

Revelers can treat themselves next Saturday to a bevy of *nian cai* (年菜), or traditional Lunar New Year dishes, from Tainan — with an extra serving of history and culture on the side.

Lulu Han (韓良露), head of South Village (南村) and a devoted foodie, is serving as chef and host for the second round of annual Lunar New Year dinner parties at the arts and culture center near Shida Park (師大公園). Each dinner, which includes a cooking demonstration, is limited to 35 guests and costs NT\$1,200 per person. Han will be preparing and introducing Shanghaiese dishes tomorrow (call South Village to see if there are still places available) and Tainan dishes on Jan. 17.

Many people now get their *nian cai* in take-out packages from restaurants or in the frozen-food aisles of supermarkets, which Han says compelled her to start the Lunar New Year dinners.

"If we don't understand food, then we don't understand culture," says Han. "You might not always have time to cook, but if you can't at least stop once a year and appreciate good food, then it really is a pity."

Han decided to showcase Shanghaiese and Tainan cuisine in order to honor her father, whose family lived near Shanghai, and her late grandmother, who cooked for her granddaughter when Han visited relatives in Tainan.

"Food doesn't just nourish the body. It is also a spiritual experience. It is a transmitter of culture and of each family's own memories, too," says Han.

Tainan cuisine traces its roots back to the Ming Dynasty and China's Fujian Province, says Han. One of the area's most important Lunar New Year dishes is *lu*

South Village's night of Tainan-style Lunar New Year food will include an impressive spread of sausages.

PHOTO COURTESY OF SOUTH VILLAGE



Made with a cornucopia of toppings, *lu* noodles are traditionally served during the Lunar New Year in Tainan.

PHOTO COURTESY OF SOUTH VILLAGE

Chow down for the Lunar New Year



The first couple of slim party weekends of the year are upon us. With not much happening, and after chronicling the recent departure of several foreign DJs, now is an auspicious time to introduce one back into the electronica fold: **006** aka Andrew Gilberts, who left Taiwan three years ago and returned last month.

Having originally washed up here seven years ago Gilberts, now 33, witnessed the Taiwan club scene wax and wane. "It ain't what it used to be ... I used to love Texound, Purple, AXD and even 2nd Floor and Eden," says Gilberts. "All those places are gone now ... but I think people are hungry for that scene again. I hear rumors of Deep Inside starting again, which would be awesome."

Gilberts, who took his DJ moniker from

the James Bond baddie of 1995's *GoldenEye*, is moving into new areas. "I came back for lots of reasons but the main one is to start a restaurant or club. I also came back because it gives me a chance to produce here and have other people to produce with. I plan on doing lots with **Saucey, Hooker, Jimmy Chen, Shawn Kidd** and **SL**."

Gilberts' ear has been around the block. "I used to play a lot more deep house and funky house, mainly 'cause of the time slots [I had] but I have always floated towards the dark side," he says. "I love dark, 4am music ... and crossing genres. I guess my style now would be tribal, tech house and progressive."

The Edmonton, Alberta, native puts the basic tenet of deejaying succinctly: "Nothing can replace a good ear. Whatever new dad comes out, a DJ's music programming will always separate him from the rest. You have to be able to make people shake their ass."

His next gig, lined up for next month, marks the return of an old night from Eden's heydays of 2006. "I will be starting Interhouse again with DJ Saucey and



Smoke 'em if you got 'em.

PHOTO COURTESY OF OLIVIA WYCECH

Hooker at ... DV8 so stay tuned for that," says Gilberts. "We are working on getting some of the Texound and AXD deejays down for a deep, dark and dirty tribal house night." Interhouse was kept alive by Gilberts and Taiwanese legend **Victor Chen** when both lived in Vancouver.

