

# ZbBz

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## 中国 创意的 柔性力量

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饕餮 GOURMET :

# 垂涎中国

## On The Menu In China

中国高端餐饮生机勃勃，吸引许多星级厨师纷往神州大陆施展拳脚，独特的食材、烹调和味道，给中国人的饮食习惯带来冲击。

TEXT 陈彬雁 & LIM HUI SIN PHOTO SCOTT WRIGHT OF LIMELIGHT STUDIO

Folie Glas Can't Quit, from Ultraviolet

晚上7时30分。法国厨师 Paul Pairet 的上海现代餐馆 Mr & Mrs Bund 聚集了10人，他们喝下最后一口香槟，准备出发到 Pairet 最新“餐馆” Ultraviolet ( 以下简称 UV )。问题是，没有人知道 UV 在哪里。

只见10人一一坐上 UV 客车，里头的黑衣司机开车穿过几条弄堂，最后在一座工厂前停下。眼前大门徐徐开启，里头空无一人，只有一张桌子。

不待10人坐定，如电影般突闻倒数声“5、4、3、2、1……噤——噤——噤……”

停电了。

每人消费2000人民币，难道就为这个而来？

不料桌子忽然亮起，青苹果与芥末冰糕上桌！接着呈上雪茄烟灰缸，烟灰缸居然带“烟灰”……这，该怎么吃好？

取名 Foie Gras Can't Quit, “雪茄”实为鹅肝慕斯，抽一口，沾一下包菜制成的“烟灰”，再抽一口，真让人欲罢不能。背景继而响起意大利作曲家 Ennio Morricone “Once Upon A Time In The West” 主题曲，四面墙投射出美国西部荒野影像，一个不小心，联想起香烟广告中的牛仔。

这下，UV 真让人感觉到它的与众不同了。

UV 是 Pairet 15 年来的梦想，耗资 250 万美元打造，周二至周六只供应晚餐，每次仅招待 10 人。互不相识的食客在不知餐馆设于何处、菜单有何物的情况下，带着期待的心情前往。“餐馆”在 5 月 18 日营业，他大叹了一口气说：“我不晓得除了上海，还可以在哪里兑现这个非商业性概念。虽然每人收费是 2000 人民币（只能在网站 [www.uvbypp.cc](http://www.uvbypp.cc) 预订），但 20 道菜的试味菜单实际上要 5000 人民币。UV 有 25 名服务生，对食客的比例是 2.5，这水准是星级餐馆也未能达到的。”

### 上海的开放

走入 UV，不见一般高级餐馆的高姿态，餐馆里只有一张餐桌，10 张椅子和白色墙壁。特别的是，每一道菜搭配依其味道而定的氛围，借由多重感官科技设备控制灯光、音效、乐曲、香氛、空气等，遥控自密室。

两年前在上海采访 Pairet 时，他已兴致勃勃分享 UV 遵循的“心理味觉”（psycho taste）理念，他说：“认为食物只和味道有关，那是天真的。你看到番茄时，大脑记忆会告诉你它的味道，唾液分泌就是心理味觉作用下明显的原始反应之一，我们在实际品尝前都会发挥自己的心理味觉。”

食物最终与情感有关，情感驾驭味觉，因此，心情、记忆、环境、身边的人、潜意识都有可能影响情绪，影响味觉。连续 27 年获米其林三



Exclusive dining at Ultraviolet (Photo: Scott Wright)

星奖的法国名厨 Alain Senderens 不也说过吗？

我们吃进的迷思幻想，多于卡路里。

不容被归类，非典型、超前卫，大概是对 UV 最适当的形容。但上海能接受，连 Pairet 也有些意外，他说：“大家都不看好。一般认为

上海不可能欣赏如此前卫的餐饮概念，但 UV 开办至今，日日客满，桌上 10 人来自社会各阶层。中国人来得很多，他们非常好奇，于是我肯定，你只要想法，还是能在上海立足并获得支持。”

### 中国吸引各地厨师

Pairet 生于法国并在法国学习厨艺，2005 年来到上海，为香格里拉酒店开设翡翠 36。他说，愿意放弃巴黎一切，那是上海香格里拉的邀约太迷人，在那里 3 年，他拥有许多创意上的自由。翡翠 36 之后，他目前所属的 VOL 餐饮集团向他提出更难以抗拒的邀约，包括主控 Mr n Mrs Bund ( Miele Guide 2011/2012 亚洲 20 大餐馆中排名第 7 )，并全力支持他开 UV，于是一待 7 年。

