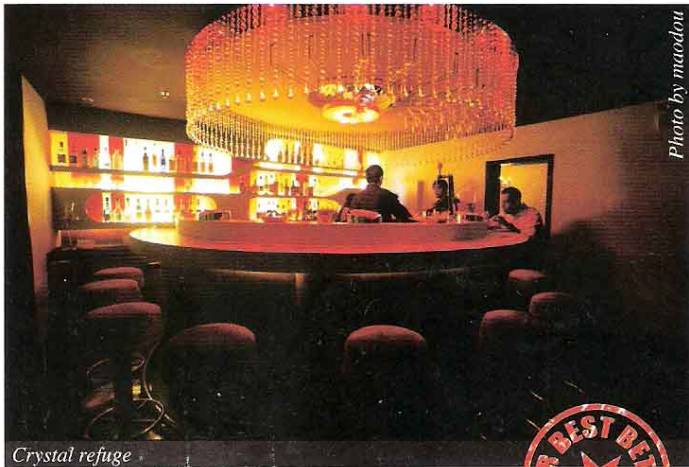


new bars



Crystal refuge

Photo by maodou

Velvet Lounge

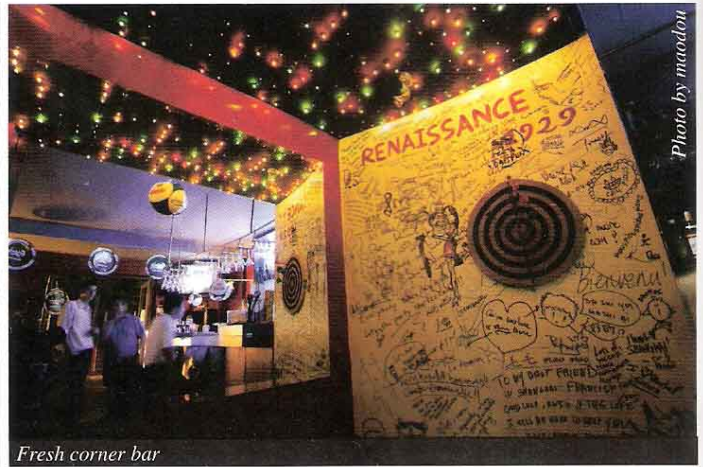
Oasis on Julu Lu

"Julu Lu" and "classy" are not words you often hear in the same sentence. Velvet Lounge, however, tries to strike a more salubrious tone on this notorious street, and if you run into a cluster of bar girls, you'll know you've gone too far. The space is located in the same building as Casanova and shares a courtyard entrance. Upon entering you'll find a C-shaped bar with welcoming 'tenders, and, further inside, a safe haven where velvet upholstered sofas envelop you. Relaxing lounge music, unfortunately sometimes mingled with bass from the bar below, provides a fitting environment for catching up with friends. All the standard cocktails (¥45-55) are there along with a rather surprising Hoegaarden on tap (¥55 small glass.) Chandeliers hang around the bar and crystal curtains surround the doorways -- both a welcome break from the usual Julu Lu accoutrements. | Mark Andrews



Perfect for:
a quiet chat

913 Julu Lu
巨鹿路913号
5403-2976



Fresh corner bar

Photo by maodou

Renaissance 1929

A second chance at life

Between dancing at Mint and shooting pool at Big Bamboo, you've probably passed Renaissance 1929 uncountable times without giving it a second glance. Though formerly lacking anything to pique your interest, walk that way again and you'll notice that the doors have been flung open to the balmy night air. The World Cup and beer banners have likewise been unfurled, and groups of contented bar-goers camp out on the interior's scattered red sofas. Under new French management, Renaissance 1929 poses a peaceful alternative to Tongren Lu's oft crowded nightlife venues. A tiny darts board hugs a corner wall and big-screen sports are sure to be a summertime staple. Cocktails run from ¥40-50 and beers hover around an agreeable ¥30. It seems Renaissance Bar has been resuscitated -- time will tell if it's been given enough air.

Perfect for:
laidback sports fans

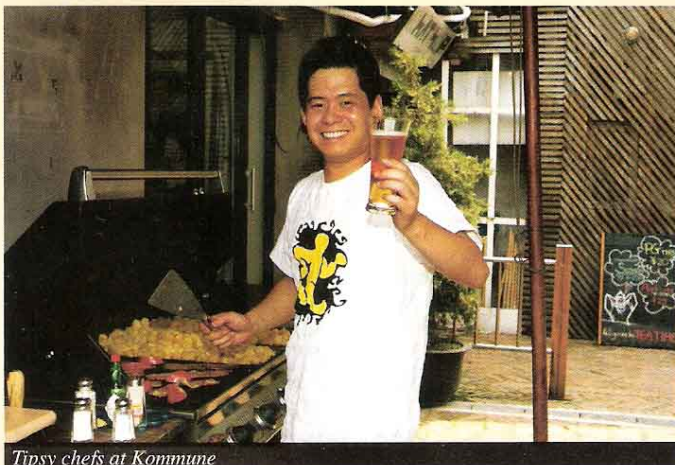
304 Tongren Lu
铜仁路304号
6279-3513

| Courtney Woo

roundabout

Beers and Barbecues

Plan your own respite from a sweltering summer



Tipsy chefs at Kommune

For many city dwellers, the aromas and sounds of summer are muted and surface sporadically at best: the pungent sweetness of blooming buds, the hum of lawnmowers, and perhaps most critically, the scrumptious smoke of a neighborhood barbecue and the satisfying "click" that signals the opening of an ice-cold can of beer. Fortunately, Shanghai's open-grill bars easily satisfy summer thirsts and carnivorous cravings. Some venues even rent out their grills for private B.Y.O.M. [Bring Your Own Meat] parties. The setup is simple: You roast your fillets and tenderloins to perfection over the fire; they provide the alcohol, tableware and clean up the mess. **Kommune** opens its backyard grill nightly after 7pm to parties of 20-40 for a minimum of ¥1500 in drinks from the bar. A BBQ bash at **British Bulldog** accommodates groups of 40 and includes a chef for a minimum of ¥2000 at the bar. If a self-catered BBQ strikes you as an organizational hazard, or you have a tendency to turn your supple mignon into a leathery brick, you can opt for professionally prepared garden parties. **Freelance Bar and Grill** hosts customized barbecues paired with summer brews on its leafy outdoor patio, while **Senses** cooks up an array of delectable meats in its spacious summer garden for parties of 50-100 people. This summer, escape the sweltering city with a backyard barbecue and booze party -- just remember to book ahead. | Sophie Kalkreuth



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