Because of the lengthy wait for his next set, Gilberts offers some hot music tips, should you fancy a bit of fresh. "Producers I really like right now are Rick Pier O'Neil who has an awesome tribal sound with tight-ass drums ... As well as Carlos Mancana, Dousk and

EVENT NOTES:

WHAT: South Village introduces Lunar New Year dishes from Shanghaiese and Tainan
WHEN: Tomorrow (Shanghai) and Jan. 17 (Tainan), 7pm to 9:30pm. As each night is limited to 35 diners, call ahead to find out if there are still places available for tomorrow's event and to book seats for the Tainan cuisine dinner on Dec. 17

WHERE: South Village, 10, Ln 80, Shida Rd, Taipei City (台北市師大路80巷10號). Call (02) 8369-2963 for reservations. Go to www.southvillage.com.tw for more information

DETAILS: NT\$1,200 per diner. Each dinner includes at least 10 courses, a cooking demonstration and premium oolong tea. Bring your own alcoholic drinks

ON THE NET: www.southvillage.com.tw

noodles (魯麵), which are also served as a gesture of respect to older family members on special occasions. The noodles were originally prepared as temple offerings during religious festivals, when cooks would add vegetables to the dish and serve it to worshippers. *Lu* noodles are known for their cornucopia of toppings: Han uses shrimp, two different types of mushrooms, spinach, flounder, daikon, Chinese red radish, bok choy, chicken and red onions.

Other Lunar New Year treats from Tainan include the area's own version of pea soup (豌豆仁鹹湯), which evolved from a dish Dutch colonialists brought over in the 17th century, and traditional *han bing* (漢堡) from a Tainan bakery. The pastry is filled with minced meat, powdered peanuts and sugar, resulting in a complex sweet-savory flavor.

Han isn't limiting her introduction of food culture to Lunar New Year dishes. Meat lovers will go pop-eyed at the Tainan dinner's sausage buffet. The spread includes area favorites like traditional fatty pork sausages, seasoned red pork sausages, pig liver sausages, daikon sausages, leek sausages, smoked sausages, chicken sausages, sticky rice and pork sausages — and that is just a partial listing.

"In Tainan, if someone asks you if you want to grab coffee or a snack, it means that they just want to chat for a bit," says Han. "But if they ask if you want to go out for sausage, it means that they really want to sit and spend time with you."

— CATHERINE SHU

Cytric, to name a couple more."

If partying just for the sake of it seems a little dull or facile, Gilberts thinks he has a solution: promoting the Zeitgeist movement, a collective of activists that advocate social change along similar lines to the Venus Project.

Finally, this is a very special weekend, so make the most of it. As of Sunday, when a smoking ban comes into force, all bars and clubs in the country will be forced to smell of stale beer and sweat — if they obey the law that is.

You have been warned, especially habitues of Vibe. Smoke it up at Bliss tonight with **Richie Partridge**, formerly of Massive Attack, who spins his last set before heading back to England, with **Greggo** dropping dub afterwards.

Sharp Edges and Smooth Curves at Bliss. Tonight from 10pm until 3:30am. Bliss is at 148, Xinyi Rd Sec 4, Taipei City (台北市信義路四段148號). NT\$200 to get upstairs. On the Net: www.myspace.com/006psyencer; thezeitgeistmovement.com.

— TOM LEEMING

EVENTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Riverside Cafe also runs **Riverside Live House** (西門紅樓展演館), a larger venue with a spacious interior and state-of-the-art equipment located in Ximending's historic Red House Theater (西門紅樓). Appearing tomorrow are garage rockers **White Eyes** (白目) and electronic rockers **Space Cake** (太空蛋糕) and **The Shine and Shine and Shine and Shine** (閃閃閃閃).
▶ 177 Xining S Rd, Taipei City (台北市西寧南路177號). Call (02) 2370-8805 or visit www.riverside.com.tw for more information
▶ 8:30pm tomorrow
▶ Entrance NT\$450, includes one drink

Jazz Your Mind appears tonight at **Sappho de Base**. **Blues Vibrations** play blues and surf rock music tomorrow night. The **Sappho House Band** hosts the venue's weekly open jam on Tuesday. On Wednesday **The Phase-In Jazz Quartet** takes to the stage, featuring original compositions by saxophonist Michael Haack. **Kate's Trio** performs on Thursday.
▶ B1, 1, Ln 102, Anhe Rd Sec 1, Taipei City (台北市安和路一段102巷1號B1). Call (02) 2700-5411 (after 9pm) or visit www.sappho102.biz for more information
▶ Performances begin at 10:30pm on weekends, 10pm on weekdays
▶ No admission fee

