



Chun'an Qiandao Lake is one of the main venues of the World Leisure Expo.

WANG LIMING / FOR CHINA DAILY

# World Leisure Expo for a healthier life

By ZHUAN TI

The capital of Zhejiang province, in the Yangtze River Delta and has been one of China's most prosperous cities for nearly a millennium and over the years has acquired the tag, "Oriental city of leisure". So, it seemed a fairly obvious place to hold a global exhibition on leisure activities.

In fact, Hangzhou was a capital for the Southern Song Dynasty (960-1279) and Marco Polo was said to have called it "the most splendid and luxurious city in the world". So, what better choice for host of the World Leisure Exposition could there possibly be?

And that is just what is happening, from Sept 17 to Nov 18, when the 2nd World Leisure Expo brings exhibitions, competitions, performances, and forums to the city, conveying the essence of leisure through a brand new leisure experience.

The first "World Leisure Expo" was held in Hangzhou back in 2006 with support from the Hangzhou municipal government and World Leisure Organization, a non-governmental organization that promotes leisure activities for human growth and well-being.

In that sense, 2006 marked the real beginning of major leisure events in China and put it in step with the times. The success of that event led the World Leisure Organization to continue cooperating with the Hangzhou government

on a regular basis.

This second expo has a theme of "Leisure — enhancing life quality", and more than 100 cities and enterprises around the world have been asked to join the forums and activities that accentuate the role leisure plays in human pleasure and urban development.

Hangzhou, as the main venue, will get help from three gardens — Xianghu Lake in the Xiaoshan district, White Horse Lake in the Binjiang district, and Thousand-Isle Lake in Chun'an.

There are also lesser venues in the Yangtze River Delta, which means a big event covering a large area.

This expo's main purpose is to develop leisure activities around the world generally and in China specifically. A vibrant leisure industry in China is a strong potential force for economic growth and, possibly, environmental protection.

Another less obvious purpose for the event is to give Hangzhou a higher profile internationally. With so many foreign visitors streaming into the city, it will have a rare chance to bask in the international limelight and to show off its scenery and ambience.

Hangzhou has always been something of a tourist destination because of its West Lake, a sort of quintessential example of how one could spend one's leisurely time since way back. After the expo, Hangzhou expects that it will exercise a greater pull for

tourists from all over.

Hangzhou needs to build a quality, innovative, ecologically sound city while developing economically, and the World Leisure Expo can fuel that development by focusing attention on the outlying districts.

Those that are expected to benefit most are Xiaoshan and Binjiang, which will hold exhibitions and competitions, and where the construction work is expected to help improve facilities.

The expo also deals with leisure concepts and leisure studies to give people a more holistic understanding of the pastime. This is considered important in a world where the hectic lifestyles and job stress leave people edgy and burdened.

The emblem and mascot for the first World Leisure Expo will be retained for this expo with some adjustments in order to foster a sense of continuity as well as to protect intellectual property.

The mascot is a drop of water, called Jingjing, which symbolizes the beauty of West Lake and the spirit of nature. Jingjing smiles and has her arms open wide as a sign of welcome to people from all over the world. And, in the same way that a drop of water merges with the lake, people from near and far are expected to merge with Hangzhou's peaceful leisure experience.

The event's emblem is a Zisha teapot drawn with just a few strokes of the brush. But, upon closer observation, it reveals the mists that waft up West Lake's surface, in the same way that stress and pressure can be made to waft away.

It also represents pools reflecting the moonlight, a common scene at West Lake, one that is associated with leisure and harmony.

The Expo will have two halls for exhibitions, one for leisure themes, the other for the leisure industry.

The thematic exhibition hall has four areas: a theme interpretation area, where enterprises show how leisure can enhance the quality of life; a life-experience area, featuring leisure cities from around the world; industry practices, with leisure products on display; and a service zone that provides on-site services.

The leisure industry has various things on display covering silk clothing, tea products, tea art, and cars to show how leisure can gradually seep into every pore of life, as well as understanding a healthy lifestyle, leisure travel and cultural activities.

The forums will include special subjects such as sports, culture, and agriculture, as well as public forums that encourage public participation and elicit people's responses, and a summit that coincides with the closing ceremony.

The events include performances that convey a leisurely spirit, for example, an opening ceremony on



Caption.

PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Chengshan Square, a fireworks show at Xianghu Lake, a parade around Xianghu Lake, a carnival at Xianghu Lake, arts and crafts activities at Xianghu Lake, hot air balloon performance at Thousand-Isle Lake, and the closing ceremony at Xianghu Lake.

For the carnival, there will be clown from all over performing on stage dramas and teaching audience how to paint.

The hot air balloon event will draw participants from various countries to demonstrate parachuting and aerobatic flights. Some lucky audience members will be invited to join the pilots in some flying events. The audience will also be treated to a romantic airborne wedding.

The closing ceremony is a show of festivity, ebullience and passion with fireworks and a special performance of Chinese folk art and singing.

The overall leisure experience refers to the combined facilities, stores, events and venues, where people can experience various aspects of entertainment, health care, food, culture, sports and shopping in an integrated way.

One example of this is the Hu Qing Yu Medicine Store and Hot Springs at Wuyi as places that combine leisure and health care. Then there are the Grand Canal Food Street and Tang Qi Food Festival where people can enjoy their food in a leisurely way. The dragon boat races and bicycle races are a form of athletic leisure, while the Silk City and Wu Lin Business Circle are perfect for leisurely shopping.

Other not-to-be-missed items are: the music festival with the exciting prospect of crowds of people joining the chorus; the college student art festival, full of innovation and vitality; and a counter-strike competition where people play terrorists and



Many Chinese and foreign visitors were able to enjoy a traditional tea ceremony amidst the traditional architecture of the city.

counter-terrorists.

And, as a gesture of true leisure spirit, the expo organizers have gone online to allow visitors to interact with them and give their specific demands and preferences. The online site shows the contents of the expo through the use of innovative techniques, and to soften the blow to those who cannot make it to the Hangzhou experience itself.

For those who do plan to experience the leisure of Hangzhou, there is no need to worry about transportation or accommodations. The Xiaoshan International Airport offers flights to 13 destinations abroad, and 44 Chinese cities, including Hong Kong and Macau. Tourists traveling by land can catch a train to almost anywhere in China from the Hangzhou Railway Station or Hangzhou East Station.

The city has adequate accommodation services, from youth hostels to five star hotels with a myriad of choices in between. The organizers have done everything possible to insure security, order, and public health during

the expo., with, for example, a good traffic system.

The 2011 Hangzhou World Leisure Expo will be a global gathering that contributes to the development of the leisure business worldwide and to the development of human beings.

The World Leisure Organization has explained that it believes that access to meaningful leisure experiences is no less important than access to food, shelter, education, employment and health care. An improved life quality can require a vigorous effort and the World Leisure Expo is a brilliant example of what effort can offer people in a stressful world.

Hangzhou is a vibrant city that welcomes guests from everywhere and invites them to just drop by for a spell of leisure — and an exchange of ideas and their thoughts on leisure.



Caption.



Caption.