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The most important upcoming dates

WHAT'S HAPPENING



FEB 16-20

Ditan Park CNY Temple Fair

When you're not swilling *baijiu* or setting off firecrackers, head down to Ditan Park's Spring Festival temple fair, consistently one of the best ways to usher in the New Year in Beijing. Fight off the crowds to buy handicrafts and traditional stodgy snacks like *niangao* (New Year cake) while watching crosstalk, folk dance, and even ventriloquism performances.

MAR 14

Mogwai

Scottish post-rock heavyweights Mogwai march through China once again on the back of their new album *Every Country's Sun*, bringing a wall of beautifully constructed noise and grandiose chasms of sound to Beijing's eager ears at Tango 3/F.



MAR 22-24

Jane Eyre

Chapterhouse Theatre brings their latest production, a reworking of Charlotte Brontë's classic novel *Jane Eyre*, to Renmin University's Rulun Lecture Hall. Founded in 1999, the Chapterhouse Theatre has been praised for creating plays that are both true to the source material but modern in their presentation.

MAR 24

Sarah Morris

British-born, New York-based painter Sarah Morris constructs dizzying and vibrant grids of geometric shapes that resemble Piet Mondrian's output seen through a kaleidoscope. Catch Morris' large abstract fractals in March when they brighten up the walls of UCCA.



Visit theBeijinger.com for even more events and details.

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

To the uninitiated, life in Beijing can often feel unforgiving; support networks can be hard to access, the familiarity of home is far away, and vices are all too easy to come by. That's why we've dedicated the first issue of 2018 to organizations and individuals that go out of their way, not only to provide help to newcomers and old-timers alike but also services to the Beijing community at large. Such commitment to aiding others takes many forms, including the mental health resources and NGOs (p.12), LGBT groups (p.14), animal welfare charities (p.16), and advocates of the zero waste lifestyle (p.44) that we'll cover here alongside a look at China's charity through the ages (p.18).

Once you're familiar with the city's benevolent associations, you'll want to feast on some of 2018's top food trends courtesy of Robynne Tindall (p.22) before exploring Beijing's newest restaurants such as Arcade (p.24) and Queenie's (p.25) as well as longtime favorite Transit (p.30), which has resurfaced following an extended refurbishment. Meanwhile, Will Griffith guides us through the sounds of the new Mao Livehouse in Wukesong (p.32) and GJ Cabrera scopes out Red Gate Gallery's new digs in 798 (p.34).

In our Get Out section, Tracy Wang drinks us under the table at five of Beijing's best brewpubs to have opened in past 12 months (p.36); I show you the sights of South Korea's quaint city by the sea, Busan (p.38); and Robynne Tindall leads us through the flavors of Malaysia's George Town (p.40).

Finally, Tautvile Daugelaite meets the women behind the capital's best female-only theater troupe, Beijing Broads (p.49), and Kyle Mullin speaks to the enchanting American songstress Julie Byrne (p.50) as well as Mr. Xicheng Dama himself, Terry Crossman (p.54).

In all, we hope that this issue can act as a guide through some of the harder times in Beijing, when you're not out and about making the most of one of the best cities in the world.



Tom Arnstein
Managing Editor



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CITY SCENE

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



China's dead-last ranking out of 140 countries featured on the annual CAF World Giving Index, placing it below crisis-consumed and war-torn countries such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, Greece, Yemen, and the Palestinian Territories. The survey consists of three questions intended to compare and rate generosity (in the past month have you given money to a good cause; have you helped a stranger; or have you volunteered your time). At a global level, the survey has found a year-on-year increase in people's inclination to help others, or at least there has been among those outside of China.

Compounding China's embarrassment, when Hong Kong was assessed separately from mainland China, it managed a five-year average of 20th place.

Due to its mindboggling size, however, China simultaneously tops and bottoms the rankings: As well as being least likely to involve themselves in other people's business, with only 11 percent of the population having helped a stranger in the past month, China simultaneously took second place for its sheer quantity of sympathetic citizens, with 273 million saying they had lent a helping hand.

However, with the report taking a very hands-off approach to moulding the data, it's not clear if China really is an every-man-for-himself society, or if cultural differences are causing a data discrepancy. After all, as it's a self-reported survey; perhaps Chinese people are actually just the world's most honest.

PHOTO: CAXIN

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the**nightlife**

the**arts**

the**style**

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BEST OF THE BLOG

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



1. Migas Sanlitun Shuts Down After Final NYE Party

This New Year's Eve was a bittersweet moment for Beijing as it also marked the last hurrah for Sanlitun's beloved rooftop restaurant and lounge Migas. Staff announced the closure just before Christmas, though the reasons behind the sudden closure were left vague. Luckily, Migas Mercado will continue to cater to the snappily dressed set that regularly hit up the original Nali Patio branch over the past seven years.

2. Believe It or Not: Beijing's Air Quality Improved Drastically in 2017

Contrary to everything we know as grizzled veterans outfitted with face masks and a wary disposition, 2018 began with reports that Beijing's air quality improved so much over the course of 2017 that it was now the best it's been in five years. If things continue this way, Beijing may soon lose its infamous reputation for having the worst air in the world.



3. Beijing Now Offers 6-Day Visa-Free Stays to International Tourists

Just after New Year, Beijing announced an extension of its visa-free entry for people transiting through the city to a full six days, twice the length of the previous policy. To be eligible for entry, applicants are required to have valid international travel documents as well as reserved tickets with a fixed date to a third destination (aside from China and their point of origin).

4. Jackie Chan on Hand for Official Unveiling of 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics Logos

In mid-December, athletes, government representatives, the Beijing 2022 Organising Committee, and Jackie Chan came together at Beijing's Water Cube for the official unveiling of the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games emblems. Said to have taken inspiration from the character 冬, winter, the colorful and lively ribbon-like emblems were designed by Li Cunzhen and were chosen from 4,506 submissions from around the world.



PHOTOS: MIGAS, CNPAM, CNTA, TOM ARNSTEIN, PRESS VIP ROOM, PIXABAY, WEIBO, BEIJING RELOCATION

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



5. Dwayne “The Rock” Johnson Rolls Into Beijing, Pumps Iron in CBD

Guomao got a whiff of what The Rock was cooking when none other than Dwayne Johnson, former wrestler and extremely well-paid Hollywood star, posted various videos of himself pumping iron in the CBD. Johnson’s short Beijing stay was part of a press junket for his latest action adventure flick, *Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle*, and is unlikely to be the last we see of him in 2018 given that he’s poised to shoot *Skyscraper* here this summer (being touted as “*Die Hard* in China”).

6. Three New Subway Lines Open on Beijing’s West Side

Beijing’s ever-expanding subway system welcomed three more lines on the city’s west side at the end of December, including the Line S1, the Yanfang Line, and the Xijiao Line, bringing the number of Beijing Subway lines to 22, with a total line length of 608 kilometers. The Line S1, which originates from the western end of Line 1’s Pingguoyuan station, is notable for being the city’s first Maglev line and has a top speed of 100kph, completing an eight-stop journey in less than 20 minutes.



7. “Foreigner” Jailed 15 Days for Failing Beijing Airport Security Check

In late January, a self-proclaimed “foreigner” refused to submit for a body search at Beijing International Airport, crossing her arms in front of her chest and eventually missing her flight and being committed to 15 days of administrative detention for disturbing public order. As police later found out, the woman was in fact a Chinese national who had lived abroad for several years but had retained her Mandarin fluency.



8. Chaoyang West on the Chopping Block as Great Brickening Continues

Though Beijingers spent much of 2017 lamenting the “Great Brickening,” those unrelenting waves of redevelopment aren’t letting up now that 2018 is here. In fact, one of the city’s most well-established strip of restaurants, situated at the west gate of Chaoyang Park, is next on the chopping block with the likes of Annie’s, Jenny Lou’s, Comptoirs de France, and La Rucola being forced out before Chinese New Year.

SCENE & HEARD

The Beijinger and Maovember Chili Eating Competition
Dec 2, Punjabi. Photos by UniYou





The Hutong Winter Fayre
Dec 10, The Hutong. Photos courtesy of The Hutong



Arcade Opening Party
Dec 22, Arcade. Photos courtesy of Arcade



WHERE TO FIND PEACE OF MIND IN BEIJING

MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES FOR ROCKIER TIMES

By Tom Arnstein



Navigating the stresses that come with living in China – the traffic chaos, the nonchalance in the face of near-death experiences, the murderous troposphere, and the occasional mass food scare – is no easy feat. But the strains that we so often embrace can also be compounded by anxieties that arise from being far away from home, having to navigate one of the world's hardest languages, learning the ropes of a significantly different culture, and trying to find suitable treatment in a country with a growing but still stigma-bound understanding of mental health.

Mental health awareness in China has grown considerably in the past decade but as you would expect, resources remain largely local-focused, which along with denial, apathy, and not knowing when to seek professional help, can all work together to impede our efforts to get better. Dr. Chou Yuwen, a trained psychologist at Beijing United Family Hospital, states that behaviors are considered detrimental and in need of treatment when they "start to affect [a person's] daily functioning such as work, study, and home life for a period of time."

Unfortunately for many, the warning signs may not be so obvious. Xiao Jie, the founder of NGO CandleX, which specializes in providing counseling for sufferers of anxiety,

depression, and bipolar disorder (with which she herself is diagnosed), states that the first step to getting help is acceptance: "you have to find a way to know that it's okay to struggle and feel bad – it's part of being human. The second point is to understand that there are options out there. Usually, if someone is suffering from depression, they have a tunnel effect where there appear to be no other options and the tunnel seems endless."

To that end, Xiao Jie suggests that should you find yourself in a bind, "try to be open and explore, find support, and don't carry [the burden] all by yourself – talk to your friends, talk to your parents, but also be aware that they might not react in the way that you expect them to, and if that's the case, what do you do then to deal with that possibility." She also suggests making a "crisis plan" for if your mental health deteriorates, an effective way to engage friends in reducing your own exposure to personal risk as well as aid recovery from an episode that may otherwise be impeded by trauma, circumstance, or anxiety. In this regard, a certain level of self-awareness is key to putting you on the right track to recovery given that it may require a drastic adjustment of your lifestyle or habits; perhaps you're in a bad relationship or a job that's not suitable for you, maybe you drink too much or don't

PHOTO COURTESY OF THOMAS SAUVIN/BEIJING SILVERLINE



put time aside to cultivate ways to unwind.

Qiao Miao, a student counselor at Peking University, describes how many of the students that he sees lack hobbies, a byproduct of their competitive and all-encompassing university education. Just as someone who works all the time, or not at all, may not have an activity to take their mind off of their problems, Qiao often simply prescribes “finding something that you can fall in love with, something that when you're doing it you can get into the flow, can focus on it alone, and are able to forget the passage of time.”

One factor that all three interviewees agree on is that the best way to combat mental health issues from developing in the first place is to be compassionate to yourself. Such self-maintenance can take many forms but you should start by tending to your body and mind, particularly by eating well, sleeping well, and getting regular physical exercise. Additionally, take a moment to be mindful of how you feel and assess the underlying causes. Finally, build habits that allow for downtime, perhaps coupling them with practical goals that will help you to manage stress more effectively.

As China's middle class becomes increasingly self-sufficient amid an uncertain future, the acknowledged

importance of mental health upkeep continues to grow, psychologists playing the role of priest to China's atheist, capital-driven masses. As a foreigner in China, the best thing you can remember is that should problems arise, home is never too far away and that there is always help available here – you just have to ask for it.

Mental health resources

CandleX: Mental health support group every second and fourth Thursday of the month, 7.30-9pm (donation-based). www.candlex.cn

Beijing United Hospital: Psychological health center: 5927 7067; 24-hour ER hotline: 5927 7120. 9-11 West Jiangtai Road, Chaoyang District. www.beijing.ufh.com.cn

LifeLine Shanghai: Accepts China-wide calls for year-round free, confidential, and anonymous emotional support, 10am-10pm. 021 6279 8990; www.lifeline-shanghai.com

MAKE 'INCLUSIVITY' YOUR MANTRA IN 2018

A ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION WITH SOME OF BEIJING'S MOST PROMINENT LGBT VOICES

By Kyle Mullin



gay leisure spaces and tourism in Beijing. The panel discussed the importance of LGBT-friendly events, along with deeper measures that can lead to more lasting, beneficial, and progressive change. Below, we've highlighted some of the most insightful comments from that discussion.

Ying Xin, Beijing LGBT Center:

LGBT life has improved considerably in Beijing recently. We can now see many LGBT-friendly restaurants around town. Ten years ago, people had to go to more underground places.

