



Comments from Our Guests

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2013

The Brickyard: We loved it! You've created a true oasis outside of the city.

Robin Allemand, April 2013

Dear Schoolhouse Team, Both my husband and I were exhausted after our trip as we were travelling with two young kids and both of us resumed work on the next day after a late flight home on 1 April. Though still sleepy as well as busy clearing up the emails and paperworks piled up over the holidays, I am urged to write this email right away to express my appreciation for the wonderful services and stunning view offered by The Schoolhouse - Brickyard.

Your team is so helpful and friendly, food so fresh and tasty, the outdoor jacuzzi so relaxing, the lounge so homey and cozy that it required an awful lot of determination to leave the room. We would definitely come again, to complete the hikes in the area and enjoy the fireplace again.

Thank you once again for the wonderful experience. Thanks to God for such a neat place at the foot of the Great Wall. Well done, Schoolhouse! *Stephanie Lin, Hong Kong, April 2013*

Dear Schoolhouse, I just wanted to say thank you for a great trip on Sunday for the very interesting Tofu Anyone? slow food program. It was my first visit to the Great Wall. The Schoolhouse was a wonderful place to have lunch and the food was delicious. I really admire how you are helping the local community. *Julia Russell, Singapore, March 2013*

We absolutely loved our stay at the Brickyard in all regards. The property is just so beautiful in every detail and believe me we studied each! The location and design are just outstanding. If we could, I think we would ask you to design a house for us! We had a truly thrilling hike to the great wall from the hotel to the secret path and on up. Really amazing. We also found your staff to be uniformly warm, welcoming and helpful. Danna is a real treasure. I also had a reflexology treatment with Jake and it was the best ever. Chatting with Jim was a pleasure; my only regret was not meeting Lauren (and Emily) who had been so helpful setting up our visit. *Jane Prelinger and Mike Stadter, Washington, D.C., March 2013*

2012

Thank you for the unforgettable weekend at the Brickyard. Our whole team really loved to stay there, we had two wonderful days. The rooms and facilities are so nice, the food you served was delicious and a lot of my coworkers said they definitely want to go to the Brickyard again. *Jasmin Schueller, German Embassy School, Beijing October 2012*

We had a marvellous stay at Mumanyu and just loved the design and interiors of the house. Your staff are delightful and I will definitely be back to try another of your fabulous houses. *Gillian Mellsop, Beijing, September 2012*

I am writing to express my sincere thanks to your house keeping team, and in particular Gina! I stayed at the Eagle at Rest house last Sunday. On Monday when I checked out, I left my iPad on the bed in one room and returned back to downtown Beijing. The house keeping staff found the iPad when cleaning the room and informed Gina who called me to let me know. And later on Wednesday evening Gina brought it to me in person. I use it

everyday, so you know how important this tablet to me. I am bring this to your attention not only because of this matter, but also I experienced the always good service provided by your team as I have now stayed a couple of times at Brickyard Inn and houses like Stone Forest, Big Rock...etc. in the past two months. You have a great team who are friendly, efficient and professional which contributes to the credit of the brand Schoolhouse and Brickyard Inn. Many thanks again and I look forward to my next stay at Brickyard Inn or the Schoolhouse houses! *Yang Bo, Managing Director of Bokai Travel, August 2012*

My daughter and I really enjoyed our time at the Brickyard. You have done a fabulous job on the facilities and the staff is very friendly and competent. I work in China and have been involved in some build-out projects, and I was very impressed with the attention to detail at the facilities. The food was also delicious and made for an "oasis" feel in the middle of China. (I particularly liked the nachos. They were better than most Mexican restaurants in the US.) We will definitely come back and spend some more time here. *Mike Toups, Clearwater, Florida, July 2012*

Wow...what a great stay at your eco retreat! I was doing business in the hustle and bustle of Beijing but had a chance to chill out at the Brickyard Inn for a few nights. From the heat of the city to the cool and quiet of the mountains... awesome! You've done a great job with it. And the new Chairman's Suite is extra nice. The staff was attentive and the facilities were beyond expectations. I'm a big fan after only one stay. I'm planning to return and perhaps host business meeting there. *Dr. Ernest Jones, Kuala Lumpur, June 2012*

