

三影堂
摄影艺术中心
THREE SHADOWS
PHOTOGRAPHY
ART CENTRE

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up an old mule path from Stromboli village's Piscitola quarter (do take a flashlight), it offers fresh fish, excellent pizza and spaghetti with anchovies and Aeolian capers *alla Stromboliana*.

■ SPIAGGIA LUNGA

Stromboli has unspoiled beaches of sparkling black sand. The central beaches are wide but shadeless, so head for one most recommended by the Stromboliani themselves. On peaceful Spiaggia Lunga, at the far end of Piscitola, you can hunker down between boulders with a lush hillside at your back. If you venture down the paths between the nearby houses, you'll find small bays where you can clamber among dark crags or cool your toes in the crashing surf.

■ GINOSTRA

While most accommodation is at Stromboli village, be sure to visit Ginostra (pop: 30), which is only reachable by boat. Wander up paths between cacti and wild flowers, splash among rocks in Caribbean blue water and gaze at the other Aeolians on the horizon. Contact l'Incontro restaurant and bed-and-breakfast, tel: (39-90) 981 2305, for overnight stays. Or you can hire a boat in Stromboli to take you to Ginostra for dinner only, passing the Sciarra del Fuoco on the return journey to show you the sputtering volcano from the moonlit sea.

■ LETUDE

Her shop's name is French, but Maria Luisa Nicotera's paintings on glass are inspired by Sicilian votive images and are the island's loveliest souvenirs. Timeless scenes of the village of Stromboli, appearing almost sheltered rather than threatened by the cheerfully spewing volcano, perfectly reflect the islanders' affection for their restless mountain. Pictures cost \$45 or \$90. Via Vittorio Emanuele, tel: (39) 276 618 11.

ON SHOW

Photo Finish. Caochangdi PhotoSpring could well be a swan song for the trendy Beijing art district

BEIJING'S 798 ART DISTRICT GETS A lot of tourists and attention, and to the Chinese capital's cognoscenti that's precisely the problem. Viewing 798 as less of a hip artist hideaway and more of a ménage of cafés and trinket shops these days, Beijing's boho set is instead seeking refuge in Caochangdi, an art quarter located in the city's northeast. Among its spacious galleries are former 798 stalwarts like White Space and Platform China. Shanghai powerhouse ShangArt has also opened its Beijing branch there. "This is one of the best holdouts for art left in Beijing," says Matthew Niederhauser, whose images of rock musicians have been collected in *Sound Kapital: Beijing's Music Underground* and who is one of over 200 photographers appearing in the inaugural Caochangdi PhotoSpring, ccdphotospring.com.

Organized by France's Les Rencontres d'Arles photo festival in partnership with Beijing-based art curators and consultants Thinking Hands and the enormous local photographic gallery Three Shadows, Caochangdi PhotoSpring's packed calendar of photographic exhibitions, lectures and documentary screenings runs through June. Besides key Chinese exhibits (Yu Haibo's "20 Years of Shenzhen in the Eyes of a Photographer," Mo Yi's multimedia "My Illusory City—1987, 1998, 2008"), displays include intimate



Prints charming Self-portraits by Rong Rong and Inri, below left and right, are on show at PhotoSpring



As step up The hotel has played a huge role in the square's regeneration

CHEFON IN

Scotsman, You Don't Have to Put On the Red Light

BY SITUATING IT AT THE GEOGRAPHICAL HEART OF GLASGOW AND ON A PROMINENT hill, the builders of Blythswood Square intended their creation to be focal point of the city when they completed it in 1823. While the buildings were grand enough—imposing four-story Georgian sandstone terraces featuring giant sash windows and colonnades—the inhabitants weren't always. By the late 20th century, Blythswood Square was home to the greatest concentration of prostitutes in Scotland. But thanks to recent regeneration, the working girls are gone and these days the square can once again lay claim to being one of Glasgow's best addresses. The highlight of its redevelopment has been the \$37 million conversion of the eastern side into an eponymous ultra-chic hotel.

The expense shows. The 100 rooms are large and feature marble baths at their centers. The central staircase sweeps around a chandelier several stories high. There's a spa, a private cinema, a serious restaurant and a champagne and cocktail bar in a former ballroom—all of it run on energy-efficient technology and harvested rainwater. The decor even contains a few witty references to the square's scandalous past. The lobby features several silk scarlet booths that seem made for illicit assignations, while hanging in every window is a single red light. Rooms are priced from about \$120 for a "wee classic" to a socking \$2,000 for the penthouse suite—a giant rooftop spread with its own lift, terrace, snooker table, butler, hot tub, bar and dining room.

See townhousecompany.com/blythswoodsquare for more. —BY ALEX FERRY



views of Picasso by Lucien Clergue, spanning a 20-year friendship.

Adding an undertone of urgency to the event is the fact that redevelopment notices have been served on parts of Caochangdi, with some of the galleries participating in PhotoSpring slated for demolition. Three Shadows co-founder, photographer Rong Rong, believes that the authorities intend to level the district in order to create a tidier cultural precinct. "That's another reason this festival is so important," says Rose Jang Wei of local gallery Art Channel, "to make everyone aware of what is here, and how special it is."

—BY RON GLUCKMAN

NEXT TIME YOU'RE IN... SINGAPORE

Looks Good on Paper

KINDLE AND IPAD LOVERS BEWARE: e-readers may seem less palatable after a visit to this old-fashioned literary shrine tucked away in Singapore's Chinatown. Books Actually, booksactually.com, is a three-level sanctuary for those who revel in cracking the spine of an actual book, as opposed to a virtual one, and shudder at the thought of a sterile chain-store shopping experience. Located on Club Street, the book shop cum publishing house cum stationery company is part of a strip of independently owned stores and cafés that have taken over restored early 20th-century shophouses. The big brands don't live in this corner of the Lion City's vast consumer landscape, but Hemingway and Nietzsche call it home.

Vintage decor, from old typewriters lining the staircase to still dusty antique cameras perched atop bookshelves, set the tone for an idiosyncratic selection of titles made by owners Kerry Leck and Karen Wai. This is the place to find such arcana as Troy Chin's graphic novel *The Resident Tourist* and *The Space of City Trees* by Singaporean poet Arthur Yap. Math Paper Press, Books Actually's imprint, also publishes limited-edition works by lesser-known, primarily local, authors. It recently came out with *Corpan*, a Singaporean literary journal, and plans to launch a new collection of verse by poet Cyril Wong called *Animal Season*.



Page browser The real not virtual kind

In addition to the bric-a-brac and books covering the walls, shelves are punctuated by quirky postcards issued under the brand name Birds & Co. Leck and Wai's stationery venture. The offshoot produces delicately crafted paper products, custom-printed cards and engraved pencils. So if you're feeling inspired by your visit, you can pick up one of those hand-stitched journals, take hold of a pencil inscribed with George Orwell or some other hallowed name and start making a book of your own. —BY KARI LIPSCHUTZ