Christopher Lee, Beijing International Studies University:

I'm relatively new to Beijing; I've only

Compassion, empathy, and inclusiveness. Together, those terms should become a mantra of sorts for Beijingers thinking of goodwill and self betterment in 2018. At least that's the conclusion reached by some of the capital's most prominent LGBT voices during a recent roundtable discussion held at the Beijing LGBT Center.

Our participants included Ying Xin, director of the Beijing LGBT Center; Mondo Wang, owner of Adam's (billed as one of Sanlitun's first gay bars upon opening in 2015); Glenn Schuitman, creative director and founding partner at the since closed Pop-Up Beijing (which prided itself on hosting inclusive events and being a safe space); and Christopher Lee, a student at Beijing International Studies University who has conducted a survey about

been here 16 months. Before, I had always assumed Beijing would be more conservative, so I was pleasantly surprised to see that it has a large number of safe spaces in schools and in leisure areas, particularly where there are lots of foreigners. I was inspired to explore that further with my study. I don't think, from a constitutional perspective, that Beijing has turned the corner on these matters yet, but from a social perspective it's quite promising.

Mondo Wang, Adam's: My bar was founded as a gay bar a few years ago, but the clientele has since become way more obviously mixed. All my straight and LGBT friends come together, young and old, drink and party, make yellow jokes [jokes of a sexual nature], and have

PHOTOS: UNI YOU

a great time. Even plenty of transgender people come now – recently I saw a very handsome female to male transgender customer at my bar, and I thought it was really amazing. Things really have changed quite a bit in Beijing.

YX: Yes, things are better now. But there is still a lot of discrimination. A recent survey conducted by Peking University determined that only a fraction of LGBT people in China are completely out, especially in the workplace, because they don't feel that those offices are safe spaces. At Western companies it's usually better, but if you're talking about domestic companies it's another story. So last year we worked with Google and Bayer at their headquarters in Beijing. They invited us to organize staff training seminars about inclusiveness. And we've done the same for staff at local businesses like Great Leap Brewing.

So if you want to help, aside from volunteering or attending an event, you can also go to your workplace and ask your boss to invite us to give your colleagues some seminars.

CL: I think that's a great idea. It's good to change the typical dynamic at most offices, and create more dialogue about diversity and inclusion. Part of it can be simple and fun – like instead of having a casual Friday, have everyone wear a particular colored shirt as a sign and symbol. It's all about making diversity and inclusiveness more mainstream, instead of volunteering at one event or making one donation and thinking "Tada! I did it! I'm a supporter!" Because, of course, the long term goal is to not think about gay or LGBT spaces but just inclusive spaces in general.

Glenn Schuitman, Pop-Up Beijing: Yes, it really is crucial to make such attitudes more mainstream. But that's not to say events aren't important as well. And yet, I also think we need to bring more nuanced thinking to events and fundraising for the "gay community." For instance: One of the key charities we worked with at Pop-Up was the China Red Ribbon Foundation. We not only gave them money, but we also shared their story and highlighted and sponsored one of their specific programs, the Blessing Bag program, and that had nothing to do with the LGBT community.

The China Red Ribbon Foundation is all about working with communities to reduce the transmission of HIV and support the health challenges that individuals who have HIV face. This particular Blessing Bag program is for mothers and babies in poor rural communities, and it involves raising money for bags filled with

clothing, towels, toys, nappies, and feeders. Those bags are a symbol of giving, but the program is focused on the fathers, who are the decision makers in these communities; the father decides to take on this box, while also pledging to encourage healthy birthing practices, follow health procedures, and so on.

When we held up those blessing bags and told that story in Chinese and English to our diverse audience at Pop-Up, we were showing that each of us can make a difference by donating. We wanted to not only support organizations that directly help the LGBT community, we also wanted to help programs that show HIV affects so many other people, not just gay men. Through these events, and sharing these stories, we can remember that we don't have to separate ourselves, that we can be inclusive.

CL: That's the next step that needs to be taken. Because many LGBT people don't want to be pigeonholed into LGBT spaces, they want to be in a space that's accepting and inclusive in general, not just in terms of sexual orientation but also gender, race, and more. It's about pushing the agenda of inclusivity, diversity, and acceptance.

So if I could suggest anything, it would be for Beijingers to try and be more inclusive, accepting and respectful in general. Because we are all people at the end of the day, and if you decide to be more respectful of people, you will eventually become more sensitive and empathetic to everyone you come into contact with.

To learn more about resources related to Beijing's LGBT community, visit www.bjlgbtcenter.org.cn.



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: CHRISTOPHER LEE, YING XIN,
MONDO WANG, GLENN SCHUITMANN



HELPING OUT OUR FURRY FRIENDS

WHERE TO ADOPT RESCUE ANIMALS IN BEIJING

By Tautvile Daugelaite

Adorning a copper plaque in Chengdu's panda reserve is one of Gandhi's most memorable quotes: "The greatness of a nation can be judged by the way its animals are treated." China still has a long way to go when it comes to animal cruelty but it is growing as a nation and education is progressing. Lead by example to help educate those around you on the importance of giving animals the respect, warmth, and love that they deserve. Below are just a few of the numerous animal care organizations operating in Beijing, as well as details as to how you can assist.

Girls4Paws

Girls4Paws is a community of private rescuers who foster animals in their homes while seeking suitable permanent residences. Started by Daphne Hutagalung, who is currently fostering five dogs and two cats, the organization was built to inspire individuals to take a proactive stance towards animal care, rather than posting a picture on WeChat and hoping someone else will do the rest. Hutagalung stresses that education is the key to responsible ownership, as it is

often the case that when a puppy's serious needs outgrow its cuteness, often landing them back in the same shelter that they were rescued from.

Help with: Monetary donations and adoption.

Contact: girlsforpaws@hotmail.com, WeChat: 138 1007 2919

A Voice for Animals

A Voice for Animals not only rescues abandoned animals but also works to prevent abandonment in the first place by educating current and prospective owners about the responsibilities that come with having a pet. Their talks and workshops are now extending to wildlife conservation and began when a group of volunteers traveled into rural China in October 2016 in order to salvage 25 dogs from a slaughter truck. The majority of those dogs have since been adopted while some still await a permanent home.

Help with: Donations, fostering, and adoption.

Contact: www.avoiceforanimals.wixsite.com/website, WeChat: AVoiceforAnimals1026

The Little Adoption Shop

Founded in 2011, The Little Adoption Shop is a no-kill, non-profit rescue shelter with three locations that currently house over 700 dogs. The organization takes dogs in from the street as well as rescuing them from meat trucks. That often means that many of them are injured, sick, disabled, or pregnant, which requires systematic medical attention. No matter how terminally ill or disabled, Little Adoption Shop swears to never give up on their dogs.

Help with: Adoption, education programs, and informing the public about responsible breeding practices.

Contacts: www.facebook.com/LittleAdoptionShop



Furry Tales

Running on the power and goodwill of volunteers, Furry Tales helps neglected cats, rabbits, and dogs to find new owners. Besides the traditional rescue and adoption process, the organization is also working on starting a "trap, neuter, and return" program in Beijing, thus helping to control the population of stray animals in the city. The founder of Furry Tales, Sarah Lovatt, ensures that animals first receive medical treatment so that they are safe to adopt. The organization covers all the costs for the foster families, from food and toys to medical bills.

Help with: Donations, volunteering, fostering, and adoption.

Contacts: furrytalesrescue@hotmail.com

Cat-Kind

Cat-Kind was founded by the organizers in the memory of a single stray kitten that they witnessed pass away after a period of homelessness. Unlike some of the other rescue organizations, Cat-Kind has a dedicated shelter space that they rent rather than fostering animals in their own apartments. They provide stays for stray and abandoned cats until they are healthy enough to move into their forever homes.



Help with:

Donations
(monetary or
via the Cat-Kind
wish list)

Contacts:

WeChat: Cat-
Kind_Connect





CHARITABLE PAST

EXAMPLES OF GOODWILL THROUGHOUT THE CHINESE AGES

By Jeremiah Jenne

Even centuries ago, the people of Beijing were willing to help those less fortunate, and throughout the city's recent history, there have been many institutions providing aid to the poor, the sick, and the displaced.

In the years following the Manchu conquest of Beijing in 1644, poorhouses known as (养济院 *yangjiyuan*) were opened throughout the city to assist those who had lost their homes or were the victims of natural disasters. The Manchu imperial family donated lavish sums to the poorhouses, including 80,000 ounces of silver from the Empress Dowager Xiaozhuang, during the great floods of 1653-1654. Not to be outdone, her grandson, the Kangxi Emperor gave over 100,000 ounces of silver during another devastating flood season in 1679.

The imperial government also operated soup kitchens (粥厂 *zhouchang*), which dispensed porridge and ran mostly in the winter months when there was little work, and food prices rose as the ground froze. Often based on the grounds of local temples, the gates to the kitchens would open at meal times and

the needy and hungry would rush inside as the monks and staff ladled out bowls of thin rice gruel cooked in massive iron vats.

Other institutions looked after the aged and alone, a particularly vulnerable population in a society where most people relied on their adult children for support once they had grown too old to work. Many of these endeavors were organized – or at least partially funded – by the state. The imperial court often showed a reflexive aversion to charities run entirely by private individuals or institutions. They were concerned that groups providing services which should be, in a perfect society at least, the responsibility of the state had the potential to create alternative centers of power.

At the same time, officials in the imperial period were stretched thin. The government served a whole empire, and while the imperial administration was impressive in its breadth, it tended to lack depth. This meant that the government even in the best of times relied on local elites, religious organizations, and other non-state entities to provide critical services like flood relief, poverty alleviation, and food distribution.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF GTING, FINE ART AMERICA

There were also debates in government about the wisdom of welfare. Some officials argued that too much generosity encouraged the poor to become lazy and dependent. It's refreshing to know that even 300 years ago, politicians could still act entitled and unsympathetic when it came to helping the less fortunate.

Beijing was also famous for its Provincial Halls (会馆 *hui guan*) where sojourners coming to the capital could rest and connect with fellow travelers from their home province. Many of these guild halls were located in the Qianmen area, and they filled during peak trading seasons or when students sat for the imperial exams. At other times, the Provincial Halls opened up their soup kitchens and "Benevolent Halls" (膳堂 *shantang*) that were modeled after the efforts of local elites in the provinces to give aid to their poorer neighbors. Charitable acts were one of the ways that the elite displayed their status in society.

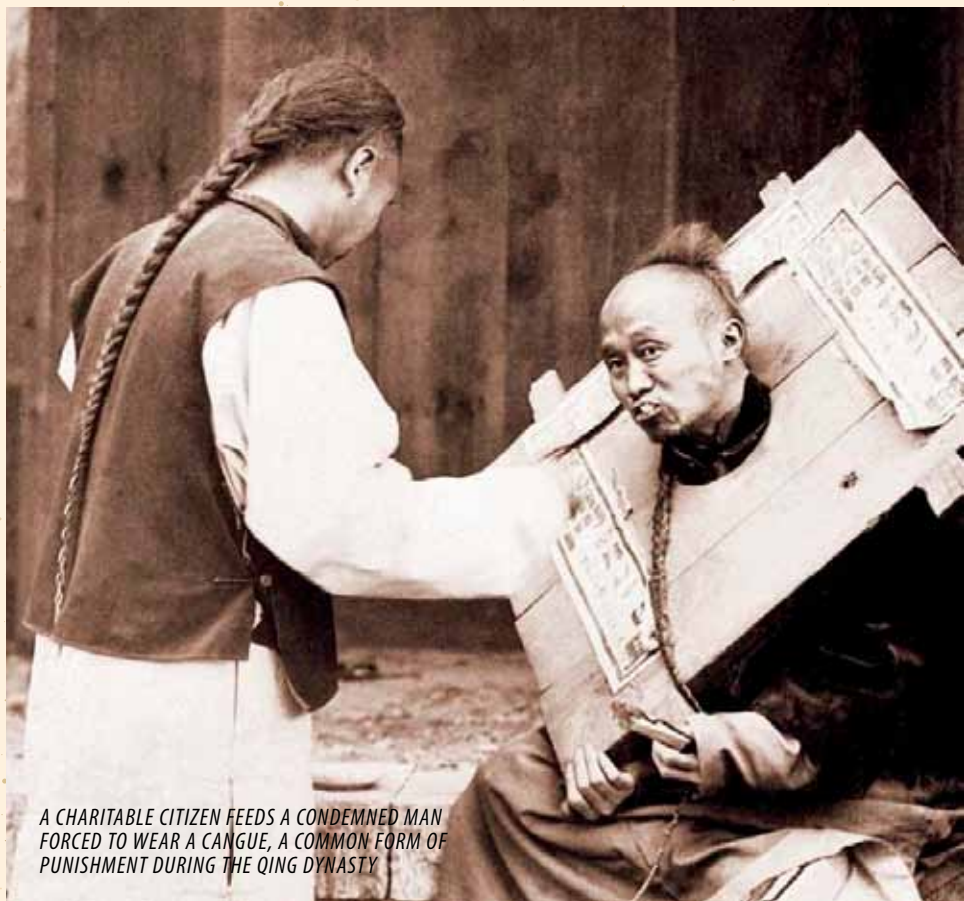
But too often the best efforts of the state and private citizens fell short of meeting the needs of Beijing's least fortunate. Not only floods but droughts and earthquakes, wars and rebellions, could drive people from their rural homes into the cities seeking food and shelter. Those who could find neither joined the ranks of the city's beggars.

