



WHITER THAN WHITE

Back shelf, from left, 'Promise' tea set, £262; 'Awareness' tea set, £238, both by Cha Cha Thé, www.chachathe.com. 'String' tea set with tray, £207, by Gearlab, for Jia Inc, www.jia-inc.com. Silver teapot set, price on request, by Wei-Wen Chung, www.chungsteam.com. 'Ambula' sugar pot, part of tea set, £126; 'Birdie' tea set, £156, both by Finding Cheska, www.findingcheska.com. 'Archi' teapot set, £47; teacup set, £21; all by oast Living, www.oastliving.com. Travel set with teapot and two cups, £47, by Shih Chieh Huang, from Zenique, www.zenique.net. Middle shelf, from left, teapot, £107; fruit bowl, £98; short cup,

£32; tall cup, £41, all by Pili Wu, from Han Gallery, www.han-gallery.com. 'Lotus' tea set with covered cup, two teacups and tray, £38, by Toast Living, as before. 'Persona' teacups, £75 for set of four, by Office For Product Design, for Jia Inc, as before. 'Iris' teacup and teapot, £156 for set, by Finding Cheska, as before. 'Zendo' teacup and saucer, £41, by Chun-Hao Chen, from The One Style, www.theonestyle.com. On front shelf, 'Lace' bowls, from £188; tea cups, £38 each, all by Gina Hsu, from Han Gallery, as before. 'Harmony' tea set, price on request, by 1300 Only Porcelain, www.1300onlyporcelain.com

POT LUCK

How to take a leaf out of the traditional tea ceremony

PHOTOGRAPHY FRANK HÜLSBÖMER INTERIORS GRACE WANG WRITER ANNETTE TAN

Perhaps more than any other tradition in Chinese culture, the tea ceremony stands out for its ubiquitous role in daily life. In fact, it's hard to think of any social occasion – marriage, Thanksgiving, birthdays, or even business deals – that isn't marked at some stage by a cup or two of soft green brew. And for the Taiwanese, with their ready access to first-rate tea leaves, tea is an almost sacred bonding ritual that straddles generations and social divide.

With its roots steeped in ancient Chinese tea culture, the Taiwanese tea ceremony is as much about celebrating life as it is about rediscovering the beauty and natural harmony

in the world. Devotees claim that the pureness and simplicity of Cha Tao, the art of tea, brings participants closer to nature and their own true essence. This philosophy explains why every movement of the process of making tea is both purposeful and full of grace, so as to convey respect for its participants and the tea itself. Each step is part of a meditation that induces an unexpected sense of calm.

Whichever tea leaf is chosen – in Taiwan, the brew of choice is oolong from Black Dragon Teas – timing is key, from ensuring the correct water temperature and calculating the time it takes for the leaves to brew, to the precise moment that the tea is poured.

Of the many variants, the one favoured by the Taiwanese is typically the Kung Fu tea ceremony (kung fu literally meaning 'skill' in Chinese), which requires a fine mastery of the complex process of brewing by repeated rinses of the teapot until the tea reaches its desired strength.

Of course, the ceremony requires a stockpile of specialised equipment, designed to enhance the layers of taste and perfume with each mouthful. For the tyro tea-maker, this might include a thermometer and weighing scale, though seasoned practitioners make do with just a brewing pot, kettle, pitcher, tray, towels, tea cups, strainers and tea holders.

ALL TIED UP

Drawing the lines between Taipei's best new furniture designs

PHOTOGRAPHY FRANK HÜLSBÖMER INTERIORS GRACE WANG



PULL THE STRINGS

Clockwise from top left, 'Chopsticks' clothes rail, £205, by Andreas Saxe, for Studio Domo, www.studiodomo.net. 'Ladder' coat rack, £205, by Yenwen Tseng, www.yenwentseng.com. '2 Be A Line' stools, large, £213; small, £150, both by Sally Lin, sallylin0201@gmail.com. 'Calligraphy' screen, £14,902, by Poching Liao, from Han Gallery,

www.han-gallery.com. 'XY' ceiling light, £529, by Meiric Chen, for Seed Design, www.seedlighting.com. 'Piano' floor light, £1,065, by Qis Design, www.qisdesign.com. 'Playful Bird' pendant light, £90, by Cose Hung, www.41.com.tw. 'Change A Second' light, £96, by Sally Lin, as before. 'S-Cube' chair, £54, by Miso Soup Design, www.misosoupdesign.com.

