

RESTAURANTS

Lido Pizza (里朵)

Address: 30, Ln 16, Taishun St, Taipei City (台北市泰順街16巷30號)
Telephone: (02) 2363-4640 **Average meal:** NT\$300
Open: Daily from 11:30am to 3pm and 5pm to 9pm
Details: Chinese and English menu; credit cards not accepted

Lido Pizza (里朵), which opened last month near the Shida night market, sells hand-tossed pizza baked in a large, brick oven that takes pride of place in the restaurant's open kitchen. The newly refurbished space's ambience is more upscale than other pizza restaurants nearby, but is nonetheless still laid-back enough for this college neighborhood. The interior's sleek black chairs and tables are tempered by warm earth tones, brick walls and soft lighting. The wait staff is attentive and food is delivered briskly, even during a recent lunch hour when the restaurant was filled with customers.

We ordered a prosciutto e funghi pizza (NT\$260) and an asparagus and white egg pizza lunch set (NT\$180). For an extra NT\$90, all pizzas can be served as a set meal, which come with soup, salad and choice of coffee or iced tea. In my opinion, the soup by itself is enough to justify the added expenditure. This week it was a delicious pumpkin soup that was more savory than expected, served hot and topped with just a few drops of sweet cream. The salad is a small, neat mound of butter lettuce and cherry tomatoes garnished with a few sprigs of watercress, brought to life by a very tangy vinaigrette.

My pizza had slices of hard-boiled eggs and stalks of asparagus artfully arranged on a layer of mozzarella cheese. A light but potent dusting of Parmesan cheese and salt saved the pie from blandness. The crust was slightly more buttery and chewy than that of my companion's order, the prosciutto e funghi, which was topped with thin slices of cured ham, an ample helping of mushrooms, mozzarella and tomato sauce. The crust on this pizza was thin and satisfyingly crispy.

Other dishes on the menu include the margherita, which is topped with tomato sauce, mozzarella and oregano (NT\$160) and the Hawaii (NT\$240) laden with ham, pineapple and cream cheese.

Vegetarian offerings include the felicitously named vegetariana (sweet pepper, eggplant and zucchini, NT\$220), porcini (a mix of mushrooms, NT\$360) and formaggi (blue, ricotta, Parmesan and mozzarella cheese, NT\$380). Sweet tooths can be indulged with the la frutta pizza (NT\$200), which is topped with a variety of in-season fruits.

One other notable dish on the menu is the Caprese pizza (NT\$280), which is similar to the margherita but garnished with basil instead of oregano and large soft slices of buffalo mozzarella instead of the standard cheese. The buffalo mozzarella is made from water buffalo milk, which is higher in fat and as a result much creamier tasting than run-of-the-mill cow milk. Stone-oven baked pizza connoisseurs who like their crusts thin and crispy may however be disappointed, as the Caprese's crust was of a similar texture to that of the asparagus and white egg pizza.

Lido also offers several pasta dishes and will be expanding its menu of lunch specials starting today. — CATHERINE SHU



Come for the pizza. Stay for the soup.

PHOTO: CATHERINE SHU, TAIPEI TIMES

PERFORMANCE NOTES:

WHAT: Kaohsiung City Ballet, Dance Shoe 2009
WHEN: Tomorrow at 7:30pm and Sunday at 2:30pm in Taipei; Feb. 21 at 2:30pm and 7:30pm in Tainan; March 7 at 2:30pm and 7:30pm in Fengshen, Kaohsiung County
WHERE: Experimental Theater (國家戲劇院實驗劇場), 21-1 Zhongshan S Rd, Taipei City (台北市中山南路21-1號); Eslite Bookstore (台南誠品書店), B2, 181, Changrong Rd Sec 1, Tainan City (台南市長榮路一段181號 B2); Wei Wu Ying Center for the Arts (高雄縣衛武營藝術文化中心), 449-1, Nanjing Rd, Fengshan City, Kaohsiung County (高雄縣鳳山市南京路449-1號)
TICKETS: NT\$400 for the Taipei shows; NT\$300 for Tainan and Fengshen; available through NTCH ticketing or online at www.artsticket.com.tw. The evening show in Tainan is sold out

Kaohsiung City Ballet is staging its sixth Dance Shoe series in Taipei, Tainan and Kaohsiung County.