My wife and I thoroughly enjoyed our mini-vacation at the Brickyard. Our room was esthetically pleasing and comfortable in all respects. The staff was terrific! Tana took care of us when we arrived; Gina watched out for us latter on Sunday evening, as well as Monday morning; and your interns (Alex and Jake) were enthusiastic and fun to discuss the world with. We had dinner on Sunday evening over at the Schoolhouse – wonderful gazpacho, perfectly cooked sturgeon and duck confit. Sitting in the courtyard of the Schoolhouse, looking up at the mountains (after a day hiking through them to get to Tower 18) was quite special. This morning's breakfast maintained the high standards of last night's dinner. We will spread the word about your establishments, and we hope to return (we spend a couple of months at Tsinghua University each year). *Charlie and Lulu*

Weschler, May 2012

Thank you again for an amazing experience [at the Brickyard]. I had a chance to talk to some locals and really enjoyed it. The light snow on the last morning of my stay is one of my most beautiful, fondest memories of my life. You offer a tremendous experience and I thank you for it. My friends and I already plan another visit. Hopefully soon!

Anonymous, March 2012

2011

Thank you for an absolutely fabulous lunch last Saturday. I took a high level USG official and my parents there and the private room you provided really added a special touch to your delicious food and a morning hike on the wall with blue skies all around. Thank you so much for your kind and special treatment. It really made for a spectacular visit. Much appreciation! *Erica Thomas 钟怡瑞, U.S. Embassy, November 2011*

The women attending the retreat had a really great time and you made it even better with your helpfulness, friendliness and flexibility. We felt very welcomed and enjoyed the rest and retreat that we were hoping for. We know that us being there made your work days on Saturday and Sunday very hectic and we thank you for your patience with us. And we'd like to pass that on to all the staff that were working! *Bridget Cheong on behalf of NeXt, August 2011*

Our stay at the Brickyard was a 'moment in time' visit which we shall always remember. It's not every day that one gets the chance to draw back the curtains in the morning to be greeted by the bluest of blue skies that hang above the undulations of the Great Wall of China as it snakes across the skyline. An unforgettable vista.

We loved the energetic walks between the Brickyard and The Schoolhouse where we enjoyed delicious meals and much appreciated glasses of wine or beer to quench our thirst. The work and effort that Jim Spear and his family and staff of villagers and lovers of China, have put into creating a most unusual sustainable world of villages, plants, buildings and hospitality, is unique in that it helps everyone involved in helping themselves, which is what it's all about. We were so fortunate to experience the 'real China' in your villages, giving us a snapshot of what life used to be like in the days

before the race for modernisation thrust so many individuals and countries into one big tumbler dryer where everything is swirled around and tumbles out, all looking identical.
Maeve Kelynack Skinner, Bahrain, June 2011

We marveled from the start by the location and your warm welcome. After having the opportunity to speak with Jim about design, sustainability, management, the ins and outs of the business, local culture and the first of a few fabulous meals, we set out to explore on our own and let the impressions deepen.

We have toured around China a bit and extensively for business and leisure around the world. We are always looking for the kind of unique place that sets a tone of privacy without stuffiness. Something that's elegant yet authentic, rustic yet refined, and that maintains an indigenous quality. What you have created at the Schoolhouse is a gem. You have seamlessly put all of these elements together along with "educational" concepts without being pedantic or contrived and rather than feeling "exclusive" it feels as if one is privileged to have found it and share in it with others... we found your whole approach inspirational and positive.

The reading materials you offered are absolutely beautiful, well written, illustrated and insightful. Your website is comprehensive and information packed.

