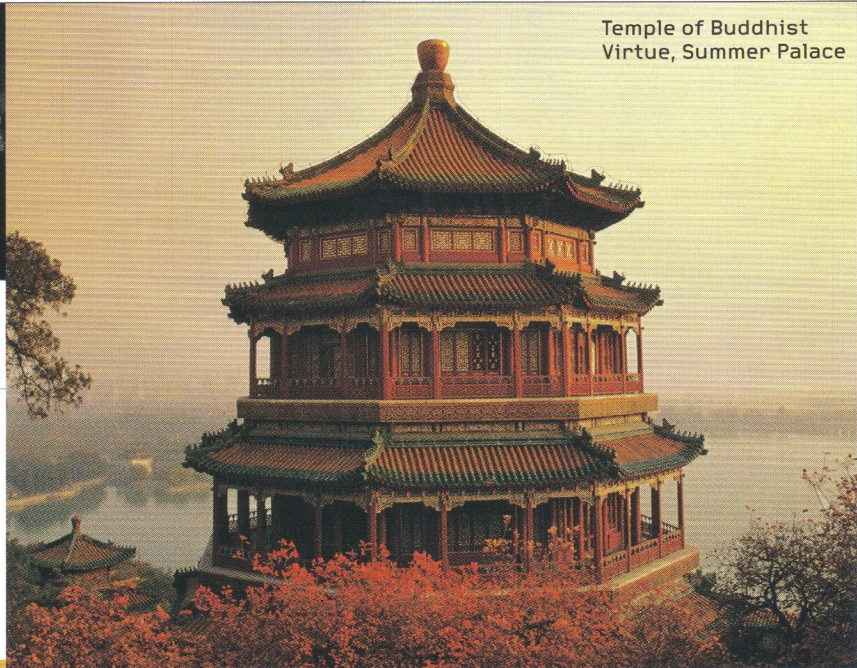


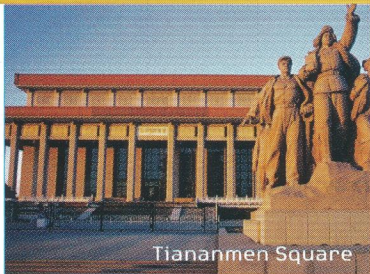


Amy Tan's  
**BEIJING**

CHINA HAS BEEN THE BACKDROP FOR TAN'S WORK EVER SINCE *THE JOY LUCK CLUB*. WE ASKED THE AUTHOR, WHOSE LATEST NOVEL IS *SAVING FISH FROM DROWNING*, TO SHOW US AROUND HER ANCESTRAL CITY



Temple of Buddhist Virtue, Summer Palace



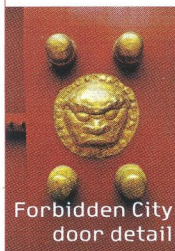
Tiananmen Square

**SIGHTS TO SEE** "I love Beijing because history is apparent wherever you look, and also because there's a beat of modern-day life just beneath the surface. My favorite place to stroll is along the centuries-old alleyways of the Shichahai lakeside district, past ancient brick walls and tile-roofed courtyard homes. During

Mao's reign, up to 10 families would cram into one of those houses. Another must is the **Palace Museum**. The back of the museum overlooks the red-walled gardens that belonged to Qianlong, one of 24 emperors who ruled from within Beijing's **Forbidden City**. A few miles from central Beijing is the **Summer Palace**, which is also known for its royal gardens, such as the Garden of Everlasting Spring. On cold days, I buy yams roasted over oil drums by the front entrance and tuck them into my coat for hours of warmth. And everyone should see a Peking opera

at the **Huguang Huiguan** theater. If you sit at a table near the stage, you can eat chestnuts and drink tea during the show."

**WHERE TO EAT** "There is a great new Chinese-French restaurant in Shichahai called **Le Quai**, in a house that was moved brick by brick from Jiangxi province. I'm vegetarian, so I usually order *dou miao*—pea-shoot greens—but they have



Forbidden City door detail

authentic Peking duck and fusion dishes like mango and Japanese crab-roe salad. Some

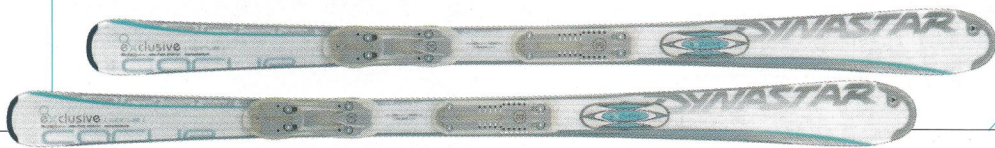
of the best foods are also served hot off the platter by vendors in **Tiananmen Square**. *Dabing*—spiced egg burrito—costs 20 cents."

**TOP HOTELS** "I like the **Grand Hyatt Beijing** [[beijing.grand.hyatt.com](http://beijing.grand.hyatt.com)], near the Wang Fu Jing shopping district. It has the best spa and pool, complete with chirping frogs. For about \$100 a night, you can sleep in a former general's mansion [[beijinghotelchina.com](http://beijinghotelchina.com)]. The one I recommend is the **Bamboo Garden Hotel** [[beijinghotelchina.com/bamboo\\_garden](http://beijinghotelchina.com/bamboo_garden)], where Communist leader Kang Sheng lived."

**WHERE TO SHOP** "During the Ming dynasty, **Old Pipe Lane** was full of tobacco merchants; today it's a mix of old and modern boutiques. I always stop in my cousin-in-law's shop, **Mei Ren**, for simple cotton and linen dresses priced between \$20 and \$60. Above the boutiques are tiny one-table bars with incredible views of the **Drum Tower** [Beijing's town clock in the fourteenth century], which is lit up at night." —INTERVIEW BY DARA PETTINELLI

**A PRO'S PICK**  
**FEMALE-FRIENDLY SKIS**

When Dynastar and Lange wanted help designing their new women's ski lines, they turned to Jeannie Thoren, a 1964 Junior National ski team member. "I was thrilled, because the industry has traditionally approached women's gear as a variation of men's products," says Thoren, 60. "But women are not small men." Her 2007 creations: the **Dynastar Exclusive Carve** (\$900), a narrow-waisted ski designed to make turns a breeze to initiate, and the **Lange Exclusive 100** (\$565), a down-lined boot that shifts a woman's weight forward. "A lot of women gave up on skiing because their gear didn't fit," Thoren says. "I want them back, and I want them to stay." Go to [dynastar.com](http://dynastar.com). —MEG LUKENS NOONAN



PHOTOS, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: ROBERT FOTHORAP, MANFRED GOTTSCHALK/LPI, OLIVIER CIRENDINI/LPI, COURTESY OF DYNASTAR, GLENN BEANLAND/LPI