

MOSAIC

Delivering a little love and care for Chinese New Year

Less than 24 hours after I had placed an online order on Alibaba's Tmall Supermarket, my father-in-law's jubilant voice on the other end of the phone conversation confirmed that everything had been delivered straight to his home in rural Zhejiang province.



Jocelyn Eikenburg
Second Thoughts

Yes, he had received the six bottles of French red wine, the three red-and-gold boxes of assorted Xinjiang dates and walnuts, and the two tins of ginseng — our Chinese

New Year presents for the family. Just as he felt such excitement over receiving the bounty of gifts we had chosen, I was thrilled by the remarkable convenience and ease of the whole online transaction.

Years ago, not a single express delivery company guaranteed next-day shipping straight to someone's door in my in-laws' mountainous rural village, located over 20 kilometers from the more urban county seat. Most orders used to take at least two to three days and usually required a trip by the recipient to the local express delivery station for pickup. But now, I didn't have to worry about whether my father-in-law could possibly lug all those bot-

ties of wine and boxes of dates and walnuts back home from the station by himself, thanks to Tmall Supermarket and their attentive service.

I'm certain my husband Jun's family never imagined that one day, they would receive Chinese New Year goods, known as *nianhuo*, through home delivery. Traditionally, you would present them in person during the holidays. But we won't be able to reunite with the family this year. And Tmall Supermarket's promise to deliver right to their house, the following day, made it the next best way to send them something special for the season. When it comes to giving Chinese

New Year goods, in certain respects, things have really changed in my husband's family, especially in the years since reform and opening-up that filled Jun's childhood. His earliest remembrances of *nianhuo* — white granulated sugar, red dates, *baijiu* liquor and dried lychees — have now given way to more diverse and international offerings, such as boxes of organic milk, imported wines and chocolates, American pecans and European olive oil. I've even observed Chinese New Year goods evolve in the years since I married into his family, witnessing a great variety of products become available with better quality and more dazzling Chinese-style packag-

ing. And now with online shopping, it's possible to send almost any *nianhuo* to anyone in the family, even if you can't be home for the holidays. Yet even with these developments, some things will always remain the same.

After all, the delight we heard over the phone in the words of my father-in-law, so enchanted to see those boxes from Tmall Supermarket, echoed his joy in past years whenever he would see me present *nianhuo* at the table during the family dinner on Chinese New Year's Eve, the most important meal of the year. That's because the true spirit behind giving *nianhuo* has always endured. It's still a gesture

to show love and care for those you cherish above all during China's greatest annual holiday, regardless of whether you're handing it to someone at the scene or shipping it by next-day service through your favorite online store.

But, with any luck, next year's special delivery to the family home will be me and my husband, bringing a little holiday cheer in person.

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XIE WEIMIN / FOR CHINA DAILY

A moment in time:
Fun for festival foodies

A Shanghai store is crowded with people buying Spring Festival goods in 1986. Preparing for the most important family reunion of the year is an age-old tradition for Chinese. The photo (right) shows a woman buying eggs at a Beijing market on Wednesday, ahead of the upcoming Spring Festival.



WANG ZHUANGFEI / CHINA DAILY

The newspaper and beyond

On our Sina Weibo

Terracotta warrior with changing faces removed

A giant model of a terracotta warrior that displayed the faces of passers-by on a street in Xi'an, Shaanxi province, has been relocated after causing controversy. The model appeared in front of the Bell Tower — one of the city's most iconic scenic spots — last week. What intrigued people most was its constantly changing face. According to the local publicity department, the faces were actually those of tourists. A small room located behind the statue was equipped with devices that projected people's features onto the warrior's face.



Retailer caught selling Honor Roll certificates

A store owner in Huai'an, Jiangsu province, has been warned by police for selling fake Honor Roll certificates to students and encouraging them to lie to their parents to obtain more pocket money, Yangtze Evening News reported. The ruse was exposed by a video clip posted online by netizens. The owner sold each certificate for 2 yuan (30 cents).

Spring Festival expenses become a burden

A survey of budgets for the upcoming Spring Festival said the high cost of the holiday imposes a financial burden on many people. More than 37 percent of respondents anticipated that their festival expenses will exceed 10,000 yuan (\$1,490). Nearly half said they will spend more than 2,000 yuan on lucky money, with about 15 percent expecting to shell out more than 5,000 yuan. This year, Spring Festival falls on Tuesday.



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Video: Ambassadors share views on festival

With Spring Festival just around the corner, China Daily sat down with ambassadors and diplomats to discuss their understanding of the country's most important holiday, their outlook on bilateral relations and their New Year greetings to the Chinese people. In the video, Andrei Denisov, Russia's ambassador, talks about his enjoyment of traditional Chinese philosophy, history and theater. Not only has his interest in Peking Opera grown over the years, but his love of Chinese cinema has also deepened.



People: Labor of love for guide dog trainer

Wang Xin, who graduated from a university in Japan with a

doctorate in psychology, works at a base that trains guide dogs in Dalian, Liaoning province. As one of the principals of the base, Wang has worked 16 hours a day for nine years for a monthly salary of just 3,500 yuan (\$522). She decided to become a canine drillmaster because her mother is visually impaired. Since the base was founded in 2006, it has provided 80 percent of the guide dogs used in China.

