

# DINING



MAGNIFICENT VIEW CAPITAL

## CAPITAL BITES

TOM O'MALLEY IS EATING OUT OF DOORS

Me in Beijing can be summed up in two words: *al fresco*. Restaurants around town have swept away five months of winter grime from terraces and emptied Lotus Flower Market of decorative *zhua* (bamboo), hanging baskets and the ubiquitous *liu* (bowing "green king") potted plants.

Unsurprisingly, the most eagerly awaited outdoor space belongs to **Capital M**. For the first time, diners can enjoy the signature pavilion in the open air, with a side order of eye candy—Tiananmen Square, Zhongnanhai and the Gate of Heavenly Peace. Views of both Hushu Lake and the majestic Drum & Bell Towers make the terrace at Vietnamese restaurant **Maqui** a lovely setting, and **Crystal** at the Emperor Hotel has a wooden rooftop overlooking the forbidden city. **Autor Grill**

at the St. Regis boasts a terrace planted with lavender, vanilla and other herbal herbs, and both **Orsaerrie Flo** and Italian restaurant **Assagi** have upper-floor patios well worth a sunny afternoon.

For livelier rooftop dining, how about Peking duck and Yangjiao at **Xiao Wang Yu** by Yuan Park's North Gate? Or try Jiugulou's busy strip of restaurants, starting from French-Vietnamese joint **Le Little Saigon** and heading north past hip chicken-wing dives. Close by, **Nanluoguo Xiang** tends to be a great spot for food with a view, but this year's rental hikes and closures have cast a dark shadow. Still, you can probably enjoy a cinnamon muffin and grande latte at a **Starbucks** there, too.

Back on terra firma, **Dali Courtyard**, with its summery Yunnan flavors and garden setting is wildly popular with

foreigners, but for a brand-new Yunnan courtyard restaurant we think is even better, see page 2. And if you want to impress a date with a true hidden gem, dine in the ornamental Chinese garden at the **Changfu New Otani Hotel**.

If picnics are your thing, Chuyang Park (across the lake), Temple of Heaven (north side) and the Old Summer Palace are three of the best spots in town. Instead of buying pricey Jenny Lou's-style fusions, go to your local **jiuchang** (family-style Chinese restaurants) and get a take-away order of **dafenghuo** (literally "big harvest"), a selection of raw julienned veggies with a dipping sauce; **peiyu shan**, thinly sliced stewed beef; and **congyoubing**, scallion pancakes. And hurry up about it. In a matter of weeks, we'll all be indoors again covering under the air-con.

## NIBBLES

### ARRIVALS

**Toro Bar** in 1949—The Hidden City is now open for business. It keeps the pastries and libanos of former tenant **Sugar Bar** with gourmet Japanese offerings like barbecued Kobe beef, truffle-vidon noodles, shrimp tempura and green tea ice cream.

**Manana Fish**, a Pan-Pacific grill restaurant, has opened above **White Rabbit** in Sanlitun. Its centerpiece is a robata grill, a Japanese cooking method involving hot coals and a bed of sand. Coincidentally, the same type of grill can be found at **Rak Manza**, a new Japanese joint just west of The Place. And both sell mackerel for RMB 10, daily.

**Barolo**, the fine-dining Italian restaurant at the **Ritz-Carlton**, mentions an excellent new head chef **Massimo Maggioni**. A protégé of triple Michelin-starred Marco Pierre White, he's cooked for everyone from the Sultan of Brunei to footballer Frank Lampard.

After a brief hiatus, **Bludapest** is open and back under Hungarian management, with a native chef to boot. (Egyszerestül? To your health! ... or something like that.)

Following news that cupcake mania has finally imploded in the West, **Lollipop Bakery** has just opened in Beijing. Their delicate creations are iced to order at RMB 200-220/dozen. E-mail: [cupcakeapi@lollipopbakery.cn](mailto:cupcakeapi@lollipopbakery.cn) for more info.

### DEPARTURES

The **Legation Quarter**, Beijing's trendiest restaurant zone, suffered another blow in April with the departure of **The Meat & Wine Co.** (winner of "Best Steak" in our 2010 Reader Restaurant Awards) with Cantonese joint **Zuo 1902** next on its heels. This leaves just **Maison Bonnet** and **Mitsukoshi Saffier** clinging on at the site of the original US Embassy. **Agua**, **Shiro Masala** and **Fac Bar** closed late last year due to rental disputes.

Rental hikes of up to 400 percent on **Nanluoguo Xiang** have caused havoc among longstanding restaurant tenants. **Rich Nation** and **Mirch Masala** have already given up, and Korean restaurant **Savrem de Corée** says it will close too when its current lease expires.

### NEW MENUS

The trend of tartly savory nibbles continues. Popular Moroccan restaurant **Argana** has launched a tapas menu that includes chorizo à la plancha, paprika king prawns, anchovy bruschetta, jamon ibérico and more.

## Dining – Nibbles

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