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TRENDS

- VINE-PRUNING ROBOTS
- 400 SQ. FT., 27 SEATS, 80 DISHES: RISE OF THE MICRO RESTAURANT

MUMBAI AND SHANGHAI'S HOT EATS

CAN ASIANS LIVE WITHOUT RICE?



Paul Pairet made Shanghai proud when he took home not one but three honours at San Pellegrino's inaugural Asia's 50 Best Restaurant event held in Singapore. Other than the coveted Lifetime Achievement award, Pairet also creamed off two lofty spots on the top 10 list for his pair of Shanghai eateries—Mr & Mrs Bund (No. 7) and Ultraviolet (No. 8).

If anything, the Frenchman's meteoric rise is a telling sign that Shanghai's blossoming dining scene is hitting its stride despite Michelin red guide's deafening absence.

"Shanghai is the symbol of new Chinese power, a magnet and a name that feeds imagination," says Pairet of his adopted hometown. "The eateries that opened in the last three years are far more professional and their success has encouraged quality-driven professionals to set foot here."

Indeed, Shanghai's simmering culinary frisson has caught the attention of big name chefs. In recent

"The fascinating historical location and the booming economy convinced me to set up shop here," says Bombana as he gazes at the Pudong skyline from his swanky Shanghai digs. "Shanghai's dining scene is continuously improving and raising its standards," Bombana says, "There's no better time than now to join the fray."

ULTRAVIOLET
Paul Pairet could have been a director/producer if he weren't the chef extraordinaire that he is. This much—and more—you'll conclude at the end of the

22-course UV-A tasting menu (RMB2,500/S\$521) with wine/beverage pairing at his 17-month-

old Ultraviolet. Here, a meal is not just about Pairet's part-classical, part-experimental creations but a journey in multi-sensorial extravagance. Pairet's burnt truffle-soup bread, a Mr & Mrs Bund signature and the only familiar dish on the menu, is served with projected visuals of foggy wooded surrounds to the tune of *Carnivale*—a

piano piece by Gonzales—while the avant-garde cuttlefish *guimauve* (made entirely of cuttlefish and coconut) is presented in a spiral alongside home-made XO sauce with a trio of hypnotic TV sci-fi music—including *Twilight Zone*—playing in the background.

Ultraviolet's reservation list is three months long, with only 10 seats per dinner, it's wise to book way in advance. Reserve online at <http://uvbypp.cc>. Diners will be driven to an undisclosed venue after converging at specified meeting point.



Shanghai's hot eats

With a wealth of restaurants to choose from in this metropolitan city, these five destinations stand out for worthy reasons. By Evelyn Chen

years, a bevy of Michelin stars-studded chefs—such as Jason Atherton and Jean-Georges Vongerichten—have planted outposts in the city with the hope of jostling for a slice of the rapidly expanding dining pie. Vongerichten just cut the ribbons to his second Shanghai eatery at Three on the Bund. Just a stone's throw away, Umberto Bombana, the undisputed truffle king of Hong Kong's 8½ Otto e Mezzo (ranked No. 6 on Asia's 50 Best list), looks set to repeat his flagship's dazzling success with a Bund-side offshoot.



View of the Bund from Ultraviolet.

8½ OTTO E MEZZO

If the accolades and awards of its three Michelin-starred Hong Kong flagship are anything to go by, this Italian fine dining export at Rockbund (next to Peninsula Hotel) is de rigueur on Shanghai's to-eat list—more so if you consider the splendid vista of the gleaming Pearl Tower across the Bund. But while the view is stunning, it does not detract from the indoor eye candy, not least the glass-wrapped temperature-controlled room with an epicurean display of artisan cheeses and cured hams.

