



FAIRMONT
MAGAZINE

VOL. 11 NO. 1

Scottsdale:
The New
Wild West

Sail Away to
Bermuda

Nostalgic
Nairobi



Shanghai to Beijing

Landmark hotels
tell a tale of two cities

Fairmont

Unforgettable.
Since 1907.

上海

SHANGHAI



Two iconic hotels and the strong founding figures

北京

TO BEIJING



behind them tell a story of China past and present.

By [Natasha Mekhail](#)



SHANGHAI

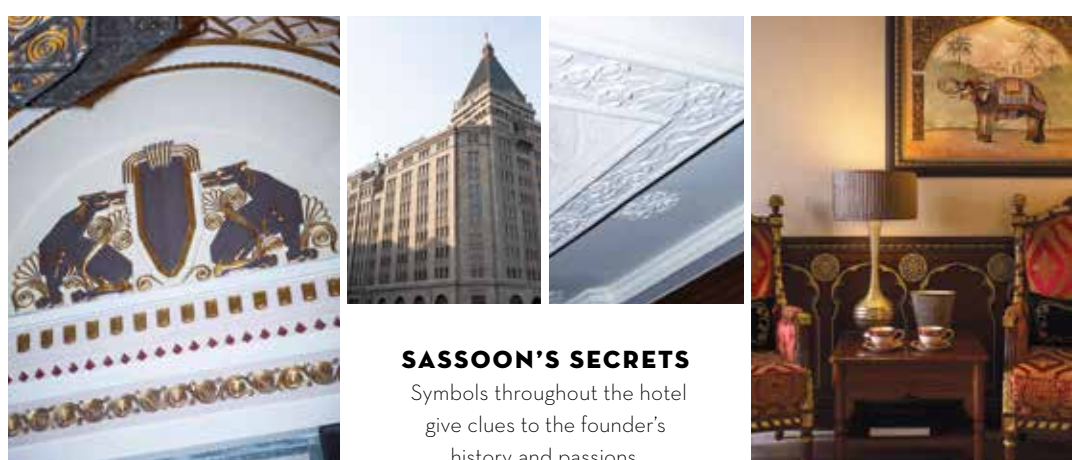
part one



In the 1920s, Shanghai real estate tycoon Victor Sassoon had a dream to create “the most beautiful hotel in the Far East.” He succeeded in 1929 when the Cathay Hotel opened its doors at 20 the Bund, one of the most commanding addresses on Shanghai’s most important financial corridor. A model of Art Deco architecture and the tallest building in the city at the time, it became an international landmark, visited by dignitaries and celebrities. Imagine Marlene Dietrich breezing into the Cathay Ballroom, Noël Coward penning *Private Lives* in his suite and Charlie Chaplin greeting press on the stairs. All the while Sassoon presided over his glittering empire from his 10th-floor



apartment, unaware of the vicissitudes ahead. In 1937, guests watched from the rooftop as Shanghai fell to the Japanese. Within a decade, the occupation and ensuing unrest would push the founder from the city he loved. After the Cultural Revolution, the hotel served as offices for the newly formed People’s Republic, and was later renamed Peace Hotel. “Every aspect of modern Chinese history took place here,” summarizes general manager George Wee. So when the hotel emerged in 2010 as Fairmont Peace Hotel, following a three-year renovation timed to welcome the world for Expo, it marked yet another turning point. Restored to its former splendor, Fairmont Peace Hotel once again fulfills its promise of superlative beauty on Shanghai’s storied landscape.



SASSOON’S SECRETS

Symbols throughout the hotel give clues to the founder’s history and passions.

- 01.** Whippets were Sassoon’s favorite dogs. Find the miniature greyhounds in a number of stylized reliefs, such as over doorways and in floor mosaics.
- 02.** The hotel’s triangular floorplan represents a “V” for “Victor,” while Sassoon’s other property, the Metropole, forms an “S” – his literal stamp on the city.
- 03.** Tudor roses on the ceiling of Sassoon’s suite speak to his reverence for England, where he was educated.
- 04.** The Nine Nations Suites represent countries to which Sassoon had a deep connection, including India, where he lived before moving to China.