In the late 19th century, thousands of beggars of all descriptions – naked, lame, mutilated, leprous, and insane – accosted travelers and locals alike as they made their way through the streets and markets. The commercial districts near the Qianmen Gate were particularly notorious for being thick with beggars. The beggars had their own guild and guild master who settled territorial disputes and extorted money from shopkeepers willing to pay

up front to avoid having the entryway of their stores blockaded by hungry vagrants.

The 19th century in Beijing also saw the introduction of a new form of charity as foreign missionaries opened schools for young, their own orphanages, and soup kitchens, as well as hospitals, and shelters. These institutions took advantage of the privileged position of foreigners, who were protected by the treaties signed between China and the foreign powers, to avoid government interference. In particular, the missionaries were well known for their clinics, dispensing the latest medicines and medical care even to those unable to pay.

While life in the capital has improved drastically for most folks when compared to previous times, today's NGOs and charities are following a long tradition in Beijing of helping the less fortunate despite facing many challenges in doing so. While the nature of charity has changed, compassion has not. Philanthropy and activism have a history in Beijing which goes back centuries and will hopefully continue for years to come.



A CHARITABLE CITIZEN FEEDS A CONDEMNED MAN FORCED TO WEAR A CANGUE, A COMMON FORM OF PUNISHMENT DURING THE QING DYNASTY

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

FOOD & DRINK

ARCADE // QUEENIE'S // MATCHA VILLAGE // SHANDONG PROV GOV // TRANSIT



BEERSMITH GASTROPUB'S SUNDAY ROAST AND BRUNCH

Beersmith Gastropub's new Sunday roast and brunch may just be your best new excuse to slob out on a Sunday. Featuring unfettered access to a carving station (think Australian rib of beef, leg of lamb, rotisserie chicken, crispy pork knuckle, and marinated ribs), sides of potato gratin and roasted vegetables, a seasonal starter (French oysters during our visit), as well as a dedicated egg station, and finally, cakes, pastries, and yogurt to tip you over the edge. As if you needed any further excuse not stand up ever again, Beersmith has also extended its happy hour, meaning buy-one-get-one-free on all craft beer, house and sparkling wine, spirits and mixers between 11am to 9pm. Sundays only, 11.30am-3pm. RMB 228 (includes a drink), additional RMB 168 for free-flow wine or beer. Beersmith Gastropub, 1/F, Hotel Jen, 1 Jianguomenwai Dajie, Chaoyang District (6505 2277 ext 6610)

PHOTO COURTESY OF BEERSMITH GASTROPUB

NIBBLES AND SIPS

2017 was the year of mall dining, characterized by the opening of a new restaurant-heavy section of China World Mall, and you can expect that trend to continue in 2018. The latest mall to hit the capital is WF Central, a high-end dining, retail, and lifestyle development from Hong Kong developers HK Land. Shops play second fiddle to dozens of restaurants, which include home-grown brands like Tribe, Hatsune, and Tomacado, as well as international chains such as Putien (from Singapore) and Café Landmark (from Hong Kong). So far, so classy but we're most excited about The Cheesecake Factory, which is set to open in WF Central, the first branch in Beijing.

The team from Moka Bros are also moving west, opening their first branch outside of Chaoyang District on the sixth floor of Xidan Joy City. That makes four venues in Beijing and the team shows no signs of stopping any time soon. Moka Bros also have outlets in Chengdu, Hangzhou, and Shanghai.

Not to be outdone by its younger sibling, Mosto still keeps us busy with plenty of promos and pop-ups. Their latest innovation is an after-dinner happy hour that runs every day from 9-11 pm, during which time all cocktails and glasses of house wine are RMB 40. A great deal during the winter when the weather is too cold to go bar hopping after dinner.

Over in Chaoyang Park, The Rug has finally reopened after a year of extensive renovations. Management were obviously not satisfied with using the occasion as an excuse to rest on their laurels, instead pushing themselves to create a new winter menu. The new dishes range from Rougié duck foie gras with berry mousse and bread slices to d'Argent No. 3 oysters, along with beetroot meatball soup and apple cider bacon mussels. TLDR; These are dishes designed to salvage you from sub-zero temperatures.

Sad news came at the end of January when everyone's favorite Korean-Mexican fusion restaurant (okay, the only Korean-Mexican fusion restaurant), Palms LA Kitchen and Bar, announced the closure of their Gulou branch. Fans of kimchi quesadillas and galbi tacos need not fear, however, as Palms' Liangmaqiao branch remains alive and kicking, and they have plenty of new projects in the works, including a new express concept in Chaoyang Joy City.





TASTEMAKERS

WHERE TO SAMPLE 2018'S TOP FOOD TRENDS

By Robynne Tindall

Early in November 2017, American retailer Whole Foods released a forecast of the food trends they predict will be keeping our palates busy in 2018 compiled by their team of global buyers and experts. Since we're not lucky enough to have Whole Foods in Beijing, we thought we'd help you stay ahead of the curve by telling you where you can already enjoy some of the trends they've identified.

Middle Eastern cuisine

Calling the diverse cuisine of an entire region a trend seems a tad reductive but there is no doubt that the flavors of this part of the world are having a moment in restaurants. According to Whole Foods, "trending Middle Eastern ingredients include pomegranate, eggplant, cucumber, parsley, mint, tahini, tomato jam, and dried fruits." The clever folks at Hatchery have gotten ahead of this trend with their new Tel Aviv concept, the menu for which features dishes such as eggplant grilled with pomegranate, mint, and ras el hanout and bulgar baharat falafel salad, inspired by Hatchery general manager Ben Mankarious' trip to the Israeli capital earlier last year. You can also stop by one of Beijing's many other tried and tested Middle Eastern restaurants, such as Sanlitun favorite Biteapitta, which was recently inducted into *the Beijinger's* Dining Hall of Fame.

Try it now: Tel Aviv by Hatchery, Biteapitta, Al Safir

Superfood supplement powders

Up your breakfast game in 2018 by stirring a "superfood powder" into your smoothie or porridge. You've no doubt heard of antioxidant-rich matcha green tea powder and you probably have some au courant turmeric floating around your kitchen cupboard. But the trend for health-augmenting powders goes way beyond that, including a wide variety of so-called superfoods such as maca (made from a root grown in the Peruvian Andes that is thought to help manage stress) and spirulina (a type of freshwater algae – yum). Online lifestyle platform Tru Living sells a variety of superfood powders, including the aforementioned spirulina and maca (from RMB 220 for 500g). Or try the Essential Greens powder from popular brand MyMaha, which features 11 different superfoods, including wheatgrass, spinach, raspberries, spirulina, and moringa leaves. Guangzhou-based Go Vegan sells things like activated charcoal, açai powder, and kale powder. Both also sell vegan protein powder.

Try it now: Tru Living, Go Vegan, Tribe Organic

"Functional" mushrooms

Certain types of mushrooms have long been used in Chinese medicine to support the immune system and help flush toxins from the body, and it seems like the rest of the world is catching on. Whole Foods points to cordyceps and reishi

(known in Chinese as *lingzhi*), both of which are thought to have anti-oxidant, longevity-boosting properties and have been popular in China for years. If you're feeling brave, you can pick them up from any TCM pharmacy or Tru Living also sells cordyceps powder (RMB 390), which can be added to soups or hot drinks.

Try it now: Tongrentang pharmacy (branches across Beijing), Tru Living

New advances in vegan food

Whole Foods says that 2018 will be the year when brands take vegan products to the next level, crafting milks, yogurts, and even simulated meat products from different combinations of nuts and vegetables. There are already some great vegan products on the market in Beijing, such as Yeyo's coconut yogurt. Restaurants like Root Pop in Shuangjing, meanwhile, are making tasty, creative vegan versions of things like burgers and hot dogs – so much so that you won't even miss the meat. Vegan staples are also often easy to make yourself. Take nut milk, for example: Simply soak the nuts of your choice (I like a mix of almonds, Brazil nuts, and cashews) in water overnight, drain and rinse, then blend with double the volume of water and strain the mixture through a fine cloth. You can then sweeten the taste with honey or maple syrup, or leave plain for cooking and baking. Taobao store Enjoy Nature is a reliable source of good value nuts.

Try it now: Root Pop, Yeyo

Tacos

We've been saying it all year: Mexican food in Beijing has never been better. According to the Whole Foods forecast, tacos in all their myriad forms are having a moment, so there's really no excuse not to gorge yourself on the tempting offerings from restaurants like Q Mex Taqueria (get the jalapeño butter shrimp tacos), Pebbles Courtyard, and, of course, Taco Bar. Whole Foods' report also says that tacos are moving away from what might be considered "traditional" components (e.g. corn or wheat tortillas) to include any and all wrappers and fillings, such as sheets of nori used as wrappers. To get in on this trend, order the hand rolls at Hana, rolled table-side with your choice of ingredients.

Try it now: Q Mex Taqueria, Taco Bar, Palms LA Kitchen and Bar

ARCADE

BEAT 'EM UP AND DRINK 'EM DOWN AT HATCHERY'S NEWEST CONCEPT SPACE

Daily 10.30am-late. 5Lmeet Guomao (Formerly Trader's Hotel), 1 Jianguomen Outer Street, Chaoyang District (6500 2884)
朝阳区建国门外大街1号国贸共享际一层（原国贸饭店）

Polished concrete may just be Beijing's favorite F&B non-look du jour. At Arcade, the cold warehouse aesthetic couples with black fencing, white tiles, primary-colored furnishings, and neon lights to conjure a setting akin to a Double Dragon level and the halcyon days of side-scrolling beat-'em-ups. We suppose blood would certainly scrub out easily of the Hatchery's newest venue, located in what used to be the all-day dining space in the former Trader's Hotel (now 5Lmeet Guomao at China World). Fortunately, you're more likely to experience a firm thrashing on one of foosball or ping pong tables or free-to-play arcade machines dotted through the bar than to suffer a steel barrel to the face.

When you're not getting your arse handed to you on a plate, regain some finger dexterity and mental determination via Arcade's culinary wares; currently a selection from two of Hatchery's previously tested food concepts, Canteen and Common Burger. The former acts as a global salad bar – choose from premade healthy renditions of meals from across the world: poke (RMB 65) to bun cha (RMB 50), and Southern-style rib bowl (RMB 50) to Mexican el pollo picante (RMB 50). Alternatively, build your own for RMB 40-50. At Common Burger, which

you order from the neighboring diner-style counter, you can go large with their excellently priced range of beef, chicken, fish, and veggie burgers (RMB 25-45) and a variety of sides (RMB 25-40). The kitchen here may be limited compared to that of Hatchery's original Zhangzizhong Lu site but the strongest attributes survive, including good service and superior (to the point of nearly being overwhelming) meal personalization.

The bar, a separate island towards the entrance, has a similarly extensive menu, spanning draft and bottled beers and cider (RMB 35-55), wines (RMB 50-60 per glass or RMB 210-285 for the bottle), cocktails (RMB 50-80), and punch bowls for the truly brave (RMB 288).

Arcade makes for a fun alternative to the CBD's snootier establishments. Given that the low prices remain despite the shinier Chaoyang setting, we can imagine that it will receive its fair share of foot traffic from young-at-heart office staff and post-work pinters alike. However, success of the venue will for us depend on whether the machines are kept in working condition – lame joysticks and sticky buttons are the bane of any gamer – and care for the merchandise will elevate Arcade from a simple gimmick to a knock-out hangout spot. *Tom Arnstein*



PHOTO COURTESY OF ARCADE



QUEENIE'S SANDWICHES & BAR

POPULAR PUB GRUB JOINT OPENS HUGE NEW CHAOYANGMEN BRANCH

Daily, 24-hours. Bldg C3, Chaowaimen, Chaowai Nanjie, Chaoyang District (behind U-Town Mall)

朝阳区朝外南街朝外们公寓C座底商（朝外们大厦东侧）

Yonghegong regulars are sure to be familiar with Queenie's Sandwiches & Bar, a fast food hotspot that has outlasted many of its bricked-up neighbors to become a surprisingly resilient Dongcheng staple. Fans of that spot are about to have their notions of it drastically shifted, however, given that Queenie's (aka QS, which you're sure to recognize from its dotted light logo) owners Wang "Jim" Zheng and his wife Feng "Queenie" Yuqian are moving towards expanding the late-night sandwich shop to chain status. The first step to doughy Beijing domination is their recently opened Chaowai Nanjie location, across the road from U-Town mall.

