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thebeijinger

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EVENT INFORMATION

Saturday, November 29th, 2014 - Free Entry

Christmas Charity Bazaar - 14:00 to 20:00

Christmas Tree Lighting and Train Launching Ceremony - 18:00

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CITY SCENE

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This month's cover feature looks at pizza in Beijing: where it came from, how long it has been around, what to do about the waste of pizza boxes, and how to make our own at home using local ingredients.

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BEIJING'S MOST
INTERESTING
PEOPLE 2014

DECEMBER
EVENTS
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NOVEMBER 11

This month's cover image was shot by Mitchell Pe Masilun in Drum and Bell Tower Square. It features La Pizza's Chef De Stefano Giuseppe.



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WHAT'S HAPPENING



NOV 8

CHI FAN FOR CHARITY

More than 50 restaurants join together for this sixth annual celebration of eating, drinking, and being merry, all to benefit children's charities Morning Tears and United Foundation for China's Health.

NOV 21

BILL CALLAHAN

It's not too often that such a respected and incendiary performer graces Beijing with his presence, but we sure do get stoked when it happens. Catch what is sure to be a killer gig with this living legend of independent music.



NOV 27

THANKSGIVING

It's turkey time again. That holiday that falls on the fourth Thursday of November means feasting and giving thanks. See our Events section for a full listing of all the celebrations with fixings and trimmings, including Lily's American Diner (pictured).

NOV 26-29

DONG DONG MUSIC FESTIVAL

Get ready for Dong Dong, as they invite in some of the most interesting acts from around Europe and Asia and promote cultural exchange through a series of panel discussions from local music industry professionals.



Visit thebeijinger.com for even more events and details.

For more events, see p65.

CITY SCENE

STAT // LETTER FROM THE EDITOR // BEST OF THE BLOG // SCENE & HEARD

STAT: 4 OUT OF 10

With China and the United Arab Emirates now the leaders in building new amusement parks, and China having a few more people than the UAE, it shouldn't be a surprise that four of every ten new parks will be constructed here.

Case in point: Universal Studios will be building the first major international theme park in Beijing, set to open in 2019, according to *The Hollywood Reporter*.

The park will cost more, cover more area, and open later than was reported in March. Originally slated for 51 acres, USD 2 billion, and a January 2018 opening, the approved attraction will now cover 300 acres, cost USD 3.2 billion, and open a year later.



LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

When this year's Pizza Cup began to approach, we started to look at pizza in Beijing in a broader sense. I mean, why pizza? Why not the Peking Duck Cup or something seemingly more local? But the more we looked at it, the more we thought, actually, pizza is pretty local by itself.

As you'll see in our cover feature, pizza may very well have Chinese origins. What we discovered is that it's not so important where pizza comes from, as it is now enjoyed widely by Beijingers, from restaurants and chains whose founders are Chinese, Italian, American, Japanese, Korean, and more, each with their own take on a food that probably originated in Naples (I'm looking forward to some all-caps emails from Neapolitans. "PROBABLY?!") but is now a truly global dish.

Also in our cover feature, we look at pizza's big bang in Beijing, with ripples emanating out from Pizza Hut in Dongzhimen, passing over the buried remnants of Sanlitun South Bar Street, and resonating in the present with the opening of new venues like Pizza Express. We'll also look at ideas for reusing pizza boxes and reducing waste generated by them, and how to source ingredients for and make your own pizza at home right here in Beijing. Elsewhere in the issue, we'll see a race for the title of Beijing's fastest delivery outfit. And please support your favorite pizza joint by voting in the *Beijinger* 2014 Pizza Cup on our website, www.thebeijinger.com.

But there's more to life and certainly life in Beijing than just pizza. In November, Beijingers will be doing a lot of eating, drinking, and being merry. For the sixth year, Chi Fan For Charity has more than 50 of Beijing's finest restaurants participating in an event that will raise about half a million RMB for two worthy causes. Book your seat at www.chifanforcharity.org. Also, see our Events section for where to celebrate Thanksgiving, which falls on November 27.

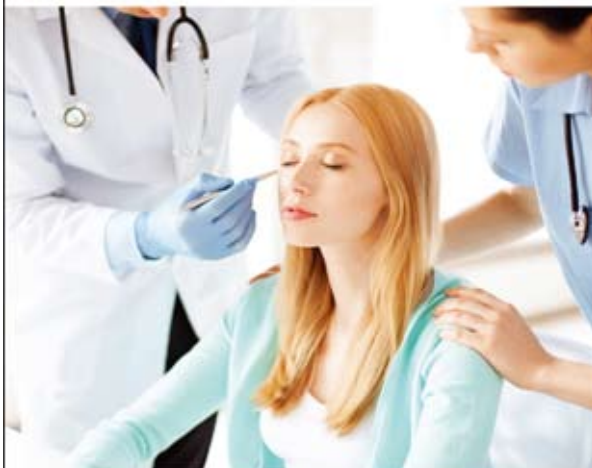
Peking Opera comes to life on stages around Beijing, and our own Kipp Whittaker provides a guide on how to enjoy it, even if the lyrics are as foreign as Verdi and Wagner. And there's a whole host of new restaurants, bars, clubs, and shops waiting to be discovered.

I hope you enjoy the November issue of the *Beijinger*.

Schwankert

Steven Schwankert
Executive Editor

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1. World's Largest Trash Incinerator to Hit Full Production Next Month, Downwind of Beijing

The world's largest garbage incinerator is set to be turned on full blast next month, downwind of the center of town. The incinerator, built by the Shougang Group, has been operating under test conditions for about a year and will go full blast in November, *China Daily* states.



2. Chinese Tourists Outspend Foreign Counterparts by USD 77 Billion

Chinese tourists spent USD 77 billion more during the first three quarters of 2014 than foreign visitors did in China over the same period. Ninety-five million trips were made to China, versus 85 million outbound trips during the same period. The deficit between the groups' spending habits for the year could be as high as USD 100 billion.



3. Government Gives City a Week Off to Host APEC Summit in Nov

The city government has canceled work for non-essential government employees and is closing all public schools for a week to host the all-important Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit, for which the heads of state of the trade bloc's 21 member states will be descending on Beijing from November 7-12.

4. The New Drum and Bell Tower Square Unveiled

The entire area has been pedestrianized, with smooth paving replacing the roads on either side of the square. The most striking change is that the bars and shops that used to line the square have been replaced with a low gray wall dividing off the houses behind.



5. Distance-based Subway Pricing Coming, But Still No Date When

Beijing's subway fares are to change to distance-based pricing in the near future, as if they hadn't already told us that numerous times since last March. The city finally declared it could no longer support one of the world's busiest subway lines with one of the world's cheapest fares.

EAT, NAVIGATE, TRANSLATE

ESSENTIAL APPS TO EASE YOUR BEIJING EXISTENCE

Anyone who has been stepped on by a shuffling, zombie-like commuter glued to their smartphone while riding the subway in Beijing will not be surprised to learn that China has over 700 million active smartphone users. As much as it can feel like a burden at times, your smartphone holds the key to overcoming issues of life in Beijing. Well, if you choose the right apps, that is.



Jinshisong

Jinshisong offers one of the biggest ranges of restaurants among Beijing's food delivery companies, with everything from Biteapitta to all types of Chinese cuisine. The app allows you to search for restaurants by cuisine or by distance and then track your order once it's on the way.

Language:

Available on: iOS and Android

Price: Free



Dianping

The Yelp of China, Dianping offers the most comprehensive listings in the city, covering most shops and restaurants. The catch: it's all in Chinese. If you can read Chinese, we find it's a great way to look up addresses and phone numbers on the fly when Google isn't cooperating.

Language: Chinese

Available on: iOS and Android

Price: Free



Pleco

The undisputed king of Chinese dictionary apps, Pleco is a must whatever your level of Chinese. The basic free version is good for looking up characters or translating tricky words, but if you're looking to get serious, they offer a range of add-ons such as character handwriting and optical character recognition.

Language: English and Chinese

Available on: iOS and Android

Price: Free (in-app add-ons available)



Beijing Map and Walks

Got guests visiting but don't fancy paying for an expensive tour guide? Take the DIY route instead. Beijing Map and Walks offers 15 self-guided walking tours of different areas of Beijing, including the Olympic Park and the area around Tiananmen Square. Tour route maps and walking directions only available in the full version.

Language: English

Available on: iOS and Android

Price: Free (lite version), USD 4.99 (full version)

SCENE & HEARD



The Beijinger 2014 Pizza Cup Launch Party
Galaxy SOHO, Sep 5. Photos by Ken, Mitchell Pe Masilun
and Ricky Zhang

Fifty Shades of Peng
Lantern, Sep 12. Photos
by Ken



**8MM Club Official Soft
Opening Party**
8MM, Sep 19. Photos by
Chris Meehan



Stocking Appreciation Party
Suzie Wong's, Oct 11.
Photos courtesy of
Suzie Wong's



YEN Anniversary
CFDC, Sep 19. Photos
courtesy of YEN



Peng Label Party
The Bar at Migas, Sep
30. Photos by Ken



Beijing Autumn Craft Beer Festival
Indigo, Oct 9-10. Photo courtesy of Slow Boat Brewing

IS PIZZA CHINESE?

WHY PIZZA MAY BE A CHINESE FOOD – AND WHY IT DOESN'T MATTER

by Steven Schwankert

Pizza is Italian. But much of the pizza that the world eats is actually American-style pizza. Unless you prefer funkier base sauces, like *alfredo* or Thousand Island, then it might be Japanese or Korean. Or maybe, just possibly, if you look at what a pizza is – a large baked crust with toppings, then could pizza have originated in China?

It would depend on the definition of pizza. While the constant argument about whether noodles were first created in China or Italy receives far more attention, there is also a case to be made for possible Chinese origins of one of the world's favorite dishes. Unleavened, pancake-like edibles made from flour, rolled thin, and then steamed, baked, or fried, are ubiquitous, having appeared in numerous Central Asian, Mediterranean, and Middle Eastern countries as far back as 5,000 years. Manna, which appears in the Book of Exodus, was described as a "fine, flake-like thing," with unleavened bread popping up elsewhere in the same book.

Beijing Bing

Similarly, the various bing (饼) that are mainstays of the northern Chinese diet also have their origins from thousands of years ago, most likely in China's original cultural heart, the Yellow River valley, still a primary growing area for wheat.

If Marco Polo, always the figure placed at the center of the Sino-Italian struggle over the origin of noodles, was also the conduit for pizza, then he would have been quite late to the game.

Contact between China and the Roman Empire dates to about 100 CE/AD, although most of that was simple awareness of each other and an indirect exchange of goods via the Middle East and Central Asia.

Roman Holiday

There is also the possibility that the fabled Lost Roman Legion may have delivered pizza to China. Supposedly this group of Roman soldiers escaped east out of Iran





in 53 BCE, following the capture and execution of their commander. They are believed by some Chinese and Western scholars to have reached and settled in western Gansu province about 15 years later, and remained, employed as mercenary soldiers. DNA testing of local residents shows that there is Caucasian ancestry in the area, as does anecdotal and visual evidence of villagers with green eyes. However, no chain of Roman pizzerias survived to the present day.

A few factors cast doubt on the possibility of pizza originating in China. Although flour products and the aforementioned bing were early components of Chinese food, baking was not, and still is not, a common method of food preparation in Chinese cuisine.

Second, dairy products only became a regular component of the local diet – and even then it is somewhat limited to urban centers – in the last 20 years, with cheese lagging well behind the drinking of milk and yogurt as favorites.

While dairies such as Meng Niu are now big companies known for sponsoring some of China's most popular television shows, they're making their money from the liquid product, not from selling cheese. Even now with the wide availability of dairy products in Beijing, one doesn't see the average baozi stuffed with cheese. Your local jianbing guy may ask if you want hot sauce, but he never says, "Can I sprinkle a little mozzarella on there for ya?" (Actually that sounds pretty good). Pizza's culinary conquest of China is really just a small victory won in the

country's larger dairy revolution.

Polo on Pizza

And what about Marco Polo? Well, if he encountered pizza for the first time during his legendary travels in China, he never mentions it once in his hundreds of pages of description of China. Polo was from Venice, although Naples is widely recognized as the birthplace of pizza in Italy. There certainly are a lot of pizza places named for him, though (Google it).

Lastly, China rarely if ever claims to have invented pizza. While a few stalwarts may insist on its Chinese origins, the idea just never gets the same play as having invented things like noodles, football, and fortune cookies.

But actually, none of this matters. Pizza's popularity in Beijing is indisputable. According to restaurant review and coupon site Dianping.com, Beijing's top 12 pizzerias operate a combined 353 outlets. Of the top 12, two-thirds are locally-founded pizza companies. Over 150 different pizza operators were named during the nomination round for the Beijinger 2014 Pizza Cup. More than 3,000 people attended The Pizza Cup's launch party at Galaxy SOHO on October 18, with one vendor alone selling 900 slices. The 2014 *Beijinger* Reader Restaurant Award for Best Pizza went to La Pizza, a locally-founded operator.

Vote for your favorite Beijing pizza in the Beijinger 2014 Pizza Cup. Find your ballot at www.thebeijinger.com/2014pizzacup.

A ROUGH HISTORY OF PIZZA IN BEIJING

BIG CHAINS AND INDEPENDENT OPERATORS
HAVE ALL HAD THEIR SLICE OF THE PIE

by Steven Schwankert

PIZZA HUT

Pizza Hut opens its first restaurant in the country in Beijing's Dongzhimen. A Qianmen location follows soon after. With dairy still not a major part of the Chinese diet, and early patrons not keen on eating with their hands, Yum! Brands finds its second effort in China, after KFC, much more foreign to the local palate. The company now operates 1,264 locations around the country as of the end of 2013, and remains Beijing's largest pizza chain, with 131 stores.



