

## RESTAURANTS

## Nakhla Shisha (那哈拉)

Address: 74-1 Houcuo Village, Sanjhjh Township, Taipei County (台北縣三芝鄉後厝村74-1號)

Telephone: (02) 2636-2048

Open: 1:30pm to 10pm Monday to Friday (closed Tuesday); 11:30am to midnight Saturday; 11:30am to 10pm Sunday

Average meal: NT\$600

Details: Chinese menu; credit cards not accepted

Nakhla Shisha, located just outside the Cianshui Bay (淺水灣) resort area on Taiwan's north coast township of Sanjhjh, bills itself as a Middle Eastern-themed Thai restaurant (泰式中東餐廳). Unfortunately, this is not quite as interesting as it at first sounds, in culinary terms at least. As a location perched on No. 2 Dan-Jin Provincial Highway (淡金公路), it looks remarkably appealing, with its rough adobe and brick exterior, large grill area and walled garden.

Kebabs of various descriptions are certainly available, but these were, with the exception of the extensive range of hubble-bubble tobacco, the only Middle Eastern items on the menu.

For the rest, your Arabian nights' experience has to be accompanied by Thai shrimp cakes (月亮蝦餅, NT\$280), green beef curry (綠咖哩嫩牛柳, NT\$280), or other such dishes. I was told by the manager that the reason for this was simply that Middle Eastern food had not proved sufficiently popular. For that matter, some dishes, such as chicken curry spring rolls (雞肉咖哩春捲, NT\$250), seemed to be more personal inspiration than any attempt at authentic Thai food — they were perfectly adequate as finger food to wash down with beer, if a tad stodgy. The curries on offer, a variety of green and red with different levels of heat, were a bit stingy on the meat given the price. Though perfectly good for pouring over rice, these weren't dishes you would explore for subtle and complex flavors.

While relying on Thai food to fill its customers up, the big draw for most are the kebabs (伊斯蘭香料烤肉串), priced at NT\$280 for three skewers of either lamb, beef or chicken. Again, the meat was a bit skimpy, but was well-flavored and came with some grilled vegetables. Sitting back among the cushions of the curtained booths was a pleasant way to relax from a day of exploring the beaches of the north coast, as most of the patrons clearly had been the day I visited. The rugs on which one sat might have put off the more fastidious, but the service was friendly and efficient, and the atmosphere of subdued orange lighting made up for this to some extent. Large bottles of Taiwan beer are available for NT\$150, and there is a range of basic cocktails starting from NT\$200.

The garden outside is equipped with little tented booths that might fit between four and six, cut off from the road by a high wall, and looking over a pleasant lawn and a central stage on which belly dancing is performed after 7pm on Saturdays during the summer months. Another draw is the availability of water pipes. Tobacco portions start at NT\$500 and go up to NT\$1,000 for exotic blends such as Dangerous Lover (危險情人), which provides a rose-flavored tobacco experience that is mediated through whiskey, orange liquor and iced soda water. Whether one goes for the simple or the elaborate, a water pipe is a perfect social gimmick to end a day with friends.

If you can't make it out to Sanjhjh Township, Nakhla Shisha has opened another branch in Ximending (西門町) located at 2F and 3F, Ln 50, Xining S Rd, Taipei City (台北市西寧南路50巷3號2・3樓), tel: (02) 2383-2618.

— IAN BARTHOLOMEW



Tasty kebabs are one of the few Middle Eastern delights on offer at Nakhla Shisha.

PHOTO: IAN BARTHOLOMEW, TAIPEI TIMES

## Inside out

Jade Hua (華玉) founded her modern dance company, Jade & Artists Dance Troupe (肢體音符舞團), 12 years ago with the goal of combining modern dance and Asian traditions to help preserve the best of traditional arts.

For the first six years, she used Eastern legends as inspiration. But in the last few years she has focused on modern stories and dancers' gestures. She says she expects her 10 dancers to dance "from the inside," not just show off their technique.