PHOTO COURTESY OF KAOHSIUNG CITY BALLET

Set to the music of John Cage and Johann Sebastian Bach, the piece explores the themes of balance, stability and trust, things Yeh said are key to both a ballerina on point and a tightrope walker. When asked what inspired her, Yeh laughed and said: "First, Miss Chang said told me we had to wear point shoes."

"I wanted to do something different, not dance on point. I tried several things ... but in the end I told myself we could dance in a line, just change the steps," she said. "It's about trying to find your balance."

Dance Shoe 2009 will also be performed twice in Tainan on Feb. 21 and twice in Fengshan, Kaohsiung County, on March 7. — DIANE BAKER



A Valentine's treat for balletomanes

Dance lovers looking for a Valentine's Day treat need look no further than the Experimental Theater this weekend, where the Kaohsiung City Ballet (KCB, 高雄城市芭蕾舞團) will be premiering Dance Shoe 2009 (2009點子鞋).

KCB founder Chang Hsiu-ru (張秀如) began the Dance Shoe series six years ago to provide a platform for ballet choreographers, and it has been a boon to the choreographers, KCB dancers and audiences alike. For the choreographers, most of whom are freelancers, it is a key opportunity to have their work seen, while the dancers learn to work in a variety of styles and with a variety of personalities.

There are six choreographers in this year's lineup. Janet Chang (張慈婷), Kao Hsin-yu (高辛毓) and Chang Ya-ting (張雅婷) all took part in Dance Shoe 2008, while Wang Kuo-chuen (王國權) had a piece in the 2007 show. Chien Liang-che (簡良哲) is truly a new face, and the sixth, former Thomas/Ortiz Dance Company dancer Yeh Ming-hwa (葉名華), is new to Dance Shoe, although her collaboration with Chen Wu-kang (陳武康) — *Dimmer* — was in last August's New Productions of Emerging Taiwanese Choreographers series at the Experimental Theater.

Chang was Yeh's first ballet teacher and Yeh danced with the KCB for several years. Yeh said her former teacher called her several months ago and asked her to create a piece for this year's show.

"I just started to choreograph recently so I think she wanted to give me a chance," Yeh said in a telephone interview on Tuesday.

"My piece is called *Tightrope Walker* (走索人). It's a duet for myself and a friend. She's the same age and we used to dance together at KCB. She was also in *Dimmer*," Yeh said.

With Valentine's Day sneaking up on us all like a lecherous drunken expat at Carnegies' Ladies Night, the following classy parties offer the chance for couples to cut loose and get loved up and desperate singletons to find someone special to get down with.

Kaohsiung has found the love with Mark Stewart's Frisky promotions hosting Marcus Aurelius, Nina and Lexicon performing at Valentine's Break Up IV.

The Valentine's Break Up parties have been going strong for the past three years now and are "a great way to let loose after a few tough weeks of work, have a great night with that special someone ... and win lots of prizes including a NT\$10,000 designer bracelet," said Stewart.

Valentine's Break Up IV at The Roof Park, 15F, 165 Linsen 1st Rd, Kaohsiung City (高雄市民權一路165號15F). Tomorrow from 10pm until 5am. NT\$400 plus two drinks. Arrive before midnight to receive three raffle tickets.

Miss Represent plays liquid funk drum 'n' bass at VU Live House tonight, promoted by Konkrete Jungle who are working hard to develop the drum 'n' bass scene in Taiwan.

Miss Represent has been working the crowds for seven years in Europe and for drum 'n' bass heads out there, this is a must-see event before LTJ Bukem hits Luxy in two weeks. Miss Represent from England is, "overjoyed to be playing for the first time in Taiwan."