HIDDEN TREE

Hidden Tree opens in June on South Sanlitun Bar Street, and offers the first wood-fired pizza oven in Beijing. Its handmade, thin crust pizza, paired with some of the city's earliest Belgian beer imports, is an instant hit. The venue and the namesake tree are cut down in 2005 to make way for Sanlitun SOHO. The original oven continues to dish out pizza at The Tree.



1990

1996

Delivery champions Annie's (see pg. 26) opens. Eighteen years later, the multiple *Beijinger* Reader Restaurant Award-winner has 10 locations.



ANNIE'S



There was a time when Beijing had no pizza, except maybe at the Italian Embassy. Four- and five-star hotels served up some kind of melted cheese on Saltine concoctions with ketchup that may have been labeled pizza, but it just left the homesick in search of comfort food feeling genuinely sick.

It wasn't until 1990 that the first true pizza purveyor, Pizza Hut, came in via investment from the Thailand-based Minor Group. A visit to that initial Pizza Hut location –

which still operates in its original space on Dongzhimen – was a cultural experience. On one side, diplomats and foreign students scarfed down Super Supremes; on the other, curious Chinese patrons eschewed the eponymous product in favor of soup and the now famous salad bar.

What follows is a rough timeline of pizza's proliferation in Beijing, from humble origins among major foreign chains, to the large assortment of individual players that comprise the current scene.

BIG PIZZA

Big Pizza, Beijing's largest locally-founded chain, opens for business. The company now has almost 50 restaurants in the capital.



PIZZA EXPRESS

Pizza Express opens its 500th global location, in Beijing in May. The UK-based company sells to a Chinese investment group for GBP 900 million in July.



2010

2002

2014

Gung Ho! Pizza launches at China View, complete with a special guest: visiting New Zealand Prime Minister John Key. Key remains the biggest VIP to show up at a Beijing pizza restaurant opening.

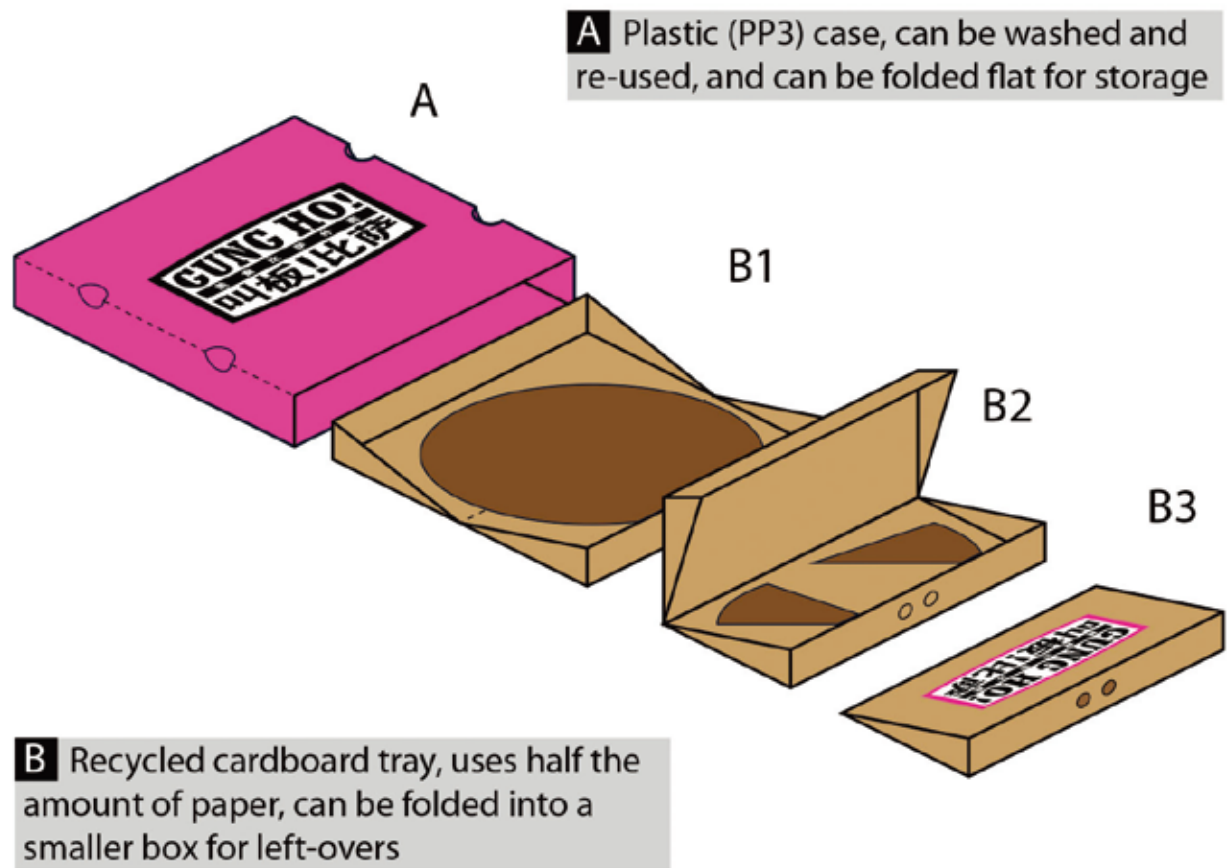
GUNG HO!



THE PIZZA BOX OF THE FUTURE

TWO GUYS FROM GUNG HO! LOOK AT REDUCING AND REUSING PIZZA CARRIERS

by Steven Schwankert



A history lesson: there was a time when most music was delivered on round things called compact discs (CDs). When they first hit the market, CDs were shipped in jewel cases (the small plastic square things the discs were stored in), that were then placed in long cardboard boxes. Some musician named Don Henley decided that huge cardboard box was unnecessary and wasteful, and with some appropriate publicity, the music industry decided to ship CDs simply shrink-wrapped in plastic.

Fast-forward about two decades later, and some other

round things that we like quite a bit, commonly called pizzas, are still shipped in large, wasteful packaging, and no members of The Eagles have jumped up to demand change. With the average pizzeria in the United States using 55 boxes per day, but a pair of Beijing's premier pizza guys, Gung Ho! Pizza's Jade Gray and Rich Akers, last year took a look at the pizza box of the future, soliciting designs and ideas from throughout the Beijing community.

Gung Ho! co-founder Gray kicked things off with his own concept. "Jade's design is made of plastic and consists of two detachable halves. The lid (the top part) slides off

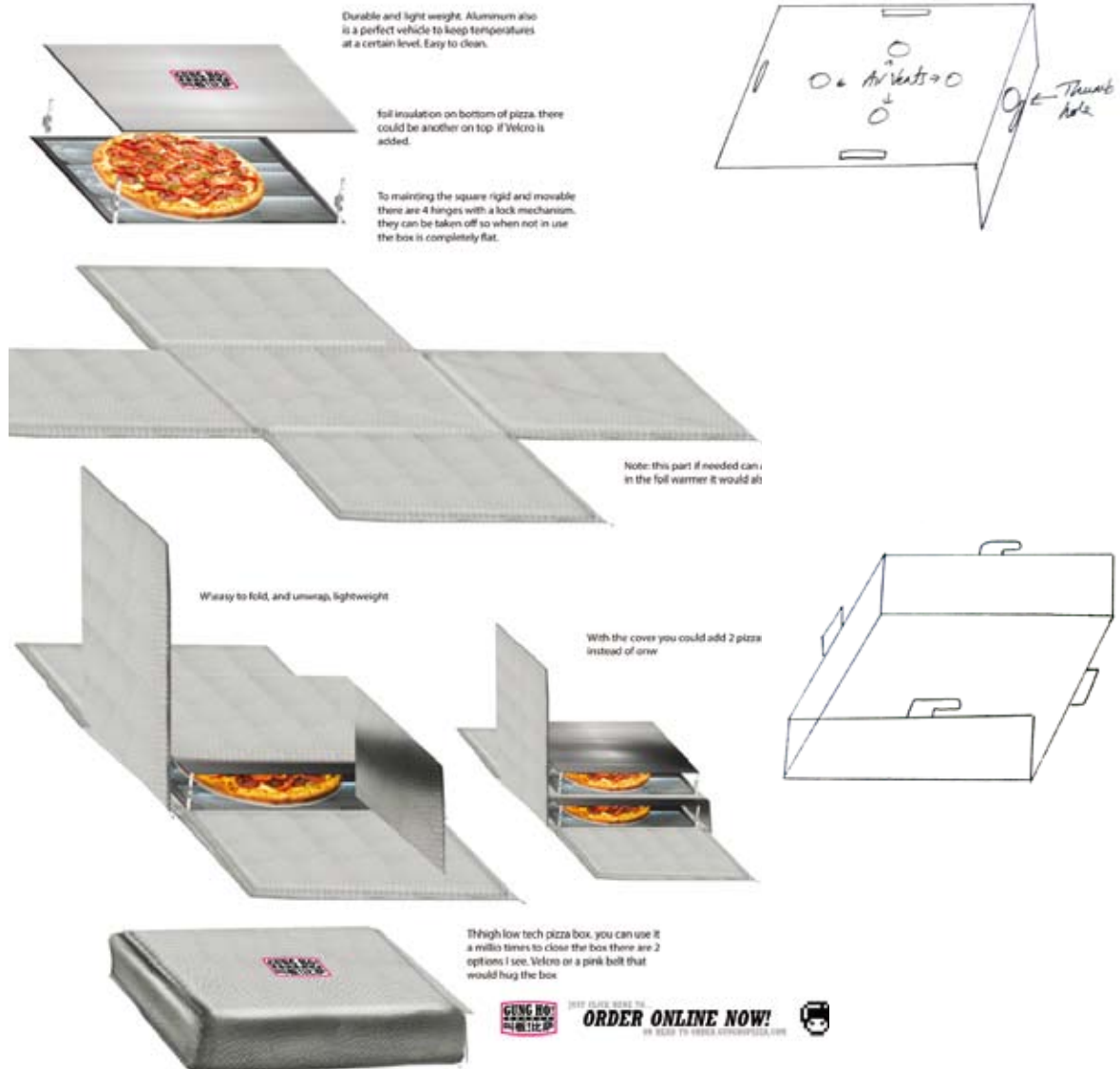
the bottom half which forms a tray. As a result, you can easily put the pizza in and out of the box. It is also easy to wash and reuse," Gung Ho wrote.

Also contributing to the mix was the company's marketing director Akers. "The lid is made of flexible plastic and collapses to be stored flat. A cardboard is used as a tray (and for hygiene). During deliveries, the cardboard tray is left with the customer and the plastic sleeve is taken away. In addition, the cardboard tray can be folded in half to create a smaller box to store leftovers in the fridge," the company said.

But the winning design was presented by Jennifer Thome, a former editor and writer for True Run Media, the parent company of the Beijinger. "With this new pizza box

project she wanted to show that small things can have a great impact. Jennifer designed a pizza box made out of polypropylene (a recyclable kind of plastic). The whole pizza box is made out of plastic as well as the bottom consisting of a cardboard slider to give to the customer. The bottom front panel of the box has a "pizza release panel," which folds down so you can easily reach under the slider to take out the pizza. The lid is not a traditional folding lid, but a lift-off lid for easy cleaning. There are two holes on each side of the card box for air ventilation to keep the pizza nice and crispy!"

Although Thome's design has yet to go into production and use at Gung Ho! or elsewhere, the quest for a better pizza box continues.



A PIZZA THE ACTION

STEAL THE PIZZA CHEFS' THUNDER
AND MAKE YOUR OWN PIZZA AT HOME

by Robynne Tindall

The Italian Standard

How much?

Ingredients sourced from
April Gourmet

2lb bag Springfield all purpose
flour: RMB 31.9

1 sachet dried yeast: RMB 1

14oz can Annalisa peeled
tinned tomatoes: RMB 10.9

Ji Kang brand mozzarella:
RMB 11.8

Basil: RMB 9.1

Garlic: RMB 2

Total: RMB 66.7

Annalisa peeled tinned tomatoes: Whip up a quick sauce from canned tomatoes, garlic and basil stalks, or cook down locally grown organic tomatoes (the tomatoes at your local xiaomaibu won't pack enough of a flavor punch).

Mozzarella: There's no substitute for mozza on a pizza – trust us, we've eaten the Beijing cheese below. If it's just too expensive, try going for a cheese-less pie instead

Springfield all-purpose flour: You can also source perfectly good flour (ask for biao zhun fen 标准粉) from local shops such as Tongrisheng on Yonghegong Dajie for a fraction of the price.



Beijing cheese 北京干酪:
This cheese is made locally by dairy giant Sanyuan. If this is the only cheese available, we say avoid: the texture is disturbingly squeaky when melted.



Jiaozi or dumpling flour: The most widely available flour in Chinese supermarkets, dumpling flour has high gluten content, making it a good substitute for bread flour.



The Beijing Flavor



Roast duck: What dish says Beijing more than Peking duck? Whether or not the flavors belong on a pizza is debatable, but the duck itself would be good in a more traditional recipe.



How much?

Ingredients sourced from a local Chinese supermarket chain

3lb bag dumpling flour: RMB 9.9
1 sachet dried yeast: RMB 1
Qianjude Peking Duck Sauce: RMB 7.5
Half a roast duck: RMB 12.5
1 pack Sanyuan Beijing cheese: RMB 21.5
Cucumber: RMB 3.2
Scallions: RMB 2.2
Cilantro: RMB 0.9
Total: RMB 58.7



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

FOOD & DRINK

MENULESS COCKTAILS // PIZZA RACE // RAGER PIES // FUSION JAPANESE



Sample fantastical creations from pastry chef Pol Ante like this three-tiered tower of fruit and chocolate on Migas' new dessert menu.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF MIGAS

NIBBLES AND SIPS

Openings

Panda Brew Pub have officially opened their new three-story space on Dongsì Bei Dajie, just a hop away from Guìjie. It houses more than eight fermenters, a terrace, bar bites and a new logo featuring a panda with attitude. Their beer varieties are on track to expand with the space, so stay tuned for more details.

