

Ancient Town Lantern Show Brightens up Ningbo

Striving towards a modern
coastal metropolis
建设现代化滨海大都市

Of all the places with festive atmosphere in Ningbo this Spring Festival, Cicheng Ancient Town undeniably stands out.

要说今年宁波哪里年味足,慈城古县城当仁不让是其中之一。

With the moon rising above the willow branches and the fair bustling with lanterns as bright as daylight, the 2024 Cicheng Lantern Fair – themed “Divine Creatures of Ancient China Celebrate Spring at Ancient Town” – took the spotlight in this year’s Spring Festival gala among ancient towns. A fanciful scroll of the Classic of Mountains and Seas (a compilation of mythic geography and beasts) was unfolded against the town’s beautiful scenery. With auspicious beasts Baize and Fuzhu scattering blessings and sending good fortune to the crowd, the spectacle leapt into festivities like the mythical Kungpeng prancing with grandeur ...

月上柳梢头,花市灯如昼。“九州神兽,古城闹春”2024年中国慈城龙年灯会在今年古城龙年新春狂欢盛宴中必然唱主角:以《山海经》文化为主题,古城美景为底色,瑞兽白泽将吉祥祝福抛洒人间,神秘夫诸携祥瑞福气穿梭人潮,九州鲲鹏怀揣鸿鹄之志腾跃而来……

These exquisite lanterns took up to 40 days to craft by 100 renowned artisans from Zigong, Sichuan, who brought their hometown’s millennium-old traditions to Cicheng. Zigong is acclaimed as the “Lantern City of the South,” and its lanterns, recognized as a national intangible cultural heritage, are hailed as the “Number One Lanterns in the World.” The encounter between the millennium-old ancient town and the millennium-old “beautiful lanterns” has sparked stunning brilliance. The divine beasts from the “Classic of Mountains and Seas” transcend the boundaries of time and space, gathering joyfully at the Congma River of Cicheng to welcome the Chinese New Year together with everyone.

这些精美的花灯,仅制作时间就长达40天,100位来自四川自贡的花灯手艺人将家乡延续千年的传统习俗也是国家级非物质文化遗产带到了千年古县城。四川自贡被誉为“南国灯城”,他们制作的花灯更有“天下第一灯”的美誉,千年古县城与千年“美灯”的相遇,碰撞出了令人惊艳的火花。《山海经》的神兽们跨越时空界限,在驄马河欢聚一堂,与大家一起喜迎新春。

A bustling and hustling atmosphere prevails in Cicheng. Not far from the

Congma River, Minquan Road is also buzzing with activities. With themes like “Abundance of Blessings”, “Guarding Wealth”, “Creative Face-changing Dragon Dance”, “Carousel Lanterns”, and “Candied Hawthorn Procession”, the folk parades and street performances have created immersive scenes to experience the ambience of traditional New Year. Across from the Minquan Road stage, the Ancient Town Commerce Center has transformed into a “Blind Box Theater”, where CCTV’s award-winning magician Dong Liang presented thrilling magic performances. Each opening of the blind box performance is an exploration into the unknown, letting you discover joy in randomness and expectation, and experience a wonderful artistic journey.

穿梭在慈城的街头巷尾,满眼皆是浓郁的人间烟火气。离驄马河不远的民权路,也同样好戏连台。福禄满堂、二柜护金、创意变脸舞龙、跑马灯、糖葫芦巡游……一场场不同主题的民俗巡游、一个个精彩绝伦的街区演艺,带你感受最传统的年味风情。民权路戏台对面的古县城招商中心也变身“盲盒剧场”,央视金牌魔术师董亮为大家带来精彩纷呈的魔术表演,每一次盲盒演出的开启,都是一次对未知领域的探索,让你在随机中寻找未知的乐趣,体验一次奇妙的艺术之旅。

Riding the festive wave of the Lunar New Year, Zhou Xinfang Theater Arts Museum offered unique theatrical experiences characteristic of ancient towns. Interactive traditional opera performances, mystery riddles with small “Easter eggs”, costume changes – all such events allowed

visitors to experience the charm of Chinese traditional culture amidst the ongoing festivity. The Cicheng Shanhaiqing Cooperative Intangible Cultural Heritage Museum brought the intangible cultural heritage of the “Daliang Mountains” (in Sichuan province) to the ancient county town. During these days, Yi ethnic friends who have come from afar joined everyone in singing and dancing, experiencing Yi ethnic intangible cultural heritage such as lacquerware decoration techniques, and making lacquer blind boxes—lacquer beads, gourds, and Dragon Lanterns. Catching the tail end of the Spring Festival, you can also visit the Cicheng Happiness Garden to reminisce about “New Year’s taste”, experiencing an authentic Chinese New Year and Cicheng New Year, awakening the warmest memories deep within your heart.

沉浸式互动式曲艺汇演、戏曲元素小市集、小“彩蛋”猜谜、戏服换装……在周信芳戏剧艺术馆,独具古城特色的戏剧企划活动,也让游客及戏迷朋友们在欢乐过年的喜庆氛围中,感受中华优秀传统文化魅力。慈城山海情对口协作非遗馆将“大凉山”的非遗文化带到了古县城,这几天的中午,远道而来的舞族朋友,与大家一起载歌载舞,体验舞族非遗漆器髹饰技艺体验、非遗打漆盲盒—漆珠、葫芦、龙年灯笼制作。趁着春节的尾巴,还可以去慈城囍园寻找那些年逐渐失去的“年味”,感受一次原汁原味的中国年、慈城年,唤醒内心深处最温暖的回忆。

“Learning online that Cicheng is holding a lantern festival, I picked today to bring my family here. I didn’t expect



The traditional puppet show.



A giant dragon lantern decorates the gate of Cicheng Ancient Town.

this whole town to be so lively; it really brings back the taste of New Year in my childhood,” said Ms. Yang, a local resident, to the reporter. Mr. Liu, a tourist from Jiangxi, agreed, “Taking the opportunity of visiting relatives in Ningbo, I brought my family to Cicheng for sightseeing. The various cultural activities have immediately evoked a sense of nostalgia for childhood pleasures. Additionally, the beautiful scenery and delicious food of Cicheng have allowed out-of-town visitors to experience special local cultures, which are both traditional and fashionable, making it a refreshing experience.”

“在网上看到慈城举办灯会,就挑了今天这个日子带家里人来看看,没想到整个慈城都那么热闹,很有小时候过年的氛围。”市民杨女士告诉记者。来自江西的游客刘先生则表示,“借着这次到宁波探亲的机会,我特地带着家人们来慈城游玩,各项文艺活动一下子勾起了自己儿时的回忆。另外,慈城的美景、美食也让外地游客直观而深刻地感受到了当地的文化特色,传统而又时尚,令人耳目一新。”

The lantern fair will run till March 22. This lantern fair will continue to March 22.

Journalists: Bian Chengyu,
Shi Daiwei
Correspondents: Zhuo Xuan,
Yang Zhi
Photos: Shen Guofeng
Translator: Pan Wenjie
Proofreaders: Yao Zhanhong,
Huang Dawang, Jason Mowbray