Her dancers will be dancing from the inside out in her latest work, *Vipashayana* (觀・自在).

Vipashayana is a Sanskrit word meaning insight. In Buddhism, it means insight into the true nature of life beyond reality. However, Hua said she wasn't trying to explore "within," but modern society.

For the score of the hour-long show, which is divided into One/Being, State of Confusion and Self Realization, she turned to Taiwanese composer Joe Lee (李哲藝).

"He joined in rehearsals, composed music and gave dancers rhythm instructions for one part of State of Confusion. So in a way, he also choreographed," she said.

The stage design is rather unusual, given that it centers around a large collection of glass tubes. Hua said she wanted something clear and crystal to illustrate "the pure state of one person."

"*Rise of Wind and Clouds* was designed and handcrafted by Chen Chien-hong (陳政宏), our glass arts director for this production," Hua said. "He agreed to provide this giant work for display in Novel Hall and the same moveable glass tubes for the set on stage."

Jade & Artists Dance Troupe perform *Vipashayana* tonight and tomorrow at 7:30pm at Novel Hall (新舞臺), 3-1 Songshou Rd, Taipei City (台北市松壽路3號). Tickets are NT\$400 to NT\$1,000, available through NTCH ticketing or online at www.artsticket.com.tw.

— DIANE BAKER



PHOTO COURTESY OF JADE & ARTISTS DANCE TROUPE

There is an air of freshness to the scene right now in Taipei. The independents are breezing back into promotion mode and the following parties offer a sniff of what may come this summer.

Things are looking up for Rise, Taipei's newest after-party night, which is held at Club DV8. Resident DJs and promoters Shawn Dean James Kidd aka vDub and Andrew Gilberts aka 006 have been putting on this night for a month now. "I was a big fan of Purple and Texound," said Gilberts. "We started Rise because we felt it was time to get the after-party scene going again."

"Taipei's independent electronic party scene was falling off the charts," said Kidd. "Small parties trying to compete with the mega clubs seemed to be a thing of the past ... so I figured an after-hours was the thing to do."

The word is out, "and it keeps getting busier every week," said Gilberts. "We are seeing foreigners that we haven't seen before so we are starting to draw on a new crowd. Last weekend with Kolette was rammed and it was good to see a lot of the local DJs out to support."

"Best moment for me so far," said Kidd, "was seeing DJs Jimmy Chen, Freaky Squeaker, Reason, Andrew Ford, Science of Sound [from Spain], A-Tao, Eben, Marcus Aurelius, Saucy and Hooker bustin' up the floor."

Although beset with sound system gremlins at first, with no mid-range but a heavy bass ("you could hear people talking on the dance floor," said Kidd), the space is just right for morning messiness. "It has got a bit of the old dirty feel, which I like," said Gilberts. "And I love the huge ... light bright board behind the deejay booth."

Kidd said he has been trying to choose DJs that pioneered the scene here, "like Jimmy Chen and Tiger, Taiwanese DJs that don't get as much exposure on the foreign scene. This gives us the chance to also attract more of the Taiwanese crowd."

Rise at Club DV8, B1, 249, Fuxing S Rd Sec 1, Taipei City (台北市復興南路一段249號地B1樓). Every Sunday from 4:30am until 8:30am. Entry is NT\$300 and includes a drink.

"It's just a matter of time before the true hip-hop steps up and kicks mainstream hip-pop in the wazoo," says Elias Tsai aka



THE VINYL WORD



Hip-hop hooray for some fresh new parties.

PHOTO COURTESY OF JOHAN VOSLOO

Shaman from THC, Taipei's number one foreign rhymes and beats outfit. Tonight at Bliss is Freaky Friday, when THC will be spitting live MC hip-hop with Mixer-T, while Anti Hero provides breaks and electro-funk afterwards.

"The Taipei hip-hop scene is a steadily growing force," says Tsai. "More and more dope MCs and producers are coming out of the woodwork here with influences ranging from East to West ... our members cover several cultures, nationalities and languages."

