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BEIJING'S EMERGING COMMUNITIES
AND DIY SPIRIT





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ACHIEVED HONOR GRANDER PROSPECT

23 July 2018, Crowne Plaza Beijing Sun Palace, as a 5-star international hotel with unique Yunnan features has been opened for 10 years in town. A lavish celebration event was held at the hotel recently. Around 200 invited guests and media joined the event to celebrate the hotel 10th Anniversary.

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The most important upcoming dates

WHAT'S HAPPENING



AUG 11

Summer Wonderland 2018

From the bubbling wave pool to the intoxicating bubbly, there'll be no shortage of fun ways to cool off at this August's Summer Wonderland. The outdoor Gongti West bash should also be a scorcher for its line-up of popular local DJs like Freak Rabbits, Eva, Juliana Lima, and Sun Meng.

AUG 12

Mike Shinoda

A poignant gig for more reasons than one, Mike Shinoda comes to share his grief of losing bandmate and friend Chester Bennington last year with China's legions of Linkin Park fans at Xizhimen's Beijing Exhibition Center. The gig is part of a world tour behind Shinoda's debut solo EP *Post Traumatic*.



AUG 25

Vertical Run

Are you the kind of person that curses those who take the elevator two floors up? Well, then the China World Summit Wing Vertical Run may just be the answer to all that pent-up ire. Don't expect to be beating any records though given that the best can run up the 82 flights of stairs (2,041 steps) in as little as 10 minutes.

UNTIL SEP 2

The Art of Kizil Grottoes

M Woods presents two exhibitions revolving around a singular theme: the Buddhist grottoes of Kizil, Xinjiang, a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 2014. Representing 20 years of cumulative research, the collection consists of three murals originating from the earliest group of Buddhist grottoes in China as well as a selection of antiquities from the Silk Road.



Visit theBeijinger.com for even more events and details.

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

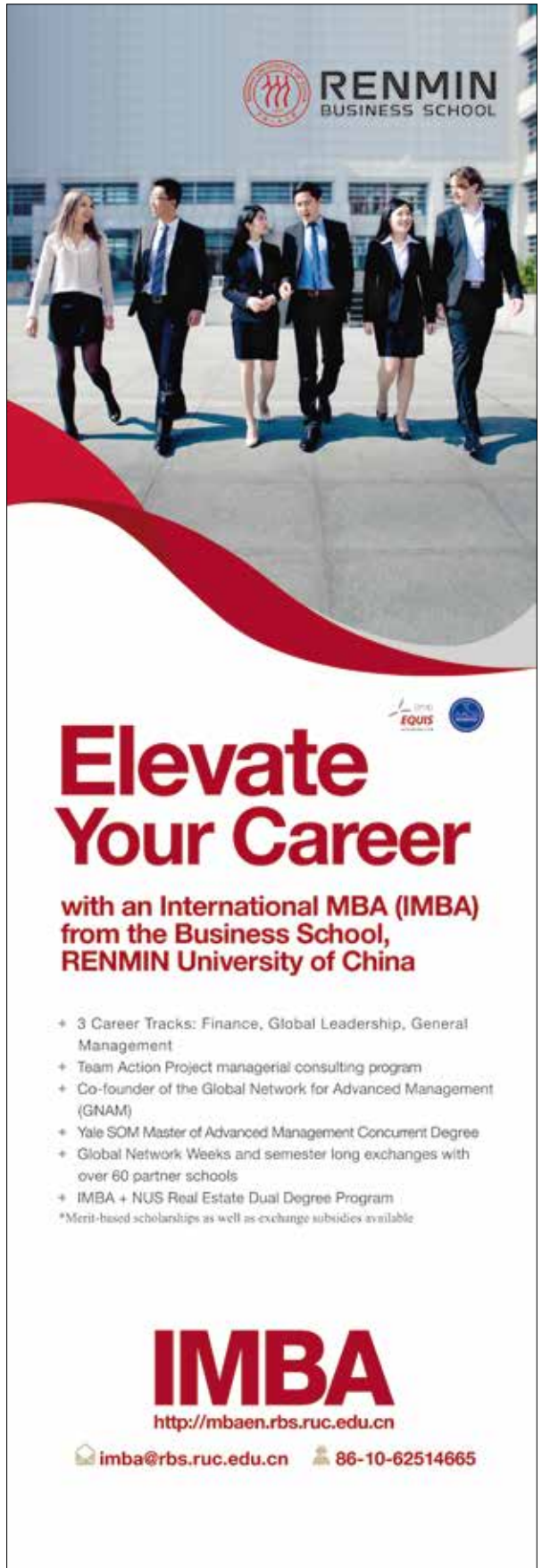
Where a person lives in Beijing often acts as short form for their personality. Wudaokou: student. Gulou: hipster. Sanlitun: epicurean/delinquent. Guomao: businessman. Shunyi: parent. Shuangjing: mall-dweller. And yet the minute you dig into each pocket of the capital's thriving communities, you'd be amazed how much is going on below the surface. That's why we've dedicated this issue to emerging scenes; groups of people with a common interest or circumstances that drive them to create and mould their own little corner in this behemoth city. Our mission led us to interview tattoo artists; F&B startups; DIY musicians; self-publishers; women's, LGBT, and minority groups; and actors masquerading as male prostitutes (well, we would have had they not only been active in the Qing dynasty).

Elsewhere in the issue, we travel to Fukuoka and Madagascar, speak with Beijing's longstanding musicians about the state of the scene as well as the incoming Wolf Alice, roundup the best convenience store coffees to avoid a serving of disappointment with your morning cuppa, and welcome two new columnists to the fray: Jeremiah Jenne for a bi-monthly dose of Capital Rant, and Artur Witkowski for a crib sheet to Beijing's weirder fads courtesy of Stunt 101.

Thank you for picking up the latest issue of *the Beijinger* – we hope that no matter which community you align with, we can open your eyes to the very best that this city has to offer.



Tom Arnstein
Managing Editor



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CITY SCENE

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



The number of disabled individuals in China as described in the 2006 National Sample Survey on Disability, only one of two to have ever been conducted in the country (the other taking place in 1987). Eighty-three million individuals equates to roughly 6.3 percent of the Chinese population, however, only 22 million people were certified as disabled by the China Disabled Persons' Federation (CDPF) in 2016, rendering millions unable to access a range of services offered by the government, which include living allowances, medical services, employment support, and tax breaks. Conditions are especially arduous in rural areas where three quarters of China's disabled population reside, often in poverty, surviving on as little as RMB 7 per day.

One positive change for China's entire disabled community was the introduction of more favorable terminology. Before 1990, people with disabilities were largely referred to as *canfei* 残废, literally "deficient" and "useless." Today a more neutral word has been introduced – *canji* 残疾 – which combines the words for "deficient" and "sickness," making for a closer approximation to disabled rather than crippled.

However, an alteration in people's lexicon and attitude is only the beginning and the disabled in China continue to face many challenges in their everyday lives. This is especially true of education, where a high score on the *gaokao* – China's competitive national college entrance exam – often guarantees a bright future but can be elusive for those in China with physical disabilities. China's top institutions are slowly starting to appreciate that disability does not necessarily mean an impediment to mental ability, which is why many commended Beijing's Tsinghua University when they accepted a disabled student from Gansu province in 2017, even providing him and his mother a free dorm room to live due to his unique circumstances.

China is taking steps towards improving the lives of the disabled but without a serious overhaul of the infrastructure that caters to the less-mobile, and a lowering of the standards for the China Disabled Persons Certificate, uncertified individuals will continue to be excluded from their local communities and exempt from the assistance they need.

PHOTO: CHINA PLUS

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



1. The Opening of the 2018 Beijing Burger Cup

Yes, July was predominantly dedicated to the seventh Burger Cup at *TBJ* HQ with 120 venues battling it out for the 2018 Best Burger Crown. In the end, it was Slow Boat that sailed to victory, trumping Q Mex's admirable fight with their crowd-pleasing Fryburger (read about this year's best burgers on p.32-33).

2. Lama Temple Neighborhood Soon to Be One With the Bricks?

The Great Brickening, which had already laid to waste vast stretches of hutongs and streets from Chaoyang to Haidian, raised its ugly head again to take the stretch of religious curio and souvenir shops surrounding the Lama Temple on Yonghegong Dajie.



3. How a Beijing Expat Overcame Her Health Scare to Start an Activewear Business

Burdensome depression. A tumor-like cyst. Anaphylaxis. That's only a few of the litany of health scares Stella Jiang was facing down last year before the Sweden-hailing Beijing expat turned her newfound vim and vigor into, *Bella Brawn*, which curates activewear for female patrons.

4. International Student Sues Ofo, Baidu After He Unexpectedly Shows Up in Their Advertisement

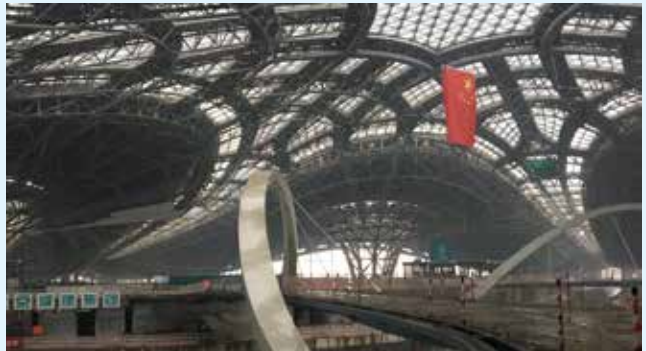
An international student from Saudi Arabia sued Chinese share-bike company Ofo and parent company Baidu for damages of RMB 300,000 after he discovered his image was being used without his knowledge to promote its "overseas strategy."



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

5. Here's a Sneak Peek at Beijing New Airport's Interior

Honeycomb windows, swooping arches, and a sprawling floorspace are some of the most striking features in photos released online of the new, yet-to-be-named Beijing Airport in Daxing District. The Zaha Hadid-designed airport will hold its first test run in October 2019 and looks to accommodate 620,000 flights per year.



6. Jing-A Confirms Permanent Closure of Their Sanlitun 1949 Venue

Only a month after news that Great Leap Brewing was forced to close their #12 brewpub, Jing-A, another behemoth in Beijing's beer scene, announced that their Sanlitun 1949 "The Hidden City" taproom had also met its permanent demise after being closed for a number of weeks.

7. Global Times Takes Aim at Baozza and De Refter for "Ridiculing" Chinese Culture With Fusion Food

The topic may have been steamed buns, but the result was straight-up beef. *Global Times* apparently has a bone to pick with Western spins on time-honored Chinese comfort food, lambasting brands like Baozza and De Refter for "ridiculing" both cultures gastronomic traditions "for the sake of a marketing gag for expats with little or no culinary background."



8. Summer Rains Again Bring Floods, Landslides to Beijing

Mid-July rains turned Beijing into a disaster zone as numerous floods and landslides appeared throughout the capital, causing citywide traffic chaos, canceled flights, and infrastructure damage. The rain caused a number of landslides in Beijing's northern suburbs, shutting down multiple roads and highways as well as cutting off electrical power to 2,000 residents in Miyun.

SCENE & HEARD

24/7 by Secoo Opening Party

Jul 6, The Crib. Photos courtesy of Jamie Zhang



Red, Blue, and Ru Independence Day Drag Party

Jul 4, Side Street. Photos courtesy of Side Street



Slow Boat's 2018 Burger Cup Win

Jul 9, Slow Boat Sanlitun Brewpub. Photos by Uni You



Wild Wasted Wet 5

Jun 2, Hotspring Leisure City. Courtesy of the organizers





BEIJING INKED

OUTLINING THE PROS AND CONS OF THE CAPITAL'S GROWING TATTOO SCENE

By Tom Arnstein

In a country whose government is frequently used as the archetype of unflinching control, the growing prevalence of conspicuous artistic self-expression provided by tattoos can often be unexpected. Yet China's tattoo scene, having now shaken free its stigma and association with the "lower class" and organized crime, has been blossoming at an unprecedented pace over the past decade, fuelling a lucrative trade for China's tapped-in youth but not one void of difficulties.

Speaking from Daybreak, a studio tucked away in the basement of an unassuming residential building near Chaoyang Joy City, American Anna Gale says that compared to the scene back home the biggest problem

here is the lack of regulation: "If you were in the Western world this [space] would be called a 'scratcher,' which means you never apprenticed, somebody taught you in a basement, and you're tattooing your friends for money without a license." Because no such practicing permit exists in China, the art form remains in legal limbo – not cracked down on at street level but not recognized as a legitimate profession either. Gale, who is currently three months into her apprenticeship, says that no regulation means no standards for training, qualifications, and perhaps most worryingly, hygiene, a major issue if say "you get an ankle tattoo in the hutong and have to go to the bathroom afterward."

Bateer, a young Inner Mongolian tattoo artist who co-opened his Qingmu Tattoo Studio in Chaowai Soho earlier this year echoes this point. He says that the lack of regulation means that “there is no way this industry will advance and achieve certain standards like there are in foreign countries,” adding that rather than a hindrance, a standardized assessment would weed out the con artists from the pros and inform purveyors and users alike “what it would take to operate a qualified tattoo studio.”

Another issue repeatedly raised by tattoo artists trying to make it in Beijing stems from the idea of originality. Credibility as a tattoo artist in the West largely relies on hard work, a solid business acumen, and most importantly, designing your own tattoos. However, copycats abound in a new scene like China’s, where people are willing to break the unwritten ethics of integrity either for a fast buck or because simply the weight of tradition here doesn’t bear down quite so heavy. One person who takes the idea of innovation very seriously is Jeanne Sun of Jeanne Tattoo (pictured opposite). A tattooist for 20 years, including 11 years in Europe, Jeanne has been working out of her Dada-adjacent shop for the past seven years and bemoans the Chinese clientele she often encounters, saying, “Almost 80 percent of people who come to me want to have something similar to someone else’s tattoo, their style, so I ask them: have you thought about the future? When a new style comes along, are you going to get your tattoo removed?” Rather than mindlessly repeating others creations, Jeanne states that it’s her mission “to help people to attain their dreams, kind of like a psychologist. People who want tattoos are people who kind of need something and I consider tattoos to be like therapy, a release.”

Part of this copy culture may also arise from the ways in which tattoo artists are taught. Josh Walden aka Black Rabbit Tattoos, who undertook his apprenticeship entirely in Chinese in Xi’an, says, “I feel China is much more orthodox – there is a sort of canon of artists, suitable tattoo themes, and locations and compositions that are studied during apprenticeship.” He adds, “Chinese artists are phenomenal and it is a shame they are not better known in the West but I would say people in the West are more apt to experiment radically with tattoo design,

pushing the boundaries of what has ever been done in the art form. That also means that you need clients bold and daring enough to get such creative new designs.”

The imitation mindset is perhaps unsurprising given that the rise of modern tattoo culture in China has largely been driven by the visibility of inked Chinese and foreign sports stars, musicians, and actors – the young, attractive, and successful. It can also be viewed positively given that it has opened up the trade to many who may not have considered getting inked previously. At certain times, however, emulation of these celebrities, or at least of their skin, by fans looking for the next big trend has gone too far in the eyes of the Communist Party. A falling out with the growing influence of hip-hop led the government in January to crack down on “low-taste content” on TV, a catchall term for vulgar themes, rap sensibilities, and tattoos. When I ask Sun what her opinion is on this, she laughs before jibes, “maybe just banning TV would be better.”