PHOTOS: XAVIER GIRARD; LACHANE (ALL EXCEPT BUND); ILLUSTRATION: MARTIN COTE



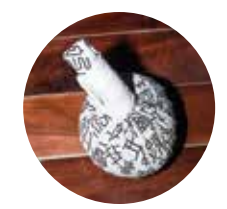
EAST MEETS WEST

LUCKY NUMBERS

The choice of digits counts at Fairmont Peace Hotel.

East - 8 The Mandarin word for “eight” is similar to that of “prosper” and is therefore auspicious. Find it in the octagonal shape of tables and the stained-glass lobby ceiling. The Sassoon Presidential Suite is #888.

West - 20 Sassoon was a betting man and thought this number lucky. He used his influence to ensure the hotel was numbered 20 on the three streets it faces: the Bund, Nanjing Road and Dianchi Road.



THE TREATMENT

WILLOW STREAM WISDOM

Duration: 90 minutes

Where: Fairmont Peace Hotel’s Willow Stream Spa

Service: An aromatic footbath followed by a full-body massage with a warm herbal pouch.

Benefits: The pouch’s heat alleviates muscle tension, allowing a deeper pressure massage. Its herbal ingredients (wormwood, ginger, club moss, balsam and Chinese elder) stimulate blood circulation and lull the recipient into a profound state of relaxation.



NOT TO MISS

OLD JAZZ BAND

The spirit of the jazz age lives on throughout Fairmont Peace Hotel, but nowhere more so than in the cocktail bar where the Old Jazz Band performs nightly. The band's name is not just a nod to the 1920s and '30s style of tunes they play, it's also a tribute to their collective life experience. With an average age of 80 and the eldest member pushing 95, the senior sextet has made the *Guinness Book of World Records*.

OUTING

PRESERVATION SOCIETY



OLD TOWN

In this beautifully restored section of the ancient walled city, a zigzagging bridge connects stilted buildings that appear to float over a lake. Next to it lies Yu Garden, a Ming-era residence that offers a glimpse into how the dynastic elite live.



XIN TIAN DI

Combining Chinese and Western details, the *shikumen* style of stone architecture was popular with wealthy Chinese families in the late 1800s. A surviving pocket of this housing style remains in Xin Tian Di, now occupied by trendy boutiques and restaurants.

HISTORY UNFOLDS



1929

The Cathay Hotel opens

1937

Guests watch from the rooftop as the Japanese invade Shanghai

1949

The hotel is used as government offices during the early formation of the People's Republic of China

1956

A conference for world peace convenes in China and the hotel reopens as Peace Hotel

2007

Closed for restoration and renovation

2010

Reopened as Fairmont Peace Hotel

上海

SHANGHAI

A SUITE SURPRISE

Match each famous guest with the Nine Nations Suite where they stayed.



01

Marlene Dietrich



02

Charlie Chaplin



03

Guglielmo Marconi



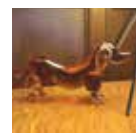
04

Muhammad Ali



A

Indian Suite



B

German Suite



C

Chinese Suite



D

Italian Suite

01-B / 02-A / 03-D / 04-C

HIGH LOW

SHANGHAI SPECIALTIES



¥

Xiao long bao

No Shanghai street-food experience is complete without this dumpling stuffed with meat and hot soup. The larger *tang bao* contain only soup, which can be sipped from a straw.



¥¥¥

Cong you ban mian

At Fairmont Peace Hotel's Dragon Phoenix restaurant, this simple, traditional green-onion noodle dish goes haute with a hint of truffle oil and crispy-fried scallions lending texture.



ACTIVITY

TAI CHI LESSON

The fluid movements associated with tai chi are based on the spiraling motion of the silkworm as it wraps itself in its cocoon: too fast and the silk breaks; too slow and it tangles. To its practitioners, tai chi is exercise and meditation rolled into one. The slow repetitive work stimulates circulation and generates body heat, while the concentration involved provides mental calmness and clarity. Guests can sign up for a lesson on the Peace Hotel rooftop with tai chi master Liu Ai Hua.