"Hip-hop is no cheesier here than back in the States, where I'm from," says Tsai. "Right now, materialism and negativity is the standard in mainstream hip-hop, because the USA is in a very decadent phase. Once people begin to go through hard times again and they realize what's really important in life, the good music will return."

THC's parties are always full of energy. Big on keeping it real, "it is the musician's job to be a warrior and fight through the bullshit," says Tsai. "Real will always win in the end. Look at Vanilla Ice, an example of what happens when a poser gets exposed. Our job is to out all fakers!"

Freaky Friday at Bliss, 148, Xinyi Rd Sec 4, Taipei City (台北市信義路四段148號). Tonight at 10pm. Entry is NT\$200 with one drink and from 10pm to 11pm admission is two-for-one.

Perpetual Motion promoters Chad Ordoyne and Tristan Newman have added a new night to the mix. "I think the scene is about to explode," says Ordoyne. "Everyone has been holed up over the winter creating new music. We're quite fortunate, in Taiwan, to have so many talented people all around us."

They recently launched Perpetual Thursdays at China White, which features free drinks for women until midnight and a different music genre each week. The first was funk, and yesterday's was rock, played not by DJs, but local musicians Mac Wooley, Nathan Javens, David Vorster and Dan Plimmer.

"I know there are many different genres that I like and don't always get to enjoy on a Thursday night out with friends," says Ordoyne. "This way, there will be something for everyone."

Next week it's electronica with Fratuzki and Schism.

Perpetual Thursdays 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). Entry is NT\$100 for women and NT\$200 for men. Every Thursday from 10pm until 3am.

— TOM LEEMING

## [ EVENTS &amp; ENTERTAINMENT ]

Veteran jazz combo JEG (這個爵士樂團) plays standards, Latin, funk, rock and fusion tonight at **Riverside Cafe (河岸留聲)**. Tomorrow the venue hosts its 2009 White Day Music Concert, while the **Wen Rhythm Jazz Band** takes to the stage on Sunday. Newcomers **io** open up for alt-rock group **Neon** on Thursday.

► 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  
► Show starts at 9:30pm tonight and 9pm tomorrow, Sunday and Thursday  
► Entrance is NT\$400 tonight and tomorrow, NT\$450 on Sunday and NT\$350 on Thursday, includes one drink

Tomorrow at **Riverside Live House (西門紅樓展演館)**, pop singer **Victor Wong (冠斌)** performs at the venue's White Day Party. Dress code is white.  
► 177 Xining S Rd, Taipei City (台北市西寧南路177號). Call (02) 2370-8805 or visit www.riverside.com.tw for more information  
► Show starts at 8:30pm  
► Entrance fee is NT\$500, includes one drink.

Jazz Your Mind plays tonight at **Sappho de Base**, while **Blues Vibrations**, a band that plays blues, surf rock and jam band music, performs tomorrow night. On Tuesday it's the venue's open jam, and on Wednesday the **Chris Stiles Jazz Trio** performs original music. **Grace's Jazz Trio** appears on Thursday.  
► 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 for more information  
► 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 **Huang Chung-yuan (黃中原)** tomorrow, **Julia Peng (彭佳慧)**, a major draw who appears every Tuesday, and **Liu Wei-zen (劉偉仁)** on Tuesday and 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 for more information  
► 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

**Mortal Jolies** and **Hi-Life Wedding** appear tonight at **Underworld (地下社會)**. Taking to the stage tomorrow are punk band **Inhuman Species (非人物種)** and **Dangzai Kongzhong (蕩在空中)**. On Wednesday it's metal rockers **Y-Chromosome (攜圖童)** and screamo band **Vanish**.  
► 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 for more information  
► Shows are from 9:30pm to 11:30pm and 9pm to 11pm on Wednesdays. Bar open from 9pm daily, closed on Mondays  
► Entrance is NT\$300 tonight and

tomorrow and includes one drink; Wednesday's show is NT\$100

## Exhibition

The natural cycle of growth and decay informs **The Day I Saw Past and Future Sceneries Playing (那天我看見昨天和明天風景在遊戲)**, a solo exhibition by Jang Tang-kuh (張堂輝). Employing a visual aesthetic that harks back to a Japanese-style of painting called *nihonga*, Jung's pastoral canvases depict scenes of overgrown gardens, running brooks and mountains shrouded in mist.  
► 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 Tuesdays to Sundays from 11am to 6:30pm. On the Net: www.artmap.com.tw  
► Saturday until April 8