AMERICAN ANNA GALE WORKS ON DESIGNS AS PART OF HER SIXTH-MONTH APPRENTICESHIP

The speed at which China’s tattoo scene has grown may not have allowed for a coherent community, standards of practice, or a comprehensive understanding of tattoo culture to congeal fully thus far. However, the dissemination and acceptance of ideas via social media and a firm embrace of the form by both the mainstream and those looking for a new mode for expression means that one thing is certain: a whole new generation of Chinese has fallen for ink, and much like calligraphy that came before it, this one too is indelibly here to stay.



FROM MARGINALIZED

TO THRIVING

FUN AND INNOVATIVE DIY GROUPS FOR BEIJING'S DISENFRANCHISED COMMUNITIES

By Kyle Mullin

They may have been marginalized but they never despaired, instead, turning the strengths of their gender, race, and interests into a creative and cutting-edge product to be shared, a fun platform for Beijing's disenfranchised that eschews preachiness.

Russian DJs Aida Minibaeva and Ksenia Mineeva are the co-founders techNORules, a dance night that serves as a springboard for female turntable artisans in a male-dominated scene.

Meanwhile, Ugandan visual artist James Sserwadda has broken similar ground for persons of color by co-running the BlackEXPO group, exhibiting his Afro-punk paintings and coordinating art events around the city.

Finally, Martin Yang is an important voice for the capital's LGBT community via his roles at the Beijing Gender Health Education Institute (BGHEI), as director of China AIDS Walk, and for co-curating this July's LookOut Fest, which billed itself as the "first Chinese arts festival on gender."

As a means to highlight various educational and inclusive organizations active in Beijing, we brought these four together to share how they each bolster different demographics in their own unique way.

Led by Sserwadda and with the help of beats from techNORules, the group splashed a little paint as they shared details of their own and other helpful initiatives active in the capital.

PHOTOS: UNI YOU

James Sserwadda, Ugandan Afro-punk painter (Instagram: @jamessserwadda) and co-founder of BlackEXPO Beijing (www.blackexpobeijing.com)

Other groups empowering Beijing's African diaspora:

- BLK GEN: Celebrates the African diaspora in China through fine arts, performances, and other mediums. info@blkgen.com

- Opopo (One People One Purpose): Beijing-based media platform that highlights positive stories, to uplift and empower blacks everywhere. WeChat ID: gh_187a43139332, opopomag@gmail.com

- Kente and Silk (K&S): Enterprise that promotes African entrepreneurs in China and coordinates events like this past spring's Africa Week. WeChat ID: gh_b283bf326b43, www.focac.org/eng

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Aida Minibaeva and Ksenia Mineeva, Russian DJs and co-founders of the all-female DJ collective and dance night techNOrules (Facebook: techNorulesBJ)

Other groups empowering women in Beijing:

- NüVoices: Platform celebrating and supporting a wide array of China-themed works by female artists and creators. www.nuvoices.com, Twitter: @nvvoices

- Wǒ Men podcast: Female hosts Yajun Zhang and Jingjing Zhang delve into a variety of topics to tell the story of "modern China from the inside." www.womenpodcast.net

- Beijing Women's Network (BWN): Strives to offer affordable resources for the personal and professional development of its female members. WeChat: kwoksamantha, www.bwn.strikingly.com

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Martin Yang, Chinese co-curator of the LookOut Fest and sustainable development manager at Beijing Gender Health Education Institute (www.bghei.org)

Other groups empowering Beijing's LGBT community:

- The Beijing LGBT Centre: Nonprofit organization that entails support services, events (Dining Out for the Centre etc.), and coordinates advocacy programs for the capital's LGBT community. WeChat ID: bjlgbtcenter

- China AIDS Walk: Coordinates major annual fundraising walk along with smaller fundraising events for a myriad of AIDS related causes throughout the year. WeChat: ChinaAidsWalk

- Beijing's top LGBT-friendly food and drink businesses include Destination, Adam's, Red Dog, Straight Spirit, Herbal, Great Leap Brewing, La Social, Migas Mercado, Palms L.A. Kitchen, Side Street, and The Great Outdoors





STARTING FROM SCRATCH

TALES OF HUMBLE BEGINNINGS FROM BEIJING'S F&B SCENE

By Tracy Wang

People embedded in the food and beverage industry are no strangers to starting projects from scratch. However, that “from square one” work ethic can be both a daunting and exhilarating concept for anyone thinking about packing in the day job to open a restaurant or start an artisanal range. If you don’t want to repeat the rookie mistakes frequently depicted in a Gordon Ramsay reality show, read these tips from Beijing food and beverage insiders.

Mastering Mixology

If you’re active in Beijing’s F&B scene, it’s likely that you’ve already heard of Garth Wilson. This jack of all trades has been working in Beijing since 2009, most recently joining as co-owner at the reopened banh mi joint Rollbox. Wilson first visited the capital on his gap year in 2002 when he was 18 years old, and after returning to Australia for his undergrad and masters, spent nearly every holiday thereafter returning to Beijing for work and leisure.

So how did he get involved in F&B? “My parents are all fantastic cooks and apparently toddler Garth used to raid the spice cabinet to mix up ‘special drinks’ and stain every surface with turmeric,” he recalls. “As I got older, I progressed from ‘special drinks’ to desserts to full meals, then to getting a job in a restaurant and catering company when I was 14.” He worked in Chinese and Turkish restaurants throughout high school and well into university, and says that “working with non-English-speaking Chinese cooks all semester and visiting China

every holiday was a great way to stay ahead of my Chinese classes at uni.”

Upon settling here, Wilson spent his first few years working for Stephanie Rocard, original owner and bartender at Mao Mao Chong in Jiadaokou’s Banchang Hutong, one of the city’s pioneering cocktail bars for fusing Chinese ingredients with Western spirits and techniques. Speaking from experience, Wilson says, “I think the best tips are the same as those for anyone wanting to start a career in any creative industry. If your passion outweighs your experience, volunteer, write a blog, or do something else that demonstrates your passion, builds your experience, and builds your body of work.”

He also points out: “I’ve never had a job or started a project where I didn’t already know the boss, the staff, or the collaborators, or wasn’t introduced or recommended by a friend. So it’s really important to get to know people who share your passion and to help each other out.”

From French Michelin Star Restaurants to Beijing's Dinner Tables

Clement Rol, with the help of his business partners Thomas Salou and Edouard Simon, recently renovated and reopened the Courtyard 4 Belgian brasserie De Refter, dusting away the restaurant's cobwebs and updating the decor and menu for an altogether breezier venue.

Raised in a foodie family, Rol's F&B journey began at the age of seven when he started helping out his dad in their family restaurant. As Rol puts it, "the only way to see my dad was in the kitchen." At 14 years old, he was already busy working in restaurants, later enrolling in culinary school where he met his mentor Franck Renimel at the one-Michelin-starred Restaurant En Marge in Aureville in France, learning a wealth of culinary knowledge.

What tips would Rol give to F&B hopefuls? "Don't do it!" he jokes before advising upstarts that "if during your first month you don't feel passionate, if you don't want to learn, don't do it. Whatever you choose to do, you have to put 100 percent effort into it. Also, your brain is like a library; everything you learn is like adding books to the collection."



Craft Sausages on the Rise

Ah, sausages, the encased meat treasured the world over. For a prime example of the transcontinental appeal of these plump, juicy wares, you need to look no further than Beijing's Salsicceria Italiana Craft Sausages. Started by two Italians, Augusto Papetti and Michele Fosci, who first came to Beijing as exchange students in 2009, Salsicceria Italiana began in April of last year after the duo was unable to find a suitable retail space due to Beijing's strict industry regulations.

Only requiring space for production and shipment, the duo got to using tried and tested family recipes to create their sausages, taking great care to source high-quality meat from domestic distributors to ensure as authentic a final product as possible. At first, they would go to the meat market every day at dawn but now they have a reliable wholesale source to provide fresh pork, chicken, and lamb.

Within six months, the team had found a suitable venue – opening what is now Republic near Workers' Stadium last December – though that process certainly wasn't easy either. In the early days, Papetti and Fosci struggled to deal with the unending paperwork involved in the restaurant racket, and before long hired an agent to save them the trouble. What else did they learn on the road to setting up Republic? "Don't be afraid of taking risks, and try to be creative and ensure the best quality of your products," Papetti advises. Try the fruits of their labor yourself by visiting Republic or savoring their raw products, delivered straight to your door (WeChat ID: spasella).





DO IT YOURSELF SOUNDS

A GUIDE TO CHINA'S INDEPENDENT AND SMALL-RUN RECORD LABELS

By Will Griffith

While streaming music over Xiami and splurging a couple hundred renminbi to see that electro-punk act that lost their edge years ago doesn't exactly scream DIY, dig deeper into China's music scene and you'll find an assortment of goodies perfect for those looking to keep it real. Over the past several years, there has been a resurgence in small music labels catering to folks with a penchant for burrowing into do-it-yourself aesthetics and underground sounds. Below, we've selected some of our favorites; a starter kit to DIY music labels in China, if you will.

Qiii Snacks Records

Qiii Snacks Records out of Guangzhou has been at the forefront of southern China's blossoming indie music scene since 2015, providing a sonic outlet for various previously disconnected scenes across the region. Armed with a strong online and offline presence and a DIY spirit that spans cassettes, lathe-cut vinyl, and zines, they have by far one of the best track records out there. Qiii's releases mostly focus on math rock, emo, and other city pop sounds, outings that have seen them collaborate with other DIY labels such as Shengjian Records in Shanghai, Petit Alp Records in Taiwan, and most recently Lost State Records/Pacific Nature Records in the US. www.qiiisnacksrecords.bandcamp.com



PHOTOS: WILL GRIFFITH, COURTESY OF THE LABELS

Zoomin' Night

Even though the weekly experimental series Zoomin' Night – a breeding ground for many of Beijing's offbeat artists – came to an end in 2015 with the closure of live music venue XP, the team behind the project, most notably Zhu Wenbo and Zhao Cong (her 卡拉OK, 我 is pictured right), have continued to showcase the city's contemporary experimental scene via their cassette label. Mostly composed of live recordings from bedrooms and DIY events around town, it in many ways acts as an archive for the underground experimental community here and further afield. www.zoominnight.bandcamp.com



Genjing Records

Genjing Records, the side project of Maybe Mars Records' COO Nevin Domer, is considered by many the OG of DIY vinyl labels in China, with over 50 releases (including the Birdstriking and Die! Die! Die! split from last year, pictured right) since its humble beginnings in 2010. In many ways, Genjing has paved the way for other labels looking to get in on the vinyl resurgence, including bigger hitters Maybe Mars and Modern Sky. Genjing's DIY ethos can most recently be felt in their string of 7-inch split releases from Beijing-based fastcore outfit Struggle Session (with Domer on bass). www.genjingrecords.bandcamp.com



Boring Productions

Boring Productions, the Shenzhen label with an affinity for C86 pop sounds, is the brainchild of musician and singer of indie pop outfit Atta Girl – a patron of 'bedroom pop' whose array of 7-inch and cassette releases provide a vital stomping ground for China's reverb-drenched dream pop and shoegaze scene. Their two most recent releases, from Chengdu's *Sound & Fury* (pictured left) and Shenzhen's *Thin City*, are perhaps their strongest yet and have put them on dream pop geeks' radars the world over. www.boringproductions.bandcamp.com

Space Fruity Records

With Beijing venue casualties left and right, Fruityspace continues to fill in as a safe haven for Beijing's burgeoning experimental and makeshift music scene with screenings, vinyl events, and showcases featuring everything from 'clapping' to 'sheet metal' music. Now, Zhai Ruixin the venue's owner, looks to make something solid out of those nebulous sounds via the launch of his own label Space Fruity. The label primarily emphasizes psychedelic noisemakers within China today, including Hangzhou drifters Dophy Kick Bebop who just launched their debut cassette release via the imprint complete with their own screen-print T-shirts. www.spacefruityrecords.bandcamp.com

Nasty Wizard Recordings

Nasty Wizard Recordings, the Beijing-based and self-described "international sect of occult sound practitioners" have been indulging in the dark arts of analog formats for over four years, using obsolete mediums as a way to tap into a community of musicians in China and pairing them off with likeminded artists around the world. While their primary vessel of choice is cassette, they most recently put out a VHS compilation featuring obscure electronic artists from across Asia, and are already giddily talking about the next frontier – a revival of the mighty minidisc. www.nastywizardrecordings.bandcamp.com

Other DIY labels to keep an eye out for include the globe-spanning digital label Seippelabel; the Shanghai-based Shengjian Records, who have been forging alliances with numerous Chinese indie pop bands; Wuhan-based Wild Records; and the France-based WV Sorcerer Records, who continue to provide tastemakers abroad with a direct line to China's principal avant-garde acts.

GOING TO PRINT

SELF-CENSORSHIP AND EXPRESSION BATTLE IT OUT IN BEIJING'S BOOMING DIY PUBLISHING SCENE

By GJ Cabrera

In the current climate of print media, publishers around the world are having to evolve in order to meet the demands and constraints of a dwindling trade. However, the challenges in mainland China stretch even further given that the sector is dominated by the state and its myriad of censorship mechanisms, imposing themselves as an implacable external force as well as a nuanced and in-built self-censoring apparatus.

Despite this, the showing of dynamic and, in many cases, self-sustained artists, designers, and illustrators at this year's abC Art Book Fair was a testament to the old adage "when one door closes, another opens." Also evident was the fact that China's publishing landscape is abundant with critical magazines, fanzines, comics, essays, compilations, art books, and photo books, displaying a

diverse and varied aesthetic approach.

Indie publishing is not a singular feat of the local scenario; just as is happening in many other places, China is experiencing a high tide for art publications, visual production, and discourse. Best of all, it's a growing and eclectic scene that signals new directions for the future of art distribution in the region.

The DIY publishing scene in China is best viewed as a diverse ecosystem defined by indie takes on 'proper' publications through curation, design, and a printing quality. Examples of glossier titles are Jiazazhi's (假杂志) and Same Paper's projects, both of which use their indie status to navigate the murky waters of local publishing, often exhibiting content that would have readers in even more liberal-leaning countries blush.



GOODS ON SALE AT FRUTYSPACE'S ZINE AND RECORD CUBBIE ZIUREN



The former is a Ningbo-based photo book platform that started out in 2009, and boasts a number of beautiful titles under its belt, such as Matjaz Tancic's award-winning portraits of Anhui peasants in *Timekeepers*. The latter is a Shanghai-based studio founded back in 2013 by photographer Yuan Xiaopeng and graphic designer Wang Yijun, which has so far produced close to 10 publications and a magazine which bears the name of its bookstore, Closing Ceremony, and takes a street photography bent.

