

Spice & Barley

STORY

No doubt a trio of portraits has caught your eye. Look closer and you'll find the stories of these mysterious beauties infused throughout the lounge.

Decades ago in Sichuan, a widowed merchant raised three daughters on the banks of the mighty Yangtze. May, Zaza and Fei. May was a poet with an incurable case of wanderlust. She charmed her way aboard the Orient Express and set a course for Europe. With a gift for languages and a nose for wine, she was a hit among the bohemian set in the salons of Paris.



Zaza was the stage name chosen by the second sister, a shining star or unbearable show-off, depending whom you asked. She swept up her best dresses and joined the Sichuan opera, to perform in the finest theatres of the eastern hemisphere.

Fei remained home and took a job as a cook in a grand household. She created delicious dishes from the spices in her kitchen garden, which overlooked the river. Life was peaceful until, after a successful society dinner, the Lady of the House turned on Fei in a jealous rage, envious of her culinary skill. In terror, Fei fled aboard a junk boat under cover of night, with nothing but the clothes on her back and a pepper plant in a pot.

Bored of Paris, meanwhile, May ventured north, searching for diversion. She amused herself learning to brew beer in Belgium, but the damp European climate was beginning to take its toll. Zaza performed nightly to standing ovations and lived a life of luxury but in every new city, she found the food yet more bland and longed for the flavours of home.

Guided by fate, each of the Sichuan sister's paths led them to a new city, full of promise and home to a vibrant community of their countrymen. There, in a humble restaurant with a kitchen garden overlooking another mighty river, May and Zaza found Fei cooking the delicious dishes of home, seasoned with her precious peppers.

We celebrate their adventure and their reunion by bringing people together on the banks of that very same river. Shadows of their meandering journeys are weaved into the walls; their silhouettes echo in every space. Discover dramatic displays on The Stage. Share a dish or two and note how the Belgian beer from the Barley Bar complements the flavours so well it can only have been paired by a poet. Take in the view from the Pepper Deck and feel finally at home.

