

JOURNAL CONCIERGE: AN INSIDER'S GUIDE

SHANGHAI

## THE BLING DYNASTY

**IN TERMS OF AMBITION**, no other Asian hub touches Shanghai. With bragging rights as China's largest city and a skyline—including the world's highest hotel lobby, the Park Hyatt's on the 87th floor—evoking Dubai, the city is challenging Hong Kong and Tokyo as the financial capital of the East.

Yet there's no paving over its darker roots—which is just as well. Once a sleepy village along the Huangpu River, the opium trade ripped open Shanghai and infused it with the heady opportunism and cheek-to-jowl jostling that still lend a charge to the city's air.

Shanghai was shaped when throngs of British merchants, French missionaries, American settlers and Jewish immigrants trickled in and set up their own neighborhoods, effectively forcing the native Chinese into the walled-off enclave of Old City.

West of the river, Shanghai's physicality is dominated by a bygone era of foreign influence, with the distinct neighborhoods and old consulates still serving as landmarks to a time before the Chinese Communist Party's rise to power. East of the Huangpu is Pudong, planned in 1991, where high-rises and wide boulevards are a total contrast.

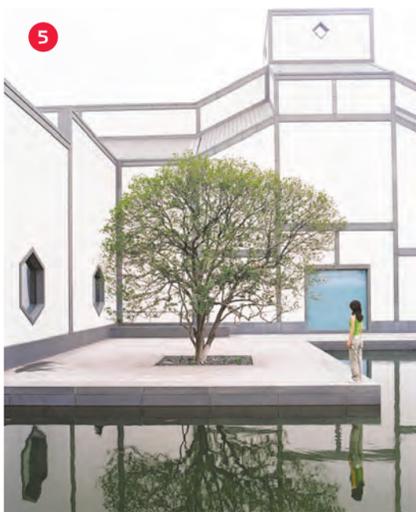
The traders and merchants have been replaced by multi-national conglomerates in banking, advertising and industry. Any visitor who breezes

through the packed restaurants, bars and clubs that stay open all night will see that the city's commercial and social ambitions are on par. Shanghai is a work hard, play harder kind of town.

Many of the neo-colonial buildings have been renovated and now house supper clubs, lounges and restaurants. The domed former headquarters of the Hongkong & Shanghai Banking Corporation building, once the most prominent structure on the waterfront Bund row, faces the gleaming new HSBC tower designed by architect César Pelli and home to an Apple Store at its base.

In the French Concession, the city's most popular residential district, bicycles and scooters careen through the winding tree-canopied streets, holding such new buzz boites as Dr. Wine and The Apartment. In the backdrop are the modern luxury malls lining Nanjing Road—the city's main shopping street—and bustling Huaihai Road, where Shanghai's best-dressed come to shop at such places as Shang Xia, the Chinese-inspired luxury brand recently launched by Hermès.

Shanghai has always been the lady in the slit-skirt qipao, the fitted Chinese dress popular in the 1920s, brought into the 21st century. It's a city that proves it's possible to be elegant, seductive, beguiling and primed for the future. —Andrew Yang



AND OF COURSE...

- **The Bund: 1** Shanghai's spectacular neo-colonial waterfront continues its upgrade, with the new Rockbund business complex. [rockbund.com](http://rockbund.com)
- **Nanxiang Dumplings: 6** A soup-dumpling institution with several locations around town. Visit the one in Yu Yuan Gardens. **85 Yu Yuan Road**
- **French Concession: 7** In the heart of this picturesque tree-lined area is Xintiandi, a popular pedestrian mall of high-end boutiques and cafes.
- **Maoming Road: 4** It's lined with tailors. Check out: Jin Zhi Yu Ye for women's qipaos (**72, Maoming South Road**), and W.W. Chans & Sons Tailor, one of the great makers of Italian-quality men's suits and shirts (+86 21 5404 1469).

Photographs by Andrew Rowat

**The Restaurateur**  
**Jean-Georges Vongerichten**  
Chef and co-owner of Jean-Georges Shanghai, Perry St in New York and other restaurants

**B&B: No. 9.** It's a cozy bed-and-breakfast inside a renovated Art Deco mansion, with only five rooms. Get breakfast in bed and look out the window at some of the place's "pets." It has a very Old Shanghai vibe, but you feel quite at home. **9, Lane 355**

**Hot Stuff: Gu Yi.** I love spicy food, especially indigenous peppercorns. The green ones at this Hunan classic, famous for its cumin-crusted ribs, are the best there is. **89 Fumin St.**

**Street Vendor: Yunnan Lu Night Market.** This Mandarin walk-up's curry-broth noodles are cut with a cleaver, not by hand—fat, flat and white. More adventurous types will go for the duck's tongue or deep-fried scorpion. **Yunnan Road, between Jiujiang Road and Guangdong Road**

