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2017/03-04

BELJING UNDER THE LOOP

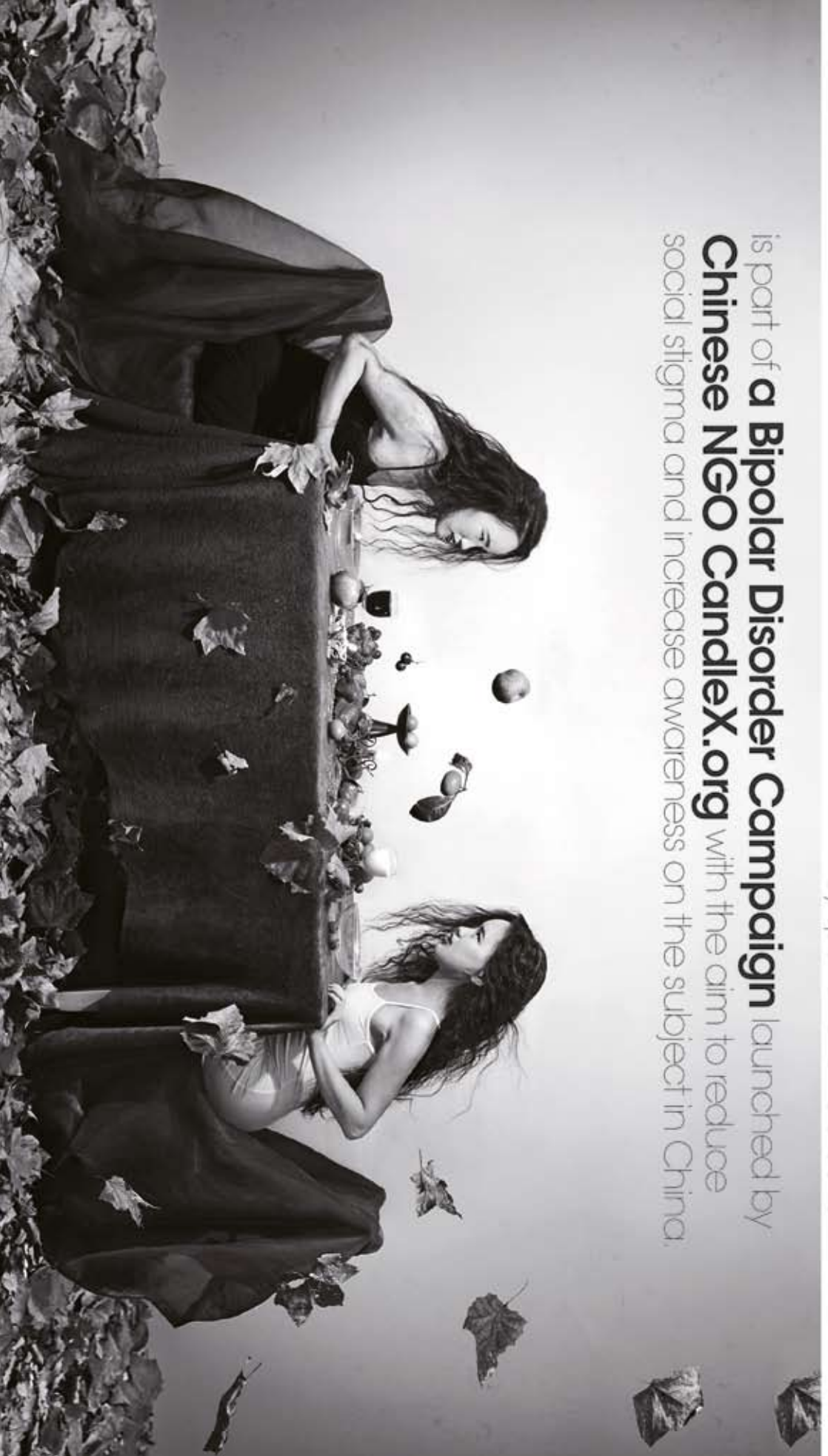
MAKE THE MOST OF
SPRING OUTSIDE



"Behind Grey Walls"

by Spanish artist Pere Ibañez

is part of a **Bipolar Disorder Campaign** launched by **Chinese NGO CandleX.org** with the aim to reduce social stigma and increase awareness on the subject in China.



"No matter how long the winter, spring is sure to follow."

—Proverb



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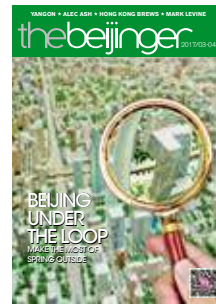
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地址: 北京市朝阳区关东店北街核桃园30号
孚兴写字楼C座5层
邮政编码: 100020
电话: 5779 8877
Advertising Hotline/广告热线: 5941 0368 /69 /72 /77 /78 /79

The Beijinger Managing Editor Margaux Schreurs
Digital Content Managing Editor Tom Arnstein
Editors Kyle Mullin, Tracy Wang
Contributors Jeremiah Jenne, Andrew Killeen, Robynne Tindall
True Run Media Founder & CEO Michael Wester
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Designer Xi Xi
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IT Support Yan Wen
Photographer Uni You
Sales Director Sheena Hu
Account Managers Winter Liu, Sasha Zhang, Wilson Barrie, Olesya Sedysheva, Renee Hu, Serena Du
Sales Coordinator Gladys Tang

General inquiries: 5779 8877
Editorial inquiries: editor@thebeijinger.com
Event listing submissions: listings@thebeijinger.com
Sales inquiries: sales@truerun.com
Digital & content marketing inquiries: dcmarketing@truerun.com
Marketing inquiries: marketing@truerun.com
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CITY SCENE

What's Happening: The most important dates this month
Stat: Beijing's Palace Museum attracted 16 million visitors in 2016
China Buzz: Didi to roll out English language app this spring
Best of the Blog: The most popular stories from *theBeijinger.com*
Scene & Heard: Take a look at yourselves, you beautiful people

04

COVER FEATURE

Get excited about spring with our cover feature detailing some of Beijing's most interesting museums, a look into kite flying history and China's history of exploration, as well as an insight into Xicheng District

12

FOOD & DRINK

Nibbles and Sips
What's New Restaurants: Takaya, Glo Kitchen, Fu Tapas, Jomi
Wikipedia: U
Just Desserts: Line Friends Café & Store
Prov Gov: Jiangsu Provincial Government Restaurant
What's New Bars & Clubs: Cinker Pictures, Out of Step, JW Taylor, Heaven Supermarket
P.S. We Ate You

20

GO

What's New Venues: Lululemon, Twoface
Get Out: Three days in Yangon
Get Out: Hong Kong beer

35

MEET

Playlist: Yiling Lin
A Drink With: Amy Daml
Advertorial: Sinan Yilmaz
Mastermind: David Connolly
Music Q&A: Owen Pallett
Music Q&A: Gate to Otherside
Book Q&A: Alec Ash
Old China Hand: Mark Levine

44

REAR VIEW

Fecal Attractions

56

NEXT ISSUE: THE
DINING HALL OF
FAME

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The most important dates this month

WHAT'S HAPPENING



MAR 10-12

2017 Beijing Invitational Craft Beer Festival

The third Beijing Invitational Craft Beer Festival organized by Great Leap Brewing returns for three days with seven beer-tasting sessions, 30 breweries, and over 100 beers.

MAR 19

Cookie Monster Charity Bake-Off

The Hutong host the annual showcase of the 20 best cookies Beijing has to offer all in the name of charity (and unfettered sugary glory).



APR 23

Great Wall Cleanup Hike

As part of Earth Day, the Beijing Hikers and Gung Ho invite you to head out for a day of hiking and recycling at the Great Wall.

Your reward? Sun, fun, a clean conscience, and a massive pizza party at the end.

APR 23

Owen Pallett

Critically acclaimed Canadian violinist and composer Owen Pallett comes to Beijing to lull us with his pop-flecked loops for a heady night of introspection perfect for a balmy spring evening. See p.49 for our interview with the man himself.



Visit theBeijinger.com for even more events and details.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE ORGANIZERS, PETER JUHL

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Congratulations. You've done it. You've survived yet another trying, bone-chilling, lung-polluting, skin-drying Beijing winter.

We know that technically winter isn't quite over yet, and there are certainly more cold days to come, but it's that time of year to start enjoying Beijing's outdoors and looking forward to the sun showing its friendly face again. Whether its an interesting museum, a new part of town, or a means of learning a little more about China's own history of exploration, we've preemptively highlighted a broad range of sights to get your brow sweating with the thought of spring discovery.

Past the cover feature, we have two travel pieces for the lucky ones among you who have started to plan your summer vacation. Jeremiah Jenne gives us a little insight into his trip to Yangon, Myanmar, one of the least traveled Southeast Asian nations, and Tracy Wang takes her craft beer knowledge to the streets of our southern neighbor Hong Kong.

A little bit closer to home, Kyle Mullin talks to author Alec Ash about his latest book, as well as Canadian indie pop star Owen Pallett, and Beijing psychedelic group Gate to Otherside ahead of their upcoming gigs.

As always, you will also find reviews and news about Beijing's hottest bars, clubs, stores, and restaurants. So, without further ado, we hope our March/April issue of *the Beijinger* whets your appetite to explore the endless depths of our city's destinations and can warm you well into spring.

Margaux Schreurs
Managing Editor



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CITY SCENE

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

16 MILLION



Beijing's most visited museum, the Palace Museum, attracted 16 million visitors in 2016. That's an average of 40,000 visitors per day, and an increase of 6.19 percent compared to 2015.

Interestingly, this change has taken place regardless of the fact that tickets were limited in the early months of 2015 in order to protect the site. The new policy caps tickets at 80,000 per day, in order to ensure that the days of over 100,000 visitors on public holidays are a thing of the past.

The museum, located inside the Forbidden City, the imperial heart of China between 1420 and 1912, is now home to an astonishing collection of ceramics, bronzeware, paintings, jade, and other

artifacts from the imperial court. An inventory of the collection, which itself took six years to complete, puts the total number of items at the museum at 1,684,490. Ceramics and porcelain alone total 340,000 specimens.

The Forbidden City was listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1987. Due to its popularity, reports of damage caused by visiting tourists have become increasingly common in recent years and are enough of a worry to authorities that they must now reign in visitor numbers.

Want to see other museums that we recommend in our fair city? Skip ahead to p.12-13 to read about some of Beijing's best museums.

PHOTO: LONG ZHENG

DIDI CHUXING TO ROLL OUT ENGLISH APP THIS SPRING

Didi Chuxing, the local car hailing app that had a hand in Uber withdrawing from China (and then discontinued support for Uber's English interface in November), will soon re-introduce a way to hail a ride in English, this time through their Didi app.

Non-Chinese-speaking expats that relied on Uber's English interface have felt stranded since late last year, resulting in a convoluted set of difficult choices for the average Beijing-based *laowai*. While the original international version of Uber still works elsewhere, it no longer works in China. Then Didi Chuxing released a local version of Uber, but in Mandarin only. Finally there is of course Didi, which is also in Mandarin only. Despite the lack of an English interface, many expats have gravitated towards Didi due to a more thoroughly developed set of local services.

Now comes word that Didi Chuxing is resurrecting

an English version. But rather than build it on top of the Chinese version of Uber, they're going to integrate it with the Didi app.

We've heard from reliable sources that a basic English interface will be rolled out as early as spring or summer this year, with the eventual intention of making the app 100 percent bilingual. Didi's foreign PR and advertising agencies have already been retrained to help the company with the rollout.

As of now there has been no change in the Chinese Didi app for iPhone, but some Android users that have downloaded it from the Google Play store have reported access to a version of the app with the beginnings of an English interface.

As of print time, the China-based Xiaomi and Samsung app stores had no English-enabled versions of the app available for download.



BEST OF THE BLOG

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



1. Visa Run?: Great Restaurants to Try in Hong Kong While You're There

Regular visits to Hong Kong aren't uncommon for Beijing folk. And why wouldn't you pop over to the 852 (that's their region phone code and what all the cool kids call their home city); there's fresh air, there's humidity, lots of people speak English, and there's a coastline with a breeze. But even when we do head over to Hong Kong, our jobs don't end: we keep our new restaurant radar on. Because otherwise how will you know which new spots are worth trying? Check out blog for the full list.

2. Forget Biking in Bad Air: Worry About Protecting Yourself While Working Out or Clubbing in Beijing

Many Beijing pollution fighters have already read the article that ran in *The Guardian* referencing a 2016 report on the effects of exercise in polluted cities – the one that said the benefits of cycling are rendered moot after 105 minutes huffing and puffing in Beijing's smoggy air. We looked at some other Beijing activities and how to protect yourself in those situations.



3. Cost of Marrying One of China's Outnumbered Women Continues to Skyrocket

Do you fancy marrying a Chinese woman? Well, get ready to open your wallet: The average cost of a betrothal gift in China has skyrocketed as women become a rarefied commodity in a country dominated by men. A recent study published by the *People's Daily* says the average cost of the cash gift that a son-in-law is expected to pay in Beijing is an average of RMB 200,000.



4. Transitioning at 69: The Heartwarming Story of a 72-Year-Old Transgender Beijinger

After decades of dreaming about it, Xin Yue has finally transitioned into womanhood. Better still: 69-year-old Leng Rui, Xin's wife of over 40 years and their daughter are both supportive of the lifelong Beijinger's brave decision, regardless of the fact that for much of Xin's life, such acceptance seemed bitterly out of reach.

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



5. Smog Makes 70 Percent of China Unhappy (the Other 30 Percent Probably Own Coal Mines)

Seven out of 10 China residents are unhappy about smog and 71 percent claim to wear masks on smoggy days, a recent survey detailed in the *Global Times* reports.

One can only surmise the remaining 30 percent not depressed by smog are either too senile to know what's going on, or they run coal mines or air filter companies that are making big bank off the bad air.

6. Rat Out Your Neighbors and Make Sweet Money With This New Chaoyang Masses App

Get ready to earn money ratting out your neighbors with the new Chaoyang Masses HD app. The app can be used to contact the authorities about five main incidents: major cases, people finder, lost and found, suspects, and cars. We might start with the select few who habitually smoke in our office building's toilet, whenever they need to take a dump – that should get us a few extra mao.



7. Tribe Open Third and Biggest Location in Solana

After successfully launching two locations in Gongti and Lido, homegrown Beijing brand Tribe Organic have just opened their third and largest venue yet at Solana. At 335 square meters, the new spot seats just over 100 people across a range of different seating areas, from (actually comfy) bar stools to banquets and tables for two.



