames stalls carry contacts for approximately RMB 180 a box, while some also carry colored lenses. Just make sure to stay safe and avoid trying them on in the store unless you've opened a new box.

NEW NOISE FROM CHINA

THE SOUNDTRACKS TO YOUR SUMMER

by Kipp Whittaker

Beijing is the music capital of China and it's always a special occasion when we are treated to new material from our domestic talent pool. Here's a small selection of the records we can look forward to this month. Take a gander and get a better idea of what to expect from these exciting releases.



Alpine Decline, *Go Big Shadow City*

Many bands have two sides. The side you see in the live house and the other that shines through on the album, a cultural artifact documented in the controlled environment of a recording studio. For many, it is hard to find the perfect balance of these two worlds

and create an accurate testament of the music they are capable of. Alpine Decline have very effectively captured everything they could hope to from this studio recording to the point where you can feel Yang Hai-song's recording equipment bearing the weight of this beautifully heavy music.

Their tracks have an easy flow with a highly informed sense of the design in mind, from in-the-gutter ragasque repetitions to the spaced out points in between songs where the guitar rings out, getting tangled and mutated into scratchy oscillations. This album showcases their ability to channel punk-driven emotion through the gaze of psychedelic exploration. Though it can seem deeply saturated in a thick blanket of echo, poetic elements seep through this lens of distortion, displaying a sense of control that belongs to a rare breed of band like Galaxy 500 or Wipers.

AV Okubo, *Dynasty*

This new Maybe Mars release from Wuhan pranksters AV Okubo has been a long time in the making. With the help of Andy Gill, founding member of the seminal post punk group Gang Of Four, this recording maintains a strong sense of intensity and musical acumen throughout. Opening track "World" is reminiscent of late '70s techno pop

akin to something off of Yellow Magic Orchestra's eponymous album, but this is just the tip of the chopstick. These guys flip, zigzag, and swing to unimaginable places throughout the duration.

They are not focused on any one genre. The way AV Okubo tangle with styles is masterful. A feature, no doubt, some might find schizophrenic, but a form of dialectical chaos that should be respected.

Dynasty is a record that could benefit from being a little more dirty and raw. The crisp production doesn't match the wild sounds shooting out of these guys, and while the slick sound isn't terrible, it's the musicianship and stylistic range that really makes this album stand out.

Zuckermann, *Serendipity*

The latest DJ transplant to Beijing, Ralph Zuckermann, has been a figure in the Berlin scene for many years. Seeing him perform is a spectacle, but this release confirms suspicions that he is on a whole other level. The sounds on *Serendipity* are an amalgamation of various electronic classifications. At times, it's sparse and minimal, before quickly shifting to something baroque or funky. Listen to it loud and let it transport you to a cinematic realm akin to an '80s Vangelis score. One minute you're making love to a replicant, the next you materialize in a bizarre techno nightmare.

It would be remiss to suggest this is an album that was made solely for the dance floor. The track "Stalk Hausen" embodies an early Cabaret Voltaire sound, shot through time to sound ultra modern and unnerving. Then the industrial and noisy elements eventually warp into something cohesive, tight and melodic before dropping off into oblivion. Vocal elements would serve to anchor some tracks with a human element but these compositions possess their own programmed version of this. The soul of the operator is still very apparent.



Introducing the people who matter

"I GUESS I CAN BE PRETTY INSIGHTFUL WHEN I'M WASTED" SEE P70

"I ONLY HAVE CRUSHES ON AUTHORS WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED WAR" SEE P71

"BACK BEFORE 2AM, NOTHING GOOD HAPPENS AFTER 2AM" SEE P69

"MISERY AND HUMILIATION ARE LIKE PIZZA – MORE FUN WITH OTHERS" SEE P68

MEET

DEAFHEAVEN // NADIA HO // NESTOR SANTANA // FRANK YU

Thoughts of Justice ...

"The best lyrics are a pop song that everybody sings without knowing really what they're singing, because they're singing bullshit."

"We'd rather have people crying or fighting than dancing."

"We've never tried to be part of pop music, it happened by mistake. And that's totally cool – we're not trying to sh*t in the nest ..."

"Through computers, music has become a great democracy and everyone can do it, even us."

