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thebeijinger

2017/05-06

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COURTYARDS, AND ROOFTOPS



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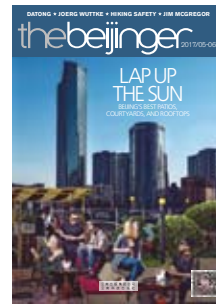
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CITY SCENE

What's Happening: The most important dates this month
Stat: Last year approximately 5,000 people attended our Burger Cup
Best of the Blog: The most popular stories from *theBeijinger.com*
Scene & Heard: Take a look at yourselves, you beautiful people

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COVER FEATURE

Lap up the sun this summer at some of our favorite al fresco destinations in the city, from rooftops, to courtyards, to patios. Whether you want to have a cold beer or enjoy an elaborate brunch with friends, we've got it all.

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YOUR BEIJING
DREAM HOME

DAILY UPDATES,
EVENTS, AND
CLASSIFIEDS ON
THEBEIJINGER.
COM

Cover photograph taken
at Migas by Dave's Studio



The most important dates this month

WHAT'S HAPPENING



MAY 20-21

***The Beijinger* 2017 Burger Cup**

The Beijinger 2017 Burger Cup is back at Galaxy Soho with a Wild West theme, showcasing the city's best burgers, plenty of booze, games for all ages, and lots of musical entertainment.

THRU JUN 11

Wicked

Having run for nearly 15 years, this critically acclaimed Broadway musical now comes to Beijing with an international company of over 70 cast, crew, and musicians.



JUN 10

Lite

Japanese instrumental rockers Lite, with their own brand of accessible math rock, showcase their talent through hard driving rhythms and soothing hooks at Yugong Yishan.

JUN 17

Escape Plan

With a mixture of indie pop, new wave, and post-punk, Chinese veteran Modern Sky-signed rockers Escape Plan aim to go big this June, inviting fans to rock out at Workers' Stadium.



Visit theBeijinger.com for even more events and details.

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

After the rebirth following a long, dreary Beijing winter, there's nothing quite so freeing as to sit on a Beijing rooftop sipping on a cold glass of wine (or any chilled beverage of your choice) and catching up with friends. That feeling of the sun on your skin for the first time is a liberating one, at least once your body remembers how to produce that sacred vitamin D.

We have Beijing's solid outdoor dining culture of *chuan'r* with a Yanjing on a stool to thank for the plethora of outdoor drinking and dining spots, and after lots of deliberation, we decided to put together our editorial brains to curate a list.

We've foregone said barbecue joints in lieu of the current demolition currently sweeping Dongcheng and Chaoyang districts. Even without those to consider, it wasn't easy to pick just 20 of the city's best rooftops and patios, and we can't wait to make the most of them.

In view of the free time coming this summer for many of you, we also explore two domestic destinations. Tom Arnstein travels to Datong, and is a tad disappointed. Robynne Tindall, on the other hand, enjoys herself by taking in the sights in Suzhou.

Elsewhere in this issue, Kyle Mullin interviews old China hand Joerg Wuttke, president of the European Union Chamber of Commerce in China, and Tracy Wang looks into the easiest fix for crawling out of the doghouse: online florists. That's right, you now don't even need to move to get your loved one a bouquet of flowers, freeing up all your time to purvey one of our recommended al fresco spots.

We hope that you enjoy this issue of *the Beijinger*, and have a great start to your summer!

Margaux Schreurs
Managing Editor

Margaux



The musical is told from the perspective of the witches of the Land of Oz; its plot begins before and continues after Dorothy's arrival in Oz from Kansas. Wicked tells the story of two unlikely friends, Elphaba (the Wicked Witch of the West) and Glinda (whose name later changes to Glinda the Good Witch), who struggle through opposing personalities and viewpoints, rivalry over the same love-interest, reactions to the Wizard's corrupt government and, ultimately, Elphaba's public fall from grace.

Performing informations:
The award-winning Broadway & West End musical <Wicked> Beijing Station
Location: Beijing Tianqiao Performing Arts Center
Date: May. 20 - June. 11
The Premier Show: 20th May (Tickets available from 14th April)
Price: 100 - 1280 yuan

CITY SCENE

STAT // BEST OF THE BLOG // SCENE & HEARD



The estimated attendance (some of you were fairly crafty and snuck past our security) of last May's *the Beijinger* Burger Cup launch party at Oasis International Hospital. This year, the biggest burger party in our fair city will have a Wild West theme, and runs May 20 and 21 from 11am to 8pm at Galaxy Soho.

Apart from the usual suspects – i.e. those juicy

burger joints and booze suppliers that keep us nourished and watered throughout the year – you'll also find plenty of entertainment to maintain your buzz come the two-day extravaganza, ranging from musical performances to themed games. And of course, there'll also be plenty of kid-friendly activities to keep the little ones entertained while you're busy stuffing your face.

PHOTO: JOEY GUO

THE 8TH KINGDOM

THE AMERICAN BALL
MAY 13, 2017 CHINA WORLD HOTEL

In the mythical splendor of the 8th Kingdom, an epic battle between good and evil rages within the medieval castle walls. Join the knights of the noble houses for a fantastical evening of pageantry, dance and feasts of roast meats and dark ale in the Imperial Great Hall.

AmCham China's famous Silent and Live Auction returns with an unbelievable array of luxury, travel, fashion and dining bargains for one night only! Proceeds from the Ball will support local charitable causes.

HURRY! LIMITED NUMBER OF TICKETS LEFT!

Individual tickets RMB 1,350

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Every issue we tally the hits from *theBeijinger.com* and bring you the most viewed blogs from our website.



1. Laser Egg's Creators Make Forbes 30 Under 30 Asia List; Rebrand as Kaiterra

Liam Bates and Jessica Lam, the masterminds behind the bestselling Laser Egg AQI monitors, are two of several Beijingers ranked in the prestigious new *Forbes* 30 Under 30 Asia: Consumer Technology list.

Ever the savvy marketers, Bates and Lam are now maximizing their time in the spotlight by launching a new product and rebranding. As of April 14, Origins is officially Kaiterra, with a new focus on not only AQI monitoring but also achieving broader, loftier aims.

2. Beijing Subway Passenger Bloodied by Expat Sparks Angry Backlash Against Foreigners

Days before the news about a "Chinese" passenger being forcibly dragged off a United Airlines flight caused massive outrage in China, Beijingers were already angry over an incident of their own in which a Chinese man was victimized by yet another foreigner.

Allegedly, the male expatriate made a "wanton" attack upon a Chinese commuter on Beijing Metro Line 10 during morning rush hour.



3. Allergies Begone! Beijing Promises to Fix Its Out-of-Control Catkins Problem by 2020

Beijingers looking for a reprieve from the smoggy skies of heating season won't find any relief with the arrival of spring, bringing with it millions of flying catkins along with thousands of runny noses and red, irritated eyes. However, there's hope yet for residents with allergies as city authorities have promised to fix Beijing's notorious catkin problem in just three short years.

pinyin	pinyin	pinyin	pinyin	pinyin	pinyin	pinyin	pinyin	pinyin	pinyin
子	生	时	样	也	和	下	真	现	做
zǐ	shēng	shí	yàng	yě	hé	xià	zhēn	xiàn	zuò
child	life, grow	time	appearance	also, too	and	below, down	really, truly	present	to do
太	该	当	经	妈	用	打	地	再	因
tài	gāi	dāng	jīng	mā	yòng	dǎ	dì	zài	yīn
too much	should	to be put at	past through	mom	to use	to hit	ly structural p.	again, then	reason
法	电	哪	西	己	候	次	信	欢	正
fǎ	diàn	nǎ	xī	jǐ	hòu	cì	xìn	huān	zhèng
law	electricity	between, among	west	myself	to wait, season	time	believe, to trust	joyous	just right, sun
工	许	东	名	同	长	亲	种	者	嘿
gōng	xǔ	dōng	míng	tóng	cháng	qīn	zhǒng	zhě	hēi
work	to permit	east	name	same, similar	long	parent, relative	kind	one who	white
更	钱	马	思	部	场	嗯	计	任	吃
gēng	qián	mǎ	sī	bù	chǎng	en	jiàn	rèn	chī
further	money	horse	to think, consider	section, part	market, occasion	interjection	to plan	to appoint, allow	eat
少	切	失	算	性	此	必	备	合	德
shǎo	qiè	shī	suan	xìng	cǐ	bì	bèi	hé	dé
few, little	to cut, to slice	to lose	to calculate	nature, gender	this, these	must, will	get ready	to close, together	virtue, ethics

4. The First 100 Chinese Character Every Beginner Needs to Know

Learning Chinese is pretty tough, and while not everyone agrees on what the first 100 Chinese characters you really need to know are, we put together some to get you started based on research across different platforms. This should give you a kick-start in mastering this rather difficult language.



5. Security Restrictions at US Embassy in Beijing Have Created a Thriving Industry for 'Bag Holders'

Would you be willing to give a total stranger all of your possessions, let alone pay him for the pleasure? What sounds like the last thing you'd want to do is actually a thriving cottage industry right here in Beijing.

Due to a longstanding ban on personal items that include cell phones and handbags for visitors to the US Embassy, street hawkers have been earning a living by temporarily holding onto other people's possessions as they wait in line to process non-immigrant visas.

6. Vineyard Café Shuts Down, to Set Up Open Delivery Kitchen

After 11 years of serving tasty Western fare in Wudaoying Hutong, Vineyard Café announced that it was closing its doors on April 13. However, all is not lost given that management are already preparing to open up a delivery kitchen in Chaowai Soho.



7. Expat Recommended: Beijing's Best Tour Companies

Beijing is a pretty easy city to get around for visitors, even for those who don't speak Chinese, but taking a tour can still improve your overall experience. The tour companies we list in this blog offer something to suit all tastes, whether you are a first timer to Beijing or a repeat visitor who wants to get more in-depth information about Beijing's fascinating sights.



8. A Year and a Half On and Nuo Brunch is Still One of the Best Buffet Hotel Brunches in Beijing

When you think buffet, 'good quality' is not necessarily the first thing that jumps to mind, but Nuo Hotel's N'Joy buffet brunch most certainly overcomes that negative stereotype.

Our initial visit to N'Joy was when it first opened almost a year and a half ago, and we're happy to report that the quality remains excellent and is most certainly worth saving your pennies for. They've since updated the brunch and added caviar to the delicacies on offer, making the spread that more lush.

SCENE & HEARD

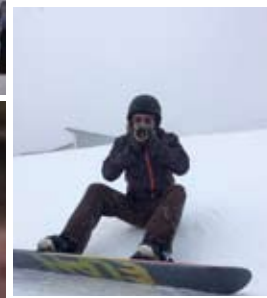


Second Hutong Food Week Foodcourt Party
Apr 9, Zarah. Photos: Uni You



Say Cheese – A Special Wine and Cheese Night
Feb 23, Vinotheque.
Photos courtesy of Kerry Hotel





Jing-A Spring Fever Break
Mar 4-5, Thaiwoo. Photos courtesy of Jing-A



Opening Bazaar
Mar 24, The Barn. Photos: Wang Wei

BASKING IN THE SUN

WHERE TO APPRECIATE BEIJING SUMMER

The season we have been dreaming about is finally here: It's time to grab your friends, and head to one of these rooftops, patios, and courtyards for a day of unfettered eating, drinking, and relaxation.

Key

\$ = under RMB 100 per person

\$\$ = RMB 100-200 per person

\$\$\$ = over RMB 200 per person



PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE VENUES, JANE'S STUDIO, UNI YOU, JOEY GUO

MIGAS

Everyone's favorite rooftop bar, and the venue for this month's cover shoot, Migas is somewhat of a Beijing institution, sporting incredible views over Sanlitun and dance parties that run well into the morning. We recommend heading over for drinks just before sunset, a simple venture that will likely end in you staying for the rest of the night, hooked by summery tunes spun by some of the best local and international DJs. Migas is also where you'll find Beijing's most beautiful crowd, although unfortunately they're sometimes far too aware of that fact.

Best for: A Sanlitun view

Address: 6/F, Nali Patio, 81 Sanlitun Lu, Chaoyang District (5208 6061)

朝阳区三里屯路81号那里花园6层

Price range: \$\$



PALMS LA LIANGMAQIAO

A first in Beijing, the menu at Palms LA is a Korean-meets-Mexican culinary mash-up, full of spice and fiery flavors that will leave you begging for more. Their second location at Liangmaqiao has a great patio for outdoor dining and boozing, especially with friends. Come in a group of six to eight and order one of everything on the menu, including the drinks, Palms LA being one of those special venues where the food and drinks were created equal.

Best for: Group dining and drinking

Address: 102, Bldg D, Yuanyang Xinganxian, 66 Xiaguang Li, Chaoyang District (8446 7565)

朝阳区霞光里66号院远洋新干线D座102

Price range: \$\$

TOAST

If you dream of having brunch every day of the week, head to Toast's rooftop at The Orchid. The terrace features pleasant views over the nearby hutong roofs, which weave together as far as the eye can see. The menu is Middle Eastern-inspired, using local Beijing ingredients where possible. The kitchen is open for breakfast, lunch, and dinner, and we suggest you arrive early for each as the terrace fills up quickly on clear days.

Best for: All-week brunch

Address: 65 Baochao Hutong, Gulou Dongdajie, Dongcheng District (8565 9295)

东城区鼓楼东大街宝钞胡同65号

Price range: \$\$



NAPA

Serving up fresh, sizable salads and healthy sandwiches, Californian-run Napa's rooftop is worthy of lunches (if you are lucky enough to work in the area), dinners, and weekend dining. Ingredients are locally sourced and organic, and the wine list features organic options, guaranteeing plenty of good, clean, tipsy fun.

Best for: Fresh salads and organic wines

Address: 20 Liulitun Zhonglu, Chaoyang District (6595 9181)

朝阳区六里屯中路20号

Price range: \$\$



GREAT LEAP BREWING #6

The several tables filling the courtyard of GLB's original Doujiao Hutong venue make this all-year-round al fresco bar a spot that brings people together, not only for its micro-brews, but also its charming Beijing hutong vibes. The only downside is that it doesn't have a food menu, but that doesn't stop you from ordering *chuan'r* from the Xinjiang restaurant nearby for a somewhat surreal Beijing craft brew and barbecue experience. Either way, beer counts as a meal right?

