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## Bikes & Friends Closed All Weekend

More problems in the Fuxing / Yongfu zone -- Bikes & Friends, which was due to start celebrating its one-year anniversary this Sunday will instead be closed all weekend. Problems continue with their neighbors and so they've decided to shut down for a couple of days in the hope that things cool off. They should be open again on Monday.

Since opening a year ago, Bikes & Friends has had on-off problems with nearby residents. At first it was the neighbors who lived above the bar. Following their complaints, the bar's owners took over the whole building and found a new place for the tenants to live, but the residents next door have also found the noise a problem.

However, the owners don't have any plans to move and say they're confident a solution can be found to keep everyone happy. They were due to celebrate their birthday with a bicycle flea market this Sunday, but that's off. No word yet on whether next Thursday's birthday party or next Friday's birthday BBQ will go ahead as planned. Tune in on Monday for an update.

NIGHTLIFE / JUN 01

## Police Crackdown on Yongfu Lu

An email has been circulating this morning about a police sweep of Yongfu Lu last night. It appears a bunch of cops visited *The Apartment*, checking that foreigners had their visas in order. This is the email:



## [My Weekender]: Charles Liao

SmsH

JUN 01, 2012

Just hanging with Charles Liao, co-owner of Ginseng, that brand new speakeasy on the Yongkang Lu strip. Vodka-soaked splendor and 8K runs inside...

COMMUNITY / JUN 01



## [The Agenda]: June '12

Who, where, what, how, why, wherefore, from whence in June. The next month in arts, dining, music, clubbing, and more in Shanghai.

BY SMSH STAFF

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DINING / MAY 31



## [Radar]: Azul 2.0

Swish new digs for a long-time Shanghai fave. SmartShanghai checks out Eduardo Vargas' re-boot of his flagship restaurant Azul...

BY JUSTIN FISCHER

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DINING / MAY 30



## The Brunch List

Where to get bloodys, bubblys, and all other lazy weekend dining pursuits. Our new regular column of Shanghai brunch picks inside

BY SMSH

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## Sensory Overload: Paul Pairet Talks UV

By [Justin Fischer](#), May 10th, 2012 | In [Dining](#)Portrait by Scott Wright of Limelight Studio. See more [here](#).

If three years was too long for you to wait imagine how Paul Pairet must feel. For him it's been closer to 15. But after all of the snags, stops, and outright overhauls, the former [Jade on 36](#) chef and mind behind acclaimed restaurant [Mr & Mrs Bund](#) is ready. Next week he unveils [Ultraviolet](#), a 20-course study in cutting edge cuisine complemented with high-tech visual, aural, and even olfactory accompaniments. Oh, and did we mention the experience is available to only 10 diners a night? Indeed, to call it a risky proposition is an understatement. Whether it will live up to the hype remains to be seen. In the meantime, though, we managed to meet up with Pairet to get a few words on his magnum opus before he dots all of the i's and crosses all of the t's.

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**SmSh:** So, you open up in just over a week. Are you nervous?

**Paul Pairet:** Oh yeah. We are a bit nervous. Typically it is excusable for a restaurant to be less than perfect when it opens. It's less excusable for us ... There is a minimum we need to accomplish so it makes sense and the three-hour experience we're providing doesn't become a burden for the diner.

**SmSh:** What is left to be done on your checklist?

**P.P.:** The checklist is bigger every day. That's the problem with our checklist. It never seems to shrink ... There are so many things that fall on you while you're opening a restaurant: the staff

shoes, the bins in the toilet, a meeting with this vendor or that department. But aside from what I answered in your first question, there are two big items on our checklist, and I think we'll get them sorted out this week. First is the service. The service right now is good. The staff know the steps, where they need to be and when they need to be there, but we need to get it looking and feeling more natural. And the other thing is more a technical issue, refining how we transition between each course. Right now the pace is like this [drawing a high-amplitude waveform in the air with his finger], and we need to get it to be a little smoother.