8. Mandarin Monday: How to Order From a Chinese Language Menu

Beijing's a great place for culinary exploration. Most of us live surrounded by restaurants, and most of us have restaurants nearby serving cuisines we've yet to try.

For many of us, our only limits are our time, our budgets, and our waistlines, but if you are one of the thousands of *laowai* living with Chinese menu illiteracy, do not despair. Walking into a restaurant, perusing the menu and ordering a meal is easier than you think. Check our blog to see the full guide to ordering in Chinese.

SCENE & HEARD



2017 Beijing International School Expo
Feb 18-19, Crowne Plaza Chaoyang U-Town. Photos: Uni You





Hutong Haircut
Jan 21, Gulu Bazz. Photos
courtesy of Jing-A



**The Summit
New Year
Concert 2017**
Jan 1, China
World
Summit Wing.
Photos
courtesy of
China World
Summit Wing



Annie's 17th Anniversary
Dec 28, Annie's (Guanghua Lu). Photos courtesy of
Annie's



DAY AT THE MUSEUM

EXPLORING BEIJING'S BEST COLLECTIONS

By Margaux Schreurs

Just because you've been to one Beijing museum, definitely doesn't mean you've seen them all. Whether you're new to the city, or just haven't seen a Beijing museum on the inside for a while, this list of the city's top eight collections will help you get cracking.

National Museum of China

Located on the eastern side of Tian'anmen Square, the National Museum is one of the largest museums in the world, created when the Museum of the Chinese Revolution and the National Museum of Chinese History were merged in 2003. Perhaps the most charming aspect of the National Museum is the collection of state gifts given to China by world leaders over the past 60 years, making for a weird and wacky ensemble of curios. *Tue-Sun 9am-5pm (tickets sold until 3.30pm). 16 Chang'an Dongdajie, Dongcheng District*
东城区长安东大街16号

Beijing Capital Museum

The Beijing Capital Museum is worth a visit for archeology buffs, containing over 200,000 items including ancient porcelain, bronze, calligraphy, paintings, jade, sculptures, and Buddhist statues. Some items come from other Asian ancient civilizations.

Tue-Sun 9am-5pm (tickets sold until 4pm). 16 Fuxingmen Waidajie, Xicheng District
西城区复兴门外大街16号

Beijing Planning Exhibition Hall

This urban planning museum's standout exhibit is the scale model of the Beijing metropolitan area located on the top floor. Test your Beijing geography by spotting your house or office! We recommend combining the visit with Qianmen or the China Railway Museum's Tian'anmen Square branch, which can be found on the southeast side of the square. *Tue-Sun 9am-5pm (tickets sold until 4pm). 20 Qianmen Dongjie, Chongwen District*
崇文区前门东街20号

Beijing Police Museum

Veering slightly off the beaten track, the Beijing Police Museum is located a stone's throw away from Tian'anmen Square in what used to be the Citibank Beijing Branch. The museum combines artifacts, photos, models, and writings, and most impressively, police weaponry used throughout history. *Tue-Sun 9am-4pm. 36 Dongjiaomin Xiang, Dongcheng District*
东城区东交民巷36号



Chinese Aviation Museum

This museum, opened in 1989 to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the founding of the People's Liberation Army Air Force, is a great spot for aviation enthusiasts. The museum was founded on part of an old airbase, and has more than 200 airplanes on show. *Tue-Sun 8.30am-5pm. Xiaotangshan, Changping District*
昌平区小汤山

National Art Museum of China

The National Art Museum of China has both ancient and contemporary Chinese artworks, as well as numerous pieces from the West. While most of the collection focuses on Imperial Chinese art, there are lots of rotating international exhibitions to be found here, too. *Daily 9am-5pm. 1 Wusi Dajie, Dongcheng District*
东城区五四大街1号

Zhoukoudian Peking Man Museum

The discovery of Peking Man, a species that provides the biological link between ape and man, was discovered 50 kilometers southwest of Beijing in 1921. Today, the site is a museum in Zhoukoudian Village, which consists of separate sites that have been excavated revealing fossils and rare stones. Most impressive is that you

can also see the actual remains of the Peking Man. *Daily 8.30am-4.30pm (summer), 8.30am-4pm (winter). 1 Zhoukoudian Dajie, Fangshan District*
房山区周口店大街1号



Palace Museum

Last but certainly not least, located inside the Forbidden City, this is by far the most popular museum in town, and a must-see, explaining why it attracts over 14.6 million visits each year. The collection of artwork and artifacts are built upon the imperial collections of the Ming and Qing dynasties. *Daily 8.30am-4pm (summer), 8.30am-3.30pm (winter). 4 Jingshan Qianjie, Dongcheng District*
东城区景山前街4号



HISTORY ON A STRING

HOW CHINESE KITE FLYING, AND KITE WATCHING, IS SO MUCH MORE THAN A HOBBY

By Kyle Mullin

Beijing may have a reputation for filthy, dreary gray skies, but by spring things are different. At least that's the case on clear blue, mild, windy post-coal burning April days at the Olympic Park, where Liu Bin flies colorful kites as not only a hobby, but also part of an age-old Chinese tradition.

As owner of the Nanluogu Xiang-adjacent Three Stone Kites shop – a family business that was founded decades ago by his grandfather – Liu knows how to not only fly but also craft the string tethered silk and paper dragons, butterflies, and other creatures that act as soaring pieces of Chinese iconography.

"Outside of the downtown core is the best," Liu says of his favorite places to fly kites, adding that the Olympic park is his favorite because it has "No trees, no traffic, and few people. Years ago, I'd fly kites in Tian'anmen Square, but now I do it in the Olympic Park more, because there's so much more free space."

Aside from pure enjoyment of getting the kites off the ground, Liu says he also loves how the hobby can offer foreigners insight into Chinese culture. Flying his decorated bat kites, for instance, has led to conversations with passersby about how "bats are associated with vampires and scary stories in Western culture. And foreigners have told me they were surprised to learn that bats are auspicious and lucky in Chinese."

Liu also likes telling people having the different colors on kites have different meanings, and even the way they fly on a given day can signify things like the arrival of good luck or the warding off of bad omens.

While kite flying may seem like a fun, albeit quaint, pastime enjoyed by elders in parks, it was actually once an integral practice in day-to-day Chinese life. It has been said that a Shandong philosopher named Mo Di invented the kite after observing how leaves blow in the wind. Early Chinese kites were built by armies to be massive enough

to hoist soldiers heavenward for reconnaissance or to scatter propaganda leaflets over hostile forces.

Other uses for kites included to send messages and take land measurements during the Han Dynasty, while the Five dynasties era saw a kite tied to a bamboo whistle making a sound like the *zheng*, a 21- or 25-stringed plucked instrument in some ways similar to the zither, under the force of wind leading it to be called *fengzheng* meaning 'zheng in the wind'.

But compelling as that historical context may be, Zhang Guobin forgets all about it once his kites are in the air. Zhang is a Beijing retiree who, at both the Olympic Park and at Guangqumen bridge (near Guangqumen Wai Station on Line 7), flies not only traditional kites but also newer renditions covered in UFO-esque LED lights, and he says simply: "I enjoy kite flying because it's relaxing and fun."



SLOW BOATS AND CARAVANS

GREAT EXPLORERS IN CHINESE HISTORY

by Jeremiah Jenne

China was never closed to the world. The myth of Chinese civilization huddled behind the Great Wall, isolated and insular, is as much a product of Western imagination as any historical reality. For thousands of years, travelers, traders, scholars, and missionaries explored the overland routes and sea lanes connecting China with the rest of the world.

Perhaps best known is Marco Polo, who recorded an account of his long journey from Venice to Khanbaliq, today's Beijing, in the late 13th century. Equally famous, at least in China, is Admiral Zheng He, who led a series of oceanic sorties throughout the Indian Ocean between

1405 and 1433, reaching the coastlines of the Arabian Peninsula and Eastern Africa. They were the best known but far from the only explorers to make the long voyage between East and West.

Zhang Qian (who died in 113BCE) served as an official and diplomat during the Han Era. He was one of the first Chinese officials to travel what would later be known as the Silk Road. At the time, the Han Empire was surrounded by hostile groups, notably the Xiongnu who controlled the steppes of today's Mongolia. In 138BCE, Zhang Qian led a secret expedition right through the heart of the



Xiongnu territories to make contact with the kingdoms of Central Asia and forge alliances against the Xiongnu. Zhang Qian's mission hit something of a snag when he and his team were captured by Xiongnu. For 10 years, Zhang Qian served his captors as a slave before he could escape and return to China. Despite the setback, Zhang Qian brought back a wealth of information about the people and geography of Central Asia, intelligence which the Han Empire would use in their conquest and subjugation of Central Asia later.

Nearly two centuries after Zhang Qian's return, Chinese general Ban Chao (32-102CE) retraced the route of Zhang Qian as Ban Chao sought to expand Han rule throughout the desert oases of today's Xinjiang. By the end of the first century CE, Ban Chao had succeeded in pacifying all of the Western Regions and even sent an envoy Gan Ying on a mission to the court of the Roman Emperor. Gan Ying never made it to Rome (he got as far as the Black Sea), but Gan Ying did bring back accounts of Roman political life and culture. (The "Explorer General" IPA sold by Great Leap Brewery is named in honor of Ban Chao.)

Perhaps the most famous traveler to the West was the monk Xuanzang (c. 602-664CE). For 17 years, Xuanzang traveled across deserts and mountains on a quest to reach India. Along the way, he studied at many famous Buddhist monasteries, and returned to China with a treasure trove of Buddhist scripture. Xuanzang was not only one of history's great travelers, but he was also one of the most influential translators of religious scripture in world history, translating over 1,000 texts from Sanskrit into Chinese. He is most famous in China though as the subject of the Ming-era fantasy novel *Journey to the West* written by Wu Cheng'en. Wu embellished the stories of Xuanzang's voyages, adding a colorful cast of characters including the Monkey King Sun Wukong and the half-human half-pig Zhu Bajie.

Centuries before Marco Polo, travelers and traders from Eastern Europe and Western Asia made the perilous journey to reach China. Chang'an, the capital of the Tang

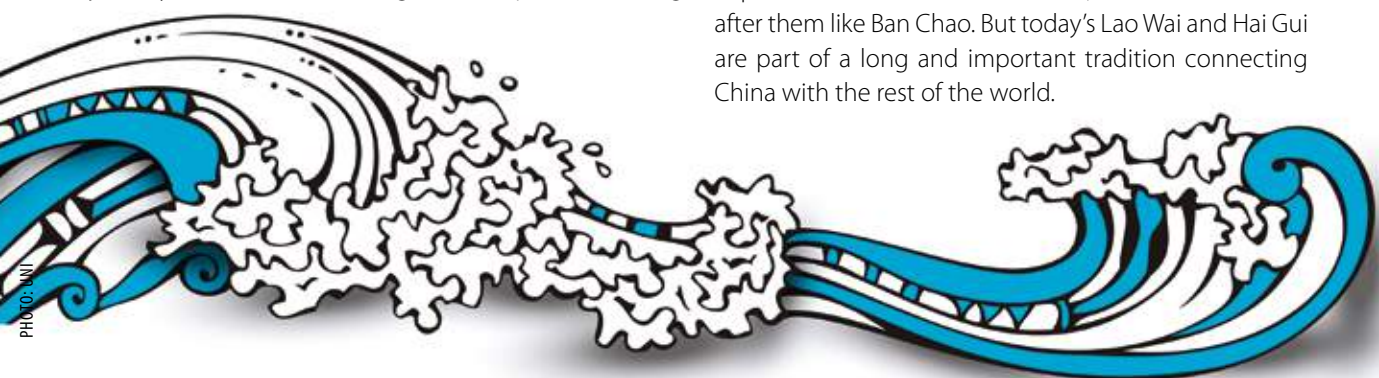
Empire (618-907CE), was the cosmopolitan epicenter of pre-modern global trade. When the emergence of new steppe powers such as the Mongols threatened to cut off overland trade routes to China in the 12th century, the flow of goods and people took to the high seas. Sea routes connected the coastlines of Fujian and Guangdong with faraway ports in India and Western Asia.

The Mongol's ultimate success in conquering most of the known world led to a brief period in the 13th and 14th centuries when traders could cross a Central Asia more or less unified by conquest. The break-up of the Mongolian Empire into competing successor states ended this period of "Pax Mongolica" and inspired many countries, including Ming-era China and the states of Western Europe, into a new age of exploration in the 15th century.

European ships began reaching the East coast of Asia in the early 16th century, and soon outposts of European trading empires began taking root from Macao to Malacca. These ships brought not only trade but also missionaries. Perhaps the most famous pioneer to reach Beijing in the post-Marco Polo era was another Italian, Matteo Ricci. Ricci was a Jesuit priest whose eidetic memory allowed him to master the Chinese Language quickly. In 1601, Ricci became the first European to enter the Forbidden City.

Ironically, the court was interested in employing Ricci and his fellow Jesuit not for their religion but their knowledge of astronomy and science. While in the service of the Wanli Emperor, Ricci translated Euclid's *Elements of Geometry* into Chinese while also being one of the first scholars to introduce the Confucian classics to a European audience. Like Xuanzang nearly a millennium before, Ricci's explorations were as much about crossing cultural and intellectual frontiers as much as actual physical space.