**Li An-cheng Solo Exhibition (晨暮中的行星—李安成當代水墨跨年開展)** features 50 works by one of Taiwan's foremost ink painters.  
► Soaring Cloud Art Center (上雲藝術中心), 7F, 11 Dayung Rd, Kaohsiung City (高雄市大勇路11號7樓). Open Tuesdays to Fridays from 11am to 6pm and Saturdays and Sundays from 10am to 8pm. Tel: (07) 533-1755. On the Net: www.sca-art.org.tw  
► Until March 29

**Explore** is a group exhibition that includes works by Hubert Cance, Iskren Semkov and Luiz Cavalli. The artists hailing from France, Bulgaria and Brazil use abstraction, expressionism and realism to "explore" landscape and still life.  
► X-Power Gallery, 98, Xinyi Rd Sec 4, Taipei City (台北市信義路四段98號). Open Mondays to Thursdays from 11am to 6pm and Fridays and

Saturdays from 11am to 8pm. Tel: (02) 2708-0929. On the Net: www.xpgallery.com.tw  
► Until March 31

The Yingge Ceramics Museum investigates the human form in **Passionate Beings: Contemporary Ceramics of Museum Collection (多情·人—當代陶瓷典藏展)**, an exhibit that brings together 35 sculptures from its permanent collection.  
► Yingge Ceramics Museum (鶯歌陶瓷博物館), 200 Wenhua Rd, Yingge Township, Taipei County (台北縣鶯歌鎮文化路200號). Open Tuesdays to Fridays from 9:30am to 5pm and Saturdays and Sundays from 9:30am to 6pm. Tel: (02) 8677-2727. On the Net: www.ceramics.tpc.gov.tw  
► Until April 19

**Easy Plastics** is a group exhibition by 11 up-and-coming Taiwanese artists who use sculpture, installation and design to investigate plastic and its metaphorical applications to our society.  
► Taipei National University of Arts, Guandu Museum of Arts (台北藝術大學關渡美術館), 1 Xueyuan Rd, Beitou Dist, Taipei City (台北市北投區學園路1號). Open Tuesdays to Sundays from 10am to 5pm. Tel: (02) 2896-1000 X2432. On the Net: kdmofa.tnua.edu.tw  
► 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 Mondays.

On the Net: www.nmns.edu.tw  
► Until May 17

**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 Mondays. On the Net: www.nmns.edu.tw  
► Until May 31

**The Art and Aesthetics of Form: Selections from the History of Chinese Painting (造型與美感—中國繪畫的發展)**. Beginning with the Six Dynasties period and moving up to the Qing Dynasty, is a selection of individual works from the National Palace Museum's collection of ink paintings arranged chronologically to provide an overview of some of the major traditions and movements in Chinese painting.  
► National Palace Museum (國立故宮博物院), 221, Zhisshan Rd Sec 2, Shilin Dist, Taipei City (台北市士林區至善路二段221號). Open Tuesdays to Sundays from 9am to 5pm, closes at 8:30pm on Saturdays. Tel: (02) 2881-2021. On the Net: www.npm.gov.tw  
► Until March 25

**Madden Reality: Post-Taipei Art Group (叛離與象：後台北畫派)** features 72 works by eight of Taiwan's most well-respected contemporary artists.  
► 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 Tuesdays to Sundays from 9:30am to 5:30pm, closes at 8:30pm on Saturdays. Tel: (02) 2595-7656. On the Net: www.tfam.museum  
► Until April 5