Rankings: World's most valuable brands

Amazon has been named as the world's most valuable brand, with its value rising 25 percent in 2018 to \$187.9 billion, according to a report by Brand Finance, a brand valuation consultancy in London. Apple ranked second with brand value of \$153.6 billion, followed by Google and Microsoft. However, brands from China climbed the rankings, with the country's total brand value topping \$1 trillion for the first time. The figure accounted for 19 percent of the list's total value, behind only the United States (45.4

percent). Visit our website to learn more.



Culture: Pig exhibition opens in Shanghai

Shanghai Science and Technology Museum recently launched a special exhibition to celebrate the Year of the Pig, introducing the animal's characteristics and cultural background in China. It is one of the 12 symbolic creatures in the Chinese zodiac. The exhibition is divided into four zones: the origins of the pig; how it was domesticated; its physiological characteristics; and its contribution to human life.

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What's on

The Wurttemberg Chamber Orchestra Heilbronn

When: Feb 17, 7:30 pm

Where: National Center for the Performing Arts, Beijing

The Wurttemberg Chamber Orchestra Heilbronn sets high standards with its stylistically confident versatility and ideal of chamber music.

Ruben Gazarian, the orchestra's principal conductor, expanded the standard repertoire in a remarkable way by enlarging the symphonic scale and choosing compositions from the Romantic and Modern eras, as well as avant-garde pieces. He has worked successfully with renowned soloists such as Gautier and Renaud Capucon, Julia Fischer and Hilary Hahn.

In September 2002, Gazarian was laureate at the first Sir Georg Solti International Conducting Competition in Frankfurt, Germany.

Cellist Gabriel Faur has won several competitive events, such as the David Popper International Cello Competition in Hungary and the Johannes Brahms Competition in Austria, and has performed as a soloist and chamber musician.

China National Symphony Orchestra

When: March 17, 7:30 pm

Where: National Center for the Performing Arts, Beijing

The China National Symphony Orchestra will play Mozart's *Symphony No 40 in G Minor, K. 550*, under the direction of German conductor Thomas Sanderling.

Sanderling has won many competitions and awards, and excelled in performing German, Russian and French pieces. He has conducted many orchestras, including the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra and the London Philharmonic Orchestra.

In the early 1980s, he was engaged as principal guest conductor at the Berlin State Opera and made his debut at the Vienna State Opera.

His father, Kurt Sanderling, was principal conductor of the St. Petersburg Philharmonic Orchestra.

Little Women

by Chapterhouse Theater

When: March 21-23, 7:30 pm

Where: 9 Theater, Beijing

Meg, Jo, Amy and Beth March are the four "little women," growing up in New England during the American Civil War. The sisters share everything — joys and pains, loves and secrets. But the four girls couldn't be more different.

Meg, the oldest, is the sensible one. Jo is funny and mischievous. Beth is the shy, dreamy one, while Amy is pretty and artistic.

Follow the girls as they grow into wonderful young women, and share the events in their lives: Meg's first dance; Amy's punishment in school; their father's return from the war; Jo's anger with her sisters when her precious diary is burned; the family wedding; and Beth's tragic illness. Their story is one of the most popular books ever written.

A Night with Chris Botti 2019 Live in Shanghai

When: Feb 27, 7:30 pm

Where: Shanghai Oriental Art Center

The Grammy Award-winning trumpeter and composer Chris Botti is bringing his much-anti-

pated tour to Shanghai and Beijing. Since the release of his critically acclaimed 2004 CD *When I Fall in Love*, he has become the biggest-selling instrumental artist in the United States.

Over more than two decades, Botti has amassed a spectacular number of honors, including multiple gold and platinum albums. His mesmerizing performances with an array of legends such as Barbra Streisand and Yo-Yo Ma have cemented his place as one of the most brilliant and inspiring forces in the contemporary music scene. Whether he's performing with illustrious musicians or at renowned venues around the globe, his unparalleled crystalline and poetic sound transcends musical boundaries.

Beijing Wind Orchestra New Year Concert

When: Feb 6-7, 7:30 pm

Where: National Center for the Performing Arts, Beijing

Conductor Li Fangfang is the founder of the Chinese Armed Police Band. He began his musical journey by studying violin and cello from a young age. In 1994, he studied at the New England Conservatory of Music under renowned conductor Frank L. Battisti. In 2003, Li graduated from the Music School of the University of Arizona with a master's in conducting, and was involved in the university's doctoral program.

He has conducted numerous classics, written from the 16th to 21st centuries, and is dedicated to the study and dissemination of Western wind ensemble music. He is the author of *The Brief History of the Western Wind Band and its Important Repertoire* and has recorded many albums.



Puppet Show: Rumba on the Moon

When: March 21-24, 7:30 pm,

March 23-34, 10:30 am, 3 pm

Where: Guangzhou Opera House

Rumba, a little mouse, is hungry. She's hungry for cheese, for adventure, for life and for dreams. Like a child who puts everything into its mouth to taste the world, Rumba wants to eat the wide and delectable unknown that she glimpses through her window when the clouds part.

So, under the light of a beautiful moon — which as everyone knows is made of cheese — Rumba, eyes wide shut, goes through the looking glass like a mousy Alice.

She dives into her imagination, and the world around her keeps changing — the ground slips out from under her feet and floats, puppets and animated figures appear, pass by, slip away, and disappear in a dancing mirage.

Real objects are transformed, blended together and seen through dream lenses. And all of nature — flowers, plants and seasons — dances along with her.