Best for: Beijing-brewed craft beer

Address: 6 Doujiao Hutong, Dongcheng District (5717 1399)

东城区豆角胡同6号

Price range: \$



GREAT LEAP BREWING

TACO BAR

It's not an eloquent patio with a captivating view or a mind-blowing design, but that's the appeal of Taco Bar's no-frills, front porch vibe. Considering the restaurant's location at Courtyard 4, the epicenter of all things fun in Sanlitun, its outdoor seating is prime for people-watching and acts as a hub for the neighborhood's overall celebratory summer vibes. And while Taco Bar has won numerous Restaurant Awards for its excellent Mexican eats, the bar's criminally underrated cocktail menu will leave you feeling woozy and breezy as you kick back on this fun, unpretentious outdoor dining haven.

Best for: Casual yet creative dining and drinking

Address: 10, Courtyard 4, Nan Sanlitun Lu, Chaoyang District (6501 6026)

朝阳区机电院10号南三里屯路

Price range: \$\$



TACO BAR



CAPITAL M

CAPITAL M

Overlooking the majestic Qianmen gate in the south side of the city, this international chain specializes in dining with a view, a formula that doesn't disappoint at its Beijing incarnation. True, Capital M may not have the same dazzle factor as it did when it first opened in 2009, but the Mediterranean-style dishes and well-trained staff still make for a solid dining option, especially when you have the sunshine to match.

Best for: International dining standards

Address: 3/F, 2 Qianmen Buxingjie, Dongcheng District (6702 2727)

东城区前门步行街2号3层

Price range: \$\$\$

THE ROOF & UNICO

The Roof bags the Topwin Center's most coveted spot as well as the complex's least original name, a fitting motif as you overlook the south side of Sanlitun among the area's young elite. However, there's no doubt that The Roof, with its horizon-dissecting waterways, umbrellas and turf, and waiters decked out in all-white, makes for a fine spot for a cocktail, a serene evening with a hookah, or even a bowl full of oysters. You get the idea.

Best for: Feeling like you have more money than you actually do

Price range: \$\$\$

Address: Unit 567, 5/F, Topwin Center, 1 Nan Sanlitun Lu, Chaoyang District (5718 1999)

朝阳区南三里屯路1号通盈中心5层567室

PAULANER BRAUHAUS

Relaxing, spacious, and sunny are merely a few of the terms that suit this Liangmaqiao gem. Those light and bright vibes can be attributed to the refreshing lack of foreboding buildings when compared to other central Beijing haunts. That, along with the abundantly lush greenery and the friendly staff, dressed in traditional Bavarian uniforms, help patrons feel like they've been transported to a warm and inviting German hamlet. The brewed-on-site pints and beer garden make it appealing for lazy summer day drinking.

Best for: Lazy steins

Address: 1/F, Kempinski Hotel, 50 Liangmaqiao Lu, Chaoyang District (6465 3388 ext 4212)

朝阳区亮马桥路50号凯宾斯基酒店1层

Price range: \$\$



PAULANER BRAUHAUS



PAULANER BRAUHAUS

MOJO

This recently opened Gongti restaurant boasts an upscale menu, 1,500 varieties of wine, and a subtly sleek decor. The latter makes us eagerly anticipate the May opening of its 600sqm outdoor seating area, which is sure to have a chic ambiance and a beautiful view thanks to its second floor perch overlooking the southwest of Sanlitun. The refined eats are bound to complement this setting, featuring foie gras and duck stuffed ravioli, iberico pork cheek, duck confit, Napoli-style pizzas, and oysters. They also have an excellent pastry chef on staff who readies a range of tasty desserts. You'd be hard-pressed to find a trendier terrace this summer.

Best for: Impressing that special someone

Address: 150m south of Gongti East Gate, Chaoyang District (151 0158 3880)

朝阳区工体东门（南侧150米）

Price range: \$\$\$

BUDDY'S

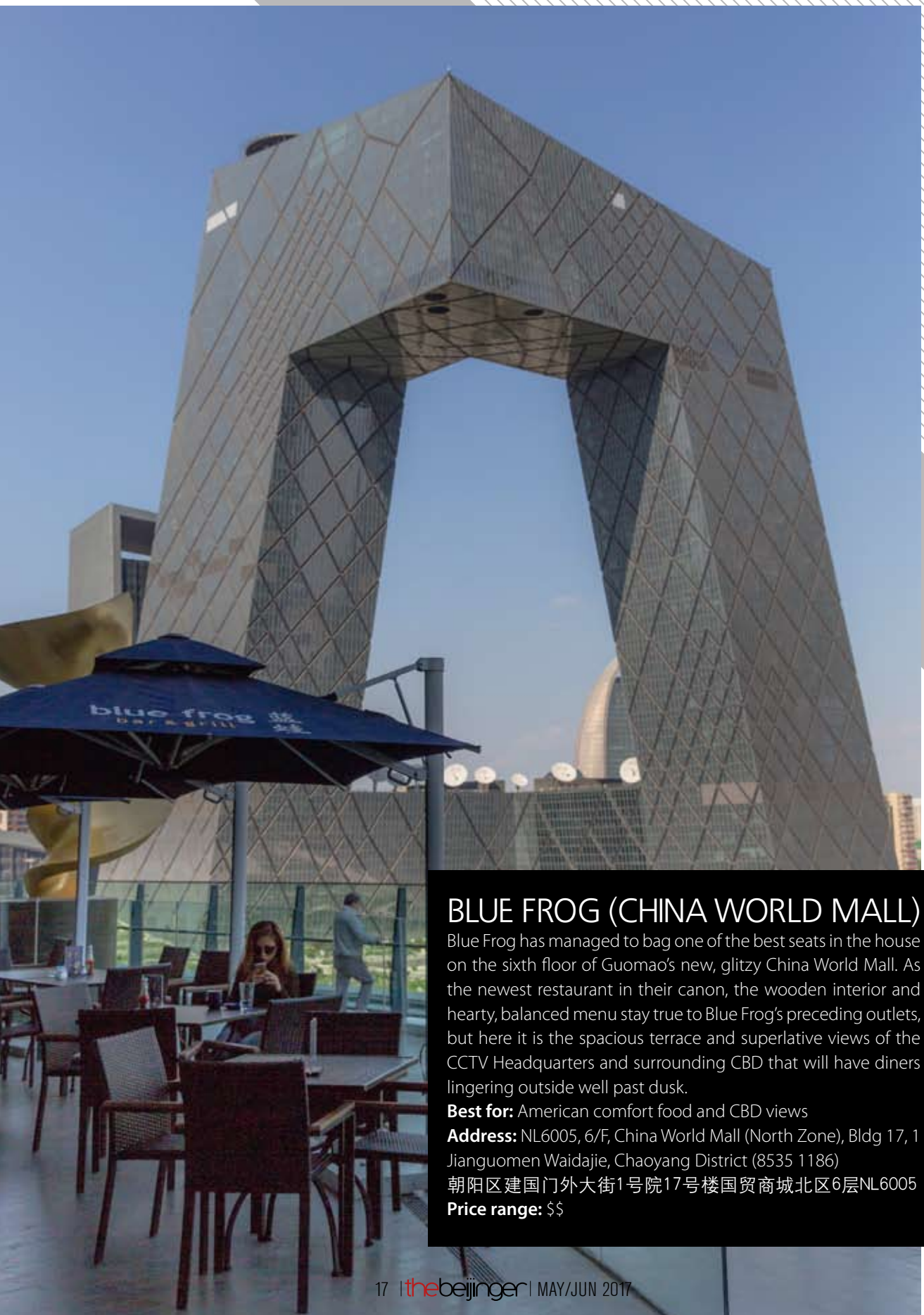
Lido dwellers feeling bored by the neighborhood's sleepy vibes will perk up when passing by this newly opened bar and restaurant, thanks to the big screen projector that plays rugby, football, and a range of other sports for those sitting on its spacious patio. The menu isn't groundbreaking but has plenty of pasta, burger, and pizza options to satisfy the sports bar set. The bar, meanwhile, is stocked with a range of Japanese whiskeys, wines, and spirits that Buddy's fun-loving owner brings back from his extensive travels.

Best for: Lido locals and sports fans

Address: 38 Jiuxianqiao Fangyuan Xilu, Chaoyang District (5607 5507)

朝阳区酒仙桥芳园西路38号

Price range: \$\$



BLUE FROG (CHINA WORLD MALL)

Blue Frog has managed to bag one of the best seats in the house on the sixth floor of Guomao's new, glitzy China World Mall. As the newest restaurant in their canon, the wooden interior and hearty, balanced menu stay true to Blue Frog's preceding outlets, but here it is the spacious terrace and superlative views of the CCTV Headquarters and surrounding CBD that will have diners lingering outside well past dusk.

Best for: American comfort food and CBD views

Address: NL6005, 6/F, China World Mall (North Zone), Bldg 17, 1 Jianguomen Waidajie, Chaoyang District (8535 1186)

朝阳区建国门外大街1号院17号楼国贸商城北区6层NL6005

Price range: \$\$

EL NIDO

You don't have to be a craft beer aficionado or part of the hutong mafia to enjoy a night on Fangjia Hutong. Having recently entered its seventh year operating from this spot in the hutongs, the outdoor wooden tables at El Nido have really seen it all. Grab a beer from the fridges or select one from the many taps serving imports, and enjoy a breezy weekend afternoon people watching. Other spots with outdoor seating on this stretch of hutong are cocktail bar Fang next door, bottle bar Cellar Door a little further down the road (where you might have to jump up to let cars pass depending on how far you're spreading onto the road), and popular Western restaurant Ramo.

Best for: Imported craft beer

Address: 59 Fangjia Hutong, Dongcheng District (8402 9495)

东城区方家胡同59号

Price range: \$



DALI COURTYARD

Dali Courtyard offers diners the chance to explore flavors most often commonly found in Yunnan from a rotating seven-course set menu (RMB 155) constructed from whatever ingredients are freshest that week. However, not only is the food delicious but the restaurant is located in a beautifully renovated hutong courtyard, equally suitable for a romantic date or the perfect spot to impress your parents with a distinctive *siheyuan* dining experience when they're in town.

Best for: Traditional courtyard setting

Address: 67 Xiaojingchang Hutong, Gulou Dongdajie, Dongcheng District (8404 1430)

东城区鼓楼东大街小经厂胡同67号

Price range: \$\$





ELEMENT FRESH (PARKVIEW GREEN)

Shanghai's greenest import, Element Fresh, brings healthy American food to Beijing at its many locations. Our favorite branch for this season's lounging is their Parkview Green terrace, far away from CBD traffic. Their menu boasts salads, pastas, wraps, and a smattering of Asian standards.

Best for: Vegetarian options and light American fare

Address: LG2-01, Parkview Green, 9 Dongdaqiao Lu, Chaoyang District (8561 0378)

朝阳区东大桥路9号方草地LG2-01

Price range: \$\$

ARROW FACTORY BREWING

Already one of our favorite watering holes, even in winter, the addition of Arrow Factory's rooftop only makes it that much more tempting. The Liangma River-facing deck consists of a fully-stocked bar, wooden benches, and a panoramic view of the embassy area. The menu is also worth salivating over, with its upgraded take on British pub food; think ale pies, sausages, a pita stuffed with pulled pork, salads, and a bunch of snacks for sharing. They also make a mean brunch if you prefer your food paired with craft beer.

Best for: Craft sausages and some of the best beer in town

Address: Tayuan DRC, 1 Xindong Lu, Chaoyang District (8532 1977)

朝阳区新东路1号塔园外交公寓亮马河南岸

Price range: \$\$

ARROW FACTORY BREWING



ARROW FACTORY BREWING



MOKA BROS (NALI PATIO)

The courtyard of Nali Patio might not be the first place that comes to mind when you think “Sanlitun” and “al fresco,” but the shaded space at the back makes for great weekday lunching if you’re working nearby, or grab a seat on the sunny patio out the front for elongated lounging at the weekend. Why should Moka Bros be your first pick of the list? Because there’s always something healthy to be found if you’re trying to absolve your weekend sins, or conversely, order one of their devilishly strong Bloody Marys and prolongue your debauchery.

Best for: Healthy dining

Address: 1/F, Nali Patio, 81 Sanlitun Lu, Chaoyang District (5208 6061)

朝阳区三里屯路81号那里花园1层

Price range: \$\$



HACKER-PSCHORR BRÄUHAUS

If you're looking for somewhere to enjoy football, German food, and beer all at the same time, look no further than Hacker-Pschorr Bräuhaus. With over 100 outdoor seats, Bavarian-style beer garden is always packed in the summer, especially during big football fixtures. Choose from three draft beers brewed on site: a pale lager, a schwarzbier, and a wheat beer, and food consisting of traditional German fare, including our favorites the breadbasket and the juicy pork knuckle.

Best for: German cuisine, sports, and beer

Address: Bldg 3, 12 Xindong Lu, Chaoyang District (8424 3827)

朝阳区新东路12号3楼

Price range: \$\$

SLOW BOAT SANLITUN BREW PUB

Having opened its second location last September, Slow Boat's Sanlitun Brewpub celebrates its first spring and summer with a smattering of seating out front on the ground floor. Perch at the bar or at the shorter tables made from kegs, with the added bonus that the bushes provide plenty of privacy from those passing on Nan Sanlitun Lu. Line your stomach with a burger from their extensive selection, including the *Beijinger* award-winning Fryburger, or try one of the salads, snacks, and desserts.

Best for: Beer and burgers

Address: 6 Nan Sanlitun Lu, Chaoyang District (6592 5388)

朝阳区南三里屯路6号

Price range: \$\$



LE LITTLE SAIGON

Having been around for nearly a decade, Le Little Saigon can be easy to overlook, tucked away just west of the Drum Tower and surrounding hutongs. But the fact is that it still lays claim to one of nicest rooftops in the area. Perched high up amidst the trees and vines, this Vietnamese-French bistro serves a unique range of dishes from pho to beef bourguignon, guaranteeing to satisfy all tastes, and solidifying its place as a favorite among tourists and locals alike. If the weather takes a turn for the worse, head inside and enjoy the warm and homely Parisian fittings downstairs.