*SmSh: So, if this were a Broadway show you'd be in dress rehearsals right now?*

**P.P.:** [Laughing] If it were a Broadway show we would have canceled the premiere ... But this isn't a Broadway show.

*SmSh: You've been kicking this idea around in your head for almost 15 years. Do you think you would have been able to put this plan into action given the available technology back then?*

**P.P.:** The technology is not central to the project. It seems to be a bit central here, but the technology is only consequence of the original idea. 15 years ago, my motive was to cook the best meal possible. To do that you need to be able to serve food without the constraints of typical restaurant like an a la carte menu ... For example, when I was working in a two-Michelin-star restaurant it would be such a disaster even with only 35 covers [Ed. Note: restaurant lingo for "guests"] because we would do everything *a la minute*. So a table would order and the chef would say something like, "Cook the asparagus now." Why didn't we cook the asparagus just before service and re-warm it to order? It was this tremendous risk, and one time out of two it failed. Here, I can cook my asparagus seven minutes before I serve it because I have total control over time. I know exactly what time it will need to be served. I'm ready ... I can do this with pretty much everything on the menu ... Once that variable becomes a constant, I can bring my cooking to the next level. Having control over every element of the atmosphere – the sound, the lights, the smell – serve only to make each dish more memorable.

*SmSh: You announced your plans for this project nearly three years ago. Let's cut to the chase. What took so long?*

**P.P.:** For starters, finding the right location, one with enough floor space and unobstructed pillars, took us a long time. We started looking in 2009, I didn't find anything until 2010. From that point on, I think a lot of the architects that we worked with, in spite of what I told them, underestimated the complexity of this project ... integrating all of these elements just took a lot of time. And there are some people who might say that I demanded too much. I don't think I demanded too much... I just think they were applying enough gray matter for a 10-seat restaurant when they should have been applying enough gray matter for something the size of Mr & Mrs Bund.

*SmSh: Was there any part of your vision that you simply couldn't realize?*

**P.P.:** No. Not really. There are a few things we don't have now but will have in the future, like wind effects. But I would say that we are very, very close to what we put on paper.



*SmSh: Why an undisclosed location in a part of town that is basically a dining desert?*

**P.P.:** By nature, it is better to allow the party to group together and bring them to dinner all at the same time. We thought it would be a good idea for the guests to wait in a place that they know and then go to a place that they don't know. It's all about the experience and how surroundings affect it ... For instance, if I put Dom Perignon in this paper McCafe cup it will taste different than if I put it in one of my hand-blown Schott Zwiesel glasses downstairs. It's the same product, but how it's presented makes all of the difference in the world.

*SmSh: I don't think a lot of people realize what kind of technology goes into making some of this food. Tell us about one of your favorite toys in the kitchen.*

**P.P.:** I have a lot of what you would call "toys" in the kitchen. This is one of the best I've worked in. It has some of the most technologically advanced kitchen equipment in Asia. I really like the vacuum extraction machine that we have now. That's a very interesting tool. It's great for reductions. It has attached to it something called a rotary evaporator. It functions something like an alembic. So you can get two elements out of it. There is the liquid, which, because of the vacuum feature, can be boiled at a very, very low temperature, like 50°C. Then there is the steam. What you get is incredible freshness together with extreme concentration...

*SmSh: So this machine basically reduces barometric pressure to the point that you're able to boil something at a lower temperature, kind of like how a pot of water will boil at a lower temperature on the peak of Mt. Everest than at sea level...*

**P.P.:** Exactly. So it not only boils it, but at the same time there is a little refrigerated spiral that will concentrate all of the steam. So there are two parts that are interesting here: an infusion or reduction of a liquid and a distillate...

When we first got the machine I was so excited to play with it. The kitchen was not open yet, I looked around to see what would be the first thing I would distill, tried it out to see if it works, and then I gave it to Fabien [Fabien Verdier, Ultraviolet's Host and Director]. He drinks it, and he says, "Ohh! Wow! Jack Daniels, bacon, cigar..." In fact what I'd distilled was the old cigarette butts that all of the workers had thrown into the sink! It was so freaking interesting! Clear, like a glass of whiskey...