No sooner than we told you local mixology aficionado Tony Zhao opened **Drink House Whiskey Bar** near Xindong Lu, he snuck away and fired off another cocktail hideout, called **The Secret**. It's an intimate venue and one of Beijing's few menu-less bars, and with Zhao's skills, we doubt it will be on the down-low for long.

More of a reopening this one, but **Mosto** is back after a brief hiatus with a new look (courtesy of design mastermind Coro Urdaneta), an expanded bar area, and a new menu that spans everything from a quick bite at the bar, to an impromptu meal out, to a relaxed weekend brunch. Everything these guys touch seems to turn to gold, so we're confident the new space will be just as successful as the last.

Closings

The food court in the basement of the **China World Mall** has closed (again) for year-long renovations. Venues affected include Fatburger, The Sweet Spot (both of which can be found elsewhere in the China World complex), and Nyonya Kitchen (whose food you'll now have to trek to Taiyanggong to sample).

Happenings

Dine out for a cause with **Chi Fan for Charity** on November 8. Local personalities will be hosting tables at more than 50 of the capital's best restaurants, with 100 percent of the proceeds going to charity (Morning Tears and United Foundation for China's Health this year). Hop on their website to see which restaurants have spaces left: www.chifanforcharity.org.

Just in case you can't get enough of the grilled cheese trend in Beijing, **BBC** has teamed up with the newly opened **Corner Melt** to host "grilled cheese Mondays" at the bar. Along with custom cocktails, BBC will offer a different artisanal grilled cheese sandwich every week and bread courtesy of Opera Bombana.

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CAFÉ FLO

FRENCH FLAIR



WHAT'S NEW RESTAURANTS

Daily 10am-10pm. LG2-22, Parkview Green, 9 Dongdaqiao Lu, Chaoyang District. (5626 9779)
福楼咖啡: 朝阳区东大桥路9号侨富芳草地LG2-22

🚶 400m south of Dondaqiao station (line 6)

I remember the first time I tried snails. Presented with a steaming dish of shell-on gastropods at an up-to-that-point charming French café, I became convinced my parents and the café owners were in on some kind of cruel joke. Needless to say, I stuck to my *frites* and Orangina. Fast forward 20 years and sitting at a table in Café FLO's tasteful art-deco interior, snails seem like the height of Gallic savoir-faire. It helps of course that they have been plucked from the shells and grilled with lashings of garlic-herb butter (RMB 36).

Butter makes a strong showing at Café FLO, where the food has the satisfying heft of casual French cuisine: duck confit, foie gras, and mounds of melted Emmenthal. An appetizer of onion soup (RMB 49) has enough croutons to make it hearty enough for a main course. The presentation is unorthodox – the soup and cheese croutons served separately – but the flavors are classic. Not that you should skip the mains, which, in true French fashion, are a celebration of carnivorousness. *Choucroute traditionnelle* (RMB 78) is all about the pork, while the *boeuf Bourguignon* (RMB 118) would make Julia Child proud. Sitting back after these with a pitcher of wine (from RMB 98), it's almost possible to forget you're in the basement of Parkview Green.

There may be better renditions of the dishes above available around town, but to my mind Beijing needs more places like Café FLO, places that show that French food doesn't have to be about stuffy presentation and budget-busting bottles of wine. *Robynne Tindall*

Also try: Un Livre, Café de la Poste



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WHAT'S NEW RESTAURANTS



BIG MAMA'S CAFE

A BIG, BOLD CHARACTER IN LIDU

Mon, Wed-Thu 11am-10pm, Fri 11am-midnight, Sat 9am-midnight, Sun 9am-10pm. Bldg 2, 5 Jiangtailu Shangyejie, Chaoyang District (5842 9007)

朝阳区将台路商业街5号楼2楼

 3.3 km northeast of Sanyuanqiao station (line 10)

A picture says a thousand words, but if you appreciate the dynamics of typographic design, fusing the two together is the way to go. Framed by two cartoonish fists clutching a knife and fork, Big Mama's Café, with swirly black letters against bright white with yellow accented framing, definitely shouts down its drab and dreary neighbors.

Head upstairs, past a fluorescent pink "good morning" sign, and consider exactly where your appetite lies. Turn left if you're feeling a little parched and enjoy the delicious aroma of coffee. If your stomach is dictating the visit, turn right and satiate that curiosity with tantalizing kitchen smells.

A healthy dollop of retro diner vibes – wood and tiled flooring with more quirky, if grammatically errant, feel-good phrases affixed to walls – combined with furnishings that would make a wannabe art director nod his or her head in approval decorate the interior. Their stylistic efforts are

reflected on the menu, with arty photography showing off deconstructed versions of flagship dishes. While the menu is excessively priced for solo diners, the midnight snacks page suggests that bringing a group of friends is more conducive to sharing the food, and the bill.

There are some choices for individual patrons though. My duck with mango wrap (RMB 68) felt a bit like *haute* street food; a chewy, toasted wrap binding the duck and mango slices together, with pickled vegetables delivering a crunchy, sharp tang in between each bite. Their Americano (RMB 28), served in a solidly built ceramic cup, was quite potent and certainly achieved the degree of alertness caffeine fans will be looking for.

A strong, independent café, that doesn't need anyone telling them style tips, the eyes and stomachs of Lido will be thankful Big Mama is in the house. *Erin Strong*

Also try: Moka Bros, Tribe

WHAT'S NEW RESTAURANTS

BERKO

THE ICING ON THE CAKE

Daily 8am-9pm. 1/F, Kerry Center Office Building, Guanhua Lu, Chaoyang District (8529 9897)

朝阳区光华路嘉里中心写字楼1层

 400m south of Jintaixizhao Station (line 10)

Say what you like about the cupcake trend that has lingered on since Magnolia Bakery's over-the-top icing made a cameo appearance in *Sex and the City* in 2000, but in Beijing at least they're not going anywhere soon. The latest contender for our city's sugar-hungry hearts is French cake brand to the stars Berko. Using 100 percent imported ingredients, including Brazilian blueberries and French vanilla, they make petite cupcakes in flavors like banoffee (banana and toffee) and speculoos (a spiced shortbread biscuit), as well as more-ish cheesecakes that are among the best we have tasted. Berko opened their first store in the Francophile Galeries Lafayette late last year but surprisingly the new Kerry Center location actually captures a better sense of the brand's French origins, fusing turn-of-the-century Parisian *salon du thé* décor – think pastel colors and extensive cornicing – with modern touches like colored LED ceiling lights. It's a pleasant reprieve from the carbon-copy Starbucks décor of most other CBD coffee shops.

At RMB 40 for a mini-cupcake Berko is, to put it mildly, at the higher end of the cake pricing scale. But for a food that is already supposed to be an indulgence, a little bit of extra pocket change doesn't seem like such a big deal. *Robynne Tindall*

Also try: Colibri, The Sweet Spot



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ONE HUNGRY OFFICE,
FIVE PIZZA DELIVERY SERVICES.
WHICH WILL REACH US FIRST?

by Robynne Tindall

Admit it, when Chinese doesn't quite cut it and the kitchen seems just too far away, most of us reach for the pizza delivery menu. But which number should you call if time is of the essence? We decided to put some of the city's premier pizza players to the test in an unannounced pizza race. Read on to see which pie prevailed.

THE RULES

The timer started when we picked up the phone to order. We ordered a large of the simplest pizza available from each restaurant. We attempted to place the order in English, apart from clarifying the address (our office is notoriously hard to find). Distances were calculated based on the suggested driving route provided by Baidu Maps.

THE WINNER



Annie's

Nearest branch: China View Building, Gongti Donglu

Phone number: 8587 1469

Distance from office: 1.7 km

Pizza ordered: Large margherita



Price: RMB 48

Time: 20 mins 57 secs

Verdict: Annie's swept in at first place with a lead of more than five minutes. We had barely even put down the phone after ordering (from an English-speaking, if perfunctory, staff member we should add) when the pizza arrived. Is this the best pizza you can get in Beijing? Perhaps. Does it do the job? Certainly.

SECOND PLACE



Gung Ho! Pizza

Nearest branch: China View Building, Gongti Donglu

Phone number: 8587 1404

Distance from office: 1.7 km

Pizza ordered: Large thick crust margherita

Price: RMB 86 (minimum RMB 65 delivery)



Time: 26 mins 20 secs

Verdict: Speedy, ever-reliable Gung Ho! Pizza took second place. There was some confusion over the request for a fapiao but otherwise their staff, from ordering to delivery, were as delightfully chipper as we have come to expect from these pioneers of good customer service in the capital. The pizza itself was divisive – some liked the lighter topping, some thought it dry – but overall a strong contender.

THIRD PLACE



Pizza by LMplus

Nearest branch: Central Park

Distance from office: 2.0 km

Phone number: 6597 0108

Pizza ordered: Large margherita

Price: RMB 55

Time: 30 mins 46 secs

Verdict: The black sheep of the competition, none of us had ever ordered from Pizza by LMplus but we were all very pleasantly surprised by their efficient phone answering, quick delivery and crisp base. A solid delivery choice, if only for CBD dwellers – their delivery service is limited to the vicinity of Central Park.

FOURTH PLACE



Pizza+

Nearest branch: Shizipo Jie

Distance from office: 3.1 km

Phone number: 6413 0991

Pizza ordered: 13in round margherita + 1 slice of margherita

Price: RMB 55 (minimum RMB 50 delivery)

Time: 46 mins 52 secs

Verdict: Pizza+ struggled to make sense of our address in either English or Chinese, which may account for their lengthy delivery time, although they are also the farthest away from our office. The pizza itself arrived hot and cheesy despite the delay. Props as well for sheer variety of pizzas: the delivery menu runs to six sides of vegetarian and carnivorous options.



FIFTH PLACE



Tube Station

Nearest branch: Workers Stadium North Gate

Distance from office: 2.1 km

Phone number: 400 8989 177

Pizza ordered: Medium Classic

Price: RMB 105 (minimum RMB 100 delivery)

Time: 1 hour 18 mins 14 secs

Verdict: Admittedly, had we not had four other pizzas to plow through the more than one-hour wait for Tube Station might have been a bit off-putting, but the pizzas are also larger than most coffee tables so probably take a while to cook. However, the huge slices with their ample cheese and slightly sweet tomato sauce made this the unanimous favorite once we got down to the eating. Best to order in advance, but you will not be disappointed.



OCEAN GROUNDS

AFTERNOON COFFEE, EVENING MIXOLOGY



WHAT'S NEW RESTAURANTS

Sun-Thurs 7am-1am, Fri-Sat 7am-2am. 1-05 Hai Long Plaza, 13 Gongti Beilu, Chaoyang District (5743 9548)
朝阳区工体北路13号1号楼1层1-05(海隆广场)

🚶 500m northeast of Dongsishitiao station (Line 2)

With Twin Peaks back in style, it's convenient that Beijing has, once again, gained a centrally-located, independently-owned café where you can rely on a fine cup of coffee. Move over Starbucks, Ocean Grounds Organic Coffee and Tea is back after making the voyage from its old haunt in U-Town Mall to the developing Hai Long Plaza near Xindong Lu. It boasts the familiar labor-of-love house roasts, but its perks aren't all about caffeine – the new location allows for a nightly transformation from café to extended hours when they dim the lights on the bright, coastal vibes in favor of a custom cocktail bar. Mastering the imaginative cocktails alongside owner Jim Lee is Paul Hsu, an award-winning bartender from Taiwan.

During the day though, it's all about Lee, whose flair for ingenuity and deep understanding of the bean lend a dose of discovery to coffee hour. Takeaway options transcend the usual offerings to include honeycomb and agave lattes (RMB 33-43), but if you have time to stay and sip (and you should because the experience is really what it's all about), the signatures are remarkable. Try the iced chicory coffee, an artisanal introduction to the root that helped caffeine go further during wartime in the French Quarter, and if you're hooked, then your next move may be the Love Drunk cocktail, where the spice extract is paired with coffee-infused rum and liqueur. Coffee even makes an appearance in the breakfast menu, where it's infused in salt and sprinkled onto a rosemary cream cheese and mango bagel. Do decaf? A creative menu sans caffeine (think Chicken Philly, Shrimp Po Boy, and street tacos) is on hand until 11pm to temper the buzz. *Jessica Rapp*

Also try: Moka Bros, Café Flatwhite



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RAMO

THAT PIZZA, THOUGH

PARMA HAM & ROCKETS SALAD PIZZA

PHOTOS: SUI

WHAT'S NEW RESTAURANTS

Daily 9am-11pm. 64 Fangjia Hutong, Dongcheng District (8403 5004)

东城区方家胡同64号

🚶 300m southeast of Andingmen Station (Line 2)

Number 64 Fangjia Hutong has proved to be a fussy space over the last year or two, but that didn't stop Paca Lee of The Box from stepping in and conceiving Ramo Pizza, a pie by the slice joint with pizzazz. It's that pizzazz that has certainly brightened up a previously dark and dusty corner of Fangjia, and we're finding it difficult to determine what we enjoy most: the food or the décor.

Lee seems simply to do what she likes. The Box evolved out of a love for entertaining guests at her house, and while pizza doesn't seem like the most natural progression from Canadian diner food, she has found an Italian chef who knows what's up. Currently, the menu features nine options for around RMB 70 for a nine-inch pizza or RMB 16-20 for a slice. The toppings range from "veggie party" to Parma ham and arugula, all with a pleasingly tart tomato sauce. In what we suppose is the Italian way, the thin pies aren't loaded, so if you're the type of person that can down a whole pizza, don't let "by the slice" hold you back. Lee tackles the drink menu herself, taking tips from her own favorite cocktails she's tried during bar hops. Look for whiskey cocktails once the cold weather hits.

