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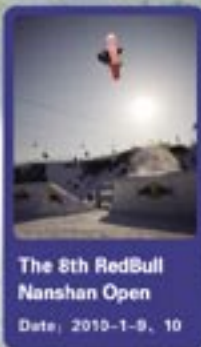
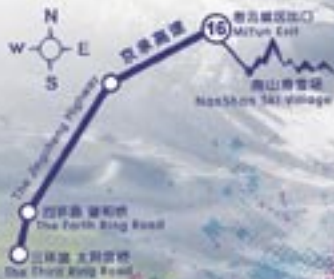
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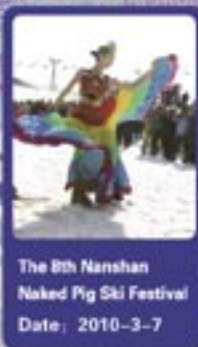
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A Capital Christmas

# LETTERS & NOTES

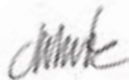
## FROM THE EDITOR

It's winter. You knew that, though, because it's pitch-black outside. It's pitch-black despite it being the afternoon. It's also freezing, but you knew that, too. That's why you're wearing mittens while reading a website about Seasonal Affective Disorder. It's also why the temperature in your apartment – which is handily out of your control – is set to sub-Saharan African sauna. The funny thing, and I mean funny in the sense that there is no joke on the way, is that we all knew this was coming. We all knew of the impending misery and yet it's the same old shock every year.

That's how Christmas makes me feel. It's unsurprising. I traipse halfway around the world just to have things I hate foisted upon me at every turn: eggnog, mince pies that contain no mince, paper hats, Christmas pudding, wrapping paper, that Pogues song, people being in the pub who never ordinarily go out being all drunk and dangerous, fake snow sprayed on windows, tree decorations, tinsel, the Queen's speech, the word "X-mas," people I've not seen in a year asking me where I've been for the last month and if I speak Japanese yet, Brussels sprouts, constant adverts for Christmas specials of TV shows that I have never seen but know that I wouldn't like, the phrase "Season's Greetings." The list goes on and on and on.

The strangest thing is that Christmas is my favorite part of the year. I couldn't be any more pro-Christmas. I've never missed being back home for it. I can't wait for another Christmas Eve spent in the pub drinking Guinness, then battling to get to church before midnight mass starts. Nothing beats the excitement of getting up early and waking my Mum and Dad by jumping on their bed.

Spending time with people you like is worth suffering through the worst that winter has to offer. The same is true whether you're back home for a bizarrely commercialized religious observance or staying here in town. You're going to be spending more time indoors, so why not have some folk around? 'Tis the season for throwing a party.



Jonathan White  
Managing Editor

PS: Add "Tis the season" to that list of things I hate.

## GIVETH AWAY

Win an **Aromasoul Therapy Treatment at Hilton Beijing Wangfujing** by correctly answering this month's Trivia Travails (p12).



Be the first person to spot this month's **Bogus Ad** and win **two RMB 388 Aroma Therapeutic massage** vouchers for **Long Island Massage & Spa**.

E-mail your answer to [marketing@thebeijinger.com](mailto:marketing@thebeijinger.com)



Head toymaker **Susu Luo** and her pixie **Judy Zhou** combined talents to create this month's festive cover.

## ON THE WEB



## Food Fight

### Damning with Faint Praise and Just Plain Damning

Oh, the cutting wit of disgruntled restaurant patrons. We get plenty of positive reviews in our weekly online **Food Fight**, but somehow the negative ones are always so much more amusing.

Check out this riposte, for example, from **meishiyingyu** after they downed a disappointing meal at **Prima Taste Kitchen**:

*"We ordered the chicken mushroom hamburger, the beef stew bread bowl and a quesadilla. They looked great on the menu but when they came out the chicken burger had shrunk, the beef had been removed from the beef stew and the quesadilla salsa amounted to a few cut-up onions and tomatoes slopped in an unappetizing fashion on the side of the plate. Service was okay, Christmas music was forgivable but the food just wasn't worth it."*

Then there are those who damn with faint praise, such as **tiafix** on the **Saddle Cantina**:

*"Tucked away from the throngs of Village window-shoppers, the Saddle Cantina creates an illusion of high-end Tijuana. Which isn't saying much ... have you been to Tijuana?"*

Check out these and other reviews in our weekly Food Fight post on [TheBeijinger.com](http://TheBeijinger.com) blog. Don't just browse, though – if you have something to say about Beijing's dining scene, join in our weekly Food Fight competition. Every week, users debate the relative merits of a different restaurant category, from vegetarian to Vietnamese, Cantonese to Central American.

Great prizes are given out every week for the best review, so log on to **TheBeijinger.com** and FIGHT!!

## BEIJING BABBLE

"Just got home from work to discover the **Ayi** cleaning while **wearing** my comfortable trousers (**sweatpants**)."

– from the thread "Ayi wearing my trousers"

"Well, they do say '**Red Bull** gives you **wings**'"

– from the thread "Red Bull drink = Slow death"

"Who has time to **shuffle** through the **supermarket** like a **zombie**?"

– from the thread "Are the Chinese the slowest walkers in the world?"

"It's a bit like **Scooby Doo**, there's a **villain** in a plastic mask lurking around a **fairground** mumbling '**pesky kids**' ..."

– from the thread "Michael Jackson's film"

"Let's REMEMBER, '**Satan**' is a **Title**."

– from the thread "Devil Worship, does it really work?"

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