



The 2009 Taipei International Book Exhibition focuses on German, French and Thai authors.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF TAIPEI INTERNATIONAL BOOK EXHIBITION

Calling all bookworms

Following hard on the heels of the Lunar New Year holiday, the 2009 Taipei International Book Exhibition (2009台北國際書展) opens at the Taipei World Trade Center (台北世貿中心) on Wednesday and runs until Feb. 9. Exhibition organizers are undaunted by the world's economic woes. Taipei Book Fair Foundation (財團法人台北書展基金會) chairman Lin Tsai-chueh (林載爵) joked that it would be a perfect opportunity to put recently issued consumer vouchers to good use.

As with many past Taipei International Book Exhibition events, there will be a wealth of international books on display, with the focus this year on German, French and Thai authors, some of whom will be visiting Taipei to promote their work and give readings from their novels.

Among the most exciting guests will be the young German novelist Juli Zeh, whose *Adler und Engel* ("Eagles and Angels") won the 2002 Deutscher Bucherpreis for best debut novel. An expert on international law who has worked with the UN, her published works range from psychological thrillers to children's books, and she has garnered critical acclaim as one of the most original young voices coming out of Germany.

Zeh, though only 34, has been extensively translated, a fact that has contributed to her rapidly growing international reputation.

Translation is a major theme at the exhibition, which will be highlighted in a presentation by Clemens-Peter Haase, head of the Department Literature and Translation



Promotion at the Goethe Institute, who has been active in bringing German authors to a wider reading public. The distinguished Austrian writer and translator Herbert Maurer will also be part of the German delegation.

In the Thai pavilion, one of the young authors to be featured will be Tawara Siripipat, a 23-year-old whose writings under the name Dr Pop have already earned him the title of "Prince of Sci-fi Fantasy" in his home country.

In addition to the main featured nations, the exhibition is introducing an international smorgasbord section to highlight the diversity of international book and music publishing.

While Hall One of the World Trade Center is dedicated to literature, Halls Two and Three focus on the interests of children and young people. Hall Two hosts the ever-popular section dedicated to graphic works such as comics, anime and manga, and Hall Three is devoted to children's publishing and features dinosaur and woolly mammoth fossils and games.

While the exhibition's focus is primarily on conventional publishing, this year, in a nod to the growing power of the Internet, it plays host to representatives from eight digital publishing or book distribution companies based in the US, including NetLibrary and the Online Computer Library Center. At the other end of the publishing spectrum is the display of outstanding book design, which includes works by 40 contemporary Chinese artists as well as winners of prestigious awards such as the Japan Book Design Concours, Korean Book Design Now and Taiwan's Golden Butterfly Award (台灣—書籍設計金蝶獎).

The 2009 Taipei International Book Exhibition officially opens on Feb. 4. Hall One will be restricted to trade representatives and disabled persons on the first day. Opening hours are from 10am to 6pm on Feb. 4, Feb. 5 and Feb. 9, and from 10am to 10pm from Feb. 6 through Feb. 8. Admission is NT\$100 on weekdays and NT\$180 on Friday and weekends. Admission after 6pm is NT\$50. Children under 120cm get in free. Comprehensive details of the event can be found at www.tibe.org.tw/2009.

— IAN BARTHOLOMEW

RESTAURANTS



The menu certainly isn't Belle Fusion, but Soho retains the same swanky atmosphere.

PHOTO: NOAH BUCHAN, TAIPEI TIMES

Soho and Urban 9 Bar

Address: 149, Dunhua 5 Rd Sec 1, Taipei City (台北市敦化南路一段149號)

Telephone: (02) 2751-1338

Average meal: NT\$330

Open: Daily from 12pm to 9pm for food; bar open from 9pm until late

Details: Chinese and English menu; credit cards accepted

Soho opened late last month in the space that formerly housed the swanky Belle Fusion. Whereas Belle used the fifth floor and rooftop space as dining areas, Soho has transformed the space into Urban 9 Bar, a lounge bar that opens at 9pm.