Prepare to witness the swift hand of Justice at the Strawberry Music Festival on May 1.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF THE ORGANIZERS

FRANK YU

TECHNOLOGY ENTREPRENEUR/INSTAGRAMMER EXTRAORDINAIRE

Which uniform were you most mocked for wearing?

In high school, when you rode public transportation wearing a jacket and tie as a teenager, it was like advertising yourself as a must-mug. We wore denim and leather jackets to school and changed to sport jackets once we arrived. It was uncool to have a jacket and tie that looked as though it fit; it was much cooler to wear three sizes too big and to wear socks or leaves as your necktie.

Which uniform was the most flattering?

Military Class A dress uniforms make one look very cavalier and dashing as long as you don't have to eat, sit down or move.

Which uniform was the worst fit?

All of them, Asians are not meant to wear Western uniform proportions.

Which uniform do you feel most sentimental about? Why?

My US military uniforms. When I wore them I was representative of an institution that had a long tradition and history. I may rob banks and double-park in civilian

clothes, but I would never dishonor the uniform or the organization when I wore it.

Did you ruin any of these uniforms? How?

They ruined me. Back in the day, many of these uniforms were polyester or dacron.

Which uniform did you resent wearing the most?

As long as others suffered with me, I didn't mind. Misery and humiliation are like pizza – more fun with others.

Which uniform did you have the most fun in?

Army uniforms were usually almost green. Unlike the Navy, which had sharp white dress uniforms where you can look all *Officer and a Gentleman*-like, Army dress uniforms made its wearers look like bad prom dates. My father was a naval officer and he looked great in dress whites and a sword. So when I had a chance to go to Dalian, I got to dress up in a PLA naval officer's dress whites. The girl that I was dating at the time said it looked stupid and gave me a hard time about it, but I enjoyed wearing the uniform and looking all squared away as we say in the Army.

Follow Frank on Instagram @mkultra00.



PHOTO: JUDY ZHOU

NESTOR SANTANA

DIGITAL DIRECTOR,
MIDWEST AGENCY LIMITED



How old were you when you started drinking?

I had a beer for the first time when I was 17 years old. It was an indelible discovery that baffled me. I thought, "Why would people drink that?" Practice helped.

Who would you most like to go out drinking with?

One of my favorite authors, Neal Stephenson. I have a substantial body of questions for him. I would drink a pilsner.

Where's the dumbest place you've gone drinking?

Panfilov Park in Almaty, Kazakhstan. Four of us ended up with a Kalashnikov trained on us. We left several hundred dollars poorer.

We're at the bar – what are you having?

Kirin Ichiban or Asahi on draft.

What's your golden rule of drinking?

If it's Japanese, it's probably good.

What's your favorite drink? Has your favorite drink changed over time?

Currently, it is Anis Del Mono. I don't know of any place to get it other than Badalona, Spain, and I'm fresh out. My preference has certainly changed over time. For years my favorite whiskey was Jim Beam's Knob Creek, but that was before I discovered so many other bourbons and of course

the world of Irish whiskeys and scotch. As I learned more variety and options, especially throughout my 20s, my favorite has certainly changed. Anis Del Mono couldn't be further from Knob Creek.

You're hosting a cocktail party – what are you making?

I prefer source elements, so I would serve Zacapa, preferably XO, or Jameson 12-year on ice. I am selfish with my I.W. Harper.

What's your idea of a good night out?

Back before 2am, nothing good happens after 2am.

What are your secret watering holes?

I'm going to be chastised for letting the cat out of the bag here, but there should be more curiosity about this place to attract more foreign patronage. Tetsu has excellent drinks and Asahi draft and hands down the best Hakata-style *tonkotsu* ramen I've had outside of Hakata/Fukuoka. Their ramen may be the best Japanese-style ramen in China. Shioyama-san and his crew have created something magical at Tetsu where you can wash down a tasty pork-bone broth ramen with a clean and crisp High Ball, Oolong Hai, or any of myriad excellent libations.

Check out the inaugural issue of SIX Magazine at six-magazine.com.



AGGRESSIVE SENSITIVITY

DEAFHEAVEN BRING NUANCE TO HARDCORE

Think all metal fans are meatheads? George Clarke wants you to think again. The frontman of Californian hardcore outfit Deafheaven reads highbrow Czech literature, writes lovesick text messages, and has an affinity for pink album covers. Below, he tells us more about breaking the genre's masculine mold.