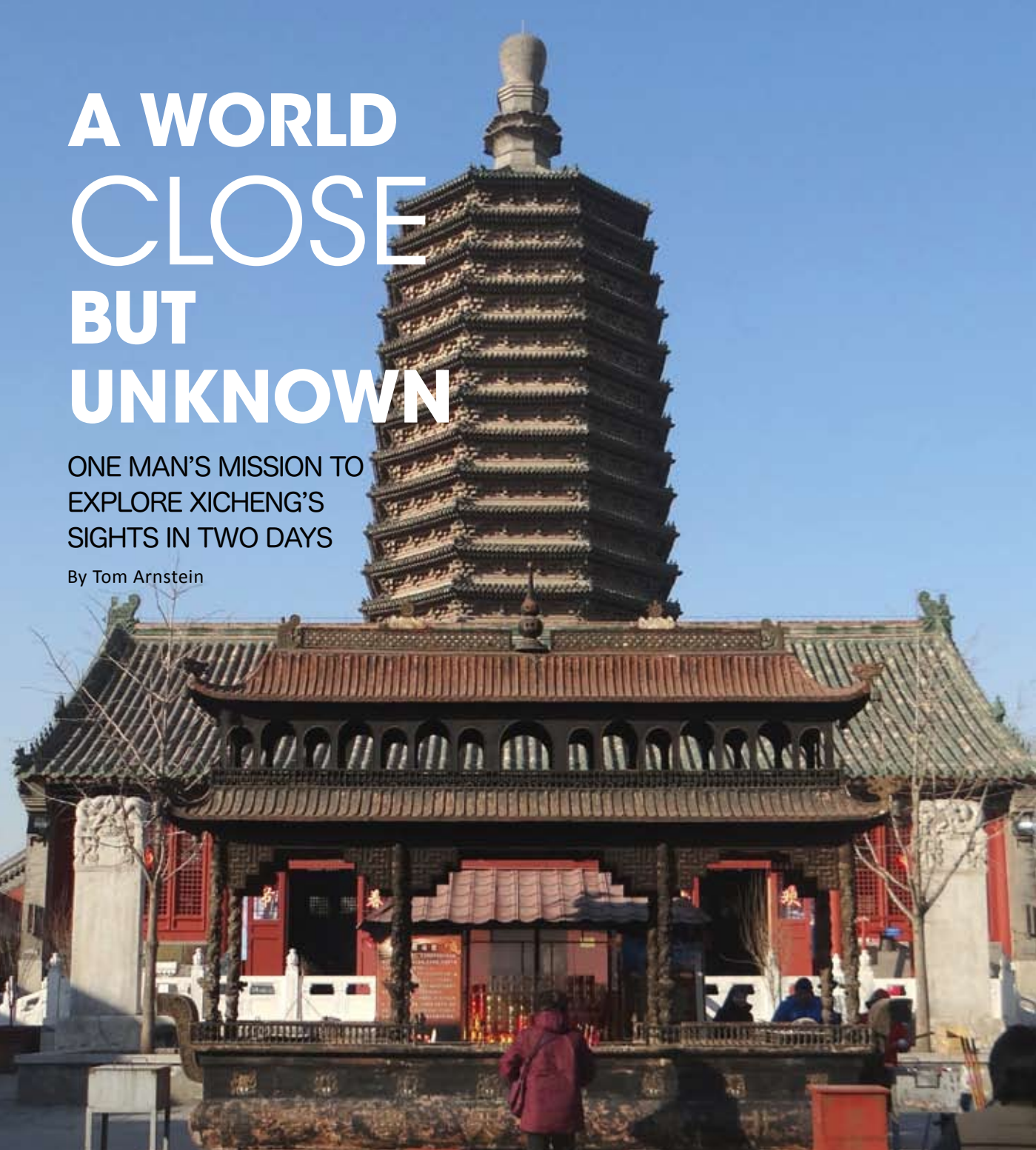
For thousands of years, people from all over the world have been coming and going along the roads and through the ports of what is today China. Not everyone became a religious and cultural phenomenon like Xuanzang, or was as prolific a translator as Matteo Ricci, or had a beer named after them like Ban Chao. But today's Lao Wai and Hai Gui are part of a long and important tradition connecting China with the rest of the world.



A WORLD CLOSE BUT UNKNOWN

ONE MAN'S MISSION TO
EXPLORE XICHENG'S
SIGHTS IN TWO DAYS

By Tom Arnstein



The west side of Beijing has always been something of a black spot in my exploration of the city given that fun, work, and housing tended to gravitate a little closer to the center. In my mind there was little in Xicheng that I couldn't experience more conveniently at a similar rendition nearer to home. Sure, I've pushed my way along the banks of Houhai, taken in views of the Forbidden City from Jingshan, explored the arty back alleys of Dashilar, and splurged in the shopping district of Xidan, but all of those straddle Dongcheng and should give you an idea of just how deep (or not) I've ventured into what was once the largest portion of Beijing's old city. It was with these gaps in mind that I decided to set out to reconcile some long-held ignorance and finally get a better grasp of a part of the city that had so far largely evaded my interest.

Xicheng, with its population of just over 700,000, is probably best known for being home to Zhongnanhai, the political heart of Beijing, and therefore, China. As you can imagine, the vast stretch of government buildings located to the west of the Forbidden City aren't particularly *waiguoren*-friendly destinations so it was instead the outlying areas that became the focal point of enquiry.

Working my way north to south, my first stop and initial surprise were several temples dotted along Ping'anli West Street (free-RMB 20 entry), each embodying a slightly different style – wooden verses jade roofs, open courtyards verses narrow pathways snaking around large temple buildings, all enshrined with calming wafts of incense and the peaceful chiming of bells. The most famous of the area's temples lies one block directly south: Baitasi or the White Cloud Dagoba, established during the Yuan dynasty (1271-1368), has finally emerged from its scaffold cocoon after a period of remodeling to sit towering above the old city, deflecting the advances of the nearby Financial District. This Taoist temple and its surrounding old town enclaves provide the perfect spot to soak up Xicheng's ancient roots.

One kilometer west, sits the Lu Xun Museum, dedicated to one of China's modern literary heavyweights, probably best known in the West for his novel *The Real Story of Ah Q*. The museum, which is built on the grounds of Lu Xun's (1881-1936) Beijing residence, guides you through the milestones of the ruminator's life using various artifacts and writings.

Walk a stone's throw further west and you'll find the Guanyuan Bird, Flower, and Insect Market, skirting the east side of the Second Ring Road, a mile-long stretch absolutely brimming with everything from the aforementioned wildlife (some acting as mascots rather than pets for sale) to jade, knick-knacks, and whatever else has been dug out from the seller's makeshift and semi-illegal shed that day.

From the museum it's a short trip directly south to one of Xicheng's, if not the city's, best kept secrets: Tianning Temple. Free to enter, this 60-meter-tall pagoda was originally made from wood and in 602AD acted as the depository for treasured Buddhist artifacts on instruction by Emperor Wendi of the Sui dynasty. The now stone structure (having been rebuilt during the Qing dynasty) is adorned with relief sculptures of stone warriors and bodhisattvas, slightly dilapidated and worn, giving them a truly aged quality that is both hard to find and refreshing in country where a substantial number of historical sites have been rebuilt in the past 50 years.

Our tour of Xicheng concludes in the old Muslim quarter of Beijing, centered around the short street of Niu Jie lined by Muslim restaurants but conspicuously lacking a significant Muslim population. The street itself is nothing of much importance but if you go with an appetite you won't be disappointed by the plethora of street snacks available, including a specialty deep-fried beef, onion, and dough roll (*niuroubing*), which at peak times finds a sizeable queue but it's one well worth waiting for. At the very southeasterly tip sits the docile Niu Jie Mosque (RMB 10), the oldest and largest mosque in Beijing. Originally founded in 996AD, and later rebuilt in 1442AD after destruction by the Mongols, the complex is an architectural curio for its melding of Islamic and Chinese designs. Oriented towards Mecca instead of on the usual north-to-south axis, golden Arabic script emblazons the red, blue, and green halls that would otherwise look at home in any of Beijing's other temples.

The above itinerary can be completed over the space of two days or in one busy day if you minimize your initial temple visits. The diverse sights and numerous attractions worth stumbling upon mean that there is plenty to do regardless of your interests. Much of what can be found in Xicheng is unmatched within the central Beijing bubble, making for an experience bound to reenliven and refresh your understanding of a city in a state of perpetual flux.



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

FOOD & DRINK

TAKAYA // GLO KITCHEN // FU TAPAS // JOMI // PROV GOV // CINKER PICTURES



BUSINESS LUNCH AT 29 GRILL

Through March and April – Impress your lunch companion with a business lunch at 29 Grill. The three-course set menu is packed with healthy, quick, and delicious options such as baby spinach salad with apple, bacon, walnuts, and a perfectly poached egg, or slow roasted pork belly for something a little more indulgent. RMB 128 (plus 15 percent tax). 11.30am-2.30pm. 29 Grill

PHOTO COURTESY OF CONRAD BEIJING

NIBBLES AND SIPS

The biggest dining news of the spring, for meat-lovers at least, is that New York City-based steakhouse **Wolfgang's** will open a branch in the newly-renovated Pacific Century Place, just north of 1949. Housed on Park Avenue in Manhattan, Wolfgang's flagship restaurant has been repeatedly ranked as one of the Big Apple's top 10 steakhouses. The brand has a handful of other branches across NYC and the US, along with a trio of locations in Japan and one in South Korea. The restaurant was founded by Wolfgang Zwiener, who honed his F&B expertise for years at another famous New York steakhouse, Luger.

Elsewhere in the Sanlitun/Gongti area, new restaurant and lounge **Mojo** opened just after Spring Festival, and looks to be carving out its position as both a Western fine dining destination and nightlife venue.

We've been hearing some very good things about **Bao House**, a small, high-end Japanese restaurant that has soft opened on the third floor of the Topwin Center next to the well-regarded yakitori joint Beyond Yakitori. In-the-know foodie friends describe the set menu as "the best Japanese food they've had in Beijing" so you better believe that we'll be first in line once the restaurant is out of soft opening.

Look out for health and fitness startup **Base Fit**, who opened their first gym in Xingfu Ercun in January, and are now looking to launch a restaurant concept sometime in the New Year (the Year of the Rooster, that is). Details are thin on the ground at time of print, but expect the food to have a decidedly healthy bent, with inspiration from both Eastern and Western cuisine.

On the other hand, those of you who have abandoned healthy resolutions now that we are several months into the year, might want to indulge in the recently launched aperitivo at **Pizza View**, which runs from 5-9pm on weeknights. All wines by the glass, beers (including Jing-A), and cocktails are buy-one-get-one free, and accompanied by a complimentary plate of snacks and mini pizza. With Aperol spritzes priced at RMB 50, it has already positioned itself as one of Beijing's best value happy hour deals.





TAKAYA

**INEXPENSIVE, HOME-STYLE
JAPANESE ON NANLUOGU XIANG**

Daily 11.30am-11pm. 3 Suoyi Hutong, Dongcheng District (6402 3070)

高屋家庭日本料理: 东城区蓍衣胡同3号

WHAT'S NEW RESTAURANTS

Takaya, a tiny but cozy restaurant serving home-style Japanese dishes, is located on the surprisingly quiet Suoyi Hutong considering its proximity to Nanluogu Xiang. The space seats 20 people, with warm yellow walls, a wooden sushi bar, plenty of cat-related ornaments and tchotchkes, and Japanese posters.

The most popular dishes here include the potato salad (RMB 25), which comes with smashed boiled egg mixed through the mashed potato, and refreshing slices of cucumber and onion.

The foie gras sushi (RMB 50 for two pieces) was our favorite – the grilled foie gras on rice and nori benefitting from a brushing of sweet-sour cranberry sauce. The tendon and tofu soup (RMB 48) filled with soft beancurd and sweet turnip was spicy and hearty. This Kansai-style soup is a must-try to warm you up through the remainder of Beijing's cold weather.

If you want a deluxe option, try the popular grilled eel with rice (RMB 110), which comes with nori, sesame, and chopped scallion, as well as an accompanying bowl of soup that can be poured over the rice, adding a stronger fish flavor to the soft white grain.

You can expect reasonable prices, with dishes such as sashimi (RMB 50-58), sushi (RMB 28-50), sushi rolls (RMB 42-88), and grilled beef with rice (RMB 36-38) all being relatively affordable. They also offer Japanese hot pot, known as *sukiyaki*, (RMB 58) and barbecued dishes to go with the drinks.

The small sake selection (RMB 25-138 per 150ml) and a flight of three types of sake (RMB 69-85) will help you round off your meal. *Tracy Wang*



Job Fairs for Foreigners in China

- **Beijing** April 8, 2017
- **Shenzhen** April 15, 2017
- **Chengdu** May 13, 2017
- **Shanghai** May 14, 2017



More at www.foreignhr.com

WHAT'S NEW RESTAURANTS

GLO KITCHEN X RAW FITNESS

HEALTHY INGREDIENTS AND INTERNATIONAL FLAVORS AT GLO'S SECOND LOCATION

Daily 10am-10pm. Unit 101, Bldg 7, 97 Jianguo Lu, Chaoyang District (5711 2877)

朝阳区建国路97号7号楼101

After seeing success with Glo Kitchen and Fitness on Guanghua Lu, Glo Kitchen takes their brand of healthy living to Dawang Lu, teaming up with Raw Fitness for their second location. Occupying a space on the ground floor of this new three-story fitness complex, the new location can only be described as “hip,” featuring plenty of low slung geometric furniture and a muted color scheme of black, grey, and, of course, Glo’s signature sunny yellow.

The food carries on the concept Glo developed at their Guanghua Lu kitchen, offering healthy eats that are a world away from boring, basic salads. The roast chicken and eggplant salad (RMB 35), for example, is a riot of color and texture, matching tamarind-roasted chicken thigh, large chunks of tender aubergine, dried persimmon, and miso dressing in a sort of Asian-Middle Eastern fusion. The menu also offers a number of power bowls, sandwiches, and wraps. Wash everything down with a wide range of beverages, including coffee (RMB 12-30), kombucha

(RMB 34), homemade almond milk (RMB 28), and creative smoothies (RMB 35). Be sure to try the thrillingly black Dark Power smoothie, made with black sesame and activated charcoal (said to be good for the gut).

Picky eaters will love Glo’s design-your-own salad or bowl bar, which they cutely dub “create your own personal best.” Select a base, protein, toppings, dressing, and garnishes from a check list of over 50 different items, and the chef will put together your bespoke dish. We were particularly impressed by the range of dressings. There’s no oil and vinegar for Glo; instead, choose from a selection including curry coconut sauce, black garlic Caesar, or Korean *ssamjang* (a spicy sauce).

Overall, Glo is a great choice for those wishing to eat healthy or recharge after a work out without sacrificing taste and texture. *Robynne Tindall*

Note: We visited Glo during their soft opening period. Look for an expanded menu, including brunch, and frequent dining promotions in the future.



PHOTO: UNI YOU



FU TAPAS & WINE

FUSION MEDITERRANEAN TAPAS AND ORGANIC WINE

Tue-Fri 5pm-midnight, Sat-Sun noon-midnight. 25 Ju'er Hutong, Dongcheng District (188 0113 6781)

东城区菊儿胡同25号

The opening of Fu Tapas & Wine has shone a light on the previously quiet Ju'er Hutong near Nanluogu Xiang.

