

中國滑浪新潮流

China's catching



Once a sleepy retirement town, Sanya's emerging surf scene is now drawing a young and hip crowd to its shores

a new wave

曾幾何時，三亞的108米高觀音像，是中國內地旅客前往當地觀光的唯一理由。然而，該市現已成為新興滑浪勝地，吸引一眾年輕型人紛紛到訪，乘風破浪

BY JAMIE FULLERTON
PHOTOGRAPHY MATJAZ TANČIČ

he shouted orders from my instructor are simple: "Paddle! Paddle! Paddle! Go! Go! Go!" As I feel the swell of the wave behind me, I push my body up and whack my size UK13 feet onto my surfboard, making a sound akin to two cuts of wet gammon being slapped onto a butcher's table. Two seconds later I'm in the drink, bath-warm South China Sea water filling my ears as sand chafes my knees.

I rescue my head from the water in time to see professional surfer Monica Guo, my teacher for the day, glide towards the beach, effortlessly riding the wave that felled me. Honey, her yellow pooch, is standing confidently at the bow of her owner's board, tongue lolling in the breeze. Guo might be doing the steering, but there's no getting away from the fact that I'm being out-surfed by a dog.

This realisation would normally be a mood-killer, but it's hard to feel anything other than serene in the waters of Houhai Bay in Sanya, on the southern coast of Hainan: China's tropical island province off the southern coast of the mainland. As well as to discover that I have worse water-sport ability than a canine, I'm here because Sanya is reportedly in the middle of a boom period that has seen it dubbed "China's Florida" by *The Economist*.

教練向我發出簡潔號令：「划！划！划！前進！前進！前進！」我感到背後的海浪洶湧而至，便順勢起乘，把我的英國碼13號大腳猛然站在滑浪板上，發出的聲響有如兩塊火腿濕漉漉地摔在砧板上。兩秒後，我已跌進海中，耳朵滿是南中國海的溫暖海水，沙粒把膝蓋都擦痛了。

我在水中探頭而出，看見我的滑浪老師——專業滑浪手郭淑娟——朝著海灘輕鬆滑行，那股海浪將我狠狠擊敗，她卻遊刃有餘。她的小狗Honey自信滿滿地站在滑浪板前端，伸出舌頭，享受微風。雖說郭淑娟才是負責操控那位，但毋疑這隻小狗的滑浪天份比我高得多。

雖然深感天資平庸，但我並沒因此心情低落：置身美麗的三亞後海灣，內心只感到平靜祥和。三亞市所在地海南島，是位處中國大陸南端的熱帶海島省份。我今次到訪三亞，除了發現自己的水上活動天份比小狗還不如，還目睹該市正在蓬勃發展——它獲《經濟學人》雜誌譽為「中國的佛羅里達州」。

三亞市人口74萬9千人，但正如佛羅里達州，每逢冬季，當地的居民數字都會突然飆升，原因是許多內地退休人士都會大舉南下，享受陽光普照的明媚天氣，暫離北京等飽受冰雪和霧霾籠罩的內陸城市。三亞市政府表示，每年都有50萬這類旅客到訪，進駐市內陸續落成的新型住宅樓宇。根據《經濟學人》所述，多得這場「大遷徙」，三亞在2000至2013年期間的經濟得以增長十倍。

除了以上的統計數字，三亞的海灘同樣令人留



Sanya has a population of 749,000 but, like Florida, every winter this number swells as swathes of pensioners descend to enjoy the sun-blessed climate while mainland cities such as Beijing choke on ice and smog. The Sanya government says that up to 500,000 of them come each year, filling the reams of new apartment blocks that have popped up around the city recently. According to *The Economist*, largely thanks to this migration, between 2000 and 2013 Sanya's economy grew tenfold.

The beaches are as impressive as the stats. Dadonghai Bay, on the coast of the central downtown area, is the most popular, and is bustling with rubber ring-adorned holidaymakers when I visit.

A few miles east, at Yalong Bay, Sanya feels less like Florida and more like Dubai. The postcard-perfect beach is public but feels private, being lined by five-star hotels all thriving on the boom. Many of the resorts, such as the sprawling Marriott, literally back out onto the sand – it's the only beach I've visited where I can get WiFi while knee-deep in the ocean.