The owner did the interior herself, too, and it's as fresh as a hot slice of pizza. Vintage tile flooring is combined with cement-colored floors, walls and ceiling, intersected with banana yellow piping, mismatched chairs, pop art, and tchotchkes, plus plenty of greenery. The eclectic pairings are candy for the senses compared to some of the more minimal, chic design that seems to be a staple of Beijing's F&B scene of late. After seeing it, it's hard to believe it all almost never happened – Lee admits the first version of the restaurant was a shocking shade of pink. *Jessica Rapp*

Also try: Hutong Pizza, Pizza+



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Rager Pies

**GIVE THANKS FOR A NEW
DESSERT IN TOWN**

by Jessica Rapp

So it seems we've been collectively missing out on this phenomenon that occurs once a year during the American tradition of giving thanks. It's big, it's tasty, and it's called a "rager."

Let's define rager. In 2010, Wilson Hailey hosted one helluva pumped-up Thanksgiving party, with tons of people, tons of turkey, and tons of pie. It was the kind of head-banging event that magnetized homesick Americans and their curious friends, starved for a slice of Ben Franklin's bird, pumpkin pie and cozy camaraderie. That luster wore off; people came and went; but the pies? They stayed. And thus, Rager Pie was born in 2012.

At first, the pies were short-lived. Co-founder Hailey ducked down to Shanghai and, meanwhile, befriended six coffee-conscious lads from Gospel Coffee Roasters. He



returned to Beijing. He remembered the pies. He bought an oven. Then came the pecan, banana, and apple, all washed down with eclectic third-wave Gospel roasts and alcoholic whipped cream. He was ready to rager again.

For now, Rager Pies is delivery-only, where for RMB 120-140 (RMB 25-28/slice), you can bring the likes of a savory chicken-spinach-mozzarella, and, inevitably, pumpkin, to your own rager (or just enjoy them in the quiet of your home). Some may find the crust lacks punch by rager standards, but a graham cracker version is in the works. We do like that the pumpkin pie filling is a hand-mixed combo of pureed Japanese pumpkins and pumpkin chunks and that the pecan plays dangerous games with your blood sugar. Because if that wasn't the case, it wouldn't be a rager, would it?




Delivery only, www.ragerpie.com (186 1405 5548)

FLAVOUR PROMISE

A PROMISE DELIVERED

Daily 9:30am -2:30pm, 6-11pm. 1/F, Longbao Dasha, 36 Maizidian Jie, Chaoyang District (6584 3358)

美味之约：朝阳区麦子店街36号龙宝大厦1层

 800m southeast of Liangmaqiao station (line 10)

What do you get when you cross Japanese food with European café culture and throw in a dash of Chinese flavor? It would seem you get Flavour Promise, a small Japanese restaurant secreted away on the first floor of a run-of-the-mill office block on Maizidian Jie.

Bear with me before you flick over the page, thinking “that sounds disgusting.” Fusion is admittedly a difficult concept to pull off but Flavour Promise does it so effortlessly that you barely even notice they’re doing it in the first place. It was not without trepidation that we chose the Italian Dan Dan Noodle meal (RMB 55) from the brief, yet well-priced, lunch menu. However, our fears

were allayed when the dish arrived, a pile of toothsome homemade spaghetti in a piquant sesame-based sauce, with just enough ground chili pepper to remind you of the original inspiration behind it. Not quite *dan dan* noodles, not quite pasta, but quite delicious.

If you still yearn for something more recognizable, perhaps choose the katsu sandwich set (RMB 50), which comes precariously anchored with a toothpick, the perfectly fried pork cutlets and heaps of lightly dressed shredded cabbage longing to escape. *Robynne Tindall*

Also try: Vin Vie, The Way





MIXED SASHIMI PLATE

O-TAKU SAKE BA

HIDDEN DELIGHTS

Daily 11.30am-2:30pm, 5:30-11pm. 1/F, Bldg 12, Xinyuan Xili Community, Chaoyang District. (8400 4388)

大德酒场: 朝阳区新源西里小区内12号楼1层

 1500m west of Liangmaqiao station (line 10)

Japanese food seems to adapt particularly well to fusion cuisine, or at least it does if the rash of restaurants around town serving menus that draw on both Japanese and Western influences are anything to go by. Fusion surfaces briefly on the menu at the Xinyuan Xili location of O-Taku Sake Ba [sic] in the sashimi salads, huge rectangular platters of lettuce draped with translucent slices of assorted fish, topped with a tangy ginger-infused dressing.

Those that prefer their raw fish presented traditionally will find much to enjoy in the sashimi platters (from RMB 180). The cuts are perhaps not as delicate as we have had elsewhere around town, but the fish is fresh, imported from Japan and, in the case of the salmon, Norway. The same fish makes an appearance in the *nigiri* sushi, which is served playfully, if slightly morbidly, with a decorative prawn head.

Raw fish may be an excellent measure of a Japanese


restaurant, but it is actually in the simpler, homestyle dishes that O-Taku shows its mettle. A snow white mound of homemade tofu (RMB 40) comes delicately displayed on a wooden board complete with little pots of seasonings such as sesame and bonito so you can adjust the flavor yourself. A piping hot plate of chicken *karaage* (fried chicken to you and me) boasts a perfect balance of crisp batter to succulent thigh meat.

Of course, if you're ordering fried chicken, you're going to need a beer. The drinks menu boasts a wide selection of sake and imported beers, many of which were unfortunately not available on our visit. But no matter. The food goes down just as easily with a frosty RMB 20 pint of Asahi as it does with a wheaty Belgian number. Gather a few friends, order a few rounds and settle in to O-Taku Sake Bar for an evening of comfortably familiar Japanese food. *Robynne Tindall*

SUZUKI KITCHEN

DOWN-TO-EARTH JAPANESE IN DASHILAN

Wed-Mon 11.30am-3pm, 5.30pm-9.30pm. 10-14 Yangmeizhu Xiejie, Dashilan, Xicheng District (6313 5409)
西城区大栅栏杨梅竹斜街14-10

 700m southwest of Qianmen station (line 2)

The newest branch of the Suzuki Kitchen empire lies on a cobblestone street just north of the maddest rushes of Dashilan hidden behind a wall of golden mesh paneling. During opening hours, one panel swings inward, revealing a stone pathway stretching through a sea of pebbles. The only thing missing from this would-be Zen garden is the trickle of running water.

Inside this elegant and ethereal space, the kitchen churns out surprisingly hearty, down-to-earth Japanese food. No delicate slivers of raw fish here – instead, Suzuki Kitchen specializes in steaming bowls of rice topped with meat and tofu and large plates of dark brown Japanese-style curry. Also popular are the personal hotpots (RMB 50), small black cauldrons holding specials like the “miso taste” chicken atop shallow wooden fire-boxes.

Less delicately, salad bowls (RMB 38) are massive birdbaths filled with tuna, egg, tomato, cucumber, and

greens, all drenched in a creamy dressing. The tofu don (RMB 25) – rice topped with tofu, eggs, and a cluster of dried seaweed – is a contender for comfort food greatness. Steamy, salty, and savory, it could easily replace ramen as the go-to one-bowl dinner for lazy nights in if it came in a just-add-water version.

The standout dishes come from the list of teppan, sizzling iron plates of grilled chicken, beef, and pork. The *shougayaki* (RMB 42), curls of fatty gingered pork belly, comes with sides of creamy mashed potatoes and a pile of thinly sliced lettuce, all of which end up soaking in the flavorful pork fat.

The drink list features pomelo (柚子酒) and plum wine (酸梅汤). Over ice, both become refreshing and light, sweet without the sickening syrup of convenience store plum wine (RMB 35, add RMB 3 to add a booze-soaked plum). *Emily Walz*



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WOKIPEDIA



C

...Celtuce 莴笋

The odd-looking celtuce, or celery lettuce, is a type of lettuce grown for its thick stem, which is sliced and used as a vegetable, although the leaves are thought to have a higher nutritional content. Its clean, crisp flavor is great tossed in a cold salad or quickly stir fried.

...Culiu 醋溜

Culiu is a popular cooking style in northern China, with vinegar (*cu*) added during stir frying to produce a lightly sour flavor. Try it with thin slices of potato (醋溜土豆丝, *culiu tudousi*) or with northern China's other great crop beginning with "C", cabbage (醋溜白菜, *culiu baicai*).

...Cong 葱

In China, *cong* commonly refers to what we would call scallions (or spring onions, depending on where you're from), while bulb onions are known as *yangcong* (洋葱, literally "foreign onions"). Like so many cuisines around the world, they form the basis of any number of dishes, the white part adding fragrance to braised dishes, the green part lending freshness to small parcels of Peking duck.

...Changfen 肠粉

Traditionally a southern Chinese breakfast dish (where it is pronounced *cheung fun*), these steamed rice noodle rolls are now a mainstay on dim sum menus around the world. Bland by themselves, the rolls come alive when filled with crisp prawns or a hearty helping of Cantonese *cha siu* pork and topped with a dressing of sweet soy sauce. Vegetarians might want to look out for *changfen* wrapped around fried dough sticks (油条, *youtiao*), a pleasing textural contrast.



A LOCAL TOUCH

HENRY ZHAO, DIRECTOR OF MARKETING,
BEIJING MARRIOTT HOTEL NORTHEAST

by Robynne Tindall

Native Beijinger Henry Zhao is the marketing brains behind Beijing Marriott Hotel Northeast. Over a meal of Shandong-style dishes in the hotel's Chinese restaurant, Choy's Seafood, he told us about his favorite local dishes and his take on Beijing's hotel industry.

Tell us a little bit about your background.

I've been in hotels in Beijing since the beginning of my career. I worked my way up from the bottom: from bell boy, to front desk, to sales and beyond. This is pretty standard in the hotel industry, even for top-level executives, as it's the only way you can really understand how the hotel works. All in all I've worked for eight different hotel brands over the years.

Do you think being a Beijinger means you bring anything special to the job?

Maybe not in the hotel industry as a whole, but it certainly does for marketing. Whenever you meet a Beijinger you'll notice that we love to tell stories and this is a key part of successful marketing. It also makes us great sales people – we can tell you all about the background of any product.

What changes have you noticed in the hotel industry in Beijing over the years?

The main thing is increased competition. Nearly every major international chain, from business hotels to luxury

brands, has representation in Beijing now. You have to work harder to identify your unique selling point.

Where are your favorite places to eat local Beijing food?

I actually have pretty simple tastes. I prefer to go for traditional street food dishes like *chuan'r* and *baodu* (boiled tripe). My favorite restaurant is called Juqi. It's in southwest Beijing near Taoranting. They serve traditional Beijing dishes, but with creative, modern twists. For example, their fried rice is made to look like the coal bricks people used to use to heat their homes and is set on fire at the table. People are always so surprised when you take them there the first time!

Since this issue is all about pizza, what's your favorite place for pizza?

I actually do like pizza a lot. We're very close to Kro's Nest on Xiaoyun Lu, so I go there quite often. We also do a great margherita pizza at our all-day dining restaurant Beijing Bistro.

"Cooking Brilliantly" brings together four award-winning chefs from around China for a five-day festival exploring the best that modern Chinese cuisine has to offer from October 27-31. The event ends with a seven-course gala dinner in the Beijing Marriott Hotel Northeast's Grand Ballroom on October 31.

Give Peas

A PEA SIZED PUNCH TO THE SENSES

by Kipp Whittaker

Fried peas are a timeless snack undeniably associated with the East, made with marrowfat peas and flavored with wasabi powder or sometimes plain. In

China we have access to these flavors and more, resulting in an interesting examination for our locally-sourced taste buddies.



Zhuangweifu Mala Peas (RMB 5)

"More like a bulbous spicy pea nugget. I love the mouth numbing, and the thick crunch."

"This would be a great road trip snack for keeping you awake at the wheel."

"So spicy and addictive, it's like eat, drink, repeat. Be advised, wash your hands before contact with your eyes or sexual partner."

Kam Yuen Spicy Flavor Peas (RMB 6)

"Not spicy at all. There's more of a slight barbecue taste, and by slight we mean minuscule."

"Copious amounts of peas in each little baggie trying their best to be barbecue-flavored Doritos."

"Easy to eat because of the addicting crunch and fake BBQ flavor, but lacks the pizzazz of the mala ones."

Jiangnan Meishi BBQ Peas (RMB 4)

"Kind of like barbecue-flavor Fritos made with peas, not as impossible as it may sound."

"A crunchy, greasy sheen topped with MSG barbecue powder. Probably not ideal for those who shy away from processed foods."

"This could be a staple part of your diet if you completely relied on convenience stores for all of your nutritional needs."

A Chance

VERDICT

The best by far were the spicy *mala* peas from Zhuangweifu. These you can barely throw down your throat without reaching for a cold beverage. Maybe too spicy for people who shy away from heat, but after a couple you will learn to suffer through this deliciously stimulating snack. Garlic is also a good choice for those who prefer that strong synthetic, MSG-laden flavor to satiate your desperate snacking.



Jiangnan Meishi Roasted Garlic Peas (RMB 4)

"If my eyes were closed I could tell it was garlic flavored. A good way to achieve awesome garlic breath."

"A bag of these little peas a day to keep the vampires away, although maybe the whole vampire and garlic allergy is a myth."

"I would rub the powder on my neck and arms to prevent mosquito bites."

Shangzhen Wasabi Peas (RMB 8.5)

"These are tasty but they're not giving me that painful tickle that I desire in a wasabi flavored pea."

"Super ordinary, and lacking in the spice department but kind of addictive."

"I could rub my eyes after eating these without too much discomfort, which isn't ideal."

