

# TRAVEL

THURSDAY, JULY 9, 2009

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Ten years since its inception, the Ho-Hai-Yan Rock Festival (台北縣貢寮國際海洋音樂祭), which starts tomorrow, looks as big as ever.

What began as a modest gathering of a handful of local indie bands has grown into a mammoth annual outdoor event at Taipei County's Fulong Beach (福隆海灘).

The free three-day festival is known these days as a summer mecca for Taiwanese teenagers and college students celebrating the beginning of the school holidays.

And the crowds keep growing. The number of visitors to Ho-Hai-Yan has increased every year, according to the Taipei County Government, the festival sponsor. A spokesperson said attendance is expected to reach 600,000 people over three days, building on last year's record number of 510,000.

Needless to say, the event will be anything but a quiet beach escape, with an imposing, stadium-grade stage plopped along the ocean side, hundreds of stalls selling food and beverages, and beach games.

This year's Ho-Hai-Yan, the theme of which is "The Rock Age," boasts its most high-profile mainstream acts ever, with R'n'B and hip-hop artist Stanley Huang (黃立行) performing tomorrow night and pop diva A-mei (阿妹) closing the festival on Sunday night as her alter-ego, A-mit (阿密特).

It would have been difficult to imagine such headliners several years ago, when festival founder Taiwan Colors Music (TCM, 角頭音樂), a long-running indie label, was co-organizing the event. Handling this year's event is Transworld TV Production Co (映畫製作).

TCM, which failed to win this year's open-bid contract to organize and run the festival, has organized nearly all of the past Ho-Hai-Yan festivals, and helped book performers like Jon Spencer Blues Explosion in 2004 and Chinese rock legend Cui Jian (崔健) in 2007.

But the label still played a small role in this year's event. It worked on behalf of the Taipei County Government to bring several bands from China, chosen in a battle of the bands competition in Beijing.

Two winners from the competition take to the stage on Saturday: PB33 (陪伴珊珊) mixes punk and electronica, and Buyi Band (布衣樂隊) is a rock group that uses Chinese classical instruments.

Ho-Hai-Yan is keeping the spotlight on up-and-coming groups with its battle of the bands competition on Saturday. Ten out of 30 Taiwan-based bands qualified in tryouts last month, and perform Saturday for a panel of judges on the main stage. The winner receives a check for NT\$200,000, while second and third-place bands each receive NT\$50,000. Winners of past competitions include popular indie groups Tizzy Bac, 88 Balaz (88顆芭樂籽) and Sodagreen (蘇打綠).

Sunday's lineup features the festival's A-list performers. One standout is VHS or Beta, a band from Louisville, Kentucky, that combines disco, new wave and rock.

The other groups also complement the beachside setting: France's Tahiti 80 plays upbeat neo-60s pop; Japan's Fumida plays J-pop mixed with rock and soul; South Korea's Clazziquai are an acid-jazz and soul group not unlike their namesake, Jamiroquai.

Of course, many are going to Ho-Hai-Yan just for the beach party atmosphere, which Taipei County appears to be trying to tone down. There was a minor media hullabaloo last week as rumors swirled that alcohol and C-strings, a type of thong bikini, were going to be banned.

But at a press conference, Taipei County Commissioner Chou Hsi-wei (周錫瑋) said authorities would "not bug people" about their beachwear.

Ho-Hai-Yan vendors will not be able to sell alcohol so that everybody can keep "a clear head," said Chin Huei-chu (秦慧珠), director of the Taipei County Government's Travel and Tourism Bureau (台北縣政府觀光旅遊局). Revelers,

Above: A-Mit, better known in the Mando-pop world as A-mei, headlines on Sunday at the Ho-Hai-Yan Rock Festival.

Below, from left to right: Dance rock band VHS or Beta of the US appears at the Ho-Hai-Yan Rock Festival at Fulong Beach on Sunday; Stanley Huang gets the party started tomorrow night at Fulong Beach; Tahiti 80, a French indie band that plays neo-60s pop, appears at the Ho-Hai-Yan Rock Festival on Sunday; The Super VC, an indie-pop band from China, appears at the Ho-Hai-Yan Rock Festival tomorrow night.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF TAIPEI COUNTY GOVERNMENT



Ho-Hai-Yan:  
bigger and better?

