

my SHANGHAI

JONATHAN HASSON



When did you move to Shanghai? What prompted the move?

I moved to Shanghai in September 2000, although I spent my first two years traveling in and out of the city. The main inspiration to move here would have to be my father, who had a fascination for the city and would return with great stories, which he shared with us throughout our childhood. He finally took me on one of his business trips to China in 1997. We spent some time in Beijing, Wuhan and then Shanghai, where I was absolutely stunned with what I saw happening in the city. The end of my studies approaching, and looking for a new opportunity and challenge, I figured that Shanghai could meet the requirements. And, having lived in Africa and Europe, I wanted to set foot on a new continent.

Where are you from originally? What do you miss about it?



I am Italian by nationality, but rest assured, it isn't all that simple. I was born in Brussels, grew up in the Congo (former Zaire); my father is Italian and my mother is part Turkish, part Lithuanian. I miss the tropical climate of Congo, the greenery and nature, as well as the outings on the Congo River over weekends. Brussels, I certainly don't miss the weather! But I do greatly miss my family, a certain comfort of life, Belgian chocolates naturally, and the great choice of quality dining options. Brussels was also a great hub to visit the rest of Europe.

What do you do in Shanghai now?

I am the co-director of Luxury Concierge China (LCC), a new travel consultant and service provider focusing on bespoke experiences in the city. LCC basically offers a large variety of services, namely; tailor made itineraries, private guided tours, hotel bookings, special events, and a lot more.

How did you get into this line of work?

My business partner Spencer Dodington and I saw a niche in the luxury travel market in China, for inbound travelers. There were no companies at the time

offering such a service, and both of us were involved to some extent in this activity. We simply decided to combine our forces and resources, and what followed was the birth of Luxury Concierge China.

What does your job involve?

As we are still a relatively young company with a fairly small but growing team, I am still involved in every part of the business; from marketing to accounting, from pr to management.

What's the best part of your job?

Without any doubt, I'd have to say having clients send us testimonials telling us how much they enjoyed their time in the city. That is always a great joy and satisfaction, and motivates all of us to further improve our services.

What is your greatest indulgence in Shanghai?

Spending the day & evening scouting all the new(er) places in town, whether they be hotels, restaurants, spas, or clubs. This allows me to have the best insight and information for our clients.

What are your top three books or films?

Only three ... Wow ... The Fountainhead by Ayn Rand, Apocalypse Now, the Godfather trilogy.

What's your favourite street in Shanghai? Why?

The French Concession as a whole, and more specifically streets such as Fuxing and Wukang Lu. The French Concession is somewhat of an oasis of peace when compared to the rest of the city.

Favourite restaurant in Shanghai? Favourite dish?

The Kitchen Salvatore Cuomo for its consistent service, great pizzas, beautiful setting & view, and a comfortable terrace right on the river. Franck's in Ferguson Lane is another one of my favorites, offering a small but excellent selection of dishes, and a warm service. My latest favorite dishes would have to be from Jade on 36. The lemon & lemon tart is exceptional, as is the lamb shank and jumbo shrimp in the jar. A truly unique dining experience.

Favourite place to go out for a drink?

Depending on my mood, Volar, BR and/or Glamour Bar.

What inspires you about Shanghai?

The city's residents, all the

entrepreneurs in town, all the activity, changes, developments, and improvements that are taking place on a daily basis. In a similar way to New York, the energy in Shanghai is extremely strong, and pushes you forward, pushes you to make it happen. I am inspired by simply being in the city, and witnessing what is happening around me.

Are you a clubber? Where do you go?



Used to be, no longer am. I did spend quite a bit of time in Bar Rouge, during its first year or two of operations. The parties were sensational.

What advice would you give to a tourist in Shanghai?

Learn some basic Mandarin words and phrases, eat local, be open to new

experiences. Isn't that the reason why we travel?

What's your favourite thing to do on a Sunday here?

A long and casual lunch in Franck's with friends, followed by either a spa and reflexology treatment or a football game.

What do you miss about Shanghai when you're away?

The excitement and buzz of the city.

Finish the sentence "Shanghai is..."

My playground.



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