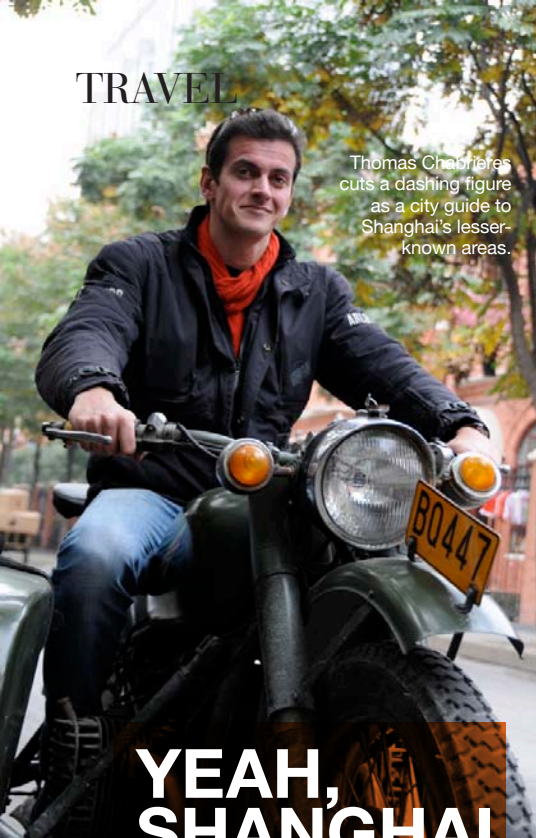


Thomas Chabrieres cuts a dashing figure as a city guide to Shanghai's lesser-known areas.



## YEAH, SHANGHAI

Step aside, Beijing. As host to the World Expo this month, Shanghai reclaims the spotlight and shows us why it is China's reigning cosmo city. By JOAN KOH

Shanghai, like most overachieving Asian cities, can leave you breathless.

The relentless pace of China's most design-savvy city has even regular visitors asking, "Was this building here the last time?" as often as they lament about entire blocks disappearing overnight.

As the battle between China's ancient civilisation and modernisation rages on, Shanghai effortlessly fuses the East with the West. With a huge penchant for novelty and residents always eager for hot spots to spend their yuan, Shanghai more than measures up as Asia's answer to Paris and New York.

### Off The Beaten Track

Thomas Chabrieres, founder of **Shanghai Sideways**, escorts visitors to little-known sights on his motorbike sidecar to paths less trodden, for instance, hidden villas in the French Concession part of the city, and an abandoned, immaculately preserved 1920s house north of Shanghai. "This is a lost and forgotten paradise," he



The Waterhouse at South Bund has a chic homely feel to its interior.



The pink-and-black cafe at Barbie emits a dollhouse vibe with suites of dainty furniture.



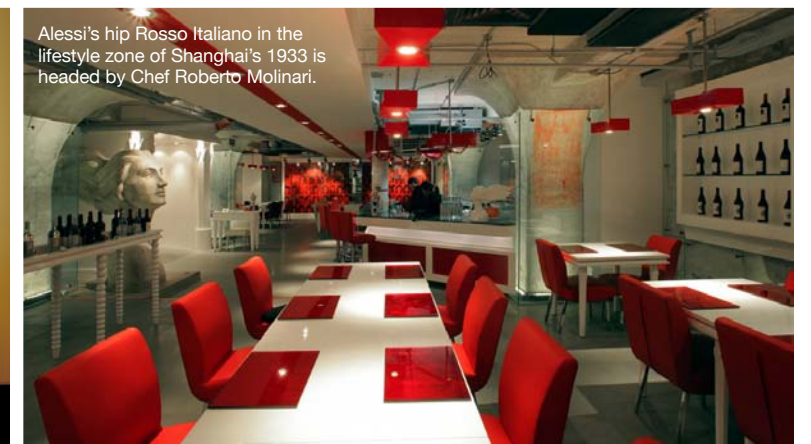
Life in plastic is fantastic: The centrepiece of the Barbie boutique is a staircase lined by an 800-piece doll collection.