Chef-owner, Umberto Bombana, who was recently crowned Chef of Chefs in Asia by the Miele Guide, lets the produce-driven Northern Italian fare crafted by recently-installed executive chef, Riccardo La Perna, do all the talking. Judging by the finesse of our dinner—which included a starter of burrata cheese-stuffed raw Carabineros topped with oscietra caviar and pasta of cavatelli seafood ragout with Tuscan white >



Carabinero Prawn with Burrata Cheese, Caviar and Tomato Vinaigrette from 8½ Otto e Mezzo.

beans, sea urchin and bottarga crumble—this Shanghai offshoot looks set to add another feather to Bombana's cap. *Sixth-Seventh Floors, Associate Mission Building, 169 Yuanmingyuan Lu, near Huqiu Lu, Huangpu district.*
Tel: +86 21 6087 2890

MERCATO

After the runaway success of his eponymous fine diner at Three on Bund, celebrated Alsace-born chef, Jean Georges Vongerichten, goes casual at his second Shanghai offshoot, Mercato. "Since we already have an established fine dining concept in the building, we want Mercato to project a different and distinct identity," says Jacky Goergler, general manager of Jean Georges Restaurant (Shanghai). "We want to encourage guests to enjoy the experience of sharing at Mercato."

Located just two floors up from its stable mate, Mercato dishes up simple but flavoursome communal-style coastal Italian—think warm seafood salad in lemon-carrot dressing, panko-crusted eggplant with tomato fondue, wood-fired spicy pork sausage pizza and a host of home-made pastas such as lobster ravioli with lemon, olive oil and herbs—in a hipster space featuring raw concrete walls and recycled wood against post-industrial elements of steel, iron and glass. Despite the million-dollar Bund-side view, the tab is surprisingly affordable—expect an average guest check of RMB200-300 without wines. *Three on the Bund 6th Floor, Zhong Shan Dong Yi Road.* Tel: +86 21 6323 3355

FU1015

Shanghainese eateries are a dime and a dozen in the city, but this newest addition to the stable of Fu 1088 and Fu 1039 delivers the most refined experience yet. Set in an atmospheric 1930s 10-room grand villa with European and old Shanghai flourishes and a balmy compound adorned with made-made mountains and lakes, this French Concession fine diner is reminiscent of a wealthy friend's private abode but the uncluttered modern Shanghainese fare served on Wedgewood China is anything but homey.

Chef Tony Lu has conceived a menu of local delights that run the gamut from traditional—think

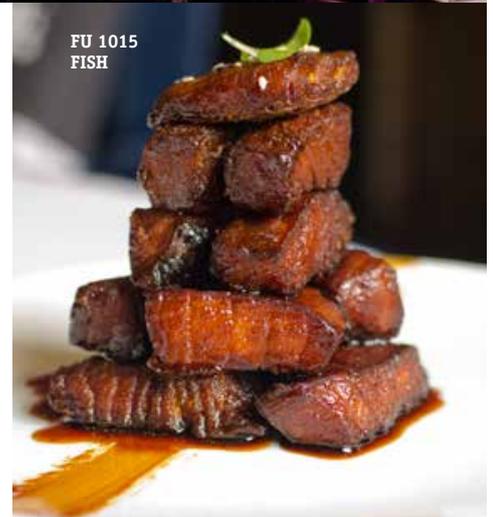


MERCATO

deep-fried grass carp in sweet soy sauce—to contemporary-like the dish of sautéed Shanghai hairy crab served with toast—executed with an eye for arty plating. Fittingly, this level of refinement comes with a haughty price tag of RMB800 minimum spend per person but for its consummate attention to quality in the rarified world of contemporary Shanghainese, it's hard to unearth a rarer gem than this. *No. 1015 Yuyuan Road, Shangning District.*
Tel: +86 21 5237 9778

COLAGRECO

Mauro Colagreco, a two Michelin starred chef from Mirazur (ranked 24th on the Sau Pellegrino World 50 Best list 2012) and a former disciple of Alain Passard and Bernard Loiseau, brings Mediterranean-inspired French novella cuisine to Shanghai by way of his eponymous fine diner tucked on the second floor of Three on the Bund. The first non-French chef to be conferred Chef of the Year status by Gault Millau in 2008, the 37-year-old is turning heads with dishes like 'sea tartare' of raw prawn, scallops and sea urchin made to his exacting standards by chef Thibaut Pouplard. Other than the inspiring cuisine, diners may also look forward to sipping one of Shanghai's most extensive line-up of Argentinian wines. The close-up view of Pudong's skyline is yet another bonus. *Three on the Bund, 2nd Floor No.3 Zhong Shan Dong Yi Road, Shanghai Crossing Guang Dong Road.* Tel: +86 21 5308 5396 e