Best for: Dining with a Vietnamese-French twist

Address: 141 Jiugulou Dajie, Dongcheng District (6401 8465)

东城区旧鼓楼大街141号

Price range: \$\$



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

FOOD & DRINK

MOJO // OMY // KOKOROWA // BLACK KNIGHT // ANTLERS // ANDY'S RESTAURANT & BAR



W BEIJING CHANG'AN X MCLAREN W T TIME

Until June 30 – Fast but furious, W Beijing Chang'an presents a fashionable afternoon tea in collaboration with sports car brand McLaren. The car-themed bites are the wheel deal, ahem, and make for something a little different from your usual afternoon tea. RMB 298 for two. 2-5pm. W Beijing Chang'an

PHOTO COURTESY OF W BEIJING CHANG'AN

NIBBLES AND SIPS

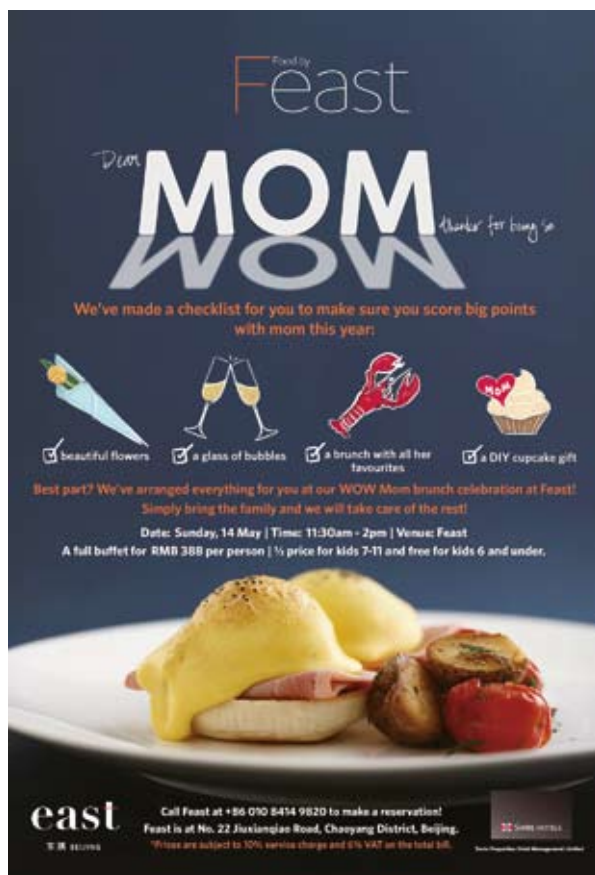
The third and fourth months of the year have been tough on some Beijing restaurants and their loyal customers, as swathes of construction across the city (including, but not limited to, Sanlitun, Wudaoying and Fangjia hutongs, and Beixinqiao Santiao) have led to the closure of such popular venues as **Andy's Craft Sausages**, **Rollbox**, **Anchor Bar**, **Lingerjiu Noodles**, and **BBC**. A number have either already relocated (Andy's Craft Sausages is now operating out of **XL Bar**, for example) or are searching for a new space to call home, but sadly others may not dust themselves off for a final round.

It isn't all doom and gloom, however. Not far away from the closures on Xingfucun Zhonglu, new casual eatery **Home Grounds** has been brightening our palates with their fresh twist on comfort food like roast chicken, and fish and chips. Brunch dishes, including avocado toast topped with a soft boiled egg and a sprinkling of hazelnut dukkah, or pancakes topped with poached fruit and cinnamon cream, are early highlights.

Elsewhere, Temple Restaurant Beijing have announced that they are rebranding, changing their name to **TRB Hutong**, while **TRB Bites** will be renamed **TRB Forbidden City**. Both restaurants will now serve the same menu (that of **TRB Hutong**).

We end with an update on Beijing's favorite sport: brunch. The team at **Migas** have refreshed their weekend offerings for spring/summer, based on the concept of "La Feria" after the "La Feria de Abril" festival held in Seville every April. The brunch features a cold station with a selection of salads and soups; a montadito bar, including different takes on these tapas-sized sandwiches; a fried fish platter; a free-flowing selection of tapas brought to your table; and a dessert cart crammed with that most festive of Spanish desserts, churros. The whole lot will set you back just RMB 268 per person. We're also eagerly awaiting to try what the team has in store for us at their new China World Mall **Migas Mercado** location.

At the upper end of the price spectrum, **Opera Bombana** has just launched a new Sunday brunch that features a monthly rotating menu inspired by the cuisines of Italy. The brunch is priced at RMB 688 per person for five courses, and includes a glass of sparkling wine.



Feast
Dear MOM, thank you for being in
MOM WOW

We've made a checklist for you to make sure you score big points with mom this year:

- ☒ beautiful flowers
- ☒ a glass of bubbles
- ☒ a brunch with all her favourites
- ☒ a DIY cupcake gift

Best part? We've arranged everything for you at our **WOW Mom brunch celebration** at **Feast!** Simply bring the family and we will take care of the rest!

Date: Sunday, 14 May | Time: 11:30am - 2pm | Venue: **Feast**
A full buffet for RMB 388 per person | 1/2 price for kids 7-11 and free for kids 6 and under.

east Beijing
Call Feast at +86 010 5414 9820 to make a reservation!
Feast is at No. 22 Jiuxianglao Road, Chaoyang District, Beijing.
*Prices are subject to 10% service charge and 6% VAT on the total bill.



Check Out Our New Restaurant Bar
Daily Happy Until 8PM
Each weekend there is a live show

THE BARN

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地址: 北京市朝阳区将台西路9-3
9-3 Jiangtaixi Lu, Chaoyang District
(6437 6988)

WHAT'S NEW RESTAURANTS

MOJO

UPSCALE GONGTI EATERY BOASTS 1,500 VARIETIES OF WINE AND INNOVATIVE EUROPEAN DISHES

Daily 6pm-2am. 150m south of Gongti East Gate, Chaoyang District (151 0158 3880)

朝阳区工体东门（南侧150米）

Beijing's fine dining scene is about to get a serious shakeup, thanks to the arrival of Mojo. The new, gorgeously designed Gongti restaurant has a distinctly delicious take on Italian cuisine, while also boasting a 1,500-bottle-strong selection of wines.

During our visit we were treated to ravioli that was brimming with foie gras and duck, the latter proving mouthwateringly tender thanks to having been slow cooked for 36-hours. The dish was put over the top with seared king prawns, baby spinach, and veal, all of which made for a unique combination that would have been too busy in lesser hands. Thanks to Chef Roberto Masili, however, the ingredients seemed born for one another, offering subtle, juicy textures and a rich flavor. At RMB 188 per plate it doesn't come cheap, but trust us: it's delicious enough to warrant an even higher price.

The tortellini with asparagus (RMB 138), wasn't quite as experimental or tasty as the ravioli (a tall order, to be sure), but it more than satisfied nonetheless, thanks to the delicate crispness of its veggies and inviting softness of its pasta.

Mojo's menu is rounded out by other European delights

like crisp fritto misto cod (RMB 168), iberico pork cheek (RMB 228), duck confit (RMB 188), pizzas, oysters, and a range of Italian cold cuts and cheeses (RMB 168).

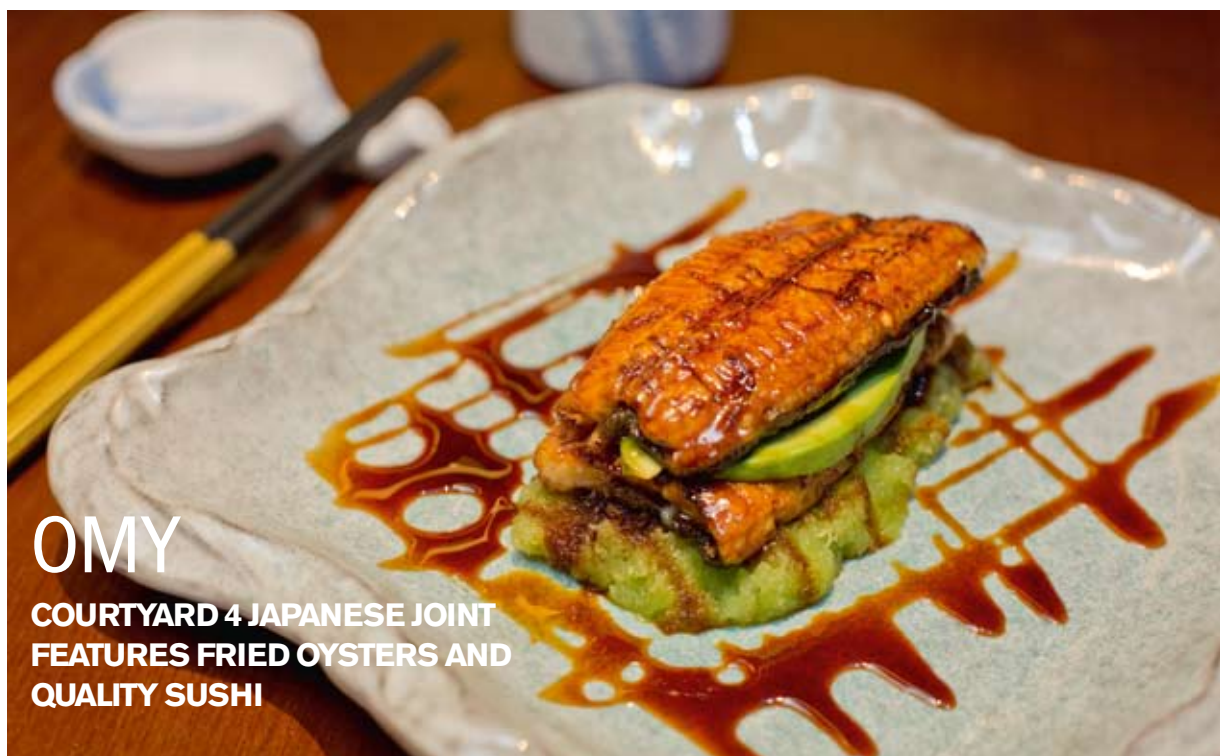
The decor complements the food nicely, with soft light sleek furniture and decorations that would fit nicely in a TV ad for a luxury car. It gives off a trendy and sophisticated vibe that thankfully avoids the stuffiness of some high-end restaurants.

The panoramic selection of wines also adds to that ambiance, including Abbazia Di Novacella, Alto Adige Pinot Grigio (RM 100 per glass, RMB 481 for a bottle), Alta Mora Etna Bianco DOC (RMB 115 per glass or RMB 540 for a bottle), Umani Rouchi Fonte Del Re Lacrima Di Morro D'alba (RMB 80 per glass, RMB 380 per bottle), Terre Nere Etna Rosso (RMB 122 glass, RMB 560 per bottle) and many, many more.

Lynne Chen – the restaurant's highly esteemed sommelier, formerly of TRB and the Opposite House – and Wine Director Krishna Hathaway, make those drink choices easy. All these facets really are flawless, and are sure to make Mojo a prime choice for anyone looking to splurge on creative, eloquently prepared dishes. *Kyle Mullin*



PHOTO: UNI YOU



OMY

**COURTYARD 4 JAPANESE JOINT
FEATURES FRIED OYSTERS AND
QUALITY SUSHI**

Daily 5.30pm-2am. 80, Courtyard 4, Gongti Beilu, Chaoyang District (next to Q Mex, where Kro's Nest used to be) (8597 0350)

朝阳区工体北路4号院80号机电研究院内

Chef Suenaga Hidetada wields his long sushi knife like a saber, but his most impressive weapon is his blazing cooking torch. He aims it at the toro sushi – RMB 198 at the new Q Mex-neighborly Courtyard 4 restaurant Omy – grilling it ever so slightly until juicy with a subtle smokey flavor. Sitting at the counter and watching the Japanese chef (who hails from Kagoshima in southern Japan, and has worked in Tokyo, Switzerland, and Malaysia prior to making his way to Beijing) prepare the sushi is a true delight, amounting to dinner and a show in one.

At Omy (a play on a Japanese slang term for “yummy,” and also pun for the English phrase “oh my!”) the biggest draw is the offbeat originality of its best dishes. Case in point: the fried oyster platter with its juicy cuts of white seafood served in shells, memorable for their crispy batter casings, each doused with three different stores of sauce: bitter tartar, tonkatsu, and codfish roe. Other creative highlights include the grilled eel topped rice with soy sauce (RMB 138), for a fantastic balance of sweet and salty.

Not all of those creative dishes are successes. I wasn't a fan of the tofu platter (RMB 52), because despite

their tasty toppings like caviar and sashimi, the tofu itself was too slimy for my tastes. Thankfully my palate was much more inspired by Hidetada's more conventional – and delicious – fare like assorted sashimi (RMB 198) and roasted salmon sushi (RMB 42).

The sake selection is also strong, including buzzed up-and-coming brands like Kid Junmai (RMB 200 for a 200ml bottle) and also a tempting sake cocktail menu with half a dozen varieties at around RMB 80 per glass.

Omy's decor is light and bright, a nice departure from the dingier and generic Japanese *izakayas* that can be found around Liangmaqiao and Sanlitun. The plates have a sand grain texture and a similar color scheme to the restaurant's decor, all of which comes courtesy of designer Claudio Colucci, a graduate of the prestigious “Les Arts Decoratifs” and protege of the award-winning designer Philippe Starck in Paris. Thanks to his easy input, Omy has a gentle seaside vibe that's both relaxing and inviting.

