

Architect

SPENCER DODINGTON, 38, is a Texas-born architect who has lived in Shanghai for the past eight years. He renovates old properties, gives architecture tours through his company SDJH Shanghai, and, unlike most foreign residents, he can speak Shanghainese, the local dialect.

Spencer Dodington's Shanghai is a city filled with fine old buildings, including the iconic structures on the Bund: the Peace Hotel and the old Hongkong and Shanghai Bank headquarters. "Those are some great buildings, fantastic buildings, really well done," he says. "Also, I'd like to give a chapeau to Bund 18, and the Taiwanese/Italian renovation team that turned that into such a splash. It's really interesting design-wise, and it's a solid renovation that emphasises the strength of the old building, but they have added new features that keep it in line with modern design." Bund 18 is home to Bar Rouge, Sens & Bund restaurant, and high-end retail shops and coffee shops.

While he admires the Bund, Dodington prefers

the old Concession areas with their whimsical, one-of-a-kind buildings. "One of the areas I always take people to on tours is the far western end of Fuxing Road, between Ulumuqi and Huashan Roads," he says. "It has some really fantastic Art Deco and moderne town houses, and some old, huge English Tudor-style mansions, also a bunch of California-style Moorish revival homes — just a whole hodge-podge of styles. It can give a walker a full-on appreciation for the multitude of styles of the 1920s and 30s. It's Shanghai architecture in miniature on just that stretch."

For visitors who want to buy antiques, Dodington recommends the dealers along Dongtai Road. "My realm is finding Shanghai Art Deco," he says. "Furniture, lighting, doorknobs, carpets, things like that. If you come in and want to buy an Art-Deco table lamp, for 1,000 kuai, 2,000 kuai, 5,000 kuai (US\$125, \$250, \$625), then go down to Dongtai Lu and find one."