Liquid funk drum 'n' bass is often referred to as "intelligent," which some feel disparages the rest of the genre. "Liquid is not aggressive," said Miss Represent. "Liquid funk d 'n' b is more chilled and deeper. It attracts a different crowd than the jump-up crew who are into the harder stuff. It is intelligent in the way it works the crowd."

Like tonight, Miss Represent often plays without an MC because "they can make it or break it." She prefers to let her music do the talking. "I am looking forward to digging out some new stuff that people may not have heard."

Also playing with Miss Represent are Too Bad It's Not Tronic, comprised of Matt Schim and Eben Pretorius, and Konkrete Jungle boy NoNSeNsi from the US.

For the boys, your NT\$600 entrance fee gets you a drink while the lucky ladies only have to pay NT\$400 for the same privilege. Sexist? Yes. Fair? Probably.

Miss Represent at VU Live House (地下絲絨), B1, 77, Wuchang St Sec 2, Taipei City (台北市武昌街二段77號B1). Tonight from 11pm until 4am.

On the Net: www.missrepresent.com
 With plumbing problems resolved but a few issues remaining with the neighbors, Copa reopens tonight with The Love Below. A Valentine's Day warm-up for those looking for decent cocktails and an eclectic track list of songs to do with love, solicited over the past few months from the Facebook group Bet I Can Find People Who Love Love (the brainchild of man-about-town, Tommy Milloy). With Cap (yours truly) and Sunrise Soup.

The Love Below at Copa. Tonight from 10pm until late. Free entry. Copa Bar, 2, Ln 137, Yanji St, Taipei City (台北市大安區延吉街137巷2號).

Tomorrow in Taipei there's Return to Paradise, a new club night launched by the resurgent ESPDJs, who are recreating the Eden Deep Inside house party vibe, which ended on New Year's Eve two years ago. Playing will be Saucy, Matt Ward and SL, the latter of whom is "synonymous with deep house," said Saucy.

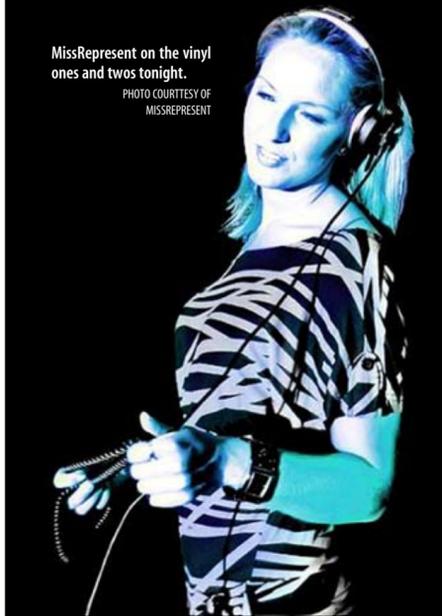
The party will be going off at China White, "because of its intimate size," said Saucy. "We have rented a beefed up sound system to provide us with the extra oomph required for a nice rolling deep house set."

Return to Paradise at China White, 2F, 97-101, Dunhua S Rd Sec 2, Taipei City, (台北市敦化南路二段97-101號2樓). Tomorrow from 11pm until 5am. NT\$350, includes one drink. — TOM LEEMING



MissRepresent on the vinyl ones and twos tonight.

PHOTO COURTESY OF MISSREPRESENT



[EVENTS & ENTERTAINMENT]

Ray Band (雷樂隊), a trio of veteran session musicians, plays power rock originals and covers tonight at Riverside Cafe (河岸留聲). The whispery voice of indie-pop chanteuse Waa Wei (魏如薈) sets a Valentine's Day mood tomorrow night.

► 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 9pm tonight and tomorrow

► Entrance is NT\$400 tonight and NT\$500 tomorrow and includes a drink

Jazz Your Mind performs tonight at Sappho de Base. Chicago-style blues group BoPoMoFo (夕夕口口) appears tomorrow. [See Highlight.] On Tuesday the venue hosts an open jam, led by the Sappho House Band. The Mr Ed Trio performs on Wednesday.

