YOUTH

TV show's rural charm

Displaced celebrities raise the profile of pastoral locales.

Xing Wen reports.

Despite hands, happy mind!

That’s the advice being lauded by celebrities on a recent reality TV show. The stars, drawn from sports, stage and screen, are seen living and experiencing a self-sufficient rural life in the show, Back To Farmery, which has been airing on CCTV, an online video platform based in Changsha, Central China’s Hunan province.

The group includes actors Jia Nailiang and Jia Hao, pop star Wang Yuan, singer Yang Chaoyue and famous former tennis player, Dong Li. All of them experienced a farmer’s day-to-day life in rural areas, learning how to grow fields, sow and reap crops, and fish.

Jia explains why he was willing to join the show: “My childhood was spent in the countryside. The show reminds me of the days when my grandfather rode his tricycle and took me to the wheat fields. He picked off the wheat and handed the grains for me to eat. That’s the flavor I remember from my childhood.”

He was also impressed by the industriousness and frugality of the villagers, which helped him understand how laborious the process of farming can be.

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Yuan also says he hopes that, by immersing these celebrities in such bucolic surroundings, the show can help vitalize the development of rural tourism and promote the agricultural products abundant that should in these locations, such as pineapples, bananas, honey and organic vegetables.

Yang Xingzhong, head of the Shu-sha Village, says the place to eventually turn the farmyard used by the celebrities into a brand. “Cole seed oil provides a major source of the village’s income,” says Yang. “Through the show, audiences will get more close of the beautiful sights here and they may more with us, and then help us, for themselves, enabling us to open a new way to the economic development of the village.”

In recent years, reality shows that focus on honestly pastoral lifestyles have become increasingly popular among Chinese viewers.

For instance, the second season of the show Back To Farmery, which recruits a group of celebrities to a rural household in Tonglu county in East China’s Jiangxi province, has notched up over 2 billion hits on CCTV’s streaming platform, according to the online TV platform.

Hong Yi, a white-collar worker, is an avid watcher of such reality shows. “Sometimes when you fail to come around to us, nature can help straighten you out,” Hong Yi, a white-collar worker, says.

Strong bond with people in such a place with fresh air, green fields and clear lakes,” says Hong. “To feel a part of, the ‘phubbing’ phenomenon, I try my best to showcase the finest of traditional craftsmanship and Chinese culture; that’s the inspiration behind the show.”

Chinese couturier Guo Pei’s high fashion exhibits are on display at the Bowers Museum in Santa Ana in Southern California.

Ornate farmhouse with a big yard where they feed cows and pigs in their pens, and cooked meals using an outdoor stove that needed to be heated by burning wood, crop residue or charcoal.

Above: Yang Xingzhong (left) and Yang Chaoyue cook meals on an outdoor stove at a farmhouse.

Top: Celebrities attend the recent launch event for the reality show Ha Ha Farmers.

This month, Guo’s designs have been dressing celebrities, members of royalty and the political elite who turn to her for show-stopping, magnificent creations. She is the first Chinese designer

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