Aside from landing in this drastically different, still untapped locale, QS' second branch boasts a far broader floor space with almost double the seating of the original, an expanded beer fridge and bar, as well as a better-equipped kitchen. Those latter two points are especially important because they have allowed bartender and F&B manager Adam Gottschalk of Ron Mexico fame to move in and work his magic.

Gottschalk and Wang have been long-time friends, initially meeting as colleagues when Gottschalk worked as the national business development manager for a spirits distribution company in China. Prior to that, Wang, a

Beijing native, had worked at the Kempinski Hotel for five years as a baker, a job he snagged after studying pastry and bread making at a trade school. It's those skills that Gottschalk wants to help the Queenie's founder better make use of, espousing Wang as one of the very best bakers in Beijing.

During our visit to the new Chaoyangmen branch, we tried QS' hunger-quelling wares, including their line of burgers (priced at a very reasonable RMB 35). The barbecue bacon was a standout, thanks to its juicy Australian beef patty, thick and salty bacon hunks, crispy fried onions, and a rich layer of melted cheddar.

There are also pizzas, the entire range of sandwiches and burgers found at the original location, as well as Wang's Kempinski-esque pastries, the latter of which should help draw the café crowd during the day in order to maximize the space.

The team's enthusiasm for this new project is clear in both the product and the way they describe their plans for the space, with Wang expressing hopes to open an even bigger third location before long. Though they already have their hands full with this sizable new joint, the potential for this dynamic trio to bring the bright QS logo far and wide is already apparent. *Kyle Mullin*

MATCHA VILLAGE

MATCHA MEETS MODERN ART AT SANLITUN SOHO'S MATCHA VILLAGE

Daily 10.30am-9pm. 2/F, Bldg 6, Sanlitun Soho, 8 Gongti Beilu, Chaoyang District (6581 0571)

抹茶屯：朝阳区工体北路8号院三里屯SOHO6号商场2层

Sanlitun might already be too saturated for yet another matcha shop, but Matcha Village is not just any matcha shop. Sharing the venue with the Liahona Art Living Space, it may just be Beijing's largest pastry shop-slash-art gallery, occupying 800sqm of Sanlitun Soho's second floor. Thankfully, Matcha Village also avoids the price hike trap that usually befalls cafés set in a gallery or museum, with wares that are affordable for the quality. The modern setting feels apt for the challenge and will likely draw inquisitive and well-off Sanlitunites to its café space, dotted with wooden tables and chairs positioned so that patrons can take in the surrounding art and sculptures.

Up to now, such fans of matcha are likely to talk about the culture of drinking powdered green tea leaves in reference to Japan's rich matcha culture and the accompanying *wagashi*, or Japanese confections. But consumption of this much-beloved drink in fact originated during China's Tang dynasty (AD 618-907) before becoming popular in the Song dynasty, leaving us with the tradition of mixing ground green tea with hot water that we see today. That method made its way to Japan in the late 12th century and gradually evolved, eventually taking the country by storm. Claiming to use the best Chinese matcha, Matcha Village wants to help illuminate the best local varieties through their fine pastries.

These desserts also include matcha renditions of ice cream, mille crêpes, swiss rolls, tiramisu, mochi, chocolate truffles, cookies, and even cheese tarts, as well as an assortment of matcha drinks (RMB 26-42). Among the sweets we tried, the best was the matcha cheesecake (RMB 48), which catches the eye with its dome shape, not unlike those found at the top of churches across Russia, and is decorated with coconut crisps, charcoal powder, and gold foil to finish. After you ruthlessly cut the artwork-like cake in two, revel in the combination of the matcha ice cream-like smooth exterior, the rich chocolate ganache base, and the cheesecake interior, which is also impressed with a hint of coconut. The matcha mille crêpes cake (RMB 48) is also a must-try and is purported to have an impressive 69 layers (no, we didn't count them).

Having stretched your belly, take a walk around the gallery, which makes for a great change of pace to the hustle and bustle of the surrounding shops. They revamp the exhibition monthly, and when we visited it was all about cats – paintings, sculptures, and artworks of felines from various artists – giving us another excuse to visit and pig out on Matcha Village's delicious range of matcha goodies (not that we needed one). *Tracy Wang*



PHOTO COURTESY OF MATCHA VILLAGE



Z

... **zhajiangmian** 炸酱面

Zhajiangmian may not have the star power of Beijing's most famous dish, Peking duck, but it is still one of the city's favorites. Although the name *zhajiangmian* literally means "fried sauce noodles," the sauce is not, in fact, fried; instead, it is made from diced pork belly simmered with yellow soy bean paste. This sauce is then mixed with thick wheat noodles and strips of radish and cucumber. Beijing's version of *zhajiangmian* is rich and sweet but different cuisines around China put their own spin on it, adding ingredients such as chili sauce or sweet bean paste.

... **Zhejiang cuisine** 浙菜

One of the so-called "eight great cuisines of China," which also includes more widely-known cuisines such as Sichuan and Cantonese, Zhejiang cuisine is lauded by its many fans for its balance of the delicate cooking methods of southern China and the strong, salty flavors of northern China. Of all the permutations of Zhejiang cuisine, the fare of the capital Hangzhou is the most famous and the most refined.

... **zongzi** 粽子

These steamed glutinous rice dumplings wrapped in banana or reed leaves are most commonly associated with Dragon Boat Festival. A common tale about the origin of *zongzi* comes from the Warring States Period when poet Qu Yuan drowned himself in a river after failing to warn the Chu king about the coming Qin invasion. Respectful villagers threw packets of rice into the river to stop the fish from eating his body. A gruesome origin story, perhaps, but there is nothing so horrid about these pyramidal treats, which may arrive sweet (common in northern China) or savory (common in southern China).

... **zhu** 猪

When it comes to meat consumption in China, pork reigns supreme. From belly to ears to trotters, no part of the pig goes unused. In 2016, Chinese consumers bought 40.85 million tonnes of pork according to research firm Euromonitor. That number is dropping rapidly, however, as people become more health-conscious and vegetarian diets start to trend.



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Just north of the Third Ring Road sits the unassuming Shandong Provincial Government complex and its adjoining white and airy restaurant, masked from the parking lot by beige chiffon drapes. Visiting on a Sunday night, the restaurant bustled with families savoring one last hearty meal before the work week commenced. The staff were friendly, patient, and willing to walk us through the sizable menu of Shandong delicacies (*lu cai* for short), considered to be one of the eight great Chinese cuisines.

Shandong's deep influence on China's northern dishes may not be immediately apparent at your run-of-the-mill restaurant but here that rich history of cooking methods – quick frying, stewing, roasting, and boiling – and ingredients – heavy on the ginger, onions, vegetables, and seafood – come together for a Prov Gov menu far superior in breadth than many of its competitors, eschewing lackluster staples for innovative takes on traditional dishes.

A prime example would be the fried radish balls (RMB 48) which come neatly piled in a deep-fat fryer basket, a deft touch rarely seen in these official outlets, and loaded with a satisfying chewiness and a hint of dried squid. The Shandong-style pancakes (RMB 58), ostensibly several deconstructed *jianbing*, were a workout for the jaw given that the porous wraps sported a texture akin to once-wet-but-now-dry cardboard. Luckily the accompanying soy

bean sauce with shredded pork helped each mouthful slip down.

The cured muntjac sausage (RMB 68) was a homestyle novelty with subtle flavors of chili, aniseed, and *baijiu* but its stronger notes rendered it an acquired taste. A lighter option would be the “get fold green food” (RMB 28), otherwise known as zucchini thinly sliced edgewise and soaked in a slightly sweet sauce. This dish is yet another testament to the beautiful care that the staff devote to presentation, the vegetable knotted in a wave pattern and each mouthful of strands giving a crisp bite. However, it was the hot and sour soup (RMB 38) that stole the show thanks to a perfect balance of sourness and generous chunks of warming duck blood, sliced onion, and poached egg as well as a slow-burn chili finish to dismiss the cold from your bones.

Despite Shandong Prov Gov scoring high marks for its modern twists, we left feeling disappointed by the limited flavors and textures on offer, which had instead been seemingly replaced by a broad chewiness. That made us wonder: Did we miss a trick by not ordering one of the many (read: six pages worth) sea cucumbers on offer, another of Shandong's rubbery specialties? I guess we'll just have to wait till next time to find out. *Tom Arnstein*

TRANSIT

POST-RENOVATIONS, TRANSIT'S UPSCALE TAKE ON SICHUAN CUISINE STILL DELIGHTS

Swanky Taikooli North used to play second fiddle to its more accessible relative to the south, but in 2017 a couple of popular new openings, including Restaurant Y and Baker & Spice, have started to draw in the crowds. However, one venue that has never had a problem tempting people toward Taikooli North is upscale Sichuan restaurant Transit, which has recently reopened following renovations with new interiors and a refreshed menu.

The secret to Transit's success, to our minds at least, has always been the skillful way the team blends elements of East and West – East being, of course, the food and West being the decor and high-end service. Post-renovations, the interiors have more touches of the Orient, but details such as crystal glasses and imported marble tabletops keep the vibe firmly fine dining.

When sloppily done, Sichuan food can be deafeningly one-note, a never-ending onslaught of chilies and numbing peppercorns. While the heat still smolders at Transit, it is applied with a much more deft hand, drawing inspiration from Sichuan's regional cuisines and even as

far afield as Fujian province. Take the Zigong-style fava beans, for example, a dish inspired by the cooking of the salt mining region around the city of Zigong. There is barely any chili employed here; Transit's chef instead relies on the flavors of ginger and citrusy Sichuan pepper. More recognizable Sichuan dishes, such as *koushuiji* (mala spicy chicken) are rendered with equal aplomb, thanks to a judicious selection of ingredients. That aforementioned chicken is spicy enough to make your mouth water, as the dish's Chinese name implies, but not so much that you'll be constantly reaching for your water glass.

Don't leave without stopping by the bar for a cocktail, where the Chinese influence has crept in as well. Try the Transit gin and tonic, which is mixed with a shot of *huangjiu* (yellow wine) and garnished with a dried, salted plum, which gives the drink a slightly savory edge. The bartender can also recommend a more traditional aged *huangjiu* to pair with your meal instead of red or white wine – just one of the many ways Transit stands out from the crowd. *Robynne Tindall*



PHOTOS COURTESY OF TRANSIT

P.S. WE ATE YOU

mighty 'shroom vegan burger

Slow Boat, RMB 50

Known for having one of the best beef burgers in town, Slow Boat might not be the first place to spring to mind when looking for vegan fare. That's slowly changing though thanks to fresh input from their new (vegan) head of marketing. The burger itself features a shiitake mushroom, red bean, and buckwheat patty, and a splotch of cilantro aioli to loosen up what in less capable hands could come out dry and dull. Best yet, there's a slow burn that you won't get from any of the other meatier substitutes.

clam, zucchini, and spinach linguine

Bottega (lunch menu, RMB 88 for two courses)

It can be a challenge to make it to Bottega and order anything other than pizza but straying out of your coma-inducing comfort zone has its benefits. Take for example, Bottega's gnocchi primavera, launched by their new Neapolitan chef as part of their rotating lunch menu. True to its name, the dish itself is an effervescent mix of greens, reds, and yellows, the homemade and chewy gnocchi in a rich cream sauce acting as a base for the crunchy bacon bits, fresh basil leaves, saffron, and asparagus to come to life.

beijing's most expensive dessert spread

Now Mansion (RMB 1,080 for a set menu)

With the amount of money flying around Beijing (flying far, far away from us, we might add) it's no wonder that if you peel back the grimy veneer you'll find some venues cashing in on cold, hard *tuhao* cash. In the case of Baiziyuan's Now Mansion, the price may just about be worth it (if you have money to burn) with RMB 1,080 buying you a three-dessert and petit four set, and coffee and tea, all served on Meissen porcelain and in a suitably refined surrounding of dark oak and European antiques. We say, save it for when the parents come.

tiramisu cheesecake

Cheesecake Factory (RMB 67 per slice)

A sneak-peek of the newly opened The Cheesecake Factory's signature tiramisu cheesecake did not disappoint us this past month. With each slice slated to hold a whopping 1,000 calories, this isn't a dessert you'll want to treat yourself to often but when dense swirls of chocolate cream atop a rich and creamy cheesecake and crumbly coffee base stare you down, it can be hard to say no. The Cheesecake Factory's opening looks to be another win for Wangfujing (WF) Central's flourishing F&B selections.

