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HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS

CELEBRATE VALENTINE'S DAY
AND SPRING FESTIVAL
IN BEIJING



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CITY SCENE

What's Happening: The most important dates this month
Stat: The South-North Water Transfer Project
Best of the Blog: The most popular stories from *theBeijinger.com*
Scene & Heard: Go on, take a look at yourselves, you beautiful people

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COVER FEATURE

This month's cover feature looks at celebrating Valentine's Day and Spring Festival/Chinese New Year in Beijing. Get away without going away with our list of staycations; Find romantic places in Beijing; Navigate the Year of the Sheep with some made-up horoscopes; and revel in the lunar calendar's most important holiday.

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Dining Feature: Cook up a storm for your Valentine
Feature: Beijing's 10 best brunches
Back For More: Domus
Dining Q&A: Billy Jin, Area Director of Sales and Marketing - Beijing, Swire Hotels
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This month's cover features Wilhelmina Yan of EAST, Beijing. Image shot by Ken at EAST, Beijing.



The most important dates this month

WHAT'S HAPPENING



FEB 2

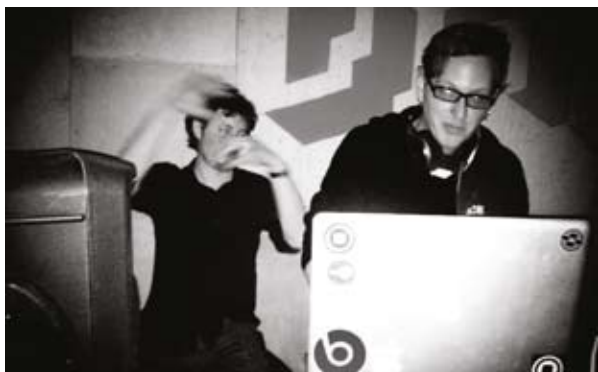
Super Bowl Monday

Join *the Beijinger* for the official NFL Super Bowl party at Kerry Hotel Beijing. The live broadcast (with commercials and halftime show) includes full American buffet and unlimited Budweiser beer. Call 8565 2333 for reservations.

FEB 14

4corners Prom

Relive those classic prom moments this Valentine's Day without the worries of getting busted for underage shenanigans. This night of love will feature Beijing's finger-licking good party boys, Tavey Lean and the Solid Gold Dream Machine.



FEB 19

Black Eyeliner

Ring in the lunar new year with DJ sets from Soundspade and Compact Dicks, as Black Eyeliner returns to Dada for another slick night of nondenominational dance music.

FEB 28

German Comedy Show featuring Klaus & Klaus

If you thought Germans weren't known for their comedy chops, then Klaus & Klaus will make you lose your strudel with their over-the-top standup routine at Crowne Plaza Beijing Sun Palace.



Visit thebeijinger.com for even more events and details.

For more events, see p66.

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ST PATRICK'S DAY
IRISH BALL

Saturday, 14th March
 The Kempinski Hotel
 Beijing Lufthansa Center

Black Tie.

Single ticket: 1,100 RMB.

Table of 12: 12,000 RMB.

Ticket Reservation E-mail:
irishballbeijing@hotmail.com

Sponsorship Packages still available.



the **beijinger**



CITY SCENE

STAT // LETTER FROM THE EDITOR // BEST OF THE BLOG // SCENE & HEARD



44.8 BILLION

The number of cubic meters of fresh water per year that Beijing and other parts of northern China will receive annually via the South-North Water Transfer Project, which has finally reached the capital.

The water redistribution project is the latest incarnation of imperial-style public works projects like the Grand Canal, which connects Beijing with Hangzhou. Although one part of this massive build involved an upgrade of the Grand Canal, that part of the water transfer, one of three, does not serve Beijing. Instead, via the project's "central, or middle, route is from Danjiangkou

Reservoir on the Han river, a tributary of the Yangtze River, to Beijing. The project involves raising the height of the Danjiangkou dam (increasing the dam crest elevation from 162m to 176.6m above the sea level), in order to raise the water level in the reservoir from 157m to 170m above the sea level," according to the project's official website (it's so big it has its own website). Amazingly, this central route actually tunnels underneath the Yellow River to deliver its liquid cargo to Beijing.

Imagine building a tunnel under a river to allow water to pass by!

PHOTO: WIKIMEDIA

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Living in a country that has two new years has some very real advantages, namely that if your New Year's Resolutions don't quite work out, you can pick new ones or rekindle them, just in time for Chinese New Year! Think of it as a dress rehearsal for big life changes.

Chinese New Year, better known as Spring Festival, is like any major holiday – it can be fantastic to celebrate if you have people with whom to celebrate it, or it can be a dull time when everything's closed. Luckily, most businesses are now only closed for about 36 hours, with many people, especially the young, cutting their home visits short or choosing to stay in town and hang.

We like a fusion approach: *jiaozi* with nearest and dearest, a bit of Spring Festival variety show (*Chun Wan*), and then four or five days of Beijing hanging. For people who don't mind the cold, Beijing during Spring Festival is one of the most quiet, authentic times one can experience. Seeing families visiting each other in the hutongs, the cacophony of fireworks, and red lanterns hung everywhere remind us of what an ancient yet contemporary city we live in.

There's another important holiday in February, one that may bring someone foolish enough to forget it even more grief than if they didn't come home for Spring Festival with a handful of *hong bao*. That's Valentine's Day, which regardless of the movements of the moon falls on February 14. This year, the lunar calendar will be tearing fewer couples asunder, arriving far enough ahead of the other holiday that there's still time for plenty of romance.

In this issue, we look at ways to make the most of both holidays. There's a round-up of Beijing's best staycations, romantic getaways right here in the heart of the city, and a look at how lovers can expect to fare during the Year of the Goat/Ram/Sheep. And we take a look at seven wonderful things to do during Chinese New Year: temple fairs, a winter nature walk, and more.

Elsewhere inside, along with our usual assortment of new restaurants, bars, clubs, and venues, is an interview with Michael Gira of Swans, who talks about infinity and his early prowess as a baseball player. China's Nobel Prize for Literature winner Mo Yan is back with his latest novel, *Frog*, a book we couldn't wait to read.

From all of us here at *the Beijinger*, we wish you 新年快乐, 万事如意! (That's Happy New Year and all that stuff.)

Schwankert
Steven Schwankert
Executive Editor

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Clean Air in Style

Every month we tally the hits from theBeijinger.com and bring you the most viewed blog posts from our website.



1. 36 dead in Shanghai New Year's Eve Stampede

On New Year's Eve 36 were killed and 47 injured in a stampede at the overcrowded Bund in Shanghai. Reports indicated that one Malaysian and three people from Taiwan were among the casualties. The accident is the worst incident of stampeding deaths in since 2004, when 37 people were killed and 15 injured in the Beijing suburb of Miyun.



2. Beijing Subway Sees 800,000 Fewer Daily Trips Since Price Hike

Beijing's subway system has seen an overall decrease in daily passenger trips of 8 percent since the era of RMB 2 unlimited-distance pricing ended on December 28. Line 10 saw the most significant decrease in passenger trips, at 18 percent. The only line to see a rush hour increase has been Line 6, attributed to the extension of the line and the new connection with Line 14.



3. Beijing Once Again Declares Uber, Didi Zhuanche Illegal

Uber and other car-sharing services such as Didi Zhuanche are facing possible government action after a Beijing Traffic Enforcement Unit official called them "illegal" in a report last month. According to law, only cars officially designated as taxis may pick up paying passengers. Beijing has 66,000 official taxis to serve almost 21 million people.

4. Stephon Marbury Named One of Beijing's Top 10 Model Citizens

Former NBA and current CBA basketball star Stephon Marbury became the first foreigner named as one of Beijing's Top 10 "Model Citizens." Marbury's qualification was based not on his basketball prowess but his commitment to community and charity work, which includes his visits to a girl with leukemia named Yuanyuan, and donations to rural schools in Yunnan province.



5. Keep an Eye Out for Fake Condoms

Beware of buying condoms online or from shady shops in second and third tier cities. During a recent investigation, reporters placed orders for samples with sellers on JD.com and Alibaba. They found that the condoms featured bad packaging; blurry production codes and expiration dates; a strong unpleasant odor; and last but not least, some condoms even leaked when being filled with water.



7. Beijing Land Prices Set to Rise after Years of Softening

Beijing home prices could reach RMB 60,000 per square meter for the first time in 2015, after a land sale seems to foreshadow a year of expansion for development and a rebound in real estate values. A large plot in southwestern Beijing's Fengtai District sold on January 5 for almost USD 1.4 billion, a new record for real estate in the capital.



6. Dunkin' Donuts to Open 1,400 Stores in China

The coffee and doughnut chain that is a US East Coast place of worship institution is partnering with a company called Golden Cup Pte. Ltd. for the rollout, which will begin in the fourth quarter of this year. Far too late, in our opinion. Dunkin' Donuts currently operates 16 stores in the southern half of China. This is the New England company's second shot at Beijing.



8. Six More Subway Stations to Limit Rush Hour Crowds

Six more stations were added to the list of stops that will restrict passenger inflow during peak hours on the Beijing Subway, officials have announced over the weekend. That makes 61 stops on the network that will now be subject to lines to get in during peak hours, and another reason to quit your job and move to Bali ask your boss for flextime hours.

9. Beijing Dropping Taxi Fuel Surcharge

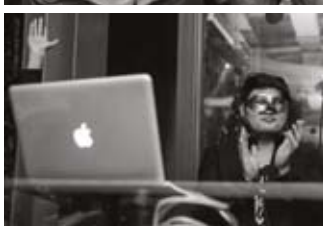
Here's something we didn't expect: even as subway fares rise, taxis have become less expensive. One yuan per fare, to be exact. With fuel fares dropping globally as oil prices hit five-year lows, the irksome fuel surcharge, which due to poor labeling and explanation led tourists to think they were being shaken down for *baksheesh*, is in the process of being removed from Beijing taxi meters.



SCENE & HEARD



PENG - VERY XMAS@Migas
Photos by Aaron Berkovich



PENG - Golden Ball NYE party@Gallery Club
Revelers rang in the New Year at Gallery Club. Photos by Aaron Berkovich



Parlor Anniversary

Moonglow Burlesque helped Parlor celebrate its first birthday. Photos by Laurent Hou



BEIJING'S BEST STAYCATIONS

GET AWAY WITHOUT GOING AWAY

By Robynne Tindall

Whether it's a romantic stay for Valentine's Day or a change of scenery for Chinese New Year, there's no need to leave our fair city for a bit of luxury and some five-star pampering. Follow our guide to these premium staycations at fine hotels throughout Beijing and give yourself a break during the February holidays.

Aman at Summer Palace

Located just steps away from the east gate of the Summer Palace, Aman is housed in a series of buildings originally used by guests awaiting an audience with Empress Dowager Cixi. The 43 luxurious rooms and suites combine modern amenities with traditional Chinese touches like Ming-style furnishings and original wood beams. The out of the way location means you're guaranteed a good night's sleep in your king-size, four-poster bed.

Do: Go ice skating on the Summer Palace's Kunming Lake

Eat: Aman's *kaiseki* restaurant Naoki combines French technique with Japanese culinary artistry

Price: RMB 5,200, Courtyard Guestroom (not available February 18-24)

Perks: Early check in, late check out; daily breakfast; one hour Chinese massage; RMB 200 restaurant credit; upgrade subject to availability

Intercontinental Beijing Financial Street

Treat that very special someone to a night of international-standard, five-star elegance at the Intercontinental Beijing

Financial Street. Sure, the location may not be the first to spring to mind for a staycation, but we say that's all the more excuse to explore this undervalued part of town. Alternatively, stay in and take a dip in the indoor pool, before relaxing in your elegant, low key room.

Do: Take a stroll in the diminutive, and often overlooked, Yuetan Park

Eat: Take a short taxi ride to Deshengmen Neidajie and search out Hutong 44 Kitchen, which serves up authentic Guizhou style food in a small courtyard

Price: RMB 2,888, available on February 14 only

Perks: Set dinner for two at Steak Exchange Restaurant + Bar, valued at RMB 2,288; book before February 11 and get a free upgrade to a suite



Waldorf Astoria Beijing

Imagine coming home to your own private courtyard. Well, you don't have to imagine anymore at Waldorf

PHOTOS: AMAN AT SUMMER PALACE; INTERCONTINENTAL BEIJING FINANCIAL STREET; WALDORF ASTORIA BEIJING; RITZ-CARLTON BEIJING; RAFFLES HOTEL BEIJING

Astoria's Hutong Courtyard. Located in a separate wing from the hotel proper, the two painstakingly authentic courtyards hold three studios, one terrace studio and one villa. Enter through a secret underground passage, where you'll be greeted by modern rooms with tasteful Chinese details. The bathrooms, with Acqua di Parma products, are a special delight.

Do: Window shop on adjacent Wangfujing Dajie

Eat: Don't leave without indulging in a piece of the Waldorf's signature Red Velvet Cake. Just don't.

Price: Three nights, RMB 23,700

Perks: Hutong butler; welcome tea service; daily cocktails and canapés; choice of Chinese or continental breakfast served in-room; dim sum at Zijin Mansion; 90-minute Signature Body Massage



Ritz-Carlton Beijing

Despite being surrounded by shiny skyscrapers in the heart of Beijing, the Ritz-Carlton still screams "old world charm." Their Club Level rooms are on the chintzy side, but still feature mod-cons like an iPhone dock and 42-inch LCD television. The accompanying Club Lounge offers spectacular views across the city (weather permitting), as well as a dedicated concierge service to help you plan out the details of your staycation.

Do: Nod appreciatively at the artworks in the Today Art Museum in nearby Pingod



Eat: Head over to Shin Kong Place for some of Beijing's best Neapolitan pizzas at Fissler Academy Café

Price: RMB 2,450

Perks: Book two nights, get the second night free; access to Ritz-Carlton Club Lounge, including complimentary food and drink throughout the day

Grace Beijing

Set in the heart of 798 Art District, it's no wonder that Grace Beijing has become a favorite with artists and arty types alike. There's no doubt this is a stylish hotel, effortlessly incorporating hints of the area's industrial past with modern artist elements befitting its current status. And with just 30 rooms, you're not likely to have your romantic getaway disturbed by other guests.

Do: Grace Beijing guests get free entry to UCCA and 5 percent off the UCCASTORE

Eat: If you don't fancy Grace Beijing's serene Yi House restaurant, call by Eatalia for Italian classics in an art-inspired setting

Price: From RMB 625

Perks: 50 percent off room rate; daily breakfast; welcome champagne; 10 percent off a la carte dining

Raffles Hotel Beijing



With its seat right on Chang'an Jie, just minutes from Tian'anmen, a night at Raffles really feels like you're taking in a piece of history. You'll feel even more so if you stay in one of their nine 80-sqm Personality Suites, all named after famous personalities like Sun Yat-sen and George Bernard Shaw who patronized the hotel in its heyday and furnished with unique memorabilia.

Do: Fight the crowds at Tiananmen Square for a good spot to view the daily sunset flag lowering

Eat: French Restaurant Jaan's Executive Chef Cyrille Mollé was previously behind the stoves at Parnas

Price: RMB 2,888, Personality Suite

Perks: Set dinner at Jaan; breakfast for two; access to Club Lounge and accompanying privileges



WHERE EMPERORS FALL IN LOVE

BEIJING IS FULL OF ROMANTIC PLACES
FOR VALENTINE'S DAY

by Steven Schwankert

Beijing may not have the reputation of, say, Paris, for romantic settings. However, if you watch any Chinese TV, you realize that romance has been blooming in Beijing for centuries. After all, this is the capital of the world's most populous nation. Somebody's clearly gettin' some.

Valentine's Day 2015 falls on a Saturday night. Here's the sucky part: Sunday, February 15, is a make-up work day ahead of the Spring Festival holiday later that week. So, to paraphrase Robert Herrick, gather ye rosebuds while ye may, to-morrow will be working. Plan your dining and drinking and wooing earlier in the evening unless you expect to convince your Valentine to make the ultimate romantic move and call in sick and stay for breakfast in bed.

There are a couple of ground rules regarding Valentine's Day in Beijing. First of all, it's cold. That after-dinner, evening stroll, well, it's going to be a little chilly. Gentlemen, play it to your advantage, be prepared to offer warmth and a

strong embrace, but bear in mind that offering your coat will make you look foolish, not gallant, and your efforts will at best extend said walk by 15 minutes, so you might want to move to your next venue fairly quickly.

