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# win

A two-night stay  
and dinner at The  
Castle Hotel in  
Qingdao

## WEEKEND

城市周报

April 7-20



# Beijing vs. Shanghai

Two Cities. Two Ways of Life.  
Only One Can Win.

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Hei She Hui | **Fashionista** | Cycle Out of Town | **Gili Islands** | Great Spa Deals



Round 8

## International Dining

### Haute Cuisine vs. Oh, Cuisine?

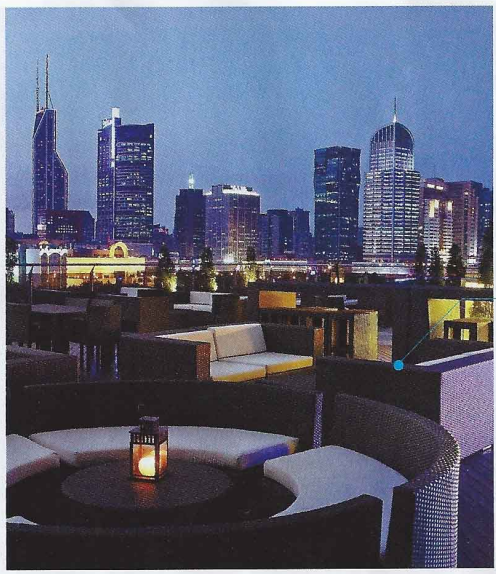
There's been talk for years of the Michelin Guide coming to China. When it finally does arrive, it'll almost certainly come to Shanghai before Beijing. Jason Atherton of Table No. 1 has already told us that he came to Shanghai with dreams of Michelin stars for his restaurant, and waiting in line next to him are spots like Jing'an Restaurant and Ipoh.

As it is, Shanghai already has a stellar reputation for its international cuisine, both in quality and selection. We've got everything from French pizzas to chifa-style (Peruvian Chinese) tapas to Basque favorites from Michelin starred chefs, and the general view is that its fine dining scene is five years ahead of Beijing. "Beijing is pulling its weight." Reto Kistler of Beijing's Opposite House tells us defensively. "Stand-alone restaurants such as Maison Boulud or Sadler are keeping Beijing's fine-dining scene on par with international standards." But it's Shanghai where the boundaries are being stretched.

Paul Pairet's Ultraviolet is due to launch in May, and it should instantly become one of the world's marquee dining destinations. A team of 25 will serve one table of 10 nightly, and every dish will come paired a set of carefully crafted smells, sights and sounds to play on what Pairet calls your "psychotaste." One seat will cost ¥2,000, and the restaurant will lose ¥3,000 on every person that comes through—it's a food extravaganza for the pure glory of it. Eat that, Beijing.



Winner: Shanghai. International chefs flock to our moneyed-up locale to impress each other.



Strip Prime

Maison Boulud



Round 9

## Booze

### Ergoutou vs. Shikumen

There is almost nothing the staff of this magazine wouldn't drink. Chinese wine, beer spilled in an ashtray—we'd drink paint thinner if you put it in a fancy glass with a paper umbrella. So it shames us to admit that we cannot stomach Beijing's local poison, Ergoutou *baijiu*. We've tried diluting it with Coke, adding other alcohol, we've even tried those expensive *baijiu* cocktails at hotels. Nothing works. It all just tastes of feet soaked in formaldehyde. Now *huangjiu*, that's a different matter. Warm evening nothing much to do, ¥18 in our pocket? The choice is clear. Tuck a bottle of Shikumen 2001 under your arm and take a stroll, pausing every third or fourth step for a swig of that warm, syrupy goodness. We've tried the posh *huangjiu* at fancy dinners. It tastes much the same. In a way, *huangjiu* and *baijiu* are like Beijing and Shanghai: both give you a headache after a while, but at least Shanghai tastes good on the way down.



Winner: Shanghai. *Baijiu* tastes like a fast, wintry death.



Cheap and ... not so nasty



No drunk is worth that

Round 10

## Local Food

### Chuan'r vs. Xiaolongbao

OK fine. So Shanghainese food is kind of the bastard child in the world of Chinese cuisine. Neighboring provinces Jiangsu, Anhui and Zhejiang all have their own style of food, and they're recognized as three of China's eight great cuisines. So, uh, Shanghai kind of blew it. All we've got are the sweet, oily, fatty leftovers and a cobbled-together cuisine made up of greasy streetside eats like *xiaolongbao*, *shengjianbao* and *youtiao*, and saccharine main courses like *hongshao rou*. Tasty in parts, clumsy as a whole. On the other hand, Beijing has *kaoya*, one of the China's most iconic dishes, and a regal, Imperial past that brought in chefs from all over China along with the daily ration of concubines and invading Mongolian hordes. The Ming, Yuan and Qing dynasties all hailed from different parts of China, bringing the best of what they had to the city. Plus, y'know, Beijing cuisine's entry on Wikipedia features 127 "well-known dishes," compared to just eight for Shanghai. Whoops. Someone go update our page.



Winner: Beijing. Shanghai's sweet, oily cuisine can be tasty, but Beijing's local dishes are fit for an emperor.