The three-floor venue invites diners in with their warm lights and whisks them away to a culinary dreamland. Owner Sohan Shao explains that, "Fu has four meanings: house, poetry, fortune, and to float," all elements that she incorporates in the space. Although not trained as an interior designer, it's more than evident that Shao enjoys putting a lot of effort into small details.

The menu takes an innovative design by offering fusion cuisine in traditional tapas portions designed by Fabio Falanga, who some may know as the manager of Sanlitun's La Dolce Vita.

We particularly enjoyed the Australian beef carpaccio with parmigiano chips (RMB 78), the crispy chips proving a morish companion to the smooth, raw beef as well as the fried scallops in kataifi pastry served with a truffle and yuzu sauce (RMB 128), which has a golden and crisp pasta crust, and balances well with the truffle sauce; and the gnocchi with chorizo and blue cheese (RMB 68), the

moist slices of chorizo and crumbled blue cheese giving the dish a sharp and savory kick.

Other main dishes presented include 200-day grain-fed beef tenderloin with vegetable tempura and béarnaise sauce (RMB 168); seared tuna fillet with red quinoa, feta cheese, Kalamata olives, and onion (RMB 128); as well as small plates, salads, cold cuts, and desserts.

As for drinks, Fu stands apart from other venues because of their great wine selection with a line of 100 percent organic wines "from classic to innovative, from Old World to New World." Prices range from RMB 45 a glass to RMB 990 a bottle.

Fu offers a modern, quiet and relaxing atmosphere with delicious bites. The first floor bar and dining area is especially suited towards a more intimate night whereas the larger second floor with its longer tables is good for bigger groups, and the third caters for private parties.

All in all, Fu lives up to the hype, and we're glad to see a new, elegant venue open in the hutongs, and can't wait to see how it grows. *Tracy Wang*

WHAT'S NEW RESTAURANTS

JOMI

COMFORTING FRENCH CUISINE WITH A CHINESE TWIST IN LIDO

Daily 11.30am-10pm. A-101 Lido Plaza, Lido Square, Chaoyang District (6431 9812)

朝阳区丽都环岛丽都广场A-101

In recent years, the Lido area has become increasingly popular both with families looking for a more relaxed environment without having the desire to live beyond the Fifth Ring Road, and with Beijing's younger expatriate community looking for cheaper rent than Sanlitun and better quality housing than seen in the hutongs.

New restaurant Jomi is hoping to use star power to tap into these two markets, as the restaurant is spearheaded by owner and chef Antoine Bunel. Bunel is active on Chinese TV reality shows, has gained a sizable following in China, and is proud of his high-profile Chinese celebrity buddies.

Jomi's menu is simple but refined enough so as to not be overwhelmingly posh, and includes a couple of soups, a handful of starters (RMB 18-58) like foie gras, mixed pepper quiche, and fusion shepherd's pie, and a series of robust main dishes (RMB 48-108) such as roasted mustard chicken leg, pan fried salmon, roasted lamb chop, and Australian sirloin.

We can confidently recommend the best selling roasted chicken leg (RMB 68), a home style meal. The juicy

chicken is served with mustard, lemon and honey sauce, slices of carrot, Brussels sprouts, roasted mushrooms, and is seasoned with thyme and Sichuan pepper. The crispy chicken skin and the tender chicken meat hidden beneath went down far too quickly. Alternatively, there is also the stewed beef with red wine (RMB 68), with juicy cuts of beef soaked in red wine covered with fried potato strips seasoned with lemon juice and honey. Take a bite of the meat, fried potato, mashed potato, and baby carrot at the same time for an impeccable combination of textures.

To round it off, we gobbled up the chocolate and peanut fondant (RMB 58), which interestingly opts for an ice cream seasoned with *mala* Sichuan pepper, giving the sweet, gooey chocolate lava from the fondant that extra depth. For a special touch, sip on a cup of homemade ginger tea, and see if you can catch a performance by Bunel's wife Chongchong, who just so happens to be a crowd-pleasing ballerina.

Jomi is a welcome addition to Lido and it should flourish among those looking for something a little more special than the area's other casual offerings. *Tracy Wang*



PHOTO: JINI YOU



SEAFOOD UDON AT MAN YO

U

... *udon* 乌冬面

Thick, chewy udon noodles are one of the most recognisable varieties of the Japanese culinary canon. Though history has obscured their back story, some academics have suggested that udon (and other Japanese noodles) have their origin in Tang dynasty China, when a Nara era Japanese envoy discovered them and other wheaten Chinese concoctions and took them back to the homeland.

... *uighur* 维吾尔族

The Uighur (or Uyghur) are a Turkic ethnic group from Eastern and Central Asia that live primarily in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region in northwestern China. When it comes to food, the term Uighur is often used interchangeably with Xinjiang, but whatever you call it the food combines influences from Central Asian and Chinese cuisine and is characterized by the use of lamb, dairy products, vegetables such as tomatoes, peppers, and onions, and grilled breads. Typical dishes include *polu* (抓饭), a sort of rice pilaf; *legghmen* (手抓拉面), stir-fried hand pulled noodles in a tomato-based sauce; and, of course, good old *chuan'r* (串).

... *umami* 鲜味

Umami, or savory taste, is one of the five basic tastes but was only classified as such in 1908 when it was first identified by Japanese chemist Kikunae Ikeda. Kikunae found that glutamate was responsible for the palatability of the broth from *kombu* seaweed. Further research over the course of the twentieth century confirmed that people taste umami through taste receptors specific to glutamate (as in monosodium glutamate or MSG), which is widely found in savory products. Many common Chinese ingredients, including soy sauce, dried shiitake mushrooms, and green tea, are rich in umami.

... *undercut* 里脊肉

In butchery terms, the technical definition of the undercut is “the tender meat of the loin muscle on each side of the spine.” Or in other words, it’s the tenderloin. Can you tell that “U” is one of the more difficult Wokipedia’s to write? Undercut can also refer to an on-the-bone sirloin with the fillet still attached to the other side. If you want to buy undercut or tenderloin from your butcher, ask for 里脊肉 (*lǐjǐròu*).



LINE FRIENDS CAFÉ & STORE

EYE CANDY FOR RICH KIDS

Daily 10.30am-9pm. 3-328, Beijing Yintai Centre, 2 Jianguomenwai Dajie, Chaoyang District (8517 1506)
朝阳区银泰中心in01购物中心三层328号

Line Friends, a Korean-owned spinoff of the Japanese messaging app Line, continues on its steady march to China domination, thanks to the cutesy animal mascots that would normally grace the app in sticker form - if it wasn't banned in China that is. With the opening of its new flagship store in Guomao's Yintai Centre, it should now also be known for some of the most overpriced tat to ever come to Beijing.

Line Café & Store offers a variety of hot drinks (RMB 27-38), desserts (RMB 32-50), and sandwiches (RMB 98, which despite its outrageous RMB 98 price tag, we declined because the staff were kind enough to confide in us that, "it's not tasty, or worth the money"). They were also out of cupcakes and since all of their food is made and delivered from Shanghai, we didn't expect them to be replenished particularly quickly, which in itself is a little concerning in terms of freshness.

We opted for the Brown Bear Mousse and Cony Rabbit Mousse (both RMB 48). Both were certainly eye catching;

the Cony Rabbit is shaped out of cream cheese filled with a tart strawberry jelly, while the Brown Bear Mousse is flavored with chocolate and orange, and was far too sweet for our liking. Kids may only be slightly perturbed by the idea of showing appreciation for their favorite cartoon character by eating its face bite by bite.

The brand's sister café and indoor playground (Kids with Line Friends) sits separate on the third floor and also falls on the pricey side. For example, try not to splurge all your money on a simple Macbook case for RMB 368 or a palm-sized "air purifier" for RMB 998. Sadly, we were unable to gain access to the In Kids with Line Friends Playground, because a) you have to be a kid or come with a kid, and b) it costs RMB 588 for two hours. Knowing that we're too broke to pay the entrance fee and severely lacking in kids to borrow, we gave up and went home. Not even these cute little characters or the pseudo high that arises from spending extortionate amounts money could save this trip. *Tracy Wang*

JIANGSU PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT RESTAURANT

STRAIGHT FROM THE YANGTZE RIVER

Daily 10.30am-2.30pm, 4.30pm-late. Jiangsu Hotel, 1 Ganshuiqiao, Andingmen Waidajie, Dongcheng District (6422 6633)
东城区甘水桥1号安定门外大街江苏饭店

Jiangsu Province, often referred to in Chinese as “the land of fish and rice,” is a picturesque and bountiful province that borders the Yellow Sea.

The bottom half of the province, where the Yangtze River gushes into the ocean from the bustling capital of Nanjing, is where the majority of its fresh aquatic produce and vegetables come from, and it's because of this verdant topography that the cuisine of Jiangsu, or Su cuisine, is generally light and elegant, and characterized by clear soups and an abundance of river greens. Meats are traditionally soft, but not mushy to the point of being unappealing.

We recognized these elements come together in one dish often referred to as Lion's Head, which, thankfully, has no relation to eating the king of the jungle. Instead, it's a stew containing large meatballs and bamboo shoots or cabbage. The Jiangsu Provincial Government Restaurant serves the balls, arranged in a beautiful green pot doused in a clear soup with a single green leaf probably placed there for aesthetics. We sampled both varieties: ‘crab roe

lion’ (*xiehuang shizi tou*), RMB 48 per bowl, and ‘Yangzhou (pork) lion’ (*yangzhou shizi tou*), RMB 38 per bowl. Both varieties were soft and succulent, and came accompanied by a clear soup to offset the heaviness of the meats.

Other dishes we were excited to try were the ‘leek screw’ (*jiuca lousi*, RMB 48), a fried mix of scallions and river snails, and the ‘smoked bean curd *malantou*’ (*xianggan malantou*, RMB 32), both of which take full advantage of Jiangsu's fertile offerings. The *malantou* (a type of vegetable also known as Indian Aster) was unfortunately a little dry and not as moreish as the rendition found at Shanghai Xiao Nanguo, a popular Shanghai chain in Beijing, but we enjoyed the snails for something a little different.

What really stood out, however, were the soup dumplings. These comforting parcels of minced pork and abundant soup rarely go wrong, and in this specific case, really hit the spot. The dumplings, in combination with the friendly staff, are reason enough to consider a return visit, something admittedly, not often said about provincial government restaurants. *Margaux Schreurs*



CINKER PICTURES

BRINGING SWANK TO THE SANLITUN FILMGOING EXPERIENCE

Daily 3-10pm (restaurant); 3pm-1am (bar); films screened at 5.30pm and 8pm. N4-40B, Taikoo Li North, Sanlitun Lu, Chaoyang District (6409 4577)

朝阳区三里屯太古里北区N4-40B

Cinker Pictures is putting a new spin on the near century-old practice of dinner and a movie. The North Taikoo Li venue houses a cinema, restaurant and bar, meaning you can catch a flick, grab a bite, and sip a cocktail all without having to step outside.

Granted, this upscale alternative to your nearest Wanda won't be screening new releases, but the cushy leather seats and footrests will make you feel like you're still at home (or, more aptly, at our imaginary impossibly rich friend's lavish new home theater).

Movie tickets can be purchased for about RMB 150 via the theater's WeChat page (ID: cinker_cinema_space), by calling the front desk or in person at the box office (though we recommend calling this ahead of time to ensure you get a seat). Dinner and drink packages can also be purchased with your ticket stub, and currently includes a free cocktail, which would otherwise cost around RMB 100, bringing the lofty ticket price down to something far more reasonable.

The venue's concept may be a novel one, but Cinker is actually inspired by the retro charm of London and New York's time-honored picture houses. That throwback theme is apparent in the decor of the cocktail lounge –

the owners have dubbed it “retro glam” – which boasts several film-themed drinks. Around the corner sits Cinker's restaurant, which strives for a more contemporary, casual vibe than the bar, with a menu featuring sharing plates, seafood mains, and more (running anywhere from RMB 150 to RMB 230 per dish).

But of course the biggest draw will be the rooms with the silver screens. Cinker boasts an intimate theater that seats 30 with cushy leather chairs, side tables for cocktails and snacks, and soft little benches that allow you to literally put your feet up. An even cozier vibe can be found in the VIP lounge, which we envisage as a luxurious birthday party spot (at RMB 2,000 per hour it would have to be).

In the same vein, Cinker also forgoes generic flavor-of-the-day flicks in favor of arthouse and foreign films. Indeed, the venue's vibe and film selection are both as pristine as the elegantly moustachioed concierge from Wes Anderson's *The Grand Budapest Hotel*, which also happens to be one of the first flicks on the program. Suffice to say, Cinker sure beats slouching in front of your laptop at home waiting for a torrent to download.
Kyle Mullin



PHOTO COURTESY OF CINKER PICTURES



OUT OF STEP

STYLISH NEW CANADIAN CRAFT BEER BAR IN SANLITUN

Daily 10am-1am. 4 Sanlitun Dongsanjie, Chaoyang District (8532 5266)

朝阳区三里屯东三街4号

Over on the quiet Dongsanjie, right next to our favorite Hainanese chicken rice restaurant Ji Kun Café, sleek Canadian craft beerpub Out of Step opened its doors just as we ushered in the new year.

Their suds menu offers 10 beers on tap, all from four Vancouver breweries: Hearthstone Brewery, Black Kettle Brewing, Fuggles & Warlock Craft Works, and Postmark Brewing. Six out of the 10 beers fall on the heavier side, while on the fruitier side there's one pale ale, two IPAs, and a milk stout. Because of the necessary costs involved with importing beer prices aren't low and range between RMB 55-65. One upside is that this selection is likely to change often as the beers on offer are brewed in small batches in Canada.

Why Canada? "Water is one of the most essential ingredients in beer, and Canada is famous for its pure glacier water. Also, we found that the [Beijing] market is American-heavy, and there is not much from Canada

around," co-founder Wiki explained.

Aside from brews, they have a small bar food menu (think french fries and tapas), and seasonal dishes designed by food stylist Juno Kimi. The finished products, however, look much too pretty to be bar food. Our favorite was the grilled chicken, which retained its juicy meat, encased in a delicate and crispy skin, seasoned with spices and homemade mustard.

Another of the co-owners, Nick, is a photographer and a skater boy who oversaw the setup of a professional-grade turntable at the bar. The playlist is also carefully curated by local musicians, hoping to draw a younger, hipper crowd.

