RESTAURANTS



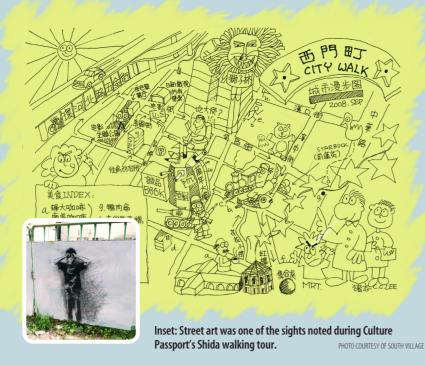
ven the most jaded Taipei resident might discover new things in the might discover new carry or city's nooks and crannies — or with a co xiangs (巷) and nongs (弄) — with a copy of the reinvigorated Culture Passport.

Since 2004 the Taipei Department of Cultural Affairs (台北文化護照) has distributed the Culture Passport every summer in the form of a brochure listing notable stores, galleries and exhibits. This year marks the first time that the city government has worked with South Village, an arts and culture center, which is co-producing the event.

Lulu Han (韓良露), the head of South Village, jumped at the opportunity. "We saw it as a way to promote Taipei culture, as well as ourselves. The city government didn't give us a lot of dictates, so we had a chance to put our own mark on Culture needs to be actively enjoyed. If you are Passport," she says.

South Village's first step was to revamp the event's format. Previously, the Culture Passport had listed sites of interest that participants could direct themselves to.

South Village organized a series of nearly four-dozen activities that started on July 19 and runs through Sept. 21. The Culture Passport itself also evolved from a modest brochure into a multi-page, newsletter-size calendar of events. South Village invited several artists to contribute whimsical graphics, as well as hand-drawn maps tracing the routes for walking tours.



Culture Passport uncovers Taipei's hidden treasures

Many of the activities, including the walking tours, food tastings, Aboriginal music performances and a flea market where famous artists donated the wares sold, are designed to be interactive.

"Culture isn't static, it is alive and engaged in something like a tea ceremony, you will have a deeper experience of the meaning and history behind it," says Han.

Culture Passport's walking tours, which center on a neighborhood, have proved popular, especially among residents who want to have a deeper appreciation for their home. Forty-four people participated in a tour of Muzha Old Street (木柵老街) last Saturday, during which they shopped for locally grown vegetables and herbs at a farmer's market, sampled handmade mian xian (棉線) and fresh roasted chicken, and learned about the area's

flora from nature expert and author Liu Ke-xiang (劉克襄).

Han hopes South Village will produce next year's Culture Passport and already has plenty of ideas percolating in her head (though she wants to keep them a surprise for now). South Village and the Department of Culture also plan to combine photos and notes from this year's activities into a book that will be available in Chinese in October and in Japanese and English by the end of the year.

The book is meant to be a guidebook that will allow Culture Passport to continue highlighting new or overlooked facets of Taipei culture throughout the year, and prove the city is as dynamic as other major metropolises across the globe.

"People say, 'think globally, act locally.' I believe that you can also think locally, and act within your neighborhood," says Han. — CATHERINE SHU Left: An illustration of highlights on Culture Passport's upcoming walking tour of Ximending. Far left: A bookstore on Culture Passport's recent Shida walking tour.

Culture Passports can be picked up at South Village, 10, Ln 80, Shida Rd, Taipei City, (台 北市師大路80巷10號), the Taipei Department of Cultural Affairs, 4F, 1 Shifu Rd, Taipei City, (台北 市市府路一號四樓), at visitor information centers, and at various cultural sites around the city. It can also be found at culturepassport.culture.gov tw. Call (02) 8369-2963 for more information. The Culture Passport is available in Chinese only. South Village head Lulu Han recommends the following activities for people who are new to Taipei or want to learn more about the city. All activities are conducted in Mandarin, and Han suggests non-speakers bring a friend along to translate.

a walking tour around the Pingdengli/Yangming shan area (北邊山區的小村落 – 從平等里看陽明山) Where and when: The tour starts from Pingdeng Elementary School (平等國小), 101 Pingjing St, Taipei City (台北市士林區平菁街101號)

What: Nature writer Liu Ke-xiang (劉克襄) leads

at 9am and runs until 11am Tickets: Free. The tour is limited to 35 people, so call (02) 8369-2963 in advance to reserve a place. For further information, call South Village

