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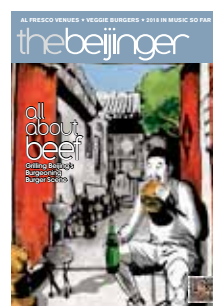
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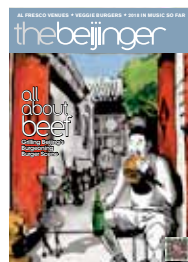
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The most important upcoming dates

WHAT'S HAPPENING



JUN 8

Dragon Boat Festival

What do a poet, a bunch of fish, and rice have in common? They form the basis of the founding myth that gave rise to China's Dragon Boat Festival, of course! Get ready to race boats and eat *zongzi* (pyramid-shaped bundles of glutinous rice) all in memory of the suicidal poet Qu Yuan.

JUN 15

Protomartyr

Hailing from Detroit, US, Protomartyr are the sonic equivalent of the best of UK post-punk grafted with psych and shred. The result: a moody, spasmodic, and sometimes violent sound with a razor-sharp focus. At this Yue Space gig, expect to hear tracks from their new EP which just so happens to see the light of day on this date.



JUN 14-JUL 15

FIFA World Cup 2018

Football fans will flock to Russia in June for the 21st FIFA World Cup, the first ever to be held in Eastern Europe. If you weren't able to bag a ticket, or didn't fancy the trip, fear not as numerous Beijing bars are ready and waiting to fill their seats for the biggest sports event in the world.

JUN 16-17

Beijing Burger Festival, Galaxy Soho

Now in its sixth incarnation, our Burger Festival is slowly becoming synonymous with the start of summer, and the undoing of all our spring fitness. Join us at Galaxy Soho once again for two days of entertainment, live performances, and most importantly, the city's best burgers.



Visit theBeijinger.com for even more events and details.

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

You've done it. You've actually put down your burger to read this magazine about burgers. You, my friend, have a problem. A burger problem. Embrace it, nuzzle it, rock it to sleep in all its greasy glory before cramming it into your sauce-flecked meat hole for it may very well be the last thing you ever eat. This is how every burger should be treated, which is why we've gone and written a whole magazine about the most righteous of foodstuffs, just for you.

But wait, there's more! Yes, we've also gone and coordinated an entire Burger Festival on Jun 16-17 at Galaxy Soho to help you get your meaty little rocks off (more about that on p. 34). It's the kind of free-for-all barbecue party where you may in fact meet your true love, down to the very last nugget of gristle you pull from your teeth at 11am the next day. It may be gone now, but what a night you spent together.

I digress. Elsewhere we have burger and beer pairings (p.16-17), the cultural underpinnings of cheese (p.18-19), the best al fresco venues (p.22-23) and venues for dogs (p.46-47), tons of new venue reviews (p.26-32), travels through Shandong (p.36) and Nanjing (p.38-39), a rundown on the best albums of 2018 so far (p.48-49), and much, much more.

And with that, I'll let you get back to your important business, for what is more important than bread, patties, and squirts of sauce? It's the stuff that life is made of.



Tom Arnstein
Managing Editor



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CITY SCENE

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113 MILLION ...

The number of cows that China is home to, which only provides around 70 percent of beef eaten domestically. The remainder is made up of imports from locales like Brazil, Uruguay, Australia, New Zealand, and Argentina. Meanwhile, as Chinese living standards improve, and the popularity of Western food continues to rise, pork's margin as the country's preferred meat is beginning to slip as more consumers reach for higher-end, leaner cuts like beef.

Indeed, China's pork consumption has witnessed a trending decline over the past three years. In contrast, farmers upped their number of cattle by 61 million from 1978 to 2013 as a means to keep up with the demand for beef. What's fascinating

is that the majority of that beef still comes from small farms that slaughter fewer than nine cows per year but are responsible for over 50 percent of China's beef industry. To compound the domestic shortage, 90 percent of local beef comes from indigenous yellow cattle, which only yield 50 percent of meat when compared to some foreign breeds.

Add that to the fact that Western fast-food restaurants continue to boom across China - with McDonald's alone opening 10 new restaurants every week on average - as well as quality standards issues, and it's clear that the country has a long way to go before it can finally rely on its own cull.

PHOTO: PIXNIO

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



1. UFO Sighted in Skies Over Beijing

An unidentified flying object appeared over western Beijing and throughout parts of northeastern China on the evening of Apr 27. Although it was widely seen, no official reports explaining the phenomenon were immediately released, leaving residents to fill in the blanks with their imaginations. *People's Daily* eventually responded via Weibo, stating that the phenomenon was “a rare noctilucent cloud,” doing little to appease online commentators.

2. Beijing Woman Makes National Headlines for Publicly Confronting Subway Groper

Video of the unidentified woman grabbing the lapel of a man and loudly accusing him of having groped her on the Beijing subway caught the attention of state-run media in late April and earned the praise of netizens. The brazen actions of the woman marked a step forward in a country where societal constraints mean that victims of sexual crimes tend to be shamed more heavily than their perpetrators.



3. Principled Expat Woman Shames Elderly Egg Thief at Beijing Olympic Park

When a Canadian expat saw an unidentified elderly man steal duck eggs from a nest while visiting Beijing Olympic Park in mid-April, she took matters into her own hands and confronted the poacher. Eventually, with the help of a friend and the arrival of security, the old man safely returned the eight duck eggs to their original lakeside nest.

4. Final Stop on the Great Brickening Shows Beijing Hutongs Have Become Sterile, Tepid Alleys

Beijing's city-wide urban rejuvenation campaign (nicknamed the “Great Brickening”) has led to the dismantling of many of our favorite hutong F&B establishments. Now, almost a year after it began, one Beijing newspaper has proclaimed the campaign a success, showing pictures of how the new government-standard renovated hutongs have been duly stripped of their personality.



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



5. Beijing Craft Beer Lovers Shocked by Sudden Closure of Great Leap Brewing #12 Venue

Craft beer lovers were handed yet another reason to drink their sorrows away this spring as a shock announcement from Great Leap Brewing detailed how their flagship #12 Xingfucun location was to close on May 10. The message, written by Great Leap's co-founder Carl Setzer, described how the brewery was being forced out on account of the landlord being "adamant that there will no longer be tenants using this property for any and all food and beverage services."

6. New Beijing US Embassy Sculpture Likened to Anal Beads

Chinese netizens expressed confusion and disgust in reaction to the unveiling of a new stainless steel sculpture at the US Embassy Beijing, many comparing it to a certain type of sex toy. Called Connecting, the 31-foot-high sculpture is the work of American artist Martin Puryear, who described at the unveiling that the artwork represents goodwill and earnestness between the people of China and the US. However, Chinese netizens weren't so convinced and went to town in making their own interpretations of the sculpture.



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SCENE & HEARD



The Beijinger Burger Festival 2017
May 20-21, Galaxy Soho. Photos by Uni You



Shuangjing Showdown
Apr 21, Hotel Jen. Photos courtesy of Shuangjing Showdown



SCENE & HEARD

Hotel Jen x Lane Crawford

Apr 26, Hotel Jen. Photos courtesy of Hotel Jen



TOUGH TONGUE CRAFT BBQ
Shichahai Restaurant

No.20 Hongshan lane, Deshengmen
Street, Xicheng District

TOUGH TONGUE CRAFT BBQ
Wudaokou Restaurant

No.109 south of Yihai building, Wudaokou
Haidian District

TOUGH TONGUE CRAFT BBQ
Century Jinyuan Restaurant

No.1075A, 1st floor of Century Jinyuan
shopping mall, Yuanda Street, Haidian
district



A CUT ABOVE

ORDERING THE PERFECT STEAK IN BEIJING

By Tom Arnstein

US beef returned to China's shelves last June after a 13-year embargo following concerns over mad cow disease. But now, with recent tariffs as high as 25 percent looming on American beef, the future of US steak in China is again uncertain. Despite US-China tensions, China's middle class and their growing appetite for beef is driving steak consumption across the board, having increased more than 10 percent over the past five years. Beef imports amounted to over USD 1.07 million in March of this year, the highest expenditure yet, and consumption rates are forecast to hit 8 million tonnes by 2020. With such figures in mind, it's clear that we're likely to see a growing refinement in Chinese tastes and a further proliferation of steak joints in Beijing. In order to help you navigate the plethora of options, we've compiled this handy steak buying guide.

Steak doneness guide

Rare 一分熟 *yī fēn shú*

Medium-rare 三分熟 *sān fēn shú*

Medium 五分熟 *wǔ fēn shú*

Medium-well 七分熟 *qī fēn shú*

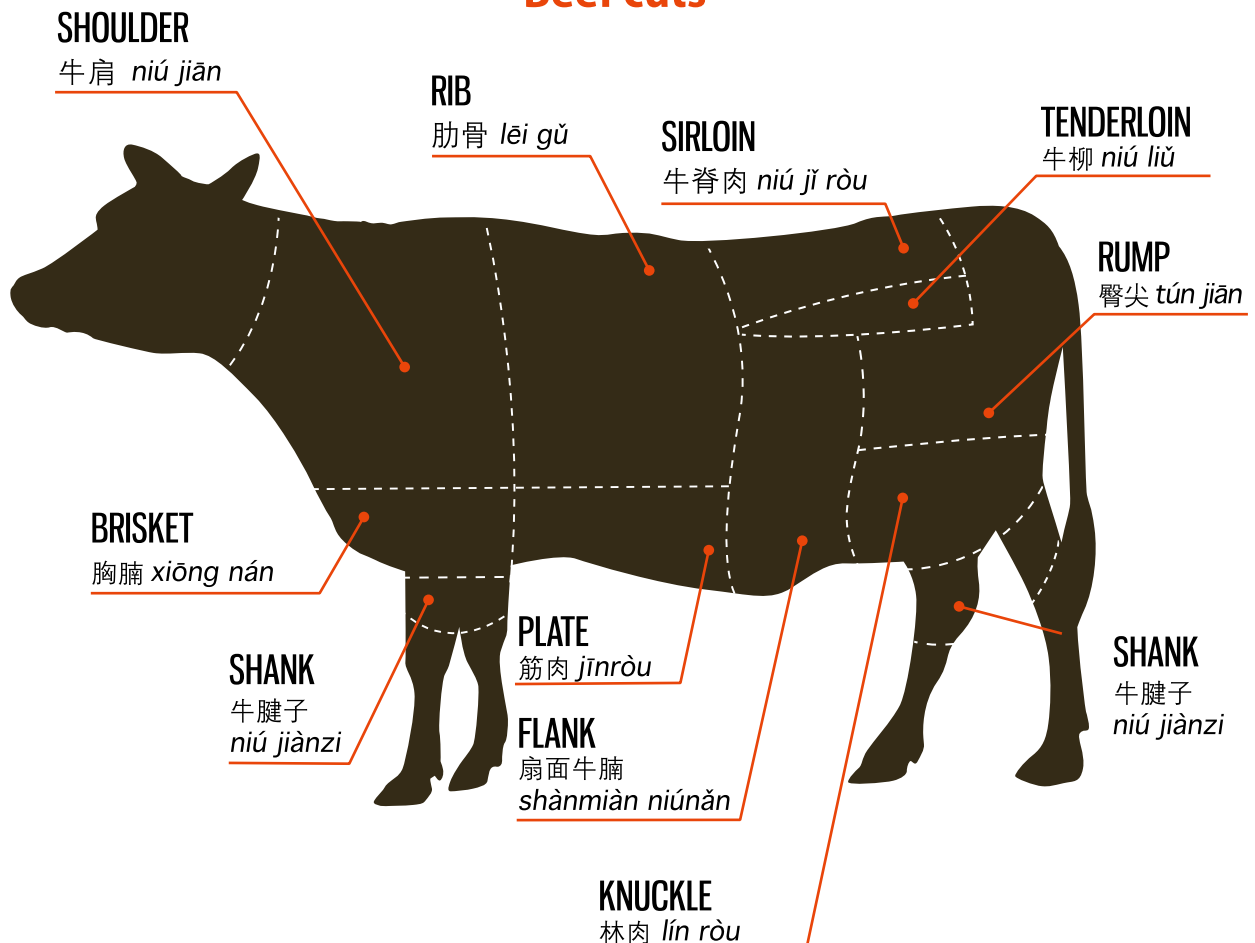
Well-done 全熟 *quán shú*

Where to buy steak and its many succulent variants

Mid-range: O'Steak, Mai Fresh, Little Boat, Bistro 108, The Butcher's Club, Meat Mate, Steak House

High-end: The Cut Steak and Seafood Grill, Morton's Steak House, Char Dining Room and Lounge, Wolfgang's Steakhouse

Beef cuts



FEATURE

BEEFING UP CHINA'S RED MEAT INDUSTRY

DESPITE LINGERING OBSTACLES, INSIDERS REMAIN ENTHUSED
ABOUT THEIR CHINA PROSPECTS

By Kyle Mullin



These days, many a foodie wouldn't blink at the sight of a pricey gourmet burger while perusing a menu. Yet that upscale trend would have been all but unthinkable when fast food beef and buns made their debut here in the late '80s, early '90s. "McDonald's and KFC were both super successful when they arrived in China. They set a precedence of what beef should be, which is low-end," says William Kerins the American co-founder of Usource (pictured right with fellow co-founder Dandan Yang), which imports beef to a wide swath of clients in Beijing, from big-box retail outlets to midsize Western restaurants.