The pink cover art for the new album *Sunbather* was meant to look like “the back of one’s eyelids as they face the sun.” How did people receive it?

Our peers and fans are really supportive of it. But I think it will take a little more adjusting before much of the hardcore community can get comfortable with album art that doesn't seem to suit a metal record, and yet does.

What inspires some of *Sunbather*’s more scholarly lyrical content?

Books never have a direct influence. They usually just impact the themes I write about. I was really hooked on Milan Kundera's *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* during the *Sunbather* recording sessions. That influenced a lot of the album's themes – all the stuff about relationships and romantic struggles.

One of your biggest inspirations was a drunken SMS you sent to an ex.

Yeah, it ended up inspiring the last four lines of the song

“Dream House,” which compares death to a blissful dream. Those lyrics came from one of my actual texts. I remember reading it the next morning and thinking it sounded nice. The whole theme of that song is heartache and longing, so I thought the text complimented it really well.

Most of us aren’t so poetic while drunk dialing.

I guess I can be pretty insightful when I’m wasted.

Are there any Chinese bands that you want to check out on this tour?

I’m still pretty unfamiliar with the hardcore scene in China and Southeast Asia, so I’m looking forward to learning more about that. I love Japanese metal, bands like Boris. *Flood* is usually my go to album for them. But it’s hard to choose a favorite, because each of their albums is so different.

Have you started working on the follow up to *Sunbather* yet? Could it be as ambitious and experimental as a Boris release?

Once we’re done with this tour, we can dedicate time to writing. Writing and recording takes time and focus, and those things are difficult to garner when you’re touring constantly.

See Deafheaven play at Yugong Yishan on May 9.

NADIA HO

NOVELIST

I like searching through used bookstores in different cities. I am always curious about the book's journey before I found it. I bought a copy of *Then They Started Shooting* by Lynne Jones. Only later did I realize it was inscribed "not for sale, uncorrected page proofs" with the editor's handwritten corrections on the pages. There's a kind of strange intimacy in acquiring someone's unique, non-replicable moment of a work in progress.

I read dull, but important books in the bathroom because when I am there, I usually have nothing else to do. Recently it has been *Game Theory* and *The Book of Raising Pigeons*.

Not only was it my favorite book from childhood, but *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* was always my favorite book until recently. It's like sooner or later you realize that you and your childhood friends do not share the same view on life anymore and you are meant to go in different directions. That is a bit sad, but natural.

I can't figure out if I'm saving the 1Q84 trilogy for old age or if that's just an excuse for not liking them now. I realized recently that there's nothing I can identify with from Haruki Murakami's novels anymore. But I also think it

might just be the age difference. Murakami wrote *1Q84* in his 60s, so maybe I will see what he sees when I get there, though I wish to be happier in my 60s.

I've never had crushes on characters, only the authors, especially those who have experienced war like Ernest Hemingway, Romain Gary, or J.G. Ballard. I am a fan of novelists with war wounds.

The last book I read was *Animals Make Us Human* by Temple Grandin. I admire Dr. Temple and enjoy the way she writes about animals. She has that scientists' straightforwardness and her study took care of farm animals from their birth to their death.

The last book I bought was *Roots of Heaven* by Romain Gary before I went to Thailand to visit an elephant camp. I spent two years writing my new book that covers 14 zoos I've visited around the world, and I finished the manuscript before the Thailand trip. I think the time after finishing writing a book is the only time I can really enjoy reading, and I love elephants!

Pick up a copy of Nadia's The Zoo Book at Book Design Shop Beijing.



PHOTO: MITCHELL PE MASILUN

thebeijinger



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GALAXY
银河SOHO

WANGFANG
王府井

CHEERS
三里屯

GANGES
GANGES
WANGFANG
王府井

WANGFANG
王府井

ae
Aurora Events

haru
HARU
三里屯

Taboo Station
三里屯

What are you planning to do?

EVENTS

OUR EDITORS PICK THE BEST OF THE MONTH

UPLOAD YOUR EVENTS AT THEBEIJINGER.COM/EVENTS

FIND ALL VENUE INFO AT THEBEIJINGER.COM/DIRECTORY. PLEASE CALL VENUES AHEAD OF TIME TO CONFIRM DETAILS.