Ceiling-to-floor windows bathe Soho in natural light during the day and lend the place a romantic atmosphere at night. The walls on the first floor, painted granite gray and punctuated by girders and supporting gray brick pillars keep the vibe downtown. The second floor has more of a country feel, with wooden seats at widely spaced tables.

Belle Fusion was known much for its food as its ambience, and the high-end crowd that frequented the space paid a hefty price for their victuals. Soho goes in the opposite direction with a simple menu of salads, soups, burgers, hot dogs, baked rice dishes and Italian pastas — in other words, pub food in a fashionable environment.

This could have ended up a disappointment — especially for those expecting a healthy lunch or dinner. But where Soho is short on menu refinement, the food it offers is solid and the portions appropriate for the price.

I started off with the garden salad (NT\$80) and the homemade Mexican white bean stew (NT\$80). The salad was an uncreative mix of iceberg lettuce, cucumbers and sprouts. The mound of greenery was sprinkled with raisins and came swimming (some might say drowning) in an Italian dressing. Thankfully, the dressing was a zesty combination of olive oil, balsamic vinegar, spices and chopped onions. Yet a leaf or two of radicchio or even some romaine would have uplifted this unexceptional salad.

The Mexican white bean stew was an improvement on the starter. Actually, it wasn't so much of a stew as it was a thick soup. The white beans had been blended with onions and squash before being added to the creamy and un-oily broth that contained dried spices. The flavor was light and the white beans lent the soup a subtle and delicious smoky flavor.

The main course mushroom cheeseburger (NT\$190) served with potato wedges won't win any "burger of the year" awards but it was served with a generous selection of veggies.

The food at Soho might not captivate the palate, but the atmosphere — particularly on the second floor — is ideal for whiling away a few hours with friends. The fifth floor and enclosed glass rooftop space are sure to gain accolades from late-night nibblers.

— NOAH BUCHAN



Enjoy Bai Hua Tai's fried banana toast with cinnamon in the cafe's comfortable dining area.

PHOTO: DAVID CHEN, TAIPEI TIMES

Bai Hua Tai (百花台)

Address: 13, Ln 41, Chifeng St, Taipei City (台北市赤峰街41巷13號)

Telephone: (02) 2559-3159

Open: Daily from 8am to 9:30pm

Average meal: NT\$180 to NT\$250

Details: Chinese and English menu; credit cards not accepted

On the Net: www.baihua.com.tw

As far as plate lunches go, Bai Hua Tai (百花台) offers good value for a home-cooked meal, with the most expensive options — rice and a main dish of either chicken or fish — costing NT\$210. It's not necessarily the food, however, that will keep you coming back.

This cafe sports a stylish, comfy interior befitting of its neighbors on this gentrified alleyway near Zhongshan MRT Station (中山捷運站). Bai Hua Tai takes up both floors of an old-looking, two-story building with a pitched roof (a sad rarity in Taipei), which makes the second-floor dining area feel spacious. The ceiling is lined with light-colored wood paneling, adding to a surprising warmth that stands in contrast to the cafe's gray concrete exterior.

There are two themes at Bai Hua Tai: fine art and jazz. A white upright piano stands on one side of the room. Two abstract oil paintings hang above the piano, and framed 1950s-era photos of jazz musicians line the opposite wall.

The sparseness of decor and white walls gives the space an art gallery vibe, but some honey touches remove any air of pretentiousness. On a recent visit, freshly cut roses were perched on a wooden, kitchen-style dining table in the corner of the room. Nearby was an extensive collection of jazz and classical CDs; Pharoah Saunders, John Coltrane and Artie Shopp seemed to get the most play, judging by the worn covers.

The wait for our meals was a little long, but worth it for the Bai Hua Tai grilled chicken (百花台香烤雞腿, NT\$210), which was covered in a tangy glaze and cooked with preserved plums. The pan-fried salmon (香煎鮭魚, NT\$190) was nicely presented, garnished with slices of green onion, but was a little overcooked. Both set meals come with three different side dishes of freshly prepared vegetables, some steamed, some stir-fried. Diners are allowed to serve themselves once at the mini-buffet downstairs and can fill their plates as they wish.