Kerins says some Western gourmet burger chains have made a go of it in Beijing in years past, with little success. That's because consumers thought "burgers should be RMB 20 not RMB 40," Kerins explains. However, that perception is now changing, and many restaurateurs in first-tier cities are leading the charge. "Thanks to places like Common Burger, Cannon's, Q Mex, and plenty of Beijing breweries, high-end beef burgers are really starting to take off, though not on a mass market scale yet; they haven't broken into second-tier cities because the wider population wants McDonald's prices. But the industry really is battling that mentality with some success."

Part of that greater enthusiasm among consumers is also due to the quality of the beef making its way into the country. Up to a decade ago, much of the beef imported to China was far from premium and

was sourced from locales like Uzbekistan and India, says Kerins. But now grain fed Australian, American, Argentinian, and Brazilian beef are all widely available, as opposed to grass fed. He explains: "[Buyers] are now going for flavor and texture in China, softer meat with lots of inter-muscular fat, rather than grass fed, which is more chewy and gamey."

Kerins adds: "I'm also happy to see them get more value from these cuts of meat, breaking away from just using loins and also taking advantage of smoked ribs and all kinds of other products that were hardly on the market here 10 years ago."

In those prior years, much of China's high-end beef sales were dominated by fancy hotel restaurants, says Kerins. But now he's pleased to see nimble startups sprouting up all over first-tier cities like Beijing, offering forward-thinking products. And while prime examples include many of Beijing's breweries and midrange western restaurants, another member of that growing niche is Casti Beef. Daniel Castiglioni founded his small company with the aim of specializing in imports of high-quality beef selected from slaughterhouses in his native Uruguay directly to China. He says the advantages of selling his wares in China include the wide variety of innovative Chinese e-commerce sites. He also enjoys how Chinese consumers "are very curious people, wanting to learn fast about the best ways of eating beef, the different ways of cooking and always increasing the volume that they consume. They know that beef is the star of the red meats and they want to go for it!"

Castiglioni is not alone in that thinking. On Feb 21, 2018, Meat and Livestock Australia released a report about the prospects of chilled beef in China. The market and research company's report found that, "In just the past 10 years, China's direct chilled beef imports have increased from almost nothing in 2007 to 6,558 tonnes shipped weight in 2017, with Australia supplying the vast majority." That means importers, from feisty up-and-comers like Castiglioni to big players like Kerins, are clearly in a booming business.



A MATCH MADE IN MEATY HEAVEN

TRY THESE 5 NEW BEIJING BREWPUB BURGER AND BEER COMBOS

By Tracy Wang

Beijing is certainly not lacking in some incredible brewpub burgers: Great Leap Brewery's cheeseburger, Jing-A's sliders with Yunnan cheese, Slow Boat's Fryburger, Arrow Factory's Mornay Glory Mushroom Swiss burger, and even NBeer Pub's standard beef burger ... we could go on. However, at the risk of sounding like we have Mad Cow's Disease, we've decided to eschew mindless repetition in order to highlight some of the city's best new burger and beer pairings.



Beersmith

The CBD's biggest brewpub won a legion of fans for its juicy Wagyu beef burger (RMB 88, served with fries) when it launched last year. A hefty chunk of Wagyu beef is topped with cheese and sandwiched by doughy buns, making their amber ale (5.8 percent ABV) a perfect match between mouthfuls of succulent meat. The ale, although one of the brewery's lighter options, still packs a deep punch thanks to the crystal and roasted malts used to make it.



The Great Outdoors

With 14 burgers, Fangjia Hutong's Great Outdoors certainly doesn't make choosing easy. However, for something a little different, the Chairman Mao Smoked Chili Burger (RMB 50, served with fries) is made using a beef patty, handmade Hunan dried sausage, and a layer of spicy chili peppers, all balanced out with a rich layer of cheese. Try it alongside a Great Friend IPA (RMB 40, 6 percent ABV) to put out the heat from the chilies.

Deal Beer

Ok, Deal Beer's not officially a brewpub but they do provide some fantastic beers on tap as well as new, delicious burgers by one-man late-night munchies favorite Was Park, formerly of Fangjia Hutong. The cheeseburger (RMB 45) maintains the venue's signature hole-in-the-wall smiley face-adorned paper wrapping, packed with a fat beef patty, pickles, tomato, lettuce, and cheese. The humble buns are McDonald's-like, but don't get us wrong, sometimes that's exactly what the occasion calls for. Grab a 100 Flowers Hidden Deep IPA by Peiping Machine (6.7 percent ABV) to wash it all down.



Rolling Rolling

Rolling Rolling's beef burger (RMB 45, served with fries and pickles) is a blend of four different cuts of Chinese beef cooked medium well. The buns, baked daily, absorb the meat's smoky notes while maintaining a crisp crust and go great with the two thick and gooey slices of New Zealand cheese. Try it with a pint of their on-site brewed double IPA Feedback (RMB 40 for 350ml), which includes tropical aromas of passion-fruit, apricot, and pineapple and comes with a hefty 7.4 percent ABV. It's a combo that may just draw you out to Yizhuang.

SteamRhino

Located near the embassy area, SteamRhino's cheeseburger (RMB 48, served with french fries) features buttery buns dusted with black and white sesame seeds, a thick beef patty with a juicy pink center seasoned with black pepper, as well as pickles, lettuce, tomato, onion, all topped with a generous amount of mayonnaise. The "4am" Belgian wheat beer (5 percent ABV) makes for a great combination, though we dread to think what would actually happen if you consumed it at that hour.





SAY CHEESE!

ON THE JOYS OF COAGULATED ANIMAL MILK

By Jeremiah Jenne

We have a rule in the Jenne/Zhang household that any snack food purchased for common consumption must pass the “bait test,” i.e. “Did Jeremiah ever at any time use said item as bait while fishing?” If the answer is “yes” (squid chips, anybody?) then it shall not be purchased.

My wife thinks this is, culturally speaking, complete 100 percent mollusk shit. Who am I, she wonders, to call her beloved food preferences – squid chips, chicken feet, duck necks – weird? Weird means “not normal” with “normal” equaling “what most people do.” Well over half of the world’s population grew up in Asia, including my wife. I am not, she points out, a member of that club.

Besides, I love cheese. I would rather eat a hamburger braised in squid droppings than eat one without cheese. American. Cheddar. Pepper Jack. Blue. Does not matter. Lay a slab on the burger and melt. A burger needs cheese like Donald Trump needs retweets.

But cheese is really f**king weird.

I tried explaining cheese to an old woman in our

neighborhood once.

“Let me get this straight,” she asked warily, “you take milk from a cow ...?”

“Or a goat,” I corrected.

“Right. Or a goat. And you ... wait until it gets hard, moldy, and smells like what, again?”

“Like Yao Ming’s jock strap.”

“Right. And you put this on scrambled beef bits?”

“Yes. Along with lettuce, tomato, Heinz 57, and a French-fried potato.”

“Right. That’s the most disgusting thing I’ve ever heard.”

And my neighbor has a point. Cheese isn’t the most intuitive food product ever. In fact, the whole dairy thing is a little odd when you get down to it. One can only imagine the scene, on some Neolithic hillside, where two dudes sat watching a calf snuffle around the utter of his mom while thinking to themselves, “Hey! I wonder how we might get the calf out of the way and get in on that action?”

Dairy products in China are also often associated

with pastoral nomads (in centuries past) and foreign barbarians (of more recent vintage) suggesting a possible – although yet unproven – connection between “lactose tolerance” and “a tendency to want to enslave the Chinese people.” This is a PR problem which is not likely to be resolved any time soon.

Just last year, the fromage-dependent in China scurried for surreptitious suppliers after customs officials banned soft and mold-ripened cheese including brie, gorgonzola, Roquefort, and camembert for containing high bacteria counts ... which is, of course, the point of soft, smelly cheese. Fortunately, authorities reversed course a month later just as chefs, cheeseheads, and reportedly the entire French embassy began muttering about illicit air drops and advanced contraband techniques that would have impressed Pablo Escobar.

There are parts of China where cheese is not only enjoyed but is nearly a staple. One of my favorite foods is *rubing* from Yunnan. The best I’ve ever had comes from the Naxi nationality areas of the province around Tiger Leaping Gorge. There, plates of goat milk cheese are hoisted on platters and suspended over cooking fires allowing the cheese to absorb the smoke and flavors for a week or more before being fried and served with a little spice or some sugar. Absolute cheese perfection.


There’s also our family’s not-so-secret shame: I’m not the only one in our household in thrall to the almighty curd. My wife – Tianjin born and bred and a pious devotee of squid chips and duck necks – loves cheese, probably more than I do. Seriously. The woman would eat gravel if I poured melted pepper jack over the rocks and called them nachos. I still remember how disappointed she was the first time we went to Q-Mex and head chef Marcus Medina cooked us authentic Mexican food.

“Where’s the cheese and sour cream?” my wife wanted to know.

I can’t be certain, but I think I saw Marcus die a little bit inside.

The Beijinger Burger Cup is my favorite food-based event in the capital’s calendar. I have some serious favorites and have no doubt taken years off my life in pursuing the perfect burger. But whichever burger captures the Cup this year, my personal choice will be the one covered with cheese.

No matter how weird my neighbors think it might be.



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FOOD & DRINK

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HULU'S BEER O'CLOCK FRIDAYS

Hulu continues to build a following as a laidback alternative to its sister restaurant Temple Restaurant Beijing. The central Sanlitun location makes it a hit with diners wanting to spend just a little bit more without sacrificing the quality and creativity that sent TRB to the top of Beijing's fine dining scene when it opened in 2012. Those who have yet to try Hulu's take on Western-style sharing plates now have their Friday sliders and beer deal as an incentive to drop by. For RMB 88, nab yourself three mini gourmet burgers made from juicy beef patties topped with Emmental cheese, tomato, purple onion, and romaine lettuce – the perfect way to ease into the weekend. Fridays. RMB 88. 3/F, Taikoo Li South, Sanlitun, Chaoyang District

PHOTO COURTESY OF HULU

NIBBLES AND SIPS

Fans of authentic French bread in Beijing have a new dream destination in the form of Le Grenier à Pain, which opened in WF Central in the beginning of May. Founded by renowned French pâtissier Michel Galloyer in 1998, Le Grenier à Pain has since expanded to more than 30 branches around the world. Expect a variety of breads and pastries, including croissants, baguettes, brioche, and pain au chocolat, all baked fresh in the kitchen behind the store. They also offer coffee.

Over near Zhangzizhong Lu, Andy Horowitz (of Andy's Craft Sausages fame) has opened 3 Little Pigs, a hutong joint serving deli-style sandwiches and burgers, all hand-crafted. Among the best offerings are the hangover-crushing breakfast sandwiches, such as the aptly-named "double sausage, double egg, double cheese, and double bacon."

Craft beer lovers and Beijing's food and beverage scene at large were dealt another blow in the first half of May with the closure of Great Leap Brewing's flagship #12 Xingfucun venue. The closure came after their landlord banned F&B services on the premises. GLB will now convert the space to house their corporate operations, a cold storage distribution center, and office space for the staff. It's not all bad though, with their beloved burgers finding a new home at GLB's #45 location. The team is also planning to open a Lido branch in the near future.

With all the shake-ups and closures over the past year or so we've often been left wondering where to go for a drink these days, especially around Sanlitun. The folks at Mosto clearly feel the same way because they have just launched The Bar @ Mosto, serving a selection of classic cocktails concocted by Francesco Agnotti, alongside their signature great value house wines. Even better, those cocktails and wines are on offer at RMB 40 each from 5.30-7pm and 9-11pm every day. The bar stays open until midnight every night and late on Fridays and Saturdays.