ESSENTIAL READING

PRIVATE LIVES

BY NOËL COWARD

While recovering from a bout of the flu at the Cathay Hotel, the English playwright wrote his classic comedy *about* a hotel.

HOTEL SHANGHAI

BY VICKI BAUM

Set at the hotel on August 14, 1937, the novel follows nine people at the onset of the Sino-Japanese War.

SHANGHAI GRAND

BY TARAS GRESCOE

Told through real letters, this non-fiction account reveals the often passionate relationship between Victor Sassoon, *New Yorker* journalist Emily Hahn and Chinese poet Zou Sinmay.



CULTURE LESSON

CHINESE DOUBLE MEANINGS

When used in decoration, these auspicious homophones elicit cosmic favor.



VASE



"PEACE"

Pronounced *ping*. A vase in your home or an archway in the form of a vase wards off evil and encourages peace and tranquility within.



FISH



"SURPLUS"

Pronounced *yú*. At the Chinese New Year meal, it's good luck to leave some fish uneaten. What remains signals abundance for the coming year.



BAT



"FORTUNE"

Pronounced *fú*. Not only do these words share a sound, but so do the words for "turn over" and "come." As the bat hangs upside down, so too will good fortune come.

LEGENDARY LIBATIONS

While researching *Shanghai Grand*, writer Taras Grescoe discovered Sassoon's own cocktail recipes written into his journals. Four of these drinks are now on the Jazz Bar menu.

01

PUSS MOTH, 1931

Gin, White Rum, Cointreau, Lemon Juice – Named for the de Havilland aircraft.



02

CONTE VERDE, 1934

Gin, Cointreau, Dry Vermouth, Crème de Menthe, Lemon Juice – Inspired by the Italian ocean liner aboard which Sassoon hosted a Venetian masquerade.



03

CHAMPION MARTINI, 1933

Gin, Dry Vermouth, Bitters – Hotel staff say this was the celebratory cocktail served when Sassoon's horses won at the track.