Your level of organisation and ability to highlight the essentials is remarkable. It's a tight run ship and it shows! The staff is warm, pleasant and friendly and eager to accommodate and quick to smile.... *Kendra & Johan Willems, January 2011*

A wonderful New Year's at a home away from home. We had a wonderful stay at the Schoolhouse and were all amazed by the incredible community you have built in the villages around Mutianyu! I will definitely come back during spring time with some of my Beijing friends! We were satisfied with everything, from the driver you helped us book, to the drink and jazz in the Smithy and most importantly with the cosiness of Big Rock House. It had all the facilities we needed and it was just like being in a home away from home! I work in sustainable development myself and was impressed by the sustainability of your concept and of the houses! *Daphne Richet-Cooper, January 2011*

2010

I wanted to thank you for the wonderful transportation service you provided to me and my family on Christmas Eve. The entire process was efficient and courteous. Many thanks! *Carly Ramsey, December 2010*

Everything was delicious and the staff was delightful. Loved it! Don't fire the chef! *David Levy, Red Bank, New Jersey, December 2010*

Wonderful ambiance and product, servers friendly and efficient. *Colleen Mace, December 2010*

As expatriates arriving from hot and humid Jakarta, we were thrilled to arrive at Mutianyu with very sunny yet cool days, perfect to climb up the hills. Our check-in was really nice because since we arrived quite late at Beijing airport, we were offered to order food by phone from the car in order to be able to eat upon arrival at Hillside Haven. We loved the mix between modern and traditional architecture. We were so happy to sit by the fire in the evening and get some good sleep in the extra comfy bedcovers. The staff at Schoolhouse was really nice and helpful, giving us very good tips to hike around the wall, we happened to actually hike on our own (with no other tourists) directly beneath the Great Wall. As we were a bit lost after one hike in one village near Mutianyu, we also tested the great hospitality of staff at Brickyard Inn, who showed us the way back. All in all, a stay to remember for everyone in our family, from our 6 years old girl who claimed she loved China, to our 10 years old boy who declared he did not see something as beautiful (the Great Wall) in his entire life! Hope to come again some day... *From a French Visitor's Review on Flipkey, November 2010*

Top notch! Great experience... *Pamela Prime, October 2010*

My husband and I have stayed at the Brickyard Inn during this past summer but we truly had a great time at The Schoolhouse this fall. In addition, the staff was so accommodating to cater to my sister who has a gluten allergy. The food was wonderful and it was great to have the chef come visit our table prior to ordering. The steak and pumpkin risotto were fabulous dishes. My husband said it was the best steak he's had in China. Thank you again for your hospitality and wonderful service. I know we will

recommend The Schoolhouse to our other visitors and friends in China! *Michelle McTaggart, From her FlipKey Review, October 2010*

Unique and wonderful. Where else do you get the chance to stay at the foot of the Great Wall, in a modern-equipped traditional village home beside an excellent restaurant? Yes, it's expensive, but it's also worth it. *From Derek Irwin's FlipKey Review, October 2010*

Everything was to our satisfaction. The restrooms were crisp and clean. The staff were very friendly and helpful. And the food was outstanding. *Sylvia & Peter, September 2010*

NEVER EVER CHANGE! *Anonymous Guest Card Comment, September 2010*

Lauren, Thanks for the warm welcome to Mutianyu! My friend and I had a wonderful time last Saturday! The bus ride was smooth and on time! Very comfortable since it was the first trip to Mutianyu for my friend and I. The map provided was very detailed and clear! It was a great resource for us to use as we hiked up to Tower 21 and back to Tower 1. It was a fantastic experience! From the friendly phone call with Morgan to your helpful advice on the bus ride up, you were all very helpful and professional! My friend and I have already started to recommend our friends! Thanks for everything! *Jennifer Fong, UK, August 2010*