Also, normal Beijing rules apply. Because Valentine's Day falls on a Saturday this year, expect traffic, lots of it. Just imagine it's going to be the worst traffic night of the year, unless "sitting in a taxi stuck on Gongti Beilu" was on your original list of "things to do on Valentine's Day."

With the parameters set, consider these ideas and venues when making Valentine's plans. Two may take a bit of money, and the others, not so much. One more thing: if you're reading this and haven't made a reservation somewhere by now, you are already late.

Temple Restaurant Beijing *The Beijinger's* readers love TRB. It won Best Restaurant of the Year (Non-Chinese) in 2013 and 2014, and more importantly for this holiday, and Best Restaurant for a Romantic Meal for the same

PHOTOS: TRB TEMPLE RESTAURANT BEIJING; M RESTAURANT GROUP

period. It's easy to see why: superb, contemporary dining in a historic Beijing setting, supported by impeccable service. A stroll around the serene grounds is the perfect nightcap. Want to make this the Valentine's Day to beat all Valentine's Days? Add a night's stay at neighboring Temple Hotel Beijing, unaffiliated with the restaurant but located on the grounds of the same temple. Just remember that transportation in and out of this hutong is difficult without your own vehicle. If you're popping the question on February 14, this better damn well be your venue. *Temple Restaurant Beijing, 23 Songzhusi Temple, Shatan Beijie, Dongcheng District. 8400 2232.*

Capital M The dining room with a view. Held in similar regard to TRB, M Restaurant Group's Beijing unique outlet understands atmosphere, service, and fine food in a setting that is relaxed without being casual. It's hard to believe that a restaurant that overlooks Qianmen, Zhengyangmen, and the southern side of Tiananmen Square could offer more than just a view, but customers shouldn't be surprised if they find themselves lost in conversation rather than in the nearby sights. If there's a Valentine's Day can't-miss, it's M's renowned Pavlova. Share it. Trust us. *Capital M, 3/F, 2 Qianmen Pedestrian Street (southeast of Qianmen), Chongwen District. 6702 2727.*

Daguanyuan Impress your date by taking her or him somewhere she or he has likely never been before. Tucked away in the southwest corner of the Second Ring Road, Daguan Yuan was built in 1984 as a set for a television adaptation of the classic Chinese novel *Dream of the Red Chamber*. Covering 13 hectares, the park is a re-creation of the Jia family mansion, based on the description in the book. Regardless of whether or not you've read *Red Chamber*, wandering through the garden's pavilions and open areas, in a part of Beijing rarely visited, especially by foreigners, makes for a charming and quiet daytime exploration. *Daguanyuan, 12 Nancai Yuan Lu, Xicheng District. 6354 4994. Open 7.30am-5.30pm. RMB 40 admission.*

Beihai Park It was good enough for emperors, so what don't you like about it? It's beautiful to walk in every season, and if it's cold enough, there may even be ice skating on the lake at the center of the park. Beihai has been a place for romance for decades, if not centuries – numerous tales of post-Liberation Beijing recount university students meeting their boyfriends or girlfriends in the park after dark, for a bit of privacy and solitude at a time when both were at a premium. This is love, *lao Beijing* style. *Beihai Park, 1 Wenjin Jie, Xicheng District. 6403 1102. Open 6.30am-8pm. RMB 5 admission.*





IN THE YEAR OF THE SHEEP, DON'T GET RAMMED

USE OUR COMPLETELY UNSCIENTIFIC HOROSCOPES TO NAVIGATE YOUR
WAY THROUGH THE NEW LUNAR YEAR

by Steven Schwankert

Goat, lamb, ram, sheep – whichever moniker you prefer for these occasionally woolly and generally tasty animals, it's a *yang* year. And if you were born in 1967, 1979, 1991, or 2003, it's your year too. The year is considered to take on the characteristics of the animal that rules it, so let's see what we can expect for the coming period, as the Year of the Sheep only lasts until February 7, 2016.

First, a note on Chinese Zodiac years: if you were born a sheep, or *shu yang* in local parlance, then this year is your *ben ming nian*, sometimes expressed in English as one's "threshold year." There's no direct translation, but people in China are apprehensive about their own animal year, as it is believed the year will bring greater hardship and general resistance from the universe.

The antidote? Wear red. Lots of red. Especially red

underwear. Like some strain of Chinese Mormonism, wearing red, especially as undergarments, is believed to counteract some of the effects of the *ben ming nian*. Men will sometimes wear bracelets with charms on them, also to ward off the *ben ming nian* curse, and some women will wear red-threaded charms around their waists for the same purpose.

However, caution is advised: wearing red when it isn't your *ben ming nian* is ill-advised unless prescribed by your *feng shui* practitioner. Although over-the-counter red clothing, nail polish, and lipstick are available, red is a very strong and powerful color, and misusing it can lead to unexpected pain, a run of bad luck, and other things that we expect are probably made up. Try to limit your non-*ben ming nian* wearing of red to Valentine's Day, holiday-related Santa Claus appearances, and the

PHOTOS: WIKIMEDIA

occasional Boston Red Sox game.

This isn't just the Year of the Sheep; it's a wood sheep. The Chinese zodiac is based on a 12-year cycle, but there are five separate cycles, each denoted by one of the elements: wood, earth, water, fire, and metal. The elements help to explain variations in personality among people born of the same animal sign from cycle to cycle.

Although animals represent certain years, what are seen as typical characteristics of those creatures are not necessarily ascribed to people born during those years. For example, being born a snake is not nearly as auspicious as the previous Chinese Zodiac sign, that of the dragon, they are not viewed as being slippery in life and business.

Sheep, unfortunately, are viewed through the lens of their animal. They are seen as meek people who will grow up as followers, not leaders. Although sheep are usually seen as passive and wanting to stay with the herd, this is not the case for people born under that sign. There is also some superstition that they will be unlucky in various areas of their lives, including in their personal relationships and in business.

Because of this, beginning in spring 2014, parents rushed to conceive, in order for their children to be born prior to the Year of the Sheep. Some already pregnant parents have taken the unusual step of scheduling early caesarean sections to avoid the stigma of the sheep.

While this may seem like a silly superstition, in a coun-

try as large as China, it can have serious implications. A large number of parents choosing to avoid having a child creates a baby bust, just as the rush to have babies during the Year of the Dragon, considered the luckiest of birth signs, causes problems for children enrolling in schools and later in life, trying to find employment and make use of public medical services.

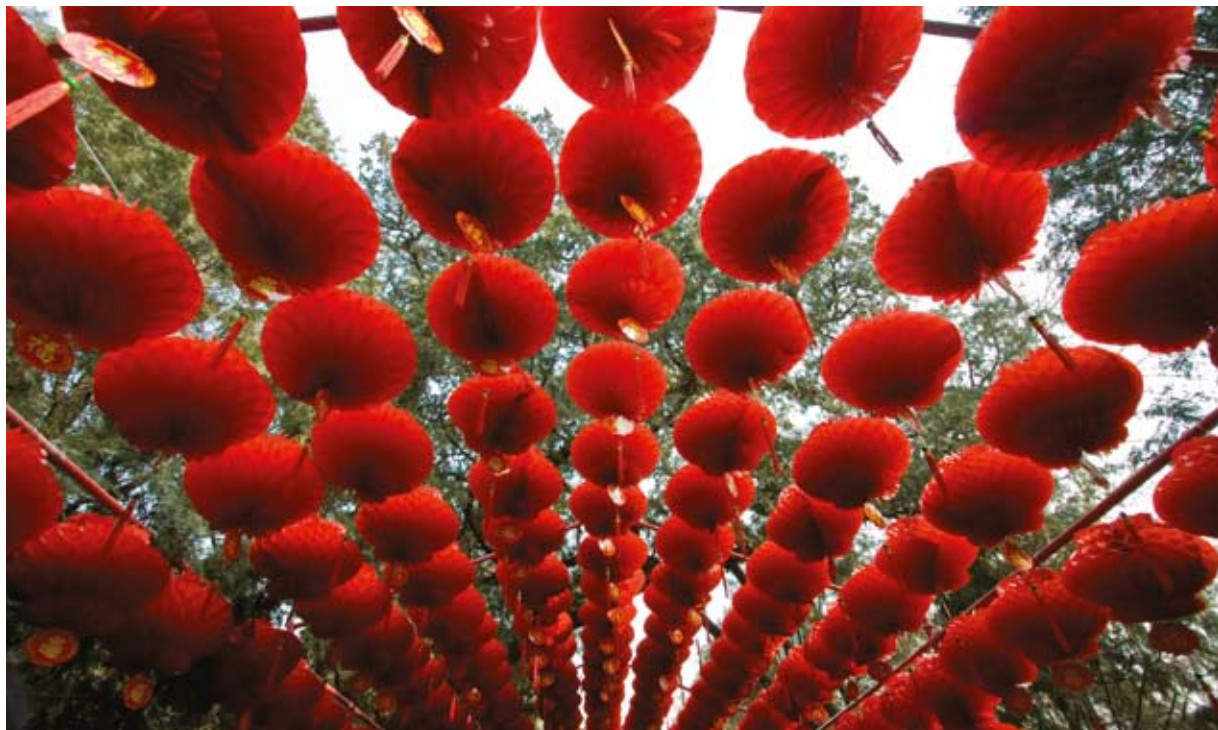
Sheep find their best mates in those born under the signs of pig, rabbit, and snake. These relationships work together not only for romance, but also for business, and vary as to whether the man is a sheep and the woman is one of the other signs, and vice-versa.

But for all their seeming celestial faults, those born under the sign of the sheep are seen as kind, generous, and artistic, and they are seen as good, albeit passive, caretakers with family and friends. And if we mix Chinese numerology together with the Chinese Zodiac, we see that the sheep is the eighth animal of the 12, and of course, there is no number luckier than eight.

The Year of the Sheep is generally a calm one, and should be approached as a time to maintain the current path, be generous, and try not to rock the boat. It's not a good time to be a black sheep.

Best wishes for the Year of the Sheep. Just remember that every time you have *yangrou chuan'r* this year, you're tempting fate.





SPRING FORWARD

MAKING THE MOST OUT OF CHINESE NEW YEAR

By Steven Schwankert

We're not fans of the phrase "Chinese New Year." I mean, we're in China, after all. If people call it Spring Festival and wish each other Happy New Year, then there's no need to qualify it.

It never feels like spring during Spring Festival, but it may be the beginning of the march out of winter, and it's the most traditional of holidays. One could fake it through 36 hours of Christmas, but Spring Festival is a week – two weeks, actually.

However, unlike the olden days, when the sun set on Beijing on Chu Xi (the night that is the eve of the new year) and restaurants and shops remained closed for as long as two weeks, now the time when the unattached Beijing resident is left to his or her own devices is only one or two days in most cases.

Beijing is also at its most quiet during Spring Festival – fireworks excepted, of course. One really gets a sense of how many true Beijingers there are, as most people from out of town head home to be with their families. The result is minimal traffic and a big city that feels like it's scaled down to a somewhat large town. Go out and enjoy the city you live in before it swells back to its normal size.

So before you take out your calendar and write "*Game of Thrones* Marathon" or "Drink" on it for February 18-24, have a look at our suggestions below for making the most of your holiday. Moving temporarily to one of our staycation suggested locations (pg. 12) might also help to make it even more festive.

Temple Fairs Like circuses, carnivals, and state fairs, these annual celebrations rotate from temple to temple throughout the holiday week, although some temples now stage multi-day events. Think of it this way: imagine if a number of hawkers and performers popped up outside your local church on Christmas or Easter. When the fairs first started centuries ago, they were ersatz celebrations, catching people who came to give offerings for the new year at temples, and maybe bought a seasonal treat or handed out a few coins for alms on their way in or out. Admission is usually free. Check theBeijinger.com for a listing of temple fair dates and times.

Jiaozi In the north, Spring Festival revolves around a single food, the making, boiling, and eating of which is as



BAOYUAN'S COLORFUL DUMPLING WRAPPERS

much a part of the holiday and its tradition as preparing a Christmas goose or turkey is elsewhere. Except for Hui and other Muslim minority families, who will use lamb, pork is the main meat for *jiaozi*, or dumplings. Someone in the family may receive a coin in one of them, considered lucky, as long as that person doesn't break a tooth in the process. Usually they are boiled on *Chu Xi*, then can be steamed or fried if there are any left over the next day.

Try Beijing's best *jiaozi* during the days off. Baoyuan Jiaozi Wu is a foreigner favorite, as much for the colorful (although non-traditional) wrappers they use as for the tasty, slightly crunchy filling they use. Beijingers don't heart this place because it's basically a Sichuan restaurant. So if authenticity drives you, head over to Xian Lao Man (the name translates very roughly as "always full of filling"). An English menu is available, but even then the sheer number

of filling combinations is almost incomprehensible. Order a whole bunch and find a new favorite. *Baoyuan Jiaozi Wu*, 6 Maizidian Jie, Chaoyang District. 6586 4967. *Xian Lao Man*, 5 Anhu Beili Yayuan, Gulou, Chaoyang District. 6404 6904. Call to confirm holiday operating hours at both restaurants.

Fireworks While the enthusiasm for fireworks has dipped somewhat since 2008 celebrations that were almost nuclear, Beijingers remember clearly what it was not to have them: like some gunpowder prohibition, fireworks were not permitted inside the Fifth Ring Road from 1994 until 2006. Although there has been some talk that Beijing doesn't need the spike in air pollution the temporary conflagration brings, the integral nature of fireworks with the Spring Festival tradition – the noise and flashes are thought to scare away the *nian*, a mythical monster that descends as the new year arrives – make that unlikely and unpopular.

Fireworks will go on sale in early February at specially-licensed kiosks around Beijing. They range in complexity and price from firecrackers to mortar-like boxes that launch rockets 20 stories in the air, along with some shapes, sound, and even a bit of choreography. Their use is permitted from 7am to midnight throughout the holiday, ending on Lantern Festival, March 1. Please use caution: hundreds of people are still maimed or otherwise injured by fireworks each year, and please keep them away from children.



FIRE YOUR OWN FIREWORKS FROM FEB 18-MAR 1

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

FOOD & DRINK

COUNTRY COOKIN' // BEST BRUNCHES // DUMPLINGS // DRINKING GAMES



Express your love at Waldorf Astoria Beijing this Valentine's Day with special heart-shaped cakes and desserts, including their appropriately-hued signature Red Velvet Cake.

PHOTO COURTESY OF WALDORF ASTORIA BEIJING

NIBBLES AND SIPS

Openings & Closings

The alleyway across from Taikoo Li South that houses Jazz-Ya and Alameda has picked up a new Mediterranean venue in the form of **Bottega**. The modern Italian restaurant serves traditional Neapolitan-style pizzas – think big, punchy crusts with high-quality, pared-down toppings.

Popular Xingfucun Shaanxi noodle spot **Ling Er Jiu Noodles** (which we wrote about in our January issue) has opened a new branch in Lido, in the same block that houses Melo Lounge and Tube Station.

Patois, the pan-American restaurant on Xingfucun Zhonglu next to Hercules that never quite managed to catch on, has finally been shuttered, to make way for Zui The Yakitori Bar. That Xingfucun spot can be lucrative if the concept is right, so we're looking forward to seeing what they come up with.

Happenings

Chaoyang Park stalwart **Chef Too** has come up with some intriguing east-west hot pot combinations for the Winter season that fuse classic hot pot techniques with western culinary methods. Highlights include claypot “mac and yak cheese,” lobster and seafood in bouillabaisse and wild pork bone soup.

Palms L.A. Kitchen and Bar is back with its ever-popular happy hour to help you through the remainder of the darker months. All cocktails, wines, beers and spirits are buy-one-get-one-free from Tuesday to Thursday, noon-8.30pm.

The Kempinski Hotel's **Kranzler's Restaurant** has revamped its Sunday brunch, adding a free-flow Champagne option (RMB 498), which also includes free-flow Paulaner beer. The brunch spread is dazzling, with everything from seafood to *jianbing*, and (as you would expect from a German hotel) some outstanding German dishes.

If you'd rather pair your Champagne with dim sum, then you can indulge at the Ritz-Carlton's Cantonese restaurant, **Yu**. Their seafood and dim sum brunch costs RMB 488, including unlimited red, white and sparkling wine, as well as beer. At the moment they have a promotion allowing four people to dine for the price of three.