Indeed, when I'd asked friends who had visited Sanya before what the spirit of the place was like, "Loads and loads of expensive resorts" was the unanimous answer. But they didn't visit Houhai Bay, found on the eastern edge of Sanya, just south of Haitang Bay (loads more five-star hotels along that one).

When I arrive there to meet Guo, Bob Marley is gently spilling from the speakers of Jile Hotel: a shack-style surf hotel on the beach. Surfers swing in hammocks, beer bottles resting on their six packs, while Honey the dog lies next to her owner





“It’s hard to feel anything other than ambiently serene in the waters of Houhai Bay in Sanya”

「置身美麗的三亞后海灣，
內心只感到平靜祥和」



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: SURFER DARCI LIU AND A FRIEND NEAR HOUHAI BAY; TOURISTS TAKING SELFIES ON THE BEACH; PRO SURFER MONICA GUO WASHING SAND OFF HER DOG; KITESURFERS AT HOUHAI BAY

順時針左圖起：女子職業滑浪選手劉丹及其友人攝於后海灣；遊客於海灘上自拍照片；職業滑浪運動員郭淑娟替其寵物狗沖洗海沙；后海灣也是風箏滑浪者的勝地

下深刻印象。大東海位於市中心沿岸一帶，是當地最受歡迎的海灘，我到達的時候，灘上擠滿了穿上水泡的度假人士。

東面數哩以外的亞龍灣，感覺似是杜拜多於佛羅里達州。海灘風景如畫，雖然開放予公眾使用，但氣氛寫意私密。沿岸五星級酒店林立，紛紛受惠於當地的暢旺經濟。不少度假酒店，如佔地廣闊的萬豪酒店，都將服務伸延至海灘之上——這是我到訪過的唯一一個海灘，可以在步入海中之際，仍能享用無線網絡。

當我問及一些曾經遊覽過三亞的朋友，該地有什麼特色，他們總會說：「有非常多的貴價度假村。」然而他們都未曾到過后海灣——位於三亞市東沿，海棠灣以南的一隅（海棠灣擁有更多五星級酒店）。

當我抵達后海灣入樂衝浪客棧，與郭淑娟見面時，Bob Marley的音樂從揚聲器悠悠飄送：酒店座落海灘之上，洋溢滑浪小屋的寫意風情。吊床上的滑浪旅人，把手上的啤酒瓶擱在健碩的腹肌上。那邊廂，小狗Honey躺在主人旁邊，懶洋洋地打著呵欠。眼前景象讓人聯想到某個泰國小島，不太像是典型的華南地區。現在，我明白為何郭淑娟和友人劉丹——另一位熱愛滑浪的健兒——會選擇以這裡為家。

「怎可能有人不想待在這兒呢？」劉丹的滑浪班剛剛下課，她一邊忙著沖洗，一邊向我說。她十年前移居三亞，在當地第一間滑浪專門店工作，該店位於大東海。其後，她在今年四月搬遷至氣氛更為寧靜的后海灣。

劉丹曾為芭蕾舞者，成為職業滑浪選手已有四年，但當她首次踏足滑浪界時，這種運動在中國還是一個全新的概念。她說：「當時不少滑浪術語都沒有中文叫法，所以我和朋友便自行建立中文滑浪詞彙。」

如今，中國已擁有一支國家滑浪隊伍，而劉丹和為我

WHERE TO STAY 住宿好地方



Sanya has a huge number of hotel options, with many top-end hotels and resorts opening recently as part of the city's tourism boom. The *Aspire* team stayed as guests of The Rosewood, which is located in the centre of Haitang Bay in the east of the city, a 45-minute drive from the airport. The hotel has a large range of room styles, including those with private balconies and small swimming pools. Facilities include a large outdoor infinity pool next to a cocktail bar, with dining options including Chop House, a European-style restaurant focusing on meat dishes.

三亞擁有大量酒店選擇，而隨著當地旅遊業蓬勃發展，近來還有不少頂級酒店和度假村相繼開業。《優遊》雜誌團隊是次以客人身分入住三亞保利瑰麗酒店，該酒店位於三亞市東部海棠灣的心臟地帶，距離機場約45分鐘車程。酒店提供多種房間類型，包括附設私人陽台和小型泳池的客房。其設施包括大型室外無邊際泳池，池畔設有雞尾酒吧；餐飲方面，則有以肉類菜餚為主打的歐陸式餐廳「炙」。

rosewoodhotels.com;
+86 898 8871-6666

and yawns. The vibe feels more Thai island than southern China, and it's clear why Guo and her friend Darci Liu, another surf obsessive, chose to make their homes here.