Sept. 7 to Sept. 21

What: Green Gold: One Hundred Years of Tea in Taiwan (綠色流金 – 台灣百年茶文物小展), an exhibit about the history of Formosa Oolong Tea Where and when: Yeh Tang (冶堂), 1 F, 20-2, Ln 31, Yongkang St Taipei City (台北市永康街31巷 20之2號1樓), daily from Sept. 7 to Sept. 21 from

Tickets: Admission is free. For more information, call Yeh Tang at (02) 3393-8988

Sept. 19

What: Learn about Ximending's buildings and attractions with architecture professor Lee Ching-chih (李清志) (都市偵探的西門町探險地圖) Where and when: The tour meets in front of the main entrance of Red House Theater, 10 Chengdu Rd, Taipei City (台北市成都路10號), at 3pm and ends at 5pm

Tickets: Free. The tour is limited to 35 people, so call (02) 8369-2963 in advance to reserve a place. For further information, call South Village at (02) 8369-5076

Sept. 21

What: Get an insider's look at the area around Longshan Temple and Snake Alley (艋舺生活圏漫步) with architecture professor Li Chian-lang

Where and when: The tour meets at the main entrance of Longshan Temple (龍山寺), 211, Guangzhou St, Taipei City (台北市廣州街211號), at 3pm and runs until 5pm

Tickets: Free. The tour is limited to 35 people, so call (02) 8369-2963 in advance to reserve a place. For further information, call South Village at (02) 8369-5076



Three events stand out this week from the all-you-can-drink gimmicky sexy bikini competition rubbish defiling dance floors with cheap music and even cheaper alcohol. (Hey, if it's NT\$500 for unlimited booze, you get what you pay for.) The following have Vinyl Word's seal of approval.

First up at Ageha, for the techno rock heads, Freaky Squeaker from Taichung will be playing his aforementioned style on a sound system big enough to take the pressure. If you're interested in seeing how people do things downtown, then tonight at Ageha is the place to be. If you're broke and waiting for payday, then check out Freaky Squeaker's brand new Electricity Guest mix at www. boogie-pop.com to see if you're missing out on anything.

Tonight from 10pm to 5am at Ageha, located at B1, 171 Songde Rd, Taipei City (台北市松德路171號B1). On the Net: www.ageha-taipei.com.

momorrow in Taichung could be ■ interesting as Urban Funk All Stars, headed by Chi Funk, are holding their four year anniversary party at Liquid Lounge called Sin City. With Marcus Aurelius, Chi Funk, Renf and Dao playing a selection of their best funk, breaks, new house and drum 'n' bass.

"Before MP3 you had to find the vinyl, take a chance that you know what you're listening to and spend a bit of cash to get it," Chi Funk told the Vinyl Word about his party ethos. "Now everyone can just download the latest tracks and play them. I like to mix up the genres, which is why we do more funks and breaks with Urban Funk ... I try to play more underground labels, some unreleased stuff I can get from friends in the west."

Vinyl Word says keep an eye out for Dao, "a local bedroom DJ with a massive old-school collection," says Chi Funk, "but who doesn't play many club parties." If you're tough enough to have a tattoo, the ink gets you two free drinks.

Tomorrow from 10pm to 6am at Sin City at Liquid Lounge, at 98 Chungming



Chi Funk: Funkin' for four years with Urban All Stars.

South Rd, Taichung City (台中市忠明南路 98號). Entrance is NT\$300 and includes one drink. On the Net: www.revevolution.net.

p north in the capital city tomorrow Unight sees Pure, a new name party but with familiar faces Junior and Megan, Eben Ezee, vDub and Scottyballer playing tech Chicago house, electro and a live set from Eben Ezee. Based at China White with a cozy intimate setting, those comfy couches and a sound system that doesn't ruin conversation. This is JAM Sessions first party since March so expect some new tunes and usual party treats.

Tomorrow from 11pm to 5am at Pure at China White, 97-101 Dunhua S Rd Sec 2, Taipei City (台北市敦化南路二段97號至101號). Entrence is NT\$350 plus one drink.

nd the gold medal award for busi-Hest deejay in town goes to Dominik Tyliszczak, aka **Hooker** who played the rain sodden (but with great atmosphere) Oasis pool party on Saturday afternoon for several hours, kept things going at a packed Primo with Saucey and SL the same night, and then polished things off with a massive session at the Croc House Sunday morning with all the sleep haters. Vinyl Word salutes you.

—TOM LEEMING



At Siris, "beer is the new wine."