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JOY CITY CHAOYANG STORE
(opening soon....)
50/5F JOY CITY chaoyang Mall,
101 Chaoyang north road, Chaoyang District
朝阳北路101号朝阳大悦城购物中心5楼50号



10 CORSO COMO CAFÉ

ITALIAN STALLION

WHAT'S NEW RESTAURANTS

Daily 10am-10pm. 4/F, Shin Kong Place, Jianguo Lu, Chaoyang District (6348 8772)

朝阳区建国路新光天地4层

🚶 200m northeast of Dawanglu (Line 1)

What began in 1990 as a bookshop and gallery on Milan's 10 Corso Como has grown into an all-round dining, drinking, dressing, and design destination in not only Milan, but also Seoul, Shanghai, and now Beijing. Suitably located in the look-at-me chic Shin Kong Place, its shelves exhibit the wares of names such as Alexander McQueen, Tom Dixon, and the venue's designer, Kris Ruhs. Looking at the price tags is just as entertaining as looking at the merchandise. But, beware, if you look at them for too long, your perspective may become distorted and the prices in the restaurant, by comparison, may suddenly seem surprisingly cheap.

The restaurant itself is tucked away at the back of the store, and visually it's a little intense, with circles large and small in every direction. Overall, however, it's very comfortable, with lighting and music noticeably well arranged. The service is refrained but attentive, with generally high levels of English.

Staying true to the history of the venue, the menu is classic Italian. We chose the homemade potato gnocchi (RMB 108) with a San Marzano tomato-based sauce, buffalo mozzarella and a sprinkling of finely chopped olives to give it a salty finish. The flavors were pleasant but lacked punch, and for us the gnocchi was a little too soft and lifeless. The tagliolini with Wagyu Bolognese sauce (RMB 128), however, was delicious, the pasta bitey and the sauce rich and moreish, although it fell short in size and didn't stand well as a main. *Shannon Aitken*





COUNTRY KITCHEN

HOMESTYLE NEVER TASTED SO GOOD

Daily 11.30am-2.30pm, 5.30-10.30pm. 3/F, Rosewood Beijing, Jingguang Centre, Hujialou, Chaoyang District (6597 8888)

乡味小厨：朝阳区呼家楼京广中心北京瑰丽酒店3层

🚶 200m south of Hujialou (Line 6, Line 10)

With its cold-fighting stodge and preponderance of wheat, the food of northern China is not often mentioned in the same breath as the word “refined,” so it may seem like an odd choice for a flagship Chinese restaurant in a high-end hotel. Yet the Rosewood Beijing has managed to take this rugged cuisine and elevate it to greater heights, by virtue of rustic-casual restaurant Country Kitchen. No fancy water glasses here. Instead the tables are set with burnished copper mugs and hand-crafted earthenware dishes, giving the restaurant the feel of an upscale canteen.

Country Kitchen’s short but sweet menu focuses on the staples of northern cuisine – dumplings, noodles, roasted meats – with hints of the cuisines of more southern climes thrown in here and there. For example, the kitchen shows

its southern chops with a soup of organic black chicken (sourced locally in Shunyi) and yam. Some may love the dumplings, others may prefer their local hole-in-the-wall (and surprisingly the pricing is not that far apart), but that’s up to you. The absolute standout dish however is the whole roast organic Mongolian lamb leg (RMB 190), enough to feed a rampaging hoard of barbarians (or alternatively, six hungry diners).

Don’t leave without trying one of the short selection of desserts, which combine traditional Beijing flavors and dishes with modern Western plating. The crispy peanut pancake (RMB 50), served with banana ice cream, ends on slightly savory note from the peanut, the perfect antidote to a meal of fatty lamb and hearty dumplings.

Robynne Tindall

WHAT'S NEW RESTAURANTS

A. WANG NOODLE BAR

SLURP IT UP

Daily 10am-10pm. B01, Great Food Town, Parkview Green, 9 Dongdaqiao Lu, Chaoyang District (182 1110 0368)
阿旺面吧：朝阳区东大桥路9号芳草地好食成B01柜位

 200m south of Dongdaqiao (Line 6)

I'm not a noodle enthusiast, but on the rare occasions that I find myself craving a serving of those wiggling strings, skipping to Parkview Green's roomy food court is now my plan of action.

Tucked away in the corner you first hear A. Wang Noodle Bar by means of their gigantic sizzling hotplates. As you're placing your own order peek over and watch the quick-handed cooks toss and chop eggs, vegetables, and aromatically marinated meats along with noodles of varying southeast Asian origin. Dispersed across the menu your fried foods are sorted with deep-fry and stir-fry options galore, in addition to some more health-conscious soups and phos for those who want to indulge a lesser guilty pleasure.

Compared with versions that I've enjoyed in Thailand, my Thai Pad Thai with Lemongrass Beef (RMB 38), while over-saturated in lime, didn't completely lose the very necessary tamarind flavor. For sneaky side dishes we ordered deep fried squid and lobster balls (RMB 10). The lobster broke apart while the squid ball gave my jaw muscles the workout of their life. Seriously, if you ever need to shut someone up, feed him or her a plate of these. Allow A. Wang room for a few more flavor tweaks, and they're sure to gain oodles of noodle loving fans in no time. *Erin Strong*



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No.1 LB01, Liangmaqiao Diplomatic Compound No.19 East Dongfang Rd, Chaoyang Tel: +86-10-85321878

CHINA WORLD STORE

2nd Units 01-03, China World Office Tower 2
Tel: +86-10-8505 8422

GEMDALE PLAZA STORE

B105A Basement 1, Tower C
Gemdale Plaza, No.91 Jianguo Rd, Chaoyang Tel: +86-10-85712797

SALT SPRING

9-3 Jiang Tai Xi Lu, west of Rose Garden Hotel, Lido Area, Chaoyang T: 010 6437 8457

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服务(监督)电话: 400-010-1717
www.huajiaiyiyuan.com

COOK. EAT. LOVE.

COOK UP A STORM FOR THAT SPECIAL SOMEONE THIS VALENTINE'S DAY

By Robynne Tindall

Nothing says true love like a home cooked meal. But in a city like Beijing with so many culinary options available, how do you choose what to cook? With this in mind, we called upon an expert to design the perfect Valentine's Day menu: Chef Li Dong of Jing Yaa Tang in The Opposite House.

Chef Li says that although these recipes look complicated on the surface, it's all in the presentation; in fact, they can be whipped up easily by any home cook with a wok and a cleaver. The ingredients can be sourced from most supermarkets around town, but we suggest calling by Sanyuanli to get the best quality.

Stir-fried mushrooms with pumpkin cream

奶油金汁南瓜盅

Mushrooms are all round health superstars, and you want your beloved to stay healthy don't you? Take the healthy edge off with a touch of cream in the sauce.

1 small pumpkin 小南瓜

300g mixed mushrooms (Chef Li suggests a mix including oyster, shiitake, tea tree and button mushrooms) 蘑菇 (平菇、香菇、茶树菇、白口菇)

Maggi seasoning 美极

Black pepper 黑胡椒

Scallions, green part only, finely chopped 小葱, 打成碎

50ml light cream 淡奶油

Sugar, salt 糖、盐

1. Cut the top off of the pumpkin and scoop out the seeds. Steam or bake until the flesh is tender when pierced with a knife (30 minutes to one hour, depending on the size of the pumpkin). Remove some of the flesh and set aside, leaving a small layer still inside the pumpkin.

2. Cut the mushrooms into equal-sized pieces. Heat a little oil in a wok over a medium heat and stir fry the mushrooms until golden brown and any liquid has disappeared. Season with the Maggi and black pepper to taste. Place inside the pumpkin and garnish with the scallions.

3. Mash the reserved pumpkin until smooth then add the cream, and sugar and salt to taste. If the mixture isn't smooth enough, blend it with a hand blender, adding a touch more cream if necessary.

4. To serve, spread the pumpkin cream on the base of a serving dish and place the pumpkin on top.

Plum-infused chilled tomatoes 话梅小番茄

Dried plums are renowned in Asia for their health benefits, which include cooling and invigorating qualities, but we were most entranced by the very Valentine's hue of this dish.

Cherry tomatoes 小番茄

Water 水

White vinegar 白醋

Sugar 白砂糖

Dried plums 九制话梅

1. Make small cuts in the top of each tomato and cover them with boiling water. Drain, and remove the skins (optional).

2. Combine water, sugar, white vinegar and a couple of dried plums. Adjust seasoning to taste – the marinade should be balanced between sweet and sour.

3. Bring the mixture to the boil then remove from the

heat and cool.

4. Once cool add the tomatoes and place in the fridge to marinate for no longer than eight hours.

5. Remove the tomatoes from the mixture and serve.

Pan-fried lamb chops with pepper sauce

蒙古酱煎小羊排

Chef Li uses imported lamb, because the chops are cut thicker than Chinese meat. Lamb is thought to have, ahem, "positive" effects for male health, although ladies will enjoy them just as much.

1 carrot 胡萝卜, 一个

2 stalks of celery 西芹, 两根

2 onions 洋葱, 两个

Sugar, salt 糖、盐

2 cloves garlic 大蒜, 两颗

4 lamb chops

Sauce:

Hoisin sauce, to taste 海鲜酱

Light soy sauce, to taste 生抽

Chili sauce, to taste 辣椒酱

Black pepper, to taste 黑胡椒

Sugar, to taste 糖

Dark soy sauce, to taste 老抽

1. Roughly chop the carrot, celery and onion and combine with a teaspoon each of salt and sugar and enough water to combine. Add the lamb chops and leave to marinate for 40 minutes.

2. Meanwhile, to make the sauce, combine all the ingredients in a small pan, bring to a simmer, and cook until fragrant. Set aside.

3. Heat a little vegetable oil in a frying pan or wok and cook the lamb chops for approximately two minutes each side, until half-cooked. Remove from the pan and set aside.

4. Add a little more oil to the pan if necessary and add the onions and garlic and cook over a moderate heat for two minutes. Add 4-5 tbsp of the sauce (you may have some left over) and cook for a few minutes more.

5. Add the lamb chops back into the pan and cook for a few minutes to coat in the sauce.

6. Remove to a plate and serve

NOTE: If you want to make the dish easier, skip the sauce and just season the lamb with soy, a pinch of sugar and plenty of black pepper. However, don't skip the marinade as this makes the lamb extra tender.



HACHER-PSCHORR BRAUHAUS

MUNICH TRADITIONS REVIVED

WHAT'S NEW RESTAURANTS

Daily 11am-midnight. Bldg 3, 12 Xindong Lu,
Chaoyang District (8424 3827)
朝阳区新东路12号院南区3号楼

🚶 1.2km northwest of Tuanjiehu (Line 10)

Just north of Heaven Supermarket a bright, electric blue neon sign flares in sharp gothic script "Hacker-Pschorr Bräuhaus Beijing." Walk inside and you will be greeted by traditional Bavarian clad servers who encourage you to walk around and explore before choosing a table. Make sure to lay a trail of breadcrumbs down as you venture in because this place is big. Hella big. One almighty cavernous floor is furnished with warm wood and gentle lighting bouncing off gargantuan copper brewing containers, a reminder that beer is the way to go here.

With three 4.8-percent leveled house brews to choose from, all available in .3L, .5L, or monstrous 1L glasses (RMB 48/58/108), whetting your tongue is easy. The Hacker-Pschorr Lager went down a lot quicker than intended with its pleasantly gentle fizz dispersing hoppy notes across the taste buds. A complimentary bread basket with generous servings of pâté, butter, and crackling fat started us off, including a perfectly salted pretzel that was a fine match for our beers.

Two upturned liter glasses plonked in the middle then became a precarious platform for the cast iron vessel holding a grilled *hax'n*, *surhax'n*, *schweinebraten*, *leberkäse mit spiegelei*, *dunkelbiersoße*, *sauerkraut* und *semmelknödel* (RMB 188/338). To translate: this was a big bowl of pork knuckle (one boiled and one crispy), dense but slightly off-putting meatloaf, juicy roast pork slices, punchy sauerkraut, crispy fried egg, luscious dark beer sauce, and a token sprinkling of salad garnish. Carving into the platter, the night fell into a daze of pig and beer and more pig and more beer as we filled to the point of bursting. With a menu tailored more for sharing in large groups, come with an army of mouths to take full advantage of their offerings. *Erin Strong*



WHAT'S NEW RESTAURANTS



FIUME AT THE RIVER

Daily noon-2.30pm, 6pm-midnight. 1/F, FX Hotel, 39 Maizidian Xijie (on the side facing the Liangma River), Chaoyang District (138 1060 0189)

朝阳区麦子店西街39号富驿时尚酒店1层

 600m southeast of Liangmaqiao (Line 10)

Does Fiume serve Beijing's best panna cotta? Considering that its main competition comes from its owners' first restaurant, Mercante, then the answer may well be yes.

This alone would be reason enough to visit Fiume, but the restaurant as a whole is very easy to love. Fiume is Italian for "river" and the wall of floor-to-ceiling windows makes a feature out of the Liangma River flowing by outside, letting plenty of natural light pour in as well. The design builds and improves upon the décor at Mercante, stripping away the hutong quirkiness and replacing it with sleek modern aspects like the touches of teal spread throughout the space. With just 30 or so covers, it's set to be an intimate dining experience.

Similarly, the menu retains many of the dishes that established Mercante's popularity, but it was the new dishes that wowed our table. Antipasti in particular have had a bit of a makeover, retaining the beautiful platter

of cold cuts (RMB 138) but introducing an extremely competent pheasant and parma ham pâté (RMB 68). Of the pasta, a plate of triangoli filled with stewed donkey (RMB 98) was worlds away from the meat's usual streetside presentation. We were also happy to see the addition of a gnocchi dish, served with a rich boar and porcini ragu (RMB 88). It must be said that portions are on the small side. If you are going for the full antipasti-primi-secondi experience this won't be a problem, but those looking to pop in for a quick pasta might find themselves leaving a little hungry. However, if small portions leave more room for that panna cotta (RMB 46), then we aren't in any position to complain. *Robynne Tindall*

Note: When we visited, Fiume was still in soft opening, operating with a slightly trimmed down, and frequently changing, menu.

JUICE BY MELISSA

A HELPING HAND TO HEALTH

Mon-Fri 7am-9pm, Sat and Sun 9am-9pm. 101 Dongwai Gongguan, 3 Xinzhong Dongjie, Dongcheng District (130 4112 1556)

东城区新中东街3号东外公馆101室

 1km northeast of Dongsì Shítiao (Line 2)

From the leaden air to the easily accessible bars (not to mention the greasy bar snacks) Beijing is not always the healthiest place to live. Luckily for us, we have companies like Juice by Melissa to help us back on to the straight and narrow. Starting out as a delivery service providing organic, cold-pressed juice cleanses, Juice by Melissa has since grown into one of the best suppliers of juices and nut milks in Beijing, with a menu chock full of delicious yet healthful blends that make the most of hero ingredients like fresh turmeric and raw cacao. Classic cleanses start at RMB 360 per day and they have a range

of packages available to fit all requirements.

However, with the establishment of their first retail store and super food café, it is increasingly apparent that Juice by Melissa is about more than just the juice. Their nut milk coffees and developing menu of “fit foods”, including items such as vegan soups, quinoa bites and chia seed pudding, promote an all-round healthy approach that will appeal to those feeling burdened by the excesses of the Beijing lifestyle. After the opening of organic-conscious restaurant Tribe in the latter half of 2014, we can only hope that the tide of health is rising in Beijing. *Robynne Tindall*





BEIJING'S 10 BEST BRUNCHES

NO NEED TO BE AN EARLY BIRD FOR THESE FINE IN-BETWEEN MEALS

by Robynne Tindall

Brunching seems to be somewhat of a sport in Beijing so we thought we'd make your weekly Sunday morning dilemma that much easier by compiling a list of what are, in our opinion, the top 10 places to go for brunch in Beijing. This should help reduce the painstaking back-and-forth planning once you eventually roll out of bed on any given weekend.

Classy a la carte at Mosto

Mosto's relaxed weekend brunch puts the emphasis on quality rather than quantity. Brunch favorites like smoked salmon eggs Benedict (RMB 68) are well executed, or you can liven things up a bit with dishes like salmon sashimi with ginger-wasabi *ponzu* (RMB 68) or *cazuela* (seafood stew, RMB 128). Add two hours of free-flow red, white and sparkling wines, mimosas and bellinis for just RMB 158.

Agua's Infinity Brunch

Another favorite Nali Patio venue, Agua caused quite a stir last year when they introduced their Infinity Brunch. For RMB 298, you order to your heart's content from a menu of Spanish-inspired, tapas-sized dishes. All the dishes are cooked fresh and brought to your table. The brunch is available Saturdays and Sundays from noon-2.30pm and you can add free-flow cava, wine, Spanish mimosas, Bloody Marys and Sangria for RMB 198.

