



Travel

**Shanghai: Panorama for**

**the Panamera Premiere**

By  
Elmar Brümmer

Photos by  
Simone Schneider

that are crowded into more than 6,300 square kilometers (2,400 square miles)? The only known formula applies to Shanghai's sense of community identity: always faster, bigger, more dazzling.

In a way this is brilliantly symbolized at night by the elevated highways illuminated from below by blue lights: in a nighttime panorama of the city, these roadways resemble pulsating arteries within a body. Mobility highlighted. Pulse rate 180, but not to worry: what strikes us as feverish is well within normal operating range for the Chinese. Life here is perceived as a never-ending endeavor, in which forward is the only direction.

The levels of new buildings get stacked up faster than the tiles in the traditional mah-jongg game. And when the cool colors of the night have yielded to daylight, new facades often gleam where steel frameworks loomed the day before. These facades are usually filled with reflecting windows, because Shanghai definitely likes to nurture its vanity—especially through its growth. It's a passion for innovation, and the dreams apparently continue to reach for the sky. Normal tempo prevails only on the urban highways. When not in a rush, the visitor in the backseat can comfortably ▶

**The number on** the speedometer's digital readout keeps rising: 398, 402, 415, 427 km/h (265 mph). The high-speed rapid transit link made in Germany symbolizes the future of this trendy city. The suspended magnetic tramway effortlessly passes over the airport freeway. Shanghai is proud of itself and of such symbols. And Porsche knows that it takes an extraordinary vehicle to attract attention in China's most exciting, glamorous, and open city. That doesn't make anyone here particularly nervous. And yet the expectations before the "Auto Shanghai" auto show are high. There are few products in the world that people here haven't seen in person yet. The Panamera is one of them.

Speed is the lifeblood of Shanghai in every respect, even when it is sometimes difficult for a soul to keep up. This challenge applies to the size of the population and of the city itself: Is it still 15 million or already 18 million people



**Mega. Giga. Ultra.** It would be difficult to find stronger words to express an increasing scale of extremes. And yet, words seem hardly adequate when used in the context of this city. There seems to be no expression that can keep step with the rapid growth and evolution in Shanghai, China. With so many contrasts and changes, what kind of a city is this metropolis at the Yangtze Delta today? For one thing, Porsche chose it as the location for the world premiere of its new Panamera.



enjoy the fascinating panorama that unfolds—the entrance to the Nanpu Bridge for instance, whose ramps spiral upward like a dragon’s tail. On the opposite side looms the TV tower, its gleaming sphere seemingly teleported directly from a sci-fi novel. Shanghai is living in the future.

“Breathtaking” is another attribute of Shanghai, even in the extreme, and occasionally even literally. Contrasts can certainly be charming, and they are always intriguing. From Mao to Tao. When thousands of people practice tai chi chuan early in the morning in perfect harmony and with almost military precision on the green spots among all the concrete, the Western observer may well believe that he or she has discovered ancient China among all the opulent modernity. Like the calm in the eye of the typhoon, tai chi chuan harmonizes the forces energizing the human body. Growth is not viewed as the only path to feeling free. Tradition has its own value. Hands stretched toward the sky—another such intuitive sign. Meditating in the midst of the maximum turmoil is viewed as the ultimate form of imperturbability. Ninety-eight percent of Shanghai’s citizens are Buddhists. But having fun is equally possible, even early in the morning. Suddenly a boom box emits a rousing tango melody, and now the people in their brightly colored jogging suits are moving in rhythm to the music with grace, as if they were at the Vienna Opera Ball and not on Renmin Square. The Chinese ideograph for joy or happiness (*shuang xi*) is written

(though not pronounced) as two identical characters. That even works quite well as a symbol for the motto “double your fun.”

Metropolises like Shanghai are often called “neon tigers”—always on the go, ready to take the next leap. In the case of Shanghai, the location for the world premiere of the Panamera, that’s not just a cliché. Shanghai has always possessed the soul of a metropolis. Ready for the next change—that’s the spirit in the rival Shanghai districts of Pudong and Puxi, which are separated by the reddish waters of the Huangpu River. Ultramodern Pudong is growing on what used to be a swamp. The older Puxi district just needed to be rediscovered and revitalized. As far back as the end of the nineteenth century, Shanghai positioned itself as a cosmopolitan hub, and during the colonial era it was celebrated as the “Paris of the East.” The surviving facades of that era can be seen especially along the famous waterfront called the “Bund” and in the adjacent quarter that used to be under French administration. It is here where you find the pursuit of pleasure and entertainment—though in a modern interpretation. The vibrant life and endless nights in the club and art scenes are vividly described in the controversial novel *Shanghai Baby* by the Chinese author Wei Hui. As happens often here, the temporary ban of the book only served to fan public interest. In the end, tolerance prevailed. “To survive in Shanghai you need radar vision for the darker side”—a little nugget of wisdom included in the excellent calendar ▶