Siris Cuisine & Lounge Address: 157, Anhe Rd Sec 2, Taipei City (台北市安和路二段157號) **Telephone:** (02) 2733-6215

Open: Noon to 2pm and 6pm to 2am; closes at 3am on weekends Average meal: NT\$500 On the Net: www.siris.tw Details: Chinese and English menu; credit cards accepted

From the outside, Siris has a whiskey bar feel that might cause the lessthan-trendy to hesitate before its darkened glass doors and then probably head toward the more familiar watering holes of Saints & Sinners or Carnegie's across the way. But this would be to miss a great opportunity to come to grips with Anhe Road's first beer boutique, which is what Siris clearly aspires to be.

The restaurant's name is derived from the Mesopotamian goddess of beer, and beer is what Rex Huang (黃政閣) and his colleagues, who opened Siris four months ago, hope will differentiate their business from the profusion of trendy bars and lounges that line Anhe Road. Rex (Siris the sort of place where everyone is on first-name terms) says "beer is the new wine." And Siris offers 130 kinds to prove it, with everything from garden variety Corona and Heineken to the only recently imported organic Vollmond Bier from Switzerland. In between, there is virtually every other kind of beer that is currently being imported into Taiwan, with a good range of German, UK and Belgian varieties. This range is unequaled by any other establishment, including high-end supermarkets, and this reviewer was assured that all of the beers were available cold.

But Siris isn't a bar, as Rex is keen to emphasize. It's a fine dining establishment at which the beverage of choice is beer rather than wine. The menu even goes so far as to offer suggestions for beers that will complement particular dishes. For example Siris recommends a stout or a lager with its sauteed mushrooms and shrimps (NT\$320), a spicy mix of good ingredients that beats the usual onion rings or run-of-the-mill mushroom sautee for both innovation and flavor. A Vollmond Bier was recommended, and while this certainly cleared the pallet, it didn't quite have the body to dominate the spicy appetizer. But then, it must be declared, I found Vollmund products insipid long before I ever entered the portals of Siris Cuisine & Lounge, and this could possibly have affected my judgment.

For a main course Siris offers a remarkably elegant roast pork knuckle with sauerkraut (NT\$520), which went very well with the Gulden Draak (Golden Dragon), the heavy — and to some palettes excessively sweet — Belgian ale that was recommended. Despite some initial forebodings I accepted the suggestion and found the combination with the rich meat, crisp skin and sour cabbage remarkable. This unexpected and successful recommendation certainly counted in Siris' favor.

The quality of the food was above average, but I was prejudiced by the lounge-bar atmosphere, which seemed more suitable to chartreuse than larger. But then there is plenty of privacy provided by string curtains between tables, the staff are helpful, wine and whiskey drinkers are also provided for, and Siris has a perfectly decent lunch set priced between NT\$260 and NT\$320, which provides a more than adequate launching pad to a "lost afternoon" in downtown Taipei.

— IAN BARTHOLOMEW



Not your average plate lunch: Aizuya serves standard Japanese fare, but it also caters to individual diners with tasty lunch box-style choices such as the teriyaki

Aizuya (會津屋)

Address: 12, Ln 60, Xinsheng S Rd Sec 3, Taipei City

(台北市新生南路三段60巷12號)

Telephone: (02) 2366-0058 Open: 11am to 2pm and 5pm to 9pm

Average meal: NT\$100 to NT\$400 per person **Details:** Chinese and English menus; credit cards not accepted

A homey dining area, soul-satisfying food and student prices will keep you coming to Aizuna (會津屋), a Japanese restaurant near National Taiwan University. The restaurant serves standard Japanese fare at average prices but it also caters to individual diners.

The lunchbox-style meals, priced between NT\$100 and NT\$150, offer good value and have a homemade touch. With almost every selection the portions are generous, and all of the side dishes actually complement the meal, instead of serving as mere slop to fill you up.

On a recent visit the side dishes included scrambled egg and tomatoes and stewed cauliflower with thinly sliced carrots, mushroom and garlic — both tasty and prepared with care. The dishes change regularly and you don't get to choose, but they rarely disappoint. On several past visits I had a delicious bitter melon stir-fry with mustard and black bean sauce. If you eat in, all meals are served on white China plates, and the restaurant

provides black lacquer chopsticks tucked neatly in a holder ring. As the warm summer days linger, try the Shaohsing wine chicken meal (紹興醉雞餐, NT\$120); the cold, wine-soaked chicken slices are refreshing in the same way sashimi can be. If cold chicken isn't your thing, then the teriyaki chicken leg (照燒雞腿簡餐, NT\$110) makes a hearty lunch. But pass on the smoked salmon (燻鮭魚簡餐, NT\$130). It doesn't go well with the rice and side dishes and is one of the few choices that may leave you hungry.