**Art-in-Residence: Hong Merchant.** When I'm not cooking, I like to look at art. Tucked away on a lane in the French Concession, you'd never know this 1920s Med-Revival was a by-appointment-only art and antiques gallery, filled with birdcages, contemporary art and Ming and Qing pieces. **At Xingqiao Road, Ln. 372, House 3, hongmerchant.com.au**

**Classic Cuisine: M on the Bund.** Chef and owner Michelle Garnaut has a deft touch in the kitchen. And the minimal but romantic dining room is one of the best in Shanghai. **5 The Bund at Zhongshan Dong Yi Road, m-restaurantgroup.com**

**The Bon Vivant**  
**Pearl Lam**  
Art collector, decorator and director of Contrasts Gallery in Shanghai

**Floral Pleasures: Caojiadu Flower Market.** This converted three-story mansion in the Putuo District has everything: real and artificial flowers, big and beautiful garden stones, antiques, pets even. I buy jade and scholar stones here. **1148 Changshou Road**

**Serious Art Gallery: ShanghART.** Housed in an old textile factory since 2002, it has been the place to see influential Chinese work. Many of the artists keep working studios there. It's alive with creativity, and has fun, big openings. **50 Moganshan Road, Bldg 16, shanghartgallery.com**

**Shi-Shi Dining: 2 YongFoo Élite.** A glamorous 1930s gem, with 1960s Gucci sofas and plenty of mahogany. One of its three bars remains members only. Some recipes come from the days of Chinese aristocracy. **200 Yongfu St., yongfoolite.com**

**New Inn: The Waterhouse at South Bund.** Fascinating modern architecture looking out on the Huangpu's historic docks. There's a great rooftop bar and a restaurant, Table No 1, helmed by Jason Atherton, a former chef for Gordon Ramsay. It's a quiet refuge. **No. 1-3 Maojiayuan Road, waterhouseshanghai.com**

**Dagger Heels: Mary Ching.** The modern-meets-sultry pumps and flats in ornate silk patterns could be worn with a silk qipao, or form-fitting dress. **376 Wukang Road, marychingshanghai.com**

**The Artist**  
**Cai Guo-Qiang**  
Guggenheim-exhibited artist; directed pyrotechnic display for 2008 Beijing Olympics

**Tranquil Public Estate: Ding Xiang Garden.** A favorite contemplating grounds of Mao Zedong. The villa compound and gardens—once home of Prime Minister Li Hongzhang's ninth wife—is the quintessential Chinese-style garden. **849 Huashan Road**

**Hotel Bar: 3 The Compass at the Peninsula.** The hotel evokes the 1920s and makes me forget where I am—there is a timelessness to it. This new wine and cocktail bar is sublime: all woody and purple décor with pricey but fantastic drinks. **32 Zhongshan Dong Yi Lu, peninsula.com/shanghai**

**Sampan Boat Ride: Zhujiayiao.** I love going to this ancient water town, the Venice of the Shanghai outskirts. I used to go there to paint outdoors. It's so well preserved, with old bridges and bubbling streams and bending willow trees. You rent a sampan boat and go down the canals through history. [english.shqp.gov.cn](http://english.shqp.gov.cn)

**Meal in the Sky: Shanghai World Financial Center.** It's now the world's second-tallest building. The Park Hyatt dining room on the 93rd floor is quite something: You can see the entire city. **100 Century Boulevard, parkhyattshanghai.com**

**Rock Show: 5 The Suzhou Museum.** An hour outside of Shanghai, the I.M. Pei-designed museum is in complete harmony with the surrounding historic gardens. **204 Dongbei St., Suzhou, szmuseum.com**

**The Entrepreneur**  
**J. Christopher Burch**  
Financier, chairman of Tory Burch fashion brand and frequent Shanghai visitor

**Dumplings: Din Tai Fung.** It's a favorite dinner spot of mine, famous for its "xiao long bao," soup dumplings—the quintessential local food. The dim sum is serious business. And I hear great things about the sweet, smoky fried fish. **Shop 11A, Building 6, Xintiandi South Block, dintaifung.tw/en**

**Custom Everything: South Bund Fabric Market.** I get suits, beautiful shirts and super-cool pants made for me at this fantastic market in a big warehouse building, with bargain prices. **399 Lujiabang Road, +86 21 6377 7288**

**Massage and a Movie: Taipan Foot Massage.** There's plenty of parlors here, and they really know how to pamper you. You can watch a movie of your choice while getting a 90-minute foot rub and eating and drinking on the house. **370 Dagu St.**

**Shoe-Man Extraordinaire: Mr Billy's.** French Concession cobbler Billy Wang is where to go for custom men's dress shoes, especially if you have an unusual foot shape. Sometimes the wait will take a few weeks, but it's worth it. [billyshoes.com](http://billyshoes.com)

**'Up' Drinks: Vue Bar.** From the Hyatt's penthouse bar on the 33rd floor you get to see both sides of the Huangpu river—from the historic buildings on the Bund to the newer buildings of Pudong. Plus, there's a Jacuzzi on the roof. **199 Huangpu Road, shanghai.bund.hyatt.com**