"How could you not want to be here?" says Liu, hosing herself down with water after finishing a surf lesson. She moved to Sanya 10 years ago and was based at the city's first surf shop in Dadonghai Bay, before relocating to the more peaceful Houhai Bay in April 2017.

A former ballerina, she was a competitive surfer for four years, but when she started out, the concept of surfing was pretty much unheard of in China. "There weren't even any Chinese versions of many surfing terms, so my friend and I had to make our own Chinese surfing dictionary," she says.

Now China has a national surfing team and Guo, who along with Liu gives me my surfing lesson, is the star female pro. She won her first surfing title, the Hainan Open, in 2013 after moving to Sanya from Guilin in 2008. "I do feel like they never stop building here," she says when I ask her about how Sanya has changed since she moved here. "But it's cool that the island is becoming even more international. It's about finding that balance."

Balance is not something I get to grips with particularly well during my surf lesson but Guo's is, as expected, perfect. She travels the world to compete in surf competitions, but chose to move to Houhai Bay to

totally immerse herself in the sport. It's a strong testament to the beauty of the bay.

"I used to be like 'Work, work, work' in the city before I discovered surfing," Guo says. "I was a different person – I loved buying high-heeled shoes, partying every night, shopping every day, being interested in rich people. Surfing changed me." Liu nods in agreement. "This is my happy place, my happy temple," she says with a laugh.

Sanya isn't all sandy beaches and surfing dogs. It's also got a 108-metre high Buddha statue with three heads. I take a taxi west of the city centre to the Nanshan Buddhism Cultural Zone: a leafy complex of temples that houses the enormous bronze statue, a Guanyin Buddha, which is taller than the Statue of Liberty.

The zone is one of the most popular tourist attractions in the area – on entry a computer screen boasts that there are currently 4,000 people inside. It is also the only religious site I've been to that forces all visitors to pass through the souvenir shop on entry and exit. Buddhism is big business at Nanshan, with the tranquillity of the main shrine room inside the statue punctured

by the sounds of cash notes flicking through electronic money counters at the many shopping stations.

The selfie stick-holding pilgrims don't seem put off by this, though, with many somberly pacing around the gold rooms, making prayer gestures at the plethora of smaller statues that line them. For Duan Ran, a 35-year-old journalist from

“Surfing changed me. This is my happy place, my happy temple”

「滑浪改變了我。
這裡是我的快樂之鄉，
我的快樂神殿」

充當教練的郭淑娟則成為了星級女運動員。郭淑娟在2008年從桂林移居三亞，並於2013年海南公開賽贏得首個滑浪獎項。我問她自從搬到三亞後，該市有什麼轉變，她說：「我覺得他們正在不斷興建新樓宇，永無休止似的。不過另一方面，海南島變得更國際化也是好事。關鍵在於拿捏平衡。」

上滑浪課的時候，拿捏平衡並非我擅長的一環，但郭淑娟當然對此駕輕就熟。她曾參與各項滑浪賽事，足跡遍及全世界，但她選擇安居於后海灣，全心全意投入滑浪運動，證明這個地方魅力非凡。

「我對滑浪產生興趣之前，曾經在城裡打工，是一個工作狂。」她說。「那時候的我，是一個截然不同的人——我當時愛買高跟鞋，每晚派對連場，每天都瘋狂購物，還喜歡結識有錢人。滑浪改變了我。」劉丹點點

頭。「這裡是我的快樂之鄉，我的快樂神殿。」郭淑娟笑著說。

三亞並非只有海灘和滑浪小狗。這裡矗立了一尊108米高的海上觀音像，展現了觀音的三個法相。我在市中心西面乘坐的士，前往南山佛教文化苑——一個綠蔭處處的綜合廟宇園區，其觀音像比紐約自由神像還要高。

南山佛教文化苑是區內最受歡迎的旅遊景點之一。我抵埗時，電腦螢幕顯示有四千人正在遊覽。此外，我從未見過一個宗教景點，會令所有訪客都必須經過其出入口的紀念品店。佛教為南山帶來滾滾財源，而佛堂裡的祥和氣氛，卻被多個購物點的點鈔機劃破。