Bai Hua Tai offers a full selection of hot drinks, ranging from espresso to herbal tea. Our server warned us that the raspberry tea (紅漿果花果茶, NT\$150), which comes steeped in a small pot and serves two people, would be "too sour." But the tartness was tolerable and made for a healthy coda to the meal.

A good excuse to stay and enjoy the surroundings is the house specialty, the Bai Hua Tai fried banana toast with cinnamon (百花台肉桂香煎香蕉吐司, NT\$90). Caramelized sugar is spread on the toast, but most of the sweetness comes from the fried banana.

To get to Bai Hua Tai, leave Zhongshan MRT Station at exit No. 2 and walk north on the left side of the parkway. The cafe occasionally hosts musical performances from string quartets or jazz bands.

— DAVID CHEN

THE VINYL WORD

As the Lunar New Year exodus from Taiwan begins for many an expat, and the Taiwanese party crew returns to family life, there are several options for those who remain and are in the need of late night music.

New promoters in town Patricia Tsou (鄭佩菁) and Miranda Liu (劉玉麗) have teamed up to produce Panda Promotions. Named Panda from the P of the former's name and last two syllables of the latter's, these ladies are bringing back Tittsworth, who put on a venerable night of hip-hop, break beats, rock, electro and 1980s tunes at Vibe on June 27 of last year.

On Thursday he plays at an all-you-can drink affair at Plush with Marcus Aurelius, Sofa Kings and hip-hop king of Taipei, Cap. This will be the party of the Lunar New Year holidays. "I expect to hear on that Thursday what most people will be listening to in a year or two," said Aurelius of Tittsworth's set.

Tittsworth's Baltimore club sound is "a loose combination of hip-hop and house ... bass heavy, sometimes break-based music, often with gritty samples," said the man himself. "Dance-friendly music, often built around DJ-friendly tracks."

This style of mixing and genre melding is made much easier because of digital deejaying. "I do like to mix fast," said Tittsworth. "I use Serato and a Pioneer 800. It's an interesting time ... rap, club, bassline, fidget. Lines are blurring and the end result is very fun music."

Since last performing in Taiwan, Tittsworth has released an album, *12 Steps*.

"Twelve tracks, loosely club music but gone in many directions ... R'n'B, rap, rave, electronic," he said. The work "also features a long list of A-list vocalists, Kid Sister,



"Panda" diplomacy brings Tittsworth to Taiwan.

PHOTO COURTESY OF TITTSWORTH

The Federation, Nina Sky, Pitbull, DJ Assault and more."

Other than Beth Cox in Taichung, there is a lack of female promoters in Taiwan. One reason Tsou and Liu made the decision to start Panda was that "there seems to be fewer promoters around now," said the former. "Female promoters are always attractive to the market. It's easier being a woman because, most of the time, people will sit down with me and listen to my proposals. It's harder for me because I can't carry 20 cases of beer up three flights of stairs."

Scooping Tittsworth for its first party is a strong start for Panda Promotions. "One of the reasons we jumped at the chance to have him stop in Taipei for his Broke These Days world tour is that the last party was so much fun," said Tsou. "Every person in that place was dancing and feeling great."

On the Net: For an awesome Tittsworth mix, visit www.sendspace.com/file/tw/ty

Tittsworth at Plush, 12F, 138, Bade Rd Sec 4, Taipei City (台北市敦化南路三段12巷5弄17號). Thursday from 10:30pm until 4:30am. Entry to the all-you-can drink party is NT\$500.

Bob Dobalina is a superb DJ who doesn't play out enough in Taipei. "Your friendly neighborhood DJ," as he likes to be known, is putting on a show at VU Live House tomorrow for the drum 'n' bass heads out there with Rich, Mixer T and Coffeepot. This will be the penultimate day of the Year of the Rat, and with the holidays ahead there's no need to worry about the Monday blues.

