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A reader gazes at a shelf emptied of Mo Yan's books at Xidan Books Building in Beijing on Friday. Books by Mo Yan, the new Nobel laureate in literature, sold out one day after he was announced the winner.

Nobel winner's books flying off the shelves

By XU LIN
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Cao Hongmin rushed to a bookstore on Friday morning before it opened. But to her disappointment, the 46-year-old fan was told that classic works by the new Nobel laureate in literature Mo Yan had sold out the day before.

"Mo has won the Nobel Prize, I know his books are excellent," said the Zhejiang native, who became interested in Mo after the announcement of his award. The woman said she did not expect his books would sell out so fast.

"My husband asked me to buy some of his books the instant we knew he won. But we were still late."

The 57-year-old Mo, who was announced the winner

on Thursday evening, rapidly became a buzzword on the Internet and his works are selling like hotcakes.

His fans stormed bookstores across the country and snapped up his most famous works such as *Frog* and *Big Breasts and Wide Hips*.

Kou Weidong, a reader from Beijing, found that Wangfujing Bookstore, one of the largest in the capital, has set up an exclusive bookshelf for Mo but his books had already sold out on Thursday night. Many are still coming to inquire about his books, which had lukewarm sales before the announcement.

"As a Chinese, I'm so proud of him," Kou said. He was also told that he had to wait at least a week to get Mo's books from the store as presses are busy reprinting his works.

Moreover, it's not easy to get a hard copy of Mo's works



This time people are more passionate because the winner is a Chinese."

YE XIAOZHOU
A PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER FROM CHINA DANGDANG

online either, as many of his classic works have also sold out in leading Chinese e-commerce websites.

According to 360buy.com, sales of Mo's books jumped sharply after his win, and demand is exceeding supply although they had stocked up.

For example, orders of *Big Breasts and Wide Hips* on Thursday night were twice those made in the entire month of

September, and new orders are still flooding in. The website is busy preparing stock and plans to sell Mo's e-books online.

According to Ye Xiaozhou, a public relations officer from e-commerce provider China Dangdang, more than 10,000 of Mo's books were sold within 24 hours and they've ordered the last stocks from publishers.

"It's not surprising that one's books sell more when one wins the Nobel Prize. But this time people are more passionate because the winner is a Chinese," Ye said.

The craze for Mo has led to a craze in the publishing field as well.

Beijing Genuine and Profound Culture Development Co will publish a set of Mo's collected works, which consists of 16 novels and four previously unpublished books including plays and prose.

The company signed a con-

tract with the writer in May, with full publishing rights as well as film and play adaptation rights of all his works.

"We achieved an agreement last year. I never expected Mo to win the Nobel Prize at that time," said Chen Liming, president of the company. "Other presses are publishing Mo's works due to their old contracts but we have the latest contract, with a term of at least three years."

In the meantime, Shanghai Literature and Art Publishing Group just published a new edition of Mo's collected works in 16 volumes.

"The collection should have come out last June or July, but was delayed because of problems with the graphic design. Now it has become a happy coincidence," said the group's deputy director Cao Yuanyong.

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EXCLUSIVE | WEI JIANGUO

African trade to surpass EU, US

Forecasts for solid growth give China confidence in continent

By HU YUANYUAN
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Africa is likely to surpass the EU and the US to become China's largest trade partner in three to five years, a senior commerce official and government adviser said.

In the process of China's ongoing strategic repositioning in the global market, increasing effort is being made to build economic ties with the continent, said former vice-minister of commerce Wei Jianguo in an interview with China Daily.

In 2012, China's trade with Africa will probably hit \$220 billion, up 25 percent year-on-year. According to Wei, China's exports to Africa grew 22 percent in the first nine months this year, while imports jumped by 21.5 percent during the period.

The Ministry of Commerce said that in 2011, China's trade with Africa hit \$166.3 billion, a jump of 83 percent over 2009.

Currently, the EU is China's largest trade partner, with bilateral trade volume of \$567.2 billion in 2011. The US is the second largest

trade partner with China, with bilateral trade volume of \$446.7 billion, according to the General Administration of Customs. But trade with Africa is expected to close the gap quickly.

"I expect China-Africa trade to see faster growth next year, as more Chinese companies have already been beefing up their business activities on the continent," said Wei, who is vice-chairman and secretary-general of the China Center for International Economic Exchanges, a high-level government think tank.