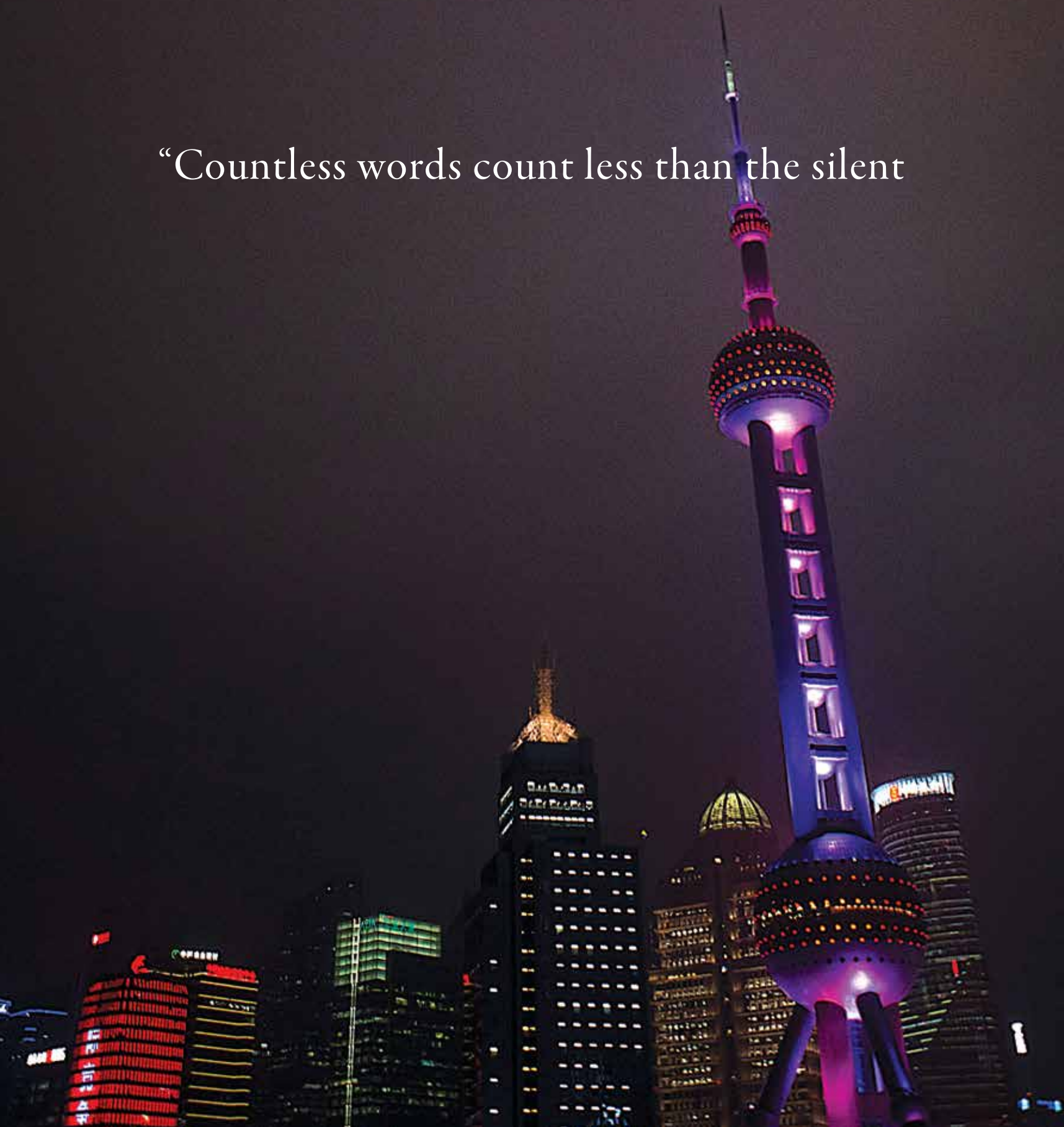
04

SAN REMO, 1934

Brandy, Orange Curaçao, Orange Juice – Named for Sanremo, a town on the Italian Riviera where Sassoon summured.

上海
SHANGHAI

“Countless words count less than the silent



北京
BEIJING

balance between yin and yang.” – Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching*



PHOTOS: JAVIER GIRARD-LACHANE

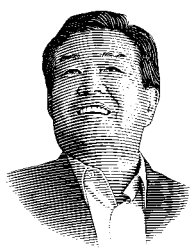


BEIJING

part two



With its 25-story twin towers connected by a soaring sky bridge and a facade of thousands of reflective rose-gold panels, Fairmont Beijing stands out in Chaoyang as a beacon of modernity. Not only does the building overlook the 21st-century business district around it, it also faces the 15th-century former seat of the emperor, known as the Forbidden City. In fact, the hotel's shape was inspired by the ancient gates that granted access to the palace's



inner sanctum, and its gold color was drawn from the imperial hue. The man behind this desire to pay homage both to where China is going and where it has come from is the hotel's owner, Chanchai Ruayrungruang. The founder of multinational multi-industry conglomerate Reignwood Group, whose offices occupy the west tower, is a passionate collector of everything from antiquities to the latest technological finds. His aesthetic pervades all aspects of Fairmont Beijing and, as with the exterior form, reveals itself once you take a closer look.

PHOTOS: XAVIER GIRARD-LACHANE (ACTIVITY); DESIGN DETAILS: IMAGINECHINA/CORBIS (RUAYRUNGRUANG); ILLUSTRATION: MARTIN CÔTE



IMPERIAL EMBLEMS
These hotel design items celebrate symbols of ancient China.

01. Four gates led to the center of the Forbidden City, and the gate-like shape of the hotel shows reverence to guests who cross its threshold today. **02.** A lobby installation of oversized marbles represents the traditional game of *fei xing qi* or "flying chess." **03.** Lion doorknockers, found on each floor as you exit the elevators, mimic the talismans on ancient Chinese residences. **04.** A ceiling installation in the lobby portrays a spiraling shoal of fish. Its ribbon-like shape also represents the long-sleeved costumes worn in Chinese opera, a passion of the hotel's owner.

ACTIVITY

CYCLE TOURS

Bicycles arrived in China in the 1890s and became a way of life. Cycling is ideal for sightseeing, allowing easy navigation of both the city's wide streets and its narrow *hutongs*. Guests of Fairmont Beijing can borrow BMW bikes and follow one of these two routes planned by the hotel's chief concierge.