Finally, we feel like it's high time to draw attention back to one of the city's best all-you-can-eat deals, the dim sum free-flow at Jing Yaa Tang (RMB 168). The already-indulgent lunch/brunch just got an upgrade with the option to add free-flow Chandon Brut Classic sparkling wine for RMB 168. Chandon is one of China's best (if not the best) sparkling wines from the up-and-coming region of Ningxia.

phone:13146853613

BODENSEE KITCHEN
德南餐厅

Address:
Chaoyang Park Road 1-24
(Lucky Street, South
German Bakery 2F)
地址: 北京市朝阳区
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BEIJING'S BEST TERRACES, ROOFTOPS, AND COURTYARDS

SPRING/SUMMER 2018 EDITION

By Robynne Tindall

The sun is out, the mercury is rising, and the cry grows louder: where are the best places to eat and drink outside? Whether you want to grab an al fresco lunch, enjoy a long dinner with friends, or dance the night away under the stars, there are dozens of great venues spread out across Beijing. We've pulled together a few of our favorites, covering everywhere from the CBD to the hutongs.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF MIGAS MERCADO, UNI YOU



Pak Pak

Set right in the middle of Central Park and the Office Park off Guanghua Lu, Pak Pak's terrace is perfect for both business lunches and the after-work drinks crowd. The Thai dishes are spicy and authentic (try the homemade northern Thai sausage) and the Thai-inspired cocktails are not to be missed, either.

1/F, Bldg AB, Ocean International, 10 Jintong Xilu (opposite the east side of The Place), Chaoyang District (8590 6956)

朝阳区金桐西路10号远洋光华国际AB座1层 (世贸天阶东门对面)

Fiume and Lievito

Aptly-named Fiume has a few shady tables on the banks of the Liangma River, the perfect spot to sip Aperol spritzes long into the evening. Fiume has recently added a number of snacky, cold dishes to the menu, as well as the option to order gourmet Italian pizzas from their sister restaurant Lievito next door.

1/F, FX Hotel, 39 Maizidian Xijie, Chaoyang District (6585 8927)

朝阳区麦子店西街39号富驿时尚酒店1层

Bistro 108

Deep in the embassy district, down an alleyway opposite the US embassy, lies one of Beijing's best terraces. Casual French restaurant Bistro 108 and its neighboring restaurants (including Italian trattoria La Villa, with which it shares ownership) share a long terrace that we feel is going to become one of the city's biggest hotspots this summer.

104 Cao Chang Plaza (across from the American Embassy), 19 Tianze Lu, Chaoyang District (5710 8106)

朝阳区天泽路19号草场商业广场一层104室(美国大使馆对面)

Migas Mercado

Perhaps not surprisingly being that this is the team that brought us Sanlitun's most Instagrammed terrace (RIP), we're loving everything about the terrace at Migas Mercado, from the striking yellow and purple color scheme to the panoramic CBD views. Head over for tapas during the day and stay on for one of the weekly themed events.

7/F, China World Mall, 1 Jianguomen Waidajie, Chaoyang District (6500 7579)

朝阳区建国门外大街1号国贸商城7层

Arrow Factory Brewing

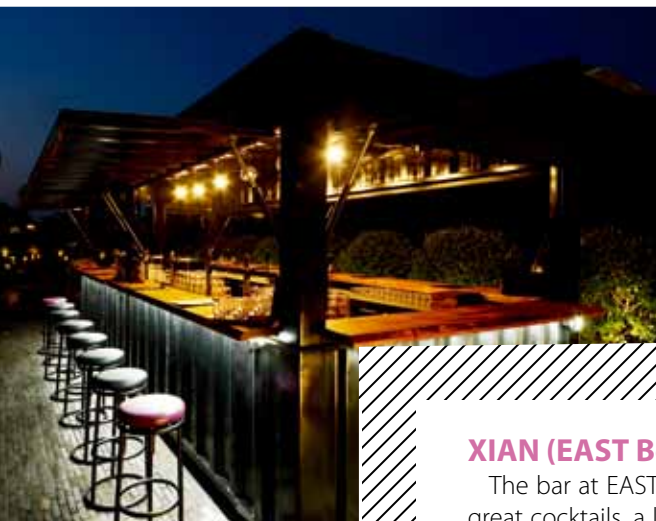
Arrow Factory's Liangma River-facing deck has its own taps serving a selection of their most popular beers, wooden benches, and a prime view of the leafy embassy area. The menu is also worth salivating over, with its upgraded take on British pub food; think ale pies, sausages, a pita stuffed with pulled pork, salads, and a bunch of snacks for sharing.

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

朝阳区新东路1号塔园外交公寓亮马河南岸



CUSTOMERS AT ARROW FACTORY BREWING ENJOY A COLD PINT BY THE LIANGMA RIVER



Hulu

Hulu was already one of the most talked about openings of the year and the completion of the terrace has only made it hotter. The terrace is expansive and tastefully furnished in white, the perfect place to sip a bottle from their well-priced wine list and enjoy some tapas-sized bites to share.

3/F, Taikoo Li South, Sanlitun, Chaoyang District (6512 5701)
朝阳区三里屯太古里南区3层

XIAN (EAST Beijing)

The bar at EAST Hotel offers something for pretty much everyone, with great cocktails, a live band, wood-fired pizzas, an oyster bar, and the Craft Beer Container, serving brews from three of Beijing's best breweries. The sunken booths on the terrace are great for groups. Upstairs, all-day dining restaurant Feast also has a terrace.

1/F, EAST Beijing, 22 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District (8414 9810)
朝阳区酒仙桥路22号东隅北京酒店1层

InfraRouge

The group behind Shanghai veteran Bar Rouge has bought their impressive pedigree to Beijing, opening swanky restaurant and lounge InfraRouge in Taikoo Li North. Split over two floors, the upper level has a cozy terrace with views over Sanlitun and plays hosts to regular DJ nights. Not quite the Bund but we'll take what we can get.

3/F-5/F, N8, Taikooli North, Sanlitun Lu, Chaoyang District (6468 1619)
朝阳区三里屯太古里北区N8室3层及顶层3

Mai Fresh

From the owner of Mai Bar comes Mai Fresh, a breezy all-day dining restaurant on Beiluogu Xiang. A sunny courtyard and a terrace make this hutong spot a great place to enjoy a healthy brunch (think eggs Benedict, quinoa salad, and smoothie bowls) overlooking the surrounding slate rooftops.

44 Beiluogu Xiang, Dongcheng District (151 1795 6682)
东城区北锣鼓巷44号



II Bar (Bulgari Hotel)

On the lobby level of the elegant Bulgari hotel, the interior of II Bar is attractive enough but it is the recently-opened terrace on the banks of the Liangma River that will be drawing the biggest crowds this summer. A pop-up gin and tonic bar mixing all kinds of interesting combinations only adds to its appeal.

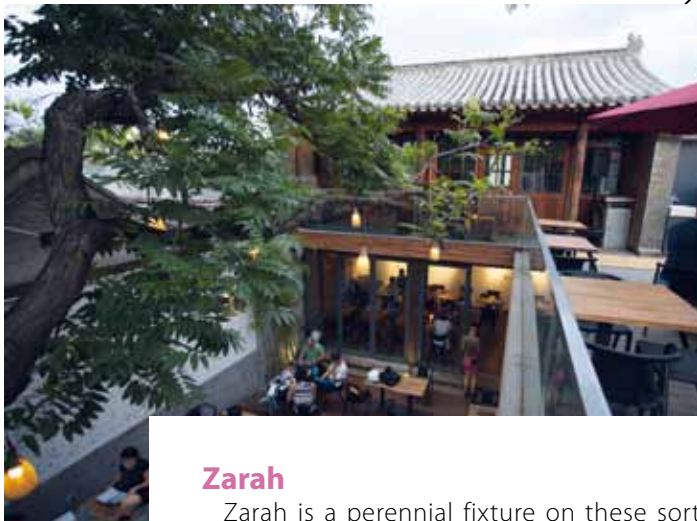
1/F, Bulgari Hotel, 8 Xinyuan Nanlu, Chaoyang District
朝阳区新源南路8号1层

Plan B

If you're in the market for a good neighborhood sports bar, then Plan B could well be the answer to your call. With sunny outside seating in the Pingod community in Shuangjing, Plan B makes for an excellent place to spend a long afternoon. They do a mean line of burgers too, which are 50 percent off with the purchase of a beverage on Mondays.

2-012, 22 International Art Plaza, Pingod, 32 Baizwan Lu (east of the Today Art Museum), Chaoyang District (5821 1353)

朝阳区百子湾路32号苹果社区22院街艺术区2-012 (今日美术馆东侧)



The Rug Café (WF Central branch)

One of the most exciting recent openings in the new WF Central mall, The Rug Café is beautiful inside and out, so there's no need to worry if you're on the terrace when the rain suddenly sets in. Expect luxurious dishes such as lobster rolls and creative drinks such as grass jelly with café au lait.

112, West Side, 1/F, WF Central, Daruanfu Hutong, Dongcheng District (6528 3966)

东城区大阮府胡同王府中环1层西座112室

Zarah

Zarah is a perennial fixture on these sort of lists – and with good reason. A favorite of Beijing's freelance crowd, a table in the sunny courtyard is a coveted spot. Zarah offers healthy breakfasts, great coffee, and – for when the sun goes down – a good value range of drinks and wines by the glass.

46 Gulou Dongdajie, Dongcheng District (8403 9807)

东城区鼓楼东大街42号

Ramo

Ramo certainly got an upgrade when it moved from its previous location on Fangjia Hutong to Lido, with a new two-story, 500sqm space, with terraces on both floors. The first floor is more for dining (they still serve their popular pizzas), while the second focuses on events and cocktails. Look out for non-dining events such as yoga on the terrace.

9-2 Jiangtai Xilu, Chaoyang District (6436 1299)

朝阳区将台西路9-2号



Taco Bar

Taco Bar may not boast an elegant patio with a captivating view or a mind-blowing design, but that's the appeal of its no-frills, front porch vibe. Its outdoor seating is prime for people watching over brunch or evening tacos and cocktails (check out their "buy a cocktail get a taco" happy hour).

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

朝阳区机电院10号南三里屯路

NAPA

BRINGING CALIFORNIAN SOPHISTICATION TO THE SHUNYI FOOD SCENE

150 meters north of Tian Bei Lu and Yu Feng Lu Intersection in Shunyi, Shunyi District (186 1115 1686)

顺义区天北路和裕丰路口向北走150米路东边

The opening of Napa at their new location in Shunyi caused quite a buzz on social media. Their previous incarnation, just south of Chaoyang Park, was particularly popular with the international community, and the arrival of their fresh take on Californian cuisine promises to pep up the suburb's often underwhelming dining scene.

The new restaurant is spacious and airy, with a high ceiling and a glass front. It seats 95 inside and there will be another 40 places outside over the summer. The contemporary vibe is enhanced by a hip indie playlist. Those familiar with the old Napa might also be surprised by the menu though. Owner Andrew Hsu and chef Colin Smith have shifted from affordable casual dining to a more formal, high-end experience.

We sampled the Caesar salad (RMB 78), composed of crisp romaine hearts, garlic *mantou* croutons, and an eyelid-batting sharpness of lemon zest cutting through. With anchovies, grana padano, and a hint of pepper heat, it's satisfyingly complex for such a light dish.

A forthcoming addition to the menu is the lobster roll; Boston lobster lightly tossed in aioli on freshly baked brioche. The butter in the brioche worked well, but its sweetness threatened to overwhelm for the delicate flavor of the meat.

The sambuca mussels and clams (RMB 138) were gloriously fragrant, with fennel the keynote in the broth, and woodfired garlic bread for dipping. Alternatively, the Mapo Burrata Pizza (RMB 128) is an intriguing marriage between Eastern and Western cuisines, with the tofu replaced by creamy burrata cheese.

The highlight though was the Australian wagyu steak (RMB 238). The beef is cooked sous vide before charring, rendering it so tender that you can cut it with a butter knife. It's sublime on its own, but dipping in a tart-sweet yakiniku sauce brought out the underlying charcoal flavors. The "Slice of Ice" salad – cold iceberg lettuce cradling a poached egg and yakiniku-ranch dressing – tended to overpower it, however.