Value and Refinement at TRB*

Temple Restaurant Beijing's brunch is a great value way to sample the restaurant's fine dining. Whether you choose five courses for RMB 298 or eight courses for RMB 368, you'll be able to try updated takes on dishes like steak tartare and (duck) eggs *en cocotte*. I would highly suggest

shelling out for the accompanying wine pairing (RMB 195 or RMB 295, respectively) – TRB's wine selection is fantastic and they don't skimp on pours. Available on Saturdays and Sundays from 10.30am-3.30pm.

All-You-Can-Eat Dim Sum at Jing Yaa Tang*

Jing Yaa Tang's dim sum must be one of the best deals in town. For just RMB 118 you can order unlimited helpings of 34 classic steamed, baked and fried dim sum dishes, including *cheung fun*, *siu mai*, *hargow*, Portuguese egg tarts and many more. Even better, it is available seven days per week from noon-3pm, so you don't have to limit your indulgence to the weekends.

Brunch with a View at Capital M*

The terrace at Capital M is my personal favorite place to eat in Beijing come the spring. Regardless of the weather though, you can still sample their brunch every Saturday and Sunday (11.30am-3pm). RMB 248 gets you two courses from a selection of appetizers, mains, and desserts, plus a welcome cocktail and limitless tea and coffee. We love M's Big Weekend Fry-Up (steak and bacon!) and the rotating selection of Danish-style smorrebrod.

California Sunshine at Element Fresh

For a place that projects an image of health, the portions at Element Fresh can be gigantic. Although always open for dinner, the Shanghai transplant is in its, er, element during daylight hours – we wish they were open for breakfast every day, not just on weekends. There's the Big American, which is a shocking platter of four eggs, three strips of bacon, two sausage links, two pieces of toast, potatoes, and fresh fruit for RMB 98. At the other end of the breakfast spectrum is the Healthy Start (RMB 68), an egg white omelet with broccoli, tomato, red pepper, and herbs. That comes with a side of yogurt with fresh fruit, toast, and includes a glass of fresh juice. Our favorite is the Elvis Presley (RMB 78): it has peanut butter and banana together. You'll have to try it for the rest. Served weekends and holidays from 8am to 3.30pm.

Semi-Bufferet Brunching at Feast

Feast's brunch really lives up to the restaurant's name. For RMB 238, you get both starters and desserts served buffet style, but don't fill up too quickly – the a la carte main courses are pretty formidable, including not only standard brunch dishes but also true main courses like deep fried crispy chicken, lamb shank and pan-fried sea bass (the latter being a favorite of our table last

time we went). Whatever you do though, don't leave without grabbing a slice of their signature Pavlova. Feast to your heart's content on Saturdays and Sundays from 11.30am to 3pm.

Champagne and Excess at Kranzler's

Brunch reaches its apotheosis at the all-you-can-drink Champagne hotel buffet. Every hotel around town has a Champagne brunch option, but most recently we have been rather taken with Kranzler's in the Kempinski. Their new Champagne package (RMB 498) includes free-flow G.H. Mumm champagne, as well as Paulaner beer and other wines. Hearty German dishes are the highlight food-wise. Available Sundays from 11.30am-3pm.

Brunch Classics and Beer at Great Leap

Great Leap hardly needs much introduction, but their new brunch dishes just might. They've gone for a simple selection of dishes, featuring high quality products like house-made sausage and bacon from Kitchen Collective. The breakfast plate, with two eggs, two sausages, bacon, hash browns and toast, is just RMB 50. If beers aren't your thing, wash it down with coffee from Rickshaw Roasters. Served weekends, 11.30am-4pm.

Spanish Style at Migas

Award-winning Spanish restaurant Migas could have sat back on its laurels and watched the accolades roll in, but instead they are always coming up with fun new ideas. The latest is their Sunday brunch, which launched with aplomb back in December. For just RMB 210 take your fill of a spread of Spanish classics like home-cured charcuterie, paella, warming stews and egg dishes from the Jospier grill. Add two hours of free-flow Cordoniu cava for just RMB 138.

**Restaurants with an asterisk are subject to service charge*



BACK FOR MORE

DOMUS

THE FINEST DINING

Daily lunch noon-2.30pm, tea 3-7pm, dinner 6-9pm. 115 Nanchizi Dajie, Dongcheng District (8511 8015)
东城区南池子大街115号

🚶 250m northeast of Tiananmen Dong (Line 1)

If a restaurant can be judged by the quality of its consommé, Domus surely ranks among the best in Beijing. But then, to borrow a phrase from a Marks & Spencer's advert, this is no ordinary consommé; this is a consommé dressed up in its best fine dining clothes. As the dish is served, each diner is presented with a mysterious chest containing a sycee (a gold or silver ingot used as currency in China before the 20th century) of truffle jelly, which they are invited to place in their bowl before a 24-hour veal consommé is poured over the top, releasing a heady burst of truffle fragrance. Some may scoff at the theatrics, but the flavors are more than up to the task.

This melding of Chinese elements and traditional Western fine dining is present throughout the serene courtyard space. Modern glass chandeliers hang comfortably next to genuine antique Ming lanterns, a

nod to the restaurant's location in close proximity to the Forbidden City. The spacious first floor is lit by the glassed in courtyard, but the basement dining room is an altogether more intimate affair, a hangover from Domus' previous incarnation as a private club. The food, from that outstanding consommé to inventive dishes like herb-marinated salmon served in a cloche filled with rosewood-scented smoke, is a perfect fit for the formal space, coming out of an open kitchen staffed by a young team many of whom were poached from the ruins of Maison Boulud.

After taking a break for Chinese New Year, manager Frankie Zou (formerly of TRB) says they will be making some changes to the restaurant design, for example adding booths downstairs for a cozier feel. With this in mind, I expect we'll be hearing a lot more about Domus in 2015. *Robynne Tindall*



PHOTO: KEN



PAK PAK

TASTY THAI

Daily 10am-10pm. 1/F, Bldg AB, Ocean International, 10 Jintong Xilu, Chaoyang District (opposite the east entrance of The Place) (8590 6956)

朝阳区金桐西路10号远洋国际AB座1层（世贸天阶东门对面）

 1.2km northeast of Yong'anli (Line 1)

I am thankful to live in a Beijing where the days when restaurants could get away with slinging out Chinese-style (or western-style for that matter) versions of the world's great cuisines are far behind us. Places like Pak Pak, which has recently expanded beyond its original Wangjing location with a new branch smack in the middle of the CBD, show that there is no reason to compromise on authentic flavors.

The menu at Pak Pak covers all the Thai classics, with a number of lesser known and regional dishes thrown in for good measure. No Thai meal would be complete with a plate of fiery-hot *som tam thai* (green papaya salad, RMB 38) and the version here does not disappoint, while those looking for something different shouldn't miss the northeastern Thai-style sour sausages (RMB 58), pungent

with chili and the scent of fish sauce. The menu offers plenty of variety for those who prefer their spice subdued too, including the creamy and lightly sweet *kaeng phanaeng neua* (Panang curry with beef brisket, RMB 58), which had us reaching for double helpings of fragrant jasmine rice.

The focal point of the new location is the colored glass-paneled bar that runs the length of the room. Said bar serves up a menu of reasonably priced, southeast Asian-infused cocktails, along with a short wine selection and beers from darling-brewers-of-the-moment 京A. With this, Pak Pak stands to be as much a place for intimate evening tête-à-têtes as it does for invigorating business lunches, and we think downtown Beijing is all the better for it. *Robynne Tindall*

A TALE OF TWO HOTELS

BILLY JIN, AREA DIRECTOR OF SALES AND MARKETING - BEIJING, SWIRE HOTELS

by Robynne Tindall

A Beijinger born and raised, Billy Jin has watched the city flourish in his 15 plus year career in hospitality. Having worked for Shangri-La, Fairmont, and numerous other hotels, he now represents both of Swire's hotels in Beijing: EAST Beijing and The Opposite House.

What challenges have you encountered in managing two different hotels at once?

I need to balance the needs of both hotels and allocate financial resources, people, and time. EAST is located close to 798. The Opposite House is located in the heart of Sanlitun. I attend meetings at both hotels which means I end up spending more time than I would like in traffic, although recently I started using Uber, which has made my life so much easier.

What differentiates EAST and The Opposite House?

Each of Swire's products is unique. The hotels' individuality is reflected in their architecture, dining, and service. EAST is a business hotel with a life. The Opposite House is a small, individual hotel with attention to detail and individualized service. We encourage individuality in both of our teams and that's evident from their attire to the personalized customer service.

How do you view the role of food and beverage outlets in marketing a hotel?

F&B represents the image of the hotel more than any other aspect and drives sales to other outlets including rooms and meeting spaces. At EAST a good example would be XIAN. The bar has really taken off since it opened. We have had guests book meetings at EAST because they originally came to the hotel to party at XIAN and through that discovered the high quality of service we provide there.

What advice would you give to people looking to start a career in sales?

It's a job that's demanding and requires you to have the ability to deal with pressure and frustration. We meet people from every industry, which means we need to be able to proactively deal with all types of

personalities and demands. However, this is a very rewarding learning curve. There's a Chinese idiom, "learn young, learn fair," which tell us that life is a continuous learning journey. I guess the best advice I can give to someone looking to start a career in sales is to always think outside of the box.

Where are some of your favorite places to eat in Beijing? Any hidden gems we should know about?

I like all kinds of restaurants. Sometimes my food cravings take me to small hole-in-the-wall places where waiters shout your orders to the kitchen but the food is always authentic and delicious. Other times I go for something a bit more contemporary. Even before I joined Swire I would go to Jing Yaa Tang for Peking duck. For a more traditionally Beijing flavor I like to go to Xiaodiaolintang. It's not exactly "hidden," but it's definitely a gem. There's always a line out the door and the food is so good that it brings me back to my childhood.



PHOTO COURTESY OF SWIRE HOTELS



F

...fermented bean curd 腐乳

Fermented bean curd is often compared to cheese, not only for its funky flavor, but also for the similar texture, which is caused by the breakdown of proteins during the fermentation process. It is most often eaten as a condiment or used to flavor stir-fried vegetables. Red fermented bean curd (made with red yeast rice) is also used in Cantonese cuisine to marinate and color roasted meats like *char siu* pork.

...fuqi feipian 夫妻肺片

Despite the name – *fuqi feipian* means “husband and wife lung slices” – actual lung rarely features in this dish, which is usually made up of thinly sliced beef, tongue and tripe in a chili-laden sauce. It is named for a husband and wife duo from Chengdu who became famous for the dish in the 1930s. *Fuqi feipian* was one of the many oddly translated dishes that came under fire in the run up to the Beijing Olympics for misrepresenting Chinese cuisine and culture. However, one look at the English menus in most restaurants around town suggests that the campaign wasn't a huge success.

...feet 凤爪 / 猪蹄

What many wouldn't hesitate to throw away, Chinese cuisine often considers a delicacy. So it is with feet, whether that be chicken feet or pig feet (trotters to you and me). Both are prized for the gelatinous texture that comes from their preponderance of skin and tendons. Chicken feet can be found steamed on the menu of dim sum restaurants or as a packaged snack with vinegar and chili, while trotters are most often 'red braised' in a sauce rich in dark soy and sugar.

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TASTE TEST

DUMPLING

WHICH BRANDS COULD FIND THEIR WAY TO YOUR CNY TABLE?

by Kipp Whittaker

We all know the pleasure of biting into a steamy hot dumpling. These pillowy mounds of deliciousness are a go-to food day or night. Chinese New Year is a time when dumplings

are consumed religiously. Because of this, we wanted to put the frozen varieties to the test so that even incompetent foreigners can easily join in the tradition with minimal effort.



**San Quan Pork and Scallions
(RMB 10.5)**

"This is just a boiled sack of spam and grass. A devilish gift to mankind. What kind of sadist would mass-produce such putrid grub?"

"Tastes a little like a monkey prophylactic filled with scallions. Not my first choice."

"These are probably the Chef Boyardee version of traditional dumplings."



**Si Nian Handmade Pork and
Celery (RMB 20.9)**

"These were made by *qipao*-wearing cherubs from a spiritual plane of existence."

"A very well-made frozen dumpling that might just be convincing if you are preparing a meal for foreigners only."

"No way does this compete with what my grandmother can do blindfolded, but a satisfactory last-minute option for a lonely holiday, away from family."



**Si Nian Pork and Celery Soup
Dumplings (RMB 14)**

"I expect any moment for a baby alien to pop out and say 'don't eat me, bro.'"

"Despite being a little squirty, I would eat these in my sweatpants watching the pirated *Hobbit* movie on CNY day."

"Not the best looking of the bunch but they taste great."

DIARIES

VERDICT

While we are not exactly dumpling experts, we and our taste buddies have still shoveled in enough of these little dudes to know what a decent dumpling must accomplish. The one example, that hit all of the critical points for a tasty frozen dumpling, was Si Nian Pork and Celery. These were well packed with enough pork to keep you out of the pigpen if served to your friends or just stuck at home in your sweatpants.



Pulmuone Korean Style Pork Dumplings (RMB 16.8)

"I can't believe these are from a bag. Perfect shape and packed full of the essentials. A great option. But wait, they're Korean!"

"I like how these leave out the greens for the simplicity of carnivorous satisfaction."

"These would probably be great fried *gyoza* style, but probably not appropriate for CNY."



Wanchai Ferry Handmade Pork Mushroom Shrimp Dumplings (RMB 36.70)

"I could buy these sometime, but I'm always wary of frozen shellfish."

"My family would probably cry if they had to eat these during Chinese New Year. Then they would probably cane me for being so lazy."

"I'm now getting a flashback to that horror movie *Dumplings*. I probably shouldn't go into detail."



Shuang Gou Pork & Celery (RMB 20.7)

"Too much celery, so there was this watery crunch similar to eating crickets."

"Satisfying and economical, considering the giant size of the bag, but they still don't compare to what's available streetside."

"These taste like they were produced at a dumpling sweatshop, by former corrupt officials. I taste their sadness in the pork."



SALUD

FRENCH FORMULA
DRINKING

WHAT'S NEW BARS & CLUBS

Daily 6pm-3am. 93 Beiluogu Xiang, Dongcheng District
6455 3920

东城区鼓楼东大街北锣鼓巷93号

 700m northwest of Beixinqiao (Line 5)

The new Salud opened up in December about half a kilometer north and on the same street as their original location. Cheeky move if you ask us. We began fantasizing about another French-flavored bar that blasts out house remixes of Édith Piaf and becomes a hormone fueled meat market at midnight.

Upon arrival, we found a comfortable atmosphere similar to their Nanlougu Xiang location, which many tend to avoid because of the massive crowds and people swerving needed to get there. The new Salud hasn't deviated much from this formula, with the same laid back atmosphere and a decent selection of cocktails, infusions, and beers to keep any palette satisfied. We sampled the apple margarita (RMB 45) and caipirinha (RMB 40), both were tasty, while not being too sweet. The caipirinha was served on shaved ice, beach bar style, which added to our enjoyment.

While this Salud is scaled down and will not be able to house live music like its other location, you will find a comfy two stories of lounge space and weekly DJs laying down fist-pumping appropriate music. It is also likely to become a popular spot for those that enjoy the vibe of the original, but get tired of being asked why you live in China by an annoying backpacker.

We're fairly certain that the Salud brand will be a selling point to many a visitor here. Just don't expect anything but their drink specials and yet-to-be-seen event programming to keep people coming. *Kipp Whittaker*





BADR BENJELLOUN

FOUNDER
CU JU AND CARAVAN BEIJING

Who would you most like to go out drinking with?

If I could get a time machine and go back a few years, I might choose to down a few alongside Ibn Battuta, allegedly the first Moroccan to visit China about 1,000 years ago. He was a Marco Polo-type before it was fashionable. A perspective such as his would make great conversation around a few glasses. Hemingway might be my second choice: We have a common fondness for all things rum.

If you could only imbibe one drink for the rest of your life, what would it be?

Tough call. It might have to be a perfect Mai Tai according to Trader's Vic's original recipe. That drink is divine when it's done right.

Tell us about the last time you were drunk.

It takes a lot to get me to that stage but it can be fast if I ever mix red wine and bubbly. Last time that happened was this summer during the wedding of Tian Qiao (owner of Jianghu). I was flat out at 3pm and woke up past midnight with a headache.