Thank you for taking such good care of my friend and his guests during a recent visit to The Schoolhouse. My friend, who is based in SH, asked me for recommendations for a unique dining experience. His relatives were visiting China for the first time, and as it was their last evening in BJ, he was looking for something very special. I spoke with Lauren when I called to make reservations on their behalf. Although The Schoolhouse normally closes at 6pm, she assured me that guests could stay until they were ready to leave, and that she would take very good care of them. To make a long story short, my friend said that they had a wonderful evening, enjoying views of the Great Wall as they dined. In fact, he said that the pasta was the best Italian dish he has ever tasted! He wants to return with his family soon. *Esther Yang, August 2010*

I visited The Schoolhouse a few weeks ago and had a fabulous, beyond words dinner there. I had the Steamed Rainbow Trout. Now back in the States, I am trying to describe

this wonderful dish to friends and family but I am having trouble describing and explaining the dish. If you could be so kind and just give me a brief description of the ingredients and how the dish is made, it would be much appreciated. Again, it was a wonderful dinner that night. *Sharon Koskie, USA, August 2010*

Fantastic house in a wonderful location! My family and friends stayed for one night at The Red Door to celebrate my husband's 40th birthday. It was a brilliant place to stay for this special occasion. The house was clean, spacious and had everything we needed. Lauren and the staff at The Schoolhouse were fantastic, and nothing was too much trouble. The Great Wall was only a 10 minute walk from the house, which was very great for the kids. We have lived in China for over 10 years and would have to say it was one of the most memorable places we have stayed. *Red Door Guest Review, August 2010*

Lunch at The Schoolhouse was a wonderful way to finish our visit to the Great Wall. Congressman Mickey Edwards (retired), *Vice President The Aspen Institute, August 2010*

An incredibly relaxing experience at Mumanyu. Five of us rented the Mumanyu house for one night and the stay was idyllic for all. The house was beautiful, well-furnished and clean, and we took all of our meals at The Schoolhouse, where we enjoyed the wonderful food and warm hospitality. A visit to Beijing just wouldn't be complete without at least one night "on the Great Wall at Mutianyu." *Schoolhouse Homes Guest, July 2010*

I had a wonderful time visiting Mutianyu. The School Bus driver was professional and a safe driver, and the bus itself had seatbelts & AC--a nice touch I'm not used to in Beijing :-). I enjoyed being so close to the Great Wall from The Schoolhouse, and everyone was friendly and helpful. The weather was clear and breezy, despite the heat, and I had a great 3-4 hour trip walking up and on the wall. After my walk, I had lunch at The Schoolhouse. The club sandwich was excellent, and I also enjoyed the glass blowing demonstration--a unique aspect of The Schoolhouse which made the day memorable. Overall everything went exceptionally well and it was my best weekend here in Beijing since I arrived late June. *School Bus Day Trip to Mutianyu Great Wall Passenger, July 2010*

Beautiful and mystical area and home. It was wonderful to wake up and look out to the

Great Wall. The experience of staying in Mutianyu and climbing the wall is not to be missed. We loved the sustainability factor that The Schoolhouse has focused on. Thank you for a wonderful and memorable stay. The kids said this was the best part of their China trip! (ages 6, 8 and 10 years old). *Guest, Hillside Haven, July 2010*

We stayed only one night at the Red Door, but it was the highlight of our visit to China. Well kitted out, comfortable - just like home really. Flat screen TV for the Football World Cup was a bonus. We took meals at The Schoolhouse, next door - the menu was balanced, served in a relaxed atmosphere and good value. The Red Door is a short walk from the Wall of China and we would recommend an early start to get on the Wall for 0800, as few visitors are there at that time. Down for Brunch at the Schoolhouse by 11.30." *Guest, Red Door July 2010*

Many thanks to Lauren and the team at Mutianyu. We had an amazing stay, and were very impressed by how helpful everyone was before our arrival, the quality of service and attentiveness during our stay, and the fabulous mix of old/new in the architecture and design of The Pavilion. We loved our stay and it was a highlight of our whole China trip. Thank you! *Sally Fisher, June 2010*

A delightful getaway. [Red Door] was a dream. Not only was it beautiful, it was also functional in terms of layout, and well-equipped for a posse of 6 adults and 4 children. The service staff was also extremely professional and quick to respond. We will definitely be back. Thank you for the wonderful stay. *Guests at Red Door, June 2010*