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MAO LIVEHOUSE

WUKESONG VENUE OFFERS ENOUGH QUALITY SOUND AND SPACE TO WARRANT THE TRIP

G23 Huaxing LIVE, 69 Fuxing Road, Wukesong, Haidian District (6503 5168)

海淀区复兴路69号华熙LIVE hi-up G23

It took long enough but the new and officially branded Mao Livehouse Wukesong is up and running. The 800-capacity venue – owned by Shijilemeng, who have already opened five different Mao branches across the country including in Chongqing, Shanghai, and Kunming – has been steadily churning out events and shows since their opening party last November with no sign of letting up.

Located in the up-and-coming mall complex Hi-Up (with direct access courtesy of Wukesong station exit B), which is essentially a subterranean, open-faced version of The Village in Sanlitun, the area has plenty of eateries

to fill up on beforehand.

As for the venue itself, Mao Livehouse does not disappoint. In many ways it's the perfect-sized venue; similar to that of the original (copyright lawsuit pending) Gulou Dongdajie Mao Livehouse if it was coupled with the layout of the third floor of Tango. Everything is allocated to the one 700sqm space, with a bar hidden to the right of the stage.

The real meat of the place, though, is its simple and effective stage – not too deep, not too high, with no filler photo pit in between – as well as its sound system. For their opening gig, the venue hosted heavyweight Ningxia

northwest folk rockers Buyi and Yunnan southwest reggae outfit Kawa and everything felt right from the solid sound, to the flow of the space.

While Wukesong isn't exactly a prime location for a live music venue, the fact of the matter is, there are a large number of patrons and music-goers in Haidian that will surely welcome having a place to call their own, especially if you include the university crowds a little further north.

Their bookings thus far indicate that Mao Livehouse Wukesong will have no problem showcasing touring bands from both here and abroad – punk mainstays Brain Failure rolled through as part of their nationwide tour, and last year also saw Thai post-rockers Inspirative take the stage.

At the same time, the venue will entice fans of more seasoned mainstream headliners like Guangzhou rap sensation 3Bangz who got in his licks, and Mandarin pop singer Chen Yiling. Mao isn't afraid to mix it up and shine a light on smaller, more niche events, as indicated by their hosting of the Sad Robot Party, an afternoon into evening event showcasing an array of visual artists and bands centered on the theme of, you guessed it, sad robots.

With the plan to schedule earlier shows that end by 10.30pm so as to get folks back to the subway on time (hot tip: the night bus to the center of town might actually be quicker than the subway), Mao Livehouse may very well be the perfect weekday main course or, better yet, a satisfying appetizer for the weekend. *Will Griffith*



A LONE FAN TAKES THE OPPORTUNITY TO SURF MAO'S PIT

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RED GATE GALLERY

LONGTIME ART SPACE RESETTLES IN 798

Tue-Sun 10am-6pm. 2 Jiuxianqiao Road, 798 Art District, Chaoyang District

朝阳区酒仙桥路2号798艺术区院内

Red Gate Gallery – originally perched within the regal Ming Dynasty Dongbianmen Tower, a stunning historical relic that housed the gallery from 1991 – officially reopened in December of last year at their new 798 location. Their maiden exhibition celebrated new beginnings by looking back to the past; showcasing works by the artists the gallery has represented since it began, such as Tao Hongjing, Li Jinguo, Chen Jiaye, Cheng Linggang, and Li Xiaofeng, among other equally weighty names.

The new venue is split across two levels: the first is a spacious and well-illuminated exhibition space, whereas the second provides ample office room for the staff to keep busy with Red Gate's multiple endeavors. Besides their regular exhibitions, Red Gate also runs the Red Gate Residency Program and projects conducted in partnership with a solid network of cultural spaces locally and worldwide, such as The Opposite House, the Associação Cultural Videobrasil, and the Goethe Institute, among others.

Located alongside a number of galleries that consistently draw relevant shows to this largely over-commercialized part of town, Red Gate wants to pique the interest of visitors interested in China's contemporary art evolution. The gallery has indeed been witness to, and also benefitted from, what could be considered an opening up of attitudes towards art over the past couple of decades.

This is actually not the first time that Red Gate has settled in 798; in 2006 they opened a "white cube"-style space complete with a Bauhaus curved saw-tooth roof. "798 [district] was still rough and raw, with little paving, potholes, and no public lighting. Contemporary Chinese art and its entourage complemented the factory workers still there," says Brian Wallace, Red Gate's founder, of the gallery's first foray into the area over a decade ago. 798 was indeed a different place back then when compared to the coffee shop-laden maze we are accustomed to nowadays. However, rather than mourning the inevitable development, we can find solace in the fact that Red Gate is embracing the need to push the envelope in terms of shows and content, a philosophy that has been met with as much enthusiasm as their new environs.

For example, the gallery's new location is also an opportunity to bring Red Gate to a wider Chinese audience. Wallace says, "not only are we creating more exposure for the blue-chip artists in Red Gate but we are also bringing a wide range of new and younger artists through our association with SURGEArt.com," a platform dedicated to bringing into the public eye emerging young artists overseen by the establishment. Visitors should expect a reinvigorated program with events, exhibitions, and weekend pop-ups drawing crowds in their own right, regardless of Red Gate's already strong reputation.

GJ Cabrera

GO

BREW PUBS // BUSAN // GEORGE TOWN // UNMANNED STORES // ZERO WASTE



GREAT WALL HELICOPTER PHOTOGRAPHY TOUR

If you've got a little extra cash to burn (or you're flush courtesy of parental supervision), why not go big and take a little-seen aerial view of the Great Wall courtesy of a hair-raising helicopter fly around. Flights include 15-30 minute views of the Badaling or Mutianyu sections of the Great Wall, at heights of 50-300m, and provide the perfect opportunity for panoramic photographs of the plebian hordes from above. What better way is there to celebrate Beijing's recent spate of blue sky days? 8.30am-midday. USD 285 (per person for 3 passengers, includes transport to the helicopter from Beijing and entrance). More info at www.tour-beijing.com

PHOTO COURTESY OF TOUR BEIJING

GO

FIVE NEW BEER BARS AND BREWPUBS NOT TO MISS IN 2018

By Tracy Wang

2017 gave us beer devotees plenty of reasons to celebrate. No matter how many bars you managed to tick off your list by the end of last year, there always seemed to be yet another that had just opened up, not to mention those that came and went before you managed to even set foot inside. If you're overwhelmed by all that variety, then let us be your guide. Aside from honorable mentions NBeer Pub Wukesong, Jing-A Brewpub Xingfucun, Heaven Supermarket III, Regain Element, East Hotel's Craft Container, and Hotel Jen's Beersmith Gastropub, below are our five favorite beer pubs that opened in the past 12 months.

Deal Beer

Opened at the end of 2017 by Peiping Machine's former manager Max Zhou, the modest Deal Beer sits on the east side of Jiaodaokou Bei'ertiao and houses 11 draft beers (RMB 30-55) from the likes of Ballast Point, Rogue, Goose Island, and a bunch of domestic brewers (rotated on a weekly basis). They also offer beer cocktails with various gin bases. Having grown up in the hutongs, Zhou says he opened Deal as a means to bring beer lovers together in a traditional Beijing setting – something that's getting harder and harder to find.

Daily 5pm-1am. 159 Jiaodaokou Bei'ertiao, Dongcheng District (135 0108 7611)

东城区交道口北二条159号



DEAL BEER

Transmountain Taphouse

Nestled away in Zuojiazhuang, Transmountain Taphouse (pictured to the left) certainly fills the gap in the market northeast of the Second Ring Road with its selection of 30 local and imported beers on tap. Though draft beer is not particularly cheap here, with prices ranging from RMB 40-90 a pint or a flight of five for RMB 120, the decent range, plus additional bottled beers in the fridge, make it a good choice for anyone wanting to explore past Sanlitun's more established vendors. There are also a few simple bar food nibbles to line your stomach.

Daily 5pm-midnight. 12 Zuojiazhuang Xijie, Chaoyang District (8069 9907)

闯山酒社：朝阳区左家庄西街12号

Peiping Machine Gongti

Peiping Machine Gongti may not have the fanciest digs, seeing as it's located on the quiet side of Gongti, in the back alley behind a slew of rowdier bars and clubs. And yet its 64 taps (double that of the original brewpub in Fangjia Hutong), mean that it has the largest imported and domestic draft selection of any Beijing brewpub. The cooling rooms full of kegs, regulators, and pipes that weave their way underground and link the kegs to the bar make this spacious brewpub even more surreal and a wonder to explore.

Daily 5pm-2am. 8 Gongti Xilu, Chaoyang District (6588 0841)

北平机器工体店：朝阳区工人体育场西路8号



PEIPING MACHINE GONGTI

Yun Brew

Another option a little further out is Xiaoyun Lu's Yun Brew. Yun offers 21 local, imported, and in-house brews for between RMB 45-88. That's certainly not the cheapest price range in town by any means, but when a flight of any four is RMB 68, or any six is RMB 98, you may want to consider a visit to scope out some of the new pours in town. They also offer salads, pasta, and pizzas.

Daily 11am-2pm. 15-40 Xiaoyun Dining Back Street, 15 Xiaoyun Lu, Chaoyang District (8069 9907)

蕴酿精酿餐吧：朝阳区霄云路15号霄云美食街后街15-40



THE GREAT OUTDOORS

The Great Outdoors

One of the survivors of 2017's Fangjia Hutong closures, we were happy to see the spacious Great Outdoors weather the storm and come out all the stronger for it. Designed by two recent Tsinghua graduates and replete with two floors and a comfortable terrace, the space also offers occasional seminars on hiking and climbing in Beijing. On tap, there are 12 beers from the likes of NBeer, No.18, Harvest, North Coast, Ballast Point, Rogue, and Brewdog. If you're looking for a bite, we'd recommend the Weightlifting Stewed Pork Shoulder (RMB 98) or just stick to the moreish housemade spicy peanuts (RMB 10). Once you've consumed enough liquid confidence, you can also have a go on the bar's inbuilt climbing wall.

Daily 10am-11.30pm. 12 Fangjia Hutong, Dongcheng District (6994 5950)

野友趣：东城区方家胡同12号



YUN BREW



BUSAN

NATURE, MARKETS, AND INCESSANT EATING MAKE FOR A FINE WEEKEND ESCAPE

By Tom Arnstein

The large port city of Busan sits on the southeast nook of the Korean peninsula and, as the country's second largest city, provides a leisurely alternative to the cosmopolitan capital of Seoul. Beaches, hot springs, and nature reserves mingle with renowned Korean nightlife and dining, making for a city that is both easy to navigate and easy to love. Flights from Beijing to Gimhae International Airport can be bought for as little as RMB 1,500 roundtrip and take just two and a half hours each way.

Busan is by necessity carved up by the mountains that surround it – traffic tunnels in and out of the rock, multicolored houses perch on the hillsides overlooking the economic centers, and sea winds make for brisk weather and blue skies.

Spend your first day exploring Gukje Market on the west side of town, the largest traditional market in Busan and absolutely brimming with bric-a-brac, vintage shopping, and indoor food stalls. Once you've exhausted weaving in out of the sea people and nibbling on grilled

PHOTOS BY WILL GRIFFITH

meat and kimchi, huddle around any one of the steaming skewer stands to refuel on spongy zig-zags of fish cake and warming broth (*eomukguk*) spooned directly out of the trough into red plastic bowls.

Heading south, you'll eventually hit Jagalchi Market, another sprawling bazaar dedicated to one of Busan's biggest exports: fish. It's not for the squeamish – eels are skinned alive, octopuses are piled up in neon basins, and

of the numerous fried chicken and beer joints that have become synonymous with Korean TV soaps in China. Now suitably dazed on sugar and meat, make your way to a *jjimjilbang*, one of the best-preserved pastimes of traditional Korean culture and an unbeatable way to while away an afternoon. Essentially, a *jjimjilbang* is a 24-hour public bathhouse whereby men and women separate, get butt-naked, and proceed to become the cleanest



THE COLORFUL HOUSES OF GAMCHEON CULTURE VILLAGE

squat Korean ladies waddle around in full waterproofs beckoning to passersby to try their wares. It won't be the cheapest meal you eat in Busan, but it will undoubtedly be the freshest. If you have some time left, hop in a taxi to Yeong Island across the bridge and take the hour-long hike around Taejongdae Park, stopping to take in the sunset and a view of the fishing boats lined up on the horizon from the island's lighthouse. Alternatively, go a little further west to Gamcheon Culture Village, a jumble of favela-style shacks that were once a refuge for families uprooted during the Korean War but have since been afforded a new lick of paint and vibrancy from quaint winding pathways, cafés, boutiques, and pockets of modern architecture.

