

Iron maidens



Features

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Kathleen Lau, Michelle Garnaut, Cotton Ding and Kelley Lee, we love you and salute you for all you've accomplished. But it's time to share the spotlight. In honor of International Women's Day on March 8th, we profile eight of Shanghai's amazing, but lesser known sisters in the F&B industry...

Cara Stadler (pictured above)

head chef, [12 Chairs](#)

Age: 23

From: Harvard, Massachusetts, US

Years in Shanghai: Two

Stadler left home at 14, graduated from high school a year early and decided she wanted a career in fine dining. So she started work at a local bistro in Berkeley, California, and immediately fell in love with the trade. After three years in the field, she took an eight-month break to study at Le Cordon Bleu, got her stars at Restaurant Guy Savoy, did a brief stint with Gordon Ramsay au Trianon Palace in Versailles and then started an underground restaurant in Beijing. After the untimely termination of the now defunct Laris, she was ready to spearhead another Laris kitchen. "I am really young for a head chef," she admits. "But the way I see it, if I can learn twice as fast as someone, then I'm just as old as they are and just as good."

On being a woman in the industry: "I don't ever want to be the girl who can't keep up with the boys. If anyone can do it then I can – if it takes spending six hours sweating behind a hot stove, I'll do it. I once had a whole thing of scalding oil spill onto my arm during a shift. It hurt like a bitch, but you suck it up. I've spent my whole career working in an industry dominated by males and trying to prove there's no difference between me and them. Nothing makes me better than them, but nothing makes me worse."