This attention to detail, alongside stylish T-shirts, coasters, and glasses, demonstrate the team's genuine passion for the product, which should help the bar thrive in future as long as they can get people through the door. *Tracy Wang*

WHAT'S NEW BARS & CLUBS

JW TAILOR BAR

MANNERS MAKETH MAN (ALONGSIDE SUITS AND WHISKY)

Daily 7pm-2am. Unit 1611, Bldg 2, Yoollee Plaza, Gongti Beilu, Chaoyang District (186 1407 5226)
朝阳区工体北路永利国际2单元1611室

Jeff Ji, the man behind many Beijing favorites like Mai Bar, Parlor, and Da Vinci, has partnered with Bruce Zhou and Justin Wang to bring us yet another shiny location: JW Tailor Bar.

Located in Yoollee Plaza on the same floor as Da Vinci, JW Tailor Bar opts for classic and old-fashioned décor, giving the impression of having time-travelled to a bar on London's Savile Row. Several ceiling fans made from repurposed propellers hang above, stag heads watch patrons from the walls, and jasper leather stools line the bar.

Said to be inspired by the movie *Kingsman: The Secret Service*, the fitting room is laid out in a similar way to the room in which young Eggsy begins his transformation from hardened scruff to dapper double agent, with shelves of various types of shoes, fabrics, collars, and all the other essentials needed for suits. British spread or French cuff – you name it, JW Tailor Bar has it.

Suits range in price from RMB 8,000 to 15,000. As Wang, who previously worked in men's tailoring for Gucci, explains, "our suits make for a good first tailored suit for the uninitiated. My motive is to attract youngsters and make

suits a necessary part of their life." It usually takes about a month to have a suit tailored from start to finish.

And, let's not forget about the drinks. The menu focuses on Scotch whisky, as well as a number of classic and special cocktails. We tried the Mala Old Fashioned (RMB 80) from Ji's Gentleman Style series, one that we have enjoyed at Li's other venues, which was notable for its smoky notes from the Old Fitzgerald 1849 Bourbon, and a burning finish and strong kick from the ginger, chili, and peppercorns.

We also liked the Forbidden Light (RMB 80), mixed using rosemary-infused Havana Club rum, lemon juice, and syrup, balanced with a splash of passion fruit juice, and a half-cut passion fruit floating on top, set alight for added warmth and fragrance.

All in all, JW Tailor Bar seamlessly combines the best parts of a tailor shop and a cocktail bar, making the perfect space to grab a suit, whiskey or cocktail, or even enjoy a cigar. Remember, as *Kingsman's* Colin Firth, and William of Wykeham said before him, "manners maketh man." Tracy Wang



PHOTO: UNI YOU



HEAVEN SUPERMARKET (PT. 2)

UPGRADED BEER BAR TRIES TO SHED ITS HELLISH REPUTATION

Daily 6pm-late. B1-100, 6 Gongti Xilu, Chaoyang District (Beneath Tango KTV)

朝阳区工体西路6号B1-100 (糖果KTV楼下)

Let's just say that we have mixed feelings about the new, secondary venue of Sanlitun's favorite love-to-hate bar, Heaven Supermarket. As the late George Michael would have lamented, "you gotta have faith [to drink here]," that's in part because you might not even find it the first time around.

Sandwiched between two night clubs on the east side of Gongti, looking for Heaven feels like you're on the path to exploring the recesses of stadium hell; do your best to ignore the terrible and thunderous music from Tango KTV, go down the stairs, pass the first bar on the left and continue down the hallway where you'll be greeted with two plain glass doors – hardly the pearly gates we were hoping for.

Unlike at its old location in Sanlitun which is open 24/7, the apparently fluid opening times during Spring Festival at first left us knocking on Heaven's door without success, claiming to be open at 5pm, but still shut at 6.30pm. Once you're in however, you'll notice another huge difference: unlike its nasty sister, it's clean here. It's also sizably bigger,

housing 16 massive fridges stocked with beer, including Nøgne Ø, De Molen, Dogfish Head, and Founders, and some varieties that are unavailable at the old location. They also do a good job of providing cheaper beers for patrons stumbling their way into the next door KTV, such as Asahi for RMB 15, Panda, and Reberg. They also have Goose Island IPA, Hoegaarden, Leffe, Stella Artois, and Becks on tap. The food menu has crawled over this way too, featuring the same like-to-live-dangerously "Mexican"-centric and fast food mains and snacks.

If you're looking for a less lonely drinking experience then we suggest arriving after 9pm, when the bar livens up a little and surpasses the original location with its noticeably dry and stick-free floor, multiple clean toilets, and lack of smoking indoors. For these reasons alone we can see how much effort management have put in to eradicate the hellish image of the old Heaven, and it's a change that may indeed see us stop by to nab a couple of from their robust bottled imports section in the future.

Tracy Wang



lentilnator

Nooxo, RMB 45

New Year's resolutions still going strong? Nooxo at Chunxiu Lu's Yu food court (also known as The Crib) has plenty of options that won't work against your health and fitness goals. This one tops our list: Cooked lentils, peppers, semi-dried tomatoes, guacamole, and a poached egg are piled onto red rice and coix seeds.

double cheesecake

Koka, RMB 28

Covered in white chocolate flakes, this treat is a healthy mix (generous healthy, not good-for-you healthy) of cream cheese, whipped cream, and sponge. Koka also offers matcha rolls for those lacking a sweet tooth.

rib pot

Sulyi, RMB 168

Get your meat fix at Korean newbie Sulyi with their

rib pot. This juicy gas stove-powered pot is a mix of pre-cooked ribs, Chinese cabbage, dates, carrots, and a sprinkle of cheese on top.

seafood paella

Casa Talia, RMB 208

Italian rice cooked to perfection in a seafood broth, filled to the brim with clams, squid, scallops, prawns, and other oceanic delicacies. Best when shared between friends or family over chat and giggles.

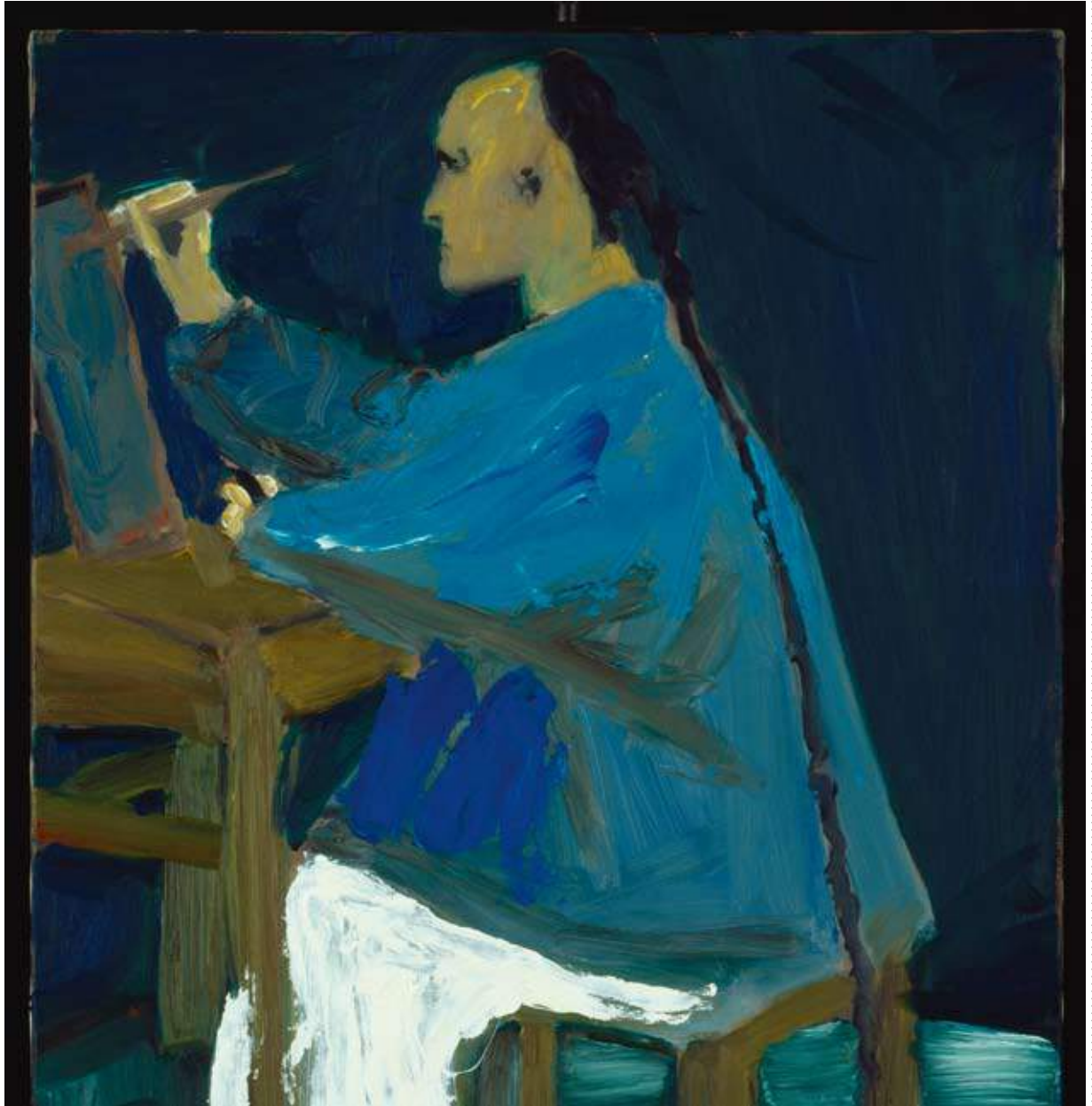
uni dumplings

Xiding Dumplings, RMB 68 for 15

Packed with the combination of umami flavors and sweetness from fresh sea urchin (or *uni*), these dumplings are rounded out with pork. You won't find this good value *uni* at any other Japanese restaurants in town.

GO

LULULEMON // TWOFACE // YANGON // HONG KONG BEER



CRISTOF YVORÉ RETROSPECTIVE

MAR 4-JUN 11 – M Woods continues its exhibitions of lauded yet underappreciated works with this retrospective of French artist Cristof Yvoré's paintings, the first gathering of his works in Asia. The 798-based gallery will display a range of Yvoré's paintings, "from his early experiments with space to the heavily impastoed floral works that he made before his death at the age of 47 [in 2013]." RMB 60. M Woods (184 0158 7202)

LULULEMON

ACTIVEWEAR BRAND'S FIRST BEIJING STORE IS A WORKOUT FOR YOUR WALLET, TOO

Daily 10am-10pm. NLG-53, Taikoo Li North, 11 Sanlitun Lu Chaoyang District (6417 8818)
朝阳区三里屯路11号太古里北区下沉广场NLG-53

If forced to identify one trend that has captured the hearts and minds of young, upwardly mobile professionals in China's major cities over the past few years, one would not be unwise to point to health and fitness. Shiny, glass-encased gyms and health-focused restaurants are popping up everywhere, and right at the center of it all are active wear brands like Lululemon, capitalizing on a new willingness to take active wear outside of the gym to brunch or even the office.

Recently opened on the lower ground floor plaza in Taikoo Li North, Lululemon's first Beijing store is also its largest to date in China. The store is judiciously laid out, encouraging customers to browse the racks of hip running, cycling, and yoga gear for both men and women.

As with all of their stores, Lululemon touts the Sanlitun location as more than just a retail space; rather, it is designed to be the hub for the Lululemon "community" in Beijing. The front of the store is given over to a casual bar area, where customers (although I sense Lululemon

probably wouldn't use that word) are encouraged to hangout and connect. It would appear that that community is indeed alive and well, too, as the store hosts frequent free yoga sessions taught by local instructors. Anyone can sign up for these sessions via the Lululemon official WeChat account (ID: lululemonathletica).

This experiential marketing is key to attracting customers for a premium brand like Lululemon. As those who are familiar with the brand outside of China will be aware, this is not the cheapest workout gear and you will pay an additional premium for the privilege of buying it in China.

Women's leggings start from around RMB 580 up to over RMB 1,000, with sports bras of various degrees of intensity around the RMB 500 mark. Men's clothing is similarly priced. Nevertheless, you certainly get what you pay for – this is active wear that keeps all your jiggle bits firmly in place, using material that won't lose its shape over time. *Robynne Tindall*



PHOTO COURTESY OF LULULEMON



TWOFACE

SLICK AND VINTAGE CUTS FOR MEN AND WOMEN AT 3.3

Daily 9am-9pm. 6/F, 3.3, 33 Sanlitun Lu, Chaoyang District (5745 1230)

双面复古理发馆：朝阳区三里屯路33号3.3大厦6层

I had a hard time of getting a haircut when I was young. Lack of style treated me well (at least until I was old enough to recognize a decade's worth of criminal bowl cuts) and having my own personal hairdresser – my mum – was fine except that one time she lopped off (read: nicked) the top of my ear, a major jolt to both my feelings of security and my quickly diminishing oedipal complex. My local barber wasn't much better thanks to an uncaged, psychopathic parrot who was of the opinion that little boys' fingers were much tastier than stale, dry peanuts. Luckily I quickly became a teenager and it was finally acceptable to go without a haircut for months on end under the "guise" of nonchalance.

Things may not have changed much since then but some scars take longer to heal than others, so you can imagine my delight that neither my mum nor a single demonic parrot was present when I stepped into Twoface on the sixth floor of Sanlitun's 3.3. What you'll see instead is a polished space made up of dark wood, ornate golden cherubs, and rich, red leather-bound metal chairs harking back to America's 1950s post-war boom. The cuts that Twoface specialize are also largely borrowed from that halcyon era: *youtou*, or slicked-back, Brylcreem-heavy styles with short sides and long, combed back wavy and straight tops. The hairdressers here are trained in such vintage styles almost to a fault, which saw my preference of less rockabilly, more just-out-of-bed chic, met with slight befuddlement but was quickly cleared up

through some careful translation from the floor manager on hand.

If the haircuts aren't simple, the pricing certainly is, with a choice between RMB 260 for a cut from the crew's lesser experienced barbers, RMB 380 for someone a little higher ranking, and RMB 580 for the kind of haircut from the manager that'll presumably have water hydrants exploding as you strut down the street and leave every man, woman, and dog panting in your wake. Each option comes with a basic wash which can be supplemented with hot towels and shaves, and it should be said that this is in no means a men only salon – women are just as welcome.

