

Cafe in rice fields a new landmark for city dwellers



With its black tiles and white walls, the One Step Garden Cafe stands out amid the surrounding rice fields.

Li Pin and Yang Di

As you walk from Liankang Road to the entrance of Xiangyue Huating (an agricultural and tourism integration development), you'll come across a charming, traditional Chinese building with black tiles and white walls.

Surrounded by vast rice fields, the One Step Garden Cafe is one of the most popular spots in Huating Town during weekends and holidays. Its unique location not only makes the cafe a picturesque scene but also adds an artistic and romantic touch to the serene farmland.

In recent years, Huating Town in Jiading District has been transforming under the rural revitalization strategy.

Increasingly, rural areas are sprouting new accommodations, boutique hotels and specialty cafes nestled amid fields and flower patches. These endeavors bring a lively atmosphere to the countryside, and present rural beauty and tranquility in a fresh way.

Upon entering the One Step Garden Cafe, visitors are greeted by thoughtful design elements spread across 1,600 square meters.

The cafe features three large floor-to-ceiling glass walls, allowing guests in every corner to enjoy the expansive views of the surrounding rice fields. The flexible layout, free from restrictive walls, includes a central Chinese-style courtyard, a greenhouse garden, and vast fields and woodland areas.

Many guests choose to sit outdoors or by the windows, enjoying their coffee as they soak in the tranquil beauty of the rural landscape. In front of the

cafe are rice fields, while behind it are vegetable greenhouses.

Why was this cafe placed amid the rice fields?

According to Xiao Shaowen, the cafe manager, the charming rural ecological environment perfectly aligns with One Step Garden Cafe's philosophy of harmonizing nature and culture.

"Here, people can fully appreciate the enchanting countryside scenery," Xiao said. "Nearby, we have shimmering lakes, and our cafe features a greenhouse garden, all contributing to a stunning landscape."

Since the cafe's opening on October 26, it had attracted more than 3,000 visitors in two weeks, and the garden has topped the coffee hotspots list in Jiading on a major food review and lifestyle platform.

Nestled among rice fields, the venue is an innovative upgrade of the original Xiangyue Huating



A visitor sits under a tent, playing with a dog. — Photos/Li Pin



The cafe's interior design features an artistic and natural touch.

Agricultural Exhibition Center, preserving its agricultural essence while adding an artistic and natural touch.

According to Zhang Mengxiang, partner of One Step Garden, a local lifestyle brand whose businesses encompass F&B, culture and educational training, the building's existing architectural structure underwent minimal changes during renovation so as to retain its authentic charm and seamlessly integrate with the surrounding landscape.

Visitors are instantly greeted by panoramic views of verdant rice fields and lush greenery upon entry, creating an immersive experience in nature.

The cafe's outdoor areas include ovens and tented seating, encouraging guests to enjoy food while being surrounded by nature. The greenhouse section preserves the original irrigation system and koi ponds, enhancing the peaceful ambiance. Southern fruit trees like mangoes and yellow peaches have also been planted to evoke the region's character and flavor.

The site choice aligns with Xiangyue Huating's growth as a rural revitalization model, Zhang said. He also noted One Step Garden's efforts to collaborate with local attractions, governments and investment companies, repurposing unused properties

and promoting local culture.

"We fully leverage One Step Garden's large fan base to promote Xiangyue Huating to more guests, supporting rural revitalization," said Zhang.

One Step Garden's newest cafe complements the resort's offerings. Recreational activities at Xiangyue Huating provide diverse rural micro-vacation experiences for all ages.

"In the future, we plan to hold exhibitions of crops, plants and flowers in the greenhouse area," Zhang said. "We'll also host countryside music events using the surrounding farmland to offer visitors a unique rural cultural experience."

Huating Town was once known for its raw, less accessible countryside, but rural revitalization efforts are reshaping its image. Rural spaces aren't short on land, but they do need fresh inspiration. The increased vitality in Huating is driving new possibilities for rural cultural tourism.

"The opening of One Step Garden Cafe offers citizens a new space with integrated leisure, sightseeing and entertainment experiences," noted Mao Lingyu, deputy director of the cultural and sports center of Huating Town.

"It also contributes to the integrated development of agriculture, commerce and cultural tourism, injecting new vitality into the area's economic transformation."