Hengkang Garlic Peas (RMB 8.5)

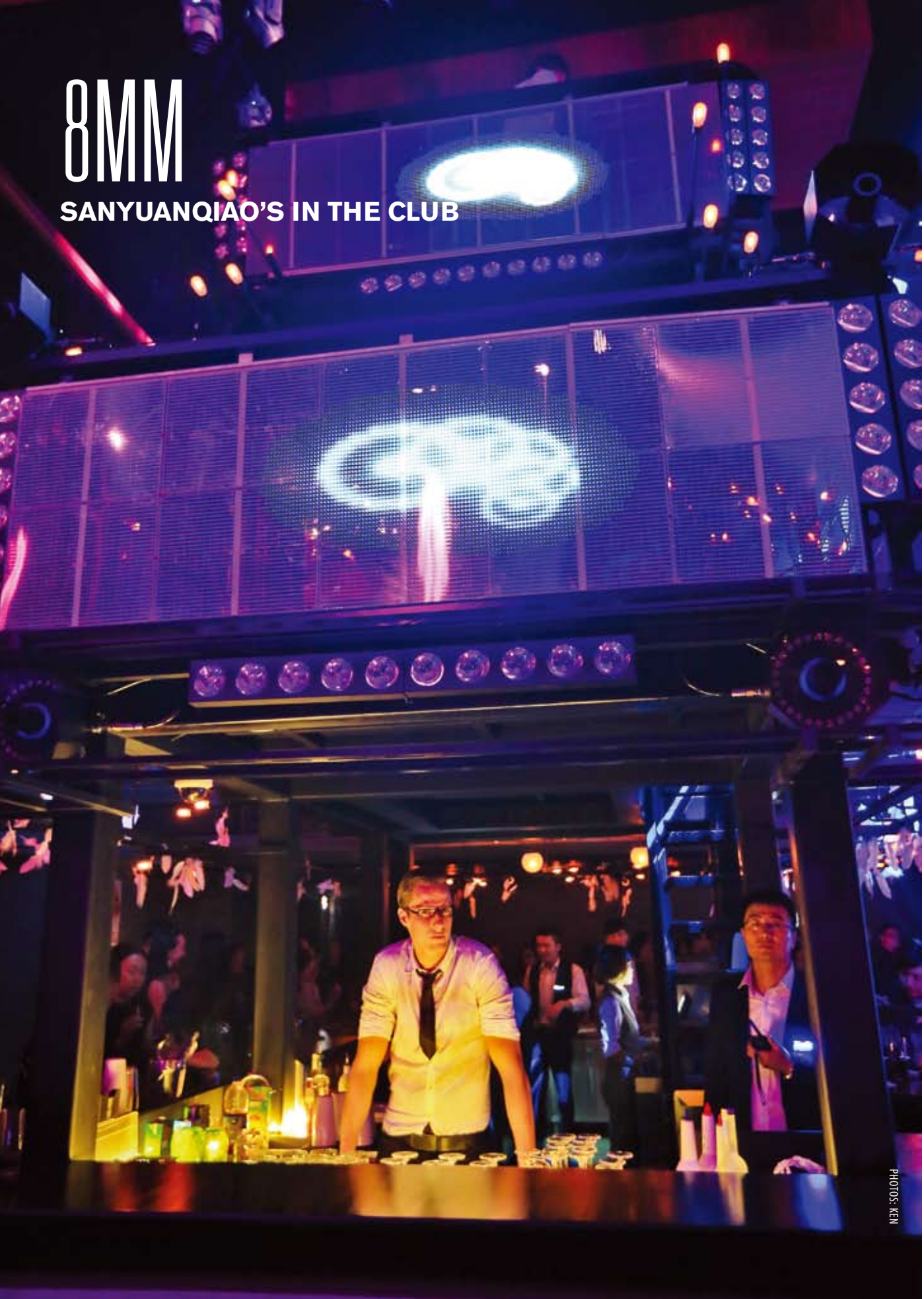
"These are really tiny and without any obvious flavoring. They don't taste bad but I could easily leave it for the weasles."

"What they lack in taste, they make up for in quantity. Which would be a great tagline for a top-40 radio station."

"The flavor is instantly forgettable, but they taste fine. Maybe more natural than the other varieties."

8MM

SANYUANQIAO'S IN THE CLUB



WHAT'S NEW BARS & CLUBS

8MM, WF1-WF2, Landmark Towers Bldg. 2, 8 East Third Ring North Road, Chaoyang District (6590 6678)

朝阳区东三环北路8号亮马河大厦2号楼WF1-WF2室

 200m south of Liangmaqiao subway station (Line 10)

Its sweeping, sparkling facade is hard to miss if you're headed north on Third Ring Road past The Great Wall Sheraton Hotel, but it's the inside of 8MM Club that will have to impress if it is going to pull party-goers so far away from Gongti's flashy nightspots. 8MM is a venture by Ammo, the same group that brought art house bar, Entourage, to Central Park, and it has settled into Hard Rock Cafe's old spot alongside a sister fine-dining restaurant. That space is set to serve luxury sets of foie gras, steak, and seafood, but it was the club that had our attention when its soft opening kicked off with a performance by Grammy Award-winning rapper Chamillionaire, following teaser after-parties with White Collar Boxing and Ellie Goulding. Resident DJ Markino has been manning the decks, a sign that this is the spot for showing off the Lamborghini in the early hours of the morning after shaking your tush to a top 100 DJ elsewhere. No sign of additional big international bookings at 8MM just yet, though.

Still, we hope they make more use of that stage-turned-dance floor, which is situated oddly close to the well-lit entrance. The bar is easy to access, and it's covered by a two-tiered LED VJ display and capped by a DJ balcony. The remainder of the open plan is defined by tiredly trendy bare light bulbs. In the far back corner and away from commotion is a wine bar, a nice touch.

Here's a request: Dear Chamillionaire, next time you come to Beijing, please sing "Ridin'" not "Let's Get It Started" by the Black Eyed Peas. Or did I just see someone pop some Moët & Chandon in a KTV? *Jessica Rapp*

Also try: Elements, Hush



慕田峪

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WHERE'S THE DRINK LIST GONE?

THE ART OF MASTERING THE MENULESS BAR

by Jessica Rapp

If you don't know your whiskeys from your bourbons, then rolling up to a menuless bar can be daunting. Luckily, you can be confident that there are bartenders in this city who have your back. Following a longtime trend that has caught on among the watering holes of Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Japan, the menuless bar is beginning to snake its way through Beijing, and with it, savvy bartenders like Douglas Williams of BBC. We tested a few of his dark rums before launching into a chat about the challenges and rewards of no drink list.

A menu isn't just a handy guide to cocktail ingredients, it can help you communicate with your bartender. How difficult is it to train staff to be able to find the right drink for a customer?

The biggest challenge is talking to customers. Between myself, my partners, Linch and Eric, and Stephanie from Mao Mao Chong, we have about 30 years of bartending experience, so that's helpful. Everyone is familiar with the different categories of cocktails.

PHOTOS: MITCHELL PEMASLUN

Can any talented bartender work without a menu?

There are a lot of technically-skilled bartenders in Beijing, but their knowledge is really just, "Here's a recipe. I know how to make it." They might not understand the cocktail families, such as how a margarita is related to a Cosmopolitan. It's important to get a feel for what people are drinking so that you can actually make something different. We want our customers to have something more unique than a gin and tonic or a mojito because we want them to remember the experience.

Is the menuless bar for everyone?

We do get a lot of worldly, well-traveled people and a lot of people in the industry. They're pretty seasoned, and they like it because we have a lot of eclectic spirits that you probably wouldn't see elsewhere in Beijing. Our Chinese customers are also typically well-traveled and savvy, but we do get some people who were just wandering by and walk in. That's the challenging part – getting to a comfort and trust level with them.

When you experiment, have you ever made a drink on the spot or do you usually prepare it beforehand?

We make tons of drinks on the spot. A lot of people pull out different bottles and ask you, "What's this? Can you make something with that?" Yet, if we decide to do a

Negroni with a coffee tincture, Aperol and Campari, some people might say, "I don't like bitter in the sense of Campari, but I like coffee." In that case, we say "OK, let's work on something else." We'll then work on something on the spot. The foundation of that has to be that you know the categories and the recipes and why they work together. If you don't have that foundation, it's like roulette, and you're going to get some bad drinks.

Do you do more craft cocktails or twists on the classics?

A little bit of everything. Each bartender has his own personality and as much as I'm controlling or would like to be, we try to let everyone have enough freedom to do what they want. Depending on who is behind the bar, everyone may be making different cocktails. It begins to become challenging if I make something for you and you come back and I'm not here. We try to keep track of what we made.

What are you working on now?

We'll be doing a couple of hot drinks as we go into autumn – less bright and more full-bodied. We'll probably start using more port and moving more towards cloves and nutmeg. We'll also be getting in some craft whiskey and craft gin from Oregon.

Read more of our interview with Doug Williams on our website.



BEIJING'S MENULESS BARS

BBC

With a rotating team of masters possessing various interests and talents, customers are in for a wealth of possibilities, from twists on their favorites to pure experimentation.

Average price per cocktail: RMB 70

Address: Daily 6pm-late. 1 Taipingzhuang Nanli, Chaoyang District (186 1405 7407)
朝阳区太平庄南里1号

The Secret

A new hideaway with a well-curated selection of spirits executed by owner and weathered barman, Tony Zhao.

Average price per cocktail: RMB 100

Address: Daily 6pm-late. A-2022, Yongli International Center, 21 Gongti Bei Lu, Chaoyang District (8405-9525)

朝阳区工体北路21号永利国际A座2022

Ocean Grounds

While they do have a petite menu with a smattering of coffee-themed creations, the owner Jim Lee and award-winning bartender Paul Hsu from Taiwan are more than prepared to go the custom route.

Average price per cocktail: RMB 70

Address: Sun-Thurs 7am-1am, Fri-Sat 7am-2am. 1-05, Bldg 1, 13 North Workers Stadium Road, Hai Long Plaza, Chaoyang District (5743 9548)

朝阳区工体北路13号际1-05 (海隆广场)



CIRCLE

THE GONGTI CLUBBER'S SAVIOR

Daily 9pm-late. 6 Gongti Xilu, Chaoyang District (6586 0961)

朝阳区工体西路6号

 1 km southeast of Dongsishitiao station (Line 2)

In the beginning, Club God said, "Let there be lights. Let there be drinks. Let there be Pitbull. Let there be Gongti."

He said he would send down a savior, rescuing the party hungry from phony DJs, hired eye candy, and vicious hangovers, and Circle is the latest in the throng of clubs hoping to fulfill the prophecy.

Circle operates under an "ask and you shall receive" approach to entertaining guests, rather than "spend and you shall be seen." Hong Kong actress Cecilia Cheung and celebrity designer Chi Zhang helped curate the interior with this in mind. A wraparound LED screen circles a modestly-sized space, propped by a mirrored colonnade that reflects a champagne train headed to the lonely table in the back. The real fun is being had up front. They opted for ample wiggle room on the bouncing (literally, it rises) dance floor. Tables taking preference over a dance floor at Chinese mainstream clubs is a common complaint shared by foreigners, and as a Circle representative told us, "The

crowd we want is the rich and fabulous and foreign." In order to attract all three, they are attempting to cater to both Chinese and foreigners' ideas of a night out.

This doesn't stop with burning tables. "Around the World" is a forthcoming series of parties that will feature food, fashion, and DJs from different countries. Their drink menu is international too, containing luxury-brand bottles from Ace of Spades to Macallan 18. If you don't have the disposable income to pop bottles all night, they have the usual row of mixed drinks and cocktails (RMB 50-80), or you can make it personal at RMB 70 a pop.

Circle is spreading the gospel of lavish leisure, without compromising what makes a club, a club: fun. And like any savior worth their margarita salt, they may just be sacrificing profits for the good of mankind, and they are attracting followers from every corner of the globe.

Reed Russell

Also try: 8MM, LIV Club

WHAT'S NEW BARS & CLUBS

DUSK DAWN CLUB

DDC STAYS UP LATE

Daily 2pm-1am. 14 Laoshan Hutong, Dongcheng District. (186 1173 0692)

东城区山老胡同14号

 600m east of Nanluoguxiang station (Line 6)

It's a global trend for live houses to forgo design in preference of a noisy party pit coated in the effervescence of stale beer and sweat. Although at times icky, there's nothing that says rock'n'roll in all of its incarnations more than the physical evidence of such raging activities. Things like sticky furniture and cigarette burns are the essence of that damaged ambiance.

DDC doesn't stick to this trend but that doesn't mean it lacks the ferocity necessary for a music venue or quality musical programming. There is an amazing amount of venues in Beijing, so you can imagine that the venue of the future needs to set itself apart in order make it in the competitive landscape. This is where DDC undeniably succeeds.

There is an industrial-looking hall to the side where the music goes down and featured art lines the walls. This is delightfully contrasted by the classical courtyard setting where the drinks are served. The beer is a little pricey, with the cheapest draft being RMB 35 for the NB Wheat.

What they did best here is create a venue on the edge of the Gulou scene near Meishuguan that you could hang out at with or without live music. The location is convenient and elegant with daytime hours and a Zen terrace for lounging around in the warmer months. Our only concern is if it's contained enough to prevent noise complaints from the neighbors. This is the most important test for any emerging hutong music box. *Kipp Whittaker*

Also try: XP, The Other Place



PHOTO: KIPP WHITTAKER

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IRON BARTENDER



Three bar masters. Three “secret” ingredients. One judge. Would Beijing’s cocksure mixologists fumble when faced with an unusual condiment or unfamiliar fruit? Or can they concoct a drink to

impress one tough taster? In the spirit of Iron Chef, we put our bartenders to the test by announcing a secret ingredient, giving them ten minutes to conceive of and create a mix, and finding out just how creative a cocktail can get.

THE CONTESTANTS



Karen Li Ambrocio
Palms L.A. Kitchen

Hailing from a town near Mexico City, Mexico, Karen took her bartending skills from school to Great Leap Brewing, Slow Boat, and Modernista before settling in Palms, where she is happy to whip up a sweet recommendation from the “secret menu.” On the real menu, a tamarind margarita makes a debut this month, which is buy-one-get-one free during happy hour until 7pm.



Matthieu Torrano
Modernista

Matthieu proudly claims to be one of Modernista’s very first customers, and it wasn’t long after his visit before Modernista’s owners introduced him to the world of mixology. Now, he’s been manning the bar for six months, thus not-so-incidentally, his expertise lies with absinthe. If given the choice, he’d opt for a dry martini, and he’s not too shabby at working with Spam.