Hutong Route (20.1 km)

Hutongs are networks of alleys that follow the lines of ancient courtyard residences. Today fewer than 1,000 remain in Beijing and efforts are under way to restore them. Along this route, you'll explore several of these small streets and find them bustling with shoppers, market stalls, street food and souvenirs.



Monuments Route (21.1 km)

This route explores the seats of Chinese government old and new. From the Forbidden City Palace Museum, you'll head north to Jinshan Park, a former imperial garden now open to the public. Doubling back, you'll travel past the Great Hall of the People and around Tiananmen Square.

CULTURE LESSON

CHINESE SOCIAL MEDIA

Use of international social media may be prohibited in China, but that hasn't stopped a vibrant social network from developing.



WECHAT

Picture WhatsApp, Facebook, Amazon and PayPal rolled into one. A personal QR code lets users pay through the app with their phones – even for street food.



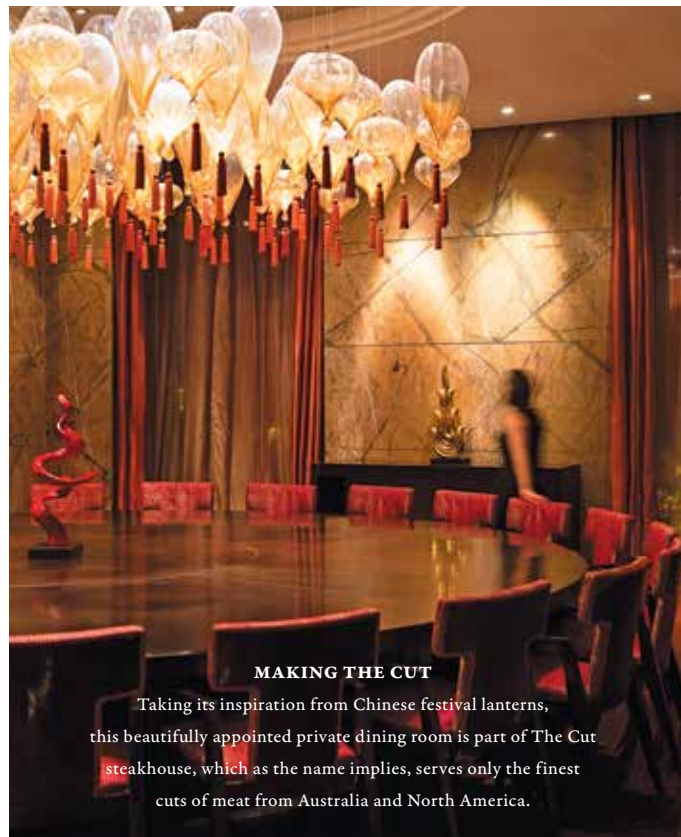
WEIBO

Its name means "microblog" and that's what you can expect from this Twitter-like social network that combines posting with photo and video sharing.



BAIDU

The primary Chinese language search engine, similar to Google, it hosts a music-download service and the online user-generated encyclopedia, Baidu Baike.



MAKING THE CUT

Taking its inspiration from Chinese festival lanterns, this beautifully appointed private dining room is part of The Cut steakhouse, which as the name implies, serves only the finest cuts of meat from Australia and North America.



EAST MEETS WEST

CHANCHAI'S COLLECTIONS

Next to Fairmont Beijing, discover the owner's treasures on display at Reignwood Centre. Private tours are available to hotel guests upon request.

East

His collection of Chinese antiquities includes ceramics, sculpture, scroll paintings and artifacts of the nobility's daily life, such as jade jewelry, silver hair combs and an exquisite bronze Shang-era pouring vessel dating back to 1600 BC.

West

The Reignwood "piano museum" houses no less than seven uprights and 11 grand pianos, the oldest being a Grotrian-Steinweg, dated 1800. Downstairs find a precious collection of vintage French fine jewelry and Swiss watches, as well as a Fabergé egg.

