

The
Miele
GUIDE

YOUR GUIDE TO ASIA'S FINEST RESTAURANTS
2011/2012

Asia's Top 20

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 Iggy's,
Singapore | 11 Antonio's,
Cavite, Philippines |
| 2 Restaurant Andre,
Singapore | 12 Mozaic,
Bali, Indonesia |
| 3 L'Atelier de Joel Robuchon,
Hong Kong, China | 13 8½ Otto e Mezzo Bombana,
Hong Kong, China |
| 4 Robuchon a Galera,
Macau, China | 14 Gunther's Modern French
Cuisine, Singapore |
| 5 Caprice,
Hong Kong, China | 15 Dum Pukht,
Mumbai, India |
| 6 Cilantro Restaurant & Wine Bar,
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia | 16 Dakshin,
Chennai, India |
| 7 Mr & Mrs Bund,
Shanghai, China | 17 Yung Kee,
Hong Kong, China |
| 8 Pierre Gagnaire a Seoul,
Seoul, Korea | 18 Sarong,
Bali, Indonesia |
| 9 Bo Innovation,
Hong Kong, China | 19 Les Amis,
Singapore |
| 10 Tippling Club,
Singapore | 20 Bukhara,
New Delhi, India |

In an eventful year for the Asian food scene, we saw the long-awaited opening of L'Atelier de Joel Robuchon at Resorts World Sentosa in Singapore in April, and Hong Kong's elevation in status as a gourmet destination, now that it has 60 Michelin-starred restaurants – almost on par with Paris which lays claim to 63 such establishments. Les Creations de Narisawa in Tokyo rose from 24th to 12th position to become the highest ranking Asian restaurant on the 2011 San Pellegrino World's 50 Best Restaurants list, and 11 restaurants from the region were featured in the Top 100, including Iggy's, Les Amis, Bo Innovation, L'Atelier de Joel Robuchon (Hong Kong) and Caprice – all earlier recognised as part of Asia's Top 20 in the 2010/2011 edition of The Miele Guide.

Asian restaurants continue to be on

the rise in terms of their prominence in the international arena. But the winds of change in the air are more subtle than that. In the 2011/2012 edition of this Guide – as collated from the votes of food journalists, our Special Jury (made up of industry professionals), and members of the public – we have seen a remarkable number of new entries in the Top 20 list.

Chef Andre Chiang returns to the list with his Restaurant Andre, which opened in October 2010. This independent restaurant debuts on the Top 20 list at number two, putting Chiang in a position higher than all the previous times the restaurant he was previously at the helm of entered the list.

Other restaurants making their debut in our Top 20 include Mr & Mrs Bund

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Mr & Mrs Bund

SHANGHAI, CHINA

6F Bund 18

18 Zhongshan Dong Yi Lu
Shanghai, China

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Monday 11.30am–2pm, 6.30pm–
10.30pm, Tuesday–Friday 11.30am–
2pm, 6.30pm–4am, Saturday 6.30pm–
4am, Sunday 6.30pm–10.30pm

www.mmbund.com

Voted the third best restaurant in China in the 2010/2011 edition of The Miele Guide, Mr & Mrs Bund makes a stunning debut in the Top 10 list this year, in seventh position. The restaurant, opened in April of 2009, is the brainchild of chef-owner Paul Pairet. A celebrity in the Shanghai restaurant scene, Pairet arrived in the cosmopolitan Chinese city in 2005 to start Jade on 36, Pudong Shangri-La's avant garde designer restaurant.

With a novel, thought-provoking cuisine the city had never before experienced, Pairet soon made a name for himself as the highly technical chef who played with texture and temperature to challenge any preconceived notions the diner might have about certain dishes and ingredients. Calling himself a "culinary egalitarian", Pairet is of the belief that all ingredients are equal – canned tuna can be as suited to fine dining as caviar; it's just a matter of interpretation.


When he opened Mr & Mrs Bund, Pairet took this philosophy to another level. While his cuisine at Jade on 36 was reserved for the elite in terms of pricing, and appreciated only by a few for its esoteric nature, here his food is simple, accessible and even a little predictable – at first glance at least. Popular favourites such as char-grilled chicken, beef ribs with traditional red wine reduction, and truffled risotto dominate the vast list of items offered, and they are served in large sharing portions. Presented in front of the diner, however, it becomes apparent that Pairet continues to take the plate as the stage for his technical experimentations.

