

CITY

WEEKEND

城市周报

4 Live: Rock's Latest Refuge

pg. E15

So Much Seoul

pg. E10

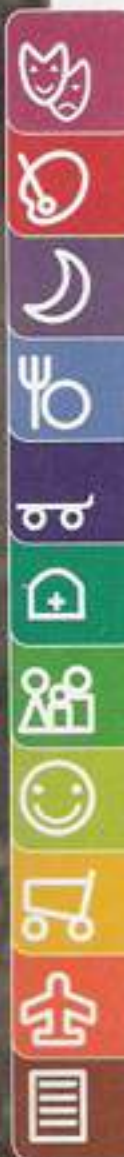
6 Ways to Play

pg. E37

Open Lane

Wander through Taikang's arty orbit

pg. E08



City Feature

Step inside
NUZI

Art Opens up the Lanes

Over the past few years, artists, craftsman and shopkeepers with an eye for the unusual have made a home for themselves at Lane 210 Taikang Lu, nestled in the former French Concession. What began as a quiet movement has now become one of the city's premier art communities. Now, the recently expanded Lane 248, with its emphasis on art and restoration, offers even more reasons to visit.

Hidden in a maze of back alleys, Lane 248 is best approached either from its street entrance on Taikang Lu or through a courtyard connected to the top end of Lane 210. Much of the development happened spontaneously, with the initial impetus coming from Mr. Tang, co-owner of Utsuwa Japanese restaurant and the first person to commit to the new area. He saw Lane 248 as a "last chance" and tells of how he sees the old Shanghai disappearing around him. "You see this glass," he says, pointing at a beautiful folding door constructed of wood and glass, "it is 80 years old. I found it in another place, thrown away." It's his vision to preserve

traditional Chinese styles and try to educate people about culture.

Zhou Xin Liang, who runs a leather goods shop nearby and is director of the Tenants Management Organization, says that the new area has been two years in development. He initially approached residents asking who would be interested in renting out their houses. Zhou says that the development of the area is very different to Xintiandi where a developer first bought the whole area and then created a plan. Here, the growth is organic through discussion between shopkeepers and building owners.

Many of the shops in the area are the first ventures of the owners. **Ba Gua Cha Guan** (Ba Gua Tea House) is the first solo shop for Chen Pei Fang, who fell in love with the area on her second visit. A "ba gua" is a Feng Shui tool used to help find preferred locations for elements such as health; it seems as if it also helped Chen find a good location for her tea shop.

For New Zealander Bobbie Cornell, opening a shop was a similar spur of the moment decision. "As soon as I saw the lane, I knew I wanted to move in," she says. "I rented

Forget sanitized Xintiandi. The newly restored Lane 248 Taikang Lu welcomes potters, designers, restaurateurs and local artisans who rub shoulders with octogenarian residents. - Mark Andrews



one of the last shops available and decided what to do with it after." The space is now a studio-cum-shop called **NUZI** where Cornell sells nature-inspired goods from her native land and works on her own architectural designs.

Norman + Karen Design Studio is the first independent project by a young Chinese couple who met while studying in San Francisco. Interior designer Norman Hsu says that they discovered the area when walking around and it suited them because "the building is an old traditional Shanghainese style house, and we wanted to find a place that could make a strong contrast with our contemporary designs."

Also on the street are a number of clothing shops, galleries and even a Korean cooking and culture centre. **Utsuwa** restaurant has a pottery workshop where Japanese potter Takahara-san makes pottery items for both the restaurant and

for sale. She also holds pottery classes. Takahara-san says that she was attracted by the restaurant's name, which means tableware in Japanese.

The area, however, is not without its problems due to different expectations between residents and shopkeepers. With the close proximity of the lanes, the bustle of commerce and tourism does not always suit the residents. On occasion tempers flare as those living above the shops try to get some peace. However, some locals like Yang Zhen Xin, who has rented his whole house out to Utsuwa, have made a two-fold profit on the arrangement. "Rent supplements my income, while the building's beauty is preserved."



NUZI
Bibbe Cornell, architect and owner

Inspiration:
To be successful, you need to be different.

Sell:
Eccentric range of products from her native New Zealand.

Highlights:
- Sets resembling mini canoes (see left) by award-winning New Zealand designer David Trubridge. (Wooden furniture ¥8,000-35,000 and wooden lights ¥2,000-8,000)
- Feather jewellery from New York-based Audrey Hu.
- Saffron Lavender baby skin care products made in New Zealand and suitable for newborns.



Warming up the afternoon at Ba Guan Tea Shop



Norman and Karen pose in the lanes outside of their studio



Takahara-san, an Utsuwa potter, busies herself with a new creation