

Nightlife

Not your average party venue



All aboard (Clockwise from above) Captain Eight, S-Limo and Shanghai Ocean Aquarium

Tired of going to the same clubs and bars? **Sam Gaskin** finds five ways to throw your own party with a difference

Pirate party

Captain Eight, 'The Ship of Dignity', takes groups of up to 300 hearties on Huangpu cruises. Inside, the decor is erudite pirate, with bookshelves, suits of armour and a large model ship called 'The Victory'. The nine private cabins all have KTV set-ups and tables for 10-16. There's also a 200-seat hall with a bar and full AV equipment, including dancefloor lighting.

The deck is split over three levels which makes it vast enough for all 300 guests to party outside at once. Western and Chinese buffet dining for up to 80 people costs 150-300RMB/head, plus a 2,000RMB service fee. That's in addition to the ship rental which costs an arm and a leg - up to 30,000RMB for two to three hours.

Captain Sailer 531 Zhongshan Dong Er Lu, near Jinling Dong Lu, Huangpu district (6355 2722, 139 1853 9468). Open by appointment. ☎ Nanjing Dong Lu. 黄浦区中山山东二路531号, 近金陵东路

Office party

Shared workspace Xindanwei has hosted creative forums and screenings for the 'ideas spreading' conference TED, but it's also available for social functions. Its six levels are staggered front and back in an old, three-storey lane house. There's a lot of raw wood and design flourishes, such as a central stairwell with a column made from recycled wooden shutters.

There are three viable party spaces for rent: Xin Café on the ground floor

Cocktail tables can be set up inside the underwater tunnel

has room for 40 and is available after 10pm; the second floor has a room with a balcony looking out on Yongjia Lu that would work for around 20 people, and a similar sized group could use the slant-ceilinged sixth floor room with a terrace with French Concession views.

The pricing takes some calculation; it's 15RMB/person/hour, with an additional 30 per cent fee for events

after 10pm. For example, the cost for 20 people to party from 8pm until 2am would be 2,340RMB. One way to keep costs down: renters are encouraged to bring their own food and drink.

Xindanwei 50 Yongjia Lu, near Shaanxi Nan Lu, Xuhui district (3428 0783). Open 9.30am-6.30pm, Mon, 9.30am-11pm, Tues-Fri, 2pm-11pm, Sat-Sun. ☎ Shaanxi Nan Lu. 徐汇区永嘉路50号, 近陕西南路

On the road

Grand China Travel rents out Kinglong coaches with capacities of 21, 33 and 49 passengers, and are open to the idea of bussing you and your friends on a bar crawl. Six hours on the 21-seat bus costs 1,600 RMB, including fuel and a driver. Bring your own food and booze.

If you want something more high-end, S-Limo offers three models of stretch limousine: a Great Wall SUV (eight people), a Lincoln (10 people) and a Hummer H3 (12 People). Four hours' riding costs 3,000, 3,400 and 6,000RMB respectively for up to 50km, with a surcharge of 5RMB for each additional kilometre.

Grand China Travel (010 8779 2717, info@GrandChinaTravel.com, www.GrandChinaTravel.com)

S-Limo Unit 111, Bldg 2, 300 Baozhen Lu, Chongming Island (5611 7687, contact@s-limo.com). 崇明岛堡镇路300号2号楼111室

Deeper underground

Renting the Shanghai Ocean Aquarium's Deep Ocean Zone gets you both the 100sqm space next to the stingray tank, where there's room for 50 people to sit or 80 to stand, plus access to the 155m-long underwater travelator tunnel, where cocktail tables can be set up.

For a three-hour fixture, the 35,000RMB rental fee includes guided tours and AV support, but no food or drinks. An extra 5,000RMB buys you a diver to appear during the event holding a submerged sign of your design. Last Valentine's Day, 15 men proposed this way.

Shanghai Ocean Aquarium 158 Yincheng Bei Lu, near Lujiawui Ring Road, Pudong (5877 9988; www.sh-soa.com/en/html/area1.html). Open 9am-6pm daily. ☎ Lujiawui. 浦东银城北路158号, 近陆家嘴环路

Arty party

The Deke Erh Art Center, the Shanghai-based photographer's large warehouse space among the lanes of Tianzifang, is available for hire from 8am-8pm.

It costs 7,000RMB to hire for a day, with room for up to 80 guests. They'll also provide free-flow wine for 80RMB/head, and they're happy to leave the art on the walls if you prefer (and undertake not to damage it).

Alternatively, an evening event at M50's OV Gallery costs 4,000RMB. The 175sqm space has high ceilings, gallery-white walls and room for 80-100 guests. They have two projectors and a PA system you can use, plus mixed seating for 50.

Deke Erh Art Center No 2, Lane 210 Taikang Lu, near Ruijin Er Lu, Luwan district (6415 0675). Open 10.30am-6.30pm daily. ☎ Dapugiao.

卢湾区泰康路210弄2号, 近瑞金二路
OV Gallery No 207, Bldg 4, 50 Moganshan Lu, near Aomen Lu, Putuo district (5465 7768; www.ovgallery.com). Open 10am-6pm Tue-Sun daily. ☎ Changshou Lu. 普陀区莫干山路50号, 近澳门路