Tonight at **Tone 56 Live Bar Rubber Band** plays rock, pop and dance music. **Adoga**, a pop and rock cover band, plays tomorrow. On Sunday the group **Stoked Pokey** hosts an open acoustic jam.
▶ 1F, 56, Minquan 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 (復興北) and Minquan East (民權東) roads. Call (02) 2517-3869 for more information
▶ Music shows go from 9:30pm to 12:30am on Fridays and Saturdays, and 7:30pm to 9:30pm on Sundays
▶ No admission fee

The **Bearbabes** (熊寶貝樂團) perform at **Underworld** (地下社會) tonight. The band's sparse, atmospheric sound showcases the ethereal voice of female singer and bassist Cookie (餅乾). **Shishukong** (屍術控) plays tomorrow night, along with one-man electro-band **Sonic Deadhorse** and experimental noise act **Null Bomb**. As of press time, no shows are scheduled for Wednesday.
▶ Music shows go from 9:30pm to 11:30pm on Fridays and Saturdays and 9pm to 11pm on Wednesdays
▶ Entrance is NT\$300 tonight and tomorrow and includes one drink, shows on Wednesdays are NT\$100

Tomorrow at **Bliss The Nixon Tapes**, a DJ from South Africa, spins tech house, electro house and filthy electro.
▶ 148, Xinyi Rd Sec 4, Taipei City (台北市信義路四段148號), one block east of Dunhua South Road (敦化南路). Call Bliss at (02) 2702-1855 or log on at www.bliss-taipei.com. For more information on live performances at Bliss, visit www.myspace.com/blisslivehouse
▶ Tomorrow at 10pm. Bar/kitchen open from 7pm daily. Ladies night Fridays; women get one free cocktail of their choice
▶ No entrance fee

Both established and aspiring Taiwanese pop musicians perform regularly at **EZ5 Live House**. This homey pub and restaurant on Anhe Road with a diverse clientele is one of the few places where people actually turn off their cell phones and listen attentively to the performers. EZ5 hosts three different singers every night. Recommended performers include beloved female crooner **Tiger Huang** (黃小琥), who performs two sets every Monday, and **Julia Peng** (彭佳慧), who appears on Tuesdays. Other highlights this week include **Liu Wei-zen** (劉偉仁) on Tuesdays and Wednesdays and

Highlight

Tomorrow at Taipei Artist Village (台北藝術村) video and sound artist **Alice Hui-sheng Chang** (張惠笙) participates in Telematic Skip, an improvised experimental music show featuring performers and musicians in Taipei, Chicago and Boston. The participants will perform simultaneously in an improvised concert using live audio and video feeds. Chang refers to the event as a "Skype improv concert." Chang will give a vocal performance with cellist Lin Hui-chun (林惠君) and dancer Elita Lin (林姿珍). Using a Web cam and an Internet video and audio connection, they will interact with musicians at the music venue Brown Rice in Chicago and art space Mobius in Boston. Musicians include Brent Gutzeit, Dan Godston, Steve Maxwell Jr and Patrick Dinnen in Chicago, and Jane Wang, Tom Plsek, Lewis Gesner, Bob Raymond and Grant Smith in Boston.



Sound and video artist Alice Hui-Sheng Chang will perform tomorrow as part of Telematic Skip, an improvised experimental music performance with musicians in the US via the Internet.

PHOTO COURTESY OF ALICE HUI-SHENG CHANG'S A NOISY PROJECT

The show runs for approximately one hour and will be streamed online at www.ustream.tv/channel/brown-rice-music.
▶ Tomorrow at noon at the 3rd Floor Piano Room (3F鋼琴室), Taipei Artist Village (台北藝術村), 7 Beiping E Rd, Taipei City (台北市北平東路7號). Tel: (02) 3393-7377
▶ Entrance is free
▶ On the Net: www.huishengchang.com

Hsing Lung (辛隆) on Saturdays.
▶ 211, Anhe Rd Sec 2, Taipei City (台北市安和路二段211號). Call (02) 2738-3995 or go to www.ez5.com.tw for more information
▶ Music shows run from 9:45pm to 12:30am
▶ Cover ranges from NT\$600 to NT\$850, depending on the performer, and includes two drinks