► 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
 ► Performances begin at 10:30pm on weekends, 10pm on weekdays
 ► No admission fee

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 for more information
 ► 8pm to 11pm every Wednesday
 ► No admission fee

EZ5 Live House hosts Mando-pop singers backed by a live band every night. Highlights this week include pop singer Julia Peng (彭佳慧), who appears on Tuesdays, and Hsing Lung (辛隆), who appears on Saturdays.

► 211, Anhe Rd Sec 2, Taipei City (台北市安和路二段211號). Call (02) 2738-3995 or visit www.ez5.com.tw
 ► Music shows run from 9:45pm to 12:30am
 ► Entrance (including two drinks) ranges from NT\$600 to NT\$850, depending on the performer. Call venue for exact fees

Taking to the stage tonight at Underworld (地下社會) are

electronic rock outfit Unfamiliar Friends Party (不熟的朋友) and Shishukong (屍術控). Tomorrow evening it's hip-hop rockers Living Force (存活勢力). Wednesday is metal night with Brain Corrosion and Total Disruption. On Thursday the venue hosts a special show featuring Taimaica Soundsystem (台費加環繞音效), high-energy rockers 88 Balaz (八八顆芭樂籽) and indie group Wangwen (惘聞) of China.

► B1, 45 Shida Rd, Taipei City (台北市師大路45號B1). Call (02) 2369-0103 or visit www.upsaid.com/underworld
 ► Shows run from 9:30pm to 11:30pm tonight and tomorrow and 9pm to 11pm on Wednesday and Thursday

► Entrance is NT\$300 tonight and tomorrow and includes one drink. Wednesday's show is NT\$100, Thursday's show is NT\$400 for admission and one drink

Tonight at Tone 56 Live Bar it's Rubber Band, which plays rock, pop and dance music. Tomorrow Blues Vibrations perform their mix of surf rock, blues and jam-band music. On Sunday it's 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). Tel: (02) 2517-3869

► Music shows go from 9:30pm to 12:30am tomorrow, Sunday's open jam runs from 6pm to 10pm
 ► No admission fee

Exhibitions

New Animamix (新動漫) features works by such renowned figures in Asian art as Yoshitaka Amano, from Japan; Kim Don Yoo, Kwon Kisoo, Eddie Kang and Lee Lee Nam from South Korea; China's Tang Zhigan (唐志剛); and Taiwan's Liao Yu-an (廖瑋安) and Hung Yi (洪易). Also included in the exhibit are works by super-realist, post-pop artist duo Thukral & Tagra, from India. Animamix is an art movement that draws from the aesthetics of anime and comics.

► Metaphysical Art Gallery (形而上畫廊), 7F, 219, Dunhua S Rd Sec 1, Taipei City (台北市敦化南路一段219號7樓). Open daily from 11am to 6:30pm, closed on Mondays. Tel: (02) 2771-3236
 ► Until Feb. 28



Comedian Kurt Penney at the Comedy Club in Taipei. Penney headlines the Wild East Comedy Show tonight in Taipei and tomorrow in Kaohsiung.

PHOTO COURTESY OF TOBIE OPENSHAW

Highlight

An expat comedy troupe serves up laughs for Valentine's Day tonight in Taipei and tomorrow in Kaohsiung. Dubbing themselves the International Comedy Troupe in Taiwan (a name no doubt chosen for its acronym, ICTIT), five Taipei comedians — Kurt Penney, Matt "The Puppet Guy" Bronsil, Tobie Openshaw, Spotty Two-shoes and Torch Pratt — will take to the stage for the Wild East Comedy Show. Tonight's show is at one of the troupe's regular venues in Taipei, The Comedy Club, and tomorrow they head to Kaohsiung to perform at DC Stage along with the Kaohsiung Improv League, with the show hosted by Lisa Furtado. Penney, who headlines the show, makes a case for a comedy show as a Valentine's date: "When polled, 90 percent of women say the top romantic thing a man can do is 'make them laugh.' So we are doing the guys' work for them here, see? Look: You come. You laugh. We promise."