INTRO

MAY 24 – China's most comprehensive electronic music festival is back again for its sixth year with a line-up of heavy-weight local dance floor disturbers to keep Capital Steel bouncing as darkness descends on the degraded industrial landscape. RMB 240, RMB 180 (advance). 1pm. Shougang Capital Steel Factory (1125 7960)



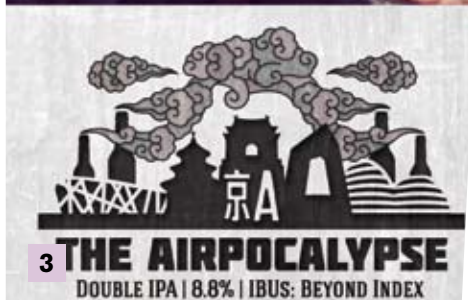
1



2



4



3



5

1. THE DROP VOL. 31 (OFFICIAL STRAWBERRY AFTER PARTY)

MAY 3 – AC Slater (that's the bass guy, not the *Saved by the Bell* guy) will round off the three-day Strawberry Music Festival with everything your tired soles need. Supplementary tunes provided by Oshi, Howie Lee, Shackup, and Blackie. RMB 50. 10pm. Dada (1108 0818)

2. DEAFHEAVEN

MAY 5 – Howling heavy metal mavens Deafheaven bring their intense breed of sludge and doom to the capital for the first time. Their latest album *Sunbather* fuses shoegaze and experimental elements, creating an intensely unique portal to the dark side. RMB 140, RMB 100 (advance). 9pm. Yugong Yishan (130 0192 8216)

3. THE AIRPOCALYPSE DOUBLE IPA LAUNCH PARTY

MAY 3 – Jing A launch their biggest brew yet: The Airpocalypse Double IPA, which clocks in at 8.8% ABV. Join them for a tapping of its maiden keg, with live music and clean air courtesy of Smart Air who will be running their heavy duty "Cannon" filters all night. Free. 9pm. 4corners (6401 7797)

4. HOUSING THE BAR FEATURING LANCELOT

MAY 16 – Up and coming Australian house producer Lancelot takes his homegrown talent to the dance floor, armed with a set which promised to sweep you off your feet. RMB 60 (free before 9.30pm). 10pm. The Bar at Migas (5208 6061)

5. FUNK OFF YOU DISCO

MAY 1 – Dig out your flares, dust off those roller skates and pop on into a time machine. Tune the radio to the funkier station, and turn the dial to 1979 – you've got yourself a ladies night at Ink. 9pm. Ink (157 0122 3422)

DON'T MISS

LIVE MUSIC

D.O.A.

MAY 2 – Classic Canadian hardcore punk band D.O.A., are back for Midi Festival and will be making an intimate appearance to help spread their historically relevant thrash in Gulou. Joined by Sick Times from Germany, Gumbleed, and The Flyx. RMB 60, RMB 50 (advance). 8pm. Temple (131 6107 0713)

THE SPICE CABINET

MAY 2 – Terry Hsieh and his guys are spicing up Baochao Hutong with a live jazz performance that pledges to be on par with that enlivening *mala* spice you had for dinner. Free. 10pm. Modernista (136 9142 5744)

MIJI LAB: WORKSHOP + DJ STRAUSSS PERFORMANCE

MAY 6 – Discover new ways to express yourself sonically with Beijing's top experimentalist, Yan Jun. The workshop will be followed by the unpredictable stylings of DJ Strauss showing off his innovative approach to improvisational guitar. Free. 7pm. Zajia Lab (0112 2252)

ANNA VON HAUSSWOLFF

MAY 10 – She's sometimes compared to Kate Bush, even though this doesn't even begin to describe the depth of this new talent. RMB 80, RMB 60 (advance). 9pm. Mako Live House (5205 1112)

X-NIGHTS: SEXY SUSHI

MAY 10 – Arguably one of the most provocative bands from France at the moment, this duo bleeds synth punk and has the scars to prove it. They will be supported by local favorites Snapline and French/Italian duo Hong Haier. RMB 150. 8pm. Yugong Yishan (6404 2711)