VU Live House is honing a good reputation for putting on alternative nights with those making the trek to Ximending usually more interested in the quality of the music than the quality of the venue's drinks.

Lunar Phase 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). Tomorrow from 11pm until 4am. Admission is NT\$350 with one drink.

— TOM LEEMING

[EVENTS & ENTERTAINMENT]

Tonight at **Tone 56 Live Bar Rubber Band** plays rock, pop and dance music. **Adoga**, which plays rock and pop covers, appears tomorrow. On Sunday there'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). Tel: (02) 2517-3869

► Music shows go from 9:30pm to 12:30am tonight and tomorrow, and 7:30pm to 9:30pm on Sundays

► No admission fee

Tonight at **Bliss High Tide** fills the room with live reggae along with rockers **Johnny Fatstacks**. [See story on Page 14.] Tomorrow Taichung's beloved funk and soul band, **The Money Shot Horns**, visit town for a pre-Lunar New Year's show.

► 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 blisslivehouse

► Music shows are tonight and tomorrow at 10pm. Bar/kitchen open

from 7pm daily. Ladies night Fridays; women get a free cocktail of their choice

► Admission for the music shows is NT\$200 tonight and tomorrow

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

Both established and aspiring Taiwanese pop musicians perform regularly at the **EZ5 Live House**, with three different singers appearing every night. EZ5 is closed on Sunday for Lunar New Year's Eve. Highlights this week include **A-ta** (阿達) on Monday, and **Hsiu-ching** (秀環) and **Liu Wei-zen** (劉偉仁) on Wednesday.

► 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 fees vary from NT\$600 to

NT\$850, depending on the performer. Cover charge includes two drinks

Exhibitions

You Are My Flowers (你是我的花朵 — 名家花卉小品展). Capital Art Center celebrates the New Year with an exhibition on flowers that includes watercolors, oil paintings and multimedia works in impressionistic, expressionistic and post-modern styles by renowned artists including Max Liu (劉其偉) and Chang Yi-hsiung (張義雄).

► Capital Art Center (首都藝術中心), 2F, 343, Renai Rd Sec 4, Taipei City (台北市仁愛路四段343號2樓). Open Tuesdays to Sundays from 10am to 7pm. Tel: (02) 2775-5268

► Ends tomorrow

For **Special Recipe of Galerie Grand Siecle (私房菜)**, the gallery has invited multimedia and performance artist Chen Yung-hsien (陳永賢) and digital artists Kuo I-chen (郭奕臣) and Wang Ya-Hui (王雅慧) to celebrate its 10th birthday. The six works on display consist of the trio's rarely seen video, installation and digital pieces, which were made between 2002 and 2007.

► Galerie Grand Siecle (新苑藝術), 17, Alley 51, Ln 12, Bade Rd Sec 3, Taipei City (台北市八德路三段12巷51弄17號). Open Tuesdays to Sundays from 1pm to 6pm. Tel: (02) 2578-5630

► Until Feb. 2

Masters' Collection Exhibition (名家典藏展) is an exhibition of more than 40 paintings by celebrated realist artists from Taiwan, China and Russia. The works include portraits, landscapes and still lifes.

► Cathay United Art Center (國泰世華藝術中心), 7F, 236 Dunhua N Rd, Taipei City (台北市敦化北路236號7樓). Open Mondays to Saturdays from 10am to 6pm. Tel: (02) 2717-0988

► Until Feb. 6

Cyber-ring (虛鏡迴圈), the latest extension of the "Cyberbeings" series that Laza Wu (吳梓輝) has been working on since 2004 is a fantastical representation of cyber space with a glass floor and 360° projections.

► National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts (國立台灣美術館), 2, Wuchuan W Rd Sec 1, Taichung City (台中市五權西路一段2號). Open Tuesdays to Sundays from 9am to 5pm. Tel: (04) 2372-3552

► Until Feb. 8

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 (唐志岡) 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 5 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 Mondays. Tel: (02) 2771-3236

► Until Feb. 28

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 features work 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 Mondays. Tel: (02) 2595-7656

► Until March 29