► International Comedy Troupe in Taiwan, tonight at the Comedy Club, B1, 24 Taishun St, Taipei City (台北市泰順街24號B1). Visit english.comedy.com.tw for more information. Space is limited. For reservations, call (02) 2369-3730. Tomorrow's show is at DC Stage, 138-1 Qiuqiang Rd, Niasong Township, Kaohsiung County (高雄縣橋頭鄉球場路138-1號).
 ► Tonight at 10pm, tomorrow at 9pm
 ► Admission is NT\$500 for both shows and includes two drinks

Tree With Arteries — Su-Chen Hung Solo Exhibition (樹是有血管的 — 洪素珍個展) is a solo exhibition that investigates cultural and individual memory and the relationship between humans and the environment.

► Museum of Contemporary Art, Taipei (MOCA, 台北當代藝術館), 39 Changan W Rd, Taipei City (台北市長安西路39號). Open daily from 10am to 6pm, closed on Mondays
 ► Until March 12

Those wanting to gain a deeper understanding of one of Asia's oldest trade routes can check out Legends of the Silk Road — Treasures From Linjiang (絲路傳奇 — 新羅文物大展). This exhibit provides viewers with a glimpse of life in the ancient world by displaying 150 items unearthed along the Silk Road, including a 4,000-year-old mummified body of a woman in sandals known as the Loulan Beauty (樓蘭美女) and artifacts from the Tang Dynasty.

► National Museum of History (國立歷史博物館), 49 Nanhai Rd, Taipei City (台北市南海路49號). Open daily from 10am to 6pm, closed on Mondays
 ► Until March 15

Mind as Passion (激情心靈) explores the ideas behind art that is created using new media technologies such as video as well as two-dimensional and three-dimensional images. The exhibition includes works by 17 artists from Japan and Taiwan.

► Taipei Fine Arts Museum (TFAM), 181, Zhongshan N Rd Sec 3, Taipei City (台北市中山北路三段181號). Open daily from 9:30am to 5:30pm, closed on Mondays.
 Tel: (02) 2595-7656
 ► Until March 29

Ancient Pottery of the Paiwan Tribe in Taiwan (祖靈的居所 — 台灣排灣族古陶器特展) shows how ceramics are closely associated with the legends of the Paiwan tribe's origins, and how pottery helps to perpetuate the tribe's social hierarchy.

► National Museum of Natural Science (國立自然科學博物館), 1, Kuanchien Rd, Taichung City (台中市館前路1號). Open daily from 9am to 5pm, closed on Mondays
 ► Until May 17

Lee Ming-tiao Photography Retrospective (李鳴鵬攝影回顧展). Lee is considered one of the foremost figures in the history of Taiwanese photography. His camera captured the anonymous, the rural and the poor at work, home and play. This exhibit displays Lee's black-and-white and color photography and memorabilia dating from the Japanese colonial period up until the 1990s.

► Taipei Fine Arts Museum (TFAM), 181, Zhongshan N Rd Sec 3, Taipei City (台北市中山北路三段181號). Open daily from 9:30am to 5:30pm, closed on Mondays. Tel: (02) 2595-7656
 ► Until April 5

The God of Earth in Taiwan (台灣土地公特展) explains the origins of the Earth God (土地公) and why it continues to play an important role in folk worship throughout the country.

► National Museum of Natural Science (國立自然科學博物館), 1, Kuanchien Rd, Taichung City (台中市館前路1號). Open daily from 9am to 5pm, closed on Mondays
 ► Until May 31

Skies of Northern Tibet (藏北的天空) is a solo exhibition of 13 of Chiu Hsien-te's (邱顯德) watercolors. The exhibit shows the continuing evolution of the artist's style with the sky now occupying a greater proportion of the picture surface than ever before. Stylistically, the paintings possess a freer, more lyrical expressiveness and a tremendous richness of layering and tonal shifts in color.