TORTOISE

MAY 17 – This groundbreaking post-rock group from Chicago has seen it all in their 20 years together. Their presence on the scene have only seen them grow more unique and relevant with age. They are like a fine wine, made especially for your ears. RMB 200, RMB 160 (advance). 8pm. Yugong Yishan (6404 2711)

TRANS-AEOLIAN TRANSMISSION


MAY 23 – An archaic musical performance by François R. Cambuzat. He will present recordings collected from Kashgar, Xinjiang, and integrate these sounds into his performance resulting in a kind of post-industrial neo-shamanic musical experience. Free. 9.30pm. Zajia Lab (0112 2252)

LI DAIGUO

MAY 24 – Artist Li Daiguo will present his unique manifestations of Western classical music on cello, Chinese classical music on pipa, and the ceremonial music of the Shona people of Zimbabwe on the *mbira dzavazimu* (thumb piano). RMB 80, RMB 50 (students). 9.30pm. Zajia Lab (0112 2252)

WE ARE NOT INVITED

MAY 24 – Beijing's favorite electro pop duo get physical at School Bar, projecting their smooth neon jams with a twist of French elegance. Free. 9.30pm. School Bar (134 0102 6852)



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(Provides lunch and school bus service, full-day excursion on Friday)

Time: 23rd June- 22nd Aug (2 weeks a term)
Register time: 8:30am-5:30pm

Register deadline: 20th Jun, 2014
Children age: 5-12 years old

For further information: Beijing Riviera, Ms Vivian Gan, Tel: 010-64308006, Email: vivian@bridge-school.com, www.bridge-school.com

Beijing Capital Paradise, Ms Evelyn Yan, Tel: 010-65461757, Email: captain@bridge-school.com



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1. FACTORY VS. DIM SUM DISCO: THE REMATCH

MAY 17 – In early April, Dim Sum Disco (Boflex, Tobias Patrick and Crystal Bones) went head-to-head with their rivals, Factory (Juhstynn, Max at Large and MRG) at The Bar at Migas in an epic beat battle to the death. Sadly, after hours of beats, blood and bruises, the crowd couldn't decide on a winning team. Find out which crew finally gets crowned champion as Factory re-challenges Dim Sum Disco to a final showdown. Free. 9pm (two-for-one mixed drinks until midnight). Ink (157 0122 3422)

2. METRO TOKYO & FRIENDS FEAT. ANDY ROURKE

MAY 15 – Andy Rourke is the bass player from the legendary UK band The Smiths. He's going to DJ all of those classic new wave and rock tunes from yesterday and today with DJ Compact Dicks and Metro Tokyo at his side. RMB 80. 10pm. Dada (1108 0818)

3. STREET KIDS PRESENT GOTH-TRAD

MAY 31 – Another one from one of our favorite party organizers, Street Kids. This dub-step samurai likes his wobble just like his Kitana: sharp and deadly. Hailing from Japan, this producer knows how to keep the floor bumping till the wee hours of the morning. RMB 50. 10pm. Dada (1108 0818)

1. HE

MAY 1 – 'HE' is an after-hours pop up collaboration between Chi Restaurant and Janes and Hooch. Think kinky, casual tipples paired with an ever-changing menu of cheeky street food served in Chi's intimate and chic space on Wudaoying Hutong. Every Wed-Saturday 10:30pm-2am. Chi Restaurant (6445 7076)

2. THE FATFACE COOKATHON

MAY 24 – Wannabe chefs show off their wares while food enthusiasts enjoy an all-day meal and tunes courtesy of DJ BB Deng. No knowledge of cooking necessary to participate. All

proceeds from the event will go towards BEAM, a non-profit that works with teachers of rural Chinese migrant schools. RMB 288 online, RMB 400 (RSVP). Noon-9.30pm (dinner starts at 7.15pm). Grace Beijing Hotel (158 1080 6284)