Together, these aspects make Omy a distinctive Japanese joint that's a must-try for both sushi devotees and fans of creative Japanese eats. *Kyle Mullin*

KOKOROWA

TREAT YOURSELF TO A LAVISH 15-COURSE JAPANESE MEAL IN DONGSI

Tue-Sun 5-10pm. 35 Cuifu Jiadao, Dongcheng District (6401 6101)

东城区崔府夹道35号

Kokorowa, a traditional Japanese restaurant situated near Dongsi, is the perfect choice if you're looking to splash some cash. Meaning "laidback" or "inner peace" in Japanese, Kokorowa's exterior reflects this concept well, its entrance simply adorned with only a small pink sakura tree and miniature rock garden.

Kokorowa pushes multi-course dining to another level, but at a price. RMB 1,280 gets you a bursting 15 courses, all executed by their two chefs: one Chinese and one Japanese. There is no set menu; instead, you sit around the 10-seat wooden bar and wait for whatever Japanese delicacies the chefs deem fit to serve that day, according to the freshest ingredients that are on offer.

Kokorowa's owner hails from Tianjin and runs a seafood import business, a fact made wholly apparent with every morsel of fish consumed throughout our meal. Ingredients that were served during our visit included Canadian *uni* (sea urchin), fat spot prawns, mackerel, Spanish thick-cut

tuna, and oysters topped with caviar, competing for the best we have ever had in Beijing.

We also enjoyed the roasted potato with pollack roe, mayonnaise, and olive oil. This dish was particularly showy; a blow torch is used to heat the mixture until the whole bowl bursts into flame and the surface of the mayonnaise puffs up and seared a rich brown. We were also particularly impressed by the grilled silvery pout, with its crisp skin and succulent, juicy chunks of meat. Depending on the day, other courses are likely to include some take on sushi, soup, tempura, globefish, and grilled scallops with *nori*. The meal was rounded off with honeydew melon from Shizuoka, sweetened and soaked in Japanese whiskey for a boozy digestif kick.

Kokorowa is undoubtedly a treat worth saving up for; avoid disappointment by calling in advance as the restaurant only seats 10 customers per day to maintain rigorous quality standards. *Tracy Wang*



PHOTO: UNI YOU

WHAT'S NEW RESTAURANTS



BLACK KNIGHT

SPICY TAIWANESE HOT POT IN BEAUTIFUL CLOISSONNÉ BOWLS

Daily 11.30am-2.30pm, 5.30-midnight. 103, Unit A, Winterless Center, 1 Xi Dawang Lu, Chaoyang District (6538 8789)

黑武士: 朝阳区西大望路1号温特莱中心A座底商103

Black Knight is a unique Taiwanese hot pot restaurant tucked away in Dawang Lu's Winterless Center. The restaurant's Japanese gangster branding (its Chinese name, 黑武士 *hei wushi*, means black Samurai or warrior), black leather sofas, and Hennessy Cognac XO wall give off a confusing vibe reminiscent of a night club, that is until you spot the hot pot apparatus.

Black Knight's signature combo of half spicy, half original broth (RMB 198) comes in a pretty cloisonné pot, pre-packed with yam and tender pork ribs, clearly benefiting from 24 hours of seasoning before being rubbed with flour and fried.

In terms of additional ingredients, meat ranges from RMB 58-680 a plate, shrimp or beef balls from RMB 18-38, and vegetables from RMB 12-28. The restaurant also counts itself amongst the small number of hot pot joints where you can drink the broth. It's brewed fresh for several hours every morning using bones from the cuts of meat and boiled for a sumptuous bisque. Also don't forget to order the all-important signature dipping sauce.

Ease the burn with one of the Taiwanese beers (RMB 15-22) that pepper the menu, or for a digestive aid grab a bottle of Taiwanese *baijiu* (RMB 158-300).

Black Knight falls a little on the pricier side for hot pot options around town, but the high quality of the food and drinks justify the added cost. As with all hot pot outings, it's best to visit with a larger group if you want to keep costs down, have a more varied order to chuck into the steamy boiling broth, and, in this case, have more mouths to drink Black Knight's delicious soup. *Tracy Wang*

PHOTO: COURTESY OF BLACK KNIGHT



THIS IS A BURGER.



TOPWIN CENTER (三里屯通盈中心) B1-2

BEIJING • SINGAPORE • KUALA LUMPUR • PHNOM PENH • BALI • BANGKOK

ANTLERS

A GRATIFYING AND HOMELY MATCHING OF TAIWANESE GUA BAO AND BEER

Tue-Fri 5.30pm-late, Sat-Sun 4pm-late. 34 Fangjia Hutong, Dongcheng District
东城区方家胡同34号

Antlers, despite its cozy space and even tighter kitchen, or perhaps because of it, is pushing to do a small number of things very well. The newest venue on Fangjia Hutong, what has gradually risen to become Dongcheng's eminent street for bars and quick and easy alcohol-absorbing snacks, sticks to a similar formula to that of its neighbors (think Tuk Tuk for sandwiches, MoxiMoxi for falafel, and Was Park for burgers) but has a secret weapon up its sleeve: the lesser known southern Chinese snack, *gua bao*.

Originating in Taiwan, and literally meaning "cut bread," *gua bao* are composed of a soft and fluffy c-shaped dough bun, somewhat similar to that of a *baozi* casing, generously stuffed with some variation on a meat and vegetable filling and sprinkled with peanuts. In Antlers' case, the four options (RMB 22 for one, RMB 58 for a choice of three) – lamb, beef, pork, and red curry tofu – are more gourmet than one you might find on the streets of Taipei but are a perfect selection for fans of the snack or the unacquainted (and soon to be converted).

The beauty of Antlers' *gua bao* is that despite the rich meat – slow-cooked in their accompanying sauces for extra tenderness – the in-house made buns are light

enough so that they don't fill you up and detract from your ability to happily eat three or more. The winners here are the classic pork, which is satisfyingly simple, like a *hongshaorou* sandwich, as well as the tofu, which avoids the trap of being overly damp and instead provides the ideal match for a beer thanks to its slow-burning red curry sauce.

The beer selection of imported bottles is nothing groundbreaking for the area which is rife with bars. However, it is novel in that it's arranged in order of price, making for a no-fuss pull from the fridge. The cocktail menu is so far small but accomplished with penicillins, revolvers, and our favorite, frangelico sours, setting you back around RMB 50. Mixed drinks are RMB 30 and shots RMB 20. Management will also be making a concerted effort to expand their whiskey selection.

The space suits these classier sips thanks to warm but dimmed overhanging Edison bulbs, dark wood furnishings, white-washed walls, and uncomplicated renovation of its hutong space, retaining the overhanging beams. This all helps Antlers attain a level of charm that stands to make this newbie a favorite haunt on an ever-improving street of simple yet dynamic dining. *Tom Arnstein*



PHOTO: JUN YOU

WHAT'S NEW RESTAURANTS



ANDY'S RESTAURANT

WEST AFRICAN COMFORT FOOD

Daily 11am-midnight. B1-521, Bldg 5, Sanlitun Soho,
8 Dongsanhuan Beilu, Chaoyang District (135 2104
4632 or 185 1127 1611)

朝阳区东三环北路8号三里屯Soho5号楼B1-521

Tough as it is to believe, Sanlitun Soho is becoming a promising hub for eats from all over the world. The complex welcomed Hawaiian eats at Poke Inn, and the substantially more successful Pachakutiq in recent months.

This time we're seeking to try the Nigerian fare at Andy's Restaurant & Bar. From the menu to the decor, it's a satisfying spot for meaty soups and stews.

The *egusi* with *ukazi*, a comforting vegetable soup to which either beef or lamb is added and served alongside a piece spongy *garri* (a West African staple made with fermented cassava root), purposefully bland so as to help temper the spiciness of the *ukazi*. The dish's beef proved tougher than those of us unaccustomed to Nigerian cuisine might expect, though not off-puttingly so, and we found that mixing it with its thick, curry-esque *ukazi* made the meat more satisfyingly tender and juicy, while also leaving it with a mild kick.

Standard cocktails like margaritas, Manhattans, and pina colodas are also on hand for RMB 40, along with whiskeys, gins, cognacs, and tequilas. We would have liked to see more Nigerian beverages on offer to accompany the single African beer and African Malta (RMB 30 each).

The space is positively simple, but the walls are dolled up with a few colorful Nigerian-style murals and a turntable in the corner, all of which makes the restaurant feel more akin to as if you were visiting the apartment of an old pal from Nigeria rather than an overly professional eatery. That's very much part of the charm though, making Andy's a friendly, inviting, and refreshingly unpretentious spot to sample a unique cuisine that Beijing is otherwise sorely lacking. *Kyle Mullin*



**HIGH
TOWN**
海棠精酿



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北京市朝阳区三里屯北街81号1幢那里花苑二层D205
D205, 2nd Floor, Nali Patio, NSanlitun
Street, Chaoyang District, Beijing.



Daily 11am-10pm. 112-115 Bojinghaoting, Dongzhimen Wai, 8 Shizipo Jie, Dongcheng District (6413 0991)
东城区东直门外十字坡街8号铂晶豪庭底商112-115

Beijing pie-by-the-slice stalwart Pizza+ is getting a makeover. Rechristened Pizza Saporita, the new brand will offer customers a lot more than just pizza with a new in-restaurant store that offers a range of gourmet products at affordable prices.

Founded in 2012 by Italian food importer Andrea Ruiti and 2011 World Pizza Championship (known as Campionato Mondiale della Pizza in Italian) winning chef Fabrizio Montori, Pizza+ quickly made a name for itself by offering authentic Italian-style pizza using only the best imported ingredients. Even the water used to make the dough was shipped in from Italy.

But facing an increasingly crowded pizza market in Beijing and rising rents, the co-owners felt it was time for a fresh look at the brand.

"We started Pizza+ as something of a hobby," said co-owner Ruiti, "but beginning late last year, we decided that if we were serious, we should do it properly or not do it at all."

The pizza will stay the same – including all the dough being handmade by Chef Montori – but everything else is getting an upgrade, including the customer experience.

"We were not happy with some aspects of our service," said Ruiti. "We learned a lot from this market and customer feedback. We wanted the quality of our service to match the quality of our food."

The biggest change for customers will be the opportunity to buy the best imported Italian products for the same retail price as they are listed in Europe.

"There's so much markup for imported goods," said Ruiti, who has over 20 years of experience in the import business. "The same bottle of Chianti I can buy in Italy for EUR 10 will cost EUR 40 in a store here in Beijing and over EUR 75 in a Beijing restaurant."

The new "Saporita Store," which will be located inside each of the branches, will offer a broad range of products including pasta, wine, cheese, and biscuits. Customers can browse through a digital menu on in-store tablets or the new company website for takeaway or delivery at prices well below other supermarkets or retail outlets.

The company also has plans to expand, but wants to do it right. After all, it takes nearly 12 months of training – including tutelage under the rigorous eye of Chef Montori – before a new chef can be fully ready to make pizzas for customers. But Ruiti is eager to bring their specialty pizzas – the "Forest Pizza" is the crown jewel featuring generous portions of salsiccia, walnuts, mushrooms, and mozzarella, with a truffle kicker.

By taking a fresh approach to classic recipes, Pizza Saporita has reestablished itself at the top of the Beijing – and soon China – pizza hierarchy. *Jeremiah Jenne*
www.pizzasaporita.com.cn



V

... vegetarianism 素食主义

Being a vegetarian in China can be a bit like playing the lottery. While Buddhism has a long-established tradition of vegetarianism that's not necessarily reflected in Chinese cooking, more and more people in China are choosing to forego meat for health reasons. The prevalence of tofu in all its many forms makes for an easy source of protein, but many smaller restaurants still seem to think that dishes that only use meat as a "seasoning" are somehow vegetarian. Arm yourself with the phrase "I'm vegetarian, please don't use any meat" 我吃素, 请别加肉 (*wo chi su, qing bie jia rou*) and you should be fine, otherwise try one of Beijing's many fine vegetarian restaurants, such as Fairy Su, King's Joy, or Vege Tiger.

... venison 鹿肉

Not commonly featured in modern Chinese cuisine, venison was a fixture on high-class menus during imperial times, when hunting was still popular. Therefore, your best bet if you want to try venison is none other than a restaurant that serves imperial cuisine, such as Najia Xiaoguan, which has braised venison with mushrooms on the menu.

... vermicelli 粉丝

In East Asia, the English term 'vermicelli' usually refers to thin rice noodles (known specifically as *mifen* 米粉), while the Chinese term *fensi* 粉丝 actually refers to noodles made out of mung bean starch (which are also known as cellophane noodles, just to add another level of confusion). *Fensi* form the basis of the popular street snack hot and sour noodles (*suanlafen* 酸辣粉) as well as the comically-named Sichuan dish "ants climbing a tree" (*mayi shangshu* 蚂蚁上树), in which they are stir-fried and served with a spicy minced pork sauce.



BACK FOR MORE

PUNJABI INDIAN RESTAURANT

A DECADE ON, LUCKY STREET VETERAN SURPRISES WITH MODERN, HEALTHY MENU

Daily 11.30am-10.30pm. 2/F, C-8, Lucky Street, 1 Chaoyang Gongyuan Xilu, Chaoyang District (5867 0221)

本杰比印度餐厅：朝阳区朝阳公园西路1号好运街C-82层

It takes something special to stay afloat for one year in the choppy waters of Beijing's restaurant scene, let alone 10, but that is just what veteran Indian restaurant Punjabi has done, celebrating a decade in business this year.

After such a long stint, no-one would blame Punjabi for simply sitting back and serving up the same dishes they have always been known for. Instead owner Gireesh S. Chaudhury has made the brave decision to revamp the entire menu, hoping to differentiate Punjabi from other mediocre Indian restaurants in the Beijing market.

Forget any preconceived notions of dull, cut-and-paste Indian dishes like chicken tikka masala – this is light, modern Indian cuisine. Take the barbecue king prawns, for example. The prawns are marinated in a lightly spiced cream and cheese mixture, allowing their natural flavor to shine through. A freshly made mint chutney adds freshness and spice. Elsewhere, a stickily sweet dish of tamarind-glazed okra (watch out – there's a kick behind that initial sweetness) demonstrates Punjabi's

new, modern approach to presentation, which has been realized with the help of Lido-based French restaurant Jomi's Antoine Bunel and Jamie Penaloza, a Beijing-based food creative and vlogger.