Although I've been instilled with a "cheap and cheerful" outlook when it comes to a requisite and often begrudged trip to the hairdresser, I was happy with my final look despite it cashing in at over 15 times my usual hutong joint. Even if you leave Twoface without a new hairdo you can still splash out on a whole new vintage look given that the surrounding shops have acquiesced into something of a vintage emporium and include a tattoo parlor, leather goods outlet, and a branch of Mega Vintage. Don't, however, expect to pay prices that you'd find in somewhere like the States, as these imports, like your haircut, will set you back a pretty penny – it's the price you must pay to secure a coif and threads more akin to Elvis Presley than Kim Il Sung, and depart with both ears intact. *Tom Arnstein*

THREE DAYS IN YANGON

A CITY ON THE RISE

By Jeremiah Jenne

Yangon is a city on the rise. Once known as Rangoon, Myanmar's largest city offers tropical breezes, a vibrant and surprisingly cosmopolitan urban culture, and one of the best collections of colonial-era buildings anywhere in Asia. Long a shipping hub between the Indian Ocean and East Asia, the city's mix of cultures is reflected in Yangon's diverse culinary and religious traditions.



Day 1: Afternoon

In the center of the old city is the Sule Pagoda, a beautiful golden stupa sentenced to be the centerpiece of a traffic rotary. Walk south to the beautiful green oasis of Maha Bandula Park which is a hub of activity in the early evenings. Food vendors line the streets and children and families sit on the grass and enjoy the cooler evening air. The park is also surrounded by some of Yangon's most important heritage buildings including the lilac-colored City Hall and the High Court.

Evening

Head down to the waterfront: Yangon was once the busiest port in the British Empire and continues to be a working port. Unlike Shanghai's Bund, much of Yangon's riverfront is still working terminals and container yards, but there are pockets of old Rangoon's charm. The Strand Hotel is a colonial grand dame in the tradition of the Raffles in Singapore. Managed today by the Aman Hotel Group, it's a pricey place to stay, but visitors can hunt for the ghosts of Eric Blair (pen name: George Orwell) in the

bar while sipping period cocktails.

For dinner, walk up the street to one of Yangon's best bistros: the Rangoon Tea House. Modern-day twists on Burmese staples, including an excellent Tea Leaf Salad, make this a popular place for tourists and Yangon residents. After dinner, look over their extensive menu of sweet and milky Burmese teas.

Day 2: Morning

Book a walk with Michael from Yangon Walking Tours. The Eastern Heritage Building walk includes the best of colonial Yangon. While many of the buildings have suffered from not-so-benign neglect and misuse over the past few decades, Yangon is still a mecca for lovers of turn-of-the-century colonial architecture.

Afternoon

After exploring the architectural relics of the Raj, head to the eastern section of town to see an even more lasting legacy of British rule: Yangon's bustling Chinese and Indian quarters. Be sure to visit Thein Gyi Zai, the largest market





in Yangon and one of the oldest as well. Keep an eye out for carts selling betel nuts (a mild stimulant that leaves the chewers lips and teeth and startling shade of red) and *thanaka*, a paste made from wood dust that Burmese women wear on their faces as a form of sunblock.

Visit the Shri Kali Temple, built by Tamil migrants in 1871, and still an important center of worship for the city's South Asian community. The Indian Quarter also features a Shia mosque built in 1914 as well as the Musmeah Yeshua Synagogue, completed in 1896. The synagogue is an active place of worship for 20 or so descendants of Yangon's Jewish community, which once numbered in the thousands and included Jews of Persian, Indian, and European descent.

Evening

In the evening walk through the Chinese quarter. Many of Yangon's Chinese community operate gold exchanges in the area. There are also medicine shops, teahouses, and the kind of lineage halls and shrines that are increasingly rare in China. Walk south through Chinatown to the Kheng Hock Temple, a shrine to the deity Mazu, a favorite of Fujianese sailors.

Across the street from the temple is a busy dirt road that leads to the jetty. In the evening the jetty is bustling

with ferries carrying commuters home and is also the best place to watch the sunset along the river.

Once the sun goes down, head back up to 19th Street, a hopping lane of barbecue restaurants all operating on the simple equation: barbecue + beer = good times. Find a seat in one of the crowded outdoor tables, point to something that might taste good grilled, order a beer, and enjoy the Yangon evening.

Day 3: Morning

Uncharted Horizons is an outfit operating out of Yangon since 2015, which arranges bicycle tours through the surrounding countryside. It is an excellent opportunity to explore some of the less-travelled areas around Yangon, including rural markets, villages, and shrines.

Afternoon

The Shwedagon Pagoda is Myanmar's holiest site; the main stupa is encased in solid gold and rises 99 meters to a crown tipped with over 2000 rubies and 5448 diamonds including a 76-carat diamond at the pagoda's highest point. Make sure to remove your shoes at the gate and proceed around the pagoda in a counter-clockwise direction, as is customary to show deference at Buddhist places of worship.

HOW TO

Get There

Twenty-eight-day tourist visas can be obtained by submitting some basic information, a passport photo, and USD 50 to the e-visa application website run by the Myanmar government.

Find a Place to Stay

There are several hostels and guesthouses in the downtown area with rates starting around RMB 300 per night. Those willing to splurge a little will be very happy staying at the Sule Shangri-La. It's not cheap at approximately RMB 1,200 per night, but the location and service make it of excellent value. If money is no object and you're looking to recreate a little of the style of old Rangoon, the Strand Hotel remains the destination accommodation for discerning travellers.

Get Around

Taxis aren't metered, but most rides within the city will only cost about MMK 2,000 (RMB 10). Roads can be a bit chaotic, although local regulations prohibit operating scooters, motorbikes, or motorized trishaws inside the city limits, which does eliminate one potential traffic hazard.

DIRECTORY

The Strand Hotel (and Sarkie's Bar)
92 Strand Road (hotelthestrand.com)

Rangoon Tea House

77-79 Pansodan Street (Lower Middle Block)
Between Maha Bandoola and Merchant Road

Yangon Walking Tour

Thein Gyi Zai Market
Between Kon Zay Dan Street and 26th Street (opening-up-burma-travel.info)

Temple to Mazu (Kheng Hock Temple)

426-432 Strand Road

Shri Kali Temple

Corner of Anawrahta Road and Kon Zay Dan Street

Musmeah Yeshua Synagogue

85, 26th Street

Uncharted Horizons

facebook.com/uncharted.horizons.myanmar (VPN required)

Shwedagon Pagoda

Singuttara Hill (shwedagonpagoda.com)

Sule Shangri-La Hotel

223 Sule Pagoda Road (shangri-la.com/yangon/suleshangrila)



852 SUDS

A GUIDE TO HONG KONG'S CRAFT BEER SCENE

By Tracy Wang



Hong Kong is a little like a diamond: you may think you've seen its sparkle, but turn it over and there are even more shiny facets to find. This is certainly the case when it comes to the city's craft beer scene.

A recent visit to the fifth annual Beertopia beer festival on Hong Kong's Central Harbourfront, which showcased 119 breweries from around the world and 66 beers brewed right there in Hong Kong, helped us rediscover that multi-faceted scene. Don't worry if you missed the beer festival itself; we have rounded up five excellent local beer bars to enjoy on your next trip to the FrAGRant Harbor.

The Roundhouse

Selected by CNN Travel as one of the top 10 beer bars in Asia, The Roundhouse is an impeccable watering hole in Central. This small place with 25 taps has never let us down, with a frequently changing beer list and a menu of American-style barbecue to soak it all up featuring beef brisket, homemade sausage, and smoked beef short ribs.

62 Peel Street, Central (+852 2366 4880)

29 Amoy Street, Wan Chai (+852 2866 3330)

The Globe

We don't only like British-style pub The Globe because it is just around the corner from The Roundhouse, but also because of its great selection of craft beers, with 18 taps and bottled options from home and abroad. The 300 square-meter space is bustling, but the atmosphere is always relaxing. You can rest easy knowing that your beer cravings will be sated here, whatever your preference.

45-53 Graham Street, Central (+852 2543 1941)

Kowloon Taproom

Located on busy Ashley Road, this small Kowloon beer bar has a good selection of almost exclusively local brews, including Gweilo, Kowloon Bay, Moonzen, Lionrock, CityBrew, Young Master, and Black Kite, as well as imported bottled alternatives. The taproom also provides a simple Western menu of French fries, pizzas, and sandwiches. The tasting flight of four 5oz glasses comes at a reasonable price of HKD 140.

Astoria Building, 24-38 Ashley Road, Tsim Sha Tsui (+852 2861 0355)

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE GLOBE AND BEERTOPIA

The Ale Project (TAP)

This hidden bar has 15 taps, including 10 local draft brews such as Young Master, Nine Dragons, and Hong Kong Beer Co., and five from Brewdog, Founders, Meantime, Anderson Valley, and Nøgne Ø, which can be paired with street food with an artisanal twist. The Ale Project also sells select bottled beers from Meantime, North Coast, Brewdog, Anchor, 8Wired, Dupont, Boon, Black Isle, and Omnipollo.

15 Hak Po Street, Mongkok, Kowloon (+852 2468 2010)

Craft Brew & Co.

Craft Brew & Co. is a place for beer enthusiasts; fans of Carlsberg, Stella or San Miguel need not apply. The idea is

simple: the management only serves beers that they like. With more than 15 beers on tap, handcrafted sausages, and a rustic décor, Craft Beer & Co. is a great place to hang out and catch up on some of the local brews.

36 High Street, Sai Ying Pun (+852 2559 0498)

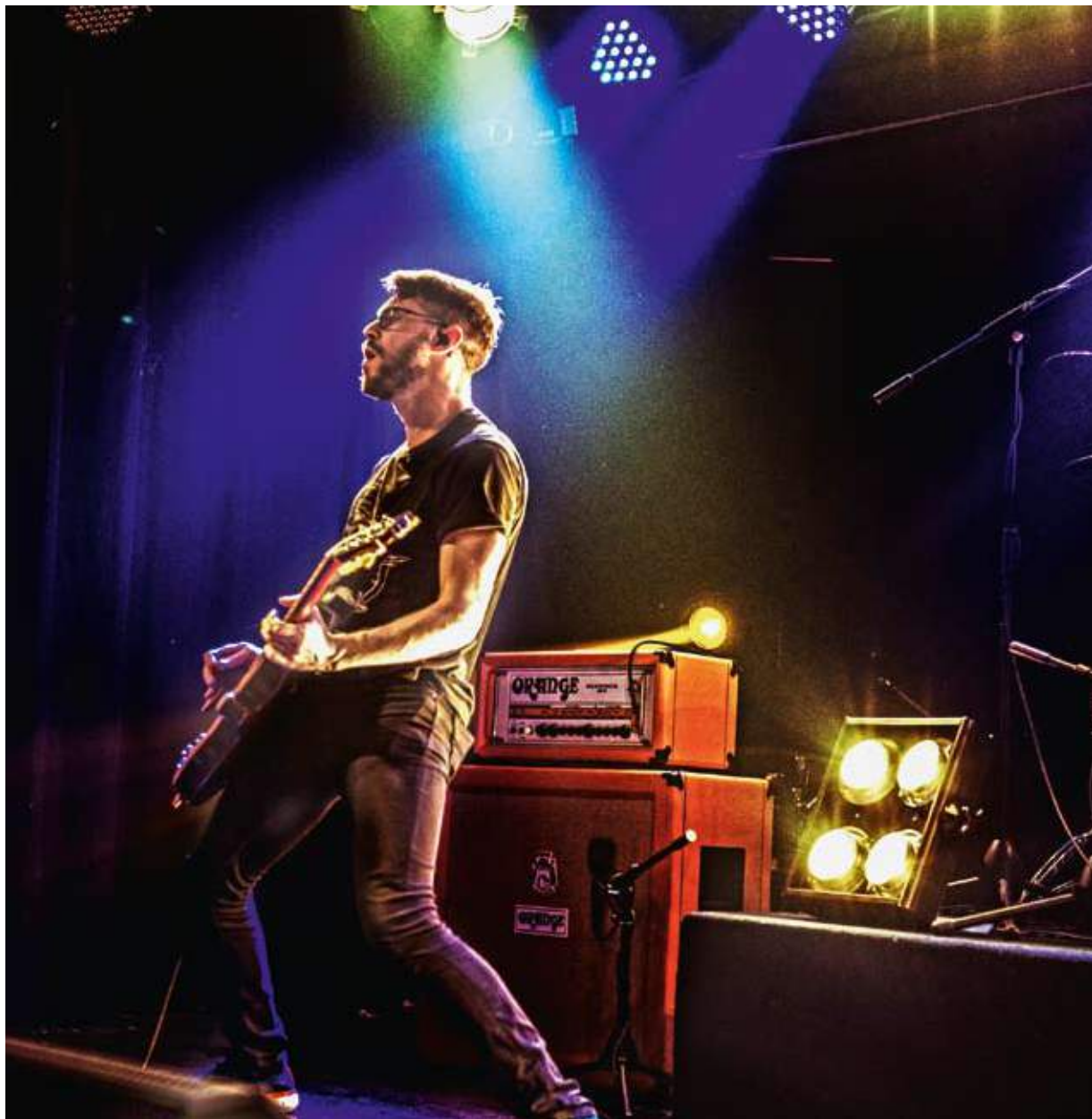
If that's not enough to keep you occupied on your sojourn, you might also want to check out one of Hong Kong's many microbreweries. These include Black Kite, Coedo, Gweilo, Hong Kong Beer Co., Hitachino Nest (Japanese craft beer brewed in Honkers), King's Belly, Kowloon Bay, Lion Rock, Mak's Brewery, Moozen, Nine Dragons, The Artist, Yardley Brothers, and Young Master Ales.



Introducing the people who matter

MEET

YILING LIN // AMY DAML // DAVID CONNOLLY // OWEN PALLETT



SLEEPMAKESWAVES

MAR 11 - Australian post-rockers Sleepmakeswaves return to Beijing as the third stop on their 2017 China tour. Having first played in the capital in 2015, the quartet will hit Beijing running, giving us one of the first live performances of their, as of time of writing, yet-to-be titled third album, due March 24. Lauded for their energetic live performances, Sleepmakeswaves will likely bring a large crowd given China's insatiable want for loud, instrumental and guitar-driven slow burners. RMB 150, RMB 120 (advance). 9pm. Yugong Yishan (6404 2711)

PHOTO COURTESY OF SPLIT WORKS

YILING LIN

GIG COORDINATOR AT BLUE NOTE BEIJING

By Kyle Mullin

From jazz infused rap to classic blues guitar licks, the songs on Yiling Lin's ultimate playlist are eclectic yet clearly linked. That's because the Taiwan born, New York-bred programming manager of Blue Note Beijing has made a career out of immersing herself in the musical traditions of the Mississippi Delta that still reverberate through modern music. Below she tells us what blues infused tunes she'd choose for a spectrum of scenarios.