Always satisfying, the breaded pork and fish cutlets (豬排簡餐, 魚排簡 餐, NT\$100 each) come out crispy and tender and never too oily. Another notable comfort food is Aizuna's tendon (天丼, NT\$150), an assortment of tempura served on rice. It comes with shrimp, fish cutlet and a medley of vegetables: eggplant, string bean, taro, sweet potato and green pepper. Many of the lunch-box style meals are available as fancier sets ranging from NT\$210 to NT\$300, which include savory steamed egg custard (茶碗 蒸) and an additional side dish. The list of budget options extends to stir-fry and soup noodles, as well as curries and fried rice (NT\$100 to NT\$140).

Aizuna's darkish interior looks fancier than it really is, but the space is clean and tastefully lit: lamps with a warm reddish glow hang from the ceiling. In the corners there are several large plants, and large wall-sized windows provide a view of the alleyways, with one side veiled by the bamboo groves. The place gets loud during lunch with chattering student diners, but by around 1:30pm the room clears out and the noise usually gives way to nakasi music playing in the background.

Given the prices Aizuna's Taiwanese-style Japanese dishes are probably best enjoyed with a companion or a group. Sushi rolls cost between NT\$150 and NT\$380, and sashimi sets you back between NT\$240 and NT\$340. The restaurant offers a large selection of tempura, salads and grilled meats worthy of a celebratory dinner. Selections include the grilled

mackerel (鯖魚, NT\$150) and fried tofu (油揚豆腐, NT\$60). The service is a step above the average student joint. The college-aged waiters, who don black T-shirts and jeans, are quick and constantly on the move, yet remain attentive and polite enough. At the end of your meal, a waiter brings you a tiny ceramic plate with fruit slices, usually oranges, "compliments of the boss."

Aizuna is on off Xinsheng South Road across from the soccer field at National Taiwan University. When you enter Lane 60, the restaurant will be on your left — look out for the bamboo grove and the Japanese tiled roof.

— DAVID CHEN

[EVENTS & ENTERTAINMENT]

- ▶ B1. 2. Ln 244. Roosevelt Rd Sec 3. Taipei City (台北市羅斯福路三段244巷2號B1), next to Taipower Building (台電大樓). Call (02) 2368-7310 or visit www.riverside.com.tw for more information
- ▶ Shows start at 9:30pm; Sunday's shows start at 8.31pm and then 10.30pm
- ▶ NT\$400 tonight and tomorrow; NT\$350 on Sunday (includes both shows), admission includes one free drink

Weekends at **VU Live House** feature two sets of shows. The first round of shows tomorrow night sees up-and-coming local bands in an event titled Rock and Roll Banquet (搖滾音樂 饗宴). Later on it's **Soma**, a Taipei cover band that plays popular contemporary rock as well as popular songs from the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, with indie-electronica band Alluvial (阿路米爾). Tomorrow night's first set includes metal band Lucifer (瑙西法), pop-rock band Music Plant (留聲機工廠) and pop cover band **Diamond5** (方塊五樂團). The second set features electronica-rock and video band Gross Fugue.

- ▶ B1,77 Wuchang St, Taipei City (台北市武昌街 二段77號B1). Call (02) 2314-1868 for more information
- ▶ Two sets of shows tonight and tomorrow, from 7pm to 10pm, and then 10pm till late ▶ NT\$400 for first set of bands; NT\$300 for the second set. Admission for each set includes a

Tonight and every Friday at **Tone 56 Live Bar**, a new restaurant on the corner of Fuxing North and Minquan East roads, it's **Rubber Band**, which plays rock, pop, and dance music. Tomorrow it's house band **Loaded**, which plays everything from "rock classics to today's hits." Sundays feature a regular rotation of bands, with the **Blues Vibrations** playing

- blues and surf rock this week. ▶ 1F, 56 Minguan E Rd Sec 3, Taipei City (台北市 民權東路三段56號1樓), near the corner of Fuxing North and Minquan East roads
- Call (02) 2517-3869 for more information ▶ Music shows go from 9:30pm to 12:30pm