Sitting at the further end of the DIY scale, here in Beijing we have the indie publishing venture Ziuren, a book space tucked away in music and events venue Fruityspace. Overseen by Cao Di, the store is home to international and local photo, illustration, and drawing books: "One copy for each book, we never restock," he states. Ziuren was also a way for Cao to get back to the essentials: "I felt I needed absolute freedom to make my books ... I just do my books the way I like." The store also eschews having an online presence, instead seeking to revive the old bookshop spirit.

Just like Ziuren, many of these publishing endeavors are self-sustained by the artists, illustrators, and designers who make them. That means it's a scene that largely depends on the creators' abilities to invest money and time with the hopes that they may later make a connection with readers down the line. This makes it a platform open to anyone willing to put a little cash and time to bring their passion project to life.

Two cases that illustrate that latent opportunity are the publications borne by Xi'an artist Zhao Haoyang and photographer and designer Hong Shiliu from Kunming (whose *恋爱之战* is pictured above).

Both artists self-publish their works from start to finish, which Zhao considers a "valuable learning curve" that allows him greater independence in general. The pair agree that they benefit from a level of freedom in content that government-approved presses would never grant.

However, Zhao notes that people in the business of self-publication still observe some level of self-censorship. That being said, Zhao and Hong are quick to point out that it's not that they outright disregard the idea of working with a publisher, it's just that they're content with how things are, making full use of various online platforms like



social media and Weidian as well as face-to-face events to promote and sell their works.

As for where's best to have works printed, options vary depending on budget and proximity; some people use stores on Taobao, others small print shops or larger outlets like Qianbaihua (千百画数码快印). Better yet, opt for printing companies with online platforms, such as QL-ART ([www.ql-art.com/wap](http://www ql-art.com/wap)).

What Beijing's rich indie publishing scene tells us is that an idea and some pocket money is all you need to get involved. As Zhao Haoyang says when we ask him about what advice he'd give someone looking to plunge into this art: "Just start by doing things. Print dirt-cheap on copy paper. Try and test. Rinse and repeat. Save on production costs until it's ready. Present it in the most imaginable and achievable way possible, and voila!"



SMILES FROM BEHIND A CURTAIN

THE WORLD OF MALE PROSTITUTION IN IMPERIAL BEIJING

By Jeremiah Jenne

The area south of Qianmen Gate was once known for its brothels, and in the late 19th century the most popular attractions were not always the fragrant female courtesans imported from China's south, but young – and sometimes not so young – men often referred to as *xianggong* 相公. The term could mean “gentleman,” or an old-fashioned way for a wife to address her husband, but it was also a play on words, a loose homophone for “*xiang guniang*” 像姑娘, or “as like a woman.” South of Liulichang, near where the Liufangqiao Metro Stop is today, was Hanjiatan, now known as Hanjia Hutong. Along with Shaanxi Hutong, Hanjiatan was famous for its proximity to the best theaters, the finest opera stages, and, of course, the most refined and comely actors.

For men of refinement, the theater was a venue of culture but also an erotic space. Patrons in particular focused

their obsessions on the actors – almost always male – who played the *dan* 旦, or lead female role in the performance. The *dan* became objects of desire and connoisseurship. Actors were encouraged to smile coquettishly at theatergoers and to mingle with more elite members of the audience who sat in curtained boxes or at tables.

The charged atmosphere of the theater was captured in this popular song from the early 19th century, translated by the historian Wu Cuncun:

*“There is no place as thrilling as the upstairs stalls,
Those fellows look like they have money to spend.
A single smile from behind the curtain,
They won't begrudge the thousand spent on the best table.”*

There existed an implicit understanding of the theater, and its performers, as sex workers. It was even assumed in legal cases. Matthew Sommer, who has done extensive research on gender, sexuality, and the law in the Qing era,

PHOTOS: UNIYOU

describes a case from 1824 in which two men attacked and raped an actor named Wang Ke'er and one of his fellow performers. Ordinarily, the two attackers would have been sentenced to strangulation for the crime of "forcible sodomy," but the provincial governor overruled his officials, arguing that Wang and the other victim, actors who portrayed female roles onstage, could not be treated as men of good character and so commuted the attackers' sentence to 100 blows of heavy bamboo.

Historian and sexologist Robert van Gulik once argued that under Manchu rule, China forgot that sex was fun. Bret Hinch, author of *Passions of the Cut Sleeve: The Male Homosexual Tradition in China*, has claimed that the Manchus were particularly intolerant of homosexuality and that the Qing era represented a departure from the more open and tolerant attitudes of dynasties past. But while the Manchus, at least at first, were eager to contrast their frontier rectitude with what they perceived as the dangerously effete sexual decadence of their Ming predecessors, by the late 19th and early 20th centuries, some of the most enthusiastic patrons of Bada Hutong's brothel culture – and especially male brothels – were members of the imperial family.

Following the fall of the Qing Dynasty, modernizers in the government of the new Republic of China and in the city of Beijing began to issue regulations which they hoped would curtail the brothels and theaters. Some of these regulations specifically target the theaters of the Dashilar area, including this police notice translated by Wu Cuncun:

"It has become clear that several houses in Han Clan Pool and Wailang Camp have been using opera as a means of luring young boys from decent families, then dressing them up and training them to sing. Initially, this was only a form of cultural gathering, but over time it has become a den of all manner of foulness. Over the generations this has become a peculiar feature of the Beijing cultural landscape, sullyng the nation's reputation and attracting the derision of foreign nations.

To be referred to as "the likeness of a woman" is completely contrary to human nature."

Despite the efforts of the Republican-era Beijing city authorities to destroy the culture of male prostitution in Beijing, the trade continued into the mid-20th century when even more puritanical (at least outwardly) and energetic politicians in the post-1949 era would employ drastic measures which pushed most prostitution – male and female – deep into the shadows for the next few decades.

Today, the street names and even some of the buildings remain in the hutongs east of Qianmen (pictured opposite and below). It is no longer a lively red light district, but the floating world of Beijing's theaters and brothels live on in the stories of an earlier, perhaps more tolerant, era in the city's history.



THE AREA SOUTH OF QIANMEN IS RICH
WITH REMNANTS OF BEIJING'S PAST

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

FOOD & DRINK

WOODSTAGE // THEFIVE // AOYAMA LAB // TIBET PROV GOV // FINDERS KEEPERS



TRAVEL THE GLOBE WITH N'JOY'S WORLDLY EATS

Nuo Hotel's N'Joy restaurant is tinkering to make its menu as worldly and seasonably fresh as possible, calling on the help from chefs from China, India, Greece, Syria, and more, who make use of seasonal ingredients from their various home countries. If you want to sample the best before they hit the menu proper, Sundays serve as a sneak preview for soon to be launched à la carte dishes like the New Zealand coastal lamb chop with scallops (pictured above), adding to their already heaving weekend brunch buffet offerings. N'Joy, Nuo Hotel Beijing, 2A Jiangtai Lu (5926 8888)

PHOTO COURTESY OF NUO HOTEL BEIJING

NIBBLES AND SIPS

Now that the sweltering summer is upon us, we're left screaming for either light and healthy food or a cold glass of something alcoholic.

In the former category, Obentos have recently launched a new breakfast menu, including health-giving options like scrambled eggs with kale and fruity smoothie bowls. Our favorite is the Okayu congee (RMB 22) – a Japanese-style rice porridge – with its combination of brown rice, avocado, shredded carrot, kale, shiitake mushrooms, ginger, sesame seeds, and onion, all topped off with a poached egg.

Speaking of breakfast, Rollbox is also now open daily from 8am. Expect fried egg rolls with or without bacon (RMB 35 and 25, respectively), cheese toasties (RMB 30), and coffees and teas, with more planned for the future.

Also in International Wonderland, Beijing bar scene veteran Jeff Ji's latest project, Mai Steakhouse, is up and running. Sharing the same space as Parlor before 10pm, the restaurant serves a simple steakhouse menu with a selection of cuts, including Australian rib-eye, foie gras and black pepper steak (RMB 178), blue cheese filet mignon (RMB 168), and their signature indulgence: homemade beef wellington (RMB 288).

In Shunyi, California-style restaurant Napa announced that they had to close their new restaurant "due to strategic and operational disagreements with our landlord," as described owner Andrew Hsu via WeChat. We reviewed the restaurant just a couple of months ago, praising their creative dishes such as sambuca mussels and clams and *mapo* burrata pizza.

As for openings, Seattle coffee giant Starbucks christened its biggest flagship store in China at the end of June in the Qianmen area. The three-story café occupies 1,040 square meters and is home to a Starbucks Reserve, Teavana, and – if you do fancy a drink – a bar serving cocktails with a caffeinated twist.

Finally, look for Pachakutiq, the innovative Peruvian restaurant that made a major splash with its pop-ups at Sanlitun Soho last year and China Central Mall before that, to re-launch in the same Xinyuanli complex that houses Bottega and Q Mex Taqueria in August. The addition of a little extra spice should cement the building's reputation as one of Beijing's top grub go-tos.



Joe's
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NO. 6 WEST GONGTI RD

¥134 on Monday
Rib Eye Steak (400g)

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Boston Lobster - MUST make reservation

50RMB on Wednesday
Joe's Signature Beef Burger

¥84 on Thursday
Live Brown Crab - MUST make reservation

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4:00pm - 10:00pm Mon - Sun
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Tsingtao 15 Beck's 20 Carlsberg 20



DE REFTER
BEER & BAO

**MODERN BRASSERIE
WITH A BELGIAN TWIST**

WOODSTAGE

DONGCHENG'S CHAI-ED FAVORITES FIND NEW LIFE AT JOY CITY

Daily, 10am-10pm. B1, Joy City, 101 Chaoyang Beilu, Chaoyang District

朝阳区朝阳北路101号负一层

It's no secret that the crackdown on Beijing's streetside businesses over the past 18 months has coincided with a boom in mall dining. But we've yet to see such a pointed example of what Beijing's F&B future may hold than Chaoyang Joy City's new Woodstage cafeteria, coordinated by the same team that started the Woodstock of Eating festivals throughout Beijing. The upscale food court is outfitted with kiosks by long-beloved businesses like Ramo, Palms L.A. Kitchen, Cannon's, Soloist Coffee, The Orchid Hotel's restaurant Toast, and more.

Now, we know what you're thinking: Fangjia diehards who frequented Ramo, or Palms fans that mourned the closure of its hutong location earlier this year, may find little consolation in spiffed-up mall renditions (and depending on convenience are likely to opt for their proper restaurants at Lido and Sanyuanqiao, respectively). But on the flip side, we can't deny that Beijing malls would be far better served by local businesses rather than generic chains, and tempting as it is to pine for the Beijing of yore, anywhere that can fix our hankering for tacos is a win in our book.

Even better, the outcome is not as offensive as you might expect. Christian Jensen, co-founder of Palms L.A. Kitchen, says "I'm especially pleased that, in creating Woodstage, Woodstock has left out corporates entirely – it feels like

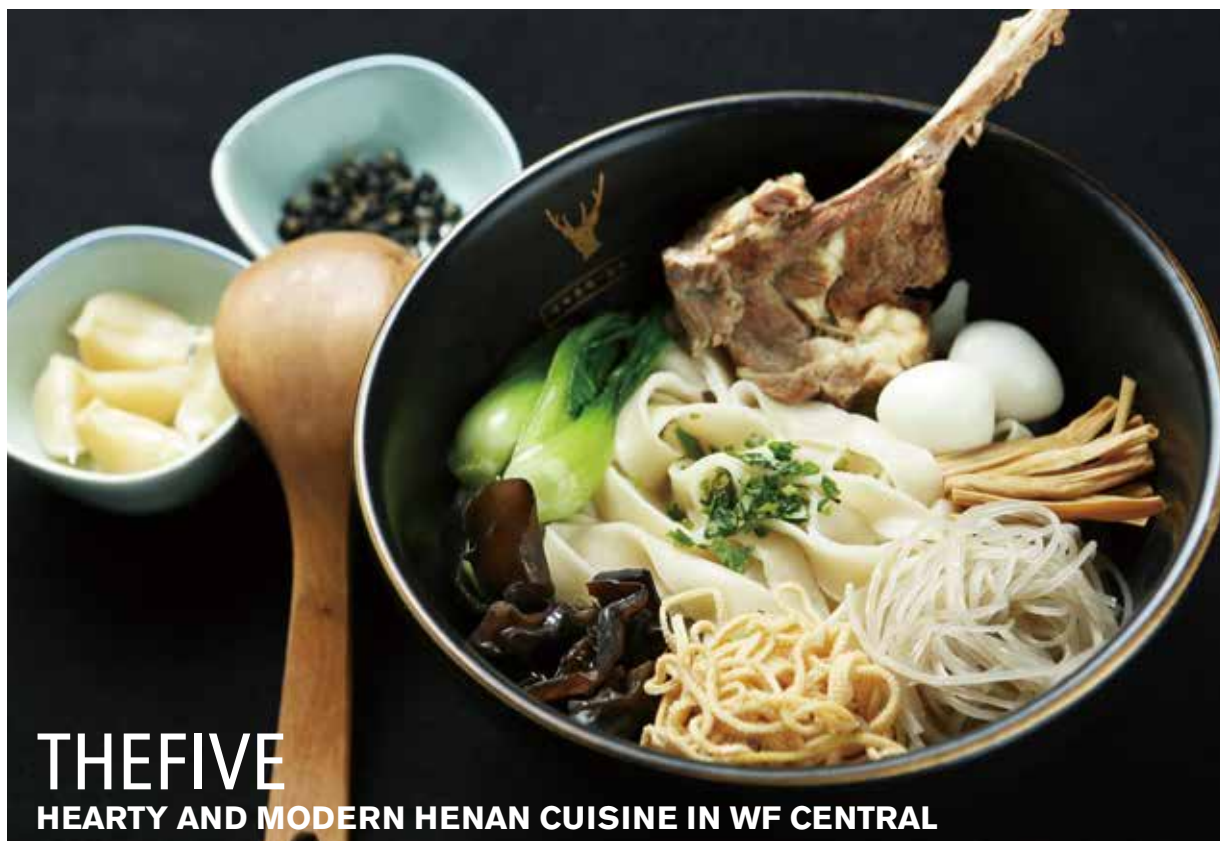
the authentic Beijing I fell in love with." It also looks the part thanks to a striking and curvy, slate-gray entryway, and a beacon of light for the shopping-weary in the form of a Soloist coffee kiosk, arguably the most famous of Beijing's fancy bean purveyors.

Foreign food fans will especially enjoy the far end of this food court, where Ramo sells pizza by the slice, Cannon's flips burgers, Palm's L.A. Kitchen pile up Mexican snacks in their spinoff Taco Stop, and Toast blends hummus-centric Middle Eastern options. Though many of the counters have fewer options than their sit-down counterparts, Ramo's pizza, Taco Stop's tacos, and Soloist's coffee were every bit as satisfying as what we'd wolfed down at their original locations, making for a gratifying pit stop before you waded into the unending onslaught of shops above.