Picture this: You've started the engine of your new car, floored the accelerator, and now you're speeding down the open road. What song would you choose to start the soundtrack to this exciting road trip?

"Bitches Brew," by Miles Davis. I'd wish that my road trip had as many unpredictable surprises as the song has. Lots of improvisation!

You're getting ready the morning of a high pressure interview for the job of your dreams. What song would you play to get you pumped up?

Anderson Paak's "Put Me Thru." I like his big smile and positive, high energy performances. They really cheer me up!

What song would you choose if you were 18 and slow dancing with your prom date?

Nat King Cole's "L-O-V-E." It has the slowest tempo I can dance to with my date.

What song helps you unwind and relax after a long day?

"I Didn't Know What Time It Was," by Cecile McLorin Salvant. I don't listen to a lot of jazz singers but Cecile is definitely one of my favorites. In addition to her vocals, the piano improvisation in the song is also very relaxing.

Fill in the blank: "If someone says they don't like to listen to _____ then I'd question their musical taste forever, not to mention their sanity."

"Afro Blue," by Robert Glasper and Erykah Badu. It has Badu singing the classic jazz standard with a modern instrumental from Robert Glasper. Definitely a great mix.

If you had to pick a blues song to introduce the genre to someone unfamiliar with it, what would you choose?

"Every Day I Have the Blues." From the B.B. King version to John Mayer's recent cover, you'll enjoy it no matter what.



PHOTO: UNI YOU

AMY DAML

FOUNDING MEMBER AND
CONTRIBUTOR TO CHINA ART
AGGREGATOR WEBSITE LORELI

By Tom Arnstein

Tell us a bit about yourself. What brought you to this beautiful and hazy part of the world?

I'm Amy! I came to Beijing to spend a year being a radio host at China Radio International (CRI). That was five years ago. Since then, I've not only hosted radio shows and podcasts, I've also been a writer, a voice actor, a softball player, an occasional drunk, and most recently I started a website devoted to most of those things.

How did Loreli conceived? When did you all meet up?

It was June of 2015 that Hannah Lincoln, Kerryn Leitch, and I first met at Hot Cat Club. We didn't really expect something like Loreli to come out of that meeting, but we knew that we wanted to do some kind of creative project together. After talking about the need for more voices in the arts scene here, we decided to be the ones to try to open up that platform. We have added several more Loreli curators since then: Angela Li, Max Berwald, Daniel Rothwell, and Deva Eveland.

Is there a favorite spot of yours and the Loreli crew to hit up? Why?

Despite the fact that it is a terrible place to get work done because all of our friends hang out there and the cocktails are too damn delicious, we always seem to have our Loreli meetings at Más. I guess it's pretty good motivation to get work done quickly so we can get on with the drinking.

What's the worst drinking experience you've had in Beijing?

Ugh. I had absinthe for the first time at Modernista and didn't know how to take it, so we drank it straight with no sugar or water. Ten minutes later it hit us all like a ton of

bricks. I got in a fight with my friend, started crying, and got super lost trying to get home.

If you could choose anyone living or passed to be your drinking buddy for the night who would it be?

Well, I read that the Queen Mother had eight drinks a day, lived to 101, and was adored by the British public. I admire anyone who can day drink adventurously and still get shit done. I would like to learn her secret.

What do you think is missing from Beijing's nightlife scene? What do you enjoy about it?

To-go cocktails! While I have been known to dabao a cocktail every now and then, there's like no McDonald's of cocktails ... although when I phrase it that way it sounds pretty disgusting.

If you got lost in the Gobi desert for four days and you returned to Beijing parched and desperate for liquid, which specific drink (and bar) would be your choice to recuperate?

I would most definitely have to stop in to Arrow Factory and get a Seeing Double IPA, as I assume that would cancel out the double vision I would undoubtedly have from dehydration. Then I would head to Temple to dance to some local rock bands until I was dehydrated again.

You can catch Daml and the Loreli crew at their affordable art market at the end of March and keep an eye out for their photography contest in the coming months. Stay up-to-date with all the team's events and content via the Loreli website (lorel-china.com) or their WeChat account (ID: lorel-china).

SINAN YILMAZ

KERRY HOTEL GENERAL MANAGER OF THREE YEARS

Kerry Hotel's General Manager Sinan Yilmaz has been living and working in Beijing for almost three years now, and still hasn't grown tired of all the city has to offer. Here we talk to him about what he likes about the city, and his favorite bars and restaurants.

What's your favorite thing about living and working in Beijing?

I have to say that every city is interesting and different in its own way. The same rings true for Beijing. What I like about Beijing is that it is such a vibrant city. It is a privilege to be living in the capital city of China with such a rich heritage that millions of people will endeavor to visit. Not only does it boast historical sites such as the Great Wall and the Forbidden City, it is also amazing to immerse in one of the oldest cultures of the world.

What is the most important thing you've learned from working in Beijing, that you would not have taken away from working somewhere else?

Being in this fast-paced city with such high energy people and a lifestyle that presents the experience of constantly being challenged to improve and innovate. Significant and important worldwide events are also held here such as the 2008 Olympic Games, APEC 2014, and the upcoming 2022 Winter Olympics. The city that also welcomes many head of states, businessmen, athletes, entertainers, and many more people of note.

What are some of your favorite restaurants and bars in Beijing?

I would recommend Centro Bar for its central location, great cocktails, awesome music, and welcoming atmosphere where people genuinely enjoy themselves. It is a fun place to relax and party with colleagues and friends after work.

There are many free standing cocktail bars in the hutongs that I think are also well-established serving beautiful cocktails by local bartenders. These hidden gems are such wonderful finds and some are even better than bars found in cities like New York or London.



DAVID CONNOLLY

HEAD OF MARKETING AT BOTTEGA

By Kyle Mullin

Even though David Connolly works at one of Beijing's most popular Italian restaurants, he'll surely be hearing all about his native Ireland throughout the month of March. Indeed, the Kildare Town-born head of marketing at Bottega gets plenty of reminders of home every St. Patrick's Day (Friday, March 17), as fellow expats go green and guzzle Guinness. Below, he shows off his homeland pride by answering our St. Paddy's-themed quiz.

1. Your WeChat photo is a picture of an Irish icon, Connor McGregor. Fill in the blank: "Connor is the reigning UFC Lightweight Champion and former UFC _____."

- A) Heavyweight Champion
- B) Featherweight Champion
- C) CEO
- D) None of the above

B ✓

2. In Irish surnames, what does "Mac" mean?

- A) Son of ...
- B) Grandson of ...
- C) Father of ...
- D) Grandfather of ...

A ✓

3. What day(s) of the year are pubs closed in Ireland?

- A) Christmas Day
- B) Good Friday
- C) Both A and B
- D) Never!

C ✓

4. What's a shillelagh?

- A) A surname meaning "son of"
- B) A Celtic poem
- C) A key component of Connor McGregor's workout routine
- D) A big old stick

D ✓

5. What punishment is bestowed upon you if you don't wear green on St. Patrick's Day?

- A) A beating with a shillelagh
- B) A pinch from a leprechaun
- C) Being flung off Slieve League
- D) All of the above, in that order

D ✗

6. What is poteen?

- A) An Irish take on Canada's famous "poutine," a potato and gravy dish
- B) How Russian President Vladimir Putin's name is pronounced in certain Irish dialects
- C) A potato based whiskey
- D) None of the above

C ✓

Score: 5/6

Answer key: 1B, 2A, 3C, 4D, 5A, 6B



PHOTO: JINI YOU



INDIE SYMPHONY

Q&A WITH OSCAR-WINNING ALT-ROCKER OWEN PALLETT

By Kyle Mullin

He's a man known for sitting on stage on his own, drawing a bow across his violin's strings, and yet creating more bombast than an entire orchestra. That's because classically trained Canadian indie pop star Owen Pallett has made his name using innovative techniques like live looping to put on wholly unique shows. He changed that dynamic with a band while touring for his last album, *In Conflict*, and now he's reinventing himself again for songs from his forthcoming album, much of which he will unveil for the first time at his April 23 show at Yugong Yishan. Below are excerpts from a lengthy phone interview (check *the Beijinger* blog closer to show time for the full version).

This new record is very different. It's a much starker, more brutal record. So it'll be a very different show than the ones before, which were more ecstatic. This will be more like a church show.

"2015 was a year marked with a lot of disasters in my personal life. Most of the new songs on the record stem from that ... It was a period of really intense mental illness caused by some betrayals in my friend group, which made me call into question the trust I have for people in general," Pallett says.

But that didn't stop Pallett from creating music. "I had

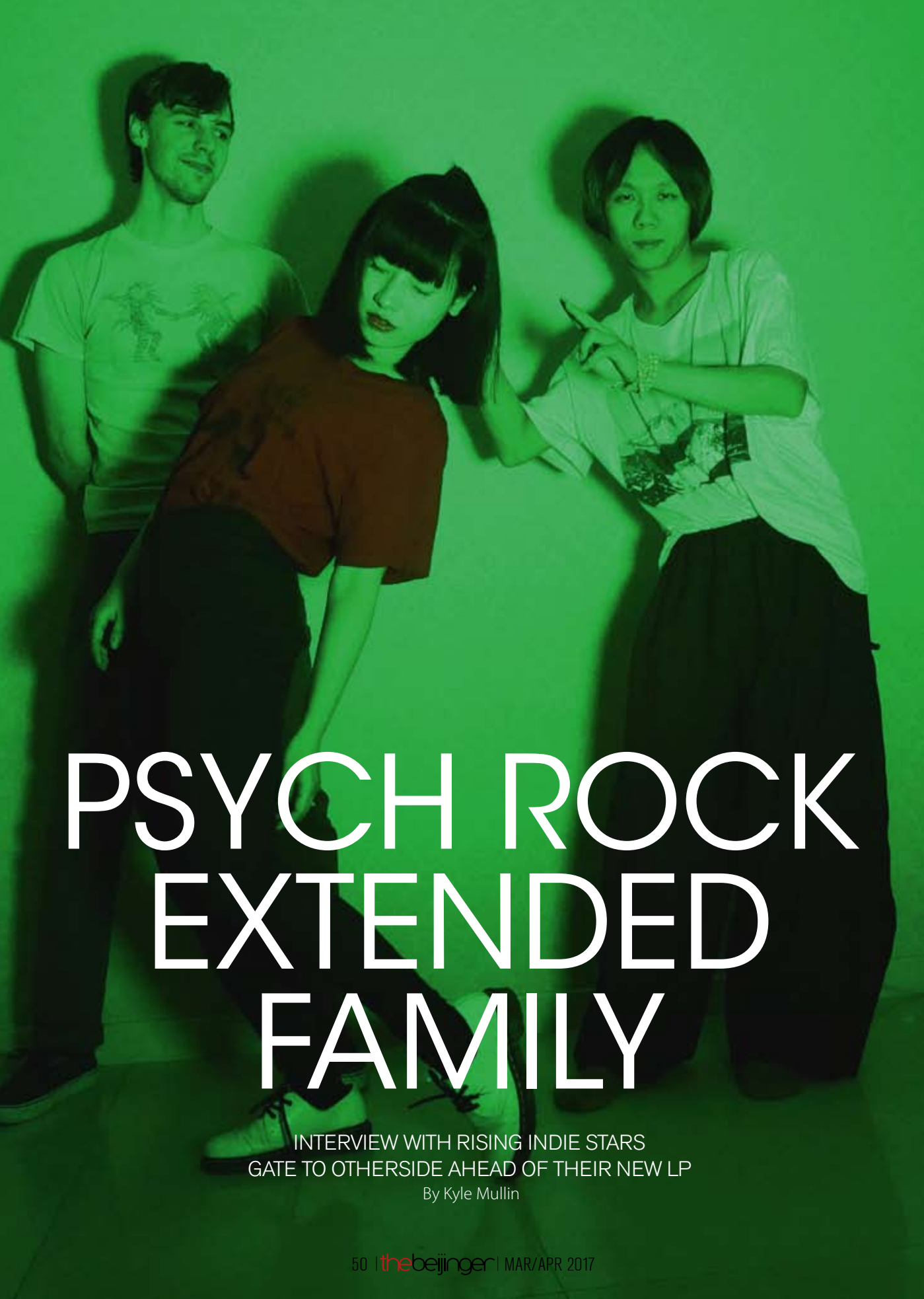
very mixed feelings about being public about my struggles with mental illness. At times it feels like I may be capitalizing on my pain and turning it into a cultural product. At other times it feels as if I might be trying to capitalize on my audience's pain and suffering.

I began to wonder if I should put my phone number there (in the lyrics of the *In Conflict* song "The Secret Seven") because I wanted to help people in need, or if I wanted people to reach out and see if I was okay.

It's difficult to really talk about that kind of thing in the context of an interview that I'm doing to try and sell tickets so people come to see my amazing show [*laughs*]. Seriously, buy tickets everyone, come to my show! [*Laughs*]

I'm just excited to come to China and experience it. Of course, the easiest window into a country is through their food. When you're a white Canadian growing up in the countryside, your first exposure to Chinese food is shitty, chicken balls or whatever. Actually my priority for touring is how excited I am about the food. Which is why I'll never tour Russia."

Owen Pallett will perform at Yugong Yishan on April 23 at 8.30pm. Tickets are available on Youpay.cn for RMB 120 presale or RMB 150 at the door.



PSYCH ROCK EXTENDED FAMILY

INTERVIEW WITH RISING INDIE STARS
GATE TO OTHERSIDE AHEAD OF THEIR NEW LP

By Kyle Mullin



Most bands write love songs, but few live out romantic fairytales quite like Gate to Otherside. At least that's how it sounds when you hear about the Beijing psychedelic group's origins.

Two years ago Xiao Sun, a seasoned drummer for beloved Beijing bands like Carsick Cars and Birdstriking, was on a date with his girlfriend, Jiang Mengyang, who is a formidable guitarist in her own right having played for the local troop Free Sex Shop. As they chatted away Jiang came upon the idea of switching their instruments and starting a band of their own. To explore their musical dynamic, they later held an informal rehearsal for which they played songs by The Vaselines, the legendary Scottish alt-rock troupe that was also started by then lovebirds Eugene Kelly and Frances McKee.