► 99 Degrees Art Center (99藝術中心) 5F, 259, Dunhua S Rd Sec 1, Taipei City (台北市敦化南路一段259號5F). Open daily from 11am to 6pm, closed on Mondays
 ► Until Feb. 28

Art on Balcony (露台開賣) presents 100 works by 40 emerging and established contemporary artists working in a variety of different mediums including painting, sculpture, photography and printmaking.

► Project Fullfill Art Space (就在藝術空間), 2, Alley 45, Ln 147, Xinyi Rd Sec 3, Taipei City (台北市信義路三段147巷45弄2號). To arrange a viewing call (02) 2325-0023
 ► Until March 8

Primo Trattoria

Address: 1F, 14, Ln 107, Fuxing S Rd Sec 1, Taipei City (台北市復興南路一段107巷14號)
Telephone: (02) 2711-1726
Average Meal: NT\$400 to NT\$600 per person
Open: 11:30am to 10pm Mondays to Thursdays; 11:30am to 11pm Fridays to Sundays
Details: Chinese and English menu; credit cards accepted

Primo Trattoria offers classic, soul-satisfying Italian food at surprisingly reasonable prices. But this is no budget restaurant. The bistro and deli, which opened in November of last year, fits right in with the style and swank of its neighborhood near the Sogo Department Store's Zhongxiao branch.

Upon entering, diners are greeted by a handful of cooks behind an open kitchen bar who pause for their work, smile and say "buona sera" (good evening). But underneath the novel formalities and the well-dressed and polite wait staff, you'll find elements of a traditional trattoria: a simple menu — pizza, pasta, antipasti and wine — and a casual ambience.

Jazz is piped in softly in the background while the clean white interior and subdued lighting set an intimate mood. Unfortunately, the seating appears to favor parties of four or more. My dining companion and I felt a little squeezed in at a small table for two (just enough room for elbows) against a wall.

At its best, the quality of Primo Trattoria's offerings are on par with that of a high-end hotel or restaurant in Taipei; at its not-so-best, the food falls short on presentation but still manages to please. The Caprese (NT\$120) is one example. It comes as a serving of three tomato slices topped by slabs of mozzarella and a dollop of fresh pesto. The tomato was a bit too chilled and the chopped rocket lettuce strewn on top looked messy and uninspiring, but the dish was saved by the subtle richness of the mild mozzarella combined with the pesto.

Primo Trattoria's stone-oven baked pizzas, made Napoli-style, are a must-try for aficionados. The thin pastry is soft, springy and chewy, but tears apart easily. The 10-inch pizzas are tossed so that the crust turns out puffy, with a good balance of dough and air.

We ordered a "half and half pizza" (NT\$420) pairing the Genovese (NT\$320), with its fail-safe combination of mushrooms, mozzarella and pesto, and the formaggi (NT\$400), which we chose for its unusual addition of honey to a combination of blue cheese, mozzarella, grana Padano and cottage cheese. Other pizzas on the menu that caught the eye include the Fiorentina (NT\$360), topped with spinach, bacon, egg and cottage cheese, and the classic margherita (NT\$340), which has tomato sauce, Italian basil and slabs, rather than shreds, of mozzarella.

The pasta selection consists mostly of linguine and spaghetti, with prices ranging from NT\$240 to NT\$400. Those looking to indulge should try the rigatoni al prosciutto (NT\$360). The cream sauce was pure pacifying comfort, while garnishes of small, thick strips of prosciutto had a rich salty flavor that was almost too intense for my companion.

Desserts include the delightfully rich and smooth panna cotta (NT\$120) made from milk, cream and vanilla and topped with fresh berries, mascarpone cheese and raisin (NT\$100), and tiramisù (NT\$120).

Primo Trattoria offers an extensive list of Italian wines (NT\$650 to NT\$1,000 per bottle). If forgoing alcohol, a couple can get away with a full, satisfying meal for around NT\$1,200. On weekends, the wait for a table runs as long as an hour and a half, so it's best to make reservations. — DAVID CHEN



Primo Trattoria's stone-oven baked, Napoli-style pizzas are worth the trip.

PHOTO: DAVID CHEN, TAIPEI TIMES