China's confidence in its future African ties, Wei added, is also based on the forecast that the EU's economy will remain sluggish in the coming three to five years and that US economic growth would linger at a low level.

The IMF said in its recent report that the EU will probably see a net decrease of 0.2 percent in its economy in 2012. Although growth is expected to be stronger in 2013, it will remain at a low level of 0.5 percent.



Wei Jianguo is former vice-minister of commerce

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Discussions target Diaoyu deadlock

By ZHANG YUNBI and ZHOU WA

Beijing and Tokyo are planning for vice-ministerial talks to break the Diaoyu Islands deadlock, but observers say spats over sovereignty issues will continue as negotiations take place.

In addition, US Deputy Secretary of State Bill Burns will fly in to mediate the dispute with Tokyo and Beijing on his tour to Asia next week, a move experts said is aimed at collecting information and shaping future policies.

Even before the vice-ministerial talks, Luo Zhaohui, director of the Foreign Ministry's department of Asian affairs, was invited to Tokyo on Thursday to meet his Japanese counterpart Shin-uke Sugiyama, director general for Asian and Oceanian affairs at Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

"The department chiefs' talk was made to brace for the

expected reconciliation on the Diaoyu Islands dispute between vice-foreign ministers from both sides," Foreign Ministry spokesman Hong Lei told reporters on Friday.

Japanese Foreign Minister Koichiro Gamba on Friday confirmed the vice-ministerial talk plan and said both sides need to think calmly as communications continue, yet he added that "the important thing is that we cannot give over what we cannot give over."

Kyodo News Agency said Luo's Tokyo tour, which ended on Friday, "may help ease the frayed ties," and he is the first key diplomat visiting the Japanese capital since the island country on Sept 11 finalized an illegal "purchase" of the Diaoyu Islands.

Lu Yaodong, director of the Japanese diplomacy department under the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, "The department chiefs' talk was made to brace for the

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PHOTOS BY YE JUN / CHINA DAILY

Codfish meatball used to please Empress Ci Xi and is now recommended on Guigong Fu's menu.

Going home to Ci Xi

This is the house where the Empress Dowager lived as a girl before she married into the Forbidden Palace. But now it is home to just memories and fine cuisine, as **Ye Jun** discovers.

Beijing has numerous restaurants housed in the traditional Chinese courtyard homes, but Guigong Fu is probably one of the biggest of its kind. It is said to be the only existing courtyard house where a Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) empress had once lived.

Beijing's courtyard houses share many similarities: They are usually serene and comfortable. They are beautifully built, with grey tiles, huge columns in dark red paint, and colorful motifs of bird, flower or scenery on the eaves.

This is especially so at Guigong Fu, Duke Gui's Residence. The former owner, Duke Guixiang, was the second brother of the powerful Qing Dynasty Empress Ci Xi, often depicted in Chinese films as a cruel, bad-tempered, powerful old woman controlling the emperors.

It is recorded that the only time Ci Xi came back to visit her mother's family was to Guigong Fu. Moreover, Duke Guixiang's daughter was married to Qing Dynasty Emperor Guangxu. For that reason, Guigong Fu used to be called "phoenix nest", a reference to the queen being the phoenix in relation to the emperor being the dragon.

Today the once royal home is hidden among residential buildings in the winding hutong near Nanxiaojie, with its ownership having changed hands several times in the past years.

It was first a restaurant offering dishes made with tea, then it became a roast duck restaurant.

Now, an experienced businessman from Shantou in Guangdong province has just taken over, and plans to promote a main menu of imperial cuisine based on historical research, with satellite offerings from the Chaozhou and Shantou in Guangdong.

There are many stories, and waitresses clad in colorful Qing Dynasty costume will patiently explain how a pork meatball was adapted using fish to please the empress Ci Xi, and served in a porcelain platter beautifully decorated with flowers.

The meatball is made with tender cod and crunchy diced water chestnut, bathed in a broth made of ham and chicken.

"Clear-water cabbage" is another traditional dish from the royal kitchens. The soup looks clear, but has actually undergone a complicated filtering process to clarify the intensely tasty chicken broth.

At Guigong Fu, it is not just the imperial dishes that appeal, the commoners' favorites from Chaozhou and Shantou are also eye-openers.