上海是 Pairet 实现梦想的乌托邦，米其林三星大厨 Umberto Bombana 则为“感受中国经济增长的脉搏”而来。

他的香港餐馆 8½ Otto e Mezzo Bombana 入选 Miele Guide 2011/2012 亚洲 20 大餐馆，并在去年 12 月获《米其林指南香港澳门 2012》颁授三星荣誉，成为首家获得三星荣誉的意大利餐馆。



8½ Otto e Mezzo Bombana

## 饕餮 GOURMET :



米其林三星大厨 Umberto Bombana

今年2月，Bombana 趁势在上海外滩开设同名餐馆，其中最大亮点是窖藏间收藏世界顶级圣丹尼尔火腿和奶酪。1993年6月抵港至今20年，他说：“我出生意大利北部贝加莫，但热爱旅游。1993年在加州时已深深感受到中国的潜力，加上对亚洲饮食文化有热忱，决定来看看，结果一待就是20年。”

中国年发展神速，受诱惑的不只是老外。日本厨师泽田和巳两年前携家带眷闯中国，出任广州四季酒店云居日本餐馆主厨。

泽田和巳是少数获京都大厨资格认证及制作河豚鱼料理资格认证的厨师，曾在东京 Banreki Ryukoko 餐馆担任行政总厨，在2008年摘下米其林一星。他带着探险的精神出战广州，并怀着远大的理想，希望在中国推广正宗日本料理和美食文化，他说：“日本料理的精髓在其季节性内涵，以河豚来说，这特殊食材需要厨师掌握河豚身体构造，厨师必须考试成功才能处理并制作河豚料理。”

### 中国下的挑战

有志立足中国吗？开启餐馆大门不过是第一步。泽田和巳说，他碰到的一大挑战是找不到合适食材。2006年获意大利 Piedmontese Regional Enoteca Cavour 委任为“国际白松露大使”的 Bombana 也说：“我在香港能轻易到手的食材，在上海因进口税高，食材价格被推高。”

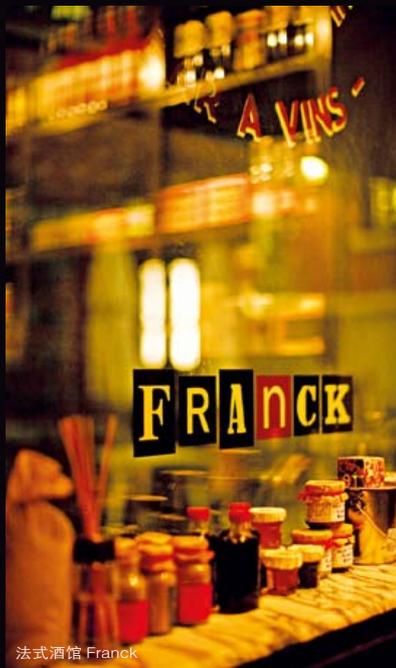
厨师不断在价格、食材及正宗料理的把握上徘徊拉锯，这是外国人在上海开餐馆每日所需面对的现实，难怪 Bombana 说，在上海，上海菜最棒，意大利菜的水平“还在进步的路上”。

法式酒馆 Franck 创办人 Franck Pecol 近日开设法式手工面包屋 Farine（意即面粉），进口有机石磨面粉时，运抵的食材也被关卡扣留，去年圣诞节时进口生蚝无法过关的尴尬局面再度上演。

寻找人才也令厨师头痛。泽田和巳发现，团队习惯制作中式日本料理，要传授正宗的日本料理手艺，还得先教大家摒弃从前所学。Bombana 在找不到好帮手的情况下，退而求其次，结果得在厨房从头跟到尾，边煮边教，所以他说，要驰骋上海，单靠厨师名声好还不够，手上非得有功夫才行。

上述厨师踏入中国不久尚处适应期，Pairet 则对以上挑战见怪不怪，他说：“没这些‘惊喜’，上海就不是上海了！上海是个‘不容易’的市场。留住人才不容易，因为人的流动率高，你总觉得是在为别人训练员工。很幸运的，我从翡翠36发展出自己的核心队伍。”

“再说饮食界的竞争，我从未看过这么多餐馆开后倒闭，但也因此你会提高警觉，瞄准才出击。如能找到独一无二的概念，那成功率会相对提高，满足感也会加倍。”



法式酒馆 Franck

Pairet 成功的秘诀，也在于他未曾迎合上海人的口味。坚持正宗意式料理的 Bombana 说：“料理得当味道自然美，我依自己对意大利料理的一套想法做菜，不是跟着市场口味走。”

