

MY BESTS



Jonathan Hasson, originally Italian, born in Brussels and raised in Africa, came to China seven years ago. While waiting for a plane at the Hongqiao Airport, Hasson and Spencer Dodington began discussing the gap in the market for a company dedicated to enhancing the discerning traveler's experience in China. Soon after, in 2006, their business, Luxury Concierge China (www.luxuryconciergechina.com), was born. "LCC's core strength is offering our clients a total travel product that becomes an unforgettable experience," says Hasson. "Our attention to detail, superior local knowledge and most importantly, our personal service, enables us to deliver to our clients the very best of the best at all times." Here Hasson shares his personal luxury travel bests:

Best Afternoon Tea

After a long morning of sightseeing, I direct people to the sumptuous and refined **Mansion Hotel** (82 Xinle Lu, Shanghai, 021-5403-9888, www.chinamansionhotel.com) for their elegant afternoon tea. The decor is spectacular, providing a feel of Shanghai's 1930 glamour.

Best New Getaway

Take the bullet train to China's newest premier private villa retreat, **Kayumanis Private Villas & Spa**, located in the hinterlands of Nanjing (Sizhuang Village, Tangshan, Nanjing, 025-8410-7777, www.kayumanis.com). The villas are highly luxurious, beautifully appointed and spacious (the smallest is 160 sq. meters).

Best New "Charm" Hotel

Cote Cour (70 Yan Yue Hu Tong, Dong Cheng Qu, Beijing, 010-6512-8020, www.hotelcotecours.com/home.html) is one of Beijing's latest "charm" hotels, located in a hutong on the doorsteps of the Forbidden City. It has maintained traditional Chinese architecture, whilst incorporating Oriental chic; a modern and stylish take on a Beijing hutong.

Best New Tour

The culinary extravaganza tour **"Made in China"** (Suite 609, Dynasty Business Centre, 457 Wulumuqi Bei Lu, Shanghai, 1350-166-2908, www.luxuryconciergechina.com) offers visitors a chance to sample local

cuisine and visit wet markets whilst being given an introduction on how local produce is used. It is interesting, informative and most importantly, it's lots of fun.

Best New Activity

Climb the world's longest arch bridge, **Lupu** (909 Lu Ban Lu, Shanghai 800-620-0888, www.shanghaiacimb.com), to get your adrenaline pumping. What's unique about the Lupu Bridge is that the viewing platform is a 300 step walk up along the arch rib to the top, giving a one-of-a-kind view of the city.

Best Tai Chi / Yoga Retreat

Learn Himalayan yoga and Fuchun tai chi among beautiful mountain ranges and picturesque tea plantations at the **Fuchun Resort** (Hangfu Yanjiang Lu, Hangzhou, Zhejiang, 571-6346-1111, www.fuchunresort.com/en/index.asp). This place is wonderful for finding peace and tranquility.

Best Ride

Take an evening spin around Peking with **Madam Mao's Red Flag Limo** (The Red Capital Club, No. 66 Dongsi Jiutiao, Dongcheng District, Beijing, 010-8401-6152, www.redcapitalclub.com.cn/redflag.html). Sit in the back seat of a classic old motor car while nibbling on caviar and sipping some bubbly. It is unique and original and much more fun than taking a luxury car provided by a five star hotel.

Best Place to Stalk Celebrities

The Paparazzo in You

» Any reader of CW's China Chat column knows that China's celebrities float among us, acting out and looking beautiful. But where do they hang out and how can we get a glimpse of the glitterati? Fei Wang holds her annual birthday party at Coco Banana, Taiwanese singer Jay Chou held a party to celebrate his record sales at Tang Club and Vicky Zhao Wei and her world ping-pong champion boyfriend Wang Liqin often frequent Jasmine. The area between Beijing's **Workers' Stadium West Road** and inside the **Workers' Stadium** is the best location to spot Chinese stars. Catch them dining at Le Quai, Jasmine or Three Guizhoumen before they seclude themselves all night in VIP rooms at Cutie Club or Coco Banana.



Best Mainland Riding Coach

Giddy Up!

» Being from Inner Mongolia, Yang Fu Jun, 27, knows a bit about horses. As the deputy-head trainer at the **Equuleus International Riding Club** (Sun He, Chaoyang District, Beijing, 010-6438-4947, www.equiriding.com), the wiry horseman has coaching credentials from a semester at the British equestrian school at Hartbury College. "Weekends are really busy," says Yang, who was on the Equuleus team that placed fifth in the team show jumping competition at the 10th China National Games in 2005. "Before, few Chinese came here but now it's about half and half." An hour's instruction on one of Equuleus' 50 horses, most of them retired racehorses imported from Australia, costs ¥200-¥240 (English language instruction).