Pretty in Pink: Stage performers at Chinatown put up a frothy-good show.



The massage parlour at Langham Yangtze's Chuan Spa.



Alessi's hip Rosso Italiano in the lifestyle zone of Shanghai's 1933 is headed by Chef Roberto Molinari.

says. His advice: hit the small alleys to explore the ever-changing city.

To book, visit [www.shanghaisideways.com](http://www.shanghaisideways.com).

### Hottest Retail Zone

It may sound macabre but **1933**, a refurbished slaughterhouse, is now one of the city's hottest commercial addresses: Apple, American Apparel, Ferrari Owners Club and trendy restaurants are all here. The gothic beauty, with its winding stairs, massive caverns and thick columns, has been suggested as a potential site for an art museum.

10 Sha Jing Road (near Jiu Long Road), tel: +86 215 213 3030

### Bohemian Chic

Shanghai grafts a bit of Manhattan Soho chic into its own art street **Tian Zi Fang**, now the must-have address

for galleries, cafes and hole-in-the-wall shops peddling funky homeware and more. This area too is under threat of being gentrified, but for now it's a haven for souvenir-hunting tourists.

Lane 210-248, Tai Kang Road

### Kitschy-Koo

Albeit over-the-top, Mattel's flagship store **Barbie** is a must-see. Its collection of 800 dolls and other Barbie products makes it seem like a doll museum. Also available for girls of all ages – manis and pedis, facials and massages, Vera Wang gowns, salads and pralines.

550 Central Haui Hai Road, tel: +86 400 620 8181

### Shanghai Cuisine

Open in time for the World Expo, the stunning **Yu Shanghai** serves neo-Shanghainese cuisine alongside a 230-

seat theatre for opera, dance, acrobatics and kung fu. This Ming Dynasty-style venue is quintessentially Shanghai, a masterful amalgam of new and old.

69 Yu Garden, Old Town Road, tel: +86 216 193 2988

### Made in Singapore

New Majestic Hotel's Loh Lik Peng opens his first China venture, **The Waterhouse at South Bund**, next to the city's latest cultural hotspot, The Cool Docks. Its 19 rooms boast chic furniture by the likes of designers like

Kana Ishikawa, a former designer at Yohji Yamamoto.

3 Mao Jia Yuan Road, tel: +86 21 6080 2988

### Theatre club

**China Town** is a distinguished three-storey club staging Broadway-type shows on a "Victorian" stage. The 1931 building was once a Buddhist temple. Owned by showbiz veteran Norman Gosney, it now plays out nightly a Hollywood version of Shanghai nightlife.

471 Zha Pu Rd, Hongkou District, tel: +86 21 6307 7607

### BEST

### New Italian

Within the 1933 hot zone is Italian design house Alessi's first restaurant, **Rosso Italiano**. Like many swanky F&B places in the city, the 100-seat eatery boasts cool decor of Chinese and European influences, and a kitchen led by Bologna native Roberto Molinari.

2nd floor of 1933, 1-218, 10 Shajing Road, Hongkou, tel: +86 21 6513 8708

### For shopaholics

The impeccably restored **Langham Yangtze Boutique** is a short distance from the Nanjing Road shopping haven. Book a massage at Chuan Spa and don't miss Chef Kwong's award-winning cuisine at T'ang Court Cantonese Restaurant.

740 Hankou Road (Near Yunnan Road), tel: +86 21 6080 0800

### Hotel and spa

Smartly furnished in contemporary Chinese style, the **PuLi Hotel and Spa** has earned a well-deserved reputation for imaginative modern cuisine using the freshest locally-sourced organic produce.

1 ChangDe Road, JingAn District, tel: +86 21 3203 9999