FU 1015 FISH

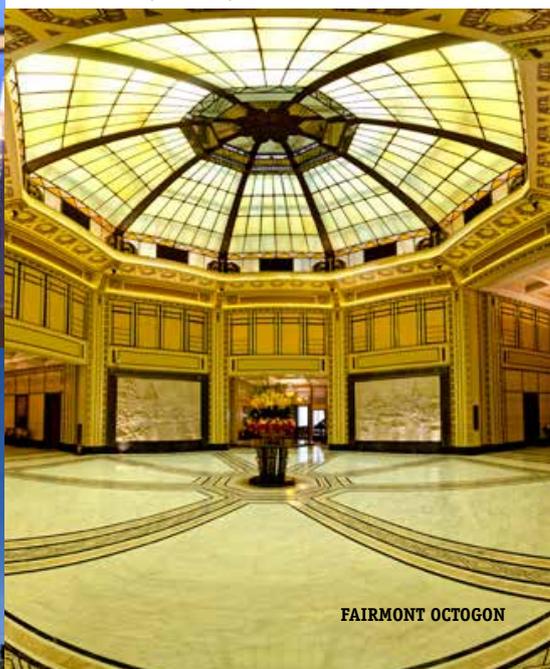


SLEEPLESS IN SHANGHAI?

Not if you are staying in these two luxe hotels with prime locations and picturesque views to boot.



Waldorf Astoria Club (Heritage Building) facade.



FAIRMONT OCTOGON

- **Waldorf Astoria Shanghai**

Waldorf Astoria's first outpost in Asia features the Waldorf Astoria Club, a 20-suite heritage building sited on the former grounds of the legendary Shanghai Club (circa 1911), and this connects—via a courtyard—to a new 24-storey wing housing 262 guest rooms and suites. Restored to its former neo-classical splendour, the façade of the Bund-facing property boasts a pair of Baroque-style cupolas and grand Palladian columns while the interior flaunts the same neoclassical pedigree (think original Sicilian marble columns and Birmingham-imported stained glass) augmented by glistening chandeliers and colonial-period furniture.

Six out of the 20 suites at Waldorf Astoria Club boast close-by views of the Bund while 50 percent of the rooms in the new tower promise splendid views of Pudong's skyline. Try the heritage suites fitted with clawfoot bathtubs, restored fireplaces and poster beds for a taste of the rich European lifestyle. All rooms and suites come with free Wi-fi. 88 Sichuan Middle Road, Huangpu. Tel: +86 21 6322 9988

- **Fairmont Peace Hotel**

Possibly Shanghai's most iconic hotel for its storied past as the once-glorious Cathay Hotel (circa 1929) by Sir Victor Sassoon and then Peace Hotel in 1956, Fairmont Peace Hotel ("Peace Hotel") opened in 2010 to much fanfare after a major facelift that spanned three years. It's prized as much for its history as for its location at the junction of the traffic-heavy Nanjing Road and the Bund. Many parts of the hotel's public spaces, such as the octagonal hall capped by a stained glass rotunda and the renowned Jazz Bar, have been carefully restored to retain its original state.

While only about six percent of rooms provide postcard-perfect views of Pudong's landscape, there are enough indoor eye candies to please the most demanding guests. All 270 rooms and suites are furnished to handsome art deco style—think poster beds flanked by table lamps with lalique base in vibrant pink and yellow hues and charming claw-foot bathtubs—with added luxuries of illy coffee machines and rose-scented Le Labo bath amenities. Even if you're not staying the night, a tour of the Peace Gallery's collection of relics, photos and artefacts will conjure up the hotel's glory days.

20 Nanjing East Road, Huangpu. Tel: +86 21 6321 6888

PHOTOS OF MERCATO, FAIRMONT PEACE HOTEL, WALDORF ASTORIA, OCTO 8/12, SH F U ALEX ANG
PHOTO OF ULTRAVIOLET BY PAUL PAIRET SCOTT WRIGHT