



Booday's store and cafe are decorated with secondhand furniture and tables made from recycled wood.

PHOTOS: CATHERINE SHU, TAIPEI TIMES



Booday's T-shirts, bags and accessories sport motifs inspired by everyday life in Taiwan. All are printed in soft, natural colors.

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All lifestyles great and small

The people behind lifestyle brand Booday hope to inspire a love of the everyday with an organic T-shirt line, magazine and combination store and cafe

BY CATHERINE SHU
STAFF REPORTER

In just six years, Booday (蘑菇) has expanded from a small graphic design firm to a lifestyle brand with its own magazine, clothing and accessories line, and a store and cafe near Zhongshan MRT Station (中山捷運站).

But the company's philosophy is about taking life one step at a time. Booday's Chinese name (蘑菇), which means mushroom, is also an expression that describes "someone who does things slowly and not very rigidly, is a little absent-minded and who takes their time making a decision," says Booday director and co-founder Kuang Yang (楊宏光). "We thought that is a bit like who we are. We aren't speedy. We just want to do things well."

"The first issue of our magazine was about taking things slowly," adds Sue Chang (張素華), Booday's brand manager. "We thought 'who among our friends takes life the slowest?' We wrote three profiles."

When it was founded in 2003, Booday launched a line of T-shirts and its eponymous magazine. The company's English name and magazine were both originally called Mogu, the Romanization of its Mandarin name, but that was changed in 2007 for trademark reasons. (Booday is a riff on Baoda (寶大), the name of the company's graphic design business.)

The name "mogu" was also inspired by a passage in *The Little Prince*. In it, the title character says that "a red-faced gentleman" who has never looked at a flower or a star is "not a man — he is a mushroom!" But Booday's designers hope that their brand will inspire people to appreciate the small things in their day-to-day lives.

"When we founded our company, the term LOHAS [lifestyle of health and sustainability] wasn't popular in Taiwan," says Chang. "We had a way of thinking about life that we thought was different than what is promoted in the media or on television. It's simpler."

Many of Booday's soft cotton T-shirts are inspired by everyday life in Taiwan. Past designs have taken cues from *zhuyin fuhao*,



PHOTOS COURTESY OF BOODAY

the phonetic alphabet used by Taiwanese schoolchildren, pearl milk tea and the humble red-and-white striped plastic bags given out at night market stands and corner stores; one T-shirt had a long, thin pocket intended for a pair of reusable chopsticks.

"We are a Taiwanese company and we wanted to express that with our T-shirts, so we had to think of what is particular to Taiwan. Life here can be messy, as you see on the TV news, but we really enjoy living here," says Chang. Other items in Booday's store, which celebrates its third anniversary next month, are handmade by independent artists and designers, and include jewelry, stationery, art books, stuffed toys, soap and jars of marmalade and jam.

Booday magazine also revolves around appreciating the ordinary. Past issues of the advertisement-free quarterly have focused on themes such as books, weekend trips, the stars, household objects, school and home cooking. The current issue is about the "colors of nature" (自然的顏色).

Most of the content, including articles, photographs and illustrations, is created by the Booday design team. In keeping with the brand's philosophy of "less is more," magazine articles are written in simple, straightforward language, without difficult vocabulary or slang. The staff takes photographs with their own cameras and illustrations are hand-drawn and purposely childlike.

Booday cafe, located above its shop, is also meant to evoke a homey feeling. The cafe's picture windows overlook the park behind Zhongshan MRT Station and the interior is filled with tables made from recycled wood, secondhand furniture and a shelf stocked with reading material, including novels and Japanese home decorating magazines.

"We wanted to recreate the feeling you have when you wake up in the morning and

relax at your table with a book and cup of coffee before your day starts," says Yang.

The company's philosophy of attention to small detail and environmental awareness extends to the cafe's food. The menu's signature is "one bowl of rice" (一碗飯). The dish is made from white rice produced by a Taiwanese company called Green In Hand (掌生穀粒), which works with independent farmers across the country, and topped with seasonal vegetables, meat and a sprinkle of sea salt.

"You know exactly where the rice was grown and who farmed it," says Chang.

The cafe also doubles as an exhibition space, with displays of artwork hung on the walls, and regular music performances, talks and cookery classes.

Booday's staff hopes to open more stores here and expand into China, with each tailored to fit its specific location, says Yang. And in the near future, they plan to use more organic materials in their products.

Beginning this season, all T-shirts will be made from organic cotton; a new series uses natural dyes made from plants grown on Yangmingshan.

"We are making a start with the organic cotton T-shirts and we also keep an eye on the manufacturing process. Design isn't just about making money but making a statement, and we try to put action behind our words," says Chang. "Those are small things, but every little thing you can do can make a huge difference."

HAPPY BOODAY

Booday will celebrate the third anniversary of its store and restaurant with a series of events next month. Highlights include a talk by travel writer Shu Guozhi (舒國治) about his favorite American rock 'n' roll musicians, a cooking demonstration of Indian cuisine by Japanese sitarist Sitar Yo, a class on photography techniques that take advantage of natural light, and a hand-sewing class that focuses on altering and embellishing old clothing. Prices range from NT\$300 to NT\$1,600. Visit haveaboodayshop.blogspot.com for a complete schedule of events and ticket information.



Many of Booday's products, including these covers for reusable chopsticks, encourage consumers to be environmentally aware.

PHOTOS: CATHERINE SHU, TAIPEI TIMES



STORE NOTES:

WHAT: Booday (蘑菇)
WHERE: 18-1, Ln 25, Nanjing W Rd, Taipei City (台北市南京西路25巷18-1號)
OPEN: Sundays to Thursdays, noon to 9pm, Fridays and Saturdays, noon to 10pm
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