The new menu was still being finalized at the time of writing, but is likely to revolve around set menus with four-, six-, and eight-dish options priced from around RMB 128-288. The dishes will change frequently and include options for vegetarians, vegans, and other special diets.

Fans of Punjabi's older fare needn't worry; they will be keeping a short menu of old favorites, although even these have had an update to both taste and presentation. Punjabi's take on the classic vegetarian dish palak paneer (paneer cheese with spinach) is perhaps the best we have tried in Beijing, the sauce rich with the flavor of fenugreek and made with chopped spinach rather than the lurid green purée many restaurants fall back on. So whether you're hoping for a traditional Indian restaurant experience or craving something new, Punjabi is certainly worth a revisit. *Robynne Tindall*



PHOTO: JUN YOU



JIANGXI PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT RESTAURANT

BETTER THAN DUNKIN' DONUTS

Daily 11.30am-2pm, 4.30-9pm. Madianqiao, Beitaiping Zhuang, Haidian District (8200 3999)

赣人之家：海淀区北太平庄马甸桥江西驻京办内

Jiangxi Province was home to the first revolutionary base set up by Mao Zedong in the early days of the communist movement. Hence, we felt it only natural to start our ordering at the Jiangxi Provincial Government Restaurant with Mao's much-eulogized favorite dish, one that crosses the borders of several provincial cuisines, *hongshaorou* (RMB 75); fatty pork braised in a sweet sauce.

Here, Mao's dish of choice is served over a candle to keep it warm, however the hefty bits of layered pork were a tad too fatty for our liking. That being said, the flavor was passable and we appreciated what little meat we had.

Many of the other offerings on the menu are named after the provincial capital of Nanchang, home to over 5 million people. The Nanchang fried powder (RMB 20) was basically just fried noodles with some vegetables that probably came out of the freezer.

A better surprise, however, came from the 'repair the water whistle' (RMB 28), a name that gives absolutely no insight whatsoever as to what the dish actually entails. In fact, the dish is comprised of a little frying pan filled with tiny pork dumplings (pictured above) – quite possibly

the cutest thing we've ever seen. The dough surrounding the small parcels was slightly sweet, offset by the savory flavors of the pork and the scallions sprinkled on top.

While we were not overly impressed with the food (can you tell?), the desserts left a more lasting impression, albeit in the form of a lengthy sugar rush. Even though the Nanchang white sugar cakes (RMB 28) were quite possibly the sweetest things we've ever tried, they were actually better than some of the offerings served by Beijing's increasingly ubiquitous Dunkin' Donuts.

Other desserts verged on the silly (yet photogenic) side: little pandas reminiscent of *mochi* filled with sweet cream, a Chinese calligraphy brush set made of rice and cream, and a mousse shaped like a flowerpot.

While this restaurant felt very much like a mediocre business hotel establishment in both food quality and atmosphere, going back here would most certainly not be as arduous as, say, the Long March because of the saving grace that is their dessert menu. Just make sure you've brought your sweet tooth and save your appetite for the end of the meal. *Margaux Schreurs*



THE BRICKS

JAZZY LIVE MUSIC VENUE FOR SANLITUN SOPHISTICATES

Daily 7pm-2am (Mon-Tue piano only; Bands perform Wed-Sat; Open Sunday but with no entertainment).

B1-007, North Area of Shoukaibojun, Sanlitun, Xindong Lu, Chaoyang District (6465 6692)

朝阳区三里屯新东路首开铂郡北区B1-007号

The trumpet blared, the piano dazzled, and the bass throbbed as the crowd looked on. The Alley Cats were clearly pleased to be performing outside of the fancier hotel bars that are their norm, in a more intimate venue called The Bricks in Sanlitun's Shoukaibojun complex. And the 50 or so smartly dressed attendees, that filled the cozy joint to capacity on its opening night this past March, seemed just as keen to live out their bebop-era fantasies and hear some jazzy rhythms in Sanlitun, a neighborhood known for its nightlife but often void of decent live music.

The Bricks is designed to fill that gap by enlisting both local talent for residencies, and touring acts that typically perform at classy hotel bars like Centro and Atmosphere. The owners have spent years booking such bands at those hotels as part of their work at Segrace International Cultural Communications, and The Bricks is a passion project, giving these musicians a place to flex their muscles and not be reduced to background noise, while also offering attendees a time warp to the sounds of the 1950s.

Jazz fans are sure to enjoy the venue's classy-yet-casual atmosphere. Don't turn your noses up, music snobs; the talent may be hotel bands, but in a more snug environment like this they were visibly liberated, soloing with vigor and touching on both smooth jazz and bebop. Sure, no talent of Blue Note's caliber is likely to stop by anytime soon. But the absence of a cover charge means The Bricks is far more affordable and prices find it on par with a night at, say, Modernista, albeit with less dancing and a snugger, more relaxed ambiance.

Another bonus is the bar's convenient location compared to Blue Note's Qianmen spot, making The Bricks a sturdy addition for Sanlitun regulars looking to bar hop between Sanlitun's numerous speakeasies. Gig enthusiasts will be equally inclined to spend their entire evening at this nookish new venue.

However, keep in mind that The Bricks' location in Shoukaibojun complex's basement makes it a little tricky to find – head down the stairs from the street, then enter the basement level doors adjacent to a hair salon, before turning left/walking north. *Kyle Mullin*

WHAT'S NEW BARS & CLUBS



PRESS RELEASE

TINY NEW TOPWIN BAR IMPRESSES WITH SOUS-VIDE COCKTAILS AND PLENTY OF WINE

Daily 6pm-late. B1-10, Topwin Center (inside L'Epasar), Chaoyang District (182 1020 0076)

朝阳区通盈中心商场B1-10(乐芭莎美食共和国蓝墙内)

It's like a scene straight out of a boozy author's masterpiece: A classy bar hidden in a shopping mall's basement, its cocktails being prepared in a sous-vide machine, and a bartender that loves rapid-fire chatter and an even quicker free flow of ideas.

Owner Issey Lin uses a top of the line Anova sous-vide machine to vacuum-seal and infuse her cocktails with fresh fruit and other ingredients, giving the drinks subtly complex flavors. Her cocktail list is short but heavy on inspiration, with each drink featuring fun literary references.

We thoroughly enjoyed the Write Drunk, Edit Sober (which, like all of Lin's cocktails, it's priced at a more than reasonable RMB 65). Taking its title from an Ernest Hemingway quote, the cocktail is straightforwardly delicious in a way fitting of its muse. Its thorn apple infused rum gives the drink a sweetly sour complexity that's enhanced by the chunk of grapefruit.

Lin is more than eager to explain the process and inspiration behind her drinks, offering up fun mile-a-minute anecdotes and vivid descriptions that will leave guests charmed and entertained.

Together these elements, along with its cozy ambiance, help Press Release stand out in Beijing's increasingly crowded cocktail scene. *Kyle Mullin*





CFC LOUNGE

NEW GUOMAO BAR IS A HIVE FOR BEIJING'S WORKER BEES

Daily 6pm-2am. A-201, IFC, 8a Jianguomen Waidajie, Chaoyang District (8566 0986)

朝阳区建国门外大街甲8号IFC大厦A座201

Admit it, we've all wished for a nice bar in the same building that we work in, perfect for a cheeky midday tippie (or strictly for after 6pm if you're a good employee, ahem). For better or for worse, the appearance of CFC Lounge, which stands for "Craft Fresh Cocktail," has made that dream a reality for the CBD worker bees stationed in or around the IFC.

Of course, even if your office isn't located inside the fancy IFC building, you can still run over and enjoy their tipples, found on the second floor. The 13 cocktails on the menu of CFC gravitate towards the classics (RMB 70-80): including Peter Liu's specialty Cuban heaven.

There are also three pages of single malt Scottish whiskies, as well as whiskies from America and Japan, all

sold by the glass or bottle.

Sticking to the classics, CFC's rendition of an Old Fashioned was blissfully alcohol-heavy, and adorned with a moreish maraschino cherry. The Cuban heaven will make for a great summertime cocktail thanks to a sweet blend of rum and tart passion fruit. The whiskey sour thankfully also did not disappoint; its flavor delicious and smooth.

Drinks are accompanied by a playlist reminiscent of any five-star hotel lobby or bar – a pro or a con depending on your preference – leaving the mind to wonder "am I in Beijing, New York City, or Singapore?" Don't fret though, just sit back, relax, and after one more drink the only thing you'll be left to wonder is "does it even matter?"

Tracy Wang

WHAT'S NEW BARS & CLUBS

REGAIN ELEMENT

NEAT AND PROMISING TWO-FLOOR CHINESE BREWPUB AT WUDAOYING

Daily 2pm-late. East Gate of 10 Wudaoying Hutong, Dongcheng District (186 1141 1109)
东城区五道营胡同10号院东侧口内

Located next to renovated Vietnamese restaurant Wan, this two-story brewpub is looking to coax Wudaoying Hutong's foot traffic in for a pint.

The venue is neat and carefully designed; there are about six leather stools on the first floor sat around the clean-cut wooden bar, as well as three fermenting tanks looming behind the bar.

Out of the nine taps costing between RMB 35 and RMB 60, during our visit, Regain only stocked one of their own beers on tap, the Midnight IPA. The others are guest beers: Hefeweizen and Vanilla Coffee Stout from NBeer, Monkey's Fist IPA from Slow Boat, Ghost IPA from Harvest for local craft beer lovers; Goose Island's Honkers, Boulevard's Tank 7, Rogue's Double Chocolate Stout for the imported beer drinkers; and Liefmans Fruitesse for something, well, fruitier. We ordered a flight of five, which were served in what looked like laboratory specimen bottles, and at RMB 80 a rip-off: We recommend you just order a pint.

The upstairs dining area holds various sized tables for small groups and the music here is well curated, and for the hungry ones there is a simple Western food menu.

Without more of their own brews on tap, Regain Element has not yet come into full bloom and its atmosphere and strong guest brews are certainly its saving grace so far. That being said, we're excited to see how things develop and are always appreciative of a new respite from Wudaoying's heavy foot traffic. *Tracy Wang*



PHOTO: UNI YOU

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P.S. WE ATE YOU

Every issue, we like to shine a spotlight on the most delicious dishes we've stumbled upon recently. Chow down!

Australian beef ribs

Q Mex, RMB 188

Roasted imported Australian beef ribs served alongside sour cream garlic mushrooms, chimichurri sauce, and crispy potato wedges. Swing by on Thursdays for Q Mex's irresistible half-price ribs deal.

eggs Benedict

Jing-A, RMB 108 (as part of a three-course brunch set)

New on Jing-A's brunch menu, the eggs Benedict are one option of three as part of a three-course set meal. The crispy bacon blew us away, something we don't say often in Beijing, and the eggs were as runny as they should be. Pair with a potent breakfast beergarita, and you're set.

avo smash

Home Grounds, RMB 50

Located right next to popular gym Base Fit and run by the same team, it's no surprise that Home Grounds' dishes are

both healthy and hearty. We recommend the smashed avocado, topped with feta cheese, a sprinkling of cumin-scented hazelnut dukkah, and a soft boiled egg.

foie gras and duck ravioli

Mojo, RMB 188

Aiming to meet high expectations, new Gongti addition Mojo's ravioli with foie gras and duck left us impressed. The dish was rounded out with seared king prawns, baby spinach, and veal, and yet was not overwhelmed by this variety of ingredients.

beef tenderloin pinxto

La Galleria, RMB 78

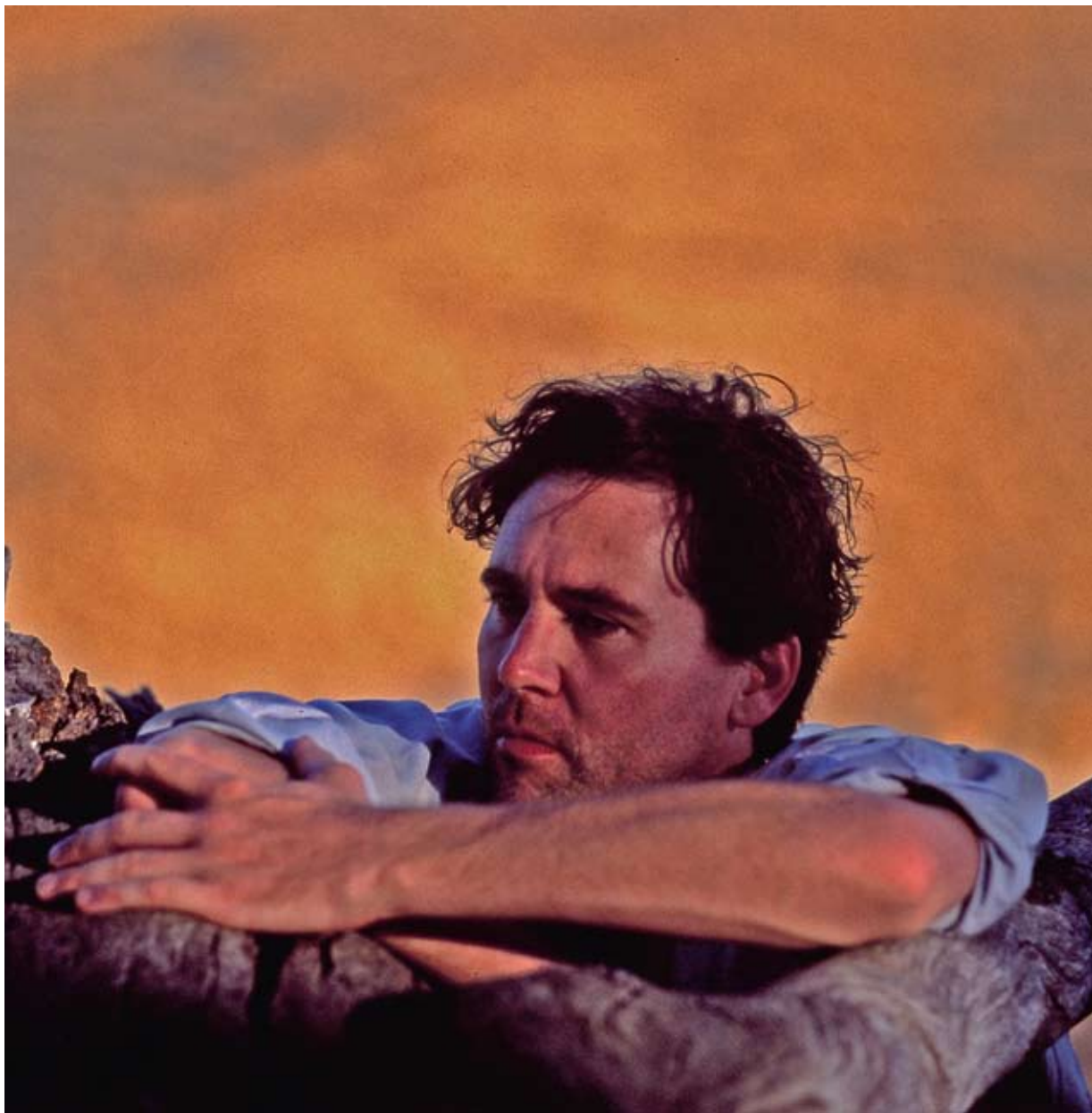
A generous wedge of toasted homemade baguette slice topped off with sweet caramelized onions, Australian beef tenderloin, and a slice of brie cheese. The tender beef and crunchy baguette make for perfect palette partners.



