



## Media release

Beijing 10.12.2020

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### **The Embassy of Switzerland celebrates Swiss gastronomy entrepreneurship in China**

**Ranked as the most innovative country in the world<sup>1</sup> for the tenth consecutive year Switzerland encourages entrepreneurship both domestically and abroad. In the early days of China's reform and opening-up, pioneering Swiss enterprises entered China to establish businesses. In recent years, new generations of Swiss entrepreneurs have come to China to set up their own ventures. To celebrate the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of diplomatic relations between Switzerland and China, the Embassy of Switzerland is profiling Swiss entrepreneurs who have founded successful businesses in China. As a first set in this series, the spotlight is on entrepreneurs in the gastronomy business.**

From the valleys of the Tibetan plateau to the plain of North China, from the Yangtze River Delta to the Delta of Pearl River, Swiss entrepreneurs founded gastronomic endeavours to not only develop their market niche but also to help boost the local economy.

In the coming weeks, the Embassy of Switzerland in China, via its official Chinese social media channels, is to feature seven women and men who have gained a foothold in the food and beverage industry in China, and who exemplify Swiss creativity and entrepreneurial spirit. To champion Swiss entrepreneurs in China, the Embassy featured the food and drinks produced by these entrepreneurs at its official year-end reception on Thursday.

Here is a brief introduction of the seven entrepreneurs:

#### **Alexander Frey – Swiss Chinese experience with Shandong Cuisine**

Alexander Frey, originally from Lucerne, moved to Shanghai upon graduation in 2014 to work as an analyst for the real estate sector. After realizing there is a market demand for authentic Western cuisine in China's second tier cities, Frey moved to Jinan of Shandong province by the end of 2016. Frey, along three other Chinese friends, opened a high-end Western restaurant in Jinan of Shandong province the next year. Having successfully run a line of restaurants serving authentic Western cuisine, Frey and his partners decided to open an authentic Shandong cuisine restaurant with an emphasis on the fine dining experience. With

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<sup>1</sup> according to the Global Innovation Index 2020.

interior decor reflecting Confucianism, Lanore Ru offers an authentic Shandong experience from its cuisine to the essence of its culture.

### **Bastien Ciocca – Swiss hospitality and modern cocktail in China**

Bastien Ciocca, graduated from the world's leading hospitality university, Ecole Hôtelière de Lausanne (EHL), worked for a number of five star hotels before moving to Guangzhou in 2015. With a passion for bartending, Ciocca and his university classmate Andrew Ho, cofounded a cocktail bar - Hope & Sesame in Guangzhou's trendy area, Dongshankou in 2016. The bar, the city's first speakeasy cocktail bar (hidden bar that originated in the 1920s in the U.S.), has since become one of the most popular bars in the city and has been ranked Asia's top 50 bars by DRiNK, a bar industry magazine in 2019 and 2020. Ciocca and his partner have expanded their bar business into two bars and a café in Guangzhou and another cocktail bar in Shenzhen, along with a bar and hotel management consultancy.

### **Claudia Masüger – Swiss International Wine Retailer in China**

Born into a family of wine dealers, Claudia Masüger arrived in Beijing in 2008 with two suitcases of wine with the single purpose of establishing wine business in China. She first set up a wine wholesale business but later decided to delve into wine retailing after her warehouse was burned down in 2010. She founded her first wine store, CHEERS Wines in 2011 to target Chinese young consumers and to transform the wine industry in China. With exclusive rights to more than 90 percent of its wine on mainland China CHEERS has been able to expand into more than 60 stores all over the country. And the ambitious entrepreneur aims to open more than 800 stores in China.

### **Philippe Huser – Swiss Quality Fine Dining in Shanghai**

Philippe Huser, alumni of the prestigious Ecole Hôtelière de Lausanne (EHL), has been working in luxury hotels for many years before moving to Shanghai. He then opened China's first wine cellar restaurant NAPA in 2007. With an extensive fine wine list and exquisite décor, NAPA offers a fresh fine dining experience. Huser had to close NAPA earlier this year because of refurbishment plans of the building on the Bund where the restaurant is located. Philippe has opened his new restaurant Cellar to Table with his original NAPA team in November. Located in the city centre, Cellar to Table has become popular with Shanghai diners.

### **Raul Casserini – Biggest Swiss Cheese Selection in China**

Raul Casserini, born in Switzerland, has lived in many places around the world and calls Shanghai home now. He runs the Cheesery, a cheese retailer, which has the biggest collection of imported cheese in China. Realizing that cheese culture is not as developed in China as in Europe, Casserini also expanded his business into providing education and consulting services to restaurants and retailers on how to store, select and serve fine cheeses. Alongside the Cheesery, Casserini runs Tiacassia, a restaurant that serves Swiss fondue as well as other cheese dishes.

### **Songtsen 'Sonny' Gyalzur – The Only Swiss Chinese Beers**

Born and raised in a town by the Lake Zurich, Songtsen 'Sonny' Gyalzur came to his father's hometown Shangri-la in Yunnan Province with the motivation to help local Tibetan communities. He founded Shangri-La Beer in 2009, Shangri-La's first premium beer brand. Based on the Tibetan Plateau, Shangri-La Beer was brewed with spring water and Tibetan barley. Shangri-La Beer hires more than 80 percent of its employees from a local orphanage, which Songtsen's mother founded. The brewery also runs a Tibetan barley farm which stretches more than 583,000 square metres. As Gyalzur puts it, Shangri-La Beer has built a sustainable business that help local farmers and businesses grow.

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## Yves Roduit – Swiss Chinese Fine Wine

Yves Roduit, originally from Swiss wine region Valais, came to visit Shangri-La in Yunnan Province in 2014. Yves was impressed by the beauty of Shangri-La and fell in love with a local Tibetan Hélène. As an experienced winemaker and seeing the climate of Shangri-La is perfect for vineyards Roduit decided to establish a winery in Shangri-La, Château Roduit in 2016. His wines are produced through environmentally friendly viticulture and matured in clay pots at an altitude of 3,300 meters. Wine by Roduit has won wide accolades and is seen as one of China's best wines.

### **Previous Gastronomy-related press releases organized by the Swiss embassy:**

[Swiss Gastronomic Week: Michelin-Star chef brings the flavours and looks of Switzerland to Beijing](#)

[On Autumnal Equinox - Raise your glass to wine of the future](#)

[Swiss Gastronomic Week at TRB with Michelin-starred La Maison du Village](#)

[Michelin star chef interprets tradition with creativity at 2nd Swiss Gastronomic Week](#)

[Craving for Swiss haute cuisine? Join the Swiss Gastronomic Week at Hilton Beijing](#)

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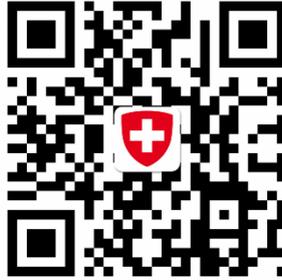
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