Richard Ammerman
Jing A

Richard is best known for his relationship with Beijing-bred craft beer, but he wasn’t always all about the hops. During his time at Tufts University, he did cocktails in his dorm room for his friends. Then, it was all about the fortified wine and Italian amari, but he hopes to put his mixing to the test in line with beer with some pointers from Bottle, Boot, and Cigar’s Doug Williams.

THE JUDGE



Warren Pang
Janes and Hooch

This isn’t Warren’s first competition, nor is it anywhere near his first bar. The Australian grew up with a family in the F&B industry, so when he came to Beijing, it was only natural that he became involved in the bar scene, notably helping to open d lounge before creating “the next niche of the niche.” Look for a food collaboration with Taco Bar this month.

ROUND 1

Karen



lime juice, lemon juice, simple syrup, Hendrick's gin, dry Martini, ice, and coriander

Matthieu



gin and ginger juice, shaken with coriander, and soda water

Richard



Koornwyn Jenever, lemon and lime juice, sugar syrup, and spicy ginger beer muddled with coriander

SECRET INGREDIENT

Coriander



Verdict: Warren enjoyed everyone's first fragrant cocktails, but it was Richard's balance of coriander and ginger – "best friends" of the spice world – that made a lasting impression.

ROUND 2

Karen



persimmon juice, passion fruit syrup, lemon juice, and Cointreau, garnished with dehydrated lemon

Matthieu



rum, coconut water, coconut syrup, shaken with fruit, and green chartreuse, garnished with a slice of persimmon

Richard



rum, rye, port, persimmon, cinnamon syrup, and lime juice, garnished with dehydrated lemon and cinnamon stick

SECRET INGREDIENT

Persimmon



Verdict: With the persimmon taste difficult to capture, Karen won the round for managing to bring out its flavor with a touch of passion fruit, while capturing a breezy texture and boozy flavor.

ROUND 3

Karen



crème de violette, pomegranate juice, vodka, and egg white, garnished with tea flower

Matthieu



Campari, pomegranate juice, and lime juice

Richard



vodka, Aperol, ginger syrup, and pomegranate juice, topped with Hoegaarden

SECRET INGREDIENT

Pomegranate



Verdict: Karen's cocktail's deep blue startled Warren, but didn't sway him. As a Campari fan, he enjoyed Matthieu's drink, while he dubbed Richard's "very freaking good." Keep reading at www.thebeijinger.com.



CAPITAL SPIRITS

BAIJIU DRUNKS

Daily 8pm-12am. Tue-Sun, 3 Daju Hutong, Dongcheng District (6409 3319)

东城区大菊胡同3号

 600m West of Dongzhimen Station (Line 2 and 13)

The gentlemen behind Capital Spirits Bar & Distillery left Derek Sandhaus' 300 Shots at Greatness lecture last March with *baijiu* on the brain. It was here they decided to create the world's first bar dedicated to the "white spirit." Sitting in a restored hutong shop, they currently feature about 30 types of the pungent Chinese fire water, along with in-house, distilled local favorites like Yanjing Beer and Great Wall Wine.

We started off our visit with the intro flight (RMB 40). This featured one *baijiu* from each of the various categories, which includes rice, light, strong, and sauce. It was indeed *baijiu*, but to our surprise there were distinct differences of strength and flavor between them. This was the first time we found it organized in a way we could determine what type best suited our pallet.

Next we ordered up the Anaconda (RMB 50), their crazy snake-infused cocktail that also contained a jigger of tequila and cold-brewed coffee. This dangerous fella was accompanied by a special light-up frog fountain,

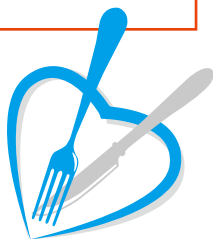
creating the kind of multi-sensory gimmick that we're partial to. The drink itself was pretty tasty, considering I thought it would initially taste like the floor of an exotic pet store. Make sure to check out their *baijiu* versions of classic cocktails, like the Crab Island Iced Tea and the *baijiu* sour, which also looked pretty interesting.

No other bar on our radar has yet to provide this sort of tasting ground specific to *baijiu*, apart from those pesky holiday dinners or business banquets, where it is forced down your throat with little grace. The only thing we can say this bar is lacking is a good soundtrack, but this is coming from someone that cares way too much about aural ambiance. The frat party tunes are a tad inappropriate for the amazing service and ancient Chinese buzz that Capital Spirits provides, and you will no doubt leave buzzed. *Kipp Whittaker*

Also try: BBC, Ming Bar

P.S. WE ATE YOU

Every month, we like to shine a spotlight on the most delicious dishes we've stumbled upon recently. Eat up!



zucchini carrot cake

Wagas, RMB 18

Filled with little poppy seeds and carrot skins, this moist guy satisfied our sweet tooth with its complex mixture of sweet and earthy flavors. Mixing in the zucchini and citrus, which is unorthodox to say the least, ended up being preferable to the usual additions of raisins and nuts.

Peking duck pizza

Alpha Omega Club, RMB 129

Not as crazy as it sounds. Think of standard Peking duck flavors (hoisin, duck, scallions), but replace the pancakes with a thin and crispy pizza base and add a healthy scattering of cheese (never a bad thing). The picturesque Houhai location doesn't hurt either.

The Tolly

Taco Bar, RMB 45

These skinny fries were a little undercooked, probably because we arrived in the middle of a Taco Bar lunch rush, but still a joy to shovel into our filthy little mouths. They were loaded with an interesting combination of savory toppings, including carnitas, kim chi marmalade, garlic, scallions, and cilantro.

chargrilled pork

HK o Man, RMB 58

It can be a little disturbing how much of this fatty meat we consumer here in China, but this dish is so classic and delectable that it sets that porky paranoia aside. It is a filling platter of very tender dark and light meats, served with a sweet garlic chili sauce and a spicy soy sauce. A perfect spread for satiating your guilty carnivore within.

cheeseburger

Waspark, RMB 35

This is actually a really great deal. Made with quality ingredients, it does a far better job of giving us a "burgerific day" than other options in the over-RMB 50 category. Also it doesn't taste like the meat is mixed with sawdust, like McDonalds. Waspark is a cool neighborhood joint, where you can just walk up to the window pick it up and consume in the comfort of your home. This sort of slow/fast food is the next wave.



Things to do, places to be, stuff to try

GO

CYOVAPE // CARHARTT WORK IN PROGRESS // MOTORCYCLE // PEKING OPERA



Break the Hollywood habit this month (Nov 2-23) during the European Union Film Festival. This festival will be featuring some important titles in European contemporary cinema like *Bullhead* (Belgium), *Name of the Game* (Sweden), and *Lisa Limone & Maroc Orange* (Estonia, pictured above). See www.euoff.org for a full list of screenings.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF THE ORGANIZERS



VAPE'EM IF YOU GOT'EM

VAPORIZING YOUR NICOTINE HABIT ONCE AND FOR ALL

Cyovape, Daily 1pm-11pm, 105 Gulou Dong Dajie, Dongcheng District (158 1138 3777)
东城区鼓楼东大街105号

 800m west of Beixinqiao station, (Line 5)

In Beijing, we take cigarette smoking pretty seriously. So it was only a matter of time before the e-cigarette revolution hit the capital. Vaporizers are currently viewed as a less harmful alternative to cigarettes for those wanting that nicotine fix, without that pesky smoke tearing up your lungs or stinking up your threads (surprisingly lots of people hate that). At Cyovape you can find everything to help you kick those tobacco sticks at one location.

There are many vaporizers to choose from (RMB 398 to 1,580). They even have disposable, cigarette-shaped versions (RMB 28) in various flavors that last about 500 puffs. This is the equivalent of about two packs of cigarettes, if you just want to give it a try and not commit to one of those pricey phallic vapor bongs.

Once you have your vaporizer picked out, Cyovape has a suitable synthesized version of your favorite tobacco and beyond, with flavors like cotton candy, blueberry ice, and cappuccino. Their selection of e-juices is set in tall stacks around the store, with prices ranging from RMB 50-100.

Next door to the shop, there is even a small tasting room, where you can blend your own e-juice, or customize your pen with Hello Kitty heads or a handlebar mustache, as if these things didn't look silly enough.

Even though this shop isn't as cheap as ordering a vape pen off Taobao, Cyovape is a convenient option if you don't have your online commerce options set up.

While the future of e-cigs is still being paved, this is probably your best option for getting a far healthier nicotine buzz. The staff is knowledgeable about their merchandise, and is willing to guide you through the differences of these simple, hyper-futuristic devices, so you can get that stinky monkey off your back. *Kipp Whittaker*

Disclaimer: publication of this material does not indicate an endorsement of smoking or vaping by the Beijinger or its parent company True Run Media.

Also try: Concertino, Heaven Supermarket



CARHARTT WORK IN PROGRESS

RUGGED MENSWEAR IN TAIKOO LI

Daily 10am-10pm. B8-22 / Bldg 8 Taikoo Li South, 19 Sanlitun Lu, Chaoyang District (no phone number)
朝阳区三里屯路19号三里屯Village南区8号楼

 500m west of Tuanjiehu station (Line 10)

Concrete and steel, cotton and denim, sweat and blood. These are raw, rugged materials forged together by working-class heroes. Often pushed aside to make way for the clean-cut suits and shined boots that many metropolises breed, durable, yet fashionable, menswear is making a comeback in Beijing with Carhartt Work in Progress (WIP) bringing to Taikoo Li a contemporary, industrial energy.

Natural and artificial light illuminates the space, bounces off concrete floors and reflects off metallic corrugation adorning the rear wall. It's airy without being empty. Collections are treated like artistic exhibitions, clustered together on low plinths and display cases or spaced out on display racks. You can browse every piece without feeling overwhelmed by the sneaky flashes of abstract patterns or rich colors.

Teaming up with Japanese brand Neighborhood, the

Carhartt x Neighborhood fall collection is an experiment in zany fur patterns and rugged weatherproof combinations. If you're a bold cat, you'll love the blazoned leopard-print jacket (RMB 3,499), but for those with a more conservative jungle view, a T-shirt (RMB 899) will suffice. Another brand collaboration, this time with Rocky Mountain, showcases a range of jackets (RMB 4,999) that lead a more neutral, but no less stylish, collection.

A light cotton T-shirt printed with a black dragon and stamped with 'Beijing' (RMB 399) is a limited edition and only available in-store, so be quick. Plans to expand the Carhartt WIP brand into Shanghai are in the works, with additional China locations being considered.
Erin Strong


Also try: Radiance Blue, COS

BLACKBRIDGE

WHAT'S YOUR PRICE FOR FLIGHT?

10am-7pm Mon, Wed, Thu, Fri. Heiqiao Art District (186 1813 2163)

朝阳区黑桥二到八艺术村

 5 km northwest of Cuigezhuang station (Line 15)

Whether you're a Wild One or a Kawasaki Ninja, motorcycles are worshipped as a symbol for individuality and personal freedom, and for their utility (parking a car sucks). Blackbridge was founded by local designer and motorcycle head Adrien Macera, and they are currently your best option for transforming your beat up old hog into something more contemporary, efficient, and elegant.

They are located near the National Film Museum, in a large live/work space kind of deal. The workshop is clean enough to perform most non-invasive surgical procedures, and they have all of the necessary tools and talents to transform your crotch rocket into something worthy of a mythical sword name like Excalibur or Stinger.

The prices aren't cheap though, which we assume is the nature of this sort of high-end custom work. They range from RMB 8,000 for a small capacity custom town cruiser to RMB 200,000 for a complete overhaul and restoration

of a vintage bike. While performance is their focus, they can add many details and eye candy that won't hinder the bike's speed or maneuverability.

If you have an idea for your ideal bike, they can probably build it, although they are developing a waiting list because their skills are increasingly in demand. Make sure to contact them first with your proposal then they will set a meeting so that you can go through the details of how and when to proceed.

In addition to these custom jobs, they provide coaching and service for advanced and beginner racers. For around RMB 10,000, they will take you on an all inclusive trip to one of the many international racetracks in China, where you can legally live out those top-speed dreams. *Kipp Whittaker*

Also try: Beijing Sidecar, Harley-Davidson



PHOTO: KIPP WHITTAKER



GET THE LOOK

Chiara Sassu
Founder of
Chiara's Coffee Table

Her style: Classic with a twist. "I like to mix iconic pieces by popular labels with avant-garde accessories from young designers from all over the world."

Style transformation: "I feel free to wear whatever I want, and I'm not afraid to make a statement by dressing up. It used to be different though... I really started having fun the moment I stopped caring what other people would think."

Shopping haunts in Beijing: "I try to avoid shopping malls and focus on discovering local ateliers or concept boutiques instead. I love to wander around Fangjia Hutong, Nanluogu Xiang and 798."

Guilty pleasure garment: "I can't control myself when it comes to Hermes' silk foulards. And I love the fact that no matter how you wear them – as belt, scarf or hat – they can always effortlessly upgrade your look."

What she's wearing: Camel coat by Max Mara, pumps by Stuart Weitzman, mohair shawl by Neemic's newly launched "Afternoon" collection, vintage bag by Fendi, sunglasses by Prada, earrings handed down by family.

Chiara dishes on local food and style trends on her blog, chiarascoffetable.com.

COOL AND CLASSIC

by Jessica Rapp



Jaxx Yuen
Hair Stylist, Shu Salon

His style: Cool and colorful, but when it's rainy, he's in black.

Shopping haunts in Beijing: Zoo market and vintage fairs. "I don't really like to shop here. I hate shopping malls." **Style transformation:** "I dress almost exactly the same as I did in Hong Kong. It depends where I'm working. When I worked in a hotel, I had to be more subtle – I couldn't be so colorful. But here, I can be myself."