What's the dumbest thing you've done while drunk?

Decide to open a bar or two.

You're hosting a cocktail party. What are you making?

Probably a boozy fruit punch so that people can help themselves, and then a mean espresso martini to keep them awake and partying all night.

What's your golden rule of drinking?

Drinking rum before noon makes you a pirate, not a drunkard.

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

I used to go through phases of about a year with each spirit. Then I entered a rum year around 2007 and never came out of it. Same thing with cocktails: For a while, it was white Russians, then Mai Tais, and finally now stronger classics. One thing that has remained the same is my love for red wine. I probably drink more red wine than anything else at this point.

What are your secret watering holes?

Gui Jie. My favorite drinking is done there, over some good spicy *laziji* and bringing in my own wine for a good time. Same thing for the Traktirr Pushkin: some decent drinking food to soak up the liquor and a low RMB 20 corkage fee.

Check out Badr's new Moroccan restaurant and bar, Caravan Beijing.

OTHER TOP CLUB

HEAVEN, BUT BETTER

Daily 11am-2am. 2/F, Unit 2, 43 Bei Sanlitun Nanlu, Chaoyang District. 6415 0299.

朝阳区北三里屯南43号楼2栋2层202室

 1 km northwest of Tuanjiehu (Line 10)

I always feel a bit naughty when I'm allowed behind a bar's cashier counter to get an up-and-close inspection of the booze on offer, like I've invaded some sacred land where bartenders rule with an iron cocktail shaker and fire off unforgiving shots to thirsty customers. So when a manager says "yeah, sure, jump behind," I'm over there quicker than you can say *ganbei*.

"We're trying to be the new Heaven, but more." That's Heaven Supermarket to which said manager is referring, far from some spiritual paradise. I'm told that is the reason for allowing patrons free rein behind the heavysset lean-to table that divides the drinks from the dance floor. While the variety of beers and spirits is not quite as heavenly as the aforementioned bottle bar, with about half a dozen fridges stocked with a beer heavy focus (most of the standard brands come in at around the RMB 30 mark) and bottles of spirits fetching closer to the RMB 400-500 mark. The "more"

part of the description is certainly apparent in their overhaul of the old White Rabbit space.

Some talented Beijing spray-paint artists have staked their claim to their walls, with an eclectic visual variety of geometric neon shapes on one side, and a cartoonish "Beavis and Butthead"-esque portrait line-up on another. While this may be called the Other Top Club, don't expect them to conform to Top 40 music. A tidy looking DJ booth sits firmly at the back on a wide central platform where the thumping beats of electronic music blasts across the dance floor. Careful where you step though, as the aisle for drinks perusing is dim at best, with a slight slope to it that like a cliff drops down to stairs without warning.

Set in a desert of dirty bar holes selling death by the cupful, this oasis of decent beer and delicious beats is certainly a welcome watering hole to Sanlitun's bar strip. *Erin Strong*



PHOTO: UNI



BS: This one you may know as it's probably the noisiest game of the bunch. All players have a cup with five dice that's shaken and slammed on the table, which only you can see. From here, someone makes the first bid as to how many of a certain number there will be when all hands of dice are combined. For example, if there are two people playing and you've rolled three threes, then you might bid, "four threes" in the hope that your opponent has rolled at least one three. The next person can either call the bluff or raise the bid. The following bid must always be higher in value or quantity than the previous. So, if someone bids "four threes," then the next bid could either be, "five threes" or "four fours," but not "three twos." The bidding continues until a player is ready to call the bluff. When a bluff is called, then all players raise their cups, and the

totals are counted. If the bid was "five threes" and there are at least five threes in the combined hands, then the player who called the bluff must drink. If there aren't, then the player who made the bid has to drink. We guess the most gratifying part of this game is making tons of noise and using a simple chance operation to get totally faced, as shown by the characters Davy Jones and Will Turner play this game about midway through *Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest*.

A Little Bee: This game is the "rock, paper, scissors" of Chinese drinking games with a slight lyrical twist. Two people at a time begin by singing a short verse about bees that goes like this, "*Liangzhi xiao mifeng ya, fei dao huacong zhong ya, fei ya.*" (Two little bees fly to the

PHOTOS: KIPP WHITTAKER

GAMBEI GAMBLE

BREAK THE ICE AT SPRING FESTIVAL DINNER WITH THESE DRINKING GAMES

by Kipp Whittaker



Drinking games have existed in China since the Tang Dynasty (618-907 CE), where they were used to promote diplomacy, test endurance, and even measure mental prowess. This is a far cry from swigging every time Sting yells “Roxanne” or blindly tossing a ping pong ball into some fuzzy, unsanitary corner of a fraternity house. So in an effort to ease the American grip on drinking games, here are some of the more popular games we have spotted around China, perfect for when you get together with friends over Spring Festival.

flowers and fly.) When it’s over, both players throw down rock, paper, or scissors. The winner must “pretend” to slap the other player’s hand while shouting “pya pya” and the loser shrieks “ah ah” in playful pain. If you both show the same sign, then it’s a draw and you “pretend” to kiss (cute!). Each step has to be done as quickly as possible. The first to sing the wrong words or complete the wrong action must drink. Can you believe a drinking game can combine poetry recital, petty assault, and face smooching?

Seven: This is a great game because it’s fast and can be played in big groups. The rule here is to avoid saying the bad luck number seven, and you must skip any number containing seven or one of its multiples. The first player says “one,” the second says “two,” and so on. For example,

the person who is supposed to say “seven” must move directly to “eight,” or if it contains a seven, like 17, 27, or 37, these must also be skipped. Anybody caught blurting out the unlucky number must go bottoms up. Of course, this becomes more difficult the longer you play, and it could also be great practice for counting in Mandarin.

Remember to play these games responsibly. The point is to have fun and fill the air with inebriated laughter, not to black out or lose your cookies, which is easier said than done. Selection of spirit could be crucial — the games will end quite quickly if you choose *baijiu*, beer may be more forgiving. Finally don’t forget your drinking etiquette, or who knows? You could wake up in a bathtub filled with ice and missing a kidney.

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



A Shan
Co-owner, D&M Bar

Vincent Guo, better known as A Shan, has been bartending around China for 12 years, with a half-decade stint in Guangdong and one year in Shanghai. Before A Shan and his partner Jerry opened D&M Bar near Melody Karaoke in Shuangjing in 2012, A Shan built up experience at Apothecary and Ala House.



Steven Lin
Former bar director at Circle Club

Steven Lin has eight years of bartending experience, but seven of them have been at lounges in Taipei. There, one may have found him at Gamers or Uptown Kitchen & Bar. He moved to Beijing to be closer to his family, and praises the capital’s cocktail bars. When he’s not behind the bar, he may be holing up in d lounge, Janes and Hooch, or Mohiki.



Dustin Merrett
F&B Director, Windy City Ballroom

While Dustin is technically not a bartender, his flair for flavor pairing certainly makes it seem that way. Cooking since he was 13 years old in Canada, Dustin experimented with molecular gastronomy at a catering firm. He’s best known around town for his desserts (the Home Plate bread pudding with bourbon sauce is to die for).

THE JUDGE



Michael Li
Mesh, The Opposite House

Michael Li studied hotel management in college before landing a bartending gig at Mesh six years ago. Currently, he runs a Thursday night social that draws an LGBT-friendly crowd, and every Friday. Guests are treated to buy one, get one free champagne, but it’s the signature cocktails that put Mesh on the map.

ROUND 1

A Shan



Caramel syrup, lemon juice, raspberry liqueur, crème de cassis, Havana Club rum, Monin caramel syrup, and mulberries

Steven



Wild elderflower syrup, Chardonnay, Belvedere vodka, mulberries, and soda water

Dustin



Rum, Scotch whiskey, crème de cassis, lemon juice, Dijon mustard, brown sugar, and mulberries, garnished with lemon and mulberry

SECRET INGREDIENT

mulberries



Verdict: Li enjoyed all of the drinks, but it was Steven's that highlighted the fresh mulberry. Raspberry liqueur overpowered A Shan's drink, and mustard took over in Dustin's.

ROUND 2

A Shan



Monin almond syrup, Disaronno liqueur, Laphroaig Scotch whiskey, and almond milk, garnished with a cherry, lemon peel, and mint leaves

Steven



Talisker Scotch whiskey, Bailey's, and almond milk, garnished with olives covered in mayonnaise and pepper

Dustin



Lemon juice, amaro digestive bitters, Patron tequila, mayonnaise, and simple syrup, garnished with pickle and chili and salted rim

SECRET INGREDIENT

mayonnaise and/or almond milk



Verdict: Dustin managed to use mayonnaise to produce a winning, creamy, well balanced beverage. Li gave Steven credit for creating a clever, albeit unusual, garnish.

ROUND 3

A Shan



Vodka, Scotch whiskey, Averna bitters, Worcestershire sauce, Tabasco, Angostura bitters, and cloves

Steven



Maker's Mark bourbon whiskey, port, Galliano, ginger, and pepper, garnished with ginger

Dustin



Vodka, rum, simple syrup, brown sugar, vanilla extract, cinnamon, cloves, and nutmeg

SECRET INGREDIENT

canned pumpkin



Verdict: A Shan and Steven created similar cocktails with spicy notes, and a little salt would have made these pumpkin drinks pop. Dustin won the round with his boozy dessert (heavy on the booze!).

WHAT'S NEW BARS & CLUBS



X 25

BAIJIU COCKTAILS AT THE W HOTEL

Sun-Thu 8pm-2am, Fri-Sat 8pm-3am. No.2 Jianguomennan Dajie, Chaoyang District (6515 8855)

朝阳区建国门南大街2号

 500m south of Jianguomen (Line 1)

Underneath all the shine and sparkle of the W Hotel, the new luxury boutique digs at the southeast corner of Jianguomen, is a single, no-nonsense gin martini. Its two speared, plump olives are the size of cherries, large enough to hold up to a near goblet of Beefeater 24 and vermouth. Drink more than one, and the saxophone player at X 25 may start looking fuzzy. Head bartender Alex Xie's creation may even have what it takes to convert James Bond to gin, but let's not get too far ahead of ourselves.

What is certain at X 25 is that Xie is bent on parading Chinese culture at one of the most anticipated international hotels of the year, and he does it with a spirit that hits hardest: *baijiu*. Xie boldly bends the rules of *erguotou* in his twist on the Piña Colada, amping up the coconut

so that sippers only detect a light bite in a surprisingly smooth drink. Alex has two *baijiu* cocktails on the menu for now, and plans to host events featuring his own *baijiu* infusions.

The prices, even with a 15 percent service charge, hover around RMB 80 for most good-value cocktails, a bargain when considering that X 25 provides guests a spectacular view of the old Beijing city wall and the swarm of headlights creeping down Jianguomen to the city center.

Even with all the twists on tradition, X 25 has managed to break free of the commonplace Sichuan peppercorn and chili peanut bar snack, making a trade for Doritos. We aren't complaining. *Jessica Rapp*

PHOTO: COURTESY OF W HOTEL

P.S. WE ATE YOU

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



homemade pesto, olive, and mozzarella toasted baguette

Salud, RMB 20

If you need to combat a series of the heavily-infused rum shots for which Salud is famous, try one of their new crunchy baguettes filled with a generous swish of homemade pesto, juicy black olive pieces, and melted mozzarella peeking out from the sandwich's loaded interior.

Amy roll

Hatsune, RMB 70

Filled with fresh salmon and topped sparingly with tobiko, avocado, and prawn, the Amy roll strikes a balance between simple sushi and Hatsune's more complex roll options. One for traditionalists looking to break out of the box.

vegetable and fish filet porridge

Huo Ji, RMB 28

Sometimes you need a bowl of rice congee to set you right. Weeks of stiff drinks and hard living can take its toll on your stomach. This warm porridge mixed with cabbage, mushrooms, and fish fillet does the trick of warming you up while re-enforcing your belly before you put it through even more abuse.

fried chicken

Xiao Bing Tang Huoxiao, RMB 10

This little food stall a couple storefronts south of Cafe de la Poste has quite possibly the best Chinese fried chicken we have ever tasted. Like all street food, it's probably made with questionable cooking oil, but for RMB 10 you get four succulent chicken legs powdered with *lajiao*. Serving them up fresh all day, it's very difficult to resist their delicious and crispy appeal.

You House roll

You House, RMB 55

You House sushi's namesake is a delightful crunchy kraken of a roll consisting of fried eel, crab, salmon and other sweet and savory goodies that creates a satisfying combo that's hard to beat. This one is a mouthful and it's understandable why it bears the You House name.

JIAN CLUB
ARES IS COMING

JIAN ARCHERY CLUB

Daily 11am-midnight. B1-308, Sanlitun SOHO, 8 Gongti Beilu, Changyang District (010 5290 2981 & 400 016 9882)
朝阳区工体北路8号 三里屯SOHO商场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.

Flavour 36
Promise 36

One Drink!
Get 1 Piece of Barbecued chicken

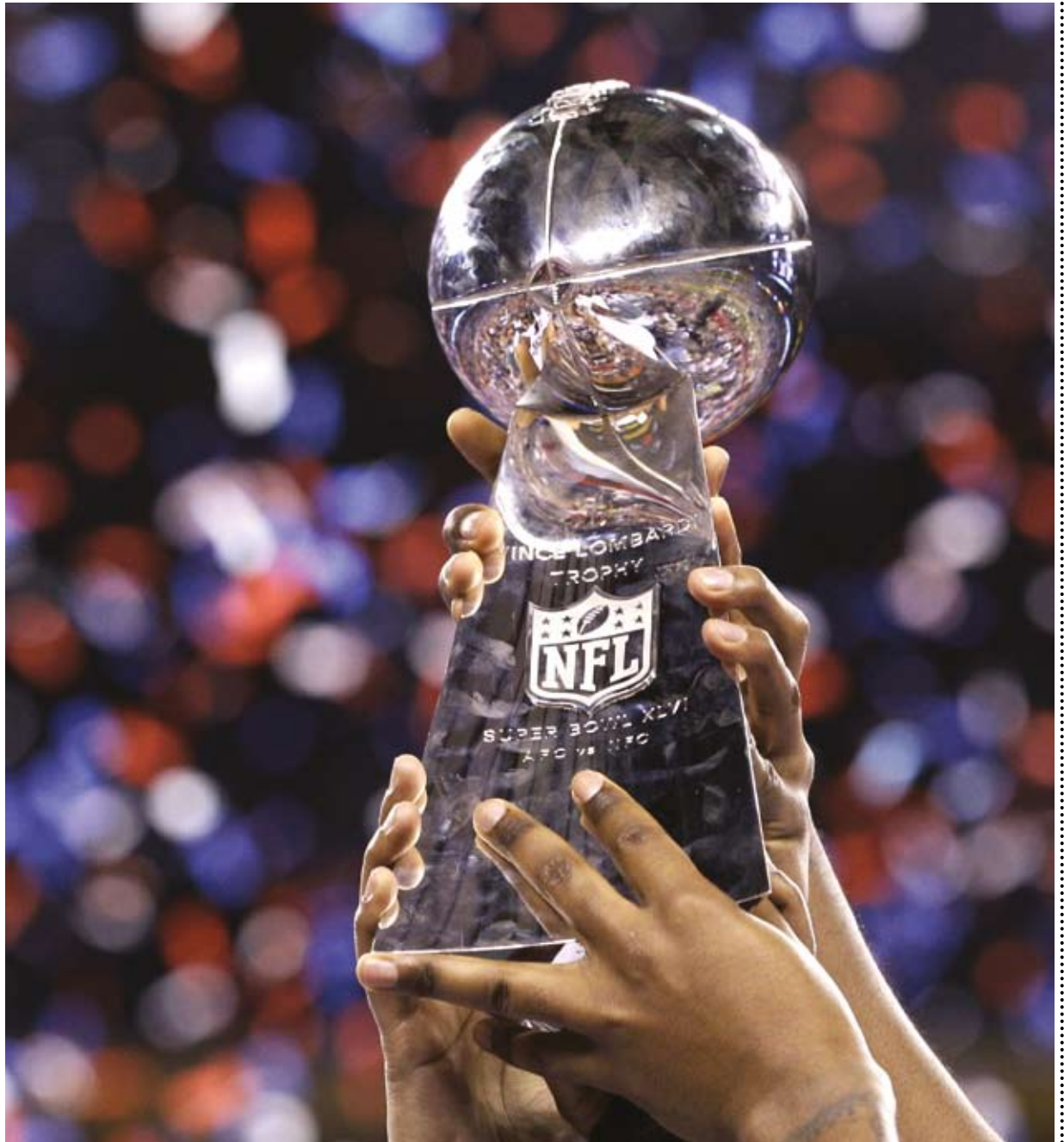
Addr. **chaoyang District maizidian street 36 longbao building**
Tel. **6584-3358**
OpenHour **9:30~23:00**

QR code for Flavour Promise 36 wechat

Things to do, places to be, stuff to try

GO

THE BACKROOM // PATAGONIA // HARROD & JI // FIRST AID



NFL SUPER BOWL PARTY AT KERRY HOTEL BEIJING

FEB 2 -- Join the Beijinger for the official NFL Super Bowl party at Kerry Hotel Beijing. Admission includes the live broadcast, complete with commercials and halftime show featuring Katy Perry, full American buffet and unlimited Budweiser beer. RMB 300 per adult, RMB 180 for children under 12. 8565 2333.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF THE ORGANIZERS



THE BACKROOM

SHANGHAI MULTI-BRAND BOUTIQUE HITS CENTRAL PARK

Daily 11am-8.30pm. 103, Bldg 1, Central Park, 6 Chaowai Dajie, Chaoyang district (6597 0667)

朝外大街6号中央公园1座103

 1km southwest of Jintaixizhao (Line 10)

In part two of former Numero China fashion editor Tang Shuang's display of the finest indie labels of her travels, The Backroom packs a fresh selection of innovative home furnishing design, jewelry, clothes, and accessories.