'Bamboo' table, £2,558, by Nendo, from Han Gallery, as before. 'Playful Bird' light; 'Tea' side tables, £213 each, all by Cose Hung, as before. 'Arbora' candle holders, £655 for set of five, by Finding Cheska, www.findingcheska.com. 'AI' light, £147; 'Young L' light, £192; 'Leer' light, £163, all by Meta Design, www.meta.com.tw

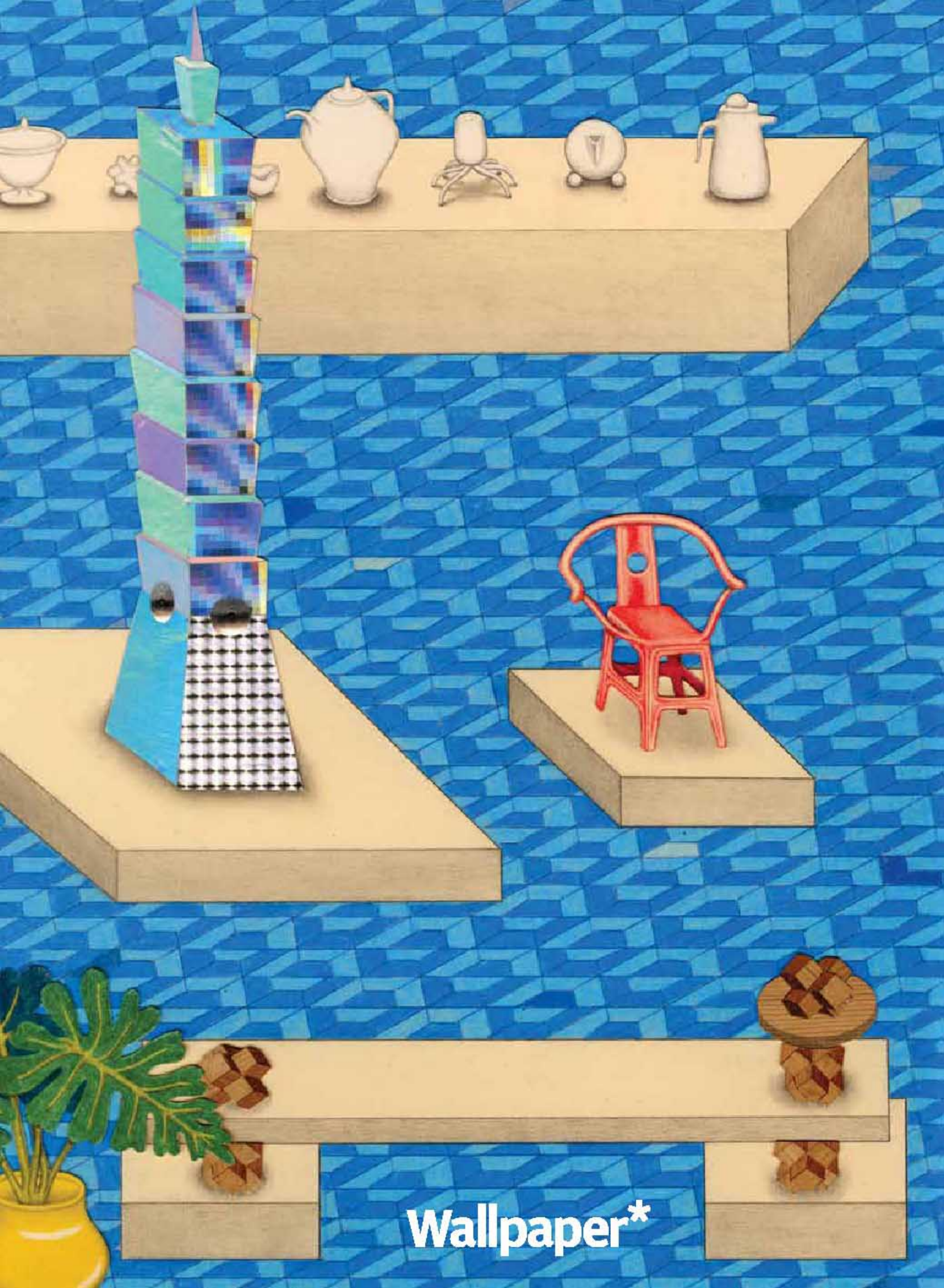
SHUANGLIAN MARKET**Chosen by Pili Wu, designer**

Just 25, Wu is already being hailed as one of Taiwan's major new design talents. His claim to fame is the 'Plastic Classic' chair (pictured here next to Wu), a clever hybrid between the ubiquitous red plastic stools that populate Asian street food stalls, and Ming dynasty chairs. The chair is made of beech, and a limited edition features traditional lacquer work. Wu, whose heritage draws from Hakka and Hoklo minorities, is fascinated with hybrids, whether between old and new, or different cultures. His latest creations include a bowl that's rounded on one side and sloped on the other, and a line of affordable dinnerware inspired by ancient eggshell porcelain. For inspiration, he often trawls the handicraft shops that pack Shuanglian Market. 'If you're a designer, it's the most important street in Taipei.' piliwu-design.com

STREETS AHEAD

Three of Taipei's top creatives take us to their favourite haunts in the city, from a bustling street market to a leafy garden

PHOTOGRAPHY JEREMY LIEBMAN WRITER JENNIFER CHEN



Wallpaper*