On tap, there's draft beer from Jing-A and Boxing Cat, as well as wine and cocktails, and a plan to expand the menu over the coming weeks, adding bar snacks, brunch, and afternoon tea. Ingredients are locally sourced wherever possible, a point that backs Napa's serious take on food, and one that impacts its prices accordingly. Nonetheless, it makes for a more than welcome change from the uninspiring chain restaurants which otherwise predominate in Shunyi. *Andrew Killeen*



PHOTO COURTESY OF NAPA



ROLLBOX

BANH MI FAVORITE ROLLS BACK INTO SANLITUN

Mon-Thu 10am-10pm, Fri-Sun 10am-11pm (kitchen), Mon-Thu 6-11pm, Fri-Sun noon-11pm (bar). 1/F, west side of International Wonderland, Bldg 39, Xingfucun, Chaoyang District (177 1091 8725)

朝阳区幸福二村39号楼首开幸福广场西侧底商

Of all the venues swept up in the wake of the Great Brickening last year, Rollbox was one of the biggest losses. Given that we're impartial to a good sandwich and, for us, sandwiches don't get much better than banh mi, you can imagine the excitement when we heard that Rollbox had reopened not far away from its original spot on Xingfucun Zhonglu.

The new Rollbox, now located on the west side of the International Wonderland complex off Xindong Lu, has a row of tables down one side and a few bar stools at the counter at the front, making it a good spot for both eat in and take away. If anything, this space is an improvement on the original and old fans will be glad to know the quality of the banh mi has also survived the move unscathed.

A good sandwich relies on good bread and none more so than banh mi, which, after all, literally means "bread" in Vietnamese. Rollbox's bread is homemade, with the requisite lightness and crackle of crust that comes from the use of rice flour in the dough. This commitment to homemade ingredients extends to the banh mi fillings, too. Take the classic pork banh mi (RMB 42), for example, which features minimally seasoned pork leg that is pressure cooked into submission, along with leg ham and brawn made using a

"slow food" process that brings out the best in the natural ingredients. We particularly like the sweep of Vietnamese-Australian-style pork pate that comes on some of the sandwiches (Rollbox was initially inspired by the banh mi shops popular in Australian cities).

The classic banh mi fillings are great but we also appreciate the slightly more innovative ones, such as grilled tofu and mushroom for vegans and vegetarians and the beef satay (RMB 52), which comes with a hearty portion of beef in a savory peanut/coconut dressing.

That peanut dressing also accompanies a selection of rice paper rolls (RMB 30-38), a new addition to the menu, along with banh mi bowls (RMB 48-58), a good option for those who want to enjoy the flavor of a banh mi without the pesky carbs. Choose from toppings such as grilled pork neck or grilled tofu and mushrooms. Another new addition is an (alcoholic) drinks menu, including a number of cocktails, available on weekday evenings and all day at the weekend.

All in all, the fact that a small business like Rollbox can survive the forced closure of its first location and come back stronger gives us hope for the future of Beijing's independent restaurant scene. *Robynne Tindall*

THE RUG CAFÉ (WF CENTRAL)

LOCAL BRUNCH FAVORITE IS REBORN IN WANGFUJING WITH THEIR BEST VENUE YET

Daily 10am-10pm. 112, West Side, 1/F, WF Central, Daruanfu Hutong, Dongcheng District (6528 3966)

东城区大阮府胡同王府中环1层西座112室

Following a relatively dull spring season for Beijing foodies on account of a dearth of new openings in the capital, The Rug Café touches down in Wangfujing's WF Central to relieve some of our hunger for something new. The latest Rug iteration embodies what we've come to expect from Taiwanese F&B power trio Aden Chang, Elin Hung, and Gordon Chan – a casual but elegant and airy ambiance draws from elements of a restaurant, bar, and café and is outfitted with trendy East-meets-West décor. Upon entering, your eye is immediately drawn to a three-meter-tall pane of stained glass and large neon lights, as well as subtler features like the stone lions tucked away in each corner, bird cages dotted around the space, and lamps in the shape of *wusha mao* (black gauze caps that were worn by Chinese officers in ancient times). There's also a large play area for the kids, big enough to house its own climbing wall, and an adult playpen in the form of an outdoor patio perfect for brunches, afternoon tea, and romantic dinners for two.

The menu is equally as ambitious, featuring everything from fetching salads to pasta, poke bowls, creative burgers, and waffles, as well as a brunch menu well worthy of repeat visits on the weekend. Be sure to try the buttered lobster roll

(RMB 198), one of the best sandwiches we've had this year, and crafted with half a Boston lobster, sliced apple, egg, and creamy avocado, and paired with a potato salad seasoned with rosemary, dill, chili powder, and a drizzle of lemon – refreshing, flavorful, spicy, and simply delicious.

Desserts include cakes made fresh daily by their new in-house pastry chef as well as the yellow mango citrus passiflora (RMB 58) with an orange paper-thin chocolate shell that conceals a thick mango and passion-fruit custard. However, it's the frozen orange pulp at its center that really put this sweet treat over the top.

If you're in the mood to play bartender, the four drinks "Apothecary" options provide you with a set of ingredients so that you can mix your own tippie. However, only the Cherry Passion Gin Cocktail is alcoholic, containing passion-fruit juice, gin, Cointreau, and a cherry and rosemary-infused mixer. If you'd rather not strain yourself, there's also Hambela cold brew coffee, regular cocktails, and a strong selection of wine.

Be it the elegant eats, sunny terrace, or airy interior, Rug Café is bursting with qualities that will likely lure Wangfujing's elite brunch crowd back again and again. *Tracy Wang*



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE RUG CAFÉ

BEST OF BEIJING



This issue is all about burgers and what goes better with burgers than a humble bucket of fried potato? Rather than focusing on boring old fries (although these still require a considerable amount of skill to make them truly delicious), we thought we'd highlight some of the more interesting topped-and-loaded fries available around town, ones that can just as easily hold their own alone or be paired with a burger.

Poutine, Plan B, RMB 60

There's some dispute about the origin of poutine, i.e. fries topped with cheese curds and gravy, but we like to imagine that it was invented by a drunk person rooting desperately through the fridge for something to eat – because that's certainly how we eat it. Plan B's version uses melty cheese instead of cheese curds (as do most versions in Beijing) but makes up for it with a deeply savory gravy.

Buffalo Chicken Waffle Fries, The Local, RMB 45

If we're being honest, we'd probably eat cardboard if it was dipped in The Local's buffalo sauce. Thankfully we don't have to as they mix it with chicken and dollop it on top of their waffle fries instead. The waffle fries, with their mysterious umami coating, are delicious by themselves but the sour and spicy buffalo sauce gives them an extra lift, simultaneously cutting through and adding to the richness.

K-Town Fries, Palms L.A. Kitchen and Bar, RMB 25

People usually fall into two camps when it comes to french fry dipping sauce: ketchup or mayo (or both for the anarchic). We'll happily abandon both for the Sriracha cream served with Palms L.A.'s K-Town fries, which are adorned with a sprinkle of crispy nori and tolerably spicy Korean chili flakes. Don't be put off by the sprinkle of seaweed; it adds depth of flavor without leaving you tasting of the sea.



CHUAN BAN

BEIJING'S BEST-KNOWN PROV GOV IS IN NEED OF A SPICING UP

Mon-Fri 7-9am, 10.50am-2pm, 4.50-9.30pm; Sat-Sun 7am-10pm. 5 Gongyuan Toutiao, Jianguomennei Dajie, Dongcheng District (6512 2277 ext 6101)

川办餐厅：东城区建国门内贡院头条5号

In the context of Beijing's Provincial Government restaurants, Sichuan's entry, which goes by Chuan Ban for short, is a bonafide heavyweight. Among Prov Gov canon, it's the one that is sought out for its popularity as a standalone restaurant and has maintained a loyal following since opening in 1979. Diners will spot the building, which sits just north of Jianguomen station, from the banner of Sichuan's iconic Leshan Giant Buddha that adorns the outer wall. Its absence of color, bar a smudging of blue ink, serves as a nod to the restaurant's lengthy existence. However, the restaurant is anything but blue, and is distinctive for eschewing the usual canteen hall chic of most Prov Govs and instead exhibits a certain flair thanks a mishmash of private rooms, walkways, and water features replete with fish and flashing lights.

As you would hope, the menu is an encyclopedic collection of Sichuan province's most beloved chili-laden dishes but despite its breadth, of most of the items we chose none truly hit the mark. Take the spicy rabbit (RMB 58) for example, which though generous in its portioning of meat, was dry and gamey to the point of being overbearing, cancelling out any flavor from the accompanying celery and chilies. Similarly, the *gongbao*

shrimp (RMB 78) was a balanced combination of leeks, peanuts, chilies, covered in a tangy-sweet sauce, but the shrimp sat just on the wrong side of chewy to allow it to compete with the best. Meanwhile, the steamed beef (RMB 32) was lacking so much in seasoning that not even the liberal lashings of chili flakes and cilantro could cover up the fact that we had been served a basket of wet, tasteless meat. Though not a main, the best dish of the lot turned out to be the spicy dried radish (RMB 22), a rich and zesty mix of finely chopped radish and carrot, and slices of fatty pork, all bathed in sumptuous chili oil.

Slightly disheartened, we turned to the menu's broad range of artery-clogging desserts to soothe our woes. The deep-fried rice cakes with brown sugar syrup (RMB 24) and the similarly dense pumpkin cakes (RMB 12) did just the trick.

While Chuan Ban is certainly a cut above the other Prov Govs, the plethora of excellent *chuancai* available to Beijingers nowadays compared to when it first opened nearly four decades ago means that flaws in the menu are only exaggerated. Just like with the faded poster that greets diners on the outside, it may be that the whole venue is long overdue a spicing up. *Tom Arnstein*



PHOTO: TOM ARNSTEIN



CHIKALICIOUS

DELICATE CONFECTIONERY FROM DOWNTOWN
MANHATTAN TOUCHES DOWN IN CHINA WORLD MALL

Daily 10am-9pm. NL6007, 6/F, China World Mall, 1 Jianguomenwai Dajie, Chaoyang District (6595 7866)
西卡利舍：建国门外大街1号国贸商城北区6层NL6007

When compared to other megacities around the world, Beijingers often complain that the confectionery here just about musters average. Which is why we've been drooling at the thought of the famous downtown Manhattan venue ChikaLicious opening their first outlet in Beijing ever since we first spotted its assigned place at the New Zone at China World Mall last April. Finally, after a year's wait, the "dessert club" is now up and running on the sixth floor.

In New York City, ChikaLicious is best-known for its three-course pre-fixe dessert menu designed by co-owner and pastry chef Chika Tillman. Beijing's branch doesn't offer such a luxury and instead simply provides seven options for dessert: four special cakes (RMB 88), and three puff pastries (RMB 48). The drink menu is much more adequate, with a choice of teas, three special non-alcoholic drinks, red and white wines, and Champagne (what party would be complete without a little bubbly, after all).

The Earl Grey white chocolate and raspberry cake is equal parts light and smooth, the tart and tangy layer of raspberry playing *yin* to the sweet white chocolate's *yang*. Finally, a dusting of Earl Grey powder lifts the underlying

flavors and a touch of silver foil bolsters its class. The vanilla caramel puff pastry features a crunchy and crisp exterior that gives way to the sweet, vanilla-whipped cream, and a deeply satisfying caramel center.

Of the cold drinks – Jogger Lost in Tokyo, The Lasting Passion from Bangkok, and New York: Secret of Rose – we settled on the last for its eye-pleasing flamingo color, pleasant peach and rose aromas, and dried rose petals. The abundant sugar content is also likely to leave you grinning.

The venue is both spacious and elegantly designed with a combination of marble, bronze, and glass. Seats along the floor-to-ceiling windows are particularly popular, providing diners with the view that we've come to recognize via ChikaLicious' neighboring restaurants: traffic on the Third Ring Road, the CCTV Building, and ongoing construction at the Zhongguozun skyscraper.

The selection of desserts may be limited and come at a pretty penny (plus 10 percent service charge), but the airy space and the promise of a true treat certainly hadn't dissuaded patrons from visiting on a weekday afternoon. For now, we'll wait patiently for the arrival of the three-course menu while nibbling our way through this handful of immaculately constructed desserts. *Tracy Wang*

SANLIAN TAOFEN

24-HOUR BOOKSTORE WANTS TO MAKE DIRTY BAR STREET CLEAN AGAIN

Daily 24-hours. 43 Bei Sanlitun Lu, Chaoyang District

三联韬奋书店：朝阳区北三里屯路南43号

Amid the settling dust of Sanlitun's neutered Dirty Bar Street, once the center of nefarious deeds in the capital, there's a learned streak arising courtesy of reinvigorated government directives. Leading the charge is the new branch of Sanlian Taofen, a 24-hour bookstore that sits in stark contrast to the disco and shots-fueled Youth Club that once occupied the space. As our directory succinctly immortalises that former haven for debauchery: "Not the place to discuss Kierkegaard."