It's clear Tang spent more time on this spacious shop, moving away from the aesthetics of the white-washed, vintage-focused Shanghai space and embracing color. Royal blue and bubblegum pink take backstage to Tunisian-born industrial designer Tom Dixon's geometric, copper vases, quirky light fixtures, and chic furniture. While his work is no doubt the star of the space, the artfully displayed goods hailing from North America, Europe, and East Asia make up more than 30 labels, some of them

first-timers to China's capital.

Minimalist silicon jugs by Normann Copenhagen are carefully balanced with brass cups and saucers by Futagami. Delicate jewelry by London's Maya Magal is juxtaposed with carbon and brass 3D rings and bangles by Italian brand, Maison 203. Eyewear and handbags straddle a shopper's need for both style and function. In between it all, The Backroom is home to several lines of gorgeous, high end candles, including the "Rolls Royce of candles," Cire Trudon; Maison Balzac's line of soy wax fragrances; natural clove and ginger candles from southern France-based label, Mad et Len; and, of course, Tom Dixon's globally-inspired scents housed in spun-copper vessels from his Eclectic series. *Jessica Rapp*




PATAGONIA

FLEECEING SOHO WITH SOFT THREADS

Daily 9.30am-9.30pm. B1, Bldg 6, Sanlitun Soho, Chaoyang District 8590 0843

朝阳区三里屯Soho 6号楼商场地下一层B1

 500m west of Tuanjiehu (Line 10)

A new flagship Patagonia store has just arrived in Sanlitun Soho. Functional threads fill its bottom-floor, semi-subterranean spot. Clothes not only made for traversing trails leading towards hard to get to peaks or summits, but also for exploring these dirty old streets of Beijing in comfort and style.

There's a reason fleece is pretty much synonymous with the brand Patagonia. This is because they are the brand that popularized the concept, and made it the softest and most cuddly way to stay warm. How many times have you bundled up with a loved one on the couch wearing your fleece? That kind of softness is addictive, almost like your favorite Hall and Oates song.

Inside the shop, you'll find a variety of outdoor wear including jackets, flannel shirts, and hiking gear for children and adults, made specifically for keeping you

warm and dry in wild conditions. Unfortunately, many of the products available here are significantly marked up. Probably because the people who would most likely consider a trek in the woods worthwhile could afford it. We saw one fleece priced at RMB 1,450, with the same one being sold by an American online retailer for substantially less than half the price at RMB 739.

A big thing in deciding whether or not it's worth paying for the original or waiting until a trip abroad where the original price will be lower is how much use you'll be getting out of these quality garments. If you need to hike in the rain on a mountain top, where it reaches frigid temperatures, then this outlet will be convenient. Patagonia is as much a fashion statement or status symbol as it is cold weather protection, and as such, the price may not really matter. *Kipp Whittaker*

HARROD & JI

SERIOUSLY STYLISH SHOES FOR DEEP POCKETS

Mon-Sat 10am-8pm. 1-033, Bldg 5, Shoukai Bojun, 8 Xindong Lu, Chaoyang District, 186 1847 5962
 朝阳区新东路8号首开铂郡8号楼1-033

 800m northwest of Tuanjiehu (line 10)

Recent years have seen a gigantic overflow of high-end fashions from the world's leading designers entering the Beijing market. It's amazing how this increased desire for luxury fashions is changing the landscape of China's capital into a never-ending catwalk of glitterati heels and matching Maseratis.

Harrod & Ji is a perfect example of this elite hunger, featuring a unique selection of women's shoes and bags from coveted brands to shape your life in extravagant fashion.

In their new showroom you'll find the sort of women's shoes and bags that are normally spotted in paparazzi photos behind velvet ropes. Their mission in opening this boutique was to bring select brands to Beijing for the very first time. Brands like Ruthie Davis, Chrissie Morris, and Oscar Tiye (RMB 4,000-12,000) were chosen because these are exclusive designs that sell out abroad very quickly and are coveted by divas and fashion icons alike. These shoes

and accessories found here are handmade by artisans from around the world, using a variety of exotic materials of the best quality. So, at Harrod & Ji don't expect to find an all purpose shoe made for everyday use. This is a fashion over function kind of place.

All of these trending shoes and bags are presented in a comfortable and private venue. The friendly staff are knowledgeable of the inventory and prepared to assist you in finding that perfect handcrafted shoe or bag that fits your shape or personality. If you're paying these prices, you wouldn't expect anything less.

While these types of kicks aren't for everybody, everything is imported, so you won't find another store with such a curated collection. All of the bags and shoes from their healthy inventory are sure to make everyone in the room stop and notice, then immediately bite their lips in envy. *Kipp Whittaker*



PHOTO COURTESY OF HARROD & JI

FIRST AND FOREMOST

CPR AND FIRST AID TRAINING IN THE CAPITAL

by Steven Schwankert

Emergency medical infrastructure has improved markedly in Beijing in recent years. However, as a large city with traffic and transportation problems, reaching or being reached by emergency personnel is not always the best option. Language may also present a barrier to communicating effectively with operators about location and the nature of the problem. Beijingers must therefore be prepared to address emergencies directly, by themselves.

Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and first aid training is important for adults, either on their own or as heads of families. Advanced preparation and contingency planning to address emergencies – be they health-related, natural disasters, or injuries – are the best solutions to crises.

Beijing is subject to a number of natural disasters, including floods – unseasonable rain in July 2012 led to 77 deaths – and earthquakes. Although not as seismically active as nearby Japan or California, residents of Beijing should remember that on July 28, 1976, a 7.8 earthquake

flattened the city of Tangshan – fewer than 150 kilometers from Beijing – and killed 250,000 people. Earthquake supplies and planning should be part of any emergency preparations for Beijing residents. The Los Angeles County Fire Department has a useful checklist and instructions for planning for fire, earthquakes, and other emergencies that can be found at <http://fire.lacounty.gov>.

When responding to situations not involving one's own family, remember that China does not have a Good Samaritan law, which would protect common citizens who attempt to provide assistance in emergencies from legal liability, regardless of outcome. It is for this reason that many Chinese citizens avoid providing assistance at the scenes of accidents, passing by without rendering aid. For example, performing CPR on a victim is likely to cause some chest soreness or related minor injuries, for which the rescuer could be sued, even if the victim is revived successfully. As such, although the urge to render assistance to strangers may be strong, the best course of action may be to notify rescue personnel and let them handle it.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF EMERGENCY FIRST RESPONSE

What goes into a first aid kit?

One easy step towards preparing for an emergency is to assemble a first aid kit, or preferably, a few of them for placement in strategic locations, including home, office, and vehicles. First aid kits and what goes in them should meet two important criteria: portability and practicality. The best first aid kit is the one that you can carry with you all the time. That means when assembling one, focus on the basics: a few pairs of surgical gloves, if possible made of vinyl or a non-latex material (many people are allergic to latex); at least 10 adhesive strips/plasters, also non-latex; at least two sterile gauze pads each in two-inch, three-inch, and four-inch sizes; at least two rolls of gauze wrap (not elastic wrap/Ace bandage, which can easily be pulled too tight and restrict blood flow); and a barrier for giving rescue breaths, either a pocket mask or a one-time use face shield. All of this can be kept in a large zipper storage bag, which allows the bag and its contents to be packed in any reasonably-sized handbag or backpack. Large, heavy first aid kits may be comprehensive, but often contain items like pharmaceuticals that the layperson is not authorized to dispense, and materials such as syringes that untrained people should not use. Keep it simple, and remember to keep it stocked. Supplies should be checked every three months, as some items will expire or dry out and should be replaced.

Other supplies good to have at hand in the house in case of emergency include additional water supplies; fire extinguishers for each floor of your home; rope ladders and smoke hoods to be used in case of fire on higher floors. Of equal or greater importance, having a plan for earthquake or fire will save time and potentially life. Where will your assembly point be? What will the route out of the house or office be, and what is the alternate plan if that is blocked or unavailable for some reason?

Working family members and students should also take the time to look at the emergency preparation of their office or school. Where are the emergency exits, and is there an alternate? Where is the office first aid kit, who is in charge of it, is it well-maintained? Who in the office is trained in CPR and first aid, if anyone? In the event of emergency, is there a chain of command? Asking these questions may make a company or school realize that there is little or no planning for emergencies, and lead to better preparation for such scenarios.

Training

While many foreign residents of Beijing send their caregivers and drivers for training, it's worth pondering



– is your *ayi* or driver with you throughout the night, on weekends, on holidays and weekends, even outside of China? Also, in a crisis will your *ayi* or driver have the presence of mind to take the right action, rather than panic, even if they are trained? The key to any such situation is building a bridge between an incident happening and the arrival of trained medical person or at a qualified medical facility. If more people in a household are trained for emergencies, then more will be ready to handle it when the worst happens.

Courses

Beijing United Family Hospital

Beijing United Family Hospital offers a basic, four-hour introduction to CPR and first aid, available in both English and Chinese. The course covers emergency numbers, common medical emergencies, common injuries, cold and heat-related emergencies, and safety tips to prevent injury. Participants who successfully complete the course received a United Family Training Certificate.

International SOS

International SOS offers occasional all-day training in First Aid and CPR, including the use of an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) in the event of a cardiac emergency. Upon completion of the course, participants receive both an International SOS and an American Heart Association certification, both valid for two years. The cost is RMB 750 per person, payable before training.

Steven Schwankert is an Emergency First Response Instructor Trainer and Executive Editor of True Run Media, parent company of the Beijinger.

Cici Feng Johnston
Co-owner of Trouble Bar

Her style: It's all about comfort.

"Because most of my days involve physical movement working the bar and managing the import inventory, I try my best to dress professionally with a bit of traditional Chinese flare of bold color, design, and patterns. Showing off my long, straight black hair is also very important to me. It may not be the "F&B style," but it's my style."

Favorite place to shop in Beijing: "I enjoy shopping at Moonstop, located at 388 Caochangdi Art District, in support of my many fashion designer friends."

Guilty pleasure garment: "This is my husband Brick's favorite question. He'll tell you I have many, many guilty pleasure garments, ranging from Nepalese shawls, to custom-made leather handbags to simple hats from street vendors. A lady has to stay on her toes if she is to create her own style outside of the trend."

Another tattoo: "My personal artist is working on a design for my back. It's still in the process of being designed, so I can't really say what it is except that it's a bit of Chinese tradition with a twist. After my back is finished, then I believe I'm finished. No more tattoos."

What she's wearing: leather vest, wide-leg wool pants, silk blouse, and silk skirt by Moonstop Work Studios

Cici and her husband Brick host tattoo and cycling events and serve up bottled craft beer every day from 5pm at Trouble Bar.

WORN AND RELAXED

TWO OF BEIJING'S STYLISH SHARE THEIR SECRETS.

by Jessica Rapp

Yi Zhou
Founder of Body Memory

Her style: "Beijing granny, but international."

Favorite jewelry designer: Karen Mabon from London. "Her works are playful and tell a story."

How her job has affected her style: She says her products reflect her personality, and she only changes her style for her Body Memory Clinic, when she dresses up like a doctor.

Favorite place to shop in Beijing:

The open-air market near Dongzhimen MOMA. "Residents who live around the area bring their unwanted items there and prices are incredibly cheap. I feel like everything there is real compared with what's offered in stores on the main street."

What inspires her about Beijing's style scene: "I am always fascinated with what Beijing's aunts and grannies are wearing. Sometimes, I will go to a morning market near my house with my mom to observe and do research."

What she's wearing: handmade mian ao (棉袄) passed down from grandma, shirt and cardigan from Uniqlo, pants by uare (有耳), shoes by New Balance, brooch by Body Memory, eyeglasses chain by Migoo, ring by Yvmin (尤目), hat is a handmade gift

Find out more about Yi Zhou's other works or buy from her Body Memory collection at yizhouedesign.com.





BACK TO BANGKOK

WHETHER FOR TRANSIT OR AS A FINAL DESTINATION, THE THAI CAPITAL OFFERS PLENTY TO EXPLORE

by Steven Schwankert

The world's second-most visited city often gets a bad rap as a destination. Travelers are either transiting through one of its two major airports on their way to beaches or mountains, or people are put off by Bangkok's raunchy reputation for nightlife. Add to that recent political instability, and many decide to give it a miss rather than include it in their travel plans.

But the Thai capital offers much more than meets the eye. The *Lonely Planet* zombie path is well-worn, and not far from the Muesli Road is a city that most visitors never bother to see. There are places like a Chinese-style courtyard home with a scuba diving pool in the middle; there's a night-time side to the city away from the neon that is spectacular; and Bangkok's kilometers of canals (*klongs* in local parlance) may not always be clean, but many offer pleasant walking opportunities.

Here are some places you've likely never seen in Bangkok but are worth a visit, especially if it isn't your first time:

Jim Thompson House: Every expatriate, no matter from where, should visit this place. Thompson was an American who first came to Southeast Asia during World War II as a member of the Office of Special Services (or OSS, a forerunner to the Central Intelligence Agency), and is credited with restarting the Thai silk industry. He "built" the house – more connected existing houses on the property – in 1958-59, and lived there for about a decade, before he vanished without a trace in Malaysia's Cameron Highlands during a walk in 1968.

The reason every expat should visit is because we should all aspire to live this way: in a grand home built in the classic style of our adopted country. Jim knew how to live and his parties at the house were legendary. After his disappearance, his household staff continued to prepare dinner for him each night, hoping that he would suddenly reappear, hungry but happy to be home. Sadly, that never happened, and the house is in the care of one of Thailand's princesses. It's free to visit but travelers must

join an organized tour.

Jim Thompson House and Museum, 6 Soi Kasemsan 2, Rama 1 Road, Bangkok. +66 2612 3601. Open daily 10am to 5pm.

Wat Prayun Wongsawat: “Wat” simply means “temple,” but no one would say Cambodia’s Angkor Wat is just a temple, and neither would that be said about Wat Prayun Wongsawat, on the western side of the Chao Phya River, which bisects Bangkok, and makes a spectacular backdrop for photography, both day and night.

The towering Wat Prayun Wongsawat was built by King Rama III, who held the throne 1824-51, but remains an active temple today. Various ceremonies can be seen by visitors, especially on Thai and Buddhist holidays. Although there are other wats that are more famous and of greater significance, Wat Prayun Wongsawat’s *chedi* (the tall spire) is a World Heritage site. Those other sites, including Wat Po, hailed as the place where traditional Thai massage was first practiced, see far more visitor traffic, and as such, Wat Prayun Wongsawat makes for a quieter, less crowded visit. It can also be accessed by walking across the Memorial Bridge on the river’s east side. As an active religious site, adhering to etiquette is important: appropriate dress should be worn, with no short shorts or halter tops; taking photos of monks or images of the Buddha without permission is prohibited; shoes should be removed when entering indoor sanctuaries.

Wat Prayun Wongsawat, near Thedsaban Sai 1 Road, Bangkok. Open daily 9am to 5pm.