Snow-white squid is freshly scalded, cut into rings, and served with two sauces to dip into. One is a soy-bean sauce, another a very good home-made chili sauce that has penetrating strength, which helps to whet the appetite.

Small oysters are mixed into egg and deep-fried to make an omelet. It also goes well with the sauces.

Pu'ning in Guangdong is famous for its bean curd made with potato powder and soya bean. It is most commonly served deep-

fried, to offer a crisp skin and tender insides.

Deep-fried mashed shrimp balls, fish wrapped with flour and spring rolls are a combo plate worth trying. Finish with a very delectable plate of *jiaozi* with pork stuffing and bits of black fungus and carrot.

The furniture is traditional Chinese style, and paintings and calligraphy works hang on the walls. In the evening, there are Chinese instrumental performances, including the *guqin*, a very relaxed and soothing style of music.

The owner of the restaurant is a big fan of Chinese teas and the restaurant offers almost every style of Chinese tea. The peaceful courtyard environment is an ideal place to sip a cup of tea and enjoy some leisure time before or after a meal.

Contact the writer at yejun@chinadaily.com.cn.

IF YOU GO

GUIGONG FU

11 Dafangjia Hutong, Chaonei Nanxiaojie, Dongcheng district, Beijing. 010-8511-2223.

Average cost per head: A la carte starts from 300 yuan (\$48) per person, and set meal ranges from 380 yuan up.

Recommended: Codfish Meatball in Broth, Clear-water Cabbage Soup, Baby Oyster Omelet.

Opening hours: 10 am-2 pm, 5-9:30 pm.



Diners can have a try at the combo plate of deep-fried mashed shrimp balls, fish wrapped with flour and spring rolls.

Good croissant is a French croissant

By **DONNA MAH** in Hong Kong
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Flaky and crispy on the outside, soft and tender on the inside, a good croissant is all these and more at Le Salon et Croissanterie at Hysan Place in Causeway Bay. This is the latest from restaurateur and celebrity chef Tony Cheng, who just three years ago, debuted in Hong Kong with his Michelin-honored The Drawing Room, also in Causeway Bay.

Le Salon is fine dining on French cuisine in the newest upscale mall in the center of the busiest shopping district in Hong Kong. After a slightly confusing ride on the elevator and a few "express" escalators, potential diners will reach the upper floors where dining options spread out. Le Salon is the only French restaurant and is on the 13th floor.

White table cloths are "framed" to the table, dark sofas and cool grays, and dim lighting provide a very romantic setting for your meal. The food is traditional French with a few creative touches from the culinary masterminds, Cheng and his mentor,



Beef bourguignon tastes incredibly tender and flavorful.

chef Roland Schuller.

We started with a basket of the much talked about croissants. Four flavors were served: chocolate, tiramisu, caramel and chestnut. All formed in the classic crescent shape, and made with top quality French butter and flour, the croissants are considered a highlight for many diners.

The ratio of flour to butter is 2:1, giving the croissants a flaky exterior and a warm buttery aroma.

The chocolate croissant is made using Valrhona chocolate cream topped with salted-caramelized hazelnuts. The tiramisu

croissant is filled with coffee mascarpone cream and sprinkled with cocoa powder. The caramel croissant is made with caramel cream with a light sprinkling of crunchy Maldon sea salt. But the overall favorite at our table was the chestnut croissant filled with chestnut cream and garnished with candied chestnuts.

All the croissants are baked in-house and served fresh from the oven. A limited number is baked each day, making them much sought after.

We dined on a few well-loved classic French dishes that were all beautifully prepared and presented.

The beef bourguignon was slow cooked for about 30 hours and made with M5 Wagyu beef cheek. It was incredibly tender and flavorful. The coq au vin, chicken cooked in burgundy wine, was made with earthy, woody mushrooms and the duck leg confit with pommes sarladaises was served with an orange salad that was the perfect complement to this rich dish.

For dessert, there was the brulee waffle with strawberries and fresh cream — a mar-

riage of a fairly large waffle and creme brulee, which was baked into the little waffle pockets. It was a sweet and creative way to end the meal.

The more casual Croissanterie outside of Le Salon has a few small tables in front for customers to sit and enjoy a pastry with a steaming cup of coffee, or order items for take away.