Overall, we envision good things for this souped-up food court, despite how much we begrudge the way it came to be. And if more Beijing shopping complexes adopt this model, with streetside businesses making the leap to follow Beijing's forced trends instead of being crushed by them, then the capital's F&B outlook may at least look a little brighter than when Palms and Ramo were both forced to shutter their original venues mere months ago. *Kyle Mullin*



PHOTO: UNI YOU



THEFIVE

HEARTY AND MODERN HENAN CUISINE IN WF CENTRAL

Mon-Fri 11am-9.30pm, Sat-Sun 10.30am-10pm. 401B, 4/F, WF Central, 269 Wangfujing Dajie, Dongcheng District (8620 2401)

伍中原食堂：北京市东城区王府井大街269号王府中环商场4层401B

Ever since its official opening in May, the shiny WF Central mall has been gradually building its reputation as a foodie haven, in no small part due to the well-respected Western eats at The Cheesecake Factory, Tiago, and Tribe. As big as those names are, one of the mall's newest additions, Henan eatery TheFive, has won a point for shoppers wanting quality Chinese food and willing to spend a little more cash than they would at street level.

Why "the five"? Simply enough, it's a nod to the five basic sensations of taste: sweet, sour, bitter, salty, and umami, and specializes in Henan-style street eats as its conduit for those flavors. Prime example: the steamed vegetable cake (RMB 38), which is essentially a tower of orange, white, and green thanks to a combination shredded potato, carrot, and crown daisy, amounting to a humble but tasty starter that projects TheFive's grounded intentions. Additionally, the *xiaolongbao* (RMB 22 for four) feature skins that are almost thin enough to see through and come oozing with a delicious, piping-hot broth that is savory without being too greasy.

However, the lamb *huimian* (烩面, RMB 48), or lamb rock

broth noodles, is the star of the menu. It features regular thick-cut and sweet potato glass noodles, quail eggs, tofu, *mu'er*, bok choy, and a single tender and succulent lamb rib. All that is served in a rich milky broth that is simmered with lamb bones, pork ribs, and 20 varieties of herbs for over four hours. This heartwarming staple is ubiquitous in Henan, and comes paired with chopped cilantro, chili sauce, and preserved garlic to help the subtler flavors of the soup pop.

As for drinks, we recommend sipping on the Maojian green tea from Xinyang, Henan (RMB 5 per person) or the creamed peach blossom clovershrub tea (RMB 26), for its delicate flavors and calming qualities. If it's something with a little more bite that you're after, grab a 150ml bottle of Zhengzhou-distilled Dukang *baijiu* (RMB 68).

Overall, TheFive's modern reproductions of Henan favorites against a chic vibe, warm lighting, and modern use of traditional Henan flourishes (cyan tiles and cane baskets enliven the space) make it an easy choice if you're looking for a more local meal than its WF Central rivals can provide.

Tracy Wang

EVEREST RESTAURANT

ACCOMPLISHED PLATEAU DISHES MAKE TIBET'S PROV GOV A WINNER

Daily 10am-10pm. B1, Everest Hotel, 149 Gulou Xidajie, Dongcheng District (6401 8822)

东城区鼓楼西大街149号珠穆朗玛宾馆B1楼(近西藏驻京办)

Keen followers of Prov Gov will share our disappointment of having to skip two entries – Taiwan (it's complicated) and Tianjin (it's closed) – in our mission to dissect every government-mandated Beijing provincial restaurant. But pay no mind, as the gap has drawn us up and away to the Roof of the World and despite our tempered expectations of finding legit Tibetan food this far from its native land, the Gulou Xidajie-located "Everest Restaurant's" take on the plateau classics was largely triumphant.

The hotel lobby holds no surprises and largely conforms to what we've now come to expect from these outings: plexiglass plinths filled with ethnic knick-knacks surround a lone guard who ushers diners down into the underground restaurant where, if you're lucky, you'll be met with shrieks of excitement at the mere sight of paying clientele. The dining room itself is clean and tastefully decorated with pink wallpaper, photos of Tibet, and gold-plated, jewel-encrusted yak skulls. It was also completely empty.

As with many Tibetan restaurants around China, the menu is largely padded out with Sichuan food (the fuwuyuan also appear to be from Tibet's neighboring province). However, a local delicacies section will keep you on the right path,

sampling barley-heavy staples and mutton and yak-based mains. However, there are some vegetable dishes too: the sponge gourd tips with marinated walnut (RMB 28) is garlicky, fresh, and addictive for a lick of chili oil and a gratifying chewiness from the fibrous vine. The assorted boiled Tibetan vegetables (RMB 38) is less enticing, with ginkgo nuts, broccoli, mushrooms, kidney beans, and ginseng making for an incongruous if not exotic combo.

Skip the gamy yak tongue (RMB 68) and head straight for the mains. Prime example: the hunger-demolishing plate of stewed lamb with potato (RMB 128). Its chunks of meat are coated in a rich sauce that nods towards spices used south of the Himalayas in nearby India and Nepal. The steamed yak meat dumplings (RMB 48) are bigger than your average *jiaozi* and bursting with buttery yak meat. Finish with a palate-cleansing and creamy yogurt topped with ginseng and marvel at the insipidness of Tibet's local Green Barley beer (hops be damned!).

Rather than just relying on its unconventional fare, Tibet's Prov Gov proves how friendly staff, a largely adept menu, and a little decoration can make up for an otherwise official nixing of all discernible atmosphere. *Tom Arnstein*



PHOTO: UNI YOU

ASIAN-INSPIRED SALADS



Beijing's muggy summer season is now in full swing, and that means we're struggling to eat anything more substantial than a couple of salad leaves. Luckily, the capital is chock-full of enough greenery options that even if you ate one for breakfast, lunch, and dinner you'd be hard-pressed to get bored. While we like a Caesar salad as much as the next person, recently we've been enjoying our leafy greens with a bit of an Asian flavor – somehow they just feel that much more summery.

Thai-inspired steak salad - Element Fresh, RMB 95

Element fresh can always be relied on to come up with creative salad combos and their new summer menu is no exception. If you're stuck in Beijing for the summer dreaming of a week on a beach in Thailand then this is the salad for you, with its combination of steak, pineapple, and spicy soy sauce dressing. A sprinkle of peanuts and fried onions gives it a distinctly Thai feel.

Keto salmon salad - Obentos, RMB 78

We've always appreciated Obentos' unique brand of Japanese-inspired healthy cuisine, particularly their salads. Our pick of the bunch is the low-carb keto salmon salad, which manages to be healthy without feeling in any way depriving. The grilled salmon is served over avocado, broccoli, edamame beans, and radishes, topped with salmon roe and crunchy almonds for textural contrast. The Japanese element shines in the tangy soy based ponzu dressing, which cuts through the richness of the salmon.

Grilled tofu and mushroom bowl - Rollbox, RMB 48

Rollbox call this a banh mi bowl but we like to think of it as a salad anyway. Some of the banh mi elements are there – pickled carrots and daikon, lettuce, bean sprouts – along with umami-rich grilled oyster mushrooms and marinated tofu. A rich satay-style peanut dressing adds the perfect final flourish. Try it on Monday evening when vegetarian and vegan dishes are 20 percent off.



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AOYAMA LAB

WHERE SWEETS ARE SERVED IN PETRI DISHES

Daily 10am-10pm. SLG38-2, B1, Sanlitun Taikooli South, Chaoyang District (5718 0155)

青山研究所：朝阳区三里屯南区地下一层SLG38-2

Let's be clear, the newly opened Aoyama Lab is not a hospital inpatient unit even though it may look like one. Puke-green walls? Check. Shelves stacked with microscopes? Yep. Staff dressed in white lab coats? Uh-huh. It's enough to make you feel like someone might whisk you away at any moment to perform surgery rather than serve you Japanese-style desserts.

Thankfully, once you have settled in and sampled the quality sweets on offer, any initial dread gives way to the realization that this quirky dessert shop is cutesy over cut-y. Marble tables, mint green sofas, golden metal chairs, and even pale pink blankets fill the space for a sleek décor reminiscent of the team's first venture, He Cong He Chu Lai. That initial venue opened at Sanlitun Beilu to an almost instant fanbase, before relocating to Courtyard 4, where it remains. Cash-strapped sugar-fiends will be happy to hear that this new shop is significantly cheaper, amounting to around RMB 75 per person instead of RMB 140. Sadly, that reduction comes at a price.

The menu features a handful of cream filled choux pastries (all at RMB 42), Aoyama rolls (the Japanese equivalent of a Swiss roll, RMB 38), and two kinds of mille crepe (RMB 78). The Thai tea choux (RMB 42) was less

successful as a dessert than it was at being eye candy, in part because the gimmick of a glass petri dish plate got the better of it. Despite the choux being covered with a crimson layer of Thai black tea-tinged whipped cream, it proved extremely dry and left us to signaling a nearby nurse for water. Meanwhile, the salty cheese Aoyama roll (RMB 38), despite featuring a lush cream cheese and whipped cream filling, was not fluffy enough to counteract its delightfully dense insides.

As for the drinks, The Dance in Austral (RMB 32) is a ruby-brown and subtly sugary milk tea served in a glass bottle with moreishly chewy bubbles. However, the Just a Moment rooibos grape tea proved to be an odd marriage that, like most unpromising matrimonies, failed. That's because its overly sweet and fruity grape flavor masked the rooibos notes entirely and half was left to be disposed of properly.

All in all, the desserts at Aoyama strike a decidedly middling note and the hospital-esque atmosphere is a theatrical device that we'd rather not encounter again until the time comes, ideally having binged on wholesome cake. *Tracy Wang*



PHOTO: TRACY WANG



FINDERS KEEPERS

VINTAGE VIBES AND COLORFUL COCKTAILS FROM A D LOUNGE AND Q BAR VET

Mon-Sun 7pm-2am (closed Tue). Rm 112, 1/F, Bldg 10, Xindong Road (6419 9118)
 新东路逸盛阁10号楼一层112室

Having honed his skills at some of Beijing's most well-known and long-running bars like D Lounge, Q Bar, and Lush, bartender Yang Yang now opens a Sanlitun spot to call his own. Tucked in the courtyard of an apartment complex on Xindong Lu, his Finders Keepers cocktail lounge is not only memorable for its drinks menu but also its neat throwback vibe.

That atmosphere is comprised of plump vintage leather chairs, tastefully lit chandeliers, and a showroom out front with aged kitchenware, knick-knack boxes, and bold post-impressionist paintings that match the color scheme of the door frames and walls (hence the "Finders Keepers Antiques" street-side sign). Yang Yang's fashion sense suits the occasion, and by that I mean he dons some of the most dapper colored, and even floral, three-pieces of any bartender in Beijing's already impressively dressed cocktail-making set.

The drinks follow suit, coming in eye-popping shades with billowing floral or hefty fruit garnishes. Let's just say if you're looking for a spot to liven up your social media stream, then Finders Keepers will more than do the trick.

But does the substance match the style? Thankfully yes, and then some. The cocktail menu sports a list of seasonal options that go above and beyond the typical "Ho-hum, let's make a Negroni with a negligible twist" mentality that far too many Beijing bartenders deem adequate once they're spent their budget on cheeky

decor. Aside from his creative streak, Yang Yang's drinks also taste great, balancing flavors in complex and refreshing combinations, though that does put them at the pricier end of the spectrum. The RMB 95 Spring Awakening, for instance, features passion fruit infused vodka, vanilla, sugar syrup, lime juice, and ginger ale for a lively summer mix that'll stave off the heat and get you gently buzzed. The quirkier RMB 100 You're One In a Melon is made using gin infused with butterfly pea flower (an earthy ingredient often found in herbal teas) coriander, fresh lemon, watermelon juice, a splash of beer, and pickled watermelon, amounting to a mix that's so flowery and fruity that it's the gustatory equivalent of being transported to a quaint rural getaway. Somewhat gruffer, boozier alternatives include the RMB 95 Tai Mang (featuring tequila, fresh mango, grand mariner, lime juice, and jasmine tea syrup) and the Take a Break (also RMB 95, made with banana pardon leaf-infused bourbon, cynar, saluted Stour Beer syrup, and chocolate bitters).

That being said, even those options are relatively sweet and dainty when compared to the burlier drinks found at Bungalow Tiki, Fang Bar, or whiskey-leaning lounges. Nevertheless, cocktail enthusiasts looking for breezy and offbeat options, along with elegant digs to impress on a date night, will enjoy the charm that Finders Keepers has to offer. *Kyle Mullin*



BEIJING'S BEST BURGERS OF 2018, ACCORDING TO YOU

By Robynne Tindall

As the dust settles on another hard-fought Burger Cup, what we're left with is a ketchup-stained wardrobe, an expanding gut, the slight waxy sensation of cheese in our mouths, and a much clearer idea who you, the great Beijing public, consider to have the best burgers in the city.

This was a year of upsets and closely fought battles that eventually saw two-time champions Slow Boat claim back their crown from last year's winners, Q Mex. Though it was newcomers Side Street, only open since January, who put on perhaps the most impressive performance of the competition with a seemingly effortless climb through the ranks to take third place.

We certainly won't blame you if you don't have it in you to chomp your way through all 120 of this year's competitors but you'll want, at the very least, to make these top-rated burgers a priority.



No. 1: Slow Boat Brewery and Taproom

Must-try burger: The Fryburger served with a pickle (RMB 58)
The Fryburger's unique placement of a stack of beer-battered french fries on top of a juicy 100 percent beef patty keeps legions of foodies in utter adulation. Dressed with homemade "ayi-oli" and buns that are light, sprinkled with sesame seeds, and delivered fresh daily, the Fryburger has cemented Slow Boat's reputation as having Beijing's Best Burger for the third time running.

No. 2: Great Leap Brewing

Must-try burger: Cheeseburger served with french fries (RMB 65)
After five straight years in the Final Four, Great Leap showed that the loss of their busy #12 Brewpub hadn't affected them in the slightest, surging to their best performance ever. With a recipe written by top-notch chef Kin Hong (of Taco Bar fame), there's little wonder why their 100 percent Australian beef burgers have been such a hit with pub-grub lovers.



No. 3: Side Street

Must-try burger: Cholo burger served with house potatoes and pickle wedge (RMB 85)
This year's newcomer Side Street had one of the most impressive runs in Burger Cup history when it knocked 2017 champ Q Mex to fourth place. Their taste-bud-tickling cholo burger is a combination of spicy beef patty, chorizo, avocado, blue cheese, mozzarella cheese, house sauce, pan-fried green peppers, and tortilla strips.

No. 4: Q Mex

Must-try burger: Double burger served with potato wedges and coleslaw (RMB 68)
Last year's winners Q Mex faced strong competition from both established favorites and runaway newcomers this year, finishing a very respectable fourth. Their range of creative burgers, some with a topical Tex-Mex twist, keep the menu fresh but it's the double burger that keeps us coming back.



No. 5: The Local

Must-try burger: Classic cheeseburger served with French fries or sweet potato fries (RMB 68)
The Local continues their annual rise up the rankings, moving up from sixth to fifth place. Their all-American classic cheeseburger is an exercise in the power of restraint, featuring a 100 percent imported beef patty, American cheese, lettuce and tomato, and shoestring onions.