What he's wearing: Sweatshirt by Deus, pants bought in Sanlitun, shirt bought in Ko Samui, Thailand, second-hand polo, Nixon watch, 70s glasses from Delia. *Jaxx or any of his Hong Kong colleagues will talk you through a hairdo that fits your personality at Shu.*

FEEL THE NOISE

HOW TO APPRECIATE PEKING OPERA

by Kipp Whittaker

We can all acknowledge that Chinese opera is very different from its Western counterpart. Although someone like Andrea Bocelli would probably make a fine eunuch on the Beijing stage, the similarities between the two styles are very limited. The use of gestures, acrobats, and cacophonous music is so alien to our cultural palate,

but if you approach it with an open mind, the beauty of this amazing art form will eventually reveal itself. From the details of the costumes and makeup, to the otherworldly sounds coming out of the performers, there is nothing else like it. Here are a few basic concepts to help newcomers get a better understanding of this art form, and clear your path to becoming a Mei Lanfang fanboy.





Acting and Dance

With the cacophony of sounds and vigorous movements, it's sometimes hard to believe that every detail of Chinese opera is calculated with exact precision to evoke a desired emotional response. It uses a style of acting that's more suggestive than realistic, and focuses on injecting as much beauty as possible in every action rather than directly imitating life. Movements and facial expressions are the actors' primary tools for narrating these stories, and it requires years of dedication to master these unique stage traditions. Everything from the costume and the colors painted on an actor's face reveal important details about the story. For example, white indicates a sinister or evil character, while red is brave and loyal, and black is fierce yet impartial. Because it so minimal in terms of props and set design, nothing is arbitrary.

Music

Musical accompaniment in Chinese opera consists of a small ensemble of melodic and percussive instruments. The lead instrument is the jinghu, a two-stringed fiddle, the main purpose of which is to precisely synchronize with the singers and adapt to spontaneous moments of improv and create instinctive harmonies at a moment's notice. It's amazing how tight the musicians are with the singers, far more complex than the general consensus that it all sounds like feral cats in heat. It isn't pop mu-

sic, so the songs won't just sit passively in the room for you to comfortably ignore. The songs of Chinese opera command your attention, which for some people can be overwhelming.

Venue

Now that your curiosity about this unique cultural treasure is piqued, you should know that it's crucial to experience Chinese opera in the right venue, not just streaming the video at your desk or dropping by a dumpy hotel stage. If you are interested in experiencing some of the best in Beijing, make sure to check out Zhengyici Theater, which has hosted many opera greats during its over 300 years of history, including American comedian Louis CK (no kidding). Here you can surround yourself with the antiquity and traditions of Peking Opera, in a venue constructed during the Ming Dynasty (circa 1688) and tastefully restored to maintain a classical Chinese aesthetic. The combination of this aura of authenticity, their talented troupe of performers and nicely curated programming make it an unforgettable experience. For maximum enjoyment get familiar with the stories before attending the performance so you can follow along, but it's also possible to just tune in and drop out to all of those crazy meandering sounds and blinged out physical theater. It's really psychedelic stuff.

Introducing the people who matter

MEET

JOSHUA FRANK // ASIAOBSCURA // SOPHIA PEDERSON // JIMI SIDES // FM3



After years of performing his off-kilter folk tunes as Smog, the sultry baritone of Bill Callahan will haze out Yugong Yishan. Prepare yourself for an unparalleled evening with a modest musical icon on Nov 21.

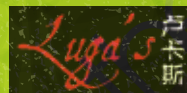
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JOSHUA FRANK

VIDEOGRAPHER FOR VICE CHINA



In the biopic of your life, which scene should be filmed in slow motion?

It's a film within a film. I'm shooting a Thai tattoo festival at a Buddhist temple and at 120 frames per second you see me get knocked in the head by a running guy in a trance who thinks he's a tiger.

What TV show or movie did you have to be coerced into watching but now readily admit that you love?

I never really got into *Seinfeld* until I lived in New York, but once you spend enough time in a stopped subway car underground things just really make more sense.

What was your favorite movie when you were a child?

Dunston Checks In, which is the beautiful story of a young boy befriending a mischievous orangutan in a five-star hotel and outsmarting a jewel thief.

What's your favorite film musical?

Hole, by Tsai Ming-Liang. It's a film about an apocalyptic virus hitting Taipei and people beginning to act like cockroaches. Throughout the film there are lip-synced dance sequences with Grace Chang songs from the 1960s. *Air Hostess and Wild*, *Wild Rose*, which are original Grace Chang musicals, are also incredible.

Is there a movie soundtrack or score that you use to get yourself into a certain mood?

"Jungle Drums" from Wong Kar-wai's *Days of Being Wild* is

deep brunching music.

What movie are you sick of people saying to you: "What?! You haven't seen it?"

I really should have seen *Antichrist* by now but either I'm feeling upbeat and don't want to get crushed, or I'm already sufficiently bummed out.

What is the slowest paced movie you still enjoyed?

I like a lot of slow movies; films by Taiwan directors like Tsai Ming-Liang or Edward Yang where most of the time it's just two people silently eating durian in a gloomy apartment. Once you get into the rhythm everything clicks.

What's the scariest movie you've ever seen?

Enter the Void is probably one of the most viscerally disturbing films I've seen, although I wouldn't call it a horror film.

If you had your own reality show, what would be the title?

When is someone going to make a reality show about foreign "creatives" sharing a *siheyuan* off Beiluogu Xiang? If you're the last to be voted out of the courtyard you win a work visa for a copywriting company and never have to go to Mongolia again.

Look out for Joshua Frank's videos on Vice.com.

ASIAOBSCURA

TAXIDERMISTRY AND PICKLED CORPSES COME TO LIFE IN ANDY DEEMER'S NEW BOOK

Before even opening the cover, Andy's Deemer's book must win something for perhaps the longest title of the year: *Balinese Cockfighters, Chinese Taxidermists, Kentucky Bodysnatchers, Mongolian Wrestlers, Two-Headed Girls, Evil Theme Parks, Shrunken Heads, Modern Cavemen, Korean Nazis, Cute Cosplay, Cock Temples and Pickled Corpses: Curious Adventures from the Annals of Andy Deemer's AsiaObscura*.

Based on the blog of the same, shorter name, www.asiaobscura.com, one may ask: how strange does something need to be for classification as "obscura"? "The obscura bar for the book was much higher than it was for the blog. Deranged theme parks make it in, as do the Korean Nazis, Kentucky body snatchers, and the quest for the Mongolian shaman," Deemer said in an email interview.

One of his favorite stories comes from attending a Chinese taxidermy school.

"'Was he killed?' asked Xiao Li as he carefully drew the thin scalpel around the inside of the ear. 'No,' said Teacher Liu. 'He just died a few days ago.' 'Died of what?' 'I don't know,' the teacher said. 'Don't ask me.' 'He must have died of something.' Teacher Liu set down his own scalpel and sat back firmly. 'He just died,' he said. 'He was old. Really old.' 'Was he a pet?' asked Xiao Han, barely looking up. 'Yes, but he's fairly large, so he was probably a guard too.' The pet that may or may not have been a guard dog was laid out in front of us, flayed and salted. This was how taxidermy school in China began."

AsiaObscura brings this big continent where we live into sharper focus for both the armchair traveler and seasoned explorer alike.

Andy Deemer's AsiaObscura is available from Amazon.com and by special order from The Bookworm.



PHOTO: COURTESY OF ANDY DEEMER



SOPHIA PEDERSON

MEDIA AND PROJECT MANAGER, SPLIT UNITED

If you could date a music genre, what would it be?

Chinese Rock. Conjures up images of Chinese boys with long hair, tattoos, leather jackets... yum!

Can you play any instruments? If so, what?

I play the violin. As a baby, my mom took me along to our local philharmonic concerts. She said after the concerts, I stuck things like pencils or rulers under my chin and pretended I played the violin. I started violin lessons when I was four. I don't really play as often as I should though...

What is your workout music?

Definitely must have something upbeat with an electronic vibe when I work out for cardio. A lot of Crystal Castle's stuff from their 2008 album. If it's yoga, then I'll listen to the XX or anything Mongolian is fine too. I really don't work out that much, just ride my colleagues' bikes and walk a lot. I need to start up again though. Thanks for reminding me!

Name a song or record for your time in Beijing?

I pick Sound Fragment's album, "Beautiful Underlife." Not only is the title befitting, the music feels quintessentially Beijing. A little dreary, but oh so fascinating and addicting.

What is your favorite music video?

I like the Madonna video "Nothing Really Matters." It was partially filmed in the decommissioned R1 Reactor in Stockholm and featured Japanese butoh dancers.

What is your favorite TV theme tune?

I love the 1980s version of the Chinese TV soap opera



Journey to the West's theme song, "Which Way Should I Go." In high school, I participated in an exchange program for a year with Youth For Understanding. My Chinese host brother (age three) and I would watch the shows together before dinner with the rest of the family. I find the melody very inspiring and also kind of love that cheesy 80s Asian-sounding vibe they have going on.

Which artist would you most like go for a drink with?

Perhaps one of the guys from Second Hand Roses. I've never met them and any guy who has a figure for a *qipao* must have some interesting stories for me.

What is your favorite cover version of a song?

I like a guy named Hui Zi's cover of Wild Children's song "Life in the Underground," called "Beijing is Not My Home." Both artists are from China's northwest and I think Hui Zi's gritty voice adds depth to the original version; also I like the violin at the beginning.

Check out upcoming Split Works events including *Wild Beasts* on Nov 14, *Lone* on Nov 14, and *Bill Callahan* on Nov 21. See our Events section for details.

SOPHIA PEDERSON'S FIVE-SONG PLAYLIST



"Yil" by Ajinai



"Shadow Chaser" by XTX



"Shadow" by IZ



"I love you" by Wang Fei



"高级动物" by Dou Wei

MUSIC REVIEW

LISTENING AND SPEAKING

BEIJING'S FM3 RETURN WITH A NEW STUDIO ALBUM

FM3 have been an integral part of Beijing's electronic music community since the late 90s. Although *Ting Shuo* is the first studio release from Christiaan Virant and Zhang Jian in about a decade, they remain active, playing gigs around Europe and Asia, and developing those cute little Buddha Machines. We were thrilled to discover that they haven't hung up their patch cables yet and continue to keep it real in their recording studio, making deep, elegant music.



After first listening to *Ting Shuo*, I realized why critics always use contradictory adjectives like "poetic noise," or "confrontationally tranquil," to describe their sound. While maintaining an often ambient approach in their compositions, there's a variety of ominous textures that appear throughout the album and manipulate your emotional response. This is done mainly through the slow sculpting of sounds and never relying on one mode or motif to project their shadowy ambient visions.

Ting Shuo, isn't quite *Music for Airports*, but rather a soundtrack for haunted CBD high rises filled with troubled minds and corrupt opportunists. There is an extremely complex interplay between the electronic and acoustic elements, like an occasional piano or violin that elegantly weaves between the surrounding synthesizers, only to drop into a deep suffocating void of silence.

There are tracks like "Hei Guan," where this device is used beautifully. It kind of sounds like you're trapped in a sensory deprivation tank with a gigantic whale singing along to the minute sounds of your central nervous system. While the track *Fo Wu*, is much more cinematic, with a slightly Klaus Schulze-style synthesizer sequence, that wouldn't sound out of place in a cathedral for some sort of space age religion or a made-for-TV true crime reenactment. What is the point of this type of exploratory music if it doesn't ignite the imagination to visualize these types of wonderfully absurd situations? *Kipp Whittaker*

Visit www.fm3buddhamachine for more information on *Ting Shuo* and the band.



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JIMI SIDES

FOUNDER, THE CORNER MELT



Who would you most like to go out drinking with?

Haruki Murakami because I wanna ask him so many questions that his books left me wondering about. Like Johnnie Walker, the cat killer, from *Kafka on the Shore* – what was he going to do with that flute and the souls it could take when it was completed?

Tell us about the first time you were drunk.

I woke up on a North Sea beach alone with a mouth full of sand and no shoes. After I found my way back to my host's home, I was told matter-of-factly that: "You wouldn't stop talking in a horrible Geordie [Newcastle] accent, so we took your shoes and filled your mouth with sand." As if that was protocol for black-out drunk Americans in northern England.

Tell us about the last time you were drunk.

Last Thursday I decided to share the art of strawpedo with some friends. This takes bottled beer chugging to the next level. You need a bendy straw to act as a way for the air to enter. With the straw in the bottle but bent outside of your mouth, you're able to inhale the beer. I love science. Needless to say I got wasted teaching people how to do it.

What's your golden rule of drinking?

Don't appear to over-drink. Nurse your drink in front of your friends and pound a quick beer on the way to the bathroom. Or go for a pack of smokes and grab a quick beer.

Where's the dumbest place you've gone drinking?

Around the age of 16 my friends and I thought we had the perfect place to get drunk – the middle of a corn maze at night. We figured the cops wouldn't be able to find us. They couldn't and neither could our friends arriving late. Needless to say, after consuming excessive amounts of beer and Captain Morgan we destroyed the corn maze by walking straight on through and out of there. It must have looked like a drunken crop circle the next day.

What are your secret watering holes?

It's literally a hole filled with water! Xihai is the smallest lake north of Houhai near Jishuitan. Bring your own booze, though, as there's nothing there but homes and fisherman.

Enjoy some cheesy goodness at The Corner Melt's new premises in Xingfu Ercun.

What are you planning to do?

EVENTS

OUR EDITORS PICK THE BEST OF THE MONTH

UPLOAD YOUR EVENTS AT THEBEIJINGER.COM/EVENTS

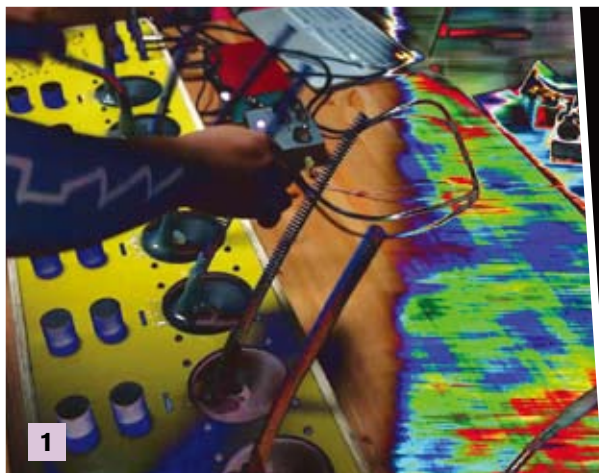
FIND ALL VENUE INFO AT THEBEIJINGER.COM/DIRECTORY. PLEASE CALL VENUES AHEAD OF TIME TO CONFIRM DETAILS.



