

OPTIMISTIC OUTLOOK

One of the youngest publishers of an international magazine in China explains why his group sees so much potential in the Chinese market. **Yang Yang** reports.

When the president and chief digital officer of Conde Nast International, Wolfgang Blau, visited China in late 2017, Paco Tang, the 33-year-old publisher of GQ China, took him to a fresh food supermarket in Beijing for dinner.

There, customers can choose fresh vegetables, meat and seafood from all over the world, take them away, or ask for them to be cooked and eat the food in the dining area.

This is a new trend in China.

"And there's no need to pay using cash. Just use your phone to scan the QR code to pay. After you order a crab or shrimp, the suppliers in, for instance, Canada get the information. It's a business model that makes the most of the internet," says Tang.

"Foreigners may feel strange about how common the cashless mobile-payment system is."

But Tang and the magazine's leaders in London realize that China is very different from any other country due to the rapidly developing internet industry.

The market is dominated by the internet and young people — and consequently is fickle and challenging and yet full of possibilities and potential.

That may be why one of the key words for GQ China under Conde Nast International, a brand with over a century of history, in 2017 was "young".

For instance, its annual celebration on Dec 15 saw GQ China's editorial team choose 10 people who have contributed to China's social progress in different areas, such as movie and music, with the theme of "the possibility of being young".

"Being young doesn't simply mean it is about age, but about one's attitude toward life," says Tang.

One of GQ's most popular digital products — the WeChat account GQ Lab — has been created by a group of people under 27 years old.

And Tang, its new publisher, is the youngest publisher of this international magazine family across the world.

Explaining why he was possibly chosen as the publisher, Tang says: "The Chinese market is big and important. So a brand with a long history needs a team that can keep proposing creative ideas to meet the demands of a market dominated by young people."

By young people, Tang means those under 30 years old.

"China is changing fast, especially in the recent two years. And each month we talked about different topics when my boss visited China.

"One month, it's shared bikes. Then it was apps for laundry.

"With the apps, people will appear at your door to collect your laundry. Or you can enjoy



From top: The cover of GQ China's September issue shows the 10 GQ 2017 Men of the Year. Paco Tang, publisher of GQ China, believes that men should also have a profound understanding of the world. Tang with Duan Yihong (middle) and Wu Xiubo, two actors who won Men of the Year, at the awards ceremony. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

a manicure at your office via an app on your phone," he says.

"It (the providing of the services) is not possible in many markets. But labor costs in China are comparatively low," he says.

Chinese brands have already started influencing other markets.

"What you do (in China) is also attracting other people's attention, and is thus having a big influence," says Tang.

Since he took the job on Aug 1, Tang has reorganized the administrative and editing systems, so that interactions among the different departments — marketing, planning and editing — are smoother.

Now, the editorial team takes more interest in producing quality content for branding and marketing.

For instance, for the annual celebration on Dec 15, fashion editors at GQ China helped the 10 men of the year with their hair, makeup and outfits. And they filmed the process and shared the videos on WeChat.

They also built an on-site studio to collect videos of the men of the year, besides taking photos of them.

"It is more interesting for both the stars and netizens," Tang says.

Before GQ China, Tang worked in marketing and branding for magazines for seven years, with stints at Bloomberg Businessweek and Esquire.

Tang, who is a Libra, advocates the idea that men should not only have a stylish look and an interesting soul, but also a profound understanding of the world.

He loves the in-depth features in GQ magazines, besides jogging, swimming and tennis to keep fit.

Describing GQ, he says: "Despite being a fashion magazine, we have an editorial team to do in-depth reporting because we want to provide Chinese men with something interesting and profound about our society."

Explaining how the process works, he says that in one instance six GQ editors spent six months collecting 800,000 characters of material on rhinitis in China's big cities, but in the final version, readers got only 10,000 characters.

"We invest a lot in such reports, but they give us a unique quality," says Tang.

Finally, he says he hopes Chinese men, especially those who tend to stay indoors, such as those in the IT industry, pay more attention to their appearances.

"They are very interesting people, but appearance, which reflects one's inner character, is also very important."

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The Alexandrov Ensemble brings songs, dances and instrumental performances to Beijing. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Russian army's troupe to return after restart

By **CHEN NAN**
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Soldier and My Country, My Mother.

The Russian army's official dance and choir troupe, the Alexandrov Ensemble, is staging five shows at the National Center for the Performing Arts in Beijing from Jan 4 to 7, with a variety of songs, dances and instrumental performances.

This is the first time for the ensemble to perform in China after 64 members of the group were killed in a plane crash, including its former artistic director, Valery Khalilov, on Dec 25, 2016.

The tragedy occurred when a Tu-154 aircraft crashed into the Black Sea two minutes after departing from the city of Sochi.

The members of the ensemble were flying to a Russian military base in Syria to perform at a New Year's concert.

Chen Ping, president of the NCPA, sent a message of condolence to the ensemble.

Zhu Jing, vice-president of the NCPA, says: "The ensemble has performed regularly at the NCPA since 2009. And we are honored to have them back."

"When we learned that the ensemble had started touring again, we invited them to perform at the NCPA."