不過，手持自拍棒的善信似乎並未受到影響，他們在金碧輝煌的佛堂裡恭敬地踱步，朝著一排排的小型佛像參拜。現年35歲的段然（譯音）來自重慶，是一位新



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: COLOURFUL SURFBOARDS AT A HOSTEL IN HOUHAI BAY; A SURFER AND HIS BEST FRIEND; ROOMS AT THE ROSEWOOD COME WITH A PRIVATE POOL

順時針左圖起：后海湾一間滑浪用品專賣店內的彩色滑浪板；滑浪者及其寵物狗；三亞保利瑰麗酒店設有私人泳池客房

PRIME SURF SPOTS ON THE NETWORK

香港航空各大航點的
頂級滑浪勝地



MALIBU, LOS ANGELES

It's home to Surfrider Beach, where LA's surfing culture was born.

洛杉磯馬利布

位於馬利布的薩弗里德海灘（又名滑浪者海灘）是洛杉磯滑浪文化的孕育地。



BYRON BAY, GOLD COAST

Byron Bay is consistently ranked as one of the top surf spots in the world and its Belongil Beach is suitable for surfers of all abilities.

黃金海岸拜倫灣

拜倫灣一向譽為世界頂級滑浪地點之一，當地的Belongil海灘適合各種程度的滑浪愛好者。



CANGGU, BALI

Echo Beach and Old Man's Beach are both hot wave-riding spots, but the latter is more suitable for beginners as it has fat waves with little power.

峇里島長谷

Echo海灘和Old Man's海灘皆是熱門滑浪地點，後者較為適合初學者，因為那裡的海浪偏緩，力量較溫和。



Chongqing wearing a Hawaiian shirt, matching shorts and yellow Crocs, this is the highlight of his Sanya trip. "Guanyin is said to be a Buddha who has great mercy and kindness," he says. "Humans should treat others with mercy and kindness, too."

I mention that many locals believe that the statue protects the island, warding off typhoons. This notion was severely tested as forecasts of bad weather had threatened to derail my plans while I was there. But Duan's faith is unshakable. "A lot of forecasts said that typhoons would hit Sanya, but they didn't!" he

says, before heading to the top of the statue to hug one of its big toes.

Sanya is still largely marketed to mainland Chinese tourists as a tropical, sunny option that doesn't require leaving the country. So, Jiang Xuemei, a golf club manager says, "We don't get many international tourists. I meet people from Europe or Southeast Asia who come here for business and they're surprised, saying, 'It's such a nice place – why didn't we know about it?'"

Indeed. Something great is happening in Sanya – and I don't just mean that a dog is riding a surfboard there. ✨

"People are surprised, saying, 'It's such a nice place – why didn't we know about it?'"

「不少初次到訪的旅客都很驚訝，

他們會說『這裡美得很，為何我們以前不知道有這個地方呢？』」

聞工作者，他身穿夏威夷襖、夏威夷花紋短褲與黃色Crocs涼鞋。對他來說，這就是三亞之行的重點活動。他說：「觀音菩薩慈悲為懷，人們都應該以慈悲之心善待他人。」

我對他說，不少本地人都相信觀音像能守護海南島，保佑它不會受到颱風吹襲。然而，新聞預報天氣將會變壞，為我的行程構成了阻礙，這是對觀音像的重大考驗。但段然似乎未有絲毫動搖：「天氣預告常常說颱風會吹襲三亞，但最終都不成事。」說罷，他走上最高處，擁抱觀音像的巨型腳趾。

至今，當地旅遊局仍然向內地旅客重點宣傳三亞，將它塑造成一個陽光充沛的度假島嶼，不用出國也可享受熱帶風情。三亞一間高爾夫俱樂部的經理江雪媚

（譯音）這樣說：「這裡的國際遊客不算多。我遇過一些前來公幹的歐洲人或東南亞人，他們都很驚訝，說這裡美得很，為何他們都不知道有這個地方呢？」

一點也沒錯。三亞現正經歷重大轉變——除了滑浪小狗之外，還有更多。

Hong Kong Airlines flies to Sanya daily. For more information, visit hongkongairlines.com

香港航空每日均設有航班來回香港與三亞。
查閱更多訊息，請瀏覽hongkongairlines.com