

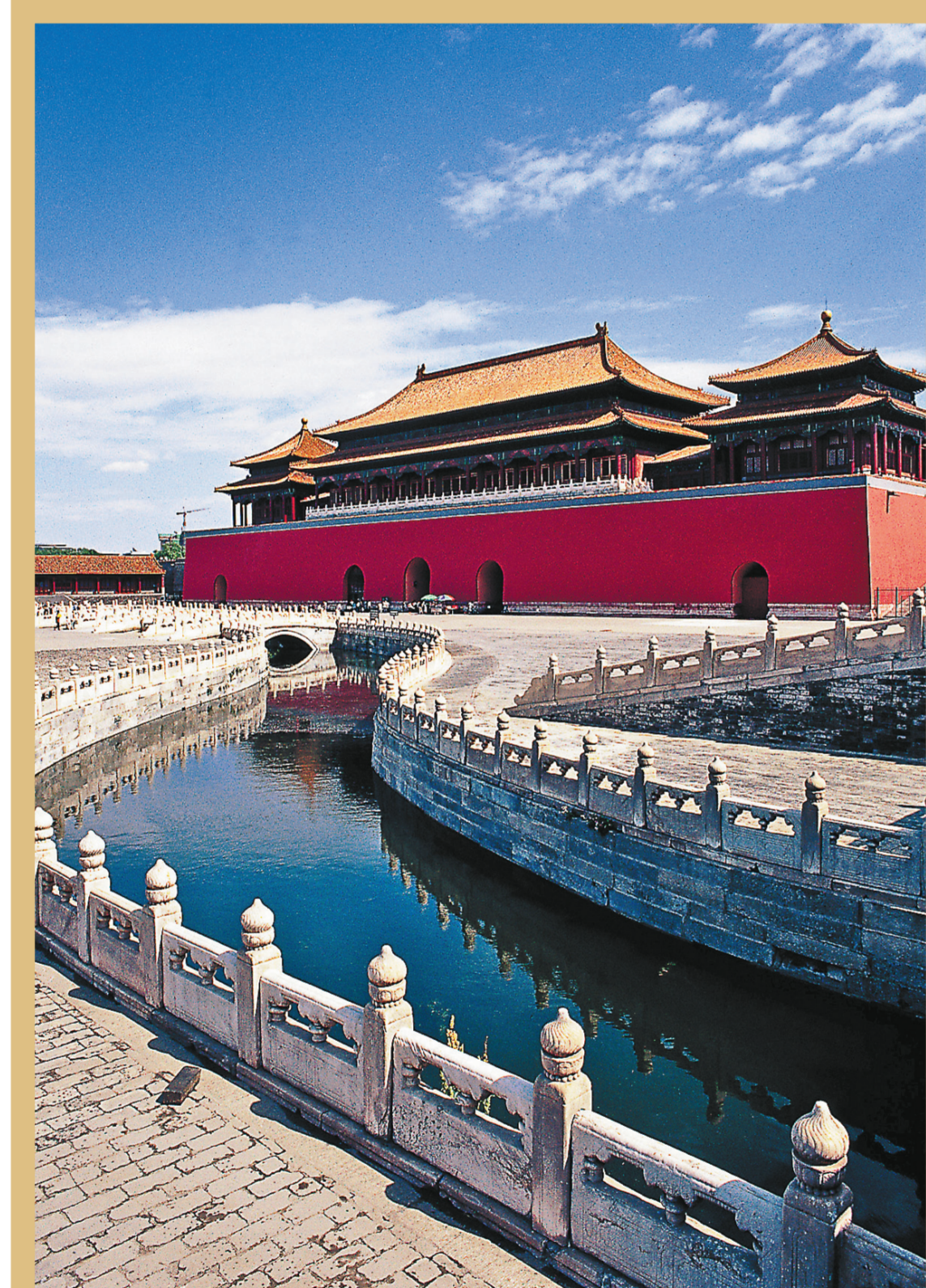
# BEIJING CALLING



Covering an area of 440,000 square meters, Tian'anmen Square is the world's largest urban square, a place to hold grand celebrations. PHOTO BY LI ZHANG



Surrounded by buildings on four sides, the courtyard forms a warm and peaceful world where several generations of a family live together. PHOTO BY FU ZHONGQING



From the overall layout to each brick and tile, all buildings in the Forbidden City manifest the supreme authority of the emperor. Pictured is the Gate of Supreme Harmony. PHOTO BY YANG SHIYANG



Turrets are an important part of the Forbidden City's defense system. Their complex structure is usually described as "nine beams, 18 pillars and 72 ridges".