This overhaul means that may no longer be the case, with shelf upon shelf of Chinese classics, philosophy, and educational texts replacing the deafening pop music and sticky residue of tequila. As invigorating as the musty titles may be – with only two cases dedicated to English language books, largely encompassing the usual 20th century classics – the main draw here is not the store's contents but its unique layout. Serpentine walkways weave up, down, and through the two-story-tall bookshelves, which depending on your outlook, adds an exploratory tactility to the experience or an unwanted obstacle in finding the book you want. It also means that squeezing past readers is a given since the walkways are just about wide enough to accommodate two people.

For the vertigo-inclined, suggested titles are also laid out on islands on the ground floor.

As an employee of the bookstore described, the whole space was transformed using government funding in a little over two weeks. While we would like to attribute that feat to unmatched Chinese engineering, poorly welded and flimsy metal railings and scuffed, unvarnished patches of wood betray the hasty means in which it was assembled and give the impression that it may vanish as quickly as it appeared. Most concerning, however, is that the same employee readily admitted that he had little faith in the safety of the towering bookshelves and railings, going as far as to prophesize an accident. We have been warned.

Looking past the imminent danger of drowning in literature, the store also has a two-level café which serves a range of coffees, teas, smoothies, and flavored sparkling waters (RMB 25-35) as well as a corner for overpriced gifts. All of that does little to quell concerns that this branch of Sanlian Taofen is more of a gimmick than a concerted move to eradicate the area's more seedy underpinnings, an impermanent and rickety facade to project a more erudite Sanlitun landscape. *Tom Arnstein*



PHOTO: TOM ARNSTEIN

P.S. WE ATE YOU

Mango with coconut milk and sticky rice

Amazingthai, RMB 46

The second branch of Amazingthai recently opened in Shuangjing's Space 3 Mall (the first is in Dongzhimen's Raffles City) bringing a ray of sunshine to cut through the southeast enclave's construction dust clouds. This dessert does exactly that courtesy of three scoops of flavored sticky rice, ample mango, and a ladling of addiction-forming coconut milk.

Cauliflower base pizza

Gung Ho! Pizza, + RMB 10 to any pizza

Gung Ho! Pizza has recently re-upped its quest to be China's healthiest pizza joint by introducing a cauliflower "paleo" base option for their pizzas which uses egg as the cohesive element. Vegans will also be interested to hear that you can now swap out their standard New Zealand Anchor Mozzarella for a homemade dairy-free alternative.

Pescado a la Talla

Pebbles Kitchen, RMB 328

Pebbles' patio, roomy inside, and airy atmosphere make it continuously one of the best pre-party summer haunts and their new summer menu does not disappoint. An absolute highlight is the grilled seabass with homemade red and green adobo marinade, topped with goat's cheese, and a roasted garlic dressing. The huge filleted fish comes with a side of hand-pressed corn tortillas to fill with morsels of beautiful white fish that peel seamlessly from the skin.

Pan-fried cod

BK's Tavern, RMB 198

BK's Tavern by the banks of Liangma River has also put their best pan-fried cod (pictured below) on the menu for the warmer months ahead. The fish's succulent meat and crisp exterior are balanced with a little acidity from a side of tomatoes, roasted to perfection. In lieu of a lemon sauce, the dish is paired with an in-house made garlic and chili relish to give it a spicy-sour kick.



MEAT YOUR GUT-BUSTING MATCH

BEIJING BURGER FESTIVAL RETURNS TO GALAXY SOHO, JUN 16-17

It was Ozzy Osborne who famously bit into a half-rancid burger that a fan had thrown onto the stage during a concert in Des Moines in 1982. Oh, sorry, it was actually a bat. Anyway, forget all about that snippet of legendary rock 'n' roll history and think about this instead: the year is 2018 and the sixth Beijing ~~Bat~~ Burger Festival is on our doorstep, and you – the all-discerning burger fiends that you are – are invited to join us on Jun 16-17, 11am-8pm, at Galaxy Soho to feast on burgers from some of the biggest patty vendors around town.

Those guys are currently readying their grills alongside 20 drinks vendors to bring a celebration of meat, cheese, and bread that hasn't been seen since, well, the Earl of Sandwich discovered the bloody combination in the mid-18th century. You yourself may very well rediscover the glories of this simple, yet hearty, concoction once you've worked your way through the 40-plus variations on offer. Just be warned: after doing so, world-changing gastronomic inventions are unlikely whereas meat sweats are an absolute given.

Funnily enough, going back to the bat incident, this year's Burger Festival theme is in fact rock 'n' roll (what a

coincidence!) which is why we've invited a bucket-load of high-energy bands, DJs, and performers to keep you pogoing throughout the weekend. Those will include the finest line-up of Beijing's rockers, a rock 'n' roll karaoke contest (start practicing that growl now), and even a play area so that the young'uns can get to grips with throwing devil horns at an early age.

Last year's event attracted close to 20,000 hungry burger fans and we hope to outdo ourselves this year by holding the biggest festival in honor of the glorious combination of meat and buns that Beijing has ever seen. For now, to get you salivating at the thought of this year's Burger Fest, turn to p.42-43 to see the winners of last year's Burger Cup.

Early bird tickets for Jun 16-17's Beijing Burger Festival can be nabbed now for RMB 17 by scanning the adjacent QR code. As always, they come with a free limited edition gift redeemable upon entry.



PHOTO: TYLER MAGNIER

GO

SHANDONG // VEGGIE BURGERS // MEMORY LANE // DOG-FRIENDLY VENUES



THE COLOR RUN

Jun 9 - Branded as 'the happiest 5k on the planet,' The Color Run returns to Beijing to brighten up our lives with its psychedelic combination of colored powder paint and the action of running away from, or toward, it. Either way, you'll come out looking like a rainbow personified. 9am (morning session), 2.30pm (afternoon session). RMB 228-288. Beijing Garden Expo Park



SHANDONG

EXPLORE THE LAND OF SAINTS, SPRINGS, AND SUMMITS BY RAIL

By Robynne Tindall

If you ever find yourself on a guided tour of Shandong Province, your guide may well tell you that Shandong's land, industry, and agriculture are diverse enough for it to be a country in its own right. Spend enough time in the province and you'll see that they're right; from mountains to historical monuments to golden sandy beaches, Shandong has a little bit of everything. Regular high-speed rail connections from Beijing put you a maximum of five to six hours away from most of Shandong's major cities, making it a great choice for a long weekend away.

Jinan

Shandong's provincial capital Jinan makes a good base from which to explore nearby destinations such as Qufu and Taishan. Jinan is also known as the "City of Springs" and, indeed, the streets in the center of the city are brimming with street-level pools just waiting for you to trip into. The most famous of the springs is Baotu Spring, part of a cluster of around 20 springs, which was declared "number one spring under heaven" by the Qianlong emperor (note that these are the kind of springs you admire from afar rather than swim in). All that spring water flows into Daming Lake, which boasts boat rides and pretty landscaped parks along its banks. The hutongs near the lake have been transformed into a sort of Nanluogu Xiang/Qianmen hybrid that is nevertheless home to some tasty Shandong-style restaurants.

Direct train from Beijing South: 2 hours

Mount Tai (Taishan)

Mount Tai is one China's most sacred mountains and also one of its most climbed. Emperors, scholars, and pilgrims have been summiting the peak of Mount Tai since before 1,000 BC and it remains one of the most popular mountains in China to this day. Depending on the strength of your will (and your knees), you can choose to climb the 7,200-plus steps to the summit or take a bus to the halfway point and change to a cable car. As the most easterly of China's sacred mountains, Mount Tai is a popular place to see the sunrise, which will require you to either hike up in the dark or spend the night in one of the bare-bones hotels on the summit. Note that the majority of high-speed trains from Beijing arrive at Tai'an Station (around 15 minutes by bus from the mountain) and there are also sleeper trains to Taishan Station.

Direct train from Beijing South: 2 hours



Qingdao

Be sure to schedule a few extra days for your trip to Qingdao because it's highly likely that you won't want to leave. With its leafy streets, generally low-rise development, and, of course, eponymous beer brand, Qingdao is a uniquely relaxing Chinese city. Aside from the Tsingtao Brewery Museum, there aren't a huge number of major tourist attractions, giving you all the more reason to laze on the beach with a beer in hand. If you do fancy doing some sightseeing, prioritize the German Governor's Residence, which hosted scores of Chinese and foreign dignitaries over the years and offers a glimpse of the luxuriousness of the colonial lifestyles and buildings that cropped up in this part of China in the first few years of the 19th century.

Direct train from Beijing South: 5 hours

Qufu

You can't visit Shandong without stopping by the home of its most favorite son: Confucius. Formerly a sleepy prefecture-level city, Qufu has since been transformed into one of the province's most popular tourist destinations. The three most popular sites are the Temple of Confucius, the Kong Family Mansion, and the Cemetery of Confucius, which were collectively listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1994.

Surprisingly, the most pleasant of these is the cemetery, which lies about a kilometer north of the city. Stone stele marking the graves of generations of members of the Kong family are spread out across grassy parkland shaded by Chinese scholar trees. Qufu is an incredibly popular tour destination so try to avoid visiting during national holidays, if possible.

Direct train from Beijing South: 2.5 hours

Yantai

The small port city of Yantai surprisingly boasts some of the cleanest seas in northern China. There are several sandy beaches from which to enjoy the sea (called, imaginatively, First and Second Beach), as well as rocky Moon Bay, which is a popular place for wedding photos. The city was opened to foreign influence as a treaty port in 1858 and although not much concrete evidence of this period remains, there is still a sort of French Riviera feel to some of the streets, especially around Yantai Hill Park. Yantai is also home to China's largest and oldest winery, Changyu. Take a tour of the Changyu Wine Culture Museum, which includes a wine tasting and a bottle of brandy to take home.

Direct train from Beijing South: 2 hours

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NANJING

BRIMMING WITH HISTORY, CHINA'S SOUTHERN CAPITAL IS NOT TO BE OVERLOOKED

By Tom Arnstein

Though no longer at the top of many traveler's itineraries, the "southern capital" of Nanjing and the capital of Jiangsu province is exceptionally significant for its role as a hub for numerous dynasties and governments over the past two millennia. As such, the city has been imbued with rich cultural remnants of Chinese political life, most recently acting as the home of the ascendant Kuomintang party from 1927 to 1937 and again from 1946 until their defeat by the Communists in 1949, when the capital was moved to Beijing and the Nationalists fled to Taiwan. That culture stretches to the neat and leafy streets, varied architecture, and numerous inner-city parks. Less enticing is the fact that Nanjing is considered one of China's three furnaces, an accolade obtained courtesy of its subtropical climate and, for many, unbearable summer heat. Nevertheless, a visit to the old capital via a four-hour fast train from Beijing outside of those sweltering months is rewarding for anyone wanting to better get a grasp of the serpentine trajectory of Chinese history.

A fitting first port of call then is Sun Yat-sen's Mausoleum, lying to the northeast of Nanjing's center, and the resting place of the founder of the Republic of China. Completed in 1929, a lower gate marks the beginning to a 400-step march toward the mausoleum surrounded by forest and perched on top of the opposing hill. Built based on an updated reimagining of imperial

tomb architecture and replete with brilliant blue tiles, the majestic stone sacrificial hall is a fitting and tranquil home for the Founder of Modern China's remains, which are encased by a life-size white marble sarcophagus.

Just west of the mausoleum sits Xianwuhu Park, containing Nanjing's largest city center lake skirted on its south and west sides by remaining sections of the city's



SUN YAT-SEN'S MAUSOLEUM




12-meter-tall wall, a marvel in itself. Built by Emperor Zhu Yuanzhang after his founding of the Ming dynasty (1368-1644) and another assertion of Nanjing as the capital, the wall took 21 years to erect and remains to this day one of the best extant specimens in China's illustrious history of wall building. Head to Zhonghua Gate in the south for one of the best remaining examples of where the wall was fortified with soldiers. Alternatively, meander through the Ming Palace Ruins for a people-watching extravaganza as locals play cards, chess, and instruments.

Returning to a more poignant and upsetting period of recent times, for better or worse, a trip to Nanjing wouldn't be complete without a stop at the Nanjing Massacre Memorial Hall. Suitably somber, visitors are greeted by statues of Nanjing inhabitants – complete with “devil”-peppered quotes – captured in various states of terror as they fled the slaughter by Japanese troops during their occupation of the city in 1937. Fortunately, the name calling ends there and what follows is a balanced retracing of the horrific acts that befell some 300,000 Chinese civilians and the rebuilding of the city by Chinese and foreign entities. To bring the content-heavy exhibits back home, the museum concludes with a winding path through two partially excavated mass graves.


