

Your company Luxury Concierge China offers bespoke tours and services. What service is most commonly requested among your clients?

They want to learn more about Chinese business ethics. That's commonly requested by the established expatriate community here. Recently, Luxury Concierge China had senior car executives from abroad wanting to better understand the local tastes when it came to automobiles, such as design and colour. Basically, they want to know what gets the Shanghainese ticking.

What is one cultural idiosyncrasy that you have noticed in Shanghai?

It's not a common sight, but one will occasionally see couples walking around the city's streets in their pyjamas—especially during the weekend. There's nothing wrong with that, and there aren't that many that do so. Anyway, shouldn't weekends be about dressing comfortably? Someone should come up with a trendy looking brand of pyjamas, though.

How can one get a good bargain at the curio shops?

Being friendly and polite always helps. Try learning some Mandarin words, and perhaps one or two in the local

Shanghainese dialect. Or you can walk away and say "vataca", meaning "never mind" in Shanghainese; it's a word the locals love. Hopefully, they'd be impressed and offer you a better deal.

If you have trouble communicating in Mandarin, learn how to count with your fingers, the Chinese way. Number eight consists of putting your thumb up and your index finger out, like making the shape of a gun with your right hand and pointing it towards the left side. Number ten requires you to make a fist with your right hand, sticking your index and middle finger out, and twisting them together.

At home in Shanghai

Armed with Mandarin and street smarts, Belgium-born Italian and bespoke tour purveyor Jonathan Hasson shares with Lin Weiwen his insights on the Paris of the East.



AMANFAYUN



EL WILLY



THE PENINSULA SHANGHAI

Destination hits

AMANFAYUN

22 Fayun Nong, Xihujiedao
Xihufengjingmingsheng District
Hangzhou 310013
Tel: +86 571 8732 9999
www.amanresorts.com

EL WILLY

20 Donghu Road
Shanghai 200031
Tel: +86 21 5404 5757
www.elwilly.com.cn

FRANCK

Ferguson Lane, 376 Wukang Lu
Shanghai 200031
Tel: +86 21 6437 6465
www.franck.com.cn

GU YUAN TEAHOUSE

1315 Fuxing Zhong Lu
Tel: +86 21 6445 4625
Shanghai 200021

LOST HEAVEN

38 Gaoyou Lu
Shanghai 200031
Tel: +86 21 6433 5126
www.lostheaven.com.cn

QUINTET

808 ChangLe Rd
Shanghai 200040
Tel: +86 21 6249 9088
www.quintet-shanghai.com

THE PENINSULA SHANGHAI

No. 32 The Bund, 32 Zhongshan
Dong Yi Road
Shanghai 200002
Tel: +86 21 2327 2888
www.peninsula.com

Tell us a few of your favourite eateries in Shanghai.

For a touch of Paris, I head to Franck, an elegant bistro in the French Concession. It offers fine cuisine, impeccable service, and attention to detail. Go for the pigeon stuffed with spinach, foie gras and shitake mushrooms served with caramelised soya sauce—simply divine!

Another great place is Spanish restaurant El Willy. Its chef, Guillermo "Willy" Trullas, is an up and rising

chef in Shanghai, who consistently serves up gems like the pumpkin risotto with black truffles, and sushi on guacamole. The place offers a great selection of tapas too.

For an interesting take on Chinese cuisine, head to Lost Heaven, a beautifully designed restaurant serving Yunnan cuisine mixed with Vietnamese influences. Try its pizza with Asian-spices, accompanied by a delectable hot tomato puree.

Gu Yuan Teahouse located on Fuxing Zhong Lu is little known to tourists. Located in the French concession, it has a pleasant garden of stone carvings and offers a great assortment of snacks. It's well known for its quality Pu-er tea.

What are some of the latest hotels in Shanghai that are worth a stay?

The Peninsula Shanghai is a grand, special place, as it's designed in the Art Deco style of the 1920s. It's also the first, new edifice on the Bund in over 60 years. For something more personal and intimate, check into the five-room Quintet, a bed and breakfast property in a three-storey garden house built in 1939, located in the French Concession.

Where should an art lover start shopping if he wants to buy a discerning collection of contemporary Chinese art and rare antiques?

You can look for Michelle Blumenthal. On top of being a collector herself, Michelle also represents several local artists, is well known in Shanghai's art circle, and also conducts the art tours for Luxury Concierge China. For antiques, head to this little shop called Laopan, located on 105 Dongtai Lu. It sells a nice collection of antique furniture, lamps and other pre-WWII household items.

When Shanghai's bustle becomes too much to bear, what is the best escape plan?

Head to Amanfayun in the suburbs of Hangzhou. It's unique because the Amanresorts Group has been able to take over an ancient Chinese village and successfully restore it to perfection, adding modern amenities and facilities, without compromising the authenticity of its structure, such as keeping its 47 dwellings—that once catered to households—intact. Staying a night at the Amanfayun feels like going back a hundred years in China. e