PHOTO COURTESY OF Q MEX

GO

SUZHOU // ONLINE FLORISTS // DATONG // NOT JUST FOR TOURISTS



DOUBAN WETWARE FESTIVAL

May 18-21 - Chinese social media and music hosting website Douban annihilates Beijing's weak summer festival lineup with a list of international acts on par with some of the best indie festivals in the West. Acts include Andy Stott, Cass McCombs (pictured above), Low, Doplereffekt, Stephen O'Malley, Alessandro Cortini, Cold Cave, Kode9, Tim Hecker, and Laurel Halo. RMB 239 (May 18), RMB 329 (single day pass May 19-21), RMB 899 (four-day pass). Various times. Tango 3F (6425 5677), School Bar (6402 8881)

PHOTO COURTESY OF ANTI RECORDS



SUZHOU

SERENE GARDENS AND MEANDERING WATERWAYS

By Robynne Tindall

As the old saying goes, “above there is heaven; below, there is Suzhou and Hangzhou” (上有天堂，下有苏杭 *shang you tiantang xia you suhang*), referring to the legendary beauty of the region around these two cities. Long renowned as a city of classical gardens and meandering canals, Suzhou may not have escaped China’s inevitable march of progress but it still makes for a diverting and relaxing short break away from Beijing.

What to do

The classical gardens for which Suzhou is known are spread throughout the city center, largely within walking distance of each other. The most famous are the sprawling Humble Administrator’s Garden, the small-but-perfectly-formed Garden of the Master of the Nets, and the Lion Forest Garden, which is known for its sculptural stonework. Also worth a visit is the I.M. Pei-designed Suzhou Museum, just west of the Humble Administrator’s Garden (free entrance). The stunning building offers a modern interpretation of the Jiangnan architectural style.

In the early evening, take a stroll along Pingjiang Lu, a quaint paved road running alongside a canal. It’s had the Nanluogu Xiang treatment in recent years (read: pointless souvenir stands and endless shops selling milk tea and novelty ice creams) but the atmosphere is still pleasant enough.

Where to stay

What boutique business hotel Hotel Soul (rooms from RMB 420 per night) lacks in actual soul it makes up for with large rooms, comfy beds, and a very central location

– within 15 minutes walk of most of the main downtown sights. If you’d prefer something a little more befitting your surroundings, try the Pan Pacific Suzhou, a sprawling five-star resort near the Panmen Scenic Area designed to resemble a classical Chinese garden. The outside may be a little bit kitschy but the rooms are luxuriously appointed – and with prices starting from RMB 580 per night it’s pretty affordable luxury.

What to eat

Suzhou cuisine, much like Jiangsu Cuisine as a whole, is known for its subtle, slightly sweet flavors and abundant use of fish and aquatic vegetables from nearby Taihu. Famous local dishes include the squirrel-shaped mandarin fish (松鼠桂鱼 *songshu gui yu*), the flesh of the fish scored so that it puffs out like a squirrel’s tail when deep fried, slow-braised belly pork (樱桃肉 *yingtao rou*), and broth with silver fish and water shield (莼菜银鱼汤 *chuncaiyin yu tang*). Try them at venerable restaurant Songhelou, which is particularly well-known for its squirrel-shaped mandarin fish.

The rest of the city, particularly the area around pedestrianized Guanqian Jie, is dotted with restaurants and snack stalls serving cheap noodles and dumplings. The whimsically named Dream of Taoyuan (which has branches near Guanqian Jie and Pingjiang Lu) serves a concise menu of local snacks and dishes, including braised pig’s trotter, sweet rice dumplings with red bean paste, and excellent pork and shepherd’s purse wontons in chicken soup. A filling meal here won’t set you back much more than RMB 30 per person.



ONLINE FLORISTS

GET YOUR SPRING FLOWER FIX

By Tracy Wang

Unfortunately, Beijing's flower markets are wilting at a rapid clip, thus making it harder and harder to track down fresh floral arrangements, especially conveniently, but all is not lost: the city is now also home to several popular online flower shops that will deliver beautiful bouquets straight to your door, helping you bring spring into your home.

The Beast

We'll leave this one for the rich kids with expensive tastes who want to burn all their *hongbao* in one go, or for those who have done something particularly egregious and are in need of a fitting way to admonish their sins.

With four locations in Beijing, The Beast is famous for its refined style. They sell fresh cut and preserved fresh flower boxes ranging from RMB 199 to 10,780, depending on whether you want to add jewelry or perfume on the side.

If you really want to push the boat out, they've also got 120cm-tall unicorn-shaped toys made of preserved fresh flowers, which cost RMB 59,999. You must have really been a bad boy to warrant buying one of these. They also sell homeware, including bedding, tableware, candles, and the like. All items delivered within 24 hours from Shanghai.

Daily 10am-10pm. S3-11, S3-21, Taikooli South, 19 Sanlitun Lu, Chaoyang District (185 1397 5160, thebeastshop.com)

Rose Only

With a focus on roses and tailored floral selections, this brand is on the up, garnering hot endorsements from a

number of Chinese celebrities, including Zhang Ziyi, Yang Yang, and Yang Mi. Bouquets range in price from RMB 999 to 2,999 and they also offer preserved fresh roses, from between RMB 999 to 3,699. It's selling point is that it literally forces commitment between seller and receiver, only allowing you to select one lucky beau per account. All flowers delivered within 24 hours.

Daily 10am-10pm. NLG-09B, Taikooli North, 19 Sanlitun Lu, Chaoyang District (6415 1517, roseonly.com.cn)

Meng Flora+

Compared to The Beast and Rose Only, Meng Flora's prices are much more reasonable. A single, 10cm rose (from a choice of six colors costs RMB 65. Ten roses in a choice of 10 colors cost RMB 90, and bouquets imported from Ecuador, Kenya, and the Netherlands will set you back an affordable RMB 70 to RMB 430. Their Chaoyangmen-adjacent florist is modern and suitably swish. All flowers are delivered within 24 hours.

Mon-Sat 9am-7pm. C1-309, Chaowai Men, 26 Chaowai Dajie, Chaoyang District (4000 380 233, WeChat ID: mengfloraplus)

FlowerPlus

Based in Shanghai, FlowerPlus provides a weekly package for varying budgets, ranging from RMB 99 to 399. Simply place an order via their WeChat (ID: everose888), choose the date you want to receive the flowers (Monday, Wednesday, or Saturday), pay, and wait. Deliveries usually arrive around 8-9am on the selected date, and you will get a free vase on the first delivery. (400 888 5928)

DATONG

A HISTORICAL CITY IN FLUX WORTHY OF A WEEKENDER

By Tom Arnstein



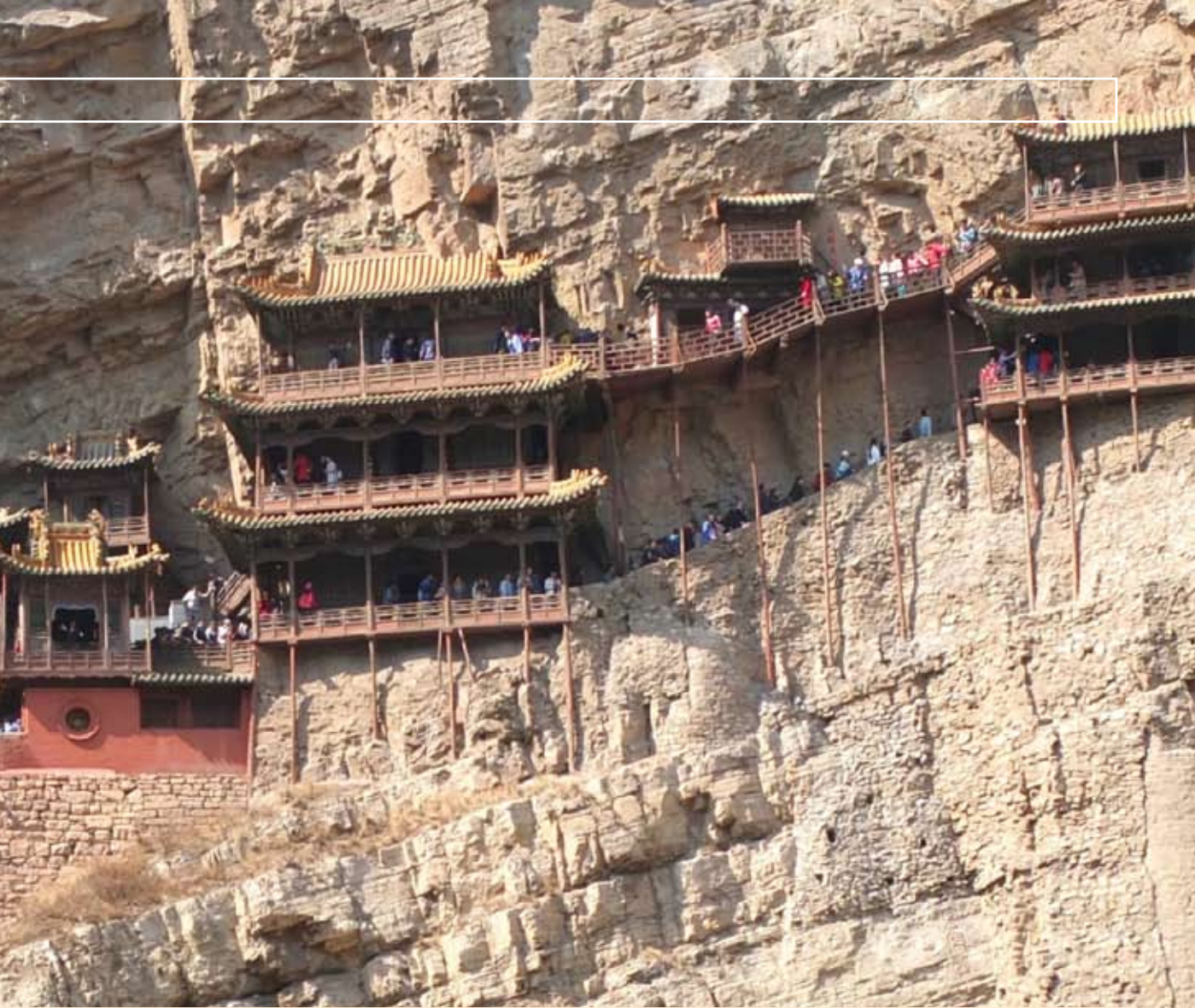
Located an hour's flight or a 4.5-hour bus ride west of Beijing and bordering Inner Mongolia, Shanxi province's city of Datong is, putting it bluntly, a hard city to like. Without its numerous center-city temples and historical sites dotted around the perimeter it would most likely be entirely unremarkable save for its more modern designation as China's "coal capital." That latter title has also unfortunately afforded the city its fair share of pollution, a factor that is made worse on the ground by the immense construction that has suffocated the city over the past few years. The dust that swirls even throughout Datong's shiniest districts is borne from the city's previous mayor's resolute pledge to rebuild the city center from scratch, resurrecting relics of the past and leaving 40,000 displaced households in its wake. Now that he's gone, the construction slowly drags on.

That being said, Datong's proximity to Beijing and its rich historical importance to China as a whole make it an easy, if not particularly luxurious, destination for a

weekend jaunt. Entering the city, the first of many ersatz sights to behold is the newly built city wall, a massive and foreboding structure that follows the path of its Ming dynasty counterpart, circumscribing a modest area of just over 3sqm and making it almost always visible from anywhere in the city center (dust permitting). The Mickey Mouse old town, which is slowly enveloping the south and west sections of the city at the expense of the once lived-in charm of the now empty and crumbling hutongs, is home to Huayan Temple, one of the more impressive of the city center's dozen or so sights. Originally built in 1038 during the Liao dynasty, the sprawling complex boasts the biggest Buddhist hall of its time and is suitably decorated in brilliant and ornate murals. From here you can also climb the accompanying wooden pagoda and get a decent view of the surrounding demolition.

However, it's outside the city where Datong's most famous historical destinations lie – the Hanging Monastery and the Yungang Grottoes (RMB 125 each)

PHOTO: TOM ARNSTEIN



– and can be tackled via a private driver in a day. The Hanging Monastery is a 1.5-hour drive southwest of downtown and is remarkable for its location: perched precariously on the side of a mountain. Built in 491, the temple has undergone extensive renovation, with apparent exception to the splintering stilts that support it, giving extra cause for buckling knees as you make your way around its teetering confines in single file formation. When you're not admiring the view, there are 40 cubbies of varying sizes to peek into, displaying Buddhist reliefs, figures, and complex wooden overhangs.

