



A short report on the Pootung Excursion May, 2009

To all my dearest friends and beloved Disappearing Corners folks,

We finally did the long awaited Pootung Heritage Tour and it was great! We had a wonderful day thanks to Silvia for allowing us to use her van and also to Mr. Gao, our driver to work for an extra day!

It turns out that the people in the Pootung suburbs are very gentle and friendly; we were lucky to enter all the places (except the former site of Moller's Ship Factory) and take photos freely!

Our first stop was [Qian's Family Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Church](#) on Juli Road. Donated by a local Chinese called Qian Jing Nan and designed by the French priests, the church had its foundation laid in 1864. The church also runs an old people's home within its complex, and we were greeted by an old Shanghainese lady who spoke some English but no Mandarin!

Our 2nd stop was [St. Luke's Church](#) hidden inside the fields on Sheng Xia Road. I discovered this little place one evening while I was running around the area, and according to Father Xie, who we met later during the day, this church will be gone soon to be replaced with a larger and modern church. What a sad thing to know. They hold a mass once a month, but I'll contact the Fathers for special permission one day to enter the building.

Our third stop was the famous [Our Lady of Lourdes Church](#) in Tangzhen. Built in 1897, this church was used as a factory during the 60s and 70s. It underwent a restoration in the early 1990s before it was listed as a protected monument in 2001. It can accommodate 2000 people and the 4.7-meter bell tower boasts good views of the sea and the town. However, we were not fortunate enough to even see a priest who we can ask for permission. Nevertheless, the splendid interior (considering this is Shanghai!) of the church is enough to make our jaws drop... .. You know what? The locals dubbed this area as 'Little Europe'!

On our way to [Chuan Sha Catholic Church](#), we passed by the [former residence of Wang Yan Pei](#), a very traditional Chinese stone house. We didn't know who Wang was, but we love the building and also the narrow alley behind it. There are many small shops along the lane selling daily necessities, handbags, 'antiques', and tons of sex shops (there is a nice Chinglish word for these shops: it is Adult Health Store)!

It took Gao and me some time before we can find Zhongshi Street where the Chuan Sha Catholic Church is hidden. Again we were blessed to enter the 137-year old church without much problems. We were greeted by Father Xie, the caretaker of the church. Originally known as The Sacred Heart of Jesus Church, it was rebuilt in 1879 and expanded again in 1926. Church activities were resumed in 1981. This is definitely a must-see if you're in Chuansha.

The friendly Father showed us the way to our 4th stop on Chao Chang Street—[the former residence of the Chinese architect Tao Gui Song](#). We enjoyed the sights of the basket and antique shops along the way, and we just can't believe many of these old commercial signs (in Traditional Chinese Characters) still exist!

Tao was working in Shanghai in the 1930s and participated in various projects, including the design of a small structure for the New Wing On Building. The 2-storey residence was built in 1930 in a layout of the Chinese character 回, which means RETURN in English. Part of the structure was demolished when we visited it, and although we were able to hear some dishwashing noises coming from the second floor, we were not able to see a shadow of a living human—Father Xie kept yelling 'Is there anyone?', but nobody answered! I don't mean there's something wrong, nor are we going to scare ourselves, it's only a bit sad we couldn't enter the hallways.

We had a short lunch break at the commercial district of Chuan Sha, and alas, the area is packed with people! We thought we were in another city! It's nothing like Shanghai at all, trust me.

We headed to LiuTuan County where our 5th stop, the [QiZao Catholic Church](#) stands. Not disappointing at all, the 600sqm building is a mixture of East and West. The roof tiles and the wooden structure of the interior are built in the style of a Chinese residence, thus Jim, one of our daredevils today, said this building reminds him of Thailand.

After minutes struggling to get out from the labyrinth of the cornfields in LiuTuan County, we headed to our last stop, the former site of [Moller's Ship Factory](#). It was supposed to be something interesting, as the Bauhaus style building was built in around 1938. But this time we weren't that lucky! There were many security guards and strong fences and gates. Again, I think one has to make an appointment in advance to obtain a permission. I'll do it if I have the time in the future.

We ended the day enjoying the views of the Bund and Whampoa River at the Bingjiang Starbucks in Lujiazui. Thanks Carol for treating us!!!

I wish each and every of the DC folks have joined us today, but if you haven't made it this time, I hope you enjoy this short report about our tour!

If you're inspired and you want to set off on your own, you can take a look at our map again at this link: <http://g.co/maps/7wpq6>. Do feel free to drop me a line should you have any questions or need some tips. I'll try my best to tell you everything I know.

A million thanks to the 5 daredevils — Carol, Gerd, Michele, Jim and Silvia for making this tour possible! I look forward to seeing you all again soon.

Coming up next: Poy Gum Lee Walk Tour. Stay tuned for further announcements shortly!

Wish you all a nice week ahead. Take care!

Cheers,
Cíntia

PS I hope I haven't missed out anyone in this email. I tried to include all the most beloved ones here, and please feel free to pass it around if you've got a friend interested to see these weird old stuffs!