*SmSh: Just cigarette butts and water?*

**P.P.:** Aijo! So good! But we need to be careful with this machine. There is some level at which you can distill ethanol, and some concentrations can be harmful. So we don't play around. For now, we only distill natural things, and we wouldn't serve them without all of the proper analysis. Me? I taste everything. One day *maybe* I will regret it.



*SmSh: Was this technology originally used for culinary applications?*



**P.P.:** Yes. The *Roca brothers*, who are working on a concept very similar to the one we're doing right now, they were really the ones who started promoting this technology. They were the first to introduce fragrances, essences, smokes, and distillates... In the avant garde, and with this model that has been set by *el Bulli*, there are a few people out there who will open the door by transposing the technology used by the pharmaceutical industry and the food industry. Like when we use spherification in our cooking, for instance, it's something that was originally applied in the food industry. It wasn't invented by [Ferran] Adria.

*SmSh: You have a fireman's pole in your kitchen. How in the hell did you angle for that in your budget.*

**P.P.:** Ask Greg Robinson [Ultraviolet's Head of Research]. That's his contribution to the design. We love it...

*SmSh: Diners familiar with your work at Jade on 36 will probably recognize a fair amount of what you're serving here. Tell us a little bit about a new dish.*

**P.P.:** Well, there are some new dishes, and there are some that we've done at Jade but never released on a menu. The reason is very simple. I haven't created anything new since I started Mr & Mrs Bund. Mr & Mrs Bund has been interpretation, no creation. When I was at Jade, I devoted 75 percent of my time to creating. If I don't have 75 percent of my time to give, I just don't do it... I am doing two new dishes, though, that are parodies of food trends like "naturalism." You know, like creating "sand" and "dirt" and "flowers" on the plate. I'm also parodying this trend of "deconstructed dishes" where everything is eaten separately. I'm trying to see how much you can exaggerate this trend of atomistic dishes and make them look like accidental pieces of art.



*SmSh: Food as parody. Do you think people will get it?*

**P.P.:** Oh yeah. It's not the first time I've done something stupid.

*SmSh: With so many moving parts to each course, how often can we expect to see the menu change?*

**P.P.:** Not so often, obviously, but let's put it this way: 20 dishes is about what I do in a year. We have a second menu in the works, but that won't be ready for another three months, maybe by September... But the reason I took some staples from Jade is really simple: I can't afford to be average on the food. I hope that some of my dishes aren't subject to fashion... but I wanted to be sure I wasn't taking too many chances at the beginning.... Of the 20 courses, there are about eight or 10 that have never been released.

*SmSh: The deepest impression that I got from my experience at Ultraviolet was that it was almost like going to see a movie. At some points I was almost afraid of talking because I didn't want to miss any details. Do you worry that the sounds and lights may distract from the food or even the fundamentally social function of dining?*

**P.P.:** I doubt that you were distracted from the food. You were distracted from your fellows at the table. So for now, my idea to bind the people at the table in this experience is not there. The focus on the food *is* there ... At the end of the day, especially if the people at the table don't know each other, this is where Fabien, the host, will have to play that role, breaking the ice

constantly, giving explanations of the dishes constantly ... For now we're still very much into rehearsing the technique. Once we master this, though, I think the guests will feel comfortable talking. But, again, I don't think we'll be distracting from the food at all.

*SmSh: Finally, was there anything about this project that was surprisingly easy?*

**P.P.:** No.

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*Ultraviolet opens its doors May 18. They are taking reservations now, click [here](#) to make a booking.*

Tagged: [Mr & Mrs Bund](#) [Ultraviolet](#) [Paul Pairet](#)



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Excellent interview Justin. Very interesting



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Can't wait to go.

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