这样的态度实在不能被看作是傲气，Pairet 说得最好，他说：“尝试迎合就等于低估了市场，那就完蛋！这么做只会让自己失去特性，与其那么做，不如花点时间找新点子，只要概念好，一定能吸引好奇的中国人。正因此，我认为上海存在许多让人发挥的空间。当然，你需要拼搏一番。”

拼搏的精神，又只有遭遇麻烦才能锻炼。Pecol 直言，若不是问题多多，他不会像现在这么灵活有韧性，他说：“在上海一阵后发现，在这里经营餐馆和在巴黎、纽约、伦敦开餐馆没什么不同。我2004年6月到上海时，抱着很大的兴趣去发掘这个瞬息万变的大城市，现在感觉是上海把我打造成一个企业家，因为餐饮界的朝气不断激励我诱惑我，让我超出原定计划，想做得更多。”

在 Pairet 看来，这就是上海餐饮业的魅力。“你走入其中，很容易产生强烈归属感，因为你会竭尽所能去寻找新概念或让自己进步。这美好的参与感，是成熟的市场不能给你的。”

这几年的成功为 Pairet 带来许多机会，但他强调，铺天盖地的机会里暗藏陷阱，他这么奉



法式酒馆 Franck 创办人 Franck Pecol

劝餐饮新兵：“这就是中国的另一特点，机会多，太多了，所以一定要懂得把持自己，学会如何说不。”

It is 7.30pm. Ten people are gathered at Mr & Mrs Bund, chef Paul Pairet's modern French restaurant in Shanghai. They take their last sip of champagne and prepare to head to Pairet's latest venture, Ultraviolet (UV). There was only one problem: No one knows its location.

They board vehicles with tinted windows and their drivers, clad completely in black, drive through several alleys before coming to a stop at a factory. The door opens to reveal a single table, 10 chairs, stark white walls and no one in sight.

They barely settle into their seats when a countdown begins before the sound crackles and the lights go out. They had each paid 2,000 yuan (S\$389) for the evening – was this all they were getting?

The table lights up suddenly and green apple with wasabi ice cream is served. What follows is a cigar ash tray, complete with ash. Or is it?

Named Foie Gras Can't Quit, the cigar was actually a mousse of foie gras that could be chomped or dipped in the "ash" made of cabbage. Ennio Morricone's theme for the film *Once Upon A Time In The West* plays, while images of America's Wild West are projected on the walls. The effect is not unlike that of being in a cigarette ad.

This and other conceptual dining experiences are a regular affair for UV. Opened since May 18, UV is Pairet's dream of 15 years and cost US\$2.5 million (S\$3.1 million) to set up. Dinner is served from Tuesday to Saturday, with only 10 people at each seating. The 10 may be strangers to one another, united only by their willingness to journey to the unknown destination. "I don't know where else you can realise such a non-commercial concept outside of Shanghai," says Pairet.

The minimum charges are 2,000 yuan per head for a 20-course degustation menu, "but the cost to us is at least 5,000 yuan per head. We have 25 staff to serve the guests and it's 2.5 staff per guest – this is a ratio that even star-rated restaurants have difficulty matching".

#### Readiness For Adventure

At UV, there is none of the posturing that is common in high-end restaurants. It stands out for the special effects accompanying each dish served: an entirely different atmosphere is created with lights, music, scent and sound effects controlled from a secret room.

When we last spoke to Pairet in Shanghai two years ago, he had shared excitedly about his idea of "psycho taste", which he wanted to serve up at UV. "To assume that food is only about taste is naive," he said. "See a tomato and your mind will call upon your memory to tell you its taste. This subconscious outcome is at work all around us. Salivation is a primary tangible effect of the psycho taste. We all psycho-taste before we taste."

Food is ultimately about emotion and emotion goes beyond taste. It is an idea shared by the revered



Chef Paul Pairet  
(Photo: Scott Wright)

French chef Alain Sendersens, on how we imbibe more fantasies than calories. His Shanghai diners lapped up the concept, notes Pairet, who went against the general consensus that the market was not ready. "They are very, very curious and if you can show or deliver genuine concepts, they will follow."

Pairet was lured from France in 2005 with the promise of creative freedom. Seven years on, after opening the Jade on 36 restaurant at the Shangri-La Hotel, Mr & Mrs Bund (ranked 7 on the Miele Guide 2011/2012) and UV, he is happy with the liberties he continues to enjoy.