In all, Nanjing's rich history affords it some of the best sightseeing and museums in the country. All that, along with the verdant surroundings nurtured by a southern climate, makes for a city that may often get overlooked by international tourists but which can reward repeat visits. And even if long ruminations on expansive periods in Chinese history aren't your thing, remember that along the way you can feast and slurp on the culinary panacea that is Nanjing's other most famed export: the insurmountable soup dumpling.

PHOTOS: ROLLEREVENTS.ORG, NINALOVES.CO.UK

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memory lane

DETAILING SHIJIA HUTONG'S LONG AND ILLUSTRIOUS HISTORY

By Jeremiah Jenne

While many of Beijing's hutongs claim rich histories, few can compete with Shijia Hutong for its abundance of famous former residents. Combined with a trip to the Shijia Hutong Museum, located at No. 24, the alley is a treasure trove for explorers seeking insight into Beijing's past.

The hutong, running west to east between Dongsì Nandajie and Chaoyangmen Nandajie is also a well-preserved/carefully reconstructed and reimagined lane rich in stories from local history.

Toward the western end, at the intersection with Dongsì Nandajie just north of the Dengshikou subway, is a row of large courtyard homes, one of which is now the Shijia Elementary School. The school is located at No. 59 on the site of the ancestral temple of Shi Kefa (1601-1645), a Ming-era general who gave his life defending the city of Yangzhou from Manchu invaders. In the first decade of the 20th century, a testing center was opened on the site where examiners screened hopeful students looking to study in the United States. Between 1909-1911 over 1,000 students sat for the exams. Only one out of 10

would pass, but one of the most famous aspirants was Hu Shih (1891-1962) who sat for the exam in 1910 on his way to Cornell and then Columbia before returning to China for a job at Peking University. Hu Shih would later become a hugely influential intellectual and scholar in Republican-era China.

The better-preserved courtyards at No. 53 and No. 51 also have a storied past. No. 53 is rumored to have been the former home of Hua Guofeng, China's leader from during the awkward transition between the end of the Mao era and the emergence of Deng Xiaoping in 1978.

Next door, No. 51 formerly belonged to the journalist and politician Zhang Shizhao, who parlayed a loan back in the 1920s to a young, struggling revolutionary from Hunan into a career in Chinese politics and some prime

PHOTOS: MITCHELL PE MASTLUN

real estate in 1950s. Zhang Shizhao's daughter, Zhang Hanzhi, even served as an English tutor/translator for Mao Zedong in the early years of the PRC. His granddaughter is the media mogul Hung Huang, who has been fighting an off-and-on battle over her family courtyard at No. 51. While the yard is closed to the public, a model of No. 51 can be seen at the Shijia Hutong Museum down the street.

That museum is housed in the former residence of another famous denizen of Shijia Hutong: Ling Shuhua. Born in 1900, Ling Shuhua was a writer and poet (a friend and contemporary of Bing Xin) who moved to Wuhan in the 1930s when her husband, the prominent author and editor Chen Yuan, was offered a teaching position in the Hubei capital. Ling soon stepped out on hubby Chen with a poet/English teacher (they had them back then, too) who just happened to be the nephew of Virginia Woolf. Ling Shuhua began a three-year correspondence with the British author and ultimately moved to London in 1947.

Screen and stage buffs will also want to check out the museum exhibit dedicated to the Beijing People's Art Theater, founded in 1952. Playwrights such as Cao Yu (who wrote the controversial study of incest, *Lei Yu's Thunderstorm*) and Tian Han both contributed to the troupe. Famous actors including Lan Tianye (1927-) and Shi Xiuwen (1915-1969) were among the featured performers. Other actors included Ying Ruocheng (1929-1990), a Manchu actor who starred in numerous Chinese films and TV shows as well as roles in *The Last Emperor* (1987) and on stage as Willy Loman in Arthur Miller's famous 1983 Beijing production of *Death of a Salesman*. Sports fans will get a chance to see Ying Ruocheng's grandson, Ying Da, take the ice in 2022 as a member of China's Olympic ice hockey team.

Several famous politicians and military figures also made their home here, including Fu Zuoyi (1895-1974) who started out as an officer in the employ of the warlord Yan Xishan but ended up serving in the government after 1949 before being ratted out during the Cultural Revolution as a counter-revolutionary (allegedly by his daughter!). No. 47 was once the home of Rong Yiren, who served as vice mayor of Shanghai in 1957 and would later be an important reformer in the government led by Deng Xiaoping. Rong founded CITIC in 1978 and was Vice President of the PRC from 1993-1998. Closer to the eastern end of the lane (at No. 8) lived Ye Guangyuan, an economist who also advised Deng Xiaoping.

Unfortunately, few of these buildings other than the museum are open to the public and the recent campaigns to "improve" the hutongs mean that much of the original structures and gates are no longer visible. Nevertheless, Shijia Hutong still offers an excellent opportunity for local history buffs to take a stroll down a real memory lane.



FLASH IN THE PAN?

A LOOK BACK AT BEIJING'S BEST 2017 BURGERS

Now six years into our Burger Cup, you could say that we're seasoned invigilators of one of the most heated competitions in Beijing's dining scene. Despite the same strong showings from similarly seasoned restaurants, each year has the ability to surprise. Last year was no different, with outsider Q Mex and newbie Cannon's trumping the likes of Great Leap, Slow Boat, and Homeplate. There's little indication as to who will be crowned Beijing's Best Burger in 2018 but last year's top 8 is as good a place as any to start ticking off ones to try before you place your all-important vote.

**Q Mex****Must-try burger:** Double Burger

While Q Mex's chorizo burger has brought something new to the table with its double-grilled and spicy beef chorizo patty, it's their double burger that has kept us coming back thanks to two special beef patties, a double helping of cheese, mayonnaise, and "special dressing." Coupled with a wide-ranging menu of strong drinks and regular promotions and events, Q Mex rightly claimed its place at the top of Beijing's most popular burger spots in 2017 and will be hard to beat entering this year's proceedings.

NO.1

Cannon's Burger**Must-try burger:** Cannonnator

The true success story of last year's Burger Cup was the rise of Cannon's. After a successful appearance at the Burger Festival, Cannon's skyrocketed from #74 in 2016 all the way to second place in 2017, even coming within a hair's breadth of the title. Their Cannonnator burger features supple, homemade buns, two diner-style Angus beef patties encased in American cheese, fried mushrooms and onions, bacon, and a fried egg.

NO.2

**Great Leap Brewing****Must-try burger:** The Cheeseburger

With a recipe written by top-notch chef Kin Hong (of Taco Bar fame), there's little wonder why this burger has been such a hit with pub-grub lovers, or why it has cracked the Final Four in our Burger Cup year after year. Fans had a temporary moment of panic when it was announced that Great Leap's #12 venue would close, but luckily the burger has found a new home in their #45 joint.

NO.3



Slow Boat Brewery

Must-try burger: The Fryburger

The Fryburger's unique placement of a stack of french fries on top of the juicy beef patty have kept legions of foodies in utter adulation since it first arrived on Beijing's dining scene. Dressed with homemade aioli, and featuring buns which are light, sprinkled with sesame seeds, and delivered fresh daily, it also remains one of Beijing's best.

NO.4

NO.5

Home Plate BBQ

Must-try burger: The Ba-Donk Burger

This burger behemoth contains a beef patty, cheddar cheese, two slices of bacon, Home Plate's original sausage, pulled pork, barbecue beef brisket, jalapeños, onions, fried pickles, and barbecue sauce. It's the kind of burger which, should you choose to eat it for lunch, will require a significant afternoon nap.



The Local

Must-try burger: The Dry Rub Avocado Burger

Combining a unique blend of house salsa, slightly spicy dry rub, and of course, perfectly ripe avocado (sourced daily), The Local's signature Dry Rub Avocado Burger demonstrates just how delectable a burger can be when its condiments and toppings impeccably complement a 100 percent Australian beef patty.

NO.6

NO.7

Fatboy's The Burger Bar

Must-try burger: The Fat Basterd

With two huge beef patties topped with a fried egg, smoked bacon, cheddar cheese, and homemade barbecue sauce, the Fat Basterd is more than just an eyeful; it's a pipe-clogging mouthful. Additionally, their special sauce comes with a twist: eschewing the smoked hickory taste of typical barbecue sauce, theirs appeals to the Asian palate thanks to a tinge of chili.



Plan B

Must-try burger: Bronco Burger

Plan B's Bronco Burger is two freshly baked sesame seed buns loaded with two 200g beef patties, double cheese, crispy bacon, spicy jalapeños, and fried onions before being slathered in their sweet homemade Jack Daniels barbecue sauce. Be warned: you'll eat every morsel and then tempt gnawing on your fingers once they're suitably sticky.

NO.8

WHERE'S THE BEEF?

EXPLORING BEIJING'S BEST VEGETARIAN BURGERS

By Tautvile Daugelaite

"It tastes just like the real deal" isn't even a fair critique anymore, for many vegetarian brethren in the burger family are beginning to taste superior. While the beefy side of the moon rarely surprises in terms of ingredients, you can often find more creativity employed when it comes to constructing plant-based patties. Many are blended with vegetables, mushrooms, and grains from across the spectrum, which helps ward off potential veggie burger fatigue. Below are our favorite meat-free Beijing burgers.



Pulling-Me-Jack at Arrow Factory, RMB 65

No to take sides (except a helping of Arrow's chunky fries), but the vegan smoky pulled jackfruit burger on the bank of Liangma River might just be the king of all meatless burgers in the capital. Offering a texture that plant-based burgers often lack and paired with smoky notes, a toasted but soft bun, and crunchy slaw on the side, the Pulling-Me-Jack is worthy of all its praises.

Mighty 'Shroom Burger at Slow Boat, RMB 50

When we said all the vegetables and grains on the spectrum, we weren't kidding. Slow Boat brings buckwheat back from oblivion and pairs it with red beans, a mighty helping of ground shiitake mushrooms, a splash of cilantro aioli, and a dash of chili for an undulating burn. Squeezed between two freshly-baked vegan buns, Slow Boat's healthier alternative to their prize-winning meaty burgers has usurped their original tofu burger to become the craft brewery's prime veggie option.





Bajaja at Root Pop, RMB 45

Tempeh doesn't get nearly enough publicity and love in Beijing. Mostly banished to the shadier corners of Taobao, fermented soybeans can be a pretty tough sell to the uninitiated or less adventurous. However, tempeh is far more appetizing than it sounds, as proven by Root Pop's pairing with mushrooms and pickled peppers, and tortilla chips on the side. This all-vegan restaurant is a true gem for plant-based dining in Beijing (and well worth traveling to Shuangjing for).



The Hutong Hipster at Side Street, RMB 55

Out of the ashes of Ron Mexico rises what appears to be an even more successful enterprise and a new Dongcheng favorite for vegetarians: Side Street. Side Street's spin on Indian cuisine packs plenty of spicy notes and flavors and their cheekily titled (entirely vegan) Hutong Hipster burger is no exception. A patty of green peas, potatoes, and a generous pinch of spices are served in a pita for vegans or a buttered bun for vegetarians. Just don't be fooled by the innocent demeanor of the green chutney for it has an unexpected bite.

Little Monk's Burger at The Great Outdoors, RMB 45

What may be the most down-to-earth vegetarian burger in town is topped with a runny egg, tomato, and cheese, and is served alongside a portion of fries for a hearty meal for one. Pair it with a pint for a perfect pairing on the rooftop of one of Fangjia Hutong's last remaining warrior.





TAKE PAWS

A WALK AROUND BEIJING'S TOP DOG-FRIENDLY VENUES

By Tautvile Daugelaite

Few summertime pleasures come close to settling in on a rooftop, cold beverage in hand and wind in your hair. Add company from man's best friend and you've got yourself a time. That's why *the Beijinger* has teamed up with Penny's Food Studio to select the best of the city's best dog-friendly venues. Below are just a few of our favorite all-access spots for hangouts with our four-pawed pals.

4corners

4corners is the one that survived when so many others were shut down; great news for anyone looking to take a breather after a stroll around Houhai. Be it Vietnamese staples, cocktails, homemade kombucha, or lively storytelling nights, you can enjoy it all together with your pup at this hutong stalwart.

Jing-A Xingfucun Brewpub

Jing-A is not just for humans – dogs love it too. This is Jing-A Xingfucun Brewpub's inaugural summer and it's bound to be a favored escape from the encroaching heat. Drop by and cool off with a craft beer and a plate of meat off the grill, just don't share your bucket of spicy fries, regardless to their deliciousness.