3. BRAINCELL SPIRAL ENERGY EP TOUR

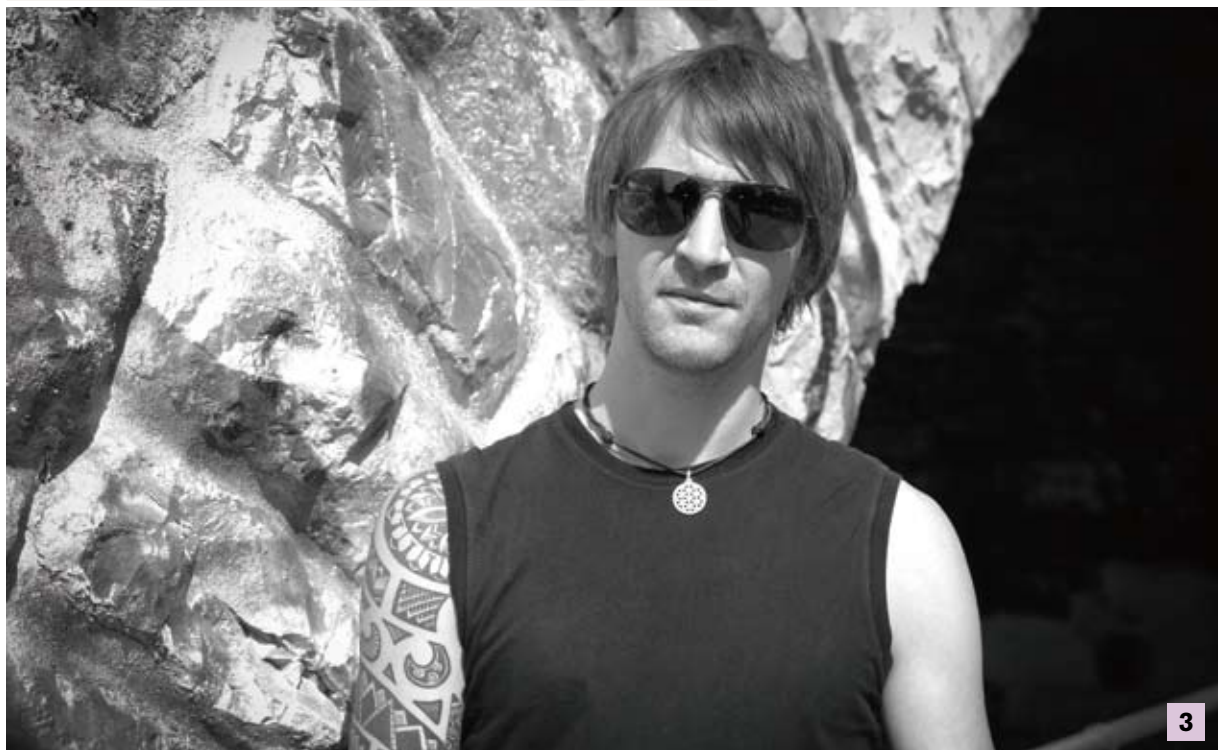
MAY 23 – Swiss psytrance artist Ralph Knobloch, aka Braincell, descends on Beijing with the help of supporting DJs Atoned Splendor, DaN, Anana and Rigelmade. Electric sheep will handle visuals to keep the dance floor spinning so you don't have to. RMB 90, RMB 60 (advance). 10pm. Yugong Yishan (130 0192 8216)



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EVENTS



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1. DIM SUM DISCO FEAT. SAN SODA

MAY 1 – Kicking off the outdoor season for Dim Sum Disco is the house music phenom, 24-year-old Nicolas Geysens, known by his growing fanbase as San Soda. Expect a May Day night of mayhem during what will be the Belgian globetrotter's first performance in China. RMB 50 (free before 9.30pm). 10 pm. The Bar at Migas (5208 6061)

3. FUNK FEVER PRESENTS THE 3RD ANNUAL JAMES BROWN DAY

MAY 2 – On what would be his 81st birthday, the Funk Fever crew pays homage to the one and only Mr. Dynamite with a full-on funk throw down. Expect the unexpected as the boys bring on a heaping dose of JB-related tunes to get your booties bouncing. RMB 50 (free before 9.30pm). 10pm. The Bar at Migas (5208 6061)

2. ABANDON: CARLOS SEBASTIÁ SOLO EXHIBITION

MAY 10 – Catch the opening of *Abandon* by Carlos Sebastián Solo at Jiali. This exhibit seeks to highlight a deeper meaning behind images of neglect and decay. When viewed through Carlos' lens, the scenes of broken facades and derelict spaces bring to mind the lives of former inhabitants. Free. 4-8pm. Jiali Gallery (8402 5613)