Thank you to The Schoolhouse for making our visit to the Great Wall and to Mutianyu such a great experience. The students had a wonderful time, and as always, thought it was simply a perfect ending to our China experience. *Dr. Nancy Nix Executive Director, EMBA Program Professor, Supply Chain Practice, Neeley School of Business, Texas Christian University, Forth Worth, Texas U.S.A., May 2010*

Best Weekend Getaway Spot in Beijing. *Thomas Liu, May 2010*

Set up a Schoolhouse in Beijing!!!! *Francois Xavier, May 2010*

Lovely place and attentive service. Best toilet in Beijing! *Alison from Australia, May*

2010

Keep up the good work ... You really do have something very special at the Schoolhouse and it is very much part of the Mutianyu experience for a visitor. Our memories of our day on the wall have lunch on the terrace at The Schoolhouse very much at the centre - well done for creating something wonderful and a truly beautiful part of China. *Sophie Soane and family, May 2010*

We had the most spectacular desserts at the Schoolhouse after a great hike on the Wall. Anne and I had hiked beyond the restored part at Tower 1 and had a nice picnic all by ourselves looking at the whole length of the restored section. Then we had dessert at the Schoolhouse (The brownie was incredible!) looking back at the Wall with the almost setting sun! *Gabi Carter, May 2010*

When you arrive at the Schoolhouse, Mutianyu, you are immediately welcomed by Jim, his family and staff. Throughout your visit staff are on hand to help with any requests- there is a nice balance of being well catered for but left alone in your romantic, peaceful setting. The cottage is a gorgeous old courtyard with lots of outdoor space to enjoy in the summer. The bathrooms are spacious and clean. The showers are 'walk in' style and the water is hot and plentiful. After a 5 minute walk through the village you are at the foot of the Great Wall. I recommend turning left at the top and heading toward Jinkou which is both quieter and more spectacular. After our walk we went for a late lunch at the Schoolhouse restaurant. I ate lamb curry and my husband had spaghetti bolognese, both were delicious, followed by some fantastic homemade ice cream. The accommodation includes breakfast, which is not to be missed! A full English and continental combined. I could not recommend this venue more highly. As someone who has been to The Great Wall a number of times this is by far my favourite location. *Laura Johnson, April 2010*

We had the good fortune to stay at a Schoolhouse property and eat at the restaurant. We had originally planned to have just one dinner at the Schoolhouse... but after tasting the Kedgeriee rice and Lamb curry, we ate breakfast, lunch and dinner at the Schoolhouse the following day. The food is brilliant. The Kedgeriee rice in particular had great depth of spices, locally roasted nuts and the kicker was house-smoked trout (the local specialty). An outstanding and unique combination of flavors. The little touches...

the roasted nuts, yam chips, and first-class hot chocolate round out the experience. But the real story is the emphasis on 'local'. The food is sourced locally and the staff largely comes from local towns / villages. The service was warmer and more personal than any we experienced in our three months in China. I'll also note that we were traveling with two kids under the age of three. As a former schoolhouse, you can imagine the place is extremely family friendly. If you are in Beijing, make the side trip to Mutianyu to see the Great Wall, and while you're there be sure to stop in at the Schoolhouse for a great meal. *Scott Buchanan, March 2010*

Delicious, Fresh Food, Good Vegetarian Options, Friendly Service and Great Place! *Jay Getto, March 2010*

Lovely atmosphere, great fun and food. My wife, an ex-teacher, felt right at home. *Iain and Gill Gray, March 2010*

2009

The Schoolhouse was a fabulous oasis after our freezing visit to the Wall. *Lyndsey+Noah+Oskar+Diana, December 2009*

Wonderful, warm service, feels like home! *Cast member of Race for Love, on tour in Beijing, November 2009*

Thanksgiving dinner was better than I have at home! *Guest from USA, November 2009*