The curved Haeundae Beach to the east also makes for a relaxed escape from the hectic core. After walking the length of the beach, feeding the seagulls and ogling the groups of preened gangs with their boy band sensibilities, fill up at one

they've ever been through a series of showers, saunas, and hot and cold pools, inside and out. Once clean, everyone meets up in a shared space for a massive unisex pajama party where you can eat, drink, and sleep to your heart's content. Rinse and repeat.

For nightlife, you'll want to head to Seomyeon, the epicenter of Busan's bars, clubs, and crowds with almost no end to the twisting alleys punctuated by a dizzying mix of blaring music and flashing lights. Similar nighttime hotspots are by the Kyungshung University area to the east and Gwanganli Beach a little to the northeast. Once you've settled on a spot, be prepared to tumble into a rotation of soju (cheaper than water, vodka-like rice wine), *makgeolli* (fermented, milky rice wine), and draft lager. Since drinking without food is largely constrained to clubs, expect to scoff several more snacks throughout the evening until you eventually keel over from overeating rather than excessive drinking.

Busan's combination of diverse nature, unending markets, and a dash of international panache make it a treat to explore and close enough for a weekend escape, especially if you're looking for some green relief from Beijing's ubiquitous gray.



GET OUT

GEORGE TOWN

EAT YOUR WAY AROUND PENANG'S MULTICULTURAL CAPITAL

By Robynne Tindall

PHOTO: PIERRE

Fascinating, heritage-rich George Town, the capital of the Malaysian state of Penang (which includes both the island of Penang and a portion of the mainland), is the perfect destination for those searching for a mix of history and culture. Its prime position along trading routes through the Malacca Strait has left it with a vibrant mix of local Malay, Chinese, and Indian cultures, as well as plenty of British colonial architecture. Penang also has a well-earned reputation as the gastronomic capital of Malaysia, if not Asia, thanks to its multicultural food scene.

George Town makes a great destination for a long weekend break from Beijing; three to four days will be more than enough time to eat your fill of the excellent street food and explore some of the rest of the island. There are no direct flights to Penang from Beijing but multiple airlines fly via Kuala Lumpur, Hong Kong, or Guangzhou, for a total journey time of around 8-10 hours.

What to do

The best way to get to know George Town is to simply wander around the city's historic core, which was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2008. This includes colonial landmarks in the oldest quarter of the city, such as Fort Cornwallis and the trade and customs buildings along Beach Street, as well as an eclectic mix of Chinese clan houses, Peranakan mansions, Hindu temples, and Indian Muslim mosques. If you want more insight into the history of Penang, local NGO Penang Heritage Trust offers several different guided walking tours.

What to eat

Food is the highlight of any trip to Penang. There are food stands and hawker stalls on every street corner and you will be hard pressed to eat a bad meal; with so much competition, poor quality places don't stay open for long. With that in mind, the best way to enjoy the food in Penang is to follow your nose to the busiest restaurants as you wander around – and plan to eat five to six meals a day rather than your usual three (seriously). That being said, there are still certain dishes that you should make it your mission to eat:

Char kway teow: Believed to have originated with the Teochew (or Chaozhou) community, these smoky stir-fried noodles are the very definition of “breath of the wok.” The dish has many interpretations but generally speaking, flat rice noodles are stir-fried with soy sauce, eggs, prawns, Chinese sausage, and bean sprouts.

Nasi kandar: Nasi kandar is a meal of rice (plain or

flavored like biriyani) served with a variety of meat and vegetable side dishes. Most nasi kandar restaurants spread out the dishes along a counter for you to peruse before choosing your favorites – think of it as the tastiest buffet you'll ever have. Depending on where you go, you won't have to spend more than a few dollars.

Asam laksa: If you love seafood, this one's for you. Unlike the Singaporean-style laksa you may have tried elsewhere, Penang's version has a strong fishy soup base made with shrimp paste and mackerel, and finished with chili, lemongrass, and sour tamarind.

Where to stay

Penang abounds with boutique accommodation, with many hotels located in restored shop houses. For the best experience, especially if you're taking a short trip, be sure to stay in the historic core of the city. Top of the accommodation tree is Seven Terraces, a thoughtful renovated row of seven shop houses with sumptuous, colorful interiors, and all the beauty of a period Peranakan home with all the mod cons. For something a little easier on the wallet (but still a step above the two dollar hostel beds on Chulia Street) try Ryokan Muntri Boutique Hostel, a loosely Japanese-inspired “flashpacker” hostel with bright, clean dorms and bathroom areas, and a pleasant café and common area on the first floor. However, if money is no object, then it doesn't get better than the Eastern and Oriental Hotel, which dates back to 1885 and was founded by the same brothers who launched Raffles Hotel in Singapore. In a prime seafront location, the elegant white building with its hardwood interiors is nostalgic opulence at its best.

Around the rest of Penang

With history and cuisine covered in George Town, the rest of the island completes Penang's bid for “perfect holiday destination” with quiet beaches and pristine jungle parks. The closest, if not necessarily the best, beach is Batu Ferringhi, a 45-minute bus ride away (take the 101 from Chulia Street in downtown George Town). This area is highly developed and you'll find plenty of vendors on the beach offering water sports packages and many bars and restaurants along the main road behind the beach. The quietest beaches, where you're more likely to set your towel down next to a family of monkeys than a family of tourists, are along the island's northwestern coast inside Penang National Park. The National Park is the smallest in Malaysia, spanning just 1,213 hectares, but still offers plenty of opportunities for trekking among the many varieties of tropical flora.

BEIJING'S UNMANNED STORES

STEP INTO THE CASHLESS FUTURE

By Tracy Wang

Clearly Beijing doesn't need human beings any more. We can finally wave goodbye to squeezing into packed out subway cars, pushing through walls of people at top sights, and queuing for hours to get a seat at Haidilao on a Friday night. No, we're not talking about the plot of our favorite sci-fi series, but the boom in unmanned stores and services across the city. The unstoppable rise of China's cashless society is spilling over into a humanless society: If our transactions are digital only, why not cut out the fleshy middle-man and go straight to the machine?

Cashless Fare Reloaders

Ten years ago, before Beijing announced the replacement of their easy-to-lose paper ticket system, we couldn't even imagine entering the subway with the streamlined ease of today – a mere swipe and we're through (after navigating the gauntlet of handheld and freestanding metal detectors, of course). However, for the modern Beijinger, who often leaves home with nothing but their keys, cards, and phone, scrabbling around for cash when your subway card runs out can be a major annoyance. The golden age of cash-free underground public transportation is, however, finally dawning, with the development of cashless top-up machines at an initial eight subway stations meaning you can now use WeChat and Alipay to reload your card when the machine stubbornly refuses to accept your crisp and uncrumpled RMB 20 note

(or at least, you can if you're travelling from Yong'anli, Qingnian Lu, Guangqumennei, Fengtai Kejiyuan, Guomao, Shoujingmao, Beishatan, or Wangjing East).



A RAY OF LIGHT FOR BEIJING'S COMMUTERS: CASHLESS PAYMENT

PHOTOS: UNI YOU

Unmanned KTV

KTV is an unavoidable part of socializing in China, but for those whose vocal chords refuse to vibrate with melodious harmony, there's a solution to your embarrassment: Mbar, unmanned KTV (www.ucmbar.com). Not even the KTV hosts need to know of your singing shame with this cupboard-sized stage – simply scan the QR code to get in the system, select your songs and sing. If you've got a trusted friend, there's just enough room for you both to perch and grasp two microphones so you can practice hitting those high notes together. If you're riding solo, the booth will record your performance automatically, so after, depending on your singing success, you can either privately cringe through the playback or flaunt it proudly on your WeChat moments.



MORE AND MORE UNMANNED STORES LIKE THIS ONE ARE POPPING UP ACROSS BEIJING

Unmanned Convenience Stores

Convenience stores: It's in the name. But what's convenient about having to take your headphones out, drag your eyes away from your glowing phone screen and interact with another human? Luckily, the days of having to pretend to be a normal, functioning member of society for brief moments of the day could finally be coming to an end. Several self-service stores have hit China, including, EatBox, which opened in last July at Jinyuan Shopping Mall with about 600 items on offer; Bingo Box, which opened its first 24-hour convenience booth at Wangjing Soho; Xiaomai, with relatively fewer goods in small spaces that are placed in busy public locations such as subway stations; and April Gourmet, which opened its first fully automated store on Qingnian Lu. You just grab what you want, scan the barcodes, and pay with WeChat or Alipay. Perfect for those days when you don't feel like talking to anyone, you've forgotten to shower, or you don't want to be judged for buying five chocolate bars and a sharing pack of chips for one. Luckily, the robots don't judge; the robots never judge.

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GO ZERO WASTE IN 2018

HOW TO WORK ENVIRONMENTALISM INTO YOUR ROUTINE

By Kyle Mullin

Though pledges for self betterment can often be daunting and go unattained, Carrie Yu is working to help make it an easy part of your daily routine. The founder of The Bulk House sells reusable products at the weekly Farm to Neighbors (F2N) market, where she also puts on regular seminars for composting, waste reduction, and other topics, all as part of the Zero Waste Movement, a conservation project that is quickly becoming trendy around the globe.

Together with F2N founder Erica Huang and F2N Zero Waste Project Manager Geng Chao, Yu hopes to help Beijingers adopt a more sustainable lifestyle.

"We want to get people thinking: 'Ok, today I can make a really small pledge to myself to bring my own cloth

shopping bag, instead of a plastic shopping bag. Then later I can start bringing my own water bottle everywhere, instead of buying bottled water at shops," Yu says. "We want to encourage people to just take everyday small steps, and slowly move into the Zero Waste lifestyle. None of us are perfect, but we can each do a little bit and a little bit more every day."

Huang agrees, saying: "I think this is a great way for individuals to reduce the waste that is harming the environment. It's really simple to start on your own, it doesn't take a lot of time, and it's enjoyable because there's a place like Farm to Neighbors where you can shop, live out this lifestyle, interact with people, and make a lot of friends."

PHOTOS: JINI YOU

The interactive aspect especially comes into play during Yu's seminars, which she coordinates both with Geng Chao at F2N and at other events and engagements around town. For attendees who are new to the Zero Waste initiative, Yu starts off by introducing them to the core principals encompassed in the movement's "6 Rs":

- 1. Refuse** (say no to single-use or disposable items)
- 2. Reduce**
- 3. Reuse** (reuse items that you can use again and again)
- 4. Repair** (fix things rather than trashing them)
- 5. Recycle**
- 6. Rot** (compost your food and waste paper)



How to Make Your Own Compost

You'll need four things: greens, browns, water, and air.

Greens (aka hydrogen): Vegetable peels, fruit peels, egg shells, coffee grounds, grass clippings, plants, plant cuttings, and so on.

Browns (aka carbon): Fallen leaves, twigs, sawdust, paper, cotton fabric, cardboard (without any waxy/slick paper coating).

Water (aka H₂O): Beijing is suffering a drought but you should have some of this at your disposal.

Air (aka O₂): This can also be in short supply, but it's getting better!

Compost Assembly

- Section off a small part of your garden (one square metre will do) or acquire a decent-sized bucket. Throw down a layer of browns, chuck some greens on top, shovel some soil from your garden on top of that.
- Spray with a little bit of water.
- Then, repeat one or two more times. That's it!

In about two months you'll have some lovely nutrient-rich soil. Better still: this method helps reduce the amount of waste that ends up in landfills each and every day. The secret to mastering composting is to be patient and not to worry about becoming a master even before you start.

Additional Tips

1. The smaller the better – chop or tear up your greens and browns. That way they will break down quicker.
2. Add worms to speed up the process (optional, but definitely makes the pile more fun).
3. If the pile starts to smell or attract flies, first: DON'T PANIC, and second: add some more browns to the pile.
4. You want to keep the pile about as damp as a sponge.
5. Keep the pile in the shade.

For more tips, and to partake in The Bulk House's next event, join their WeChat account by searching thebulkhous.



WHY I'M (NOT) LEAVING BEIJING

By Jeremiah Jenne

"I'm leaving Beijing."