The Place, known for having Asia's largest screen, displays visitor's text messages every hour. The mall is a major entertainment center and a new landmark of the capital. PHOTO BY MA YOUNG



Standing 386.5 meters tall, the world's sixth tallest tower, the Beijing Tower (Central TV Tower) is a hot tourist destination. Against the curtain of night, it looks like a glittering lantern hanging in the sky. PHOTO BY WANG JIANCHONG



Happy Valley, China's largest ecological theme park, is a youthful and colorful part of the city. PHOTO BY MA YOUNG



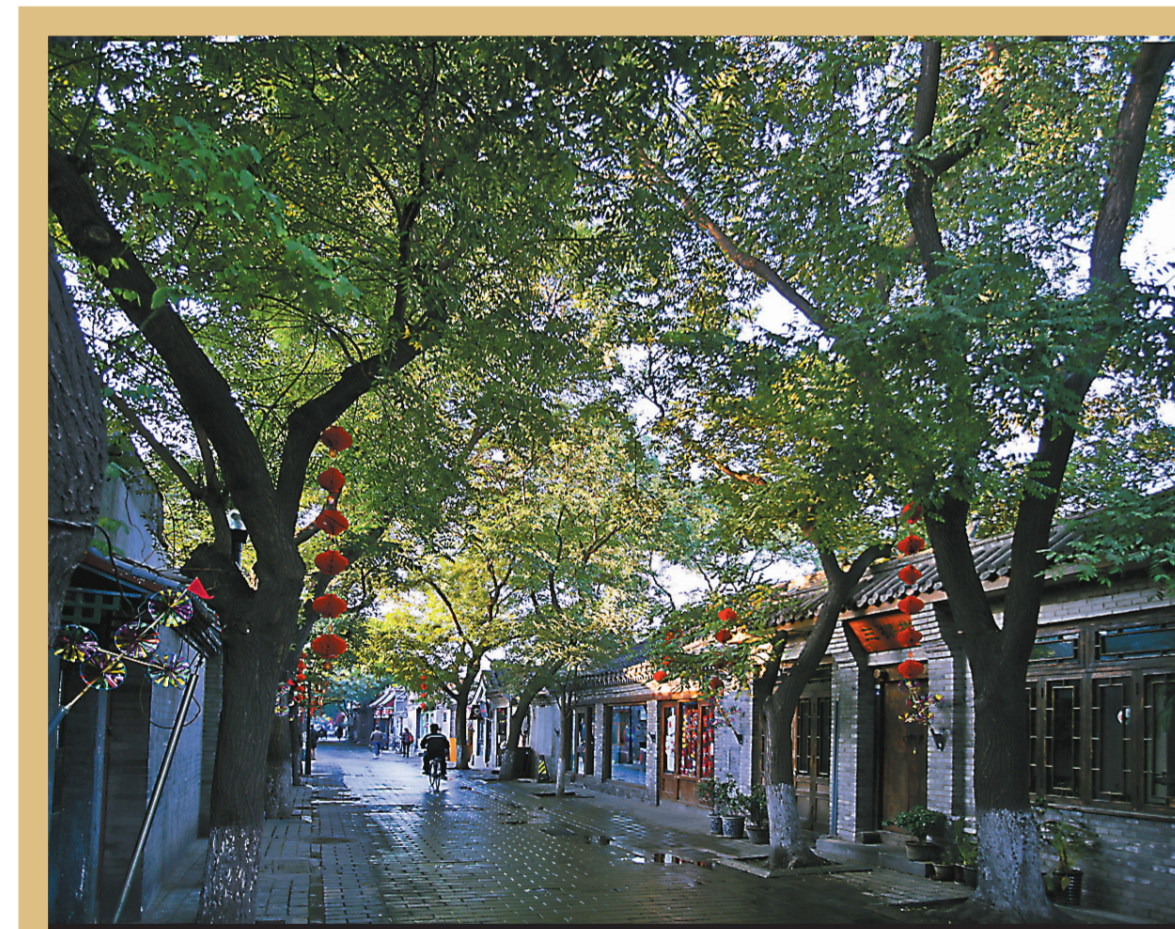
Every year, the National Center for the Performing Arts offers a stage for the world's top art troupes to entertain the masses. PHOTO BY TREV CLIFF