## Shaburi Sushi (紗舞縞壽司屋)

Address: GF, 39, Fuxing S Rd Sec 1, Taipei City (台北市復興南路一段39號1樓)

Telephone: (02) 2731-7918

Open: Weekdays 11am to 9:30pm; closes at 10pm on weekends

Average meal: NT\$500

Details: Chinese, Japanese and English menu; credit cards accepted

The diminutive Shaburi Sushi stands like a display case on Breeze Center's ground floor, surrounded by larger restaurants on three sides and the shopping center's makeup floor just outside of its entrance. Despite the somewhat cramped surroundings, Shaburi Sushi is neatly decorated, with a large sushi bar in the front and several tables tucked into its back dining room.

Shaburi Sushi's menu centers around three set menus which cost NT\$399, NT\$599 or NT\$799 each. Diners select two types of seafood from the list for each price and how they want it prepared: as sashimi, sushi or donburi (rice topped with seafood and vegetables). The most expensive set looked promising, with a selection of delicacies including premium tuna belly, akagai or "bloody clam," barracuda, abalone and Japanese sea urchin. We selected the tuna belly and sea urchin. Our sashimi arrived promptly, but it was missing the urchin, which our waiter quickly brought over in a separate bowl when we pointed out the error.

Each set's entree is filled out with seafood selected by Shaburi Sushi. In our case, it was slices of amberjack sashimi. The portion of tuna belly was slender — three small slices — but reasonable, considering the price of the meal, and fresh and tasty. On the other hand, the large pieces of amberjack were lackluster. Our sashimi was served on a bowl of ice, which hardly seemed necessary considering the fact that the fish had been chilled to the point that my dining companion wondered if the slices were still thawing out. They weren't frozen, but cold enough that it affected the taste and texture of the fish. The sea urchin, on the other hand, was delicious. Each ocher-colored strip was plump and firm, and had a wonderfully sweet flavor somewhat reminiscent of honeydew. To round out our meal, we ordered a carafe of hot sake (白鶴青酒, NT\$160).

Each set comes with your choice of salad (fruit, yam noodle or tofu), miso soup, white rice and dessert. Our fruit salad had slices of dragon fruit and melon drizzled with a very tangy ginger dressing and served on top of iceberg lettuce and cherry tomatoes. The dessert was a sweet red bean and black rice soup that was comfortingly warm after our very cold slices of sashimi.

The selections of fish for the two less expensive sashimi sets still look invitingly lush: options include sweet shrimp and cobia fish (for the NT\$399 set) and salmon belly, mantis shrimp and Sakhalin surf clam (for the NT\$599 set). Shaburi Sushi says its seafood is flown in daily, which may explain why it was out of seasonal items like akagai by 7:30pm on the Sunday we visited.

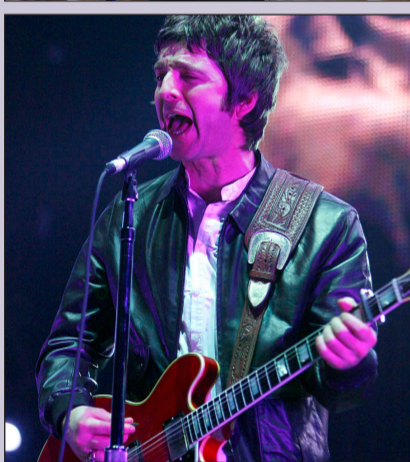
The restaurant also serves a modest selection of sushi rolls, including California, grilled tuna and rainbow rolls, which are available in a carte or in a set meal. We ordered a rainbow roll (彩虹細卷, NT\$280). The slices of sashimi on top of the row were garnished with sparkling spheres of ikura, or salmon roe, and it was filled with cucumber and asparagus instead of the more usual avocado and imitation crabmeat.

— CATHERINE SHU



Shaburi Sushi's sashimi set.

PHOTO: RON BROWNLOW, TAIPEI TIMES



Liam, top, and Noel Gallagher are, er, looking back in anger at China.

PHOTOS: AP AND EPA