

The Kunlun Jing An ready to serve top tennis stars

Li Anlan

For 16 years, The Kunlun Jing An's catering service team has been serving food and beverages to tennis stars who've played at tournaments in Shanghai.

This year, they continue to support the ATP 1000 Shanghai Masters from October 5 to 13.

When tennis started to become popular in China, the general manager of the hotel, which was Hilton Shanghai at the time, was a fan of the sport. The hotel's collaboration with the Heineken Open Shanghai in 2003 and 2004 were small in scale, but as the sport and competition expanded, its catering services also became more robust.

Every year, The Kunlun Jing An's kitchen team starts preparations for the tournament three months in advance, according to David Chen, food and beverage manager at the hotel.

"First, we compose the menus for each dining zone according to the requests and requirements of players, media and host organization. We are also in communication with Shanghai's food and drug authority when developing the menus and provide qualification credentials of the food suppliers to ensure food safety. After that, we'll start ordering the ingredients and make plans about quantity and delivery time," explained Chen.

More than 500 people will be serving



Catering team of The Kunlun Jing An, which provides food and beverage service to the ATP 1000 Rolex Shanghai Masters in Qizhong Tennis Center

food and beverages for the tournament. According to main kitchen chief chef Joseph Ooi, there are around 12 kitchen staff, including those recruited part-time for the event as well as task forces from sister hotels.

This year, the hotel is also having renowned German chef Johann Lafer

and his team working together for the whole event.

Ooi explained that due to food safety and hygiene concerns, menus for ATP don't include raw fish or seafood. Certain ingredients like cheese in the desserts are also replaced with other options. Most of the ingredients are

imported to raise the standard and quality of the food served.

Every morning, suppliers deliver fresh ingredients which will be processed and vacuum packaged before being transported to the tennis center. The cold dishes, hot dishes, desserts and fruits are stored separately, and food that hasn't been used within the designated period will be replaced or removed.

Professional tennis players often have special dietary requirements, and the catering team can customize dishes or provide new options for them.

"Since we have worked with them for so many years, some of them ... we have records of what they might need. And, of course, a few of them have their own nutritionist who will arrange with our executive chef on what they need us to prepare before they come to Shanghai," explained Ooi.

Ooi added that some local delicacies are included in the menus, such as deep-fried spring rolls, sesame balls, *youtiao* (deep-fried dough sticks) and sweet-and-sour ribs. Popular items among players are soup dumplings, glutinous rice dumplings and sweet-and-sour pork.

"We have different highlights every year, like the Federer pizza created and named by the player, as well as customized dishes by the chef of a Michelin-starred restaurant," said Chen.



Charity is a social responsibility for me. After my retirement in China or Germany ... I would definitely like to continue as a volunteer and contribute more to society.



Cao Qian

German native Gerd Knaust paid a brief sightseeing trip to Shanghai in 1991, probably with little expectation that his

Hotelier channels the spirit of charity into the community

next encounter with the city 20 years later would prove to be such a turning point in his life.

The general manager of The Kunlun Jing An, the former Hilton Shanghai, recently was honored Shanghai's Mag-nolia Silver Award for his contributions to the hospitality industry and to local charity work.

Eight years ago, he took the helm of the five-star hotel in downtown Jing'an District, bringing his seasoned experi-ence as an international hotelier to the facility.

"I feel thrilled and greatly honored to receive the Magnolia Silver Award and very thankful to Jin Jiang International Group for recommending me for this award," said Knaust, who embarked on his career as a kitchen apprentice. "This is big encouragement for me to move forward."

The first Hilton hotel on the Chi-nese mainland was rebranded as The Kunlun Jing An in January 2018. The 669-room property on Huashan Road was the epitome of luxury when it first opened in June 1988. It has welcomed numerous celebrities from around the world over the past 30 years.

Under the leadership of Knaust, the transition was smooth and its reputation for high levels of service uninterrupted.

Knaust has worked in the hotel industries of Malaysia, Singapore, In-donesia, Hong Kong, Beijing and Sanya, with stints that included the Mandarin Oriental.

In 2018, the year of the transition, The Kunlun Jing An managed to scoop 16 industry accolades, including the prestigious TripAdvisor Certificate of Excellence Hall of Fame award. It also became the first and only hotel in China to receive the Safehotels Ex-ecutive Certificate, the highest level of

certification of Global Hotel Security Standard.

Business aside, The Kunlun Jing An has been a committed corporate citizen dedicated to "giving back" to society. The hotel has partnered with Shanghai Sunrise, a non-profit orga-nization raising funds for educational scholarships for underprivileged and at-risk young people in the city, for the past 15 years.

While the hotel has been supporting three or four students under that pro-gram, the general manager and several other executives have also provided individual sponsorships to help two or three more young people since 2011.

"A lot of companies do charity, but few have this consistency," Knaust said. "We have to be very careful about liability."

Under the company's newly created I Care@Kunlun initiative, hotel staff go to the homes of the elderly to help out where they can. For example, chefs cook them nutritious meals.

As a next step, the hotel is think-ing about organizing simple but fun activities for seniors such as baking classes, and providing cozy blankets for wintertime.

Running eight to 10 charity pro-grams with an average of two or three activities a month keeps the hotel busy. The Kunlun Jing An is taking it one step at the time to ensure that it can meet all its pledges.

To encourage its staff to participate, a list of activities is issued and em-ployees are asked to choose which they want to undertake. It's all counted as time at work.

"Money is surely very important to keep charity activities flowing, but time is free," Knaust said. "When I was young and had no money, the least I could spend was my time."

He added, "Charity is a social respon-sibility for me. After my retirement in China or Germany, which could be three or four years from now, I would definitely like to continue as a volun-teen and contribute more to society."

▼ The Kunlun Jing An best employer in tourism and hospitality

On September 20, **The Kunlun Jing An** received the Best Employer of Tourism & Hospitality Industry in The 6th Best Employer of Tourism & Hospitality Industry Selection (2019). Mabel Zhang (center), director of human resources, and her team members were honored.





Hotelier scoops prestigious Magnolia Award

Gerd Knaust, general manager of [The Kunlun Jing An](#), received a Shang-hai Magnolia Award on September 12. Magnolia Award, one of a series of awards, is given to foreigners in recognition of their contribution to the improvement or welfare of Shanghai.



▲ Five-year plan to bring globe's top sporting events to Shanghai

The Kunlun Jing An and Shanghai Juss Event Management Co Ltd, China's top sporting event promoter and organizer of world-class international sports events, announced the signing of a five-year strategic partnership to leverage the promotion and development of top international sporting events in Shanghai.



▲ Award-winning

Gerd Knaust (third left), gen-eral manager of **The Kunlun Jing An**, and his team was honored to receive five indus-try awards, including Chinese Restaurant of the Year, Luxury Chinese Restaurant of the Year, Catering Team of the Year, Administrative Lounge of the Year and Most Skilled Chef of the Year at The first Golden Spoon Award by Grand Hotels media.



▲ The Kunlun Jing An gets in CPC spirit

The Kunlun Jing An organized a visit to the site of the First Congress of the Communist Party of China late last month.



▲ The Kunlun Jing An celebrates anniversary

The Kunlun Jing An hotel celebrated its one year of rebranding anniversary on January 1. As the first Kunlun hotel in Shanghai, it is rapidly gaining an international reputation for excellence delivering some of the best service in modern Chinese hospitality.