OUTING

COOL QUARTERS



798 Art District This former munitions factory was nearly demolished in the 1990s until the artists using it as studio space intervened to have it formally recognized as a creative district. Today you'll find it filled with public art and abuzz with modern galleries and design shops.



Sanlitun In this go-to destination for going out, expect every style of nightlife from mojito bars to karaoke stages. Try Migas to groove to top Chinese and international DJs, and Janes + Hooch for inventive cocktails, including one of the city's best whisky sours.

PHOTOS: JAVIER GRAND-LACHAINE (ALL EXCEPT REIGNWOOD GROUP; NOODLE, DUCK, SPA, COCKTAIL); REIGNWOOD GROUP; HAMILTON SCOTT'S RESIDENCES; BELL HELICOPTERS

A VAST EMPIRE

Fairmont Beijing's owner Chanchai Ruayrungruang oversees Reignwood Group, a wide portfolio of interests from multiple industries – and their spoils pop up in the guest experience.



GOLF COURSES

Owens several golf clubs around the world, including Beijing's Reignwood Pine Valley Golf Resort.



AVIATION

Operates a fleet of helicopters. There's a landing pad on the roof and occasionally one on display in the lobby of the west tower.



BEVERAGES

Owens the Chinese rights to Vita Coco, served in Beijing's fitness center, as well as Red Bull.



REAL ESTATE

Develops luxury properties. Look for the architectural model of Singapore's Hamilton Scotts residences, where owners can drive their cars into their flats.



NOT TO MISS

REIGNWOOD THEATRE

Located on the first floor of Reignwood Centre, the opulent Reignwood Theatre is the owner's semi-private venue for all manner of entertainment, from movie premieres to Peking Opera performances. The gilded theater, reminiscent of Monaco's famed opera house, has an 18th-century ambiance but hides many modern conveniences. An ingenious sinking floor transforms the hall from theater to banquet seating in a matter of minutes, while its six, one-ton crystal chandeliers can be raised or lowered at the push of a button. Among the celebrities who have graced its stage is tenor Plácido Domingo, who visits the venue twice a year to work as a mentor for the Reignwood Asian Young Artists Training Program.

HOUSE SPECIALTIES

BEIJING CUISINE

The chefs at Fairmont Beijing's Lunar 8 take tradition to the next level to prepare these local dishes.



Handmade Noodles Watch a master at work as he tosses, twists and teases the noodles from a ball of dough. Then enjoy the freshly pulled noodles as part of a hot and spicy beef soup.



Peking Duck This version, baked for an hour over an applewood fire, comes out crisped to perfection and ready to be wrapped in thin pancakes with all the accoutrements (strips of celery, honey melon, cucumber and green onion), plus a drizzle of hoisin sauce.



THE TREATMENT

TUI NA MASSAGE

Duration:

60 or 90 minutes

Where: Fairmont Beijing's Willow Stream Spa

Service: A pressure-point massage delivered dry (without oil) using deep finger pressure, stretching and hand-rocking movements.

Benefits: The massage follows the body's meridian lines, the "energy highways" along which the qi, or life energy, flows. By relieving the muscle tension that causes blockages, circulation to vital organs is restored.

MIXED MEDIA

Expect the (completely) unexpected in these Fairmont Beijing house cocktails.

01

VITA COCO MOJITO

White Rum, Vita Coco, Simple Syrup, Lime Juice, Mint Sprigs – The classic with a coconut kick. Reignwood Group owns the Chinese rights to this US coconut water brand and this take is off-menu but available in the Lobby Lounge upon request.



02

CHINESE FIVE SPICE FIZZ

Cognac, Soda Water, Lemon Juice, Ginger, Five Spice Syrup – This cocktail gets its kick from the Szechuan spice combo of black and green peppercorns, chili, star anise and cinnamon.

03

ACETO BALSAMICO

Vodka, Apple Juice, Maple Syrup, 10-Year-Aged Balsamic Vinegar – A play on the drinking vinegars or "shrubs" used in Asia to whet the appetite and cleanse the palate.

04

THE FBFI

Gin, Lemon Juice, Red Bull – Distributed in China by Reignwood Group, the energy drink serves as a potent mixer in this cocktail, served as a flip with a fresh egg white.