Every Wednesday night at the **Cosmopolitan Grill** there's a blues open mic, held by the Blues Society on Taiwan. 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
▶ 8pm to 11pm every Wednesday
▶ No admission fee

Exhibitions

With **CowParade Taipei 2009** (2009台北奔牛節), Taipei becomes the 65th city to host CowParade, one of the world's most successful public art events. Huanshan Cultural Park has been transformed into a "Moootel," where artists from different disciplines gather to create oxen statues, which will be displayed until Feb. 1. From Feb. 3 through March 31, some 130 of the statues will be placed throughout the capital. For more information, visit cowparade-taipei.com.
▶ Huashan Cultural Park (華山創意園), 1, Bade Rd Sec 1, Taipei City (台北市八德路一段1號). Open Mondays to Fridays from 10am to 6pm, Saturdays and Sundays from 10am to 9pm.

Tel: (02) 2358-1166
▶ Until March 31

The Circus of Den-Den-Giao-Jean: Exhibition by Tsui Yung-yen (崔永謙—燈籠腳尖兒馬戲團). Award-winning designer and illustration artist Tsui extended her toy designs for the National Palace Museum by creating a new series of paintings that feature characters from ancient Chinese paintings transformed to become circus performers.
▶ Free Hugs Street Gallery, 200, Roosevelt St Sec 4, Taipei City (台北市羅斯福路四段200號). Open Tuesdays to Sundays from 4pm to 12am. Tel: (02) 2930-2934
▶ Until Feb. 8

1/2Q's Theme Park (1/2Q遊樂園). Since its inception in 2006, 1/2Q Theatre has experimented with integrating diverse elements such as installation art, modern dance and theater, *kun opera* (昆劇) and multimedia visual art. For this exhibition, the troupe is revisiting visual elements from its previous productions.
▶ Taipei Artist Village (台北國際藝術村), 7 Beiping E Rd, Taipei City (台北市北平東路7號). Open Mondays to Sundays from 10am to 7:30pm. Tel: (02) 3393-7377
▶ Until Jan. 18

Hope and Dreams (豐衣足食—耶誕節特展). The third exhibition held at the Zhongshan Metro Book Mall by the Museum of Contemporary Art Taipei aims to close the gap between the public and the art world. Hope and Dreams features cross-discipline and mixed-media installations that include a white Christmas tree composed of dresses and gowns.
▶ Zhongshan Metro Book Mall, Taipei City (台北捷運中山山下書街). Open daily 11am to 9pm. Tel: (02) 2552-3720.
▶ Until Jan. 31

RESTAURANTS



Throw the guide out the window to really enjoy Full Green.

PHOTO: ZOE LI

Full Green (食草植物鍋)

Address: 10, Alley 11, Ln 216 Zhongxiao E Rd Sec 4, Taipei City (台北市忠孝東路四段216巷11弄10號)
Telephone: (02) 2721-6856 **Open:** Daily from 11am to 9:30pm
Average meal: NT\$400 **On the Net:** www.fullgreen.com.tw

An intense smell evoking a dark, mystical Chinese apothecary hits patrons immediately upon entering Full Green, an organic hot pot restaurant that serves medicinal herbs as well as meat and seafood.

But inside, the dining room is well-lit and filled with blonde wood furnishings and the pleasant, mild din of chatter from diners. Full Green serves organic medicinal plants grown in the Yuan Sen Applied Botanical Garden in Taitung (台東原生應用植物園). The restaurant promotes the Slow Food culture and an ecologically sound lifestyle through its signature hot pot of herbs, each possessing specific medicinal properties.

On my first visit I ordered the surf and turf set meal hot pot (海陸鍋, NT\$550), which includes a choice of meat — I chose beef — and a seafood platter.

The large bowl of raw medicinal herbs was served first. It included centella asiatica (蒲公英) a mildly anti-inflammatory, antibacterial and anti-viral leaf that herbalists believe promotes youthfulness, angelica keiskei (明日葉) a plant that contains a powerful antioxidant, and cinnamonum osmophloeum (土肉桂), a medicinal herb native to Taiwan. The leaves were each a different shade of emerald and I felt healthier just looking at them.