Plan B

This Shuangjing burger spot welcomes puppies to its considerable outdoor seating area. Coupled with an extensive burger selection and daily deals, Plan B makes for a great spot to stuff your stomach, pup in tow.

Fella's

Dog owners out in Shunyi will want to head to Fella's for their idyllic terrace skirted by willow trees and a lake. Even if you don't live in the sticks this sports bar and family restaurant makes for a great summer outing and a setting worth the trek.

XL Bar & Restaurant

Praised for its down-to-earth atmosphere, XL Bar & Restaurant serves hearty burgers, sausages, and cocktails at reasonable prices. Often titled "the least pretentious place in Beijing" it is sure to become your top after-walk naughty dinner spot. Better yet, your dog doesn't have to wait outside while you gorge.

This is only a small fraction of Beijing's best dog-friendly venues. A full list can be found on Penny's official WeChat account by scanning the adjacent QR code.



Introducing the people who matter

MEET

DEVANDRA BANHART // GORDON MCMEEKIN // DAVID CANTALUPO



JUN 23 - HEDGEHOG

Beijing's long-running and much-beloved indie rock band Hedgehog head to Omni Space to release their ninth studio album, *Sound of Life Towards*, also rumored to be their last before an "indefinite hiatus." No matter what happens, the band will remain a voice for an entire generation of Chinese fans. 8.30pm. RMB 180, RMB 130 (advance). Omni Space

THE BEST ALBUMS OF 2018 SO FAR

With the arrival of 2018.5, the time is ripe to pause and take a look back at some of the best mainland Chinese albums to grace our ears thus far, releases that enraptured us and had our earworms wiggling in delight. Whether it was sun-soaked dream pop, blistering post-punk, electroacoustic meanderings, post-apocalyptic club bangers, middle-finger-flicking ska punk, or retrowave odysseys, there's a little something for anyone in need of a fresh summer jam.



Zafka - *The Abraham's Machine*

Zafka, aka Zhang Anding, is a Beijing-based sound artist, experimental musician, and "youth culture expert." His latest release, out of Shanghai's emerging play rec label, is buoyant with charm and sophistication. Despite

the dance floor-ready sounds which make up *The Abraham's Machine*, it's hardly a compilation of club bangers. Instead, it takes a remarkably restrained approach to riding each new flourish that comes its way with assured ease and playful splicing, like a modern day *Phantom of the Opera* put through a vaporwave prism.



Genome 6.66Mbp - *Self Salvation Compilation*

Genome 6.66Mbp, out of Shanghai, dabbles in a dark-minded, bombastic, artistically-elevating brand of electronica that is downright hypnotic.

They also made some serious headway in 2017 and to celebrate, put out this delicious compilation chock-full of 'forward-thinking weirdo club music' from an array of talent from China (Hyph11e, Dirty K, RVE, Khemist, and Charity) and abroad. Genome 6.66Mbp's music is both hauntingly mesmerizing and a firm reminder that the Chinese underground electronic scene is heading in exhilarating directions.



Lonely Leary - *Through the Park, Almost There*

Maybe Mars is having a hell of a year – besides the hotly anticipated debut from Beijing's Backspace, the independent label has overseen releases from street punk stalwarts Demerit and Chengdu post-punk trailblazers Hiperson. However, none have hit as hard as Lonely Leary's blistering debut – a down and dirty cesspool of paranoid angst, cool-headed melodies, jagged edges, and pummeling post-punk mania that perfectly captures the band's live raw energy.



Hedgehog - *Sound of Life Towards...*

Hedgehog, one of China's most influential indie rock bands, return with their first release in four years, and quite possibly their last. While far from being the band's most profound album, there's no denying their continued knack for crafting lyrically-rich, melody-driven indie rock anthems that speak to an entire generation. In many ways, their latest is an encapsulation of the band's many modes – from pop delights to grunge breakouts, enraged social critics, boisterous party animals, and for once, young adults who have found themselves on the other side of the mirror.



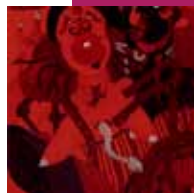
Zoogazer - *Zoogazer*

While shoegaze has been seeping into the nation's consciousness for quite some time, there's hasn't been a band to break through as boldly as Zoogazer has done with their full-length via Qiii Snacks Records. Hailing from Xuzhou, Jiangsu, the band has crafted a collection of infectious sun-drenched pop songs that reverberate with a heady scraping of noise bolstered by the crackling of youthful energy. This is dream pop to fall punch-drunk in love with.



Xie Yugang x Serge Teyssot-Gay - *A Nano World*

Xie Yugang, frontman of longstanding and globally admired Dalian post-rock group Wang Wen, teams up with renowned French guitarist Serge Teyssot-Gay for *A Nano World*, an ambient wonderland that captures the two virtuosos finding solace as they intertwine their musical visions and philosophies.



Fishdoll - *Noonsense*

Beijing-based singer-songwriter and producer Fishdoll mesmerizes on her new beautifully realized LP – a piece of old-school jazztronica layered to the tee with inebriating flourishes, a tribute to soulful trip-hop that's buoyant, lush, and rich with detail that plays out like a day trip to '90s era New York City through the lens of our increasingly globalized world. Put on Noonsense and what you get is a vibrant swirl of styles and grooves that overwhelms the senses and intoxicates.



Baishui - *Their Paradise*

The latest from the Sichuan-raised composer, multi-instrumentalist, and sound artist Baishui is a multi-faceted ambitious ensemble that finds the artist expanding upon his musical eccentricities all the while retaining and sharpening his intimate and affectionate signature. Originally intended to be a purely instrumental piece using analog synthesizers, the album slowly transformed into a spirited, kinetic, electroacoustic song-oriented album that finds the musician honing his singing chops with additional help from electronic musician Yao Chunyang and Chengdu singer Yuan Tian.



Pinboard - *Shock!*

Guangzhou ska-punk outfit Pinboard's beaming debut *Shock!* is infused with the charm and radiance that only Southern China can offer – a charged, bombastic, flailing stage dive into '80s/'90s-era punk rock that never lets up. That's to say, it's ridiculously fun. From the soundbites layered over the opening chords to the crisp and robust production, and the devil-may-cry attitude that propels each of the band members to lay it all out on each track, this is simply one of the best-sounding punk albums out there.



The Hormones - *The Hormones*

Amidst prominent lineup changes and their brush with mainstream stardom, it's a relief that The Hormones (lead singer Zhu Mengdie pictured opposite), the all-female indie rock band out of Chengdu, have managed to retain their edge. More of a relief is just how catchy the band's debut is – a tightly wound, expertly produced album of somber dance punk that finds the four-piece renewed with a newfound maturity.



GROOVY WISDOM

ESCAPE YOUR RUT WITH ALT-FOLK GURU
DEVENDRA BANHART

By Kyle Mullin

PHOTO: MOSES BERKSON

Feeling a little down? Fear not, because indie folk star and feel-good guru Devendra Banhart has plenty of sunny vibes and time-honored wisdom to hoist you out of the deepest of doldrums. Not only is the 36-year-old Houston troubadour's music indebted to the Flower Generation, his musings in interviews are famously trippy, idealistic, and ruefully groovy. Speaking to Banhart ahead of his Jun 9 gig at Yugong Yishan, he didn't disappoint, delivering self-deprecating non-sequiturs that morphed into inspirational palate whetters. Many of his answers were silly, others were surprisingly poignant. None were dull.

One review of your latest LP, 2016's *Ape In Pink Marble* says: "It's glorious that Banhart has found this high watermark plateau so far into his career, especially when you remember he was once in danger of becoming the one-time token hippy at the party? Do you agree that you were in a bit of a rut before that?"

Oh yeah! In a rut for sure, but a rut is a good place to be! It makes it easier to know which way to go. As the first tenant of Buddhism states, all life is suffering, and how you react to that suffering or how much you identify with it is all you can work on or work with.

The so called "rut" is really a perspective, a mental position. Ruts will always come. Do we resist them, or work with them? Do we work through them or let them consume us? It may not be the easiest path, but I say go through it! Just don't get too attached to regaining traction, because pretty soon you're off the rails again! That's just how the world game goes.

It's been two years since you released *Ape In Pink Marble*. Are you in the midst of a follow-up, and if so, what muses are currently inspiring you?

Yes, we are just beginning to record the new album. The hope is to record it all over California, beginning in the north and moving southward, then ending with one single overdub at a temple in Kyoto.

At the moment the biggest inspirations seem to be the birth of so many children in my life. All of my closest friends are bringing life into the world and it's so inspiring. Also, the news these days is right out of a chaohuan novel [a new Chinese literary genre that strives to capture the "ultra-unreal"]. So, that's bound to weave its way in there somehow ...

Way back in 2009 you told Pitchfork: "I've never recorded in a super controlled ... professional studio. I don't think it's respectful to exclude the rest of the

world. For example, I was recording a song for this last record and while I was playing a fly landed on my nose. That changed the cadence, the vibration, the emotiveness – the entire song. I want to be able to collaborate with the unknown." Do you still feel that way?

I certainly would never word it that way today; the "I don't think it's respectful to exclude the rest of the world," part in particular. It was an unskillful way of trying to make a case for total acoustic inclusion. But putting down the alternative never works! Ugh, how embarrassing!

Anyways, no, I don't think it's lame to record in a proper soundproofed studio. It's amazing actually! And I'm of both schools; it all depends on the song. Does this one call for open windows and the sounds of traffic, the sounds of the sea? Or does it call for total external silence and intimacy? The song determines the approach we take in the studio.

Was that fly landing on your nose the most distracting thing that ever happened while you were recording? Oh, I don't need any help getting distracted ... What was the question again?

You once famously sang: "From my cave to mygrave I guess I'll always be a child." Have you grown up since then?

I say this with a mixture of pride and horror, but I'm considerably less mature today than I was when I wrote those lines. At the time, I thought I was a genuine "grown-up" and so singing a song about feeling like a child was funny and ironic. Now that I've been an "adult" for some time I've noticed that the very few actual adults I've met have a lot more in common with kids than I would have ever imagined earlier on in my life. A sense of wonder and awe, respect for their fellows, intuition and insight – all rare flowers.

What aspects of your upbringing in Venezuela still impact your songwriting and artistry to this day?

For one, there is a love of nature, art, and poetry that is very much a part of Venezuela's cultural heritage. It's devastatingly sad, what's been happening there. And just when I think it can't possibly get worse, it does. I was just there, and it's a full-fledged military dictatorship. Total disregard for the suffering of the people. [President Nicolás] Maduro and Trump have a lot in common. But I have hope, and so do all the Venezuelans I know. A heartbroken open hope, but hope nonetheless.

Devendra Banhart will perform at Yugong Yishan on Jun 9. Tickets are RMB 180 advance and RMB 240 on the door.



GORDON McMEEKIN

HEAD BREWER AT WANGJING'S HISEWEL BREW-PUB

By Tracy Wang

A Drink With is a regular column in which we ask amazing Beijing personalities to tell us about their drinking habits and liquid preferences. This issue we speak to Gordon McMeekin, who started as a homebrewer, before landing jobs as head brewer at several breweries around China. He most recently worked with Wangjing's newest brewpub, Hisewel.

Could you tell us a bit about yourself, what brought you here and what was that like?

Scottish, 5'9", currently sporting a straggly ginger beard. I first came to Beijing to study for a year in '93, came back a couple of times for flying visits, then arrived last summer to make beer here ... the Northern Capital has changed a bit!

Who would you most like to go out drinking with?

Well, aside from just having a few drinks with a general assortment of convivial ne'er do wells, reprobates, and barflies my impossible evening would be with my father – who is now pushing up daisies – my brother, a few of the really good friends I've met at different stages of life and who are from all parts of the globe and would never otherwise meet. Throw in Dean Martin, Jim Morrison, John Wayne, Richard Burton, Marlene Dietrich, Flann O'Brien, and John Bonham, and it would undoubtedly be an interesting evening.

How old were you when you started drinking?

I started drinking about 15, brewing often rough but drinkable beer with my brother and friends in our little village on the Argyll coast of Scotland – you made your own fun there.

Tell us about the first time you were drunk.

