

# LOCALTalk

## 248 TAIKANG LU

The renaissance of Taikang Lu continues... Not that the place ever really went away. It's just that, for a while there, dozens more column inches were written about the city's art street in the north, Moganshan Lu, or about new entertainment enclaves like Tongren Lu. But if the closest

you've come to exploring Taikang Lu lately is the (admittedly excellent) Wednesday night Aussie BBQ at Kommune, then go back on the weekend for a better look. In particular, plunge down some of the back alleys – particularly 248 Taikang Lu – where plenty of new and notable boutiques and cafes can be found.

Talk's **Emma Lloyd** stumbled upon some highlights.



### No. 30 - Nuzi

New Zealand and Australia combine forces at Nuzi, with the result being some very cool merchandise. Walking by the shop front, a wooden garden bench will definitely catch your eye. It's just one of many great designs available from a quirky collection of tables, chairs, light shades and more. Check out the website and follow the link to David Inubridge's designs. The shop also sells accessories, books, gifts, art and wine and hosts a weekly wine night where you can sample some fine New Zealand plonk. Tel: 5464 3245. Web: [www.nuzi.com.cn](http://www.nuzi.com.cn)

### No. 39 - Discover

What you'll discover here is an ideal place to pick up some high-quality Chinese souvenirs for friends and family back home. Because the quality is good, the prices can be a little steep, so some attempts at negotiation may be in order. There are loads of cute mobile phone hangers (RMB 95) and good luck tassels (RMB 480), as well as necklaces and brooches, and other knickknacks. Tel: 13910007353. Email: [discover\\_39@hotmail.com](mailto:discover_39@hotmail.com)

### No. 42 - Bohemia

If your weary legs need a break from shopping, Bohemia is a great bet. Sit outside and enjoy the surroundings, or opt for a cosy table inside. The food is satisfying and inexpensive: main meals and breakfasts start from RMB 40. And the cakes are divine: blueberry pie, chocolate fudge brownie, apple cake, banana cake, cheesecake, vanilla cookies and cream cake – all for just RMB 20 with a scoop of ice cream or cream. Those seeking extra indulgence can order a chocolate fondue for two (RMB 60). Tel: 6410 0065. Web: [www.bohemiashanghai.com](http://www.bohemiashanghai.com)

### No. 46 - Vervia

"Innovative lifestyle design" is the motto of Vervia; and, indeed, this charming shop is crammed with garments, jewellery, housewares, stationery and other goodies from inventive artisans, photographers and craftsmen from Asia and abroad. Classy, but not classic, is Vervia's rule-of-thumb for stocking their shelves. Have the concept for a pair of earrings or a set of martini glasses dancing in your head? Vervia's designers can make it happen. All you have to do is ask. Tel: 5468 7832. Email: [shop\\_vervia-house.com](mailto:shop_vervia-house.com)



### No. 49 - By Ying's Fashion Studio

This studio showcases the work of two local designers. It's a small, contemporary boutique which fits right in with the arty atmosphere of Taikang Lu. The racks are full of stylish little numbers, perfect for even the most fashion-conscious reader. As a guide, you can expect to pay anything from RMB 500 up to 1000 plus. Four figures will secure you a tailor-made dress, excellent for cocktail parties or a night on a Bund terrace. Tel: 5468 7860. Web: [www.fungchua3006.com](http://www.fungchua3006.com)



### No. 50 - Yutaki

If you're all oppe'd out, try a taste of Japan instead and buy yourself a kimono. Yutaki has racks of kimonos which are beautiful not only because of their designs, but because they're one size fits all. The most stunning (and most expensive) is a gold kimono displayed on the wall. You can also have a dress or shawl fashioned out of the kimono material and tailored to fit, a nice compromise between luxury and practicality. Tel: 6467 7948. Email: [apanyutaki@hotmail.com](mailto:apanyutaki@hotmail.com)



### No. 47 - Miss Ginger Indochine

Another Ginger has opened, this time on the lane corner of 248 Taikang Lu. Not surprisingly, it's a relaxed and very funky space of red highlight, with a great menu of pastas, sandwiches, soups, main meals and desserts. But there's also a hefty southeast Asian influence (hence the name) evident in an assortment of Vietnamese and Thai-style tapas: spring rolls, satays, rice paper rolls. It's hard to fault Ginger. Tel: 5465 7353. Web: [www.gingercafe.cn](http://www.gingercafe.cn)



### No. 41 - SQ Décor

For stylish ornaments for the home, SQ Décor may be the pick of the boutiques on this part of Taikang Lu. There are unmistakable Chinese, Japanese and Korean influences in all of the teapots, bowls, candles and cushions that line the shelves, any of which will bring an instant touch of style and elegance to a room. The South Korean owner is an established designer whose creations have been used in leading hotels. Prices range from just RMB 35 up to almost 1000. Another SQ Décor boutique can be found on Fuxing Xi Lu. Tel: 5462 3260. Email: [sqdecor@gmail.com](mailto:sqdecor@gmail.com)

### Also ...

The following shops can be found along the shikumen wall opposite Yutaki (No. 50, left). Note that the address of these four locations is actually 210 Taikang Lu rather than 248.

#### No. 14 - There Art Studio

If art is on your shopping list, there's a multitude of studios in Taikang Lu. Slip through the stone archway into There Art Studio and you'll find a host of original paintings and sculptures, many with an abstract twist, and all produced by the shop's owners. The sculptures are comical and well deserve a spot in the house somewhere. Paintings can be bought for as little as RMB 300, up to tens of thousands of renminbi.



#### No. 15 - Tian Zi Fang Handmade Leather Workshop

Looking for a quality leather bag, belt or shoe? This place will sort you out. As you wander around the shop checking out the goods, you yourself will be scooped out by the little terrier who patrols the aisles. Once you've passed his inspection, you're free to examine the craftsmanship of the leatherworkers in action. If you don't see something you, ask to have something tailor-made.

#### No. 16 - Lucy

For more traditional artwork, have a meander around Lucy. Their original oil paintings are painted in traditional style by contemporary Chinese artists. Paintings start at about RMB 1000, up to a whopping RMB 40,000. If you had something a little less elaborate or expensive in mind, Lucy also sells cute bags, picture frames and ornaments in a small area behind the main gallery.

#### No. 18 - Angel's Pearls and Jewellery

The pearls here are sourced from the shop's own oyster farm – look for the photos on the wall. There's even a jar in the corner with a few oysters working away to produce the next lot of beautiful necklace decorations. Speaking of which, all the pieces are handmade and they come in a variety of styles and designs. The owner – who we'll assume is named Angel – is eager to help (without being pushy). Earrings are typically RMB 20, and a necklace can cost anywhere from RMB 60 to 380. Bring your haggling hat, because you can definitely barter here.