The placemat advises diners to first cook the medicinal herbs and then drink the soup to absorb as much of the nutrients as possible before moving on to cooking the meat and seafood.

There are photos of each herb and a detailed description of their tastes and nutritional values. However, the pictures are thumb-sized and it is difficult to match an herb with its corresponding description.

A fern-like leaf that vaguely resembled the blurry photo of Japanese prickly-ash (紅刺楸) tasted like a quality shitake mushroom, but was slippery and slightly chewy.

The herbs on their own do not make for the most exciting gastronomic experience. So on my next visit I decided to ignore the restaurant's instructions. I first cooked all the other ingredients to flavor the soup, and popped in the herbs last.

The squash and mushrooms that come with the set meal went into the pot first, as they take longer to cook. The frozen beef slices went next, cooked in seconds and paired well with the salty-sweet toon dipping sauce.

The it was the seafood platter, which includes a small basket of baby oysters, two prawns, and a handful of scallops and fish slices, all fresh and plump.

Finally the herbs. The taste of the different herbs — sometimes bitter, sometimes tart, sometimes woody — foiled the soup, which had absorbed the flavors of meat, seafood and vegetables. With a dash of dipping sauce and a drop of chili oil, the medicinal herbs made a veritable feast.

— ZOE LI



In to India's silky-smooth chicken Madras is a mild affair.

PHOTO: RON BROWNLOW, TAIPEI TIMES

In to India (印度瑪瑪)

Address: 65, Yunhe St, Taipei City (台北市雲和街65號)
Telephone: (02) 2367-0239
Open: Daily from 11:30am to 2:30pm and 5:30pm to 11:30pm
Average meal: NT\$450
Details: English and Chinese menu; credit cards not accepted

Out of India fans now have a second location for relief when the popular restaurant on Pucheng Street (浦城街) is crowded with diners on weekends: In to India recently opened between Taishun Street (泰順街) and Longquan Street (龍泉街).

In to India's comfortable decor is reminiscent of its older sibling, with walls painted in warm hues and covered in strands of gilt ornaments. The ambience is more intimate, however, with dimmer lighting and tables placed against the wall instead of lined up side-by-side, making this branch a better place to bring a date or have a private conversation with friends.

Service at the restaurant is friendly and prompt, but somewhat scattered. We ordered a serving of samosas (蔬菜咖哩餅, NT\$200), or deep-fried pastries stuffed with potato, vegetables and minced meat from the appetizer menu, but they did not arrive until the end of the meal. In the meantime, our chicken Madras (椰汁咖哩雞, NT\$350), a south Indian-style chicken curry made with coconut milk, basmati rice (印度香米, NT\$30) and garlic naan (蒜味烤餅, NT\$50), which is leavened bread baked in a tandoori oven and covered with garlic butter (a plain version is also available for NT\$40), arrived quickly.

The Madras' coconut milk curry was made with a copious serving of the main ingredient, and as a result was luscious and slightly sweet. The basmati rice was fragrant, with a hint of saffron, but softer and stickier than expected. The naan was chewy and the garlic butter satisfyingly pungent — but it had been applied too liberally. Garlic lovers might rejoice, but we had to eat the bread quickly before the butter rendered it too soft to dip in the chicken madras.

The samosas were worth waiting for, but by the time they arrived at the table we were stuffed. Prices at In to India and Out of India may be relatively high for restaurants in this college neighborhood, but the food will definitely fill you up.

Another dish worth trying is the chicken tandoori (嫩乳烤雞, NT\$280 for half a chicken, NT\$550 for a whole bird), or pieces of chicken marinated in a yogurt sauce and then grilled in a tandoori oven. The version served at Out of India and In to India is delightfully succulent, with the yogurt marinade lending just the right touch of tanginess to each juicy piece of meat. The chicken tandoori is also one of the healthiest options on the menu because it is not served in curry or sauce, but is flavorful enough that you won't feel deprived. Worthwhile vegetarian options include alu mutter (青豆馬鈴薯, NT\$180), peas and potatoes cooked with spices; mutton paneer (青豆乾酪, NT\$240), peas and chunks of soft white cheese; and chana masala (香豌豆子豆, NT\$180), or chickpeas cooked in spices.

— CATHERINE SHU