

PEARL'S CIRCLES

Diamonds may be a girl's best friend, but the sheer range of possibilities presented at Pearl's Circles leaves visitors happy to dive in for these underwater gems. The moment you step off the escalator, the quantity of jewelry is overwhelming, especially as vendors immediately pounce on their prey. But if you pause, take a deep breath, and remember exactly what you want, the shopkeepers are actually quite friendly and surprisingly honest. They will even take the time to educate you about the subtleties of their assorted pearls. From a range of white, purple, and pink freshwater pearls to white, yellow, and black seawater pearls, you can design your own accessories according to your budget and tastes. Stringed pearls only take a matter of minutes to make, while more complicated designs may take up to an hour. With affordable prices and pearls galore, the world is your oyster.

3/F of First Asia Jewelry Plaza, 288 Fuyou Lu
Shanghai Denise Jewelry Ltd.
上海城隍庙福佑路288号 (6355 3418)

YANG MING VIOLIN STUDIO

Blossoming Paganinis can be grateful that Yang Xujie has devoted his life to creating handmade violins. While violinists express their individuality through music, this talented craftsman designs their instruments with their specific style and needs in mind. Many young students flock to this tiny studio; especially at a growing age, when it's crucial to have a violin that is comfortable and customized. Most pieces are generally carved from pine, but other imported materials of higher quality are available. An instrument designed with the consideration of your measurements and temperament can be a rare treasure.

1363 Fuxing Zhong Lu, near Baoqing Lu
复兴中路1363号, 近宝庆路
(136 5183 2268)
Chinese-speaking only



ESTHER'S BEARS

Have you suffered too many cold and lonely nights craving someone to cuddle? Your isolation can be remedied with a visit to Esther's, where, after just five-to-six hours, you are guaranteed to go home with a soft, starry-eyed companion. Esther's Bears is China's first teddy bear shop, and those interested in delving into a different sort of arts and crafts activity can venture into the world of DIY teddy bears. Materials such as mohair, German-made stuffing, a variety of threads, and yarns for teddy clothes are readily available, as well as instructors who can guide you in forming your teddy's gentle face. These personalized bears are ideal gifts for sentimental friends, but those who are tempted to play Pygmalion will find appeal in creating a customized bed warmer. (Bears cost from RMB 400-800.)

No 23, Lane 248 Taikang Lu (Tianzifang)
泰康路248弄23号 (6473 0645)

THE FLYING CHEF

It's not just about furniture and fashion, your food can also be tailor made in Shanghai, with chef Li "flying" to individual homes in Shanghai with his cooking equipment and passion for cooking. "Whatever Chinese dish you've had before in any restaurant, or you want to have, you name it or describe it for me, I will have it ready for you. Be it spicy tofu or nostalgic hong shao rou" Chef Li said with a confident smile on his face. Having worked in Germany for seven years with education by Swiss management, Chef Li knows most Westerners' tastes like his own pocket. His signature dishes are vegetable spring rolls and beef dumplings, all fresh made from scratch. "Communication is very important. I always ask people about their personal favorite flavors or ingredients, as well as any allergies and things to avoid, when I discuss a menu with them." Li said. "It is hard work. Sometimes I have to make two dinner parties on one afternoon, hurrying to the second dinner party right after I've finished cooking for the first one."

www.flyingchef.cn