

# SHANGHAI

In this month's Expat Files, *Anne Lim* talks to Melbourne-born restaurateur **Michelle Garnaut**, whose love affair with Shanghai began when she opened M on the Bund eight years ago.



I live in **Embankment House**, a 1930s apartment building funded by Shanghai legend Sir Victor Sassoon. It was once the largest apartment building in the city and has a fantastic view overlooking Suzhou Creek and the lights of the city.

I like the energy of Shanghai, the optimism of the people, the sense that anything is possible and, of course, its inimitable "style". But there are a few things I don't like. It's still quite a transitory place: friends – both expats and locals – are always leaving. And the fact that beautiful historic buildings keep going down. Ultimately, it is a very urban place and there are no nature spots or beaches close by – you can't go on a long hike in the country on the weekend, as you can in Hong Kong.

October is when Shanghai is at its absolute best. The Chinese say that autumn is the best time of the year, but personally I like it most during the holidays when everyone clears out!

My quintessential Shanghai experiences start with antique shopping at **Cangbao Antiques Market** (457 Fangbang Lu, near Henan Lu). Eating dumplings at **Nanxiang Dumpling House** (Yuyuan Bazaar, Old Town) is right up there, along with Shanghainese **Nanling Restaurant** (168 Yueyang Lu, by Yongjia Lu). Drinking tea at the **Song Fang Maison de The** (227 Yongjia Lu,

near Shaanxi Nan Lu) is a special treat when I've got time.

I love biking in the laneways of the **French Concession** district. Try warming up with a stroll in cute little Fuxing Park before getting on your bike and heading out along the 7km route ([www.shmag.cn/feature/free\\_wheeling](http://www.shmag.cn/feature/free_wheeling)).

My favourite sight in the city is the **Bund** (pictured), which loosely translates as "embankment". It's always so full of life and there's always something unpredictable happening somewhere along its length.

There are so many new shops opening in Shanghai all the time, so when I need to shop I call my friend Francine Martin at **East of the Sun**. She's a shopping guide, has impeccable taste and always knows exactly where to send me. Or, better still, I get her to take me ([www.eastofthesun-asia.com](http://www.eastofthesun-asia.com)).

My favourite galleries are the **Shanghai Urban Planning Exhibition Hall** (100 Renmin Dadao, People's Square; [www.supec.org](http://www.supec.org)). And the myriad of galleries at **Moganshan Lu** are lovely if you like old warehouse backdrops contrasted with a wealth of artistic forms.

**The Glamour Bar**, my own establishment at M on the Bund (7th Floor, 20 Guangdong Lu Corner; [www.m-restaurantgroup.com](http://www.m-restaurantgroup.com)) is a great venue for meeting friends. My other choice

would be **DR Bar** (15 North Block), a very minimalist, American-designed bar in the sexy district of Xintiandi.

For music, there are a ton of places in Shanghai now. I really like the **JZ Club** (46 Fuxing Xi Lu; [www.jzclub.cn](http://www.jzclub.cn)) on a Sunday night when the "oldies" play, though they're still all quite young in reality.

I love to walk the backstreets of **Hongkou** at 6am when the city is coming to life and breakfast foods are being cooked and sold all over the city. Then I like heading into one of the big parks, such as **Lu Xun**, which has a boating lake and beautiful landscaped areas.

Picnics are very simple here. All you have to do is go to a street stall and buy some traditional cold noodles or anything that takes your fancy. Ask for it *da bao* (very useful words meaning "takeaway"), then find something interesting to look at in the park, sit down and dig in.

