



The city's iconic convertible-style double-decker hop-on-and-hop-off sightseeing bus is to be withdrawn from operation in September. — IC

Iconic city double-decker tour buses nearing end of their line

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Zhou Weihong

Deputy to the Shanghai People's Congress and deputy general manager of Shanghai Spring Tour

Hu Min

Shanghai's iconic convertible-style double-decker sightseeing bus will bid farewell to travelers soon, having reached their used-by dates.

They will be replaced by electric buses, also double-decker but with an enclosed upper deck, to continue serving people's hop-on-and-hop-off sightseeing demand.

A mobile city landmark over the past 13 years, the buses will disappear in September. This has triggered an avalanche of nostalgia among Shanghaiese, especially those who have worked, lived or traveled in Shanghai.

"I once took a ride with my father," recalled Hu Yinghua, a Shanghai resident in his 20s. "I still remember the bus passing by landmark attractions of Shanghai one by one with my father murmuring along.

"It was a sunny summer

afternoon and everything looked fresh and lively," he said. "It bears an important piece of childhood memory which is still fresh in my mind even today although it was almost eight or nine years ago."

Lin Yun (a pseudonym) came to Shanghai following her graduation in 2005. She quit her job in 2012 with the company she had worked for seven years.

"I lost my purpose in life at that time and was walking at People's Square absentmindedly," Lin revealed. "I bought a ticket randomly and sat on the upper-deck.

"The plane tree leaves outside the bus were within reach and the architecture along the trip was beautiful. It was a lovely short respite which made me see the soft side of the city. I decided to stay in Shanghai in that moment."

Zhu Weihua, 45, has been driving the buses for nearly 13 years. He witnessed the rapid

development of the city on the bus. "It has the best view among all sightseeing buses in Shanghai."

The upper deck has more than 50 seats and the lower has around 20.

In recent days, people have flocked to the bus for nostalgic trips after the news of its "retirement" triggered a buzz on social networking platforms.

"The traditional peak of the bus is May and June, but these days, I have seen a blow-out of passengers," Zhu pointed out.

Yan Jiao, a university student, went on a ride with her roommate recently.

"I took a large number of photos and the attractions along the trip were all popular ones," she said.

The bus also has a chartered service for occasions such as marriage proposals, complete with decorations.

There are eight convertible-style double-decker buses in operation in Shanghai and

they reach their us-by dates in September.

Regulations require that sightseeing buses must be scrapped after being in operation for 13 years, according to Shanghai Spring Tour, the operator of the buses.

Shanghai Spring Tour has about 30 double-decker buses in operation at present, and convertible-style ones are the most popular, according to Zhou Qing, who is responsible for the operation of the buses.

After the "retirement" of the convertible-style fleet, Shanghai Spring Tour plans to purchase eight electric buses as replacements.

"The new buses will have a capped roof and more space," according to Zhou Weihong, a deputy to the Shanghai People's Congress and deputy general manager of Shanghai Spring Tour.

"Moreover, the glass window will be big for the best photo effects."