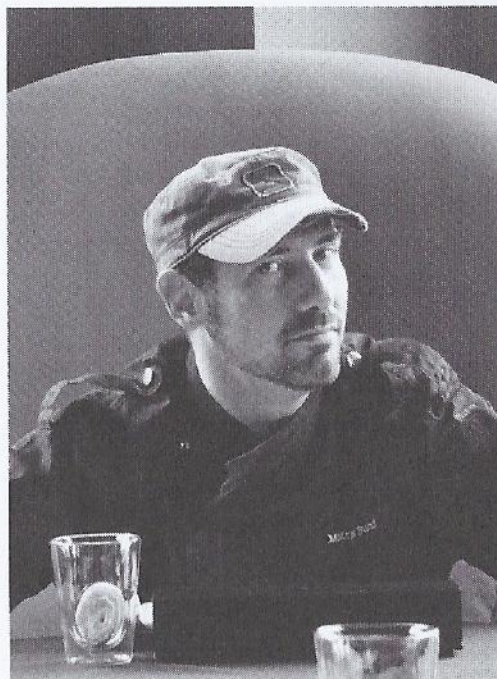
Like his food, the restaurant is full of pleasant contradictions. "Contemporary but not stuffy, relaxed without sacrificing an ounce of chic." This is how Pairet describes it. Indeed, despite being housed in the majestically beautiful colonial building of Bund 18, the cavernous space takes on a lounge-like vibe with a sexy palette of red, black and silver, and pieces in a neo-classical style. The room is filled with a scattering of smaller, intimate tables near the windows overlooking The Bund, and a dramatic 16-seat communal table that serves also as a centrepiece.

Later into the night (a supper menu is served until 4am on Fridays and Saturdays), the atmosphere becomes club-like, with a DJ spinning thumping rhythms and the trendy party set streaming in.

People come for the 32 wines by-the-glass – made possible by an enomatic wine dispensing system – and some 200-odd more by the bottle. This deliciously wide selection is accompanied by a vast – for some intimidating – volume of a menu, spanning appetisers, vegetables, seafood, meats and desserts – each divided into myriad sub-categories. Pairet wants his guests to treat the menu simply as a guideline and to improvise on it any way they wish, be it to change the side dishes, the cooking method or even the main ingredient. It is a choose-your-own-ending story in real life, set in a restaurant.

Within this list are signature items carried over from Pairet's menu at Jade on 36, such as lobsters steamed in a mason jar with lemongrass and vanilla, and new classics like a dish of enormous beef ribs cooked to tender, juicy perfection, glazed with teriyaki and served with an orange reduction. The absolute must-try, however, is the dessert of Lemon & Lemon Tart. Taking 72 hours to prepare, it is a candied lemon served whole with a delicious surprise within. To describe the dish any further would be to spoil the fun for anyone who has yet to try it, but we can certainly say that it is a prime showcase of the chef's wit and technical abilities.

Constantly running on a desire to challenge stereotypical perceptions of dining, Pairet is in the midst of realising yet another radical concept restaurant, Ultraviolet. Where the new restaurant will take this rising chef remains to be discovered, but it is a revelation that Pairet's fans eagerly anticipate. 



Chef Paul Pairet

China

Viewed as one of the rare havens in the world with a booming economy, China continues to attract restaurant talents from countries everywhere. Reflecting the country's economic trends, the newest phenomenon is foreign-owned restaurants where the owners serve as full-time managers rather than just chefs or investors. Where it was once a rarity to encounter an expat serving your food anywhere outside the priciest upscale restaurants, you now find bistros and casual mid-range spots where the expat owner or manager is working the floor, guaranteeing a quality of native-English speaking service that has raised the service bar once again.

Top 5

- 1** Mr & Mrs Bund, Shanghai
- 2** Jean Georges Shanghai, Shanghai
- 3** Beijing Da Dong Roast Duck Restaurant (Dongsishitiao), Beijing
- 4** el Willy, Shanghai
- 5** Maison Boulud, Beijing

There are restaurant openings nearly every day, but also closings, even from restaurateurs who have prospered with other venues. It's a tough market, with high rents, increased food costs and increasingly high salaries.

The cuisines in vogue include small plates, European food, American comfort food and steakhouses, Southeast Asian, Californian-style sushi, and omakase Japanese. In Chinese dining, restaurants serving spicy Sichuan and Hunan cuisine continue to rule top-reviewed lists.

Other dining trends include the wildfire spread of coffee and wine culture. Cafes launched by obsessive baristas who select and roast beans in-house are spreading, along with dozens of casual cafes dotting neighbourhoods – even those in areas far from central downtown. As China's appetite for wine grows, so too the myriad wine importers, large and small, representing labels from Napa to New Zealand. – Crystyl Mo, food editor, *Time Out Shanghai* 🍷