4. PIXELORD, 813, SABUROV

MAY 10 – Pixelord and Saburov are joining producer 813 and taking their futuristic bass tunes to Moscow thru Siberia, then down to Beijing. These guys developed their own shiny futuristic music genre called internet ghetto that draws comparisons to other twisted pop mixers like Hudson, Mohawke, and Rustie. RMB 60. 10pm. Dada (1108 0818)

1. JUVENILES

MAY 16 – This French electro pop trio pays homage to their Manchester idols The Smiths and New Order on synthesizers older than they are. Hazy, melodic, and distinctively Parisian, they descend on Beijing as part of Fake Love Music's latest series, Electric City. RMB 120 (RMB 80, advance/student). 9pm. Yugong Yishan (6404 2711)

2. BOK BOK

MAY 23 – One of the two founders of Night Slugs – considered by many to be one of the most distinctive labels alive in the UK. A mutable hybrid of grime, house, electro,

R&B, techno, hip-hop, and dubstep. To say it is bass heavy would probably be a slight understatement. Adult diapers will be provided after admission. RMB 80. 10pm. Dada (1108 0818)

3. NIGHTWATCH WALKING TOUR WITH BESPOKE BEIJING

MAY 11 – Just 100 years ago, central Beijing was the most policed city on Earth, locked down nightly by the banner watchmen. Their fascinating, forgotten story is brought to life in this latest historical nighttime experience. RMB 300. 7-9pm. Bespoke Beijing (6400 0133)



TO THE GUY WHO STOLE MY IPHONE



by George Ding

Hi there, and congratulations on your new iPhone 5.

Let me first say that you're a truly talented thief. I mean, one second I'm checking WeChat and the next I'm wrestling random people to the ground and rifling through their pockets.

Listen, I'll be frank: I am willing to pay cold hard cash to get that phone back. 200 *kuai*. Okay, 500.

If you're not in it for the money, I would be willing to give you one of my friends' phones in exchange for mine. You could totally trade up here. My friend Mark – you might remember him, he was walking with me when you stole my phone – just got a brand new 5S and hasn't dropped it once. As you might have noticed, my screen looks like a bed of mud cracks. You don't want that.

If you're unwilling to part with the phone, I understand. It's got a pretty sweet My Little Pony case and what may be the world record high score on Flappy Bird. You're welcome to keep it. I mean, you earned it with those wiley fingers. But can you at least download all my pictures and send them to me? Dropbox should be fine.

I ask that you please do not look through the files as you download them. It is unfair to judge me based on the contents of my phone without proper context. And before you ask: No, I'm not embarrassed about the number of shirtless selfies on there. I love my body and make no apologies for it. If you're interested in achieving my body mass index, we can converse further through email.

I don't think I have to say this, but please do not call anyone on my contact list pretending to be me. They

won't fall for it. And don't have McDonald's deliver a bunch of food to my apartment because they have my number and address on file. It would only waste the delivery man's time.

If you do decide to dial random numbers, please do not call "Stephanie 2." It's a long story but we sort of dated for a while before I lied and told her I left the country. I only have her number in case she calls me. If you do happen to call one of my friends, make sure to tell them your real name and where you are.

If you're really intent on keeping the phone, can you at least tell me something about yourself, like where you're from or what you do? I'd feel a lot better knowing that my phone was in good hands.

Please don't think this is a ploy to get my phone back. On the contrary, I am willing to let it go. Sure, the phone meant a lot to me – you

might even say it was my entire god damn life – but maybe it will come to mean even more to you.

In fact, I encourage you to make new memories with it and sync them with iCloud. Take a lot of selfies and group photos with your accomplices. Remember to keep geotagging on. It also doesn't hurt to record videos of yourself going about your day, walking around your neighborhood and confessing to stealing phones in your spare time.

I do hope that you'll get in touch, but if not, enjoy the phone that I worked so hard to buy. May it serve you as well as it served me.

Oh, one last thing, I can't find my bike. Did you steal that too?

**"IF YOU DO DECIDE TO DIAL
RANDOM NUMBERS, PLEASE DO
NOT CALL 'STEPHANIE 2.' IT'S A
LONG STORY BUT WE DATED FOR
A WHILE BEFORE I LIED AND TOLD
HER I LEFT THE COUNTRY"**



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