A two-course set lunch menu is offered for HK\$188 (\$24) and a three-course set is available for HK\$268. Prices for entrees start from HK\$138 and \$398 for mains.

IF YOU GO

LE SALON RESTAURANT ET CROISSANTERIE

Shop 1302, 13/F, Hysan Place, 500 Hennessy Road, Causeway Bay. 852-2115-3328.

Average cost per head: HK\$200-400 (\$26-52).

Recommended: Croissants, Beef Bourguignon, Coq Au Vin, Duck Leg Confit.

Ultraviolet, ultra sensory

By **MARY K SMITH** in Shanghai
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Ultraviolet is one of a kind; a multi-sensory experience where you not only taste and smell but are surrounded with projections and soundtracks that correspond with each of the plates that arrive at your table.

Paul Pairet's pet project limits nightly guests to just a mere 10, and having only opened in May, the restaurant continues to be booked solid months in advance.

No newbie to Shanghai, French chef Pairet began his stint in 2005 when he started at Shangri-La's Jade on 36 and in three years, brought it to international recognition. In 2009, Pairet introduced the city to Mr. And Mrs. Bund, which has arguably become the city's best for French food and one of the premiere fine-dining restaurants in Shanghai.

Now his dream — 15 years in the making — of a dining experience that orchestrates images, lighting, sounds, aromas and environments to enhance his food has been one of the most talked about openings for Shanghai's dining scene this year.

No detail is left to chance. From the first car ride to the restaurant's secret location, to the first moments before entering the dining room and throughout the meal, you feel as if you're on a psychedelic trip, then you're on an amusement park ride and then are transported to each of the places Pairet wants to take you with each of his dishes.

From the first moments in the car to the last dessert, the excitement of the unknown swells and is only perpetuated by the eagerness of the host and wait staff.

The first 10 courses, or act 1, are a mixture of classic favorites from Mr. And Mrs. Bund, including the truffle burnt soup bread (pictured) that is rich in oaky flavors, and new creations Pairet and his team have developed over the years.

The interpretation of the British classic fish and chips — which, surprisingly, has no fish — was lightly battered and fried and served on an oversized plate, a teasing juxtaposition that is common throughout the meal.

The presentation goes beyond just what is presented on the plate and the scenes that are projected on the walls. The host, Fabien, who also serves as the restaurant's director, becomes a bit of the mad scientist as he prepares, cuts and serves the cuttlefish, which is uniquely paired with Sichuan spices.

One of the peaks of the meal was the first main course, the sea bass Monte Carlo. The bass was moist and baked in bread and topped with olive oil, tomato, mozzarella, olive and basil mixture that was as palatable as it was interesting.

Much like the first act, the six desserts tend to jump around a bit. Pairet once again pits classic and convention with childlike wonder and fun.

One minute you're enjoying a sophisticated carrot cake or egg tartlet and the next you're feasting on gummy bears and drinking gummy bear-infused Evian water while watching gummy bears (and the staff) race around the room.

There were some down sides to the six-hour psychedelic culinary exploration.

While each dish is creative and inventive, some of the dishes are very strong. The bouillabaisse, a classic French soup, while a mere spoonful, was very heavy and overloaded with flavors to the point of being overpowering.

For the untrained eater, the 23 courses is a hefty amount of food. As the table neared dessert number 4 or 5, we wondered if we could be able eat and enjoy any more of the food that was to come our way.

Another obstacle is the amount of time it takes to serve all these courses. There were a few times when there was a sense of hurriedness and diners not able to enjoy each course at their own pace.

What really stands out at Ultraviolet — second to the experience of it all — is the service.

With a wait staff ratio of 1:1, it's hard to not get swept into the moment with the amount of sheer passion and excitement coming from the waiters, host and cooks. No need is too small and no request unmanageable for the team. Guests are their top priority, and they make sure the experience is one that none will forget.

There are few things in Shanghai that can compare with the experience the team at Ultraviolet presents, be it with the food, presentation, service and entertainment value, especially with its price tag of 2,000 yuan (\$318) per person (which includes wine and drink pairings).

The only hard part will be getting a spot at the table.

IF YOU GO

ULTRAVIOLET

Reservations are required and must be done online or through e-mail.

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Website: www.uvbypp.cc