Moving back towards the city, the Yungang Grottoes, built around the mid-5th century, are made up of 20 stunning larger caves, each decked out with as many as hundreds of Bodhisattvas or, like the largest, just one imposing 20-meter-tall Buddha carved directly into the rock. Several of the painted caves have retained their salmon hue, while others have been unable to escape the infectious need for reconstruction and are reemerging

as smooth 21st century imaginings of what they once were.

In terms of accommodation, there are plenty of hostels dotted throughout the new-old town. However if you're looking for a lavish stay, then the newly built Yunzhong Inn is a diamond in the rough, offering pristine and boutique rooms (breakfast included) across a traditional courtyard, making for a serene escape from the surrounding clamor. Just north of the hotel sits the city's Drum Tower and a plethora of restaurants where you can relish a comforting bowl of one of Shanxi's most notable foods: *daoshaomian*, or knife cut noodles.

Datong may encompass everything wearisome about China's uncompromising road to development but a mixture of historical importance and ease of access makes it at least worthy of consideration if you have a couple of days to kill. The construction has to end at some point, and who knows, the city may have completed its transformation by the time you visit.

NOT JUST FOR TOURISTS

HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OF BEIJING'S SCENIC SPOTS

By Jeremiah Jenne



Beijing's scenic spots are often dismissed as touristy by those of us who have called this city home for longer than, say, six months. This summer, however, you may want to pay them another visit bearing these alternative activities in mind.

Picnic at Beihai Park

Let's start with an easy one. Yes, Beihai Park can be crowded on the weekends especially along the lakeside. But to beat the crowds, head away from the teeming hordes along the shoreline. Among the rocks and trees along the eastern edge of the park are several secluded gardens and pavilions which, if not exactly empty, are sure to seem like quiet oases even on the busiest weekends. We recommend the garden known as Hao Pu Jian. The name, which translates as "Between the Hao and the Pu," refers to two rivers in allegories made famous by the Taoist philosopher Zhuangzi. Originally built by the Qianlong Emperor in 1757, the Hao Pu Jian was also a favorite perch of the Empress Dowager Cixi. It is a multi-level collection of pavilions, pools, and bridges and features several excellent spots to bust out a picnic lunch (and even a bottle of wine or two if you keep it on the down low). To find it, walk along the Eastern shoreline of the lake about 120 meters north of the East Gate and turn away from the lake.

Reading at the Confucian Temple

We were initially going to suggest the yard inside the former residence of Lao She, a Beijing author best known for his use of Beijing dialect, but his home is once again closed for renovations, this time through to January 2018. A worthy replacement for literary getaways is the courtyard of the Confucian Temple and the Imperial Academy (Guozijian). It won't be perfect solitude but lacking the glitz of its colorful neighbor Yonghegong, this venerable complex is often spared the megaphones and matching hats of the large tour groups. There has also been a recent uptick in the number of "Confucius Camps" activities at the site involving groups of young children wearing traditional scholar robes doing call-and-response Confucianism. That said, there is something eminently cool about grabbing a good book on Chinese philosophy (you can't go wrong with the classic *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy* by Feng Yu-lan) and sitting among the ancient trees and stone steles.

Naval Warfare at Summer Palace

Fair warning: We know from personal experience that this is an activity not sanctioned by the park authorities.

We also know from personal experience that you may get kicked out of the Summer Palace for doing this but ... it's a lot of fun on a hot summer day. Kunming Lake is the large artificial reservoir at the center of the Summer Palace. The game is simple: smuggle a few water guns or other similar implements into the palace, rent a boat, head out on the lake, and get in touch with your inner admiral. Word of caution: Be careful of collateral damage. If one of your water cannons hits another boat, say one full of innocent park goers, this will hasten your departure from the premises.

Birdwatching at Yuanmingyuan

Yuanmingyuan is famous as a historic site and a place for teachers to remind their patriotic young students that as much as they might love Adele never to forget how her British ancestors are responsible for the burning of their sacred heritage. Nevertheless, it is also an enormous park of woodlands and lakes. At 864 acres (350 hectares), there is a lot of ground to explore, and much of it is seldom visited. Beijing's birds know this too, and the park is an important habitat for many local species as well as a rest stop for migratory flocks passing through the region. In addition to the ubiquitous magpies, the park also features dozens of other species including a resident population of black swans. As 90 percent of visitors make a beeline for the ruins of the "Western Palaces" in the northern section of the park, any diversion to the left or right will take you to solitude after only a short amount of walking. Head over to the "Fu Hai" (Lake Fu) area for a quiet spot to check out the park's feathered denizens.

Hiking at Olympic Forest Park

At 6.8 square kilometers, the Olympic Forest Park is one of Beijing's largest green spaces. Built as a recreational site for the athletes participating in the 2008 Olympic Games, the park boasts an extensive set of hiking trails, jogging paths, lakes, and wetlands. Accessible by the Line 8 Metro, it also makes a great getaway for urban dwellers seeking green spaces without having to head out to the Great Wall and beyond. Those looking for something a little wilder should instead head over to the northern section (the park is divided by the Fifth Ring Road).



SAFETY FIRST

HOW TO STAY SAFE ON YOUR NEXT BEIJING HIKE

By Jeremiah Jenne

With warmer weather, the temptation grows to escape the heat and smog of downtown Beijing and head for the hills when the skies turn blue. Beijing's mountain ranges and valleys provide surprisingly good opportunities for hiking. But even on the sunniest summer day, it pays to be prepared when hiking. Sudden thunderstorms, unstable terrain, and spotty emergency services in remote areas can turn a pleasant weekend stroll into a trip into an epic – and sometimes dangerous – journey.

One example of such occurred this past February, when two hikers – one from France and one from Germany – needed assistance from local rescue personnel after the hikers became lost near the Jiankou section of the Great Wall. The two hikers had ventured out without food and water. As the sun began to set, they lost their bearings and were forced to call friends, who in turn summoned the authorities, according to a report in *The Shanghai Daily*. After an uncomfortable three-hour wait, the pair were rescued by firefighters.

Many of Beijing's most popular hiking areas also present hazards. Phoenix Mountain, only 51 km away from Haidian

and one of Beijing's most accessible peaks, is famous for its poor footway and crumbling stones. Lingshan and Haituo Mountain each exceed 2,000 meters, hardly Himalayan, but sufficiently high to be taken seriously. Both have been the site of rescues and deaths in the past few years when hikers overestimated the length of their chosen route, became lost, and then were forced to bivouac overnight in cold temperatures.

While the Beijing authorities' simple solution to this problem would seem to be "Buy a ticket to one of our pre-approved Great Wall theme parks and ride the chairlift," there is still plenty of safe hiking to be had around the city provided hikers are adequately prepared.

According to Hayden Opie of Beijing Hikers, people most often find themselves in trouble by being either unprepared for the weather or by tackling a route that is simply too challenging.

"You need enough energy to be able to get back down the mountain," says Opie. "And you need a rough idea of which turn you're supposed to take at that fork in the trail."

PHOTO: HAYDEN OPIE

He adds that hikers should be sure to wear sturdy shoes or boots and to take their own water and food. "You won't find any water on the Great Wall. If you do, it will be being sold by someone at a very inflated price."

Opie also recommends always carrying a fully charged mobile phone just in case.

Simon Ashmore, who leads outdoor educational programs for The Hutong and who holds the Mountain Leader qualification from the Mountain Training Association of England and Wales, concurs.

"People get in trouble the most from getting lost, exposure, and dehydration," says Ashmore.

He also strongly suggests that hikers inform others of their planned route, and expected time to return.

"Always tell a friend what you plan to do and what time you aim to be back. Give them a call or a text or a WeChat message when you are back and safe. Even give them a cut-off time by which to contact you if you forget. Then if you can't be contacted, they can raise the alarm."

What happens when things do go wrong, and you become lost?

"Is it appropriate for me to quote [the British adventurer] Bear Grylls here?" asks Opie. "The mnemonic is Please Remember What's First. P for protection – find a safe spot to hang out and wait, instead of wandering on and getting more lost. R for rescue – think about how you can help your rescuers find you. In Beijing, you can usually get a phone signal. You did bring your phone, didn't you? W for water – this is a tough one in Beijing, with it being so dry. You probably won't find water, and would you want to drink it? But you did bring plenty of water with you, didn't you? F for food – again, a tough one in Beijing. Those squirrels are hard to catch. But again, you did bring plenty of food with you, right?"

But even the best hikers at some point can have their whimsical moments. "Something we always do is check out routes before we take people there for a hike," Opie recalls.

He tells us of a time he went to check on a part of the wall to add to an existing trail. A part he knew was steep. "We hadn't been up there in at least 10 years. What I found was that part of the wall had fallen down, leaving a five-meter scramble with some serious exposure – a slip would have meant a tumble down a 30-meter set of stairs at an 80 degree angle, or a longer fall off the adjacent cliff. I was seriously glad I didn't find out if it would have been the stairs or the cliff. I was equally as glad that I wasn't trying to take a group of hikers down there."

While Beijing's mountains and walls present excellent recreational opportunities for urban dwellers, it pays to be prepared for the unexpected.



Introducing the people who matter

MEET

JI MING // TOM KENEALLY // JIM MCGREGOR // MINDFULNESS // JOERG WUTTKE



THE NOTWIST

May 14 - Since forming in 1989, the The Notwist have become one of Germany's most well regarded and sonically eclectic bands, dabbling in heavy metal, indie rock, and electronica. Now the veteran Bavarian-bred quintet come to Beijing to showcase their many musical incarnations. RMB 150, RMB 120 (advance). 9pm. Yugong Yishan (6404 2711)

PHOTO: PATRICK MORARESCU



Ji Ming opened Soulgoods sneaker shop in Topwin Center in 2016, after having been a sneaker salesman for 16 years. Such a jackground has afforded him a hell of a lot of knowledge about the history of sneakers, as is evident in our Mastermind sneaker quiz below.

1. Sneakers got their name because “they were so quiet, a person wearing them could sneak up on someone.”

T / F

F ×

2. During the first half of the 20th century, sports shoes were worn mostly to play sports. But in the 1950s, kids began wearing them as fashion statements. Even more teens followed the fad after seeing James Dean in sneakers in the popular movie *Rebel Without a Cause*.

T / F

T ✓

3. The basketball star Magic Johnson signed a contract to wear and promote Nike shoes in 1984, which made sneaker sales increase to a whole new level.

T / F

F ✓

4. Kobe Bryant has a lifetime contract with Reebok, one that pays him seven million dollars a year.

T / F

F ✓

5. Converse Chuck Taylor All-Stars, first marketed in 1917, are the all-time best-selling sneakers, with total sales nearing 600 million pairs.

T / F

T ✓

6. In the 1970s, NBA player Darryl Dawkins was offered money by two brands, Nike and Pony, to wear their shoes and help with promotion. Instead of picking sides, he wore Nike on one foot and Pony on the left. A disgruntled Nike ended up canceling their contract.

T / F

T ✓

7. When Nike signed Yao Ming in 2003, it was the first time that the company won an endorsement battle against Reebok.

T / F

F ✓

8. In 2006, Stephon Marbury first launched his Starbury line of sneakers and they became famous for only costing USD 15.

T / F

T ✓

9. The most expensive pair of sneakers in history were the Air Jordan 12s that Michael Jordan wore during the 1997 NBA Finals.

T / F

F ×

10. Adidas recently released a pair of 3D-printed shoes.

T / F

T ✓

Final Score: 8/10

Answer Key

1. True, 2. True, 3. False (it was Michael Jordan), 4. False (it was Alan Iverson), 5. True, 6. True, 7. False (the opposite is true), 8. True, 9. True, 10. True

TOM KENEALLY

MAN BOOKER WINNING AUTHOR OF *SCHINDLER'S LIST* DISCUSSES HIS CHINA CONNECTION

By Kyle Mullin

Though Tom Keneally is best known as the Man Booker Prize-winning author of *Schindler's Ark*, which was adapted into the Academy Award winning 1993 film *Schindler's List*, he nearly made cinematic history a decade earlier in China. The Sydney-born author was attempting, in the early 1980s, to broker a deal between Australian directors and Shanghai studios as part of the two nations' first cultural liaison. While those efforts stalled, Keneally returns to mainland this May as a speaker for the Australian Writers Week in Beijing. Below he tells us more about his long-running China fixation.

I was hoping to get Australian filmmakers and the Shanghai studios to make a feature about the men from Guangdong who came to Australia in the 19th century to mine gold. Many of them were former bandits, and I think it would be fascinating to look at the interaction between them and the white Australians.

But that's just one of the movies I'd like to make if I were a director. And had a rich uncle [laughs].

If you're an author it's best to keep out of the film business. I think films are wonderful. But it's not what I normally like to do at all, though I loved every aspect of making *Schindler's List*.

I thought Spielberg's adaption of my book was good. He had to choose a simple storyline through. A lot had to be sacrificed. He did a great job of that. Movies are wonderful entities, but they've got less DNA than novels do.

Spielberg once said to me that a film has to be designed for the span of a human bladder. He then went and made a three and a quarter hour movie out of my book [laughs].

There are some books that will never be films, because they're too complex. You can't ever tell. It's best for a writer to never think "Will this be a good movie or not?" [laughs]. Because that sort of thing happens entirely by accident.

My next book will be very complex. As I get older I want to write about our shared humanity. It's the fact that we all come from a woman in Africa, and that you and I are related to each other through her. That's a compelling idea, and I'll write about that in my next book.

I want to talk about things like that, and the ethnicity issues raised by *Schindler's List*, and the great ironies of history, at the event in Beijing. And of course I want to talk about the question of China and Australia.

Things have both improved and have almost gone backwards in China. As an old social democrat I'm sad to see all the big designer labels there now. But anyhow, that's not my business. I do look forward to coming to talk about it though, and hearing more about it.

Tom Keneally: In Conversation will be held at The Bookworm on May 12, 7.30pm. Tickets are RMB 50 each, and can be bought at The Bookworm or by calling 6503 2050. The Australian Writers Week runs from May 10 through May 18.



PHOTO COURTESY OF PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE

JAMES MCGREGOR

AMERICAN WRITER AND CHINA EXPERT TALKS SCOTCH

A Drink With ... is a regular column in which we ask amazing Beijing personalities to tell us about their drinking habits and liquid preferences. This issue we talk to James McGregor, an author, businessman, consultant, and political junkie who has one mission in life: to have fun every day.