- tonight and tomorrow, and 7:30pm to 9:30pm on Sundays
- No entrance fee

Every Wednesday night at the **Cosmopoli**tan Grill there's a blues open mic, held by the Blues Society on Taiwan and hosted by Torch Pratt. All are welcome to bring their instruments and sit in on guitar, bass, or drums. ▶ 1F, 218 Changchun Rd, Taipei City (台北市長 春路218號1樓). Call (02) 2508-0304 or visit www.cosmo.com.tw for more information

- ▶8pm to 11pm every Wednesday
- ▶ Free admission

Exhibitions

The Ancient Art of Writing — Selections from the History of Chinese Calligraphy (筆有干秋業). Long a subject

of interest Chinese culture, the history and development of calligraphy is the theme of this exhibition that features selections from the museum's collection. Masterpieces from the Jin (221 BC to 206 BC) to Qing (1644 to 1911) dynasties are arranged in chronological order to provide a general overview of calligraphic development.

▶ National Palace Museum (國立故宮博物院), 221, Zhishan Rd Sec 2, Taipei City (台北市至善路 二段221號). Open Mondays through Sundays from 9am to 5pm; Saturdays until 8:30pm. Call (02) 2881-2021 for more information

Anomy — Chen Wen-chi's Solo Exhibition (社亂— 陳文祺個展). Chen's video work shows improvised performances evoking the seven deadly sins: lust, gluttony, greed, sloth,

- wrath, envy and pride. ▶ Galerie Grand Siecle (新苑藝術), 17, Alley 51, Ln 12, Bade Rd Sec 3, Taipei City (台北市八德路 三段12巷51弄17號). Open Tuesdays through Sundays from 1pm to 6pm. Call (02) 2578-5630
- for more information ▶ Until Sept. 14

▶ Until Sept. 25





Post-rock group To a God Unknown plays its final show at Roxy Vibe tonight at 10pm.

Upcoming

Tonight at **Roxy Vibe** experimental rock quartet To a God Unknown will play their last show under their current name. The band cultivated its current post-rock sound by avoiding normal song structures; their songs often start quietly and build up into walls of noise. To a God Unknown enjoys a loyal following and has often filled venues like The Wall (這牆) to capacity with appreciative crowds.

Blood Orange and metal rockers Doublewide. ▶ To a God Unknown, Doublewide and Blood Orange at Roxy Vibe, B1, 155, Jinshan S Rd Sec 2, Taipei City (台北市金山

Also playing tonight are punk band

- 南路1段155號B1) ▶ Tonight at 10pm
- ▶ NT\$300 cover includes free drink

Collaboration — Anticipating the Art of Future (跨領域— 未來藝術先驅). As the

artist in residence from May 11 to July 13, Mary Sherman from the US worked with students and faculty at the Taipei National University of the Arts to create this exhibition of collaborative art. Each work is born out of discussions, workshops and meetings among five teams of artists from diverse backgrounds and disciplines with the aim of lifting creativity beyond the physically isolated, geographically specific, and historically limited space that is conven-

tional for studio art. ▶ Taipei National University of the Arts — Kuandu Museum of Fine Arts (台北藝術大學關 渡美術館), 1 Xueyuan Rd Beitou, Taipei City (台 北市北投區學園路1號). Open Tuesdays through Sundays from 10am to 5pm.

Call (02) 2893-8871 for more information ▶ Until tomorrow

Something to Wear ... (穿什麼). The New York-based Chinese-American artist Rosa Ruey takes clothing as the theme for her debut exhibition in Taiwan. Through a playful show of costumes and accessories, the artist creates a form that she calls "fantastic functionalism." ▶ Juming Museum (朱銘美術館), 2 Sishihu Rd, Jinshan Township, Taipei County (台北縣金山鄉 西勢湖2號). Open Tuesdays through Sundays from 10am to 5pm. Call (02) 2498-9940 for more information ▶ Until Sept. 28

City, Image and Perspective: Between Realign and Imagination (城市·影像·透 視— 在現實與想像之間). This photo exhibition features works by five local photographers who have captured and recorded the changes undergone by Kaohsiung City, its culture and

people over the years. ▶ Kaohsiung Museum of Fine Arts (高雄市立美 術館), 20 Meishukuan Rd, Kushan Dist, Kaohsiung City (高雄市鼓山區美術館路20號). Open Tuesdays through Sundays from 9am to 5pm. Call (07) 555-0331 for more information Until Oct. 5