

A budget bar for the post-crisis set



Not Me in Xuhui District has ditched the high-priced table formula. Sam Riley pops in.

Despite being set in one of Shanghai's more pricey neighborhoods, the new Xuhui District watering hole Not Me is aiming to attract the budget-conscious crowd with cheap drinks and an indie music focus.

The futuristic-looking bar was the home of a seedy-looking "talking bar" before it was revamped under the ownership of Indonesian owner Sam Liem and his local partner Jacky Shao.

With beers from just 20 yuan (US\$2.93) and standard mixes 30 yuan, Shao says the bar has ditched the standard dicing and high-priced table formula of other bars and clubs and is aiming to hook into thrifty post-financial crisis partygoers.

"People who want to go for a party at a bar or club find it is too expensive, so when set up we wanted to provide a different

kind of thing from high-priced clubs with expensive entry prices and high charges for tables," he says.

The bar had a soft opening two months ago and held its grand opening party last Friday.

Aiming to fit somewhere in between the bar and the nightclub scene, Shao says they wanted Not Me to feel more like a "party room" than a club or bar.

In keeping with the feel, the bar can be divided into several rooms and its main dance floor area has sleek 1970s style booths and white cocoon-like walls.

"We wanted the dance floor to be big — in other clubs the tables take up all the space," Shao says.

"We also wanted the dance floor area to feel like a cocoon and give it an egg-like feel."

Shao was a customer service manager at the Hilton and he says he met his business partner Liem



The new watering hole Not Me in Xuhui District is a bargain bar with a club style. — Dong Jun

at the hotel.

The partners had initially wanted to open an Italian restaurant in Xintiandi but saw a gap in the market for a stylish, low-cost bar.

"While it is a very different environment to the Hilton, some of the things are still the same, I still have a focus on customers and service," he says.

"We really want it to be a place that will be full of our friends, where people can come here to enjoy a party and a good atmosphere."

Australian Reggie Laxative or R3 as he is known as a DJ, is the public relations bugle for the bar and has also helped chart its

musical course.

With a dedicated indie music night on Thursdays the bar has nailed its indie colors to the mast and hopes to stand out from the house and hip-hop dominated club scene in Shanghai.

With venues like The Shelter showing the benefits of straying off the accepted path of dicing and top 40 hip-hop, Not Me is hoping to meet a growing demand for indie music, which is being fuelled by the resurgent live music scene in Shanghai.

"We think there is a huge gap in the market for this type of indie music, and the live music scene has shown that there is a big demand out there for this," he says.

"We want to help the kids who want to hear something that isn't house or electro."

The bar will feature local DJ duo Bai Jiu Robot with guest DJs on Fridays and will have regular weekly guest DJs.

For the hardy early week drinkers, Monday and Tuesday nights represent thirst quenching value. Mondays is all you can drink for 50 yuan and Tuesdays has 10 yuan beers and standard mixers.

The bar also has an outdoor area and plans to display works from young local artists.

Address: 21 Dongping Rd
Hours: 6pm until late
Reservations: 6433-0760

Dinner at 8, followed by a murder

Sam Riley

A SHANGHAI restaurant will become a crime scene and the diners will turn into detectives when local experimental theater group Zuloo Productions holds its first murder mystery night tomorrow.

Diners will have to guess who the culprit is from a cast of nine who use the restaurant as the setting for a murder that occurs at a glamorous Hollywood party.

"It's a very light-hearted atmosphere that we want to create. People can have a laugh, interact with the actors in a different way and feel like they have

done something a little different in Shanghai," Zuloo founder Zsuzsi Lindsay says.

The murder mystery dinner party will be held at Purple Restaurant and Wine Bar, and the actors have been rehearsing the three-act play that was specifically written for a murder mystery genre party.

Between acts, the players will answer questions from the audience. There is no stage and all the action taking place within the restaurant.

"You need the right venue so people can see what is going on, and Purple is a great place to stage this," says one of the event organizers Jos Biber.

The "murder" occurs at a glitzy pre-Oscars party for the fictional film "That's When I Love You."

The players in the drama include typical Hollywood types with directors, costume designers, actors, producers and screen writers all having a motive to commit the murder.

Diners are encouraged to get into the theme and dress like they were at a glamorous Hollywood party.

Zuloo Productions holds regular performances and acting workshops and many of the actors performing in the murder mystery-themed night are from its impromptu theater group.

One of the actors, Jubal



Death becomes them: Crew members from impromptu theater group Zuloo Productions rehearse their roles for the three-act murder mystery dinner party tomorrow night.

Jallaga, who plays a costume designer, says staying in character while interacting with the audience will add to the fun of the event.

"I am playing a costume designer who is also one of the suspects and he is a very flamboyant and outrageous type of character," he says.

It is the first time that Zuloo has staged a murder mystery night and Lindsay says it is a good way of

actors testing their skills as well as having a fun night.

"I have done some small murder mystery evenings but nothing on this scale, with nine characters," Lindsay says.

"From our point of view it is a great way of combining good food, a drink and some good entertainment.

"Usually in Shanghai you usually combine the drinking and eating but we

wanted to provide all three," he says.

The event will cost 150 yuan (US\$22) per head and includes main course meal and a drink.

Date: July 17, 8pm
Venue: Purple Restaurant and Wine Bar, 1333 Huaihai Rd M.

Reservations can be made via email to tickets@zuloo.co.uk or jessica@zuloo.co.uk.