Could you tell us a bit about yourself and what brought you to Beijing?

I moved to Beijing to work for the *Wall Street Journal* in 1990. Beijing was quiet at that time and everybody was on bicycles. There were hardly any bars or restaurants, except for state-owned or provincial restaurants and the ones in the hotels. At that time, there were two Western bars in which you could pay in Foreign Exchange Certificates, Frank's Place at the east gate of Gongti (founded in 1989), and Charlie's Bar on the first floor of Jianguo Hotel. Due to the lack of wine options, when we went to Hong Kong, we would fill our suitcases with bottles of wine, and use blocks of cheese to pad them.

How old were you when you started drinking?

I came from northern Minnesota, where even in high school there was a drinking culture. So we drank a lot, especially malt liquor (similar to strong beer). We also preferred flavored vodka, such as lime or orange flavors. Due to age restrictions, we had to find people to buy liquor for us and then we would hide the bottles in the snow banks in the winter. Sometimes digging through the snow was a problem. I remember digging around with a shovel and finding the bottle when the snow bank suddenly turned orange as I broke the bottle.

Tell us about the first time you were drunk.

In the spring in Lake Superior, these small fish named smelt would run up the rivers and creeks in a huge mass. People would catch them in a net and dump them into buckets. It was a huge party with people from all over the state coming in their campers. The fishermen spent most of their time sitting around campfires drinking. One night

two friends and I stole a bottle of Peppermint Schnapps from the truck of some drunken fishermen. We drank the whole bottle, got sick and ended up basically stumbling around in the mud. This wasn't the first time but one of the most memorable.

Who would you most like to go out drinking with?

I would like to have a drink with two people: Winston Churchill and Franklin Roosevelt, in same room at the same time, because I think they are both good drinkers and thinkers. I'd like to ask them for their philosophy, ask them to look back to what they went through in World War II, how they made decisions, what they thought was smart or not so smart, how did they manage the war and keep themselves sane while young people were getting killed and countries were being destroyed. I would like to ask what this did to how they view civilization and how human beings treat each other.

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

Single malt Scotch (whisky). My favorite brands include Lagavulin, and Laphroaig ... almost anything peaty from Islay. My children think the stuff stinks. But I love the bite of the peat.

Scotch is really an old man's drink [laughs]. I

also drink wine with my wealthy friends, who are really experts and always bring out very good wine. But they also know that it is a waste to bring out a 1,000 *kuai* bottle of Penfolds when I am around. I really have the palate of a Minnesota peasant. I drank beer when I was younger but I don't drink much anymore.

What's your golden rule of drinking?

Do not drink *baijiu*. I drank a lot of *baijiu* when I was a reporter in Taiwan in the 1980s and in China in the 1990s. Andrew Browne and I were both in Taiwan one Chinese New Year when a friend brought us to a dinner at a massive table with 25 people. Of course, as soon as they saw the foreigners, those at the table had to goad us into having a shot of *baijiu*. I don't remember much after that. I have had good *baijiu* which was palatable, but I don't enjoy it as much as Scotch.



MINDFULNESS IN BEIJING

TEACHING HOW TO TACKLE PAIN THROUGH MEDITATION AND SELF AWARENESS

By Tom Arnstein

Settling into a group meditation class at the Beixinqiao-adjacent Beijing Mindfulness Centre (BMC) – think sitting on the floor, dimmed lights, gentle music, and the occasional chime to mark time – meditation leader and Serbian-born founder Dalida Turkovic says something unexpected: “People often suggest to their friends that they in turn should try meditation, ‘It’s fun!’ they say. But in truth it’s a nightmare, which is exactly how it should be.” It wasn’t quite the tranquil opener to a meditation session that I had anticipated but even over just a couple of sessions at BMC it became clear what Turkovic meant; deconstructing and rebuilding the habits and mental processes that we have relied on throughout our lives – what is the very core of our personality and which give rise to our behavior – is never going to be all happiness and laughter, and it takes time and effort to do it right.

Mindfulness’ part in this reconfiguration relies on what Turkovic defines as “non-judgmental awareness of present moment experience,” that is, viewing your current condition with complete objectivity, devoid of associations

of “good” or “bad” so that we grant our consciousness unimpeded access to our physiological state. By taking note of our emotions and inner sensations we can start to apply self-awareness and disassemble the root causes of anxiety and fear in the hope of rationally confronting them before potential exacerbation. It is by experiencing the present that all prior prejudices melt away: “the body self-regulates, your mind slows down, and the brain produces neurotransmitters such as dopamine and serotonin that gradually enable a positive outlook,” Turkovic explains.

The rise of mindfulness in the West is often attributed to studies conducted by biologist Jon Kabat-Zinn, who in the 1970s found that he could use the practices that had been observed by Buddhists for close to 2,000 years – as a meditative means to reach enlightenment – to now treat the chronically ill. Kabat-Zinn’s scientific, secularized approach helped rejig these ancient implementations for “modern man,” attracting the likes of mega corporations who began to see its applications and benefits in the workplace.





Mindfulness' success is in part due to the fact that practice itself is neither very complicated nor expensive. But as with any activity that requires the formation of good habits, the hardest obstacle is building self control and carving out time to do it; it is consistency that will create the outcome. This need for discipline has meant that over the years mindfulness has gained traction among not only sufferers of chronic physical pain but also those who are in desperate need to make changes to temper destructive mindsets or ease mental afflictions. Turkovic, a resident of Beijing going on 20 years, candidly admits that she, following a period of life setbacks and swelling anxieties, was, after much confessed reluctance eventually accepting of mindfulness. Through the practice, Turkovic says she was able to tackle the underlying problems in her life by connecting to her emotions, especially fear, which she was neglecting as a result of believing that she was not afraid of anything. That's likely a trait that many of us can also admit to being guilty of, especially when stationed so far away from home.

A combination of Beijing's fast-paced life, a sense of transition and perpetual change, and the struggle of connecting to a disparate culture is frequently compounded by other external factors out of our control. The prime culprit is pollution, which often hampers our means of expunging additional energy to maintain a healthy lifestyle. "People are unable to self-regulate, which causes stress, which in turn impacts the immune system, and [people] encounter anger as a side effect towards their relationships and decision making," Turkovic says. It's for this reason that expats in Beijing must find an outlet for their stress as well as look inwards to adjust how they cope with it.

Finally, when I ask Turkovic who she would recommend mindfulness to first and foremost she suggests, "People who are experiencing high level of anxiety and perhaps even loneliness. One of the side effects of mindfulness is improved relationships; if someone is feeling that they can't really integrate themselves within a community and if there's any curiosity towards personal development then mindfulness is a great place to start."

If you want to give mindfulness a trial run at home, there are a neverending number of apps to help guide you towards a more mindful life and keep you on track. Turkovic counts Insight Timer, Mindfulness Coach, Calm, and Headspace as some of her favorites. If you want to go it alone, breathing exercises may also be your gateway. From a neuroscience perspective, it is physiologically impossible to create stress and focus on our breathing at the same time, and thus helps to sync the body's mental and physical components. In an air purified room or on a clear day, keep mental count of your breaths in a cycle up to 10, for example, "breathe in one, breathe out one, breathe in two, breathe out two ... " If you find that your mind has drifted off or loses count, then simply restart at one. Turkovic suggests that if you're able to maintain this habit for five minutes a day for one week, and are still curious to explore the practice afterwards, then this may just be the start of a more mindful life in Beijing. Just don't be distressed or dissuaded if it occasionally proves to be a nightmare.

To find out more, add the Beijing Mindfulness Center on WeChat (ID: mindfulnessbeijing), visit their website beijingmindfulness.com, or RSVP for their ongoing Mindful Mondays or Mindful Body Thursdays via 6403 4923.



JOERG WUTTKE

PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN UNION CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE IN CHINA

By Kyle Mullin

As Joerg Wuttke prepares to end his term as President of the European Union Chamber of Commerce in China this coming May, and head back to his hometown in the German countryside, he feels a deep nostalgia for Beijing, pangs that he's contended with for years. Specifically, he has long pined for the Beijing of old that first greeted him in the early 1980s.

"When I was first here in August of 1982 the streets were empty," he says during a recent interview at the Chamber's Liangmaqiao office. "We were sitting on the pavement and donkey carts came in to bring vegetables for the next day's market. I thought: 'Maybe this is not the kind of market I was thinking about working in.'"

Yet the prospect of remaining in his tiny hometown was stifling enough to turn Wuttke's gaze toward the vast, untapped Far East. And despite living in a backwater, Wuttke was no stranger to the pillars of Chinese culture. As a boy, he'd see his elder brother crisscrossing the streets hoisting Chairman Mao's *Red Book* high.

That irked their father, a refugee from East Germany who held deeply opposed political views to those of his rebellious eldest son. And yet, young Joerg's father was always fixated on ancient philosophy, and often read the works of Confucius. That contradiction compelled Wuttke to look into studying Mandarin as well as applying for funding so that he could begin an adventurous business career in China.

When Wuttke revealed those plans to his mother, she "broke out in tears. She thought I'd lost my marbles because in the early 1980s there was no business in China," he says, adding that all the universities and think tanks he applied to rejected him. Wuttke says one professor dismissively asked: "What are you going to sell to those people?" But I was committed to go to China, to avoid my hometown's countryside."

Though Wuttke managed to escape that provincial upbringing, he was by no means greeted by a glamorous

metropolitan Beijing, despite all he'd heard about the size of China's capital. Wuttke and his wife first lived in Taipei as teachers, where he says he mingled with a unique Chinese middle class. When he finally ventured to the mainland for a holiday, he was shocked by Beijing's sparse development. He recalled how: "My brain was telling me this must be a big country, a big market. But when I was here for the first time in 1982, my heart sank. The whole of Beijing's expat community went to the Friendship Store, where you could get foreign crackers. That was it."

Still, the compassion and pure curiosity of mainlanders, who had few opportunities to meet foreigners, charmed and inspired Wuttke. This is why he jumped at the opportunity to work for a major German multinational in the 1980s, and was further heartened by Deng Xiaoping's reforms in the 1990s. Before the end of the decade, Wuttke was the head of the multinational and tells us, "When I was negotiating multibillion dollar deals for my company we were used as a guinea pig for transfer agreements. Working in a lawless setting, where the policies creep up one by one, was actually quite enriching."

Despite the opportunities it afforded him, "Beijing, for me, has always been more of a farewell story," Wuttke continues. He cites the 2008 Olympics in particular as the source of his Peking melancholy. "High-rises came up. It was just the ultimate Chinese story of history turning into modern glitz. That made me sad."

He is quick to concede that Beijing had to modernize, just like any capital. Yet, when he thinks back on his favorite Beijing days, he won't dwell on the gridlock and concrete, but instead the horses on the empty streets and the endearing, earnest locals, all of which were more akin to his rustic German hometown than the modern metropolis it is today. Before he leaves, Wuttke hopes to spend as much time as he can visiting hutongs and temples. He adds: "Now you really have to look for them, but you can still find corners in Beijing that have that history I love so much."

FREE YOUR HAIR

AND YOUR BRAINS WILL FOLLOW

By Andrew Killeen

The Beijing spring is here, that delightful window of warmth and freshness between the bitter winds, toe-numbing cold, and toxic fog of winter, and the oppressive heat, swarming insects, and toxic fog of summer. The sun is out, the sky is blue, it's beautiful, and so are – oh. Nevermind.

So now is the time to get out in the open air, to go al fresco. Sadly Beijing never adopted the Japanese custom of “viewing the cherry blossom,” which does not mean, as you may imagine, wandering through the trees in a kimono composing haiku about the transience of existence. Instead it consists of sitting on a tarpaulin in the local park getting hammered on beer cocktails and sake. Still, don't let that stop you! Charlie Chaplin famously said all he needed to make a comedy was “a park, a policeman, and a pretty girl.” And there's no end to the fun you can create with a bench, a *baó'an* and a bottle of *baijiu*.

But if being chased naked around Chaoyang Park by the local law enforcement doesn't appeal to you (and let's face it, the novelty wears off after the fourth or fifth time), then there is another way you can enjoy the fresh breeze blowing through your hair. A marvelous, transgressive freedom available only in China and a dwindling number of places. We're talking, of course, about riding your bike without a helmet. (Disclaimer: We are not telling you to ride your bike without a helmet. Wear a flipping helmet! See that squidgy grey lump of chemicals and electric signals inside your skull? That's you, that is. We know you're also a winged, harp-playing ghost that will float up out of your body on your eventual demise like in a *Tom and Jerry* cartoon, but no need to hasten that day. Wear a helmet. Though frankly, if you take advice on health and safety issues from a quasi-humorous column in an expat lifestyle

magazine, then you're probably better removed from the gene pool anyway. End of message.)

Still, if you don't mind risking brain damage or a horrible death squished under the wheels of a bendy bus, there are few joys greater than scooting through the traffic bareheaded, taking deep breaths of exhaust fumes and belting out the latest K-pop hits to an oblivious world. Because if you want to take that gamble, nobody cares. And if you die it's your own stupid fault.

Such freedom bucks a worldwide trend of governments trying to protect citizens from the consequences of their own idiocy. This is what in the UK is called “the nanny state,” usually by Conservative politicians who are secretly imagining the government as a strict elderly lady in a Mary Poppins hat who will pull down their knickerbockers and spank them for being impertinent.

And curiously, this same freedom contrasts completely with the Chinese view of child rearing, wherein all kids under the age of six are required by law to be followed around by at least two grandparents and an *ayi*, so that in the event of the child falling or encountering any mishap they can be immediately swathed in comfort and consolation. On reaching the height of 120cm kids are then locked away in a math class which lasts for seven years, until they re-emerge as polite but quietly subversive adolescents.

It remains to be seen how such a coddled generation will respond to the sudden freedom of adulthood. You might, if you're so inclined, see it as a metaphor for China's emergence from self-imposed isolation to become the dominant global power of the 21st century. But you do so at your own risk.

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