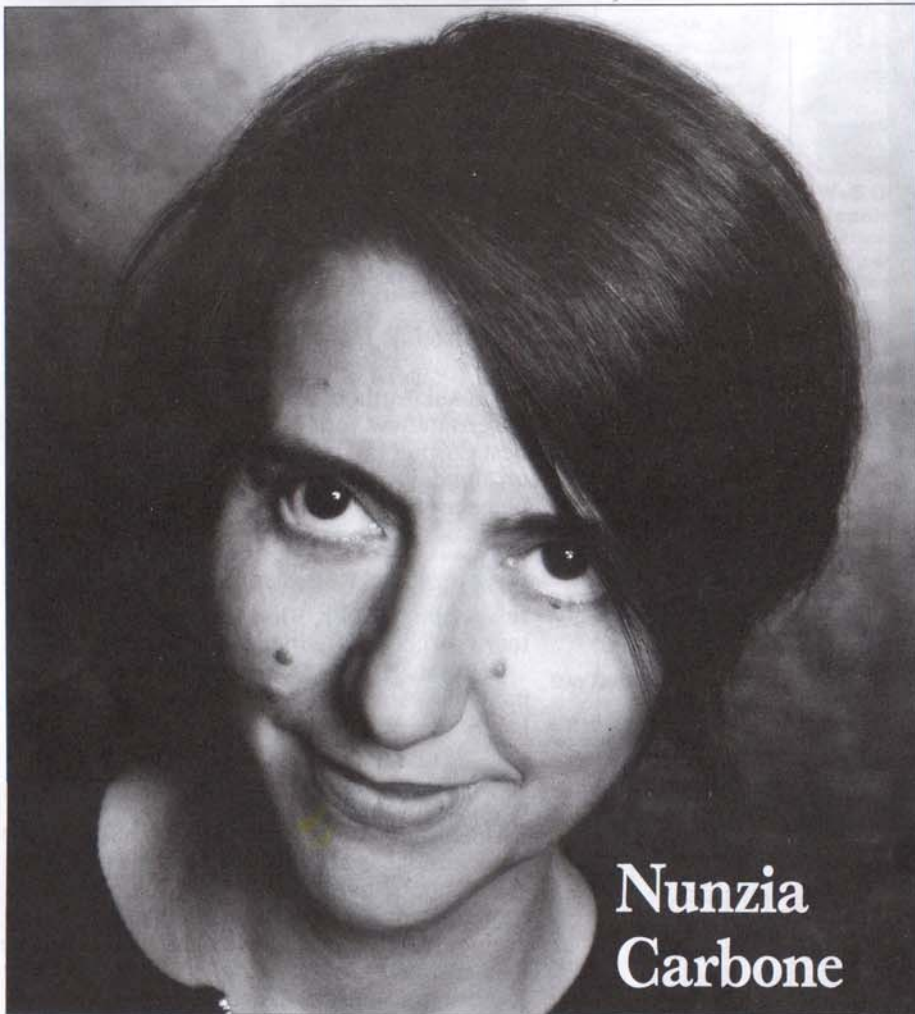


Milan Expo brings Italian community to the fore

申城的意式生活



Nunzia Carbone

Editor's Note

More than a quarter of the foreign residents in China live in Shanghai, with many of them calling the city their second home. Foreigners have long had an impact on the cultural history and diversity of Shanghai. Their presence offers fascinating glimpses into the differences and similarities of cultural influences. Every month, iDeal talks with some of those expats about the fun and frustrations of living in a different culture.

This month our attention turns to Italy, where the Milan World Expo has just opened. There are around 5,000 Italian expats living in Shanghai. Most of them work for Italian companies or corporations from other countries.

To many Chinese, Italy is synonymous with sun-kissed vineyards, Mediterranean cuisine, creative fashion design, music, art and architecture. An increasing number of authentic Italian restaurants, wine lounges and gelato shops have opened in the city, offering Shanghai residents a taste of the renowned "boot of Europe."

We explore the delights of Italy in a tale of two cities: Milan and Naples.

(Yang Di)



1984 Bookstore on Hunan Road

Where do you find artworks and books in Shanghai?

I support artists working with Aike Dellarco Gallery, ShangArt and James Cohan Gallery. I buy books and magazines from small independent bookstores, such as 1984 Bookstore on Hunan Road.

Where do you source furniture?

For furniture I like Moroso, Cappellini and Knoll classics. I also like to visit the old antique dealers on Yongjia Road and Wuyuan Road.

Where do you go shopping?

I buy my clothes anywhere I see something I like. In Shanghai I like to have things custom made by my friend Han Feng in her studio.

MILAN & SHANGHAI

A TALE OF TWO CITIES

City's contrasts charm architect

WHEN Milan architect Nunzia Carbone came to Shanghai in 2001 to supervise a project for her studio practice, she fell in love with the city and decided to stay.

"I found Shanghai big, loud, chaotic and also profound, charming, intense, mysterious and exciting," she said. "I was not overwhelmed by the size of Shanghai per se. I love big cities. What intrigued me most was the extraordinary contrast of Shanghai's street life, like butcher shops displaying hanging meats and Buddhist temples where people burn incense and eat vegetarian food. I was even amazed by the thousands of people who stood at a crossing at People's Square, waiting for the green walk light."

She was also taken with the city's art. The first work she bought was by contemporary Chinese artist Xu Zhen, entitled "29 Question Marks." The work, she said, visualizes that emotion and evokes the intimacy and silence of the city's back lanes.

Carbone said she has found some of the architecture in the city fascinating.

"My favorite buildings are the World Financial Center and the new Shanghai Tower in Pudong New Area," she said. "I also like the older structures of the Longhua Temple and Jade Temple. The Children's Palace on Yan'an Road and Yongfu Elite on Yongfu Road are also charming places."

Asked about the food and wine scene in the city, Carbone said it's often difficult to find excellent Italian ingredients such as extra-virgin olive oil, premium wines and Italian durum wheat pasta.

"The quality of the Italian cheeses, salamis and prosciuttos are not quite the same — yet," she said.

For her, Italian cuisine is about simplicity and directness, intensifying the flavor of each ingredient.

"When I am at home, I really like to cook for friends," Carbone said. "I love to make special dishes with home-made pasta, cuttlefish or risotto with saffron and golden leaf."

Carbone opened her own architectural studio Dedodesign in Shanghai in 2001. Her firm has been designing Maserati showrooms in China and East Asia.

"I'm also very interested in urban farming and sustainable agriculture," she said. "Dedodesign is acting as a consultant for Anhui Province in designing eco-cities and smart buildings. We are also developing some innovative and sustainable urban farming projects to create a green network in a place called Edible Cities."

Carbone said she spends weekends walking around Shanghai's small streets and picturesque lanes, especially in leafy neighborhoods.

"I love the plane trees and the fragrance of magnolias and camellias," she said. "They remind me of home."



Architect Nunzia Carbone's apartment in Shanghai is adorned with her designs such as the suspension lamp and stainless steel table, along with a collection of Chinese statuettes, a Chinese cabinet and art work by John Armleder.