How many times have I heard those words? Perhaps dropped casually over a couple of pints at Great Leap #12, or maybe I read them in a blog post. It's one of the rewards for holding out here. Stay five years and you level up with a terminal case of black lung, a liver which only responds to pure formaldehyde, and the right to pen a valedictory essay on your way out the door. Stay here long enough and they might even do a podcast about you.

Sure, there have been moments over the past decade

when I've also thought of shipping out. There have been other incidents at the visa office when I faced the possibility that my end date would not be of my own choosing. Could I adjust to life in the People's Republic of Trump? What would it be like to spend my declining years in the hills of New Hampshire writing increasingly out-of-touch missives about my old life in China while my wife complains that the local restaurant puts corn in their *gongbao jiding*?

Well, f**k that. I'm staying.

I want my air crunchy and my *gongbao jiding* to be a pure, unadulterated mess of chicken parts, peanuts, chili peppers, and enough MSG to give a rhino testicular cancer. I want my crosswalks to be free-fire zones. I like the seasons of Beijing. Chinese New Year. Big smog. Little smog. Heat. Miserable heat. Get me the hell out of here heat and humidity. Fall (for an hour or two each year). And then winter.

I like that Beijing chooses its residents like a garlic-fouled cab driver cruising a dark Sanlitun alley in the wee hours of Saturday. It is grit and growl, *bajiu* and attitude. Beijing is steampunk in a Mando-pop world.

Admittedly, 2017 was a tough year in the city. A lot of people went home. Not all of them voluntarily. Major political events, random drug testing, business closures, housing demolitions, and the bowdlerization of the hutongs were hardly a love letter to the city's residents. But I'm over that. It's a new year – *er-ling-yao-ba*, bitches!

I'm giving 2018 a chance because it's the only year I've got at the moment. I'm giving Beijing a chance because it's home. It's the gristle in my *baozi* and the place where I've left my heart and, according to my last check-up, about 38 percent of my lung capacity. It is imperial halls and Gongti clubs. It's the quiet Xicheng neighborhoods, the ones just off of Houhai and Xihai where the only sounds on a winter's evening are the clacking of mahjong tiles and chess pieces and the quiet guttural words friends share over a cheap cigarette and a bottle of sorghum hooch.

It's a tough place to raise a kid or the perfect place to raise a tough kid. I'm not sure which but maybe one day I'll find out. Most of my friends with children decamped already, leaving behind strange excuses like "school systems" and "food safety." Whatever. I like to take my chances. Every bite of *chuan'r* is a culinary game called "feline roulette." Gutter oil? Forget about it. I've spent time in an oily Beijing gutter (The Den, one year gone, RIP).

I suppose it's also the history. Despite the best efforts of well-meaning urban planners fresh from academic sojourns in places like London, Toronto, Tokyo, and the Central Party Academy, Beijing still has a little bit of history lurking beneath the Disneyfied recreations of formerly historic sites. Looking for them is another reason I stay. Sharing those places with others is how I make a living.

Yeah, Beijing is a tough mistress, a city that a friend once compared to like living in an abusive relationship. He's now living in Bangkok. I'm still here ... for as long as they'll let me stay.

Beijing wansui.



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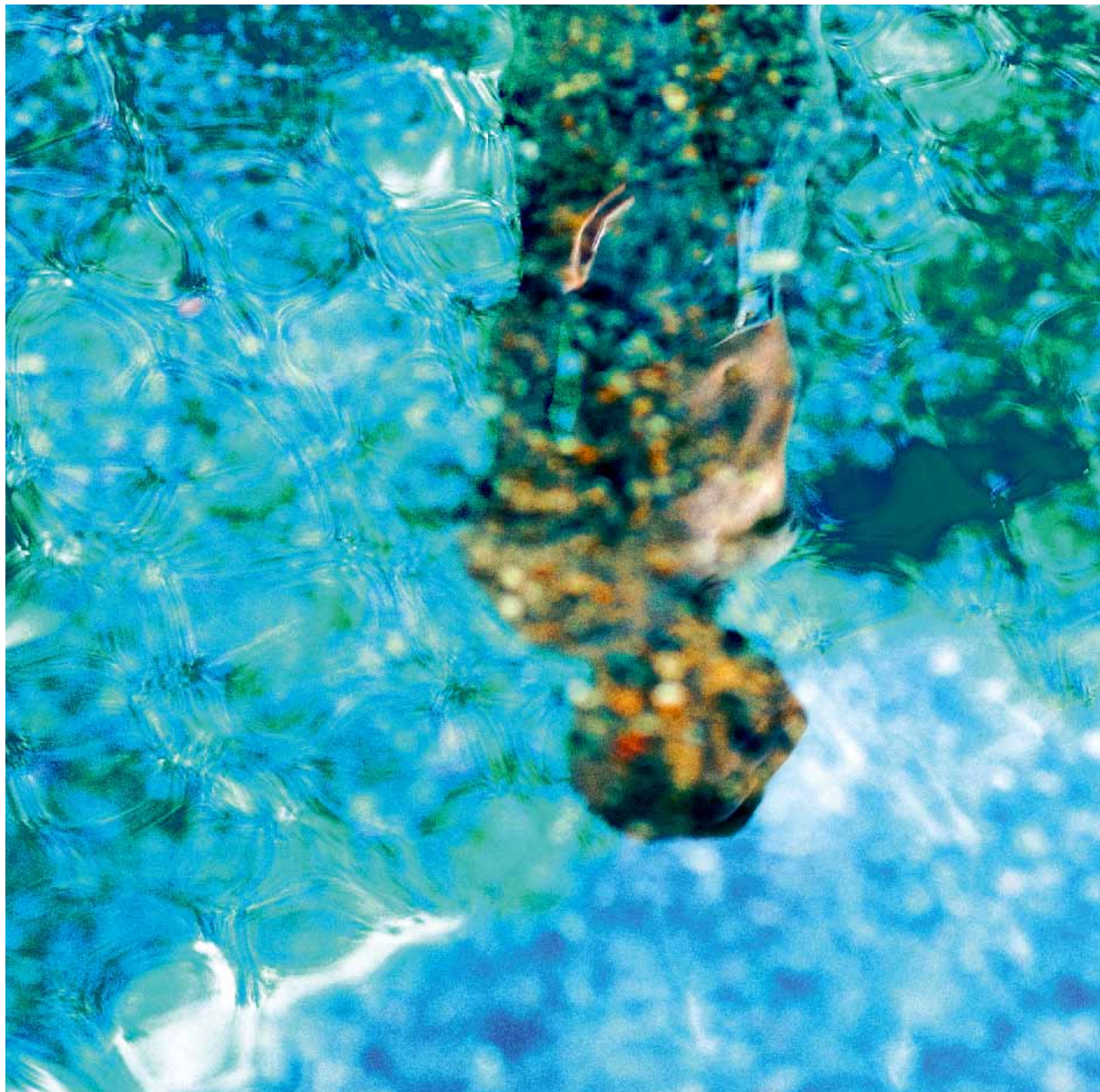


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MEET

BEIJING BROADS // JULIE BYRNE // LIU KAI // DEBBIE MA



THE FIN.

Mar 9 - Considered Japan's answer to chillwave mainstay Washed Out and epic synthmeister M83, The fin. make upbeat dream pop about boys, girls, and hazy days that go nowhere in particular. On this stop of their Asia tour, the guitar chops and danceable bass lines are sure to draw a Beijing crowd hungry to celebrate the onset of spring (so much so that we've heard the presale tickets have already sold out). The saccharine and reverb-drenched melodies of these youngsters may just be the best accompaniment to the changing of the seasons. RMB 150, RMB 120 (advance). 9pm. Yugong Yishan

PHOTO COURTESY OF NEW NOISE

BEIJING BROADS

"IN IMPROV YOU HAVE TO ACCEPT THE WORLD THAT IS GIVEN TO YOU"

By Tautvile Daugelaite

Charity does not always come from strenuous labor, by building schools or digging wells. It can also disguise itself under the umbrella of comedy. All female improv group Beijing Breads started out with occasional shows and have now grown into a monthly slot at the US-China Comedy Center. Where does charity come in? All of their proceeds go to Educating Girls in Rural China (EGRC), which helps young women from impoverished families, single parents or from otherwise challenged households in western China, finish high school and attend university. "Did you know it costs around RMB 5,000 per year for one girl to attend high school? I had no idea it wasn't free! We almost cried when we found out," says Anete Elken, one of the cofounders of Beijing Breads. The group now consists of nine players, who gave us the lowdown on the lives behind the laughs.

Why do you think it's important to have a female improv group?

Lucila San Martin: Comedy is usually a very hostile environment for women. If you are on stage with the man, you will be the woman in the scene, the partner, second in importance. I have played in scenes with men when I start the situation playing a male but once a guy walks on stage I am immediately pushed into a woman's role.

Anete Elken: They don't even notice if you go on stage with the physicality of an old Beijing man, playing a definite male character. Just look at a random improv group. If there are 10 people, maybe two of them will be women, no more.

Lucila San Martin: I think it's very important for the community because it provides a safe space for women. Funnily enough, our audience is very mixed.

Silvia Perdiguero: It's a statement. We need to prove that women can be funny without sexist jokes. We write our own sketches about international politics, feminism, or other topics of importance.

All: It's a space for women to be silly, try their voices, not be ladies, and just play.

How do women join the Breads?

Anete Elken: Most of the girls joined through open workshops.

Lucila San Martin: The open practices are very rewarding because you see a lot of women who clearly want to express themselves but are not used to using their voices or their bodies. After the workshop, you can see the impact it has had on the women who come.

What other benefits has improv brought to your lives?

Lucila San Martin: Improv has actually helped me deal with daily situations. I've found myself saying yes to opportunities much more often. It also helped me to make friends with other women, it is interesting and we don't like talking about it but most of us were "tomboys" growing up and no one taught us how to be friends with other girls but rather how to be cool like the guys.

What do you like about being a part of Beijing Breads?

Lucila San Martin: I think it's amazing that we are so international. We have Americans, Canadians, Argentinians, Estonians, Brits, Spaniards, and Chinese. It's very inclusive and we like to mix everything up a little. Our last practice sketch was about kangaroos and the Australian accent but the currency was RMB.

Silvia Perdiguero: People say it is obvious from how we act on stage that we are really good friends. I think it helps us perform as well.

Laurence Couture: I just want to summarize and say that Beijing Breads are incredibly supportive of each other. I've been a part of improv groups around the world and it is often more competitive or judgmental. This is the only place members actually reflect on their feelings after the show. This is amazing!

Where can we see your shows?

Anete Elken: We perform every last Saturday of the month at the US-China Comedy Center.



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: BERIT PAXSON-TARNAI, SILVIA PERDIGUERO, CATHERINE SUTHERLAND, AND LAURENCE COUTURE

INTERVIEW

JULIE BYRNE'S MELANCHOLY LINEAGE

**ACCLAIMED SONGSTRESS TALKS CARRYING ON HER FATHER'S
MUSICAL LEGACY AHEAD OF DDC GIG**

By Kyle Mullin

For Julie Byrne, one of the most heart-wrenching parts of seeing her father struggle with multiple sclerosis was knowing that he could no longer play guitar. The 27-year-old Buffalo, New York-born songstress – whose latest album *Not Even Happiness* made numerous critics’ “best of 2017” lists – grew up in awe of her dad’s fingerstyle playing. As his condition worsened, she picked the instrument and started to learn fingerstyle for herself at 17, in part as a tribute to him. Such warmth, melancholy, and quiet resoluteness can be heard throughout *Not Even Happiness*. As Byrne prepares to play those songs for Beijing fans at DDC on Feb 6, she tells us about working on the LP and the family ties that drive her music to this day.



You once said that two specific songs from *Not Even Happiness*, “I Live Now As a Singer,” and “Follow My Voice,” are closest to your heart. Why is that the case?

My relationship with them at this point is usually through performance, which is about connecting with people in the moment, rather than thinking about where they came from. So I don’t often think about the inspiration for writing songs. But I remember “Follow My Voice”, being the most honest song I’ve ever written.

It features lyrics like “this city is hell.” Is that in reference to your adopted home of New York City?

Yeah, it’s a reference to New York [takes a long pause before laughing]. It really isn’t in my nature to live at that kind of pace. There’s still no way for me to make it feel natural.

In that case, it must’ve been nice to head back to your childhood home in Buffalo to record *Not Even Happiness*?

We did it because we had no other option – a

studio in New York would’ve been too expensive. My producer Eric Littmann and I had been living in New York, and going to Buffalo to record for four months was a complete 180 from how we’d been living – so slow and flexible. I really enjoyed it; making songs was the framework of each and every day we spent there.

It’s kind of full circle in a way – you came back to Buffalo to record your breakthrough album, in your childhood home where you fell in love with guitar as you watched your father play.