Three-Michelin-star Italian chef Umberto Bombana had a different impulse for visiting Shanghai. Having made it in Hong Kong (B1/2 Otto e Mezzo earned three stars in the Michelin Guide Hong Kong and Macau last year, the first Italian restaurant outside of Italy to do so), he wanted to move closer to the heart of China's economic growth. Twenty years ago, he had travelled from Bergamo in Italy to Hong Kong for the same reason.

In February this year, Bombana opened his eponymous restaurant on the Bund, offering diners stashes of San Daniele ham and cheese in the pantry and five-course meals that start from 688 yuan.

China's economic boom has attracted not just Western talent but neighbouring ones too. Japanese chef Kazumi Sawada moved his family from Kyoto to China when he was appointed head chef at Four Seasons Guangzhou's Japanese restaurant Kumoi two years ago. He is one of the few chefs in the world qualified to prepare blowfish.



Micro Fish No Chip, from Ultraviolet (Photo: Scott Wright)

## 饕餮 GOURMET :

The former executive chef of Banreki Ryukoko in Tokyo, which garnered one Michelin star in 2008 under his watch, says he was driven by the spirit of adventure and a vision to promote authentic Japanese cuisine and food culture in China.

### Rocky Road

Like many “lao wai” who struggle to navigate the inscrutable Chinese landscape, foreign chefs face their own unique challenges.

Sawada says one of the biggest challenges he has met with is the lack of the right ingredients, a disaster considering how “the essence of Japanese cuisine is in the seasonality and ingredients”.

Likewise, Franck Pecol, the founder of French bistro Franck, tried to import stone ground organic flour from France for his new venture, an artisanal French bakery named Farine (which means flour). The goods were stuck in customs on arrival, meeting the same fate as the oysters he tried to bring in last Christmas.

Apart from availability, there is also the issue of price. Bombana, an international white truffle ambassador, also notes: “In Hong Kong, I can get as much ingredients as I want. But in Shanghai, the taxes make the food more expensive.”

Finding the right people is another headache. As Sawada found, his team of Chinese chefs were versed in preparing Japanese food Chinese-style and it took time and effort to reprogramme them. Bombana ended up taking care of everything in the kitchen and training people at the same time because he failed to recruit worthy assistants.

“Shanghai is not an easy market, not your market,” Pairet points out, likely with the benefit of hindsight from a longer stay than the rest. “For staffing, there is a lot of movement; with so many places opening, you’d be



Kazumi Sawada, head chef at Four Seasons Guangzhou's Japanese restaurant Kumoi



Four Seasons Guangzhou's Japanese restaurant Kumoi

training people and they will go elsewhere the next day.”

Besides being able to retain a core team of staffers, Pairet's secret to success also comes from not having made any adaptations to his dishes to suit local tastes. Bombana, another believer in upholding authenticity, agrees: “If the food tastes good, it tastes good to everybody.”

This attitude cannot be put down to arrogance; as Pairet best puts it: “In Shanghai, you have to be truthful and genuine, and that's a powerful angle. Because when you start to underestimate the local market and you adapt, most probably you will fail because then you are not distinct.”

“So long as you find for yourself a good concept that is at the top of its range, no matter how new, you will attract the curiosity of the Chinese.”

The grind has its advantages. Pecol, who arrived in Shanghai in 2004, says candidly that he would not be as patient or flexible a person as he is now if not for the slew of problems he faces daily. “Maybe Shanghai made me become more entrepreneurial. Because there is so much energy here, you are actually tempted to do more than what you had planned.”

For Pairet, the same attraction remains. “You feel like you are participating in the building of the market; this is a great feeling that you can get only in a place that is not yet mature.”

He is careful not to fall into the trap of entertaining all the options that open up to him with each bout of success. “I think this is one of the characteristics of operating in China – you don't want to spread yourself

too thin and target too many opportunities. After all, quality is more important than quantity.”

This appears to be the reality facing foreign chefs in Shanghai every day: they need to juggle staffing problems, high costs, a lack of the right ingredients and the need to be authentic and novel at the same time. Then there is the underlying excitement – and fear – of knowing that any idea that sounds crazy elsewhere could be a hit in China.

This is par for the course, says Pairet, who chimes in sagely about the Chinese city he has come to know well: “Shanghai wouldn't be Shanghai if there were no surprises.”

**“When you start to underestimate the local market and adapt, most probably you will fail because then you are not distinct.”**

**– Chef Paul Pairet**