**The sheer size, the appetite for excitement, the obsession with speed, and the persistent pushing of the envelope determine the pace of a city that seems to have no boundaries with its tens of thousands of high-rise buildings. In what is perhaps the most Western-style city in China, commerce and constant change are responsible for a profound cultural shift of a very different kind. Shanghai stays at the top by continually reinventing itself. Even with all the glitz and the need for speed, elegance remains a priority.** \_\_\_\_\_



## Tips for Shanghai Trips: Surprises always included

### Facts

The administrative zone of Shanghai includes about 18.5 million residents. Since 1949 the population has more than tripled. The city limits enclose an area that's more like a small province—more than seven times the size of Berlin. Ongoing land reclamation projects in the Yangtze Delta will probably increase the area to nearly 6,475 square kilometers (2,500 square miles) soon. Shanghai is an important traffic hub and a significant cultural and educational center.

[www.shanghai.gov.cn](http://www.shanghai.gov.cn)

### Hotels

You check into the Grand Hyatt Shanghai on the 54th floor of the 425 meters-high (1,400-foot) Jin Mao Tower. This is surpassed by the new Park Hyatt, which occupies the 79th through 93rd floors of the Shanghai World Financial Center.

[www.hyatt.com](http://www.hyatt.com)

The 88 Xintiandi is located in the midst of Shanghai's most fashionable tourist quarter. In addition to its unbeatable location, the hotel offers modern design and eschews the gold-marble excesses so popular in China.

[www.88xintiandi.com](http://www.88xintiandi.com)

### Restaurants

In Shanghai, entire districts are dedicated to gastronomy. You can get an overview of the spectrum of Chinese cuisine on the so-called Food Streets.

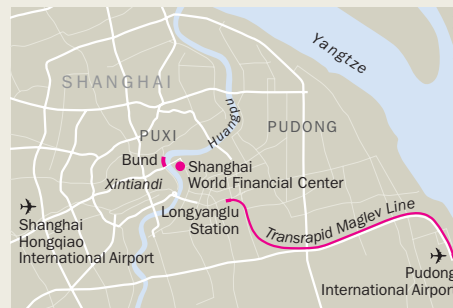
In the scenic Xintiandi district, the trendy “yè shanghai” serves Chinese cuisine that has been modernized by the chef, but without distorting its original appeal. (Phone +86-21-6311-2323)

The “Zen” in Xintiandi is positioned as a posh eatery among ancient walls, serving a cuisine that draws on recipes from all Chinese regions but is also unafraid of coming up with delectable innovations. (Phone +86-21-6385-6385)

The “M on the Bund” is Shanghai's most famous foreign restaurant. Here you can enjoy a Mediterranean dinner on the roof terrace, with a fabulous view of the Bund. (Phone +86-21-6350-9988)

### Sightseeing

The French Quarter extends eastward from Huaihai Lu Street, where the elegant shopping street Avenue Joffre was located during colonial times. The quarter ranks as the most elegant shopping area in China. A great place for taking a walk under the trees is Xinhua Lu Street, which is lined with restaurants, bars, and boutiques. A bit more out of sight you'll find some colonial villas that are worth a visit.



### Porsche Design in Shanghai

In the heart of the city, on Huaihai Middle Road, Porsche Design has created a real eye-catcher. Covering 300 square meters (3,200 square feet), the new Porsche Design Store attracts attention even through its stark, rectilinear architecture. The interior contains a dazzling display of Porsche Design's product program—high-quality men's accessories, including watches, sunglasses, luggage, and leather goods; a sports and fashion collection; and electronic devices.



“Shanghai Profiles” by the Stuttgart photographer Simone Schneider. She plumbed the depths of the city's undreamed-of possibilities for photographic subjects.

The ubiquitous symbol of the dragon represents the immense potential of surprise, which the city itself radiates. The cosmopolitan past and Shanghai's speed of change provide a great backdrop for the Porsche Panamera. The challenge of life in this city can be met only through inner strength. It's time to mark the beginning of a new era. An era built on confidence. ◀