Oh dear, that was bad, I still shudder a bit at the thought. I was still about 15, a few friends and I got a helpful fella to buy us a takeaway of beers and a bottle of vodka from the Sundowner bar in Dunoon. Then we went back to our den by the river and drank it all by a bonfire. I burnt my eyebrows off lighting the fire after my 'friend' poured a load of petrol on it when I wasn't looking. We all got staggering drunk, I went home with my friend to stay the night and as we got to his house his parents came back from the pub. We tried to pretend we weren't drunk and his mother went to the kitchen and prepared the post-pub fry-up. She put down a groaning plate of fried food for my friend's dad and asked if I wanted some. It was an instant "Can I do you a fry-up Go--?" accented with projectile

vomit through my fingers as I ran, hands clasped to mouth, heading for the toilet. Cleaning up was not fun either.

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

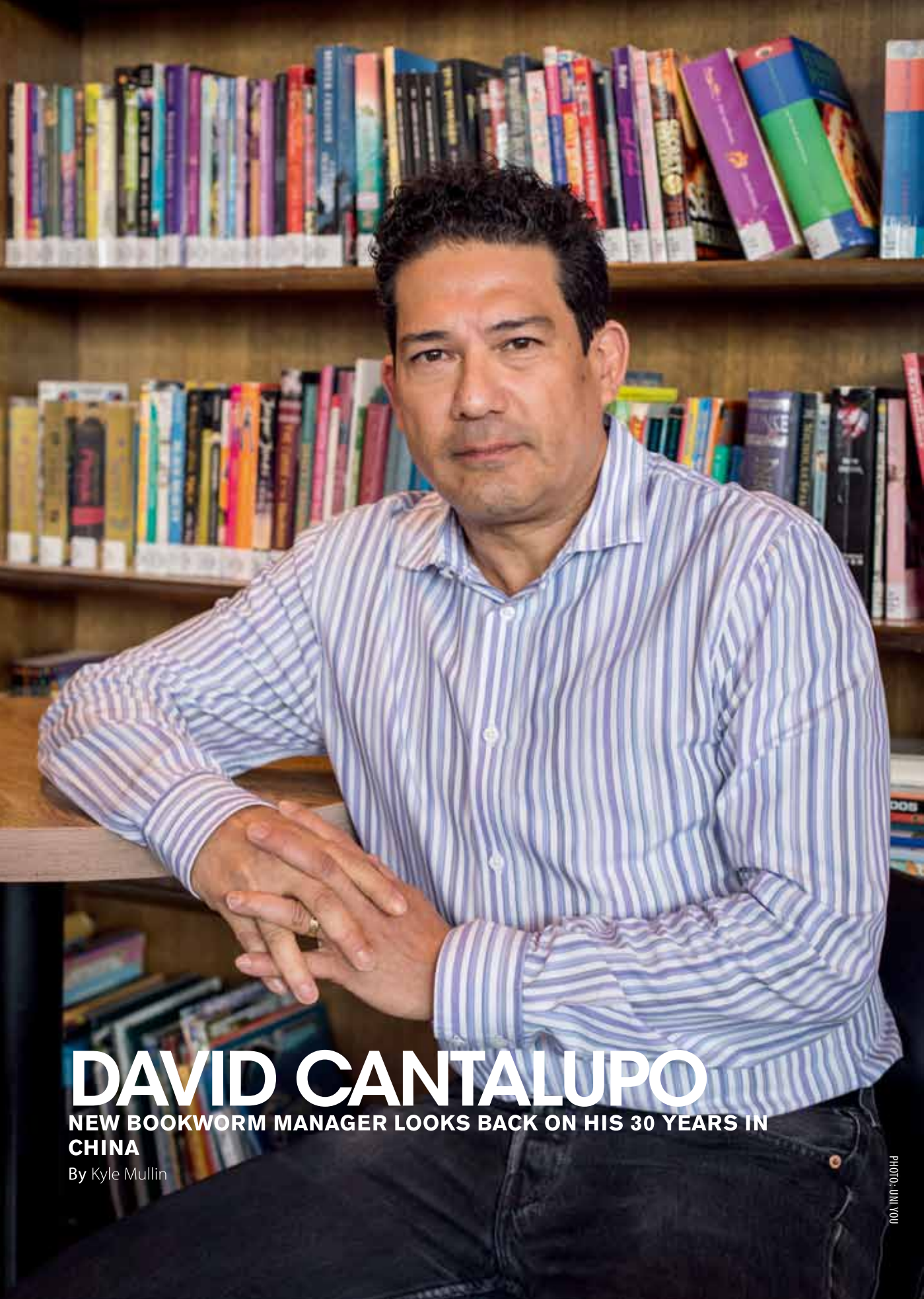
I went through a long cider phase. If you travel around the southwest of England it's difficult not to get a taste for good cider. I flit between bourbon and Scotch for hard liquor. Peaty Islay malts have been winning out for the last few years – a gorgeous tippie. But really, I'm a brewer and beer drinker, so it has to be beer and the clear winner is green-hopped Kentish cask ale. It's made with the freshest hops pulled off the vines at the optimum moment in the autumn, and brewers have them in the kettle the same day. In the hands of those wizards the result is sublime; gentle but distinctive fresh hop notes meld smoothly with a light malt background. Hand-pumped, it only lasts a few weeks and is best savored at a pub beer garden table on a sunny Kentish autumn evening – perfection.

What's your most outrageous drinking experience?

Jeez, I'm drinking as I answer these questions, should I really be honest about this? There have been a few but keeping things local: I ruined my chances of a diplomatic career by standing with my trousers round my ankles to illustrate an anecdote after helping myself to lots of free booze at the British Embassy Christmas party when I studied in Beijing back in the early '90s.

Which is the favorite of your beers, and what makes it special?

Right now it's my West Coast IPA. I love the way those folk over in the western states of the US have made a style of their own; you couldn't have drunk beer like that 20 years ago. An American sense of adventure and exploration with fantastic new hops, sitting wonderfully on a complementary malt base – it's a modern classic. I've tried to honor that with my West Coast IPA; new recipe, new brew wit. It's good and I enjoy every pint but I want it to be better, and it will be.



DAVID CANTALUPO

NEW BOOKWORM MANAGER LOOKS BACK ON HIS 30 YEARS IN CHINA

By Kyle Mullin

David Cantalupo hasn't been in Beijing so long as to have taken a slow boat to China, but he did in fact once take one back to the US. Decades before his current role as general manager of The Bookworm, and long before his pioneering stint as managing director in China for ESPN, Cantalupo recalls his typhoon-lashed trek as a toddler, where "My mother was sea sick in bed, and I was sitting on the floor playing with blocks that kept toppling over."

Cantalupo's father, a second generation Italian from New Jersey, was given a language aptitude test while serving in the US Air Force on account of the service's desperate need for Chinese translators. He scored high enough to be shipped off to Yale for an intensive course, then to Taiwan to listen in on communist Chinese radio communications.

Following his discharge, Cantalupo's father went back home to New Jersey and continued his Chinese studies at Seton Hall University, where he met his would-be wife, a Taiwanese national studying nursing, and the daughter of a high-ranking Kuomintang official who sent her "to be a backdoor to the US if Taiwan should fall." While the couple hit it off immediately and married quickly, things soured when Cantalupo's father lost enough of their savings at the horse track to drive Cantalupo's mother back to Taiwan, toddler in tow.

Thankfully, within a few years his father had sufficiently changed his gambling ways to prompt their return via stormy seas. Cantalupo spent his childhood in New Jersey until he turned 16, when the family took a year-long sabbatical back to Taipei and Cantalupo enrolled at a Chinese boarding school. Looking back, he says: "I failed everything, with the exception of English, which I did not get the highest grades in because it was all grammar-based. But it was an amazing year for me."

Cantalupo loved it so much that years later, while enrolled at Georgetown University, he asked his well-connected advisor to pull some strings until he landed an English teaching job at a university in Wuhan in 1986. He ventured to Beijing from there, staying at an RMB 8 per night youth hostel near Yongdingmen. "While all the other backpackers were heading out to the Great Wall, I'd put a stack of resumes and a sports jacket in the basket of a bicycle and ride off to look for work," Cantalupo recalls fondly.

During a decade stint at a Fortune 500 company, Cantalupo married his wife, a local Beijinger working in the film industry. Noticing the growing interest in

sports in China, at one point he told her: "'Sports isn't political, it's got a better future here.' Of course, I was totally wrong." Still, she indulged him and he snagged a gig at a marketing and media company and was successful enough there to prompt a headhunter from ESPN Star Sports to poach him in 2000. As much as he loved his five years at the broadcasting company, he says his higher-ups squandered a deal with the NBA, just as Yao Ming was on the rise. It was one of many snafus that prompted Cantalupo to move on.

During his (comparatively lucrative) glory days at ESPN, however, Cantalupo describes he helped his friend and fellow Old China Hand Alexandra Pearson turn her lending library into The Bookworm. At the time, Pearson had temporary setups at one Beijing pub after another like Le Petit Gourmand. While Cantalupo attended a book talk there, Cantalupo told her: "I'm a sports guy, I watch TV. But I like pretending that I'm well read, so I come for the fun stuff like book talks. Meanwhile, the bar that's housing you is selling me beer, and you're not getting a penny. Your business model is f**ked."

So Pearson scouted The Bookworm's location, while Cantalupo put up most of funds. Other investors included Peter Goff (a journalist and devotee of Pearson's private library who went on to become co-owner). It was an instant hit upon opening in 2005, so much so that Goff headed up new branches in Chengdu and Suzhou. Cantalupo calls Pearson "a visionary" when it came to events, especially the Literary Festival. But he says she grew disenchanted with the F&B side, especially as competition mounted in the ensuing years, which partially prompted eventual her departure. And, rather than continuing to split his time between the three locations, Goff gradually turned operations in Beijing over to Cantalupo last year.

"People want us to succeed, we just need to do a better job of addressing the changing market," Cantalupo says. That strategy involves plenty of book talks and other events like standup sets, along with a menu revamp and other flourishes, not to mention a bigger marketing push. The smash success of this year's Literary Festival, which skipped a year due to financial woes, certainly gives Bookworm Beijing promising momentum now that Cantalupo has taken the reins. As he puts it: "The potential here is fantastic." Just keep in mind that this new Bookworm manager might want to sometimes talk hoops over the classics.

BURGER OFF

By Andrew Killeen

A h, burgers. Burgers, burgers, burgers. There really is no subject more endlessly fascinating, is there? And having guzzled your way through a whole magazine dedicated to burgers, here you are at the last page, desperate for one last little fix of patty-related fun before you have to return to your dull, everyday world of love and music and beer and sunshine. Fear not! Rear View is here for you. We understand your raging burger needs, and will do literally anything to satisfy them. (Except that. We won't do that. And we're a little shocked that you even thought of it.)

Of course the absolutely hilarious thing about hamburgers is that they're not made of ham. The name comes from the city of Hamburg in Germany, just as frankfurters come from Frankfurt and contain no actual Franks, and KFC Zinger Burgers get their name from the little town of Schnabelknorpelzingerburg, in Lower Saxony.

The German language is said to have a word for everything. *Kummerspeck*, for example, literally "grief bacon," is the extra weight you put on through comfort eating after a breakup. *Handschuhschneeballwerfer*, meaning someone who wears gloves to a snowball fight, is a term for people who hurl abuse on the internet from behind the safety of anonymity. And *unmöglicherschmerzartikelpanikumwandlung* is the word for that thing where a journalist is given a few days to write a humorous piece on an impossibly dull topic, and so shamelessly changes the subject halfway through the article.

Chinese manages these complex ideas more elegantly, through *chengyu*, those four-character phrases which pack whole stories and fables into a handful of syllables.

Inspired by German ingenuity (like so many other Chinese products), we decided to suggest some new *chengyu* suitable to contemporary urban living.

早酒买憾 - *Zǎojiǔmǎihàn*

Waking up in the morning with a hangover, then remembering you bought something expensive and unnecessary on Taobao the night prior.

共车刹怖 - *Gòngchēshābù*

The feeling of terror experienced when you've just got up some speed on a Mobike and you realize neither of the brakes work.

吧门砖痛 - *Bāménzhuāntòng*

Arriving at your favorite bar to find the door has been bricked up.

错车梯怒 - *Cuòchētīnù*

Watching your train pull away while you're stuck behind somebody occupying the entire width of the escalator and ignoring all your attempts to get past them.

志汉堡乐 - *Zhìhànbǎolè*

The sense of joy experienced on picking up your favorite magazine and discovering this issue is all about burgers.

This will be the last Rear View. We are scuttling off to a city which is less overcrowded, toxic, and pushy than Beijing – which, let's face it, could be more or less anywhere. Thanks for all the messages of support, expressions of bewilderment, and snowballs hurled by gloved hands. *Màn zǒu.*

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