WILD BEASTS

NOV 14 – From years of honing their quirky waltz vibes to perfection, and recently including the twists and turns of synthesizers in their repertoire, Wild Beasts has grown into quite the formidable British-infused musical beast indeed. Advance RMB 130, Door RMB 160. 9pm. Tango (6425 5677/6428 2288)

EVENTS



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1. MOVIE CONCERT: SILENT SCI-FI

NOV 1 – Silent films will be given a new lease on life as Meng Qi and Jacob Baboni Schilingi cut their way through old and new technologies to synthesize a realm of audio soundscapes never before used with such famous films of yore. RMB 50. 9pm. Meridian Space (5160 0496)

2. MARK MORRIS DANCE GROUP “MUSIC IN MOTION”

NOV 14 and 15 – On the tail end of a unique multi-continent tour, the Mark Morris Dance Group are set to deliver a stunning commitment to the audiences of Beijing in the form of a truly mesmerizing dance performance. RMB 120 and up. 7.30pm. National Centre for the Performing Arts (6655 0000)

3. DO HITS PRESENTS: MUMDANCE (UK)

NOV 22 – “Discovered” by Diplo, Mumdance’s first release on Mad Decent was only the beginning. He’s gone on to be one of the leading lights of the new instrumental grime wave, remixing an eclectic list of artists including Pinch, AC Slater, Brodinski, Santigold. and many more. RMB 60. 10pm-late. Dada (183 1108 0818)

4. BEIJING INVITATIONAL CRAFT BEER FESTIVAL

NOV 14-16 – Great Leap Brewing hosts the first Beijing Invitational Craft Beer Festival at EAST Beijing Hotel. Guests will be provided with a sampling glass to taste free-flow beers from established international brands previously unavailable in China. Tickets and information available on yopay.cn/event/BICBF2014.

5. WOOOZY OFFLINE: LONE FEAT. KONX-OM-PAX

NOV 14 – Praised for making music that feels like an aural documentary into personal happiness, be entranced by the melodic chords and subtle nuances that ebb and flow from Lone’s music. RMB 60 before 12am, RMB 80. 10pm. Dada (113 1108 0818)

DON'T MISS

THANKSGIVING

THANKSGIVING AT TIM'S TEXAS BAR-B-Q

NOV 27– Tim's is serving up an all-American menu of turkey, honey-baked ham, green bean casserole and more. RMB 198, RMB 178 before 4pm. Tim's Texas Bar-B-Q (6591 9161)

THANKSGIVING DINNER BUFFET, EAST 33

NOV 27– Experience a bountiful Thanksgiving buffet with family and friends at East 33 featuring roasted whole tom turkey with classic trimmings, pineapple-glazed gammon with cherries, and roasted bone-in rib-eye from the carving station. RMB 348. 6pm. East 33 (8500 4331)

THANKSGIVING WITH FRENCH FLAIR, JAAN

NOV 27– Add a touch of French flair to Thanksgiving at Jaan, where you can indulge in a set menu including turkey carved table-side by their chefs. RMB 368. 6.30pm. Jaan (8500 4331)

THANKSGIVING DINNER BUFFET, AROMA

NOV 27– A traditional Thanksgiving dinner is complemented by champagne, red and white wine, and signature Thanksgiving cocktails. RMB 638. 6pm. Aroma (5908 8161)

THANKSGIVING SET MENU, JING

NOV 27– The Peninsula's Jing serves up a menu of classic Thanksgiving delights, including turkey, roasted butternut squash with pancetta, and pecan pie. RMB 240. 5.30pm. Jing (8516 2888)

CELEBRATE THANKSGIVING WITH LILY'S AMERICAN DINER

NOV 27-30– Enjoy a traditional Thanksgiving dinner at all three Lily's locations. Delivery of whole roasted imported US turkeys for RMB 99/kg including sides of homemade stuffing, mashed potato, sweet potato, vegetables, cranberry sauce and gravy. RMB 129. Lily's American Diner (131 4642 7090)

THANKSGIVING AT CHEF TOO

NOV 27– Chef Too have been doing Thanksgiving in Beijing since 1999. Dine in at one of several sittings over the weekend, or order a whole bird with all the trimmings to take away. Chef Too (6591 8676/6591 2520)

THANKSGIVING TO TAKE AWAY AT VILLAGE CAFÉ

NOV 27– Pre-order your thanksgiving goodies, from whole turkeys to pecan pies, from The Village Café, either ready for your oven or hot and ready to serve. Order four days before pick-up, 50 percent deposit required. The Village Café (6410 5210)

THANKSGIVING DINNER AT CHI

NOV 25-28– Wudaoying's Chi Restaurant is serving up it's first Thanksgiving dinner, featuring dishes such as Gewurztraminer-poached foie gras, and turkey and stuffing based on a recipe from Marilyn Monroe. Price TBC. Chi (6445 7076)

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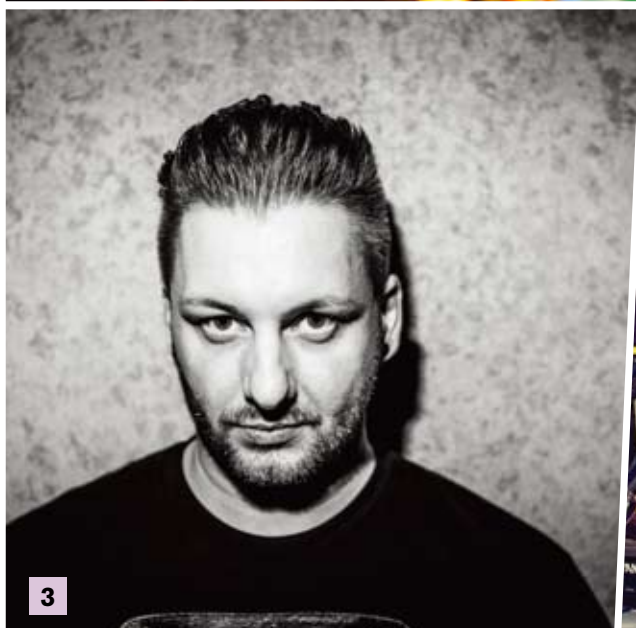
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1. THE SWEET 6: AGUA'S SIXTH ANNIVERSARY PARTY

NOV 14 – Agua is celebrating its sixth anniversary in typically fabulous style, with free-flowing cava, wine, gin and vodka cocktails, accompanied by slick beats courtesy of Mosto's Alex Molina. Reserve early to avoid disappointment – there may not be room for walk-ins! RMB 250, RMB 200 (advance). 11pm. Agua (5208 6188)

2. EL TIGRE SOUNDSYSTEM FEATURING DENGUE DENGUE DENGUE

NOV 7 – Join Dengue Dengue Dengue, a Tropical Bass duo from Lima-Peru as they bring a little jungle fever to El Tigre Soundsystem. You can expect a truly caliente evening filled with Electro Cumbia, Tropical, Bass Music and Moombahton

that is sure to get your maracas shaking. RMB 60. 10pm-late. Migas (5208 6061)

3. BACK 2 BASICS FEATURING MARK REEVE

NOV 21 – This new monthly series will bring you back to the origins of underground EDM, while giving up 50% of all profits to the Migrant Children's Foundation. This month will feature the groovy techno skills of Mark Reeve. RMB 100, RMB 70 (advance). 10pm-late. Lantern (135 0134 8785)

4. DONG DONG FESTIVAL PRESENTS: CHEVEU

NOV 27 – These frantic Frenchies are gonna tear it up for Dong Dong, with their oddball stage show and delightfully lo-fi garage rock aesthetic. RMB 130, RMB 80 (advance). 8pm. Yugong Yishan (6404 2711)

EVENTS

1. COMPUTER LOVE

NOV 1 – Beijing's disco queen is celebrating another year on planet Earth with Cousin Kippy and friends. Join in for a sinful evening of hip shaking grooves and sleazy disco tunes from yesterday and today. Free. 10pm-Late. Dada (183 1108 0818)

2. GOA PRODUCTIONS PRESENTS:

PSYFIDELITY FEATURING MICROGRAM

NOV 22 – If you're into the typical rave fare of glow sticks, diabolos and the occasional fire walker, then this is your event. Combine that with the psy-trance stylings of Microgram and you've got probably the most stimulating monthly party in the city. RMB 50. 10pm-late. Other Top Club (135 0110 3581)



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EVENTS



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1. HOUSING THE BAR WITH PATRICK ZIGON

NOV 21 – Come experience this stylish monster of house music from South Germany. He will surprise you with the depth and control of his self-produced tracks. We guess this is why he's affectionately known as the electronic hypno maestro from South Germany. RMB 50. 10pm-late. Migas. (5208 6061)

2. BROTHER CULTURE

NOV 9– Based in Brixton, Brother Culture has been heavily involved in the UK dub/roots reggae scene for years. As an established MC, he has traveled the world expounding the Rasta message of Jah's eternal love. RMB 100, RMB 80 (advance). 8pm. Mako (5205 1112)

3. DONG DONG FESTIVAL PRESENTS: CALLMEKAT

NOV 29– CALLmeKAT is the internationally acclaimed moniker of Scandinavian musician, composer and singer Katrine Ottosen. Often making use of analog keyboards to give an earthy, organic feel to her innovative pop stylings. Also expect some amazing supporting acts like AM444 and Fifi Rong. RMB 180, RMB 130 (advance). 8pm. Yugong Yishan (5204 9698)

4. UNIQUE BEIJING ANTIQUES TOUR

NOV 23– Whether you're a professional Chinese antiques collector, an enthusiastic hobbyist or a complete newcomer who just wants to decorate your home with a few unique works of art, this is the tour for you. RMB 190 (adults), RMB 120 (kids under 14). TBA. Newman Tours (138 1777 0229)

5. SYNDICATE SESSIONS

NOV 15 – After a break in October following The Syndicate's 10th birthday month in September, they're back at Dada for another Syndicate Sessions, shining a spotlight on some serious local talent, featuring DJs Kay C, Blackie, Clir and Chloe. RMB 30, Free before 11pm. 10pm-late. Dada (183 1108 0818)

EVENTS

1. THE RETURN OF MG PRESENTED BY MOZART GROUP

NOV 9 – Join these classically-trained musicians as they inject a little humor into those stiff classical tunes. Get ready for an evening of sophisticated, perfectly arranged, sublime fun that will leave you crying from laughter. RMB 50-580. 7:30pm. Forbidden City Concert Hall (6559 8285)

2. DONG DONG FESTIVAL PRESENTS: FIFI RONG, ANTIPOP

NOV 28 – Rising trip hop star and Tricky collaborator, Fifi Rong, makes her first Beijing appearance. You can also expect a banging live audio visual set by Howie Lee, and finally DJ Antipop from the band Telepopmusik will be dropping by for your listening pleasure. RMB 80. 10pm-late. Dada (183 1108 0818)



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THE MICHIGAN J. FROG WATER HEATER

by George Ding

My roommate and I have been taking cold showers for months.

Every time we turn on the hot water, our water heater clicks on for a few seconds. Then, almost as if it's giving up, the flame sputters out. If we're extremely lucky, the fire will stay on for a few minutes, giving one of us time for a quick rinse, before it shuts off entirely.

So why haven't we gotten it fixed?

Believe me, we've tried. But whenever a repairman comes over, the heater stays on like nothing was ever wrong.

No, no, it's really broken, we'll insist, **give it a few minutes**. But invariably the repairman gets bored and thinks we're crying wolf.

Recently, though, the heater hasn't bothered to turn on at all. After weeks of endlessly cold showers, we were sure it was broken and called building management.

They sent a repairman and we explained the problem. He tried the hot water and we held our breath. To our astonishment, the heater flicked on, then sputtered out almost immediately. He tried it again. Same thing.

My roommate and I watched as he poked around under the sink, cleaning out a clog in the kitchen pipes. Then he tried the kitchen sink and the heater stayed on.

"The problem is the clog in the pipes leading to the bathroom," he said. "It's already past five so I'll come back tomorrow to fix it."

We couldn't believe how easy it was. Reliable hot water, a luxury we had almost learned to live without, was within reach.

But the next day, a different repairman came to our apartment. He tried the hot water in my roommate's bathroom. This time, the flame stayed on.

"There's nothing wrong here," the repairman said.

"No, no, it's really broken. Another repairman came

yesterday and said there was a clog."

"I don't think so. If there's a problem it's with the water heater," he said.

This new guy had made up his mind and he quickly packed up his tools and left. I wanted to get the first repairman back but in my excitement I had forgotten to ask his name. So the next day we called the water heater company.

That morning I had tried to take a shower but the heater had not even deigned to ignite. Perfect. It just needed to do that again in front of the repairman.

That afternoon, the water heater repairman arrived. He tried the hot water in my bathroom and, as if to taunt us, the water heater sprang to life. The repairman tried all the faucets in the apartment and the flame stayed on again and again.

"No, no, it's really broken" I said. "I tried to take a shower this morning and it didn't start at all."

"Well, if there's a problem it's with the pipes, and I can't help with that."

So the water heater repairman left, though he was kind enough not to charge us for his time because, after all, there was nothing wrong.

In the following days, my roommate and I would wonder how much of this was bad luck and how much of this was the water heater's machinations.

Both of us agreed it was pointless to call another repairman. We knew how it would end. If anything, we'd call a repairman only when we needed the hot water to stay on and have him stand there while we took a shower.

On the bright side, whatever tinkering the last repairman did allowed the heater to stay on consistently for a few minutes before sputtering out.

Now it clicks on more often than not. But after a few minutes, when it's sure no one's looking, the heater turns itself off.



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