

London Voices – Jianhui Yan

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Continuing our London Voices series where we ask Londoners what makes them love London, Irene Caswell speaks to Jianhui Yan.

Jianhui has lived and worked in London for 18 years, at one time working as an office manager at a chemical company. In order to pay the study tuition fees for an MBA at Hull University he borrowed from friends and family. At weekends, Jianhui sold antique and vintage pieces of jewellery at the London markets and began making his own designs from broken pieces. In 2006, he started a 'proper business', Jianhui London, producing ethical jewellery made from recycled materials, initially from home and now from his own design studio.

Jianhui, thanks for agreeing to share with us your thoughts on living in London. First up, what do you like the most about London?

The arts and culture, which is something I miss most when I'm away from London. I love all the museums and theatres, and the different races of people involved.

What's your top tip for new visitors to London to get the most from a trip to the city?

I would definitely recommend a walk along the banks of the River Thames to experience the beauty and inspiration of London.



Jianhui Yan with Tower Bridge in the background.

If visitors only had 24 hours to spend in London what would be your top ‘not-to-be-missed’ suggestion to see/do?

Top of my list would be the **Victoria and Albert Museum** (V&A) and the British Museum. Growing up in a tiny village in China I had never been to museums like these before I came to the UK. I’ve always loved art and design so when I moved to London, a city full of creativities, it was so exciting. After living in London for 17 years I still get a thrill walking around the city and especially visiting the museums because they give me so much inspiration.

Where is your favourite place to eat or drink, and why?

Until the pandemic last year I had a store at the Gabriel’s Wharf on the **Southbank London**. I often walk along the river there which gives me inspiration and makes me feel good. There’s so much to see and enjoy looking at the tides coming and going, artists performing their art on the beach, different styles of buildings along the banks and tourists enjoying London.

I like to eat at **Gourmet Pizza** at the Wharf where you have a beautiful view of the river. The staff are very friendly and they serve quality food with a reasonable price list. Gabriel’s is a treasure positioned between the South Bank Studios and the OXO Tower. There are over 10 small shops run by local designers, artists and makers together with cafés, restaurants and bars. On a sunny day you can sit down with a drink and people-watch, or chat with friends for a good time.

Where do you like to go in your leisure time to relax in London – theatre, music scene, art, sports?

When I'm not visiting a museum or the theatre, I enjoy spending time at Highgate Wood and Queens Wood which are about a 10-minute walk from my home. The ancient woods give the illusion that you don't live in London. The tranquillity is such a contrast to other parts of the city. After a long day or a busy week, walking through the woods is very relaxing physically and mentally.

If you were Mayor of London for a day what would you change?

I would take all politicians to visit people who live with poverty.

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