Dubbed the "aircraft carrier" of Asia's TV industry, the new CCTV tower and its avant-garde look signifies a new era of modern Chinese architecture. PHOTO BY WANG JUN



The mural paintings at Fahai Temple in the western suburbs of Beijing were created more than 500 years ago. They are well-known for being spirited and rich in color. PHOTO BY YAN YUSHENG



Hutong are ancient alleyways unique to Beijing. They constitute the texture of old Beijing, together with the courtyards. PHOTO BY WANG JIANGLO



Beijing has become an international food center where you can enjoy cuisines from across the world. But one delicacy you cannot miss is Peking duck, with Quanjude Roast Duck being the most recognized brand. Peking duck is famous for its tender texture and rich taste. PHOTO BY FENG BICUN



Chinese shadow puppetry, thought to be more than 1,000 years old, uses flat and movable figures to create the impression of people and objects. It is often referred to as the "the ancestor of modern cinema". PHOTO BY SUN YUFEN



Beijing has become the focus of world attention. International media organizations, including the Associated Press and Reuters, have established offices in Beijing. PHOTO BY YANG JUN

By RAYMOND ZHOU

There are many ways to get to know a city. The best way is to experience it in person - travel across it, live there for a while, talk to people and make friends. If possible, learn the language, or even learn the local cuisine by cooking your own dishes. As many in the expatriate community will tell you, there is nothing that beats the real thing. Even the little frustrations will add to the richness of your Beijing experience. The capital is vast and constantly evolving. There is not a single book or film that can capture its diversity. That said, for those who do not have the luxury of a close encounter, a vicarious experience is the next best thing. Viewing Beijing through a third person has its

advantages: The images are heightened and tend to distill the essence for you. You can save the trouble of browsing through the clutter of irrelevancy and cut to the chase, so to speak. An image of Beijing naturally condenses; yet it also expands by suggesting things not inside the frame. The same goes for the proscenium of a theater or the screen of a cinema. A film or stage show about Beijing usually presents some aspect of the city and its people, maybe about its past but with modern-day repercussions. It may be symbolic of something more widespread, yet one should caution against reading too much into it. Likewise, the frame of a photograph is by no means the boundary for the viewer's mind's eye. It has a natural vista toward the unseen. In a sense, it resembles a traditional Chinese brush painting where much is left blank, to be filled with the imagination of the viewer. A picture

may be worth a thousand words, but in the case of China this is hardly enough to describe its multiple facets. You have to make the photo you see a part of a bigger picture. Yet, it is a worthy attempt and people should never stop. As a traveler derives joy from sharing his or her discoveries, both locals and outsiders can gain from their knowledge or curiosity about Beijing, which is in a constant state of being rediscovered. Let these images be the signposts of the departure gate. You are embarking on a voyage that will be richer than that which could be captured by other people's photographs. The end of your journey will be marked by an assemblage of images that went through your own lens and represent what you saw and experienced. That will be the city you discover. All the pictures will show at Barbican Center on July 26 and 27.



Beijing's Miyun Reservoir, Asia's largest man-made lake, attracts many endangered birds on their long migrations. PHOTO BY WEI JIANGLUO



On the night of Aug 8, 2008, the 29th Beijing Olympic Games opened at the Bird's Nest stadium (National Stadium), putting Beijing under the world's spotlight. PHOTO FROM NPKC.COM