

## TRAVEL

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PHOTO COURTESY OF FLEUR DE CHINE

## LUXURY ON THE LAKE

*Fleur de Chine is one of the plushest of the new hotels that have been sprouting up around Sun Moon Lake*

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**S**un Moon Lake (日月潭) in Nantou County is easily one of the fastest-growing tourism destinations in the country, with new facilities being added all the time, including a spate of high-profile new hotels and extensive bicycle paths and walkways around the lake, as well as a soon-to-be-opened cable car that will connect Sun Moon Lake with the Formosan Aboriginal Cultural Village (九族文化村). One of the plushest of the new hotels to set up shop on the lake shore is Fleur de Chine (日月潭雲品酒店), which is going head-to-head with older luxury establishments such as The Lalu (涵碧樓) to attract well-heeled customers who want to enjoy the lakeside scenery in comfort.

Fleur de Chine recently launched its Sky Lounge, a rooftop bar and casual dining area that provides a 270° panorama of the lake and offers such high-tech facilities as a multiple camera live Web cam so that people anywhere in the world can participate in the weddings and other functions that the hotel hopes to attract to this scenic venue.

Like many similar luxury hotels, Fleur de Chine is all about providing a total experience, and much can be enjoyed without leaving its well-appointed surroundings, ranging from making rose petal jam with flowers from local organic orchards to sampling a taste of the nearby forests with a specially commissioned pine-scented martini designed by William Wang (王靈安), Taiwan's "godfather of the cocktail bar."

While some of the luxury establishments around Sun Moon Lake are rather less than child friendly, aiming to appeal more to corporate and DINK-y types, Fleur de Chine has taken another route, actively catering to families by providing a lavish playground, which in addition to the various ladders and slides, also comes complete with cute, but real Internet-enabled computers, a canny recognition that the world it is a changing and that the demands of computer-literate youngsters are not to be neglected. Even pets get a look in, with four large cabinet spaces in a store room behind the concierge desk where dogs and cats can stay while owners enjoy the hotel facilities. It's not exactly luxurious, but bellboys can be prevailed on to walk dogs if owners can't pull themselves away from the comfort of their rooms.

The rooms themselves are elegant, with a comfortable mix of the modern and traditional; the Japanese-style shower and hot-spring tub is a very nice touch, and the computerized toilet seat is almost as difficult to navigate as the remote for the room's multimedia entertainment system.

A spa treatment center is now de rigueur at



Lakeside embankments are popular locations to take in the view at Sun Moon Lake.

PHOTO: IAN BARTHOLOMEW, TAIPEI TIMES

hotels of this type, but the swimming and hydrotherapy area overlooking the garden is impressive for the size of the baths and the spaciousness of the design.

However carefully the windows are placed to take best advantage of the view, there is no substitute for getting out by the lakeside to enjoy the ever-changing scenery. Month by month, new sections are being added to a system of pathways separate from the road to allow visitors to enjoy the view without danger from the sometimes chaotic traffic, whether they are walking or cycling.

Sun Moon Lake has become an excellent spot not only for recreational cyclists, but also for those interested in getting a taste of more serious cycling challenges. The huge Giant Sun Moon Lake Cycling Rest Stop (日月潭單車開站) located just below the Sun Moon Lake Scenic Area Administration (日月潭國家風景區管理處) in Shuii Village (水里村) provides professional bicycle services, including rental of top-of-the-line TCR ADO road bikes and XTC Advanced SL 1 mountain bikes, models which sell for more than NT\$10,000.

For those who would rather soar above the lake than sweat their way around it, the opening of the new cable car to the Formosan Aboriginal Cultural Village is much anticipated and is expected to pass its final inspection in the coming weeks. The long-delayed project will cut through the hills that surround Sun Moon Lake, reducing the hour-long drive from the lake to the cultural village to under 10 minutes, and provide spectacular aerial views of the lake into the bargain.

Ian Bartholomew stayed at Fleur de Chine courtesy of the hotel.



▲ Fleur de Chine recently launched its Sky Lounge, a rooftop bar and casual dining area that provides a 270° panorama of Sun Moon Lake.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF FLEUR DE CHINE

▼ Cycle paths near Sun Moon Lake are separated from the traffic to create a safer cycling environment.

PHOTO: IAN BARTHOLOMEW, TAIPEI TIMES



## IF YOU GO

## GETTING THERE

» The No. 6 National Highway puts Sun Moon Lake just one hour's drive from Taichung. Visitors from Taipei can take a Taiwan High Speed Rail (台灣高鐵) train and be in Sun Moon Lake in under three hours. An hourly shuttle bus service, which is also equipped to carry bicycles, is available for those without private transport



A view from the Sky Lounge at Fleur de Chine.

PHOTO: IAN BARTHOLOMEW, TAIPEI TIMES

## WHERE TO STAY

» Fleur de Chine (日月潭雲品酒店) is located at 23 Jhongheng Rd, Sun Moon Lake, Yuchi Township, Nantou County (南投縣魚池鄉日月潭中正路23號). Walk-in room rates begin at NT\$11,500 per night. Tel: (049) 285-5500. On the Net: [www.fleurdechinehotel.com](http://www.fleurdechinehotel.com)

» The Lalu (涵碧樓) is located at 142 Jhongshan Rd, Shueishe Village, Yuchi Township, Nantou County (南投縣魚池鄉水社村中興路142號). Walk-in room rates start at NT\$1,000 for the first hour (depending on the type of bike) and NT\$200 for each subsequent hour. Tel: (049) 285-6713. On the Net: [www.thelalu.com.tw](http://www.thelalu.com.tw)

» Sun Moon Lake Full House Resort (德化社) is located at 8, Shueisioi St, Sun Moon Village, Yuchi Township, Nantou County (南投縣魚池鄉日月村水秀街8號). Walk-in room rates start at NT\$3,200 per night. Tel: (049) 285-0001. On the Net: [www.thsmliidv.tw](http://www.thsmliidv.tw)

## WHAT TO DO

» The Giant Sun Moon Lake Cycling Rest Stop (日月潭單車開站) is located at 1F, 163 Jhongshan Rd, Shueishe Village, Yuchi Township, Nantou County (南投縣魚池鄉水社村中山路163號1F). Rental rates range from a base price of NT\$200 to NT\$1,000 for the first hour (depending on the type of bike) and NT\$200 for each subsequent hour. Tel: (049) 285-6713. On the Net: [tw.myblog.yahoo.com/giant-sunmoonlake](http://tw.myblog.yahoo.com/giant-sunmoonlake)

» The Formosan Aboriginal Cultural Village (九族文化村) cable car is scheduled to open to the public in December. Bookings to be among the first passengers to ride on the cable car are already open. Tel: (049) 289-5361. On the Net: [www.nine.com.tw](http://www.nine.com.tw)