## **HANDMADE JOURNEY**



ABOVE: Professor Jason
Pomeroy is an award-winning
eco architect, academic and
urban planner. He is the
host of City Time Traveller,
an architecture travel series
on Channel News Asia.
BELOW: This type of door
was usually found in the
courtyard housing exemplified
in Xidi and Hongcun. The
courtyards would be built in a
formation that would provide
natural light and ventilation.
Usually houses would back
on to the streets to conceal
the interior courtyard and
enhance security.



## STORIES ON THE WALL

THE ANCIENT VILLAGES OF XIDI AND HONGCUN HAVE BEEN DESIGNATED AS WORLD HERITAGE SITES. ARCHITECTURE EXPERT PROFESSOR JASON POMEROY LOOKS AT THE INTRICATE DETAILS IN THESE HISTORIC BUILDINGS

Set amidst the ethereal mountain beauty of Huangshan, the UNESCO heritage villages of Xidi and Hongcun are superb embodiments of regional culture and architectural style. Delicate and elegant carvings from both the Ming and Qing dynasties are set in stone, brick and wood. Featured on doorframes, walls and columns these artistic renderings are as practical as they are beautiful.

The architecture of the villages offers a nostalgic trip into a bygone era, which features many interesting insights into the way of life of the time. An elaborate door handle (pictured right) was typically found on a carved door. The intricate design depicts plum blossom and bamboo foliage amongst the 12 creatures of the Chinese zodiac. It is important to note that the permeable doors adorned with this typical motif were usually west-facing, allowing for wind to flow through the property, for natural ventilation. They were also a source of natural light. None of the doors or windows were built facing south, because this was the direction that evil spirits were said to travel. Evil spirits would be further confused by the buildings being constructed around zig-zag walkways.

Towns and villages were usually built near water, not only as a good source of irrigation but also because of the cultural importance: to symbolise money rushing in. The feng shui master would determine the best location, to ensure that flowing water allowed prosperity and good fortune while building in the shadow of the mountains offered a protective buffer. \*\*



BANYAN TREE
HUANGSHAN
Marvel at the magnificent
sunrise over Huangshan
mountain when you stay at
Banyan Tree Huangshan,
opening in late 2014.
The resort draws on the
architectural prowess of
nearby Xidi and Hongcun,
supplementing them with
modern comforts. The
surreal landscape of the
area has been a favourite
subject of artists for
centuries.



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