The ensemble, which is also known as the Red Army Choir, was founded in 1928 and is named after its founder, composer Alexander Vasilyevich Alexandrov (1883-1946).

It has toured the globe performing Russian folk tunes and patriotic songs using Western classical-music and traditional Russian instruments.

Now, the ensemble comprises a choir, a dance troupe and an orchestra.

The repertoire at the NCPA comprises 24 songs and dance pieces, including *Song of the Soviet Army*, *The Sacred War*, *Escamillo* from the French opera *Carmen*, *Moscow Nights* and *Festival March*.

It will also perform Chinese songs including *I Am A*

Speaking about the shows, the new chief conductor and artistic director, Gennady Sachenjuk, says: "The friendship between China and Russia has a long history. So, we are glad to return to China in 2018, which is the year marking the 90th anniversary of the ensemble."

"The year 2017 was very important and special to us. It was a very tough time for the ensemble after the tragedy."

Mikhail Marushevskii, the vice-president of the ensemble, says: "We started preparing and rehearsing for the shows in January 2017 and gave our first show after the accident in April in Moscow, which was followed by a tour of Europe, with performances in the Czech Republic, Israel and Poland, among other countries."

He adds that the ensemble made its China debut in 1952, and the current performance marks their 10th visit.

As for the new performers, Baritone Maksim Maklakov, who now is a soloist, says, "It's a great honor and a great responsibility to join the famous choir and to carry on its legacy."

Maklakov, who joined the choir in January 2017, stood out among 60 male singers when the ensemble held auditions across Russia.

Among the senior artists is Russian actor and singer Vadim Ananyev, who has been with the ensemble since 1987.

He says: "I've been with the ensemble for over 30 years. We sing and dance to serve the country."

"The ensemble has a long legacy, and the military musicians take it to a new level with their creativity."

If you go

7:30 pm, Jan 4-7, 2:30 pm, Jan 6. NCPA, 2 West Chang'an Avenue, Xicheng district, Beijing. 010-6655-0000.

She led villagers to bore through a mountain to reach the world

By **LI YINGXUE**
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The small village of Mahuai in Southwest China's Guizhou province was not easily accessible for years because of a mountain.

Deng Yingxiang, the village's Party secretary, knows well the pain of the isolation from her own experience.

"My first child was ill one night. But it took us so long to cross the mountain that he died because we could not get him to the hospital in time," says Deng.

"That hurt a lot and I knew we had to build a road."

So, from 1999 to 2011, Deng and her fellow villagers built a 216-meter-long road through the mountain.

"When we completed the

road on a cold winter day in 2011, every villager was too excited to sleep," says Deng.

Deng shared the story when giving a speech recently to the geophysical and geochemical exploration team of the Guizhou Geological Exploration Bureau.

She said that if she had met the team earlier, then the road would not be curved.

Deng was a delegate to 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China. She told the story to emphasize the thrust of the 19th Party congress and the spirit of President Xi Jinping's speech there, when meeting the Guizhou delegation.

Chen Zongquan, the leader of the team, says Deng's speech was inspiring, espe-

cially when she used her own story to explain the spirit of the 19th Party congress. And he added that his team would give technical support for the development of Mahuai.

From Oct 27 to Dec 24, Deng gave 53 speeches across China, using her own words and stories to share the spirit of the congress.

"The report of the 19th Party congress says that all rural residents living below the current poverty line will have been lifted out of poverty, and poverty will be eliminated in all poor counties and regions by 2020," says Deng.

"So, we need to keep developing our village in the new era."

Deng gave the first of her



"I would like connectivity with villages around us and to strengthen our economy."

Deng Yingxiang, delegate to 19th National Congress of the CPC

latest series of speeches in her village, and then visited more than 10 towns in Guizhou province.

Deng received a phone call just before midnight on Nov 23.

An old man from Fenggang county in Guizhou's Zunyi city called to invite Deng to speak in his town.

His reason — he had not been able to hear Deng on Nov 18 when she spoke in his county, but he had watched the video of her speech four times. And he wanted to hear her in person.

On Dec 20, in the meeting room of Xingren county's Party committee, more than 200 people listened to Deng.

For two hours, she gave a presentation without taking a sip of water or looking at

her draft.

Due to cold weather, Deng delayed her presentation from 9 am to 10 am, hoping that her listeners would feel warm.

Ma Li, a standing member of the county's Party committee, was touched by Deng's speech.

"Her experience is like a textbook of motivation."

"Our province is facing a key challenge to lift people out of poverty, and this spirit of perseverance and courage to think and act is just what we need," says Ma.

Deng was also invited to Shandong, Jiangsu and Fujian provinces to speak.

She also manages the construction of another road to connect Mahuai with the outside world.

According to Deng, the road will be broadened from 4.5 meters to 6.5 meters by the first half of next year.

"To hasten the development of Mahuai, we must widen the road," says Deng.

Meanwhile, the average income of the villagers in Mahuai has grown from 800 yuan (\$122) in 2011 to 8,200 yuan in 2017.

Deng has also helped set up a project to raise 300,000 quails and 100 beef cattle to enhance the villagers' incomes.

"I'm more confident of developing the village since I have come back from the 19th Party congress," she says.

"Now I would like connectivity with villages around us and to strengthen our economy together," says Deng.