Chinatown: Before you say, “I live in China, why would I want to visit Chinatown while on holiday in Bangkok,” think of it this way: Bangkok’s Chinatown is nothing like Beijing. Settled in the 19th century by immigrants from southern China, especially from Guangdong province, Thailand’s overseas Chinese community has grown into one of the wealthiest of Southeast Asia.

Bangkok’s Chinatown is centered around Charoenkrung Road, along a kilometer of closely packed stores, shops, restaurants, and other businesses. Chinese characters will indicate that you’re in the right place. Visitors arriving around Chinese New Year will see different variations in both the traditions and the decorations both for sale and on display.

There are also some good eats to be had, Chinese variations on Thai dishes and vice-versa, and not just the Chinese food cooked in coconut milk so common at “Thai” restaurants in Beijing. Have something like *kanom sai sai* (steamed coconut milk, wrapped in banana leaves), and you’ll leave happy no matter what time of the year you visit.

Chinatown, Charoenkrung Road, Bangkok. Opening times vary.

To remove some of the guess work out of visiting unseen Bangkok, take a walking (or cycling) tour with Bangkok Vanguard [bangkokvanguards.strikingly.com], a company with such a solid reputation that even locals join them to learn more about their city.

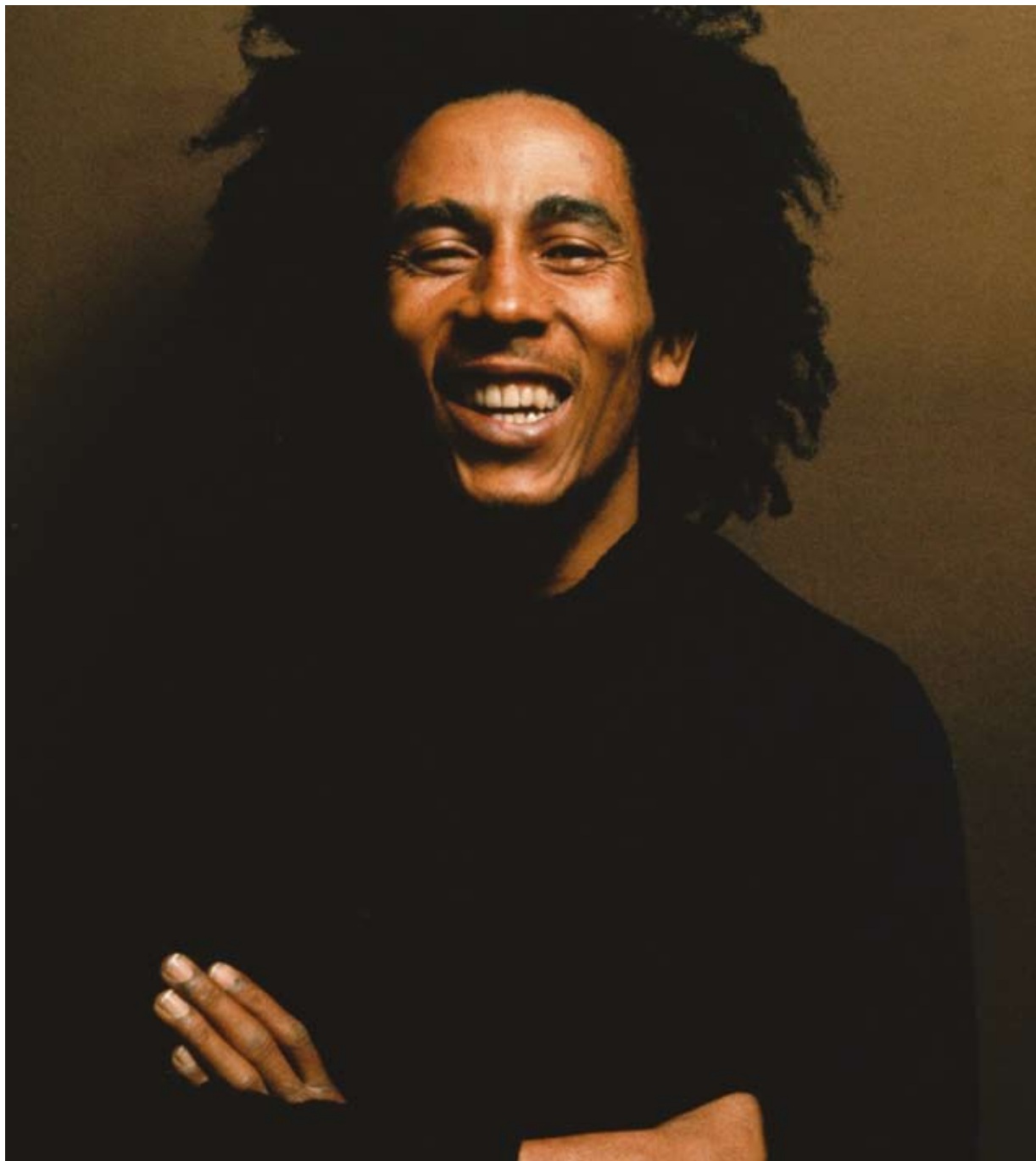


PHOTO COURTESY OF JIM THOMPSON HOUSE AND MUSEUM

Introducing the people who matter

MEET

DJANG SAN // MICHAEL GIRA // KERRY BROWN // MO YAN



ULTIMATE PRODUCTIONS PRESENTS BOB MARLEY DAY *This figurehead of reggae celebrates another birthday courtesy of the folks behind Ultimate Productions. Head over to Yugong Yishan on February 6 to pay your respects with live performances from local dread heads rocking it steady, in memory of this important icon.*

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ORGANIZERS

DJANG SAN

MULTI-INSTRUMENTALIST, RECORDING ARTIST

What's the worst song for getting stuck in your head all day?

Probably one of my songs, especially when I'm working on a new one. I think of the song over and over until I find a way to finish it.

What's your favorite Chinese song, and why?

"A Piece of Red Cloth" by Cui Jian, it's a song about blindness. One of his greatest.

Who is the best songwriter in your opinion?

Jacques Brel. He was Belgian but wrote the best French songs in history, like "Ne me Quittes Pas," "Les Bourgeois," "Amsterdam," and many more. Nobody wrote songs in French like he did, apart from maybe Mano Solo, who also had a few good ones.

Which character from a song would you most like to meet?

The walrus, from the Beatles song "I Am the Walrus." It's a psychedelic song. I like the absurdity of it, and it reminds us just how meaningless life is.

What song would you want to be played at your funeral?

The "Muffin Man" by Frank Zappa. "Girl you thought it was a man, but it was a muffin!" That's what I am, a muffin!

What is your favorite cover version of a song?

"I Am Calling You" sung by Jeff Buckley. I saw that film *Bagdad Café* when I was a kid, and that song was in the film. My parents bought the vinyl of the song, and I couldn't stop playing it over and over. I felt his voice was



something different, like a calling. I was 7.

What would you choose as your perfect break-up song?

"Love Will Tear us Apart" by Joy Division. It has this perfect balance between melancholy, nostalgia, fate, and reality.

What is your favorite song to wake up to?

"Shine on You Crazy Diamond," by Pink Floyd. I like to wake up to something slow, and get into the day step by step, remembering we live in a mad world.

What is your favorite period or year for music?

I don't have a definite period I really like, but of course there are some moments that played an important role in changing music history, like the 1960s and 70s for rock, the mid 70s for electronic music, and the 50s for experimental music.

What songs would be on your sex mix?

Any progressive rock album is cool for sex, it has slow and fast parts, soft and hard parts, which is the way you want to do it.

DJANG SAN'S FIVE-SONG PLAYLIST



"The Muffin Man"
by Frank Zappa



"Creep"
by Radiohead



"Dirty Boots"
by Sonic Youth



"The End"
by The Doors



"Machine Gun"
by Jimi Hendrix

MICHAEL GIRA

AN UNDERGROUND LEGEND OPENS UP ABOUT INFINITY

Michael Gira started Swans in 1982, forging new paths in experimental rock music and influencing countless bands with their primal performances, bursting with sonic mayhem and brooding rhythms. In 2010, they reformed after a 13-year hiatus with a series of new albums, including last year's *To Be Kind*. Now, they are still pushing boundaries, but with a more refined sound that could only come from experience and intense dedication to their craft. Michael was kind enough to have a little chat with us about life, music, and the existence of infinity.

It must be amazing to know that after so many years Swans still have sold out shows in major cities around the world. Was there ever a particularly dark time when you thought maybe you should do something different outside of music?

I'm always questioning if I should be doing something outside of music. In fact, at some point in the not too distant future I will do so. That would be starting to write seriously. As for now I'm pursuing Swans. This iteration of Swans has been very fortunate to receive a lot of attention. That's due to persistence, hard work, and a lot of luck. It just seems like the zeitgeist that is appropriate for the music right now. Seeing such large audiences is great, and it feeds the performances that have been the

best of our career.

In recent live videos, you seem to have some voodoo priest spasms or movements on stage. Would you say that your music is spiritually informed? Do you believe in witchcraft?

The answer to the final part of your question is that probably I do, because infinity exists, anything and everything is possible. Because it's all possible then anything and everything does exist, so yes I believe in witchcraft, but I also believe in astrophysics. As for our music being spiritual, at its best Swans is rock, so it's dunderheaded. But the music does lead us to a higher place, and hopefully that includes the audience.

The compositions on "*To Be Kind*" are very cinematic and at times reminiscent of something you might hear on an Ennio Morricone score. (almost like if *A Few Dollars More* was mashed together with *The Thing*)

Have you ever worked with any filmmakers?

That's about the highest compliment you could give. Just briefly I worked with a lady in New York. It's been a goal of mine to work in film, but now I'm not certain it will ever happen or care. I did in the late 80's start to think of music as non-visual soundtracks, as opposed to just albums.





Can you talk about your use of samples and sound used throughout the record?

There are no samples, there are recordings. It's understandable though because people misuse the word sample. I picture samples being something that you just grab on your computer, and then sequence into a song. If you're talking about the saw sounds on "Bring The Sun / Toussaint L'Ouverture" for instance, that was specifically recorded in a studio by our illustrious percussionist, who also happens to be a carpenter.

It will still be the year of the horse when you arrive in Beijing. How did you go about recording the horses on "Bring The Sun/Toussaint L'Ouverture?" They sound very angry.

I had in mind to use some horses, because of the kind of violent sounds they make, and also because this historical figure (Toussaint) was such a supreme horseman. They were recorded in a coral area and riled up a bit because they needed to sound like they were rushing into an altercation.

Will Swans be using those recorded sounds live, for the same effect?

Absolutely not, I'm not a fan of pre-recorded sounds being used live. I realize that this kind of obviates an entire genre

of music, but it's not for me. Things need to be made in the moment, with actual physical exertion from the performer and not from just pushing a button.

Could you tell us what your ultimate live music experience would be?

One thing I intend to develop, is a concert where we perform the instrumental sections from the last three Swans records with the band. Then I also want to augment these with a dozen horns, a small choir, various percussionists, and maybe a dozen electrified hammered dulcimers to make a total sonic experience.

What kind of venue would you choose for this concert?

It would have to be classical, but there's a problem as I've discovered with the decibel levels being too high for most classical music venues

Have you ever played any sports?

I was an excellent baseball player in my youth. I was a pitcher and shortstop, and I showed a lot of promise. Then, unfortunately, I fell victim to the ubiquitous influences of the 60s, and drifted into other activities which were not quite so productive.

Catch Swans at Yugong Yishan on February 4.



KERRY BROWN

AUTHOR, *THE NEW EMPERORS: POWER AND THE PRINCELINGS IN CHINA*



political philosophy tracts, and Chinese exceptionalist literature.

If you only ever read one book about China, make it something by the late Simon Leys (Pierre Ruykmans) if only because he was about the only person of the immediate post-Maoist generation of Sinologists who could actually write. He had extensive literary interests and passions, and that came through in his books. I guess *Broken Images* would be my choice, because it is the most eclectic of his works. When you look at the menu of highly granular specialist literature produced on China now, you realize just how often those producing this work, often very valuable in terms of its content – put little real value on writing accessibly and nicely. But then, as Elias Canetti so brilliantly showed in his wonderful novel *Auto da Fe*, Sinologists are often odd!

I pretend to have read, but haven't really finished

Edward Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* about five times, and even took a full everyman edition of it to Japan with me in 1990. Despite downloading it on Kindle and restarting it nearly two decades later, I have to now confess that, alas, it still remains unread!

The book I hid before you came around is Tony Blair's autobiography. I had to read this covered with a copy of *The Financial Times* when I was on trains a few years back because of the reputational damage. Beyond Blair's increasingly seedy image now, the book itself is almost unreadably bad in places. He evidently had the editors as mesmerized by his charm as so many voters in the UK who chose him and then realized they had made a terrible mistake. I did labour (forgive the pun) through the book, and the parts on his dealings with the peace process in Northern Ireland were good. But it just proved that to be a politician these days you have to jettison any real chance of being a normal human being.

Look for Kerry's upcoming contribution to Penguin's Specials series on the failures of British diplomacy in China, to be available as an e-book and at fine bookstores including The Bookworm.

The book on my shelf that has the greatest

sentimental value is probably Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations*. It seemed, when I first read it as a teenager, and even now, to be the perfectly structured novel. Dickens can often be very prolix, but this novel is one of his most brief, and there isn't a wasted word. It is also set in the part of the UK where I was born and brought up, in northwest Kent, so I was very familiar with the physical landscape of the book and its atmosphere and environment.

The bookshelf in Beijing I would you like a peek at

is of course, that of President Xi Jinping. A photo of him sitting in his office was released about a year ago, and many commented on how bare of books it seemed. He often quotes from classical sources, something I've noticed while wading through his collected speeches, "On the Governance of China," released to great fanfare late last year by the entities in China.

I guess, though, the bookshelf that might be most revealing would be that of someone like Wang Huning, the sort of *eminence grise* of the Chinese political establishment, and its thinker-in-chief. I imagine, though, it must have a healthy dose of Kissinger,

NOBEL LITERATURE PRIZE WINNER MO YAN HOPS INTO *FROG*

IN HIS FIRST TRANSLATED WORK SINCE WINNING THE BIG ONE, CHINA'S TOP MODERN AUTHOR COVERS FAMILIAR GROUND

"**S**ensei, an old custom in my hometown dictated that a newborn child is given the name of a body part or organ. Nose Chen, for instance, Eyes Zhao, Colon Wu, Shoulder Sun ... I haven't looked into the origin of this custom, but I imagine it embodied the outlook of 'those who are badly named live long.' Either that or it evolved from a mother's thoughts that a child represented a part of her body. The custom is no longer followed, as young parents have no interest in naming their children in such an unusual way."

So begins the first chapter of Nobel Prize for Literature-winning author Mo Yan's book *Frog*. It's hard to say that it's a new book, having originally been published in Chinese in 2009, before Mo won the big one. However, for readers who can only enjoy Mo's work in translation, *Frog* is the latest to become available.

Mo likely first came to the attention of Western readers not via a written work, but through the late 1980s film version of *Red Sorghum*, directed by Beijing Olympics opening ceremony director Zhang Yimou, and starring now-cinematic icons Gong Li and Jiang Wen.

The book gives away a bit of its device early, revealing the main character's name as Tadpole. A writer, he describes the life of his aunt in a series of letters to one of his teachers, who happens to be from Japan.

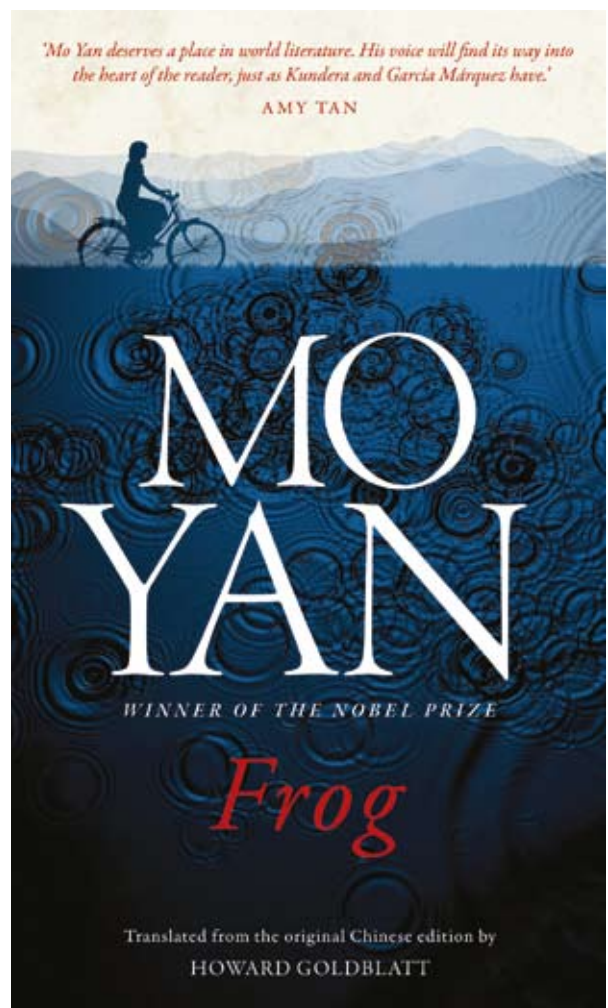
Through this series of letters, Tadpole's story carries the reader from before the Cultural Revolution, through it, and to the period of opening and reform afterwards. It is not a feel-good story. Tadpole's relative, Aunt Gugu (actually redundant as "Gugu" means "Aunt") goes from being a respected obstetrician, to ending up in charge of enforcement for the nation's one-child policy, a position that forces her to question herself and the job she is doing, along with her own values as a doctor.