SERPENTINE PAVILION

MULTIFUNCTIONAL CONCEPT SPACE LEAVES LONDON FOR THE FIRST TIME

Open for scheduled events. WF Central (west courtyard), 269 Wangfujing Street, Dongcheng District

东城区王府井大街269号王府中环（西侧广场）

Originally founded in 2000, the Serpentine Pavilion has been a mainstay of central London's Hyde Park and was conceived as a means to bring light to architects yet to have completed buildings elsewhere in England. The project also emphasizes interaction, and with the arrival of each summer, a new structure is unveiled that is free for the public to visit, explore, and co-opt for its three-month existence. The project's name comes from the nearby Serpentine Lake – itself created on the behest of Queen Caroline in 1730 – and has previously been headed by such renowned architects as Zaha Hadid, Rem Koolhaas, and Ai Weiwei. Now, for the first time in its 18-year history, the Serpentine Pavilion has flown British shores and landed in the central outdoor courtyard of Wangfujing's WF Central.

Beijing's rendition, open until the end of October, was overseen by Chengdu's Liu Jiakun, an architect most notable for his hometown's sprawling and partly elevated West Village project, a labyrinthine collection of public parks, basketball courts, and alcoves for mahjong, chess, or simply an afternoon chat. In that regard, Liu's buildings, which stresses the modest ebb of daily life through functionality, makes him the perfect candidate for this practice in utilitarianism.

The Pavilion itself reflects Liu's previous work with concrete and iron, making for a modest but powerful overarching wave constructed from 38 metal hook-like beams that are connected and embossed with industrial-grade bolts. Tension is created by metal cables that pull each bow-like arch taut, giving a muscular kineticism to the otherwise stark base of steel girders and concrete slabs. The result is a partially enclosed edifice that feels like it may catapult skyward at any moment.

Though compelling and refreshing in its simplicity and the rejection of the gaudiness of its surroundings, the project's true potential lies in the events that it will play home to in the coming months. In that regard, the (poorly publicized) schedule has yet to live up to its original London-based counterpart. So far, only a smattering of musical performances, panel talks, and film showings have graced the stage, and upon the day of our visit, the planned talk had the bad fortune of coinciding with a rare Beijing shower, forcing the proceedings to move inside to WF Central making for a suitably British affair. Let's hope that as the summer draws on, the Pavilion's mission for community enrichment can reach its true potential, opening the way for similar projects in the capital in the future. *Tom Arnstein*



PHOTO COURTESY OF WF CENTRAL

GO

FUKUOKA // CAPITAL RANT // CONVENIENCE STORE COFFEES // CIRQUE DU SOLEIL



AUG 24-30 - KINKY BOOTS

Having won every major Best Musical award (including a Tony for Cyndi Lauper's score) in its five-year run, Broadway's Kinky Boots now heads to Beijing's Tianqiao Theater for two weeks of drag, singing, dancing, and of course, more thigh-high boots than you can shake a stick at. Based on the unlikely true story of a factory owner who takes an entertainer up on her harebrained scheme to go into the stiletto trade, the musical has won accolades around the world for its big heart and larger than life production. RMB 180-1,080. Matinee 2pm, evening 7.30pm. Beijing Tianqiao Theater

FUKUOKA

BEACHES, SHRINES, AND RAMEN AWAIT AT THE GATEWAY TO KYUSHU

By Robynne Tindall



More relaxed than Tokyo and less touristy than Kyoto, Fukuoka is the perfect destination for a quick city break, especially for those who have already visited the aforementioned destinations. Located on the northwestern coast of Kyushu island, it is made up of two former towns – Hakata and Fukuoka castle town (now known as Tenjin) – divided by the Naka-gawa and which were merged in 1889. As a result, you'll see references to both names around the city; for example, it's Fukuoka airport but Hakata station. Air China flies daily to Fukuoka via Dalian. Note that although this is billed as a direct flight on one flight code, you'll need to disembark in Dalian and go through passport control (this does have the advantage of being much quieter than Beijing).

What to do

Fukuoka may be better-known for its food and shopping but there is plenty to keep you occupied if that's not your thing. The Gion area just north of Hakata station

is home to a number of pretty Buddhist and Shinto shrines and temples, including Kushida Shrine, said to have been founded in 757. Kushida Shrine is famous for being the starting point of the Hakata Gion Yamakasa, a five-day festival in July where the city's residents race 10-meter-tall floats through the streets. If you want to learn more about the history of Fukuoka, Hakata Machiya Furusato-kan is a recreation of a Hakata neighborhood from the Meiji era spread over three traditional townhouses. Finally, if you want to experience a bit of Fukuoka's coastal lifestyle, Momochi Beach is a pleasant seaside escape within striking distance of Tenjin.

What to eat

Fukuoka is the home of Hakata ramen, famed for its rich, milk pork bone tonkotsu broth and thin, resilient noodles. If you have ever eaten at a branch of Ippudo or Ichiran, both of which have flagship stores in Fukuoka, then you have tried this style of ramen. A good place to



try tonkotsu ramen, as well other styles from across Japan, is Ramen Stadium in Canal City, which boasts a regularly-rotated selection of eight different famous ramen outlets. Alternatively, another place to eat this Japanese staple is at a *yatai* – mobile street stalls that pop up around the city after dark. Most do not have English menus but many do display their ingredients or specialties in a glass case for easy pointing. They also make for a good place to try one of Fukuoka's other delicacies, spicy salted cod roe (*mentaiko*), often served rolled up inside a Japanese-style omelet (*tamagoyaki*).

Where to stay

If you are planning to travel around Kyushu and use the JR Lines, then it's best to stay near Hakata station, while if you're looking to indulge in nightlife and shopping Tenjin is your best bet. In the former, the brand new Nest Hotel Hakata Station offers clean, well-proportioned rooms just a few minutes from the station and also within a

10-minute walk of Canal City. In the latter, Candeo Hotel Fukuoka Tenjin boasts pleasant alfresco onsen baths on the roof. Whether you choose to stay in Hakata or Tenjin, both are connected to the airport by the subway.

Further afield

As Kyushu's transport hub, Fukuoka makes a great base to explore the rest of the island, including a number of excellent day trips within a 30-minute train ride. Dazaifu, accessible on the Nishitetsu Tenjin-Omuta Line from Tenjin station, is home to the beautiful Dazaifu Tenmangu Shrine, dedicated to a Shinto deity of learning, making it a popular pilgrimage spot for students from around Japan. Twenty minutes away from Hakata Station, Nanzo-in is a huge Buddhist temple complex with numerous shrines and chapels scattered across a tranquil hillside. The centerpiece of the temple is the giant statue of a reclining Buddha, said to be the largest bronze statue in the world.

MADAGASCAR

MEETING KING JULIEN AMID UNRIVALED NATURAL BEAUTY AND BEACHES

By Margaux Schreurs

For us Beijingers, finding somewhere to meet a friend traveling from Europe can be a challenge. After all, where can you meet that is approximately halfway between each, affordable to travel to, and is exciting enough to enrapture both?

That for us meant taking a step out of our comfort zone – not quite halfway, but almost equidistant – and heading to Madagascar to meet King Julien. What we hadn't expected was just how blown away we'd be by the island's spectacular nature and its gracious people. And yes, it was even better than the film, but no, we did not find any penguins.

If you've been gifted a long break, it's recommended to spend time on the main island of Madagascar, visiting its many national parks so as to take in the flora and fauna. However, if time is an issue, traveling by car can be challenging due to poor road conditions and therefore it's best to fly to Nosy Be direct. The island is situated off the northwest of the main island and packed with similar sights: thick jungles, lemurs, lizards, turtles, and stunning natural views, as well as wide-ranging marine life. Ethiopian Airlines flights from Beijing to Nosy Be go via Addis Ababa. Alternatively, fly via South Africa with South African Airways, or Nairobi with Kenyan Airways.



Nosy Be

As the most popular destination in northern Madagascar, Nosy Be is home to a range of hotels fit for all budgets and makes for a great place to start your exploration. Long-stretching white-sand beaches make for wonderful swimming and sunbathing spots and tour operators offer scuba and snorkeling trips. July to October is the best time to visit if you want to catch the humpback whales and whale sharks as they migrate from the Arctic to warmer waters in order to breed and calve. However, this also marks high season and you should budget accordingly.

On land, a visit to Lokobe Nature Special Reserve will get you accustomed to much of the island's wildlife, including lemurs, birds, snakes, geckos, and chameleons, among many other reptiles. It's worth asking around at your hotel to secure a knowledgeable guide, as you're likely to miss many of the animals without a trained eye, or you may even get lost.

Nosy Komba

Venturing beyond Nosy Be, Nosy Komba, literally "Island of Lemurs," is a mere 20-minute speedboat ride away. Though there's no electricity past what your hotel's solar-powered grid can suck up, the forced break from hectic day-to-day life makes for peace and quiet and the perfect opportunity re-connect with nature. The stretches of pristine beaches don't hurt either.

One side of the island has a lemur reserve, where you'll be able to come eye to eye with King Julien. The ring-tailed lemurs' adorable snort gives their presence away as they stare down from the treetops with their beady little eyes. By now, they're used to people passing through and are not easily scared off (you may even become their personal chauffeur).

Beachside, if you hire a kayak and paddle out, chances are that you'll spot dolphins swimming and playing. It's also possible to spot sea turtles just under the crystal-clear water, or when they come up for air. Though for the proper sea turtle and snorkeling experience, take a day trip to nearby Nosy Tanikely.

Nosy Tanikely

Nosy Tanikely is a small island with a volcanic islet as well as a marine protected area due to its incredible



NINETY PERCENT OF MADAGASCAR'S WILDLIFE CANNOT BE FOUND ANYWHERE ELSE IN THE WORLD

ecological wealth. Explore its natural bounty by walking along the beaches or volcanic rock, and by snorkeling. Very few tourists come to these waters, and a short hike to the top of the hill and its lighthouse offers great views of the island. On your way up, you'll be joined by more adorable lemurs too.

Given that 90 percent of Madagascar's wildlife cannot be found anywhere else in the world, there will be animals you've never seen before around Nosy Tanikely, regardless of how many times you've been snorkeling. In one two-hour-long snorkeling trip, we swam alongside multiple sea turtles, which paid us no mind as they leisurely scoured the coral and seabed for food. You'll also be dazzled by coral, reef fish – including the colorful clownfish and angelfish – and stingrays if you're lucky.

Swimming slightly further from the beach, the fish grow substantially in size, and include breathtaking barramundi and barracuda. Even if you don't manage to spot the dolphins, dip your ears underwater to hear their calls; a sound to remember this incredibly ecologically rich part of the world by.

MAKE SOME NOISE

THE VISIBLE AND NOT-SO-VISIBLE DANGERS OF BEIJING'S PERPETUAL DIN

By Jeremiah Jenne

// Noise pollution is a relative thing. In a city, it's a jet plane taking off. In a monastery, it's a pen that scratches."
– Robert Orben

"Bring the Noise." – Chuck D

I've heard monks chanting their prayers in a monastery on the Tibetan plateau, listened to elderly Beijingers singing joyously in a park on a Sunday morning, and caught the cry of an eagle flying majestically over the Mongolian steppe. But on my death bed, I swear the most powerful sonic memory from my years in China will be that of a drill reverberating through walls and floors and burrowing its way into the reptilian part of my brain. You know the part. It's the primordial core of the central nervous system, the one which occasionally enjoys crafting elaborate and baroque revenge fantasies against feckless neighbors in the middle of a home renovation project.

I get that I may be a little sensitive to noise. I grew up surrounded by trees in a small semi-rural community tucked in the far northeast corner of the United States. When I moved to Beijing it was, except for a couple of

semesters spent studying in Singapore, the first time I had lived in a major city. It is entirely possible that I would have just as many complaints about noise had I settled in Boston or Berlin as in Beijing.

Or maybe not.

Noise pollution is a problem around the world but it is a particular issue here in China. Based on noise pollution data collected by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2017, two of the top five noisiest cities were found to be in China. Beijing took the bronze behind Cairo and top offender Guangzhou. (Let's – silently – pour one out for our Pearl River Delta comrades ...)

A rough survey of friends – both expatriate and Chinese – similarly suggests that I'm not alone in being bothered by noise pollution. Car horns, bike alarms, construction sites, the ubiquity of Kenny G's "Going Home", were all cited as examples of gratuitous noise



in our fair city. But nothing seems to trigger rage quite like the keening malevolence of the hand-held power drill. Few among us have been spared that sound. The unlucky few have had to endure it for weeks – sometimes even months – on end.

There are signs that things may be improving, but like many aspects of life in the Northern Capital it depends a bit on where you live. A few years ago, we moved to a reasonably upscale apartment building. Nothing super luxurious, but a slight step up from the six-floor *xiaoqu* complexes. Certainly, our new neighbors seem to think so. One of the advantages of being surrounded by snootily aggressive social climbers is that when one of their own foolishly transgresses the unmarked boundaries of appropriate middle-class behavior, the mass turns on the culprit with the ferocity of feral corgis chowing down on a bacon-covered bunny. This has meant an end to late-night and early-morning drilling, although what specifically constitutes “late” and “early” seems to have been left a little vague. It is still all too common to hear the drill bits of the apocalypse as early as 7am and as late as midnight.

Noise pollution is not only about having a neighbor's home decorating obsession get in the way of a Netflix and chill night. According to the WHO, second-hand noise can cause loss of sleep, poor concentration, and high stress. Noise pollution can also have more serious effects, including raising the risk of diabetes, stroke,

and heart attack.

The WHO also has suggested that noise pollution may “provoke annoyance responses and changes in social behavior,” which is totally going to be my defense in court if – purely hypothetically – one of my neighbors is ever found wandering the courtyard of our complex in a daze with an electric drill bit shoved up his ass.

There are no easy fixes. Noise pollution comes from a combination of sources, and sound travels in ways which make it difficult to contain. Excessive noise leaves no residue and enforcement can be spread over multiple agencies and institutions. In 2016, *The Global Times* lamented, “Environmental, cultural, traffic, industry, and commerce departments, as well as urban inspectors and local police all have the power to control noise. But when confronted with a specific problem, it remains unclear which department has jurisdiction.”

This is of course also not a problem limited to any one city, country, or culture. Noise pollution – whether from drilling walls or from some moron drunkenly wailing down hutongs looking for “his buddy Pete” who never seems to know how to get from The Great Outdoors to Café de le Poste – affects everybody who lives in Beijing. The issue may not be as sexy or obvious as air pollution, but the effects of living surrounded by second-hand noise ultimately also has a negative effect on all our health.



BEAT THE HEAT

THE BEST CONVENIENCE STORE CAFFEINE FIXES

Tautvile Daugelaite

Very Black Coffee (Japan)

RMB 16.50

An easy-drinking Americano with no additives to speak of, we couldn't honestly grant 'Very Black' the blackest crown given that past the packaging, the drink itself has a generous pour of water. That being said, it does come packing a slightly fruity and pleasant aroma and is not burnt (this, you'll find out later, is important).

Verdict: 8/10. A flavorful hit with a price that screams "this is safe!"

Georgia Americano Coffee (China)

RMB 8.80

Georgia's entry starts off with an innocuous enough buttery smell before it explodes into an all-out popcorn experience once it hits your taste buds.

Verdict: 6/10. It may taste like the cinema in a coffee cup but nothing can beat that sweet, sweet price.