"Jiang really loves The Vaselines, I only think they're okay," Xiao says with a laugh, ahead of the March 25 release date of Gate to Otherside's album *Dragon Bus Terminal*. He adds that the pair realized they wanted a third member to help give their songs a fuller sound, within two months of those early rehearsals.

They turned to Xiao's friend Alex Turner, an expat from Ohio (not British lead singer of the Arctic Monkeys), who frequents many of the same livehouses and parties. Turner saw it as a chance to have fun with his friends and as an opportunity to get more band experience, which prior to that was next to nil. Not everyone shared his excitement – Turner says another friend told him "You're so fucked. You're not familiar with bass. You've never played in a

band. And the first thing you do is join a band with a couple?"

However, Turner says he doesn't get caught in any Fleetwood Mac-esque drama or petty lovebird squabbles. "They have their ways of communicating that are obviously borrowed from the relationship, so sometimes I'll have to summarize or reinterpret what they're getting at for myself. But that's about it."

After settling into a groove and signing to local label Maybe Mars, the band set to work on Gate to Otherside, a project notable for Xiao's refreshingly restrained and strategic kaleidoscopic guitar playing.

Jiang and Turner also add subtle depth and rhythm to the tunes that will leave them lingering in your mind and humming along long after you've heard them. Ricky Maymi, of veteran San Francisco psych rockers The Brian Jonestown Massacre and longtime fan of Chinese indie rock produced the album.

Xiao is not just proud of the album – he also feels blessed to have formed a band so organically with his girlfriend and his best friend. It makes writing, recording and performing together feel like an extended family reunion between uncle Alex, Mom, Dad and their new baby LP. Or as Xiao puts it: "The new album gathers all our talents and hard work, it's like our child."

Catch Gate to Otherside on March 11 at School Bar, and on May 13 to celebrate the launch of their latest album also at School Bar.

ALEC ASH

AUTHOR ON HIS DEBUT BOOK 'WISH LANTERNS: YOUNG LIVES IN NEW CHINA'

By Kyle Mullin

Today, Alec Ash is garnering acclaim for his debut book *Wish Lanterns: Young Lives in New China*, which details with intimacy the struggles of six Chinese millennials. Take the case of Snail, whose struggle with an online gaming addiction derailed his studies at a Beijing university, yet even before the British author began chronicling Snail's issues, he may very well have unknowingly witnessed some of his would-be subject's dysfunctional behavior.

"I've never told anyone this before," the lanky young author says after a talk at The Bookworm in January: "During my first visit to Beijing I would stop by an internet café at China Mining and Technology University – I was staying with a friend of a friend nearby – and for all I know Snail was sitting next to me playing, and slowly becoming addicted to, *World of Warcraft*."

Internet addiction was one of the major themes that Ash wanted to explore while writing the book, jotting the term on a scrap of paper and sticking it to his desk-side peg board along with other major facets of Chinese millennial life like online life, living underground, and the pressure on women to marry early. To find a couple that characterized that latter theme, Ash spoke with the sort of business person that all betrothed Chinese deal with: a wedding photographer. Sitting in the hutong studio of one such chronicler of Beijing's new nuptials, Ash leafed through a photo album and pointed to one costumed pair of lovebirds after another, asking the photographer to share their stories. Ash didn't write about anyone in that album, but the exercise prompted the photographer to introduce him to acquaintances that helped him find a couple with an especially moving tale about China's customary rush to tie the knot. In fact, the couple that he settled on had a mere month-long courtship before signing their marriage papers.

"I was casting out to find the right people, because I wanted to write about these pressures through people's

stories, rather than just lecturing the reader," Ash told a group of fans during his Bookworm talk. "There's such an amazing canon of China books, so it was a bit intimidating to write my own. But from the beginning I knew I didn't want to do the 'I'm a journalist, these are my observations,' type of a book."

That urge to write about China from a fresh perspective has prompted many of Ash's literary peers to laude *Wish Lanterns*. Indeed, the book's jacket and first few pages are lined with praise from heralded authors like Xiaolu Guo (*I Am China*), Jeffrey Wasserstrom (*China in the 21st Century*) and Rob Schmitz (author of *Street of Eternal Happiness: Big City Dreams Along a Shanghai Road* and NPR's Shanghai correspondent). Of *Wish Lanterns*, Schmitz wrote: "Ash effortlessly dissolves stereotypes with this refreshing and nuanced portrait of individuals who are shaping the China of tomorrow."

Ash has not only been deeply flattered by such kudos, but also quick to reciprocate, citing Schmitz as an influence whose *Street of Eternal Happiness* "Captures some of the same themes I was trying to capture in my own book, in terms of people's ambitions and the stories of what happens when people try and fail to realize those ambitions."

And while his book is being acclaimed for revealing the particulars of Chinese youth to Western readers, *Wish Lanterns'* very best passages might not seem foreign or exotic at all. "I certainly found a lot of elements in their lives that resonated with me," Ash says of the six Chinese millennials he profiled. "I wrote the book in my twenties, and while I wouldn't presume to say my life experiences chime with theirs that much, so much of it is universal – not knowing what you're doing with your life, punishing yourself for not succeeding enough, dealing with your parents. All of these things bring Chinese and Western twenty-somethings together so much closer than the cultural gap separates them."





OLD CHINA HAND

EXPAT TROUBADOUR

AMERICAN SOCIOLOGIST AND SONGWRITER MARK LEVINE DISCUSSES
SINGING FOR CHINA'S MARGINALIZED

By Kyle Mullin

Mark Levine has played at massive festivals for audiences of thousands, shot music videos atop the Great Wall, and received the Friendship Award from Chinese dignitaries, the highest honor that the government can bestow on a foreigner.

But aside from numerous such prestigious moments since his arrival in 2005, the 69-year-old California-born songwriter, performer, teacher, and sociologist was also deeply fulfilled by far humbler milestones, such as one gig at a construction site in Anhui, where he strummed his guitar and sang for migrant workers.

Playing for China's marginalized echoed the years he spent prior to embarking for the Mainland, when he worked Stateside in the labor movement helping farmers join unions. And it also overlaps with his reasons for staying in China for over a decade. Before his musical career began, the sociology doctoral came to Jiangsu to teach university students (he now lectures at Minzu University in Beijing). When he tasked the class of 75 to imagine that they were 70 years old, and then write about what they had lived for through the years, most focused on making a better life for themselves and their families.

"On the one hand I can understand that, but I also saw it as a huge societal problem," Levine recalls. So he decided to stay, lecturing on history, philosophy and, more importantly: "Teaching students here how to have a broader view of the world."

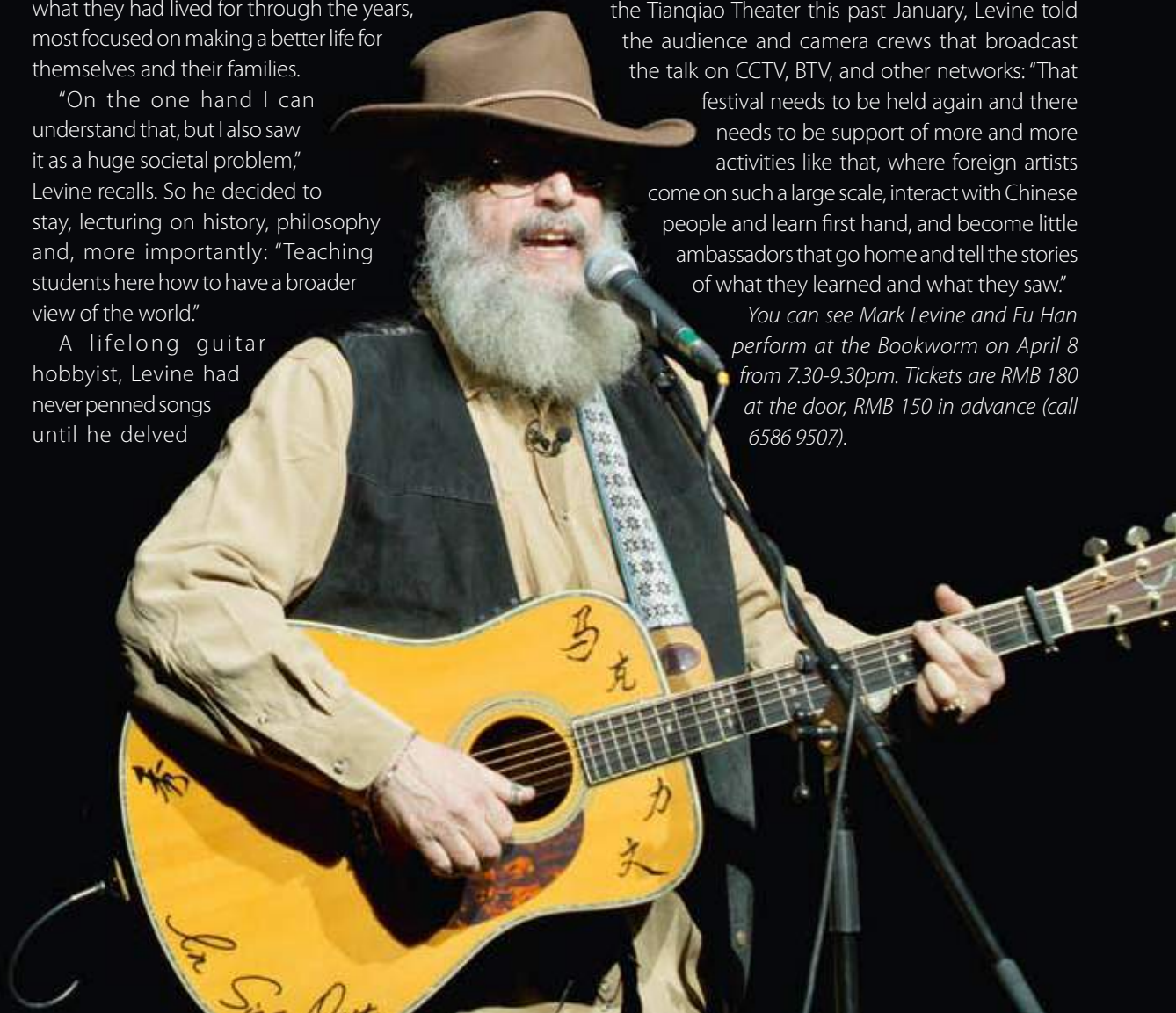
A lifelong guitar hobbyist, Levine had never penned songs until he delved

into those conversations with his new Chinese friends and students, and began mulling over what they had to tell him. Before long he became compelled to share that music and asked his friend, Fu Han, to help him. She not only acquired an agent's license and began representing him, but also collaborated with him on a bilingual song and story performance for which they play as the duo Inside Out (or Shuo Huo Wai Zhong, a play on words in Mandarin that means "beautiful on the outside and intelligent," but also Wai as in foreigner and Zhong as is Chinese).

Inside Out's unique dynamic quickly helped the duo gain a strong following and led to performances in front of huge audiences. Levine also went on to have a solid solo career in China, being the only foreign musician out of hundreds to be repeatedly invited back to the massive International Zhangjiajie Country Music week.

That festival has not been held for several years because of budgetary issues, but during a panel discussion and subsequent acoustic performance at the Tianqiao Theater this past January, Levine told the audience and camera crews that broadcast the talk on CCTV, BTV, and other networks: "That festival needs to be held again and there needs to be support of more and more activities like that, where foreign artists come on such a large scale, interact with Chinese people and learn first hand, and become little ambassadors that go home and tell the stories of what they learned and what they saw."

You can see Mark Levine and Fu Han perform at the Bookworm on April 8 from 7.30-9.30pm. Tickets are RMB 180 at the door, RMB 150 in advance (call 6586 9507).



FECAL ATTRACTIONS

By Andrew Killeen

Beijing isn't all Ming Tombs and toxic smog, you know. Among our beloved city's most distinctive attractions are its quirky, oddball museums. The Watermelon Museum, the Tapwater Museum, and the Chaoyang Museum of Urban Planning are among the offbeat delights the city has to offer. Although, it must be said, none is as weird as the Wuyuan Museum of Stones that Look Like Food.

We sent our intrepid reporters – well, some of them are a bit trepid to be honest – out onto the streets to discover Beijing's less well known institutions and attractions. All of these sites can be easily reached via the First Ring Road and Subway Line 11.

Monument to the Ineffectual Official

A colossal statue commemorating all the heroic *teqin* and *jiaotong* who patrol the streets of our city. Equipped with flashing lights and whistles as if they're going to an early nineties rave, but with absolutely no power whatsoever, they bravely stand on street corners waving flags and shouting instructions. Then when everyone ignores them, they stoically maintain a deadpan expression and pretend the whole thing never happened.

The Old School Expat Sanctuary

In a specially designed habitat, dedicated volunteers work to preserve this endangered species. In a bygone age, known to historians as the Olympic era, the Old School Expat roamed in vast herds on the streets of Lido and Sanlitun. However, since the Old School Expat subsists only on fat relocation packages, and lives its whole life in a bubble of privilege, it has proved unable to adapt to a changing environment, and is growing increasingly rare. Sanctuary workers are trying to train

it to use public transport and operate a washing machine, but the future looks bleak for this endearing but helpless creature.

Global Institute of Totally Missing the Point

This increasingly popular venue includes attractions such as the Hall of Taking Offense, which information plaques describe as "a state of being thin-skinned, humorless, and prone to be driven to pompous rage by things you don't understand." There's also "Whoosh!" a thrilling ride that simulates the sensation of a joke going completely over your head. A new wing, recently opened, is dedicated to certain readers of this column.

Split Pants World

In this open air theme park you can recreate the thrill of being a Beijing toddler: running around with your deplorables dangling in the wind, and enjoying the freedom to defecate anywhere you choose, be it sidewalk, subway platform, or historical monument. You don't need to clean up after yourself, and no one else will either!

The Repository of Untidy Things

The Repository is the final destination for all the various unsightly, unlicensed, and generally untidy things which are currently being swept from the streets of our city. Behind the doors of the Repository lies a huge junk pile of tuk-tuks, *jianbing* stalls, street markets, and sellers of wooden carvings. When the cleansing is complete, a massive stone slab will be pulled across the entrance, sealing it forever, and ensuring that the Beijing of the future will consist of nothing but identical soulless malls and chain restaurants.

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