The letter format is one that Mo has used before, such as in *The Republic of Wine*. The book is translated by Howard Goldblatt, widely regarded as the top translator of contemporary Chinese fiction into English. Goldblatt once said during a talk at a Denver bookstore that he admired Mo's style in that novel, in which one of the characters is an aspiring novelist – and not a very good

one – who writes letters to Mo. He admired Mo's "ability to write poorly. He's such a good writer, it must be difficult for him to do that."

Frog is a good winter book, not the kind of light fare that works on a beach holiday, but one that will satisfy the serious reader with an interest in Chinese literature, and require contemplation of the issues that the author so deftly raises. *Steven Schwankert*

Frog is available at *The Bookworm* and via *Amazon.com*.



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.



PRE JUE 2015: SWANS

FEB 4 – For the first time in their career, Swans come to China to elevate lovers of otherworldly music to new heights. Don't miss out on this American treasure brought to you by Split Works for their JUE warm up show. RMB 220, RMB 180 (advance). 8-11pm. Yugong Yishan (8408 4637)

PHOTO COURTESY OF SPLIT WORKS

Valentine's Day

SAINT VALENTINE AT DACCAPPO

FEB 14– Enjoy a complimentary Bellini on arrival, as well as a rose for your Valentine, before embarking on Chef Mirko Lacchini's special a la carte menu. 6pm. Daccapo (8522 1888)

MIGAS VALENTINE'S MENU

FEB 14– Give Valentine's Day a fine dining twist at Migas with dishes such as "oyster with Champagne and roses" and "cabbage 5J Iberico love heart." RMB 360 per person. 5pm. Migas Restaurant and Lounge (5208 6061)

ROMANTIC MONTH AT LOFT EATALICIOUS

FEB– A whole month of romance awaits lovers at Loft Eatalicious, where their three course Valentine's menu is available throughout February. RMB 520 per couple. 11.30am. All branches of Loft Eatalicious

A TAYLORMADE VALENTINE'S DINNER

FEB 14– If "bespoke" is your middle name you'll want to book in for a one-on-one consultation with Aria Head Chef Philip Taylor, who will design a menu just for you and your sweetheart. RMB 1,520. Aria (6505 2266)

VALENTINE'S DAY AFTERNOON TEA

FEB 14– Indulge in a gastronomic extravaganza of pastries, chocolate truffles, strawberries and, most importantly, free-flowing Champagne. RMB 1,288 per couple. 2pm. Fairmont Hotel Beijing (8511 7777)

"YOU ARE NOT ALONE FOR VALENTINE'S DAY"**SINGLES PARTY**

FEB 14– Don't waste Valentine's Day if you're single, make it an opportunity for next year at Intercontinental Financial Street's Singles Party. RMB 398. 3pm. Intercontinental Beijing Financial Street (5852 5916)

ROSE-INSPIRED SPA TREAT AT WALDORF ASTORIA BEIJING

FEB 14– Take the pampering up a notch with a rose-infused body scrub, full body massage and heart-shaped cake to end the spa experience. RMB 2,299 per couple. Waldorf Astoria Beijing (8520 8989)

BLISSFUL TREATS AT YU

FEB 14– Not only has Yu's Chef Ku put together a special menu featuring high-end ingredients like braised live grouper in black truffle sauce, you will also be entered into a draw to win a diamond necklace. RMB 1,388 per couple. 6pm. Yu (5908 8111)

HIS AND HERS VALENTINE'S DAY MENUS AT OPERA BOMBANA

FEB 14– Opera have designed his and hers five course menus, each equally scrumptious. Men can expect venison and beef tenderloin, while women can indulge in sea urchin tagliolini. RMB 1,088 per person. 6pm. Opera Bombana (5690 7177)

ST. VALENTINE'S DAY AT AGUA

FEB 14– Agua's Valentine's menu showcases the best of the traditional Spanish cooking that Chef Jordi Valles is renowned for, including Catalan seafood stew and 50 month cured Iberico ham. RMB 798 per couple. 6pm. Agua. (5208 6188)

YOU'LL ALWAYS BE MY VALENTINE AT MOSTO

FEB 14– A romantic dinner to be enjoyed over candlelight and roses. Featuring foie gras, seared tuna, and bouillabaisse. RMB 388 per person. 5.30pm. Mosto. (5208 6030)

IN A VALENTINE'S STATE OF MIND

FEB 14– Your happy ever after is only a pasta dinner away, apparently. In any case, this dinner is a great value, including pasta, salad, grilled main and two glasses of red wine to share. RMB 298 per couple. 10.30am-10pm. MODO Urban Deli. (6415 7207)

DINE IN LOVE

FEB 14– Be seduced by Huang Ting's outstanding Cantonese cuisine, including roasted duck breast and succulent Boston lobster, plus a complimentary bottle of Champagne. RMB 1,980 per couple. 11.30am-10.30pm. Huang Ting. (8516 2888 Ext 6707)

CELEBRATE VALENTINE'S DAY AT GRACE BEIJING

FEB 14– Set in the heart of 798, Grace Beijing is the perfect Valentine's destination for arty types. Indulge in a five course dinner plus a bottle of fine wine and free-flow soft drinks. RMB 1,288. 8pm. Grace Beijing. (6436 1818)

VALENTINE'S GETAWAY FOR LOVERS

FEB 14– Why not have yourself a Great Wall romance that includes private transfers to and from Beijing for two people, a superior queen Great Wall view room, a complimentary bottle of imported sparkling wine, breakfast for two in the Lodge, and two 60 minute Chinese massages. RMB 1,988. The Brickyard Inn (6162-6506)

MOULIN ROUGE-THEMED VALENTINE'S DAY

FEB 14– Celebrate Valentine's Day at BLD Café with a romantic Moulin Rouge-themed buffet. Includes free-flow wines and complimentary access to the R Lounge after party. RMB 888 per couple. 5.30pm. BLD Café (5863 8223)

LOVE ON THE SQUARE AT CAPITAL M

FEB 14– Savor a five-course menu among Capital M's roaring fireplaces, all the while taking in one of the best restaurant views in Beijing. RMB 488 per person. 5.30pm. Capital M (6702 2727)

VALENTINE'S DAY AT SUREÑO

FEB 14– Sureño's serene subterranean dining room is the perfect place for a romantic dinner. Their five course menu ends with a special Chocolate and Berry dessert. RMB 398 per person. 6pm. Sureño. (6410 5240)



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1. THE SYNDICATE PRESENTS CONRANK (UK/SHANGHAI)

FEB 7 – After a busy year touring the USA and releasing massive collaborations with DJ Shadow and Sa Dingding, producer CONRANK returns to Beijing to show off the talents he's garnered thus far in an all-out booty shaking extravaganza. RMB 40. 10pm. Dada (183 1108 0818)

2. H-A-L-F-A-M-A-N

FEB 7 – Red Gate artists-in-residence Raval and Obermair target the ambivalence of sharing through words like “teilin” and “bhang,” words that both express a “share” and “divide” concept, and look at how the whole can cease to be a whole when it is divided. Free. 5pm. Red Gate Gallery (6525 1005)

3. ORANGE MESCALINE

FEB 5 – This supergroup of talented musicians are coming together to jam in a freestylin' manner that fuses glitch, dub, old school jungle, and just about anything else that sits outside the mainstream box. Free. 10pm. Temple Bar (131 6107 0713)

4. DEVILS AT THE CROSSROAD

FEB 13 – For one night only a screaming orgy of burning sounds will fill your earholes and leave you writhing on the ground for more. Come drink your sins away because tonight, the Devil runs free and those thought unredeemable will find comfort once more. Free. 10pm. Temple Bar (131 6107 0713)

5. ROCK YOUR VALENTINE WITH WHAI

FEB 14 – If your idea of the perfect Valentine's Day has more to do with banging experimental goth tunes than flowers and candy and all that consumer crap, then WHAI will definitely send your black heart, and pierced ears, swooning on the heels of love. Free. 10pm. Temple Bar (131 6107 0713)



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1. SCOTTISH BALLET: ROMEO AND JULIET

FEB 5-7– Experience the acclaimed skills of the Scottish Ballet as they present their unique version of Shakespeare's classic tale on Beijing's most reputable stage. RMB 280-880. 7:30 pm. National Center for the Performing Arts. (6655 0000)

2. YU COUNTY'S ANCIENT WALLED TOWNS AND FIREWORKS OF MOLTEN IRON

FEB 22– Beijing Hikers are organizing a two day trip to Yu County in Hebei province, where you'll walk the streets of this well-preserved ancient city and at night experience the 300 year-old tradition known as Da Shu. This is when local performers fling molten iron at the city walls for beautiful incendiary results. RMB 1,800. All day. Beijing Hikers (6432 2786)

3. THE LOOP

FEB 13– Get over to Beijing's only smoke free dance night, featuring a rotating crew of Beijing's best DJ talents like Eddie Lv, who continuously set the vibe for a healthy and rad dance environment. RMB 50. 10pm. Migas (5208 6061)

4. FRIDAY THE 13TH PARTY

FRI 13– The dudes at four corners have set up an intense evening of vodka roulette, live music, and psychological scare tactics sure to keep your britches full. Free. 10pm-late. 4corners (6401 7797)

5. CHINESE NEW YEAR WITH BLACK EYELINER

FEB 19– Embrace the darkness as another year comes full circle. DJs Soundspade and Compact Dicks will be showcasing every kind of wave music known to man at this Beijing party favorite. Free. 9pm. Temple Bar (134 2636 2636)



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1. EL TIGRE SOUNDSYSTEM FEAT. CHICO SONIDO (FREAK CITY, MEXICO/LA)

FEB 6 – Coming all the way from Mexico, the first El Tigre Soundsystem of 2015 features special guest Chico Sonido. The renowned DJ for Vice, Fader, and party collective Freak City, you can expect booty shaking noise known famously as “Nalga Bass” to spin your night into a world of Latin flavor. RMB 60. 10pm. The Bar at Migas (5208 6061)

2. THE 京A BEER MILE

FEB 7 – If working out more was one of your New Year’s resolutions then 京A have you sorted with your first mile race of 2015! The rules are simple, for every quarter mile lap, every competitor will down a 400mL serving of 京A beer until the final swagger over the finish line. RMB 150 (sign up in advance). 3.30pm. 京A Taproom (6501 8883)

3. FOURTH ANNUAL 4CORNERS CHINESE NEW YEAR’S BASH

FEB 18 – Partygoers wandering the post-apocalyptic landscape of a city hazed with the infinite explosions of fireworks could do no worse than finding shelter at 4corners where drinking, dancing, and the respite of fire hazards is plentiful. Free. 10pm. 4corners (6401 7797)

4. PORTACONES IL FLAMENCO FESTIVAL

FEB 8 – Watch as students and teachers showcase their mesmerizing skills and the pageantry of flamenco dance. Following the success of their previous performances, the group has moved to Qinglan theater to allow even more of the public to come and enjoy. RMB 80. 8am. Qinglan Theater (136 4128 1842)



1. CAPITAL M MOVIE NIGHT: COMRADE KIM GOES FLYING

FEB 1 – Head over to Capital M for their inaugural movie night, where they'll be screening North Korea's first girl power movie. The story follows a coal miner as she conquers impossible odds and haters to become a professional trapeze artist. RMB 75, RMB 20 (students). 5pm. Capital M (6702 2727)

2. THE SAME AS IT EVER WAS WITH DJ SANTO CHINO

FEB 6 – DJ Santo Chino brings the disco heat with his deep collection of rare disco and extreme endurance behind the decks. He'll no doubt have you spinning to some of the funkier rhythms of the 70s and 80s till the sun comes up. Free. 10pm-late. Dada. (183 1108 0818)

3. ZUCKERMANN

FEB 14 – Ralph Zuckermann returns to Dada with an evening of frigid techno straight from the cavernous depths of Berlin. He, along with local Zhiqi, will be doing it big with hours of swinging tech bliss. Free. 10pm-late. Dada. (183 1108 0818)

4. AT THE GATES

FEB 7 – Arguably one of Sweden's most notorious death metal bands, At the Gates will lead you to a dark realm filled with orcs and vampires, then make you watch as they slay everything with their insane guitar shredding and blast beats. RMB 280, RMB 200 (advance). 8:00-11pm. Yugong Yishan (8408 4637)

THE EXPAT SUBWAY EXPANSION

by George Ding

By now it's clear that the Beijing municipal government has completely ignored my ideas to reform the city's subway system without raising ticket prices.

At first, I was incensed. I rode Line 10 in a circle all day, getting out at my original station for two *kuai*, just to spite the system.

It was on one of these circuitous rides that I thought of a compromise. With all the extra income from the price hike, the least the government could do is invest the money toward a subway expansion aimed at us expatriates.

The Expat Line

Sanlitun – Let's face it: Tuanjiehu station is useless. There is nothing at Tuanjiehu. No one wants to go to Tuanjiehu. Anyone caught dead there is either on their way to Sanlitun or Chaoyang Park. But if it were a transfer station for the Expat Line, I suspect people would actually use it.

If there's any place in Beijing that needs a subway station, it's Sanlitun. I don't care how impossible it would be to build. Think of the possibilities: one exit opens into Taikoo Li, the other into Sanlitun SOHO. It would be a dream come true.

Sanlitun South – The area around 1949 is so bougie I feel like it deserves its own station. Exit A: Home Plate/Taco Bar; Exit B: Jing A/Duck de Chine; Exit C: Janes and Hooch/The Local; Exit D: Q Mex/Kro's Nest. For those who think this location is too close to warrant a separate station, take a ride from Fuxingmen to Nanlishilu.

Sanlitun North – If Tiantongyuan can have three stops, why not Sanlitun? It would save us the hike through Taikoo Li to Luga's, Taps, and La Pizza at the north end of bar street. Plus, it's the only way anyone will ever go to Taikoo Li North.

George's House – Okay fine, this station is less for expats and more for me.

Please note that this isn't a complete list of stops.

There are plenty of places – Gongti East, Gongti West – that deserve their own. Once officials see the revenues from this new line, I am sure they will approve further expansions.

The Wudaokou-Sanlitun Maglev Express

I forgot to mention earlier that Sanlitun would be an interchange station for the Wudaokou-Sanlitun Maglev Express. Using state-of-the-art technology, the shuttles could reach upwards of 500km/hr, getting you from Haidian to Chaoyang in little over two minutes.

I believe this engineering feat would be on par with the other great works in China: the Three Gorges Dam and the South-North Water Transfer Project. No longer will the two expat hubs be separated by a long and buzz-killing commute. No longer will your friends have an excuse not to come meet you at Wu Club at three in the morning.

The Hutong Monorail System

I'm sure the government is already aware of this but currently it is so inconvenient to hang out within the Second Ring Road, at least for those of us who aren't cool enough to live nearby.

Thus, I propose a monorail system to connect the constellation of hole-in-the-wall places. Stations include: 4corners, Temple/Dada, Modernista, Zajia, Mai Bar, Cu Ju, Mao Mao Chong and 8-Bit.

This loop would offer revelers a way to cruise between hangouts and enjoy an elevated view of Beijing's nightscape while intermittently puking on the residents below.

Needless to say, I expect these lines to run 24/7 and all the trains to be equipped with air conditioning. If the operating cost is too high, just keep raising ticket prices.

So that's my plan. Once again, I've done all the hard work of drafting the proposal. All the bureaucrats have to do is implement it. I hope this time they will be more progressive.

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