Beans & Roasters Caffé Latte(Japan)

RMB 25

With our expectations set high upon glancing at the assertive price tag, the free-fall back to the reality has been long and crushing. Closer to artificially sweet vanilla milk with a hint of coffee, this can had us shrugging our shoulders and methodically listing 100 better ways to spend RMB 25.

Verdict: 1/10. Two points for being the largest bottle of all, minus one point for the sugar comedown.

Say Coffee Cold Brew Coffee Americano (China)

RMB 18.80

The initial pour into the cup delivers a pleasant and deep color that is, however, quickly scratched by a taste that could only be achieved by using the same beans twice in a French press.

Verdict: 3/10. The beautiful anti-slip grip bottle design works for when you start to get the coffee shakes (which you won't with this weakling).



Here in the serenity of *the Beijinger* office, we are on occasion known to throw all caution to the wind and drown ourselves in beer in order to escape the summer heat. However, overindulgence on the golden nectar can often take its toll on productivity, so this time, just for a change, we turned instead to the redemptive side of cooling beverages: coffee. Namely, convenience store coffee (because not all of us can afford to heed the call of the green and white Siren three times a day). Before we begin, you should be aware that many of these match or surpass their caffeine content with sugar, so if you want to get truly buzzed, your nearest Kuai Ke may just be your best bet.

Barista Rules (Korea)

RMB 15.80

One of the few milky beverages where the coffee flavor pulls through, Barista Rules cuts the sugar content and deftly parades as medium city roast.

Verdict: 7/10. We salute any cold coffee-milk mix that manages to deliver both the caffeine as well as the taste.

UCC Black (Japan)

RMB 11.90

Somewhat similar to the first blend (Very Black), this canned rendition of an Americano passed simply as “drinkable.” Despite its overall watery texture, you are rewarded with some lingering hazelnut notes.

Verdict: 7/10. You won’t be disgusted but you might as well just throw in an extra RMB 5 and go for the Very Black coffee instead.

The Cloud Time Milk Coffee (China)

RMB 9

The fact that the only other beverage that this company sells is milk should have been enough of a red flag to steer clear of Cloud Time but so as to pay our respects to mother sugar, we had to squeeze it in. And sugary it is. Artificially sweetened to the point of starting to taste like caramel, this one at least looks presentable thanks to a neat glass bottle.

Verdict: 4/10. Too sweet to be cooling anything down, this one should only be consumed as a last-ditch effort afternoon pick-me-up.

Never Coffee Bulletproof Cold Brew Coffee (China)

RMB 15.80

One of the most exciting coffees in the lineup, this neat triangular bottle is loaded with both a spoonful of butter – as per your usual bulletproof blend – as well as a splash of coconut oil. The coconut notes are unmistakable and the creamy texture justifies all the fat inside the minimal design bottle. A tolerable sugar content also makes this one notable.

Verdict: 9/10. A smooth blend that will awaken your body-builder dreams, housed in a bottle designed to grace your Instagram feed.





AVATAR COMES TO LIFE

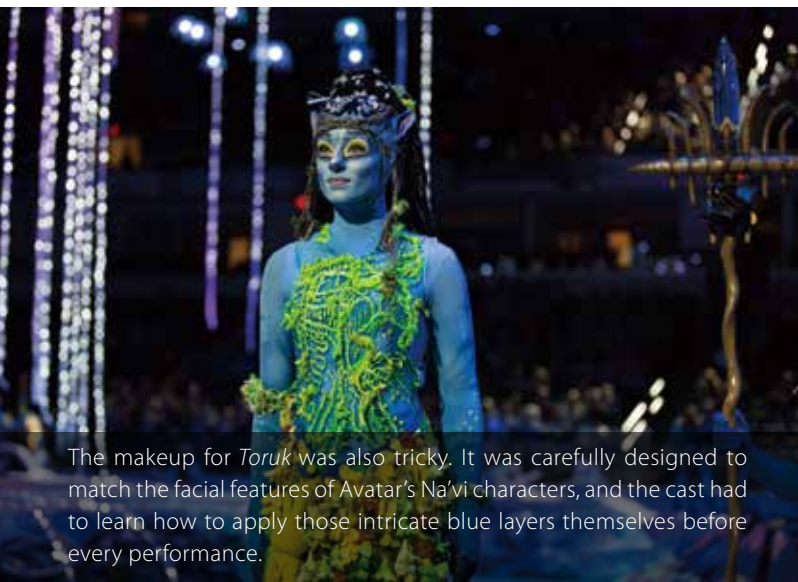
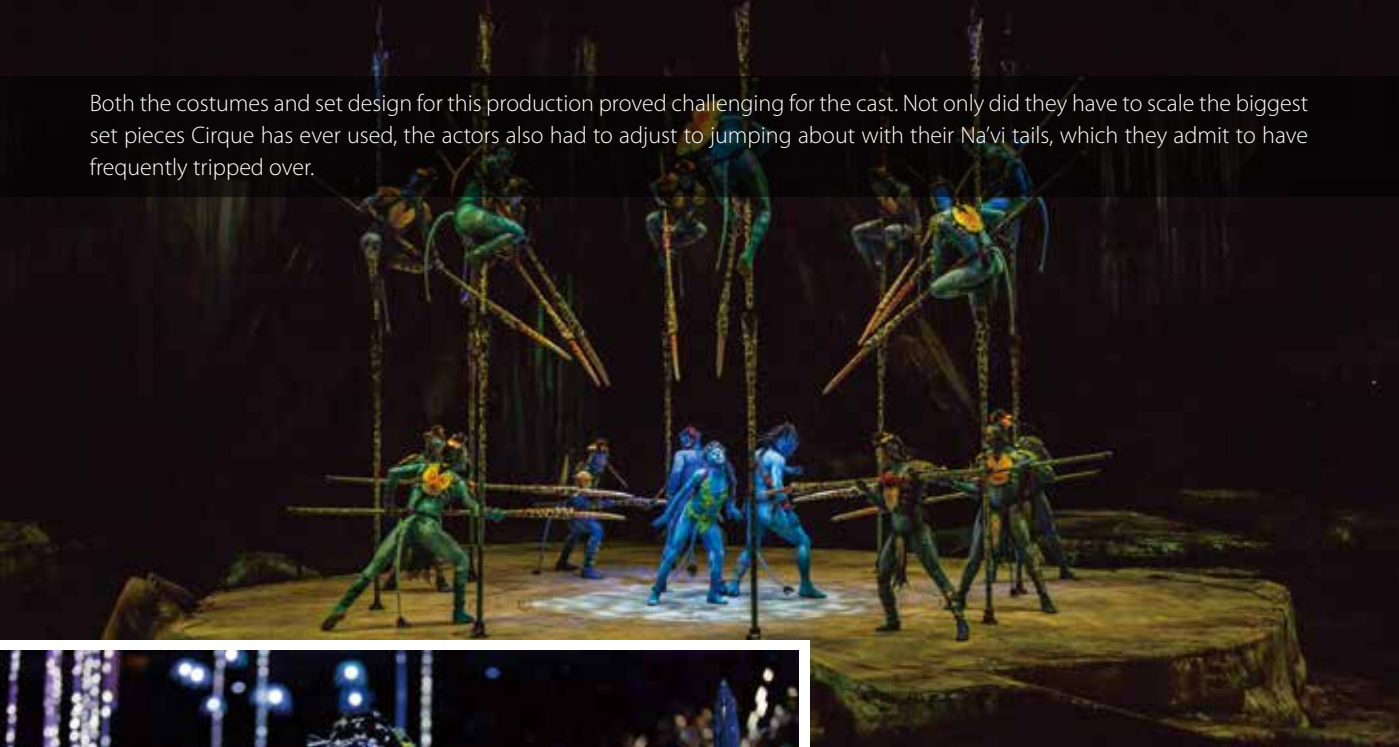
CIRQUE DU SOLEIL LAUNCHES THEIR FIRST FILM INSPIRED PRODUCTION

By Kyle Mullin

Forget everything you think you know about Cirque du Soleil. And while you're at it scrap your preconceived notions about the blockbuster sci-fi flick *Avatar*. Because, surprising as it may be for casual onlookers to see these brands converge in the new stage production *Toruk: The First Flight* – showing at the Cadillac Center, Aug 1-12 – the two are actually deeply entwined. That's because having shot a documentary about the Montreal theatrical and acrobatic troupe, director James Cameron went on to model *Avatar's* Na'vi aliens on those agile stage performers.

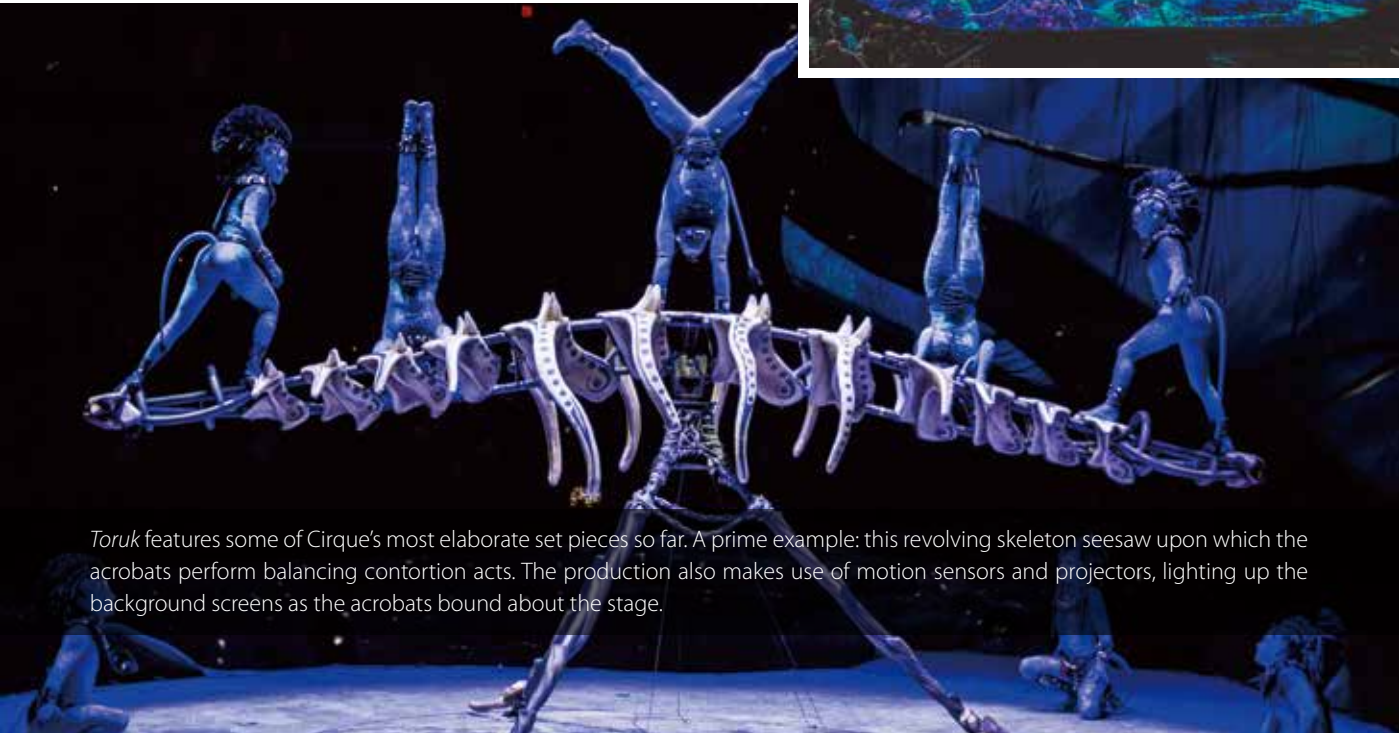
Now, Cirque has drawn on Cameron for ideas, bringing its first heavily narrated stage show based on a movie rather than an original story to China. So far, it has been a hit akin to the film that inspired it – after debuting in Montreal in 2015, the production has toured the world steadily ever since. On the opposite page, we delve into some of the unique hurdles that the cast and crew had to overcome to put on this massive, intricate show.

Both the costumes and set design for this production proved challenging for the cast. Not only did they have to scale the biggest set pieces Cirque has ever used, the actors also had to adjust to jumping about with their Na'vi tails, which they admit to have frequently tripped over.



The makeup for *Toruk* was also tricky. It was carefully designed to match the facial features of Avatar's Na'vi characters, and the cast had to learn how to apply those intricate blue layers themselves before every performance.

From the audience's vantage point, the *Toruk* world in front of them is bigger than five Imax screens – the largest production Cirque du Soleil has ever put on.



Toruk features some of Cirque's most elaborate set pieces so far. A prime example: this revolving skeleton seesaw upon which the acrobats perform balancing contortion acts. The production also makes use of motion sensors and projectors, lighting up the background screens as the acrobats bound about the stage.



JING AT THE PENINSULA BEIJING

GETTING TO THE HEART OF MODERN FRENCH CUISINE

There are few duos in Beijing more dynamic than Jing at The Peninsula Beijing's restaurant manager Martin Vanackere and chef de cuisine Julien Cadiou. Since arriving in Beijing (both within the last 12 months), the young, energetic French team have cemented Jing's position as one of Beijing's hottest French restaurants, serving an au courant menu of neo-bistro cuisine.

Martin trained at one of Europe's most prestigious hospitality schools, Ecole Hôtelière de Lausanne (EHL) in Switzerland, but thanks to his Asian heritage he always felt a strong pull towards this side of the world. After graduating from EHL, he moved to Hong Kong to work with trendy Black Sheep Group, before moving to The Peninsula Beijing. "What I love about Beijing is it has so many things that Hong Kong doesn't have ... it has taken me so long to visit all the sights!" Martin says. "On the other hand, Hong Kong is really about food. For example, in Hong Kong we were working with Meilleurs Ouvriers de France (Best Craftsmen of France) and it was very easy for us to get artisanal products like cheese. Here, it's not so easy but we are working with a local cheesemaker [Le Fromager de Pékin], which I actually find more interesting. However, in Beijing, there is more to discover, more to educate."

Education is a key part of what Martin and Chef Julien are trying to do at Jing. For Chef Julien, who has wanted to head a kitchen since he was a nine-year-old boy growing up in Brittany, one of the most rewarding parts of his job is helping

both his staff and his customers get to know French cuisine. "Food service, and particularly cheffing, are now seen as a 'prestigious' career paths in France but there is still a way to go before either is seen the same way in China," he explains. "Nevertheless, it is a testament to our passion and effort to see young staff come away from working with us with an understanding of French cuisine."