I remember my Dad worked a stressful and unrelenting management job. He would come home decompress by playing guitar, and it was always fingerstyle. And I loved the sound of that instrument. After he stopped, I tried to learn, and as soon as I began to learn I was in pursuit of the style that he would play in. And it’s actually his guitar that I play now and it’s his guitar that we recorded the album with. I realized recently that it was also the first instrument I had ever heard in my life, as a baby girl when he would play for me.

In another interview, you described your playing as “an offering to him.”

That’s true, though he won’t hesitate to give me constructive criticism to this day! [Laughs] It’s really fun and engaging for both of us.

Julie Byrne will perform at DDC on Feb 6. For tickets, visit juliemariebyrne.com/tour



LIU KAI

CENTRAL CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC PROFESSOR ON TEACHING MARGINALIZED STUDENTS

By Kyle Mullin

It would be an understatement to call Liu Kai an elite musician. The 34-year-old piano prodigy frequently performs at the Houhai-adjacent East Shore Live Jazz Café, is a lecturer at, and alumnus of, the Central Conservatory of Music, has taught piano to students at the Berklee College of Music, and most impressively of all, is the first Chinese scholar to be accepted in the world-renowned Jacques Dalcroze Method Diplôme supérieur program in Geneva, Switzerland. And yet, Liu hasn't let any of that go to his head, dedicating much of his professional life to teaching music lessons to marginalized Chinese students at BN Vocational School in Wangjing. Below, Liu lists which songs he uses to help open his students up to a new world of music.

“Heal the World” - Michael Jackson

I taught my students this song for a charity concert performance. Its themes of goodwill suited the event perfectly and I also liked it because it's rhythmically challenging and because the lyrics are difficult to sing. I implored my students to learn the lyrics and understand the story behind this song. They all grew to have a deep affection for it, practicing every day, even when I wasn't there. When they performed it, they were accompanied by my band, which was something they had never experienced before. It was a very powerful and unforgettable experience for all of us.

“小河淌水/Little Stream is Flowing”

This is a traditional Yunnan folk song. Its lyrics tell a love story of a boy and a girl who live in the mountains. I begin my lessons by performing songs for students, and when I

played it for them they fell in love with it immediately. They each tried to sing with a beautiful voice and tried to imagine what the mountains described in the song looked like.

I enjoyed working with at this vocational school so much that I extended my volunteering period and eventually wrote a curriculum. Chinese folk songs became a strong component of that curriculum because I felt they helped the students delve into their nation's identity, and they even learned geography through a folk music lens.

“相信爱/Believe in Love” - Na Ying

This is a widely known Chinese pop song by Na Ying [best known for her role as a judge on *The Voice of China*]. I think it was meaningful for the students because the lyrics emphasized the importance of believing in love, and how love can help us join together and work out our differences.

“Vois Sur Ton Chemin” - The Chorus OST [2004]

The music in this movie is so great that it became an international hit. I screened it for my class and then I taught them this song. It was fun to work on French pronunciation together but more challenging still was the fact that this is a polyphonic song with two parts, and the students learned to sing it with a stable voice. I was extremely satisfied with the result – in fact, it was one of my proudest moments as a teacher because my class learned to sing it fluently, which was a huge sign of progress for them.

If you'd like to get involved or make a donation to the BN Vocational School, visit en.bnvs.cn.

DEBBIE MA

TCM DOCTOR AND HOMEBREWER EXTRAORDINAIRE

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

I'm a Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) physician, and perhaps the only TCM doctor in town that will discuss what new beers have been released or which breweries are good for my patients. I've been living in Beijing on and off for 11 years, and for the first eight years focused on finishing med school. I didn't drink too much beer at that time. That all changed after I got my PhD and began working as an acupuncturist for a Norwegian cruise line, which opened up the world of beer – let's just say drinking provides you with a social life on a ship! I came back to Beijing in 2014, when the craft beer scene had just started gaining momentum, and have since learned how to brew, which is now a big part of my life when I'm not at the clinic.

When did you start to brew beer?

My first batch was Dec 5, 2014, a month after I took Yin Hai's (founder of NBeer) brewing class. I brewed a "pale pale ale" because I added too much water during sparging and the ABV ended up at only 4 percent – a bit thin for a pale ale. It still tasted nice and was good enough for a first-timer.

What's your most outrageous drinking experience?

Umm, that was a random night on my first ship. I was with three other friends and we treated ourselves to sushi after work. It was still early after we finished and there was not much to do on board so we decided to do a bar crawl from deck 12 all the way down to our crew bar, six bars in total. Having made it to the fifth bar, ordering a Woo Woo shot at each stop on the way, we ended up downing 10 shots in one hour. We still made it down to crew bar to drink a Strongbow and after that night we started calling our bar crawls "a walk on the ship."

What is the most underappreciated style of beer?

I think it has to be ginger beer. Sure, ginger beer is not really beer, but instead a naturally fermented beverage made of ginger, lemon, sugar, and live culture. Throughout my practice, I've seen a lot of patients in their 20s and 30s that have developed digestion problems on account of having stressful jobs and poor eating habits, which lead to bloating, constipation, diarrhea, even more stress and sleeping disorders. What does that have to do with ginger

beer? Well, it contains probiotics which help your gut flora remain healthy. What's more, ginger warms your stomach and helps to deplete excess water through antioxidant and anti-inflammatory agents. I brewed and sold ginger beers earlier this year. Eventually, I stopped because I got too busy, but I believe it's still a better beer than beer itself.

Normally, TCM doctors tell us not to drink any alcohol. What suggestions would you give to the drinkers among us?

Any doctor will tell you that overconsumption of alcohol is bad for you, and if you suffer from poor digestion, water retention, or even worse, liver problems, you should always listen to your doctor. If you're not feeling as good as you used to, it's likely to be your body crying for mercy, not crying for you to pour alcohol into it. However, as long as you're healthy, you shouldn't believe any doctor that tells you not to drink at all. In fact, alcohol like *huang jiu* (黄酒) can be used medicinally, guiding herbal energy to those meridians in the body that are in need. As a brewer myself, I know that craft beer has loads of amino acid, vitamins, minerals, and much less sugar and calories when compared to soft drinks. In that regard, it can act as a good energy drink when consumed in moderation. As for the drunks, you can check out my post about treating hangovers via my WeChat blog (WeChat ID: docsays). I think the best remedy is to take some herbal anti-hangover pills before and after you drink, or simply just control yourselves and drink moderately! *Tracy Wang*



TERRY CROSSMAN

**THE AMERICAN WHO JOINED THE RANKS OF
BEIJING'S VOLUNTEER DAMA**

By Kyle Mullin



Imagine being a Chinese tourist not native to Beijing, strolling down one of the capital's hutongs and happening upon a smiling foreigner sporting both a tie-dyed T-shirt and a red volunteer armband. As if that wasn't surprising enough, he then begins to give you directions and advice in fluent Mandarin. No, it's not a practical joke – sixty-two-year-old American expat Terry Crossman officially joined the ranks of the Xicheng Dama [granny] Volunteers this past spring, and has been lending a hand in the streets ever since.

"I like helping people. It's very touristy around here, and there're always people lost in the hutongs. I know my way around and can help," Crossman says during an interview with *the Beijinger* at his assigned post next to the Starbucks on the west side of Houhai. Crossman – whose Chinese name is Gao Tianrui and who also goes by the nickname Lao Gao – adds that most of the tourists he interacts with "are Chinese, and I'll ask them in Mandarin where they want to go. And they'll have this lost look on their face. Or sometimes they don't even realize I'm not Chinese, and after a few minutes of conversation take a proper look and say: 'Wow! You're a foreigner?'"

Crossman's stint as a volunteer has brought him internet fame and plenty of friends. It all started last winter when he was making his daily walk to the aforementioned Starbucks from his home in Shichahai, and while at the cafe, struck up a conversation with one of his regular servers, who he would go on to nickname Liu Jie, or Big Sister Liu. Their friendship grew and on one chilly morning Liu invited Crossman to accompany her to the sentry booth next door for a chat with her *dama* pals. They all became fast friends with Crossman and before long one of the volunteers, Liu Xiao Xia, asked the American expat if he'd like to appear in a video to promote them and their work.

"They asked me to memorize all these lines in Chinese, which I failed miserably at. But I really enjoyed the experience. The video was really well done and it led to the Xicheng volunteers winning an award, which means we beat out effing Chaoyang!" Crossman says with a chuckle of the friendly district based rivalries between these volunteers. That led to more promotional and viral videos, interview requests from journalists, and an invitation from the head representative of the Xicheng government to become a "Dama Volunteer" on a part time basis.

"A lot of people must be surprised to see this old hippie doing propaganda work for the Xicheng government," Crossman says with a wry grin. "If they ever found out that I'm an anarcho-capitalist, libertarian Daoist, they might kick me out for good!"

Aside from the volunteering gig, and the slew of interview requests from various reporters, Crossman also

now spends his time studying Mandarin. Not that he needs it – he speaks so fluently that he accidentally slips into Chinese during our interview, before quipping "My *muyu* [mother tongue] is Chinglish!" Despite that, one of the easiest ways for him to legally remain in Beijing, as a retiree, is to sign up for a student visa and hit the books.

He now plans to take the HSK Level 4 exam, of which he says with a laugh, "I can pass that, though I'm a little bit



worried about trying Level 5," adding that his reading and writing aren't as strong as his speaking skills. He developed the latter over the past 22 years spent in Beijing, Crossman first coming to the capital in the late '90s as a headhunter, following a 12-year stint in Hong Kong and several years in Taiwan studying Mandarin prior to that.

His current arrangement might not be described as the cushiest of retirements, especially when he braves the cold winter days with a red scarf and Xicheng Dama hat, spending his breaks huddled in the booth with his fellow volunteers and chatting away over sips of hot water. But all that suits Crossman just fine. What's more: He's content to stay in Beijing for now, despite suffering a stroke in September of 2016.

That ill bout of health didn't immediately make him pine for a Western hospital. Instead, "acupuncture really saved me; it's great for stroke recovery. So now you know what to do if you ever have a stroke!" he exclaims with a chortle. Though his speech is occasionally slurred, and he now uses a cane while strolling along Houhai and the surrounding hutongs, Crossman otherwise looks strong and undeterred. He's also clearly content to relish his surreal celebrity status and – above all – his chances to chat with visitors and his fellow volunteers.

Crossman concludes by saying, "I often tell the tourists I help, and the *dama* I work with, that my favorite phrase in Chinese is 'wo zai dangxiale,' or 'I live for the moment.'"

SWEET CHARITY'S BAD ASS SONG

By Andrew Killeen

Here at Rear View, we believe that our role as journalists is about more than just scavenging free food and booze, and getting into things without paying. We believe that it's vitally important to give something back to the community, and not just when someone runs after us shouting "Hey! Give that back!"

We always try to do our bit for those less fortunate, by writing about other people who do charity work, and sticking a QR code at the end or something.

So for this special charity issue, we decided to speak to some expats who are making a real difference here in Beijing. We meet with Nigella Tray-Ling, who lives on the Sunset Boulevard Oregon Trail compound in Shunyi.

"I feel it's really important not to get stuck in the expat bubble," she tells us. "I make sure to chat with the security guards on our compound every day, and ask about how their families are doing. Of course, I get my driver to do it for me, because I'm so, so busy with my voluntary work."

Nigella has organized a bake sale to raise money for "Asinine Aspirations," a local charity working with migrant donkeys. "Many of these donkeys have never had a single day's education," she tells us, tears welling up in her eyes. "But with the proper training they can get jobs as receptionists, or English teachers."

She proudly shows us the cakes she has brought.

"This is an old family recipe, which my grandma used to make. It's so important to keep these traditions alive. Of course I got my ayi to do the actual baking, because I've been so busy organizing the event."

The ladies arrive at the hotel at 11 am, and are greeted with a refreshing glass of Changyu bubbly. Three hours later, all the cakes have been sold, and the event has raised the magnificent sum of RMB 358.

"I'm sure that's going to make a real difference to the donkeys," Nigella says. "After the hotel has taken out its costs, of course. We do seem to have drunk rather a lot of bubbly. Can you call my driver? I need some help standing up."

We tried to speak to the chief executive of the charity, Mr. Ronald Stoa, but he was on a fact-finding trip to Macau. "There's a lot of really innovative charitable work going on in Macau," a spokesdonkey told us, "especially in the high-end casinos. It's very important that Mr. Stoa keeps up with the latest developments in card counting. I mean donkey education."

If you would like to donate to this worthy cause, then just pop your generous contribution into a sealed envelope and send it to Rear View at *the Beijinger*, marked "Private and Confidential." Cash only, in used notes.



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