Tens of thousands are expected to flock to Fulong Beach this weekend for the Ho-Hai-Yan Rock Festival, which turns 10 this year. While indie bands make up most of the bill, this year's festival touts several mainstream acts

BY DAVID CHEN  
STAFF REPORTER

however, are permitted to bring their own alcoholic beverages.

Fireworks and sparklers have been banned this year due to a number of injuries suffered by visitors last year, she said.

Chin said that with the large volume crowds expected at Fulong, festival-goers are encouraged to take Taiwan Railway Administration (TRA) trains.

## IF YOU GO

### GETTING THERE

Additional trains have been scheduled between Taipei Main Station and Fulong throughout the weekend. Trains run several times every hour between 11:30am and 9:30pm. Visit [www.railway.gov.tw/index.htm](http://www.railway.gov.tw/index.htm) for a full schedule or download the schedule (in Chinese only) from [www.hohaiyan.tw/links.asp](http://www.hohaiyan.tw/links.asp)

### PLACES TO VISIT IN THE AREA:

Caoling Historical Trail (華嶺古道芒花季): This 8km-long hiking trail has panoramic views of the mountains of the Northeast coast and the Pacific Ocean. Buses leave Fulong Tourist Center (福隆遊客中心) for the trail head at Yuanwangken (遠望坑) every 20 minutes from 8am to 11am. Alternatively, you can walk to Yuanwangken from Fulong Train Station, which is less than 2km away

Jiufen, Jinguashi and Ho-Hai-Yan in one day: These historic mining towns, which offer scenic views of the coast and colonial architecture, are popular destinations in their own right. The Taipei County Tourism Bureau has arranged for special bus tours that leave from East Exit 1 at Taipei Train Station (台北車站, 東一門) at 8am tomorrow, Saturday and Sunday. The tour stops at the Jinguashi Gold Ecological Park (金瓜石黃金博物館區) in the morning. The afternoon will be spent in Jiufen (九份) with visits to local teahouses. In the late afternoon the bus makes a stop at Ho-Hai-Yan, before heading back to Taipei at 7:30pm. The tour costs NT\$900 per person; spaces are available on a limited basis. Registration is required online at [cyc.cc/2009Ocean](http://cyc.cc/2009Ocean) or by calling (02) 2563-8787. The Web site is in Chinese only.

### FESTIVAL NOTES:

**What:** Ho-Hai-Yan Rock Festival (福隆海灘)

**When:** Tomorrow, Saturday and Sunday

**Where:** Fulong Beach, Taipei County

**Admission:** Free

**On the Net:** [www.hohaiyan.tw](http://www.hohaiyan.tw)

### Main stage schedule

#### Tomorrow

4:20pm Wonfu (旺福)  
5pm Soler (Macao)  
5:55pm Estranged (Malaysia)  
6:50pm The Super VC (樂味VC, China)  
7:45pm Electrico (Singapore)  
8:40pm My Little Airport (Hong Kong)  
9:35pm Stanley Huang (黃立行)

#### Saturday (Taiwan Indie Music Awards Competition)

3:10pm Buyi (布衣樂團, China) \*non-competitor  
3:40pm Daximen (大囍門)  
4:40pm Miss Dessy  
5:10pm Soundboss (騷包)  
5:40pm Overdose  
6:10pm PB33 (陪伴珊珊, China) \*non-competitor  
6:40pm Miaoj Gongdehui (嗶濟功德會)  
7:10pm La Petit Nurse (小護士)  
7:40pm Iron Banana (鐵香蕉)  
8:10pm Neon  
8:40pm Matzka and DeHot  
9:15pm The White Eyes (白目樂團, last year's winner)

9:45pm Announcement of winners

10pm Encore performance from winner

**Taiwan Indie Music Awards competitors:** Neon, Full House, Matzka and DeHot, Iron Banana (鐵香蕉), Daximen (大囍門), La Petit Nurse (小護士), Miss Dessy, Overdose, and Soundboss (騷包) and Miaoj Gongdehui (嗶濟功德會)

#### Sunday

4:30pm Zenkwun (神棍樂團)  
5:10pm Pa Pun (怕詳樂團)  
5:55pm VHS or Beta (US)  
6:45pm Fumido (風味堂, Japan)  
7:30pm Tahiti 80 (France)  
8:20pm Clazziquai (酷賴之味, South Korea)  
9:10pm Amit (阿密特, Taiwan)

For a list of the bands on the smaller stage, visit the festival Web site at [www.hohaiyan.tw](http://www.hohaiyan.tw)