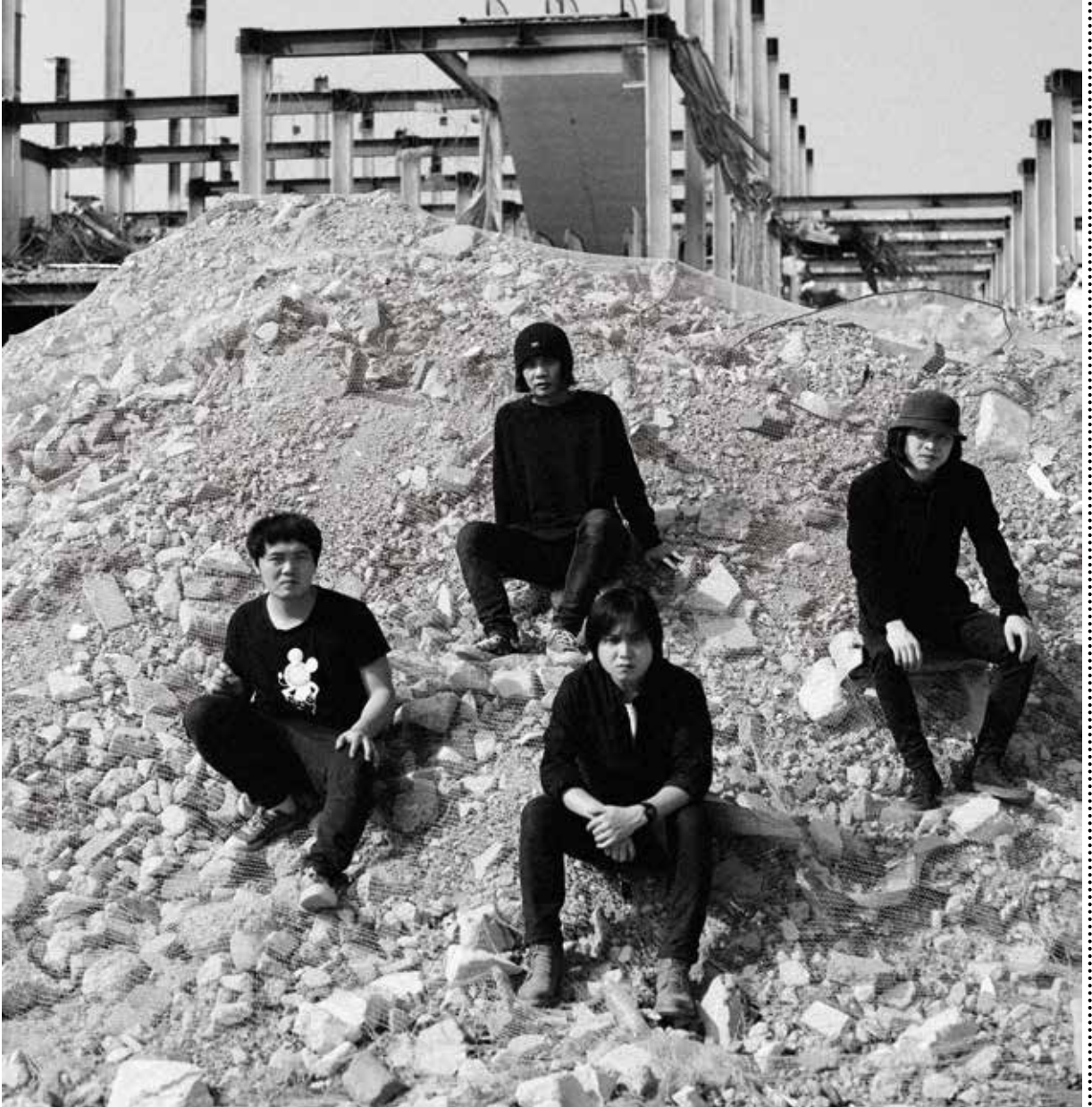
Chef Julien is certainly in a good position to pass on a passion for French cuisine, having refined his craft at Michelin-starred restaurants in Paris alongside celebrity chefs Alain Ducasse and Kei Kobayashi. His pedigree may be fully French but the food at Jing is full of subtle Asian influences, from lobster marinated with Japanese shiso leaf to Chef Julien's homemade teriyaki sauce and tandoori paste. One of the standout dishes on the menu is the tuna and beef tartare, which pairs the best of earth and sea with a piquant dressing of sesame and Korean gochujang [a sweet and spicy fermented chili paste]. As an added bonus, it is served table-side by the gregarious Martin, who will be more than happy to explain the dish and talk about his own love for Asian cuisine.

From late nights to busy wine dinners to table-side service, neither Martin nor Chef Julien would argue that the life of a restaurateur is easy. However, their excitement for their industry is undying. As Martin puts it: "Food is the simplest way in the world to make someone happy. That's what keeps us going."

Introducing the people who matter

MEET

MUSIC ROUNDTABLE // WOLF ALICE // EDWIN MAHER



AUG 31 - BACKSPACE

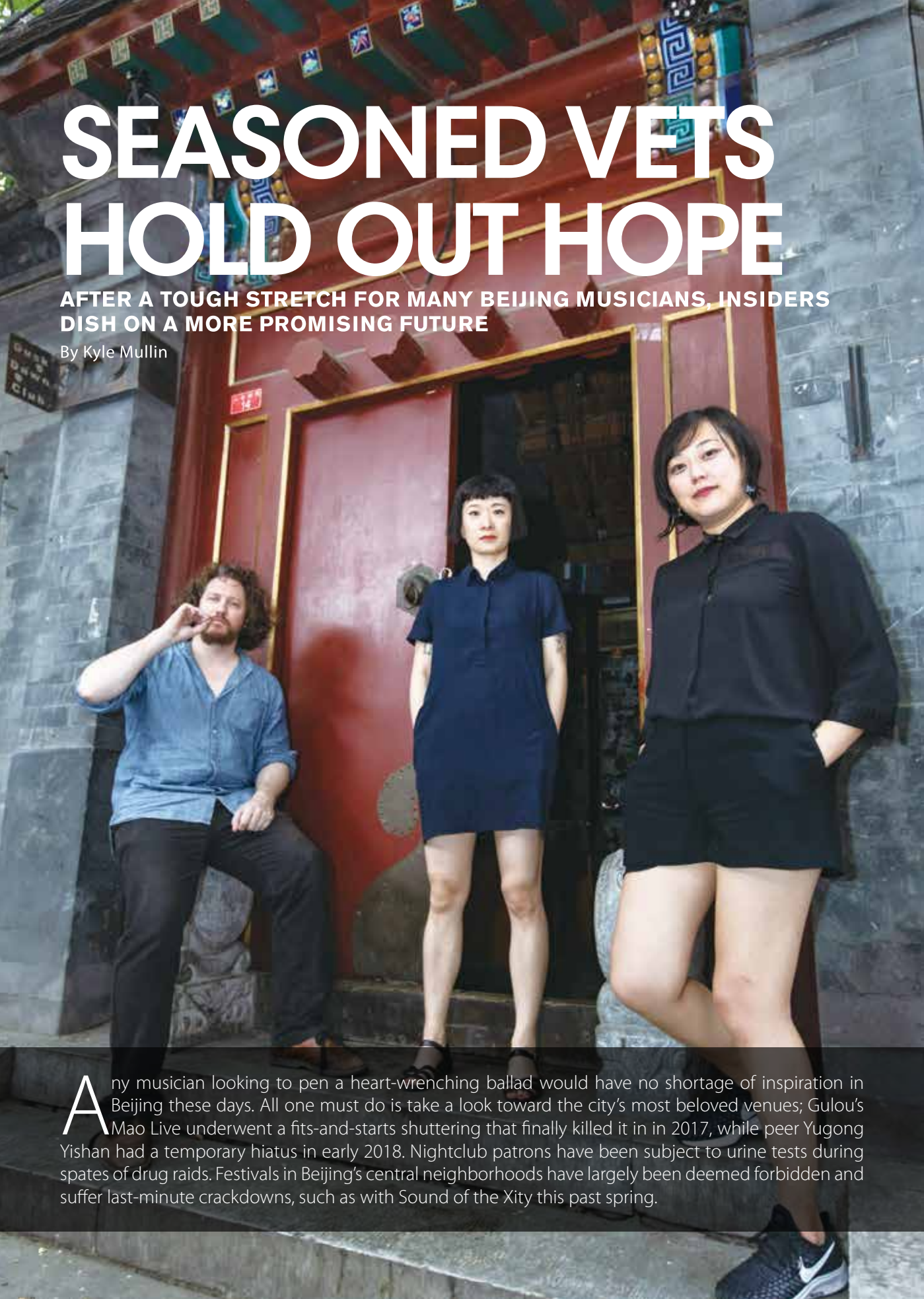
A 16-date tour on the back of their new album *Human Nature Architecture* sees this young Beijing-based but Yulin, Guangxi-hailing band douse the land with their neurotic and driving brand of psychedelic rock. Down-to-earth and now signed to Maybe Mars (P.K. 14's ubiquitous Yang Haisong yet again gets CD production credits), Backspace have been quick to plant themselves in the capital's music scene and will have the crowd pogoing as they reach the end of this victory lap. RMB 90, RMB 70 (advance). 9pm. School Bar

PHOTO: DU HUAYI

SEASONED VETS HOLD OUT HOPE

AFTER A TOUGH STRETCH FOR MANY BEIJING MUSICIANS, INSIDERS
DISH ON A MORE PROMISING FUTURE

By Kyle Mullin

A photograph of three people standing in front of a traditional Chinese building entrance. On the left, a man with curly hair and a beard, wearing a blue button-down shirt and black pants, is sitting on a stone step and holding a cigarette. In the center, a woman with short black hair, wearing a dark blue short-sleeved dress, stands with her hands in her pockets. On the right, another woman with short black hair, wearing a black long-sleeved shirt and black shorts, stands with her hands in her pockets. The building behind them has a large red door with gold trim and a grey stone wall. The title 'SEASONED VETS HOLD OUT HOPE' is overlaid at the top in large white letters. Below the title is a subtitle 'AFTER A TOUGH STRETCH FOR MANY BEIJING MUSICIANS, INSIDERS DISH ON A MORE PROMISING FUTURE' and the author's name 'By Kyle Mullin'. At the bottom, a paragraph of text is overlaid on a dark grey bar.

Any musician looking to pen a heart-wrenching ballad would have no shortage of inspiration in Beijing these days. All one must do is take a look toward the city's most beloved venues; Gulou's Mao Live underwent a fits-and-starts shuttering that finally killed it in 2017, while peer Yugong Yishan had a temporary hiatus in early 2018. Nightclub patrons have been subject to urine tests during spates of drug raids. Festivals in Beijing's central neighborhoods have largely been deemed forbidden and suffer last-minute crackdowns, such as with Sound of the Xity this past spring.

Despite those dramatic shifts, some of the city's most seasoned music insiders remain hopeful, albeit for different reasons. Among them: Djang San, a French alt-folk musician famed for wielding traditional Chinese instruments like the zhongruan and father to 40 albums. Having been active in Beijing's underground music scene for nearly 20 years, he's seen no shortage of seismic change first-hand. The same goes for Helen Feng, charismatic frontwoman for the beloved, long-running indie pop band Nova Heart. And finally, Pei Pei Sun, renowned DJ and founder of the now decade-old ByeByeDisco music label. The trio inhabit disparate corners of Beijing's music world, to be sure, but nevertheless share a fairly positive outlook.

"There have been rumors that bars won't be allowed within the Second Ring Road in the future. But I've heard that kind of talk ever since I came here," says Djang San, adding the recent opening of a new Mao Livehouse in Wukesong signifies "the reality of the situation, which is: some places have closed, some have opened. But the musicians are still here, and they will always create new spaces for people to go to."

This sentiment leads Feng and Djang San to fondly recall one of their earliest run-ins at 2 Kolegas, before mourning the closure of that once vibrant Liangmaqiao dive in 2014, of which Feng says: "I think we don't have a lot of cradle venues [like 2 Kolegas] anymore. Beijing used to have so many punky places where you could be a shit musician, but if your energy was good and you had ideas, you could explore."

While Feng believes the dearth of such novice livehouses, along with Beijing's unwieldy cost of living, have left little room for up and comers to get a toehold, she takes heart in a whole new frontier. "I think 2018 will be the blow-up year of the bedroom producer," Feng states, adding that rising stars who are affluent enough to afford decent equipment will secure their own audiences by "getting away from the traditional music industry because online outlets are becoming stronger."

Pei Pei Sun agrees that that trend looks likely across the city's myriad of genres, noting that she's already seen it take place in the electronica scene. "For DJs and producers this has been a common practice," she explains, describing numerous streaming platforms, before adding: "Now it's very normal for some producers to play all over the world from just one or two successful releases, no matter if the promoters know what their live performances will be like."

Sun also sees the demand for DJs in Beijing as being at "an all-time high," so much so that after about a decade of building ByeByeDisco, she was finally been able to quit her

day job 18 months ago and simply live off being a DJ and promoter. Sun jokes, "Ten years ago, we would say 'If you meet 10 people in Gulou, nine of them will be in a band.' But three years ago, we began saying: 'If you meet 10 people in Gulou, nine of them will be DJs.'"

Feng says a wide range of musicians abroad are already following that bedroom producer model, and it's only a matter of time before the same becomes more common in Beijing beyond the capital's electronica scene. "The traditional music industry is dying, and bedroom producers are the future," Feng explains. That shift is mainly because that newer, lower-key process is faster and the artists have greater control over their own output and production compared to



HELEN FENG, DJANG SAN, AND PEI PEI SUN

those musicians entangled in China's notoriously arduous development deals.

Feng describes how it can even "happen on [Chinese short video app] Douyin, when someone releases something and it goes viral. Then the requests for them to play live will drive the next level of the music industry." That means many musicians won't work their way up through the venue system anymore. Instead, Feng says: "You'll work your way down from an explosion online."

Despite all that potential, Djang San says newcomers shouldn't let bedroom production become too dominant. He hopes that venues and the emerging online frontier can feed off of each other. After all, one of the main things that has kept the veteran folk rocker in Beijing for all these years is the openness of its music scene, compared to the more aloof musicians he's encountered in his home country. He concludes: "The best thing about Beijing is how easy it is to meet people and play any day with anybody, thus easily creating something new."



"LET THE SONGS BE WHATEVER THEY WANT TO BE"

Q&A WITH ELLIE ROWSELL, FRONTWOMAN FOR BUZZED BRITISH BAND WOLF ALICE

By Tautvile Daugelaite

Wolf Alice is living (and rocking) proof that electric guitars, angry vocals, and explicit lyrics paired with windswept hair and monochromatic band photoshoots are not only traits for the memory books. Hailing from London, the alt-rock revivalists began as a harmless folk duo consisting of frontwoman Ellie Rowsell and guitarist Joff Oddie. But after their debut single "Fluffy", the band adopted a heavier style with the help of Theo Ellis on bass and Joel Amey on drums. Before long, they were being described by *NME* as "the lovechild of folk and grunge." Yes, Wolf Alice has long since departed from all that is fluffy, turning instead dark and dreamy lyricism with a bucket-load of shred. We caught up with the band's frontwoman, Ellie Rowsell, ahead of their Tango Live gig in Beijing on Aug 15.

You started out playing acoustic folk but later transitioned into a grungier style. What led to that change?

We were bored of making that style of music and it felt like no one was listening or cared. We realized that if we got louder and heavier, it would be harder to ignore and would probably be more fun to play.

In a previous interview, you asked, "Is there such a thing as a genre anymore?" Do you see the concept of genres as a constraint or a tool to help keep your work focused?

I think it is up to the artist, there's no right way of doing anything. Some people only want to make music within a certain genre, and that's fine. Other people are more fickle

about what type of band they're in and that's fine too. Honestly, I don't think about it that much and let the songs be whatever they want to be.

