

Mr & Mrs Bund

What: Modern "global-French" dining
Why: Chef Paul Pairet is a Picasso of the kitchen – he takes everything apart and rearranges the pieces in ways that seem unusual, and taste unforgettable.
How Much: RMB 1,500 and up for two
Where: Bund 18, Zhongshan Lu at Nanjing Lu.
 Tel: 6326 9898

Guests ring a doorbell to enter Mr & Mrs Bund as if it were any ordinary residence, but inside await fantastical furnishings and Paul Pairet's extraordinary culinary permutations. Don't let the 100+ choices on the menu intimidate. Semi-formally dressed staff in Converse sneakers and elbow-patched shirts will help you make your selections. Each page is a long list of many variations on a few dishes. For example, choose a main from chicken, lamb, pork or beef. Then choose a cut (ribs, cheek, prime cuts like chateaubriand). Then you pick your own cooking and seasoning. If you choose beef, soy medium rare in bearnaise sauce.

Selection takes time, but even if you get it wrong, you can always steal your neighbour's food. All dishes, including mains, are deposited on a side table or lazy Susan instead of in front of you, so everyone can share.

Usually the meal begins with one of Paul Pairet's famous texture-switch dishes: a tin of tuna, that actually contains a tuna foam, accompanied by paper



thin, crisp bread for scooping up the salty goodness. We also recommend commencing drinking right away – because you can sample all night long without committing to a bottle. A selection of 32 wines are available, self-serve if you please, in four sizes.

The mains are "simple", as advertised, but the soups and desserts are more creative and complex than you might expect from a restaurant going for the basic, dinner at a friend's house vibe. For example, the Vanilla Corn Veloute (RMB 75) and the Tomato Consomme arrive at the table unfinished, separated into multiple elements. Staff pour these various bits together from fancy decanters. It's a curious process – science experiments that produce edible art, as visually pleasing as they taste.

We especially recommend the Vanilla Corn. The creamy, warm veloute quickly softens the corn flakes added to it at your table, producing a hearty yet delicate dish you drink from a mug. If you missed Pairet at Jade, you can still try some of his trademark dishes here too. For example, the 'Lemon & Lemon Tart' or the 'Orange & Orange Tart', each candied and filled with sorbet (RMB 100).





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