You have previously talked about the industry being strongly male-driven. Being the only female in the band, do you feel that there is still some difference in terms of how male and female musicians are treated? Or has it evened out?

I don't really know as I'm not sure that I have experienced it [sexism]. I feel like people, for the most part, have always taken me seriously and treated me fairly. However, I know that kind of experience is not true for other female musicians and females in the music industry, so we still have a long way to go.

You've now headlined a number of festivals and even been nominated for a Grammy, so it seems like you've made it! Is there still an artist that you dream of sharing the stage with?

I'd like to play some stadium shows with Kings of Leon. Paramore would be fun too.

Which Wolf Alice song do you feel most personally connected to?

"After the Zero Hour" and "St. Purple & Green" because they are about my grandmother. And "Don't Delete the Kisses" because it's about me crushing on someone.

Wolf Alice will perform at Tango Live on Aug 15 at 8.30pm. Tickets are RMB 350 advance, RMB 400 at the door.



EDWIN WINCKLER

AMERICAN SOCIAL SCIENTIST, PROFESSOR, AND AUTHOR

By Tracy Wang

A Drink With is a regular column in which we ask Beijing personalities to tell us about their drinking habits and beverage preferences. This issue, we talk to Edwin Winckler, an American social scientist, author of several books, emeritus at Columbia, and professor at Tsinghua (pictured above), who has also in his spare time experienced Beijing via a plethora of drinks.

First, tell us a bit about yourself.

I am an American social scientist who has been studying China for more than 50 years. My responsibility has been to explain Chinese politics to Americans. However, in the 2010s, I started spending more time in China, trying also to explain American politics to Chinese students. I first came to Beijing in 1979 escorting a group of American urban planners. Like many people, I love Beijing's old hutongs. Now I always stay in the same old courtyard hotel off Beiluogu Xiang.

I walk a lot here and find lots of interesting places. Nevertheless, it took the *Lonely Planet* guide to Beijing to direct me to Great Leap Brewing, then only at 6 Doujiao Hutong. I was immediately enchanted by the Chinese courtyard setting and intrigued by the Chinese ingredients in some of the beers.

What's your favorite drink, and has it changed over time?

Currently, I particularly enjoy affordable effervescent white wines from the Atlantic coast of Spain and Portugal. I also enjoy numerous liquors like gin, especially before dinner. My favorites are either classic London or experimental American gins. In winter, however, nothing beats a smoky Scotch. After dinner, I often sip a little brandy or bourbon or rye. I now use vodka only to soak up interesting flavors, such as Chinese tea or Sichuan pepper, imitating Great Leap Brewing.

Among beers, as an overseas student in Europe in the early 1960s, I enjoyed French blond beers and British dark stouts. Now, of course, American craft beer is good too. But I have become tired of increasingly over-hopped India Pale Ales, so I now prefer good versions of other types.

What's your golden rule of drinking?

I believe in drinking whatever the occasion calls for: a quiet cocktail to relax before dinner, several glasses of wine with dinner, and several beers with friends. Such social rituals probably have a good effect on the body, regardless of the chemical content of the drinks.

For me, living alone, the "occasion" is mostly dinner: what wine to drink? Some classic pairings really do improve both the food and the wine. But now sometimes I eat food and drink wine mostly separately, in order to taste each as clearly as possible.

As a scholar, I always have to worry about whether my head will be clear enough the next day to think. Now one also has to worry about medical research that

recommends fewer and fewer drinks a day, by now only about one!

Has your time in China changed any of your drinking habits?

Well, unlike many foreigners, I've found I actually like *baijiu*. Moreover, I now understand that drinking too much of it together with new acquaintances is a good way to establish new social relationships. I particularly enjoy occasions when Chinese hosts, after warning me that *baijiu* may be too strong for a foreigner, gradually discover that I can drink more of it than they can!

**What's your most outrageous drinking experience?**

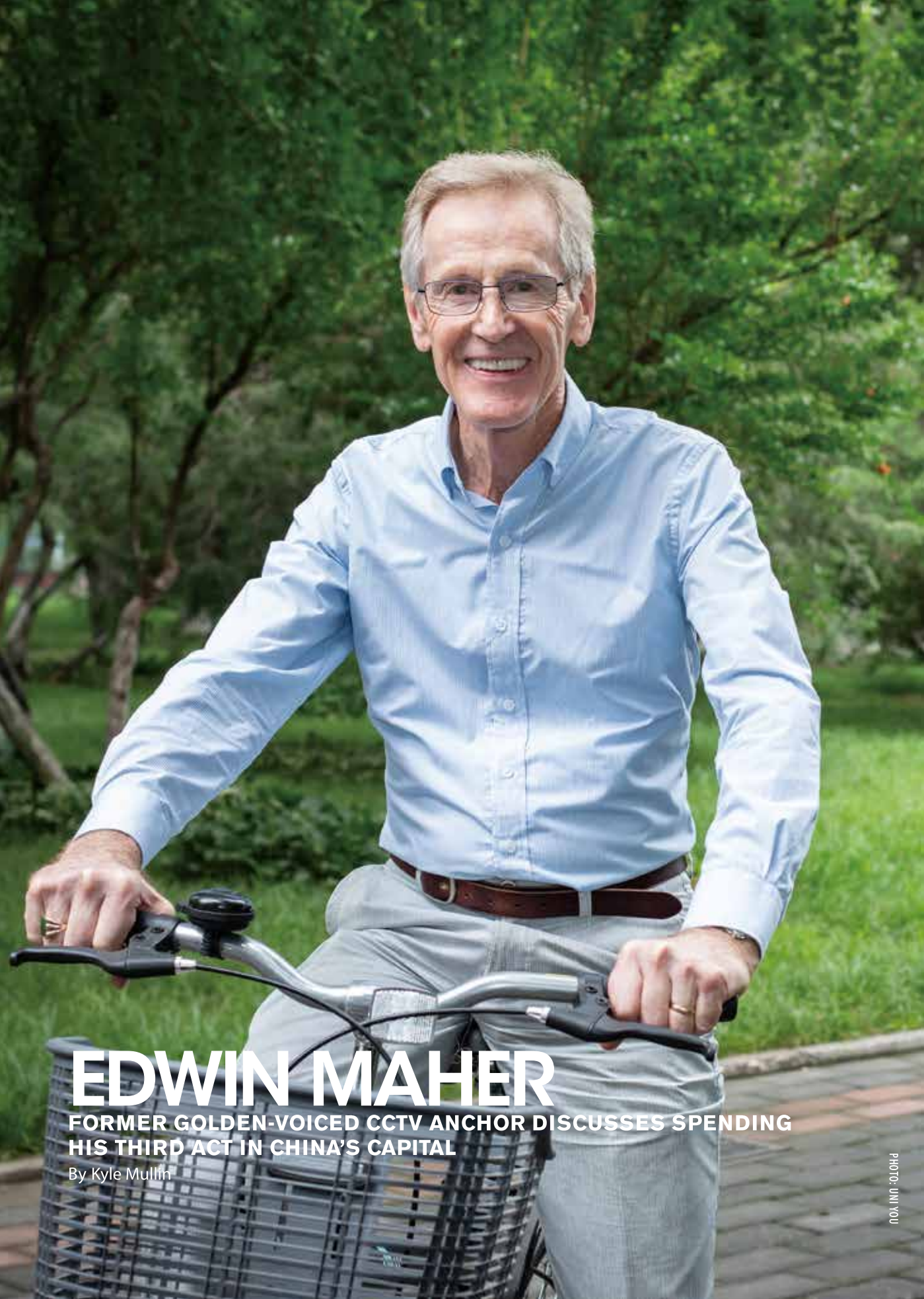
In the mid-1960s while I was a graduate student at Harvard in Cambridge, Massachusetts I had a girlfriend out in the suburbs near Wellesley. Her family was in the grocery business and started an elegant restaurant in an old mill overlooking a lovely waterfall.

Unfortunately, to finance the restaurant, her family borrowed money from the local mafia, who then stole things from the restaurant like fine silverware and fine wines. I tried to monitor the wine cellar, which the mafia definitely did not like.

So one night at the bar they put a "mickey" in my drink (drugs to knock me out). Driving back to Cambridge, I could barely see where I was going, blinded by the bright lights of other cars. I was lucky to make it back without an accident. After that, I stopped monitoring the wine cellar.

What's your idea of a good night out?

I particularly enjoy multi-course tasting menus in which an adventurous chef presents a sequence of his best dishes and creatively pairs them with a sequence of beverages, be it wines, beers, spirits, whatever. Of course, this experience is best when eaten with a charming woman or a few foodie friends. But I don't mind eating alone so that I can give full attention to the food and drink.



EDWIN MAHER

**FORMER GOLDEN-VOICED CCTV ANCHOR DISCUSSES SPENDING
HIS THIRD ACT IN CHINA'S CAPITAL**

By Kyle Mullin

Even though Edwin Maher reported on many exhilarating stories during his 14-year stint as a news anchor at CCTV 9, one of his most gripping China experiences occurred away from the studio's cameras.

When the New Zealand-born broadcaster was settling into Beijing in 2003 – one year before scoring the job that would beam him into millions of homes as one of China's first foreign anchors – he went to a Carrefour supermarket and bought himself bicycle. "When I first got here it was still a city of bikes, and one the most memorable days was going on the road, joining the throng, and even talking to people riding beside me. It was so exciting!" says Maher. It's a treat to hear the firm and fatherly professionalism that Maher employed on the air for so many years slip away in conversation, as he lets a few casual "uhms" and "yeahs" slip in and his tone grows more enthusiastic. That being said, the former anchor's famously golden voice, enunciation, and vocabulary remain as eloquent as you might expect throughout. While speaking about the white-knuckle nature of cycling in Beijing, for instance, he quips: "I was thinking the other day, 'Why am I still biking in Beijing? I just nearly got killed!' But negotiating all that wild traffic is good for the mind and reflexes at my age."

Of his departure last year from the CCTV role that made him famous, Maher says the decision was mutual and that the station's rebranding to CGTN created a bookend of sorts that made leaving just one of many changes at that newsroom.

Since then, Maher has continued to challenge himself in China, making time for speaking engagements about his background along with voice coaching seminars for Chinese professionals at various organizations, including staff at Xinhua state media's new English television station and social media team. Maher states he thoroughly enjoys such educational work, and it has remained a constant in his fast-paced and ever-evolving China adventure ever since he first came here in a similar capacity for China Radio International (CRI) nearly 15 years ago.

That journey East came when after 20 years of working as an anchor and weatherman in Australia, he and his three children found themselves grief-stricken and adrift when his wife of 33 years, Robyn,

suffered complications from a brain tumor and died in 2000. One day a few years later, Maher was idly thumbing the dial on his shortwave radio at home when he came across a presenter with an accent he didn't recognize. His ears perked up all the more when he heard the announcer say "This is China Radio International." A profile on Maher in *China Daily* last year says that that chance listening, along with his wife's passing, "gave him the impetus to try pastures anew which is when he applied to CRI" despite already being well into his 60's. After six months of coaching Chinese broadcasters so that their English was up to par for the airwaves, Maher was approached by CCTV to work as an anchor as the network began its push to reach a wider Western audience.

As time went by he found himself enthralled by the rapid changes China was undergoing, even though he hasn't always kept up. Maher admits, for instance, that he stuck with his brick Motorola phone until 2015, after he grew weary of CCTV colleagues telling him: "Yeye (grandpa), you really need an upgrade." Since then, he has enjoyed using WeChat pay and leaving his wallet at home. Maher also gets a kick out of shared bike apps and is pleased to see Beijing becoming a city of cyclists once again.

And yet Maher's favorite trend of all is podcasts. He frequently downloads BBC and Australian ABC network news programming, and also looks to launch a podcast of his own soon, though he admits, "I need to do more homework to ensure I get it right."

Maher cites the chance to pursue such opportunities and the brisk pace of life as reasons why he has stayed in the capital for so long, as well as (perhaps most importantly of all) the low crime rate and overall safety of Beijing. That being said, Maher makes sure to head back to Melbourne for family visits at least once a year and relishes every moment, except for one night when he found himself unable to sleep. After tossing and turning, he recalls "realizing there was no background noise. I had to open a window, and upon hearing a dog barking in the distance, eventually, I got off to sleep."

"It's interesting how your mind and body adapts to a new environment," Maher adds. "I've become very, very used to Beijing."

YOUNG AND VERY FASHION

By Artur Witkowski

Stunt 101 takes a sultry dive into the weird, the explicit, and the abnormal fads and trends gripping China and its inhabitants, so that you never risk being stunted on again.

Have you ever wanted to dress up as a Power Ranger, and maybe have sex with other Power Rangers? And never have to see the person's face? Just two cool people with big helmets on? Meet Xiao Gan, an up-and-coming social media star with a remarkable talent for beguiling virgins into vice. She had breast cancer, she now has one boob, and she is currently stunting on me with pictures of sweaty, half-dressed Power Rangers on her iPhone X.

"Why Power Rangers?"

"It is my way for punishing people for thinking their own lives are more important than mine. I'm not even that into Power Rangers; don't think I'm Beijing's most sexually active Power Ranger or something. It's more of a brand identity. One boob, bisexual, hangs out with Beijing's only openly gay parkour team, crazy tats. Look, here you see I'm the White Ranger and he's the Blue Ranger, representing Sprite Fiber+ and Pepsi Blue. I want to show my support for fiber in an edgy way, and the color commitment can get me more likes and followers."

"Yeah, I hear fiber is really big in Japan right now."

"Actually, I was one of the first to be really into fiber, and you can ask around to verify that. I love fiber. Always have. A splash of Fiber+ in my coffee." She takes a couple more gulps of soda and continues shaking her head. "And I hate the fiber posers who are jumping on the bandwagon just because one bottle gives you the fiber you get from two apples. I'm not even really trying to stunt, you know? Fiber

is great for *baijiu* hangovers. My grandpa always said so. Me and my family, we go way back with fiber."

"What about Mr. Blue Ranger? You find him on Tantan?"

"GMU, not Tantan. It's like Tantan, but powered by Tim Burton. 积目. You don't know? I thought you had street cred."

"So much. So much street cred."

"GMU is an easy way to act like you're better than other people. I think a lot of young people with interesting hobbies, or with a little bit of character – a little bit special – use GMU. You upload a pic, and choose one idea that defines who you are. What are you? Fetish? Rap? Pets? Livehouse? Then you meet people just like you."

"What are you?"

"I'm Basketball Shoes. So in my searches, only other shoe fans show up. Here, look at this guy. K-pop backup dancer living in the catacombs of Sanlitun. Sells limited edition sneakers. He holds his nuts when he poses for photos."

"Eat Poop?"

"Yeah, a lot of people have funny names. 'Nothing_Real', 'Acid Drinker'. Lots of vaping, tired expressions, SM. I'm not really into SM, but I like to see girls who are. 'I would like to be your cat.' 'I want someone to consider me as a pet.' For me, if it's not criminal, it's not illegal, it's not really a bad thing. Unless you're hurting someone. I mean, someone who doesn't want to be hurt."

July Stunt Kit:

1. Fiber supplements
2. GMU/积目 app
3. Fiber (real)

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