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After 22 years and 50 printed issues, Ngee Ann Polytechnic's campus newspaper has gone online! Visit *nptribune.com* now for the latest campus happenings!





## GONG HEY FAT CHOY,

This issue, we pay tribute to **HARMONY** as our beloved country celebrates her Golden Jubilee – SG50. We celebrate also the Year of the Goat and Valentine's Day – the harmonious co-existence of East and West on our Little Red Dot.

There is beauty in HARMONY, which unites elements that contrast each other. Elements – whether culture, language, arts or food – are unique on their own but are revitalised because of the union. Singapore boasts a vibrant nation of racial and religious harmony, and a splash of modernity while being rooted

Stay rooted to our traditions with fashion-forward *gipao* and *kebaya* (p. 63), as well as the traditional food that makes Singapore truly a food haven (p. 82). Take and bite out of the occasional churro and enjoy the crunchiness that reminds you of our humble youtiao (p. 76).

When it comes to music, we have the strikingly mismatched jazz infused, neo-soulfunk quintet, The Steve McQueens (p. 12), who is a showcase of the harmony of generations.

And as we explore the concept of feminism (p. 24), we discover that Singapore's unique brand is based on a true understanding between the sexes.

Jovita Ang

Melissa Chang

Shalini Devindra

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Now turn the page and feel the harmony.

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# Soulster Well-Suited

### Gareth Fernandez knows how to get you dancing on your feet, as ANA LARAE RIOS discovers

The once camera shy crooner is now the pretty face of fashion forward brands such as Mr Gentleman, Superga and Dr. Martens. Looking at the pop/soul musician with perfectly coiffed hair, and neatly folded pocket square to match, it's not difficult to understand why.

Gareth Fernandez, 24, with his velvety smooth vocals, has pocketed quite a few achievements in his short music career with the most recent being the launch of his self-titled extended play (EP) and single, Subliminal Love, in October last year. He also performed at Music Matters 2014 and MediaCorp Celebrates SG50 to usher in 2015.

Says the once chubby kid who still isn't used to the attention he gets now: "Being a little bit classy never goes out of style. I really enjoy dressing up and I would love to be involved in more fashion events."

The homegrown soulster who grew up in a family of six didn't really have a musical upbringing. Gareth's older siblings did not take to the piano very well and his parents decided to send him and his younger sibling for taekwondo lessons instead.

He adds, laughing: "It would have been so much better if I had taken up the piano. But it was okay at the time because it was embedded in me that I wasn't going to do music. I was going to study hard and get a job."

After showing interest in the arts in his early teens, Gareth started mirroring his musical muses Michael Bublé and Josh Groban. In the midst of his junior college days, Gareth joined a multitude of bands, and enjoyed playing at various performances such as weddings. During this time, he explored genres like pop and rock, most notably in his first band that he frontlined for, Kings.

"It didn't suit my voice at all," he says of the strain on his voice, especially the screaming riffs of his Bon Jovi covers.

"I still remember the first gig we did as Kings. It was at a bar called Wala Wala and I was so stressed out," he adds. Being a musical novice at the time, Gareth gained the bulk of his musical knowledge from his peers. After one year, he decided to go solo when his band members began commenting on how soulful his voice was.

He formed The Momma Shop, consisting of keyboardist Sikai Goh, bassist Titus Ng, guitarist James Lye, and drummer Anson Koh. Taking only a brief two to three months before warming up to each other, it seemed like the boys were a match made in harmony heaven. Gareth credits this to their fervent passion for music.

"It was only recently that I really got into James Brown, and Bruno Mars. I still love big band jazz, but I like what Bruno is doing, taking old school elements and applying it in today's context. His vocals are amazing! I remember going to his concert in March and just being in awe," he says, almost turning red from all the gushing.

Despite his EP being an anthem for love bugs young and

old, Gareth holds a particular track on the album closest to his heart, Northern Lights. "It's not always about romantic relationships," he says. "It's about relationships with something else."

a song for our generation, there's a lot of applications and interpretations you can take out of it."

"I think it's really

The raw draft of this piece was initially shelved in worries of not making the EP cut. However,

- Gareth Fernandez

after mulling through the draft and bringing it to his band members, it eventually evolved into the tear-jerker we hear

At the time, Gareth was on a university exchange with friends and a particular friend was constantly searching for the aurora borealis. After weeks of giving chase, Gareth's inspiration for the song came through a phone call - if you spend your whole life chasing northern lights, you'll never come back home.

"I think it's really a song for our generation, there's a lot of applications and interpretations you can take out of it," he explains. "For some it can be about wanderlust and you feel like the song has a lot of explorative emotions - you just want to get out there. Then again it's also very inward, because it's really about self-reflection... and the longing for something that you might, or might not be able to have.

His success was further propelled with the spew of collaborations with big names in music such as Sezairi Sezali, Nathan Hartono, The Sam Willows, and Dru Chen - all of whom have quickly grown to be in his close circle of friends.

Gareth says of his new-found friends: "I learnt so much from them... Nathan with his guitar and vocal arrangement, Dru Chen with his soul and reverence. I was a bit of a nobody at the time, but Sezairi, Nathan, Dru - they took a chance on me."

Clearly, Gareth is suited up for an exciting 2015.

"I really want to perform for National Day. I won't be doing my own song, but at least I'll be on stage," he chuckles.

# **PASSION PERFECT**

Campus SuperStar 2013 winner **Bonnie Loo is the shining new** addition to the Mandopop scene. **CLARISSA CHEANG finds out more** 



If practice makes perfect, then surely she has perfected the art of singing and perseverance with her passion.

Meet Bonnie Loo, 20, the rising star of the local Mandopop scene.

With a tall, lanky frame coupled with a distinctive sweet voice, it is hard to imagine that this Malaysian-born singer has participated in close to 300 singing competitions.

Her passion has led to her prominence following her win in Channel U's Campus SuperStar 2013, and clinch supporting roles in MediaCorp drama serials such as Against The Tide and C.L.I.F. 3. She has also released her debut self-titled album in October last year. Her formula is simple: Be zealous and positive.

Bonnie's fervent participation in a stunning number of competitions speaks volumes of her effort and passion. With diligence and intensity, she was well rewarded with a wealth of experience and made friends who taught her how to sing better each time.

"Through competitions, I found many friends who love singing as well. They guide me on how to sing certain songs... I have even made a precious friend who is like a big brother to me," recalls Bonnie.

She is the envy of many aspiring singers in the local music industry, such as Tiffany Tan, 19.

"You cannot say that Singapore is not a good place for singers. Instead, believe in where you are..."

- Bonnie Loo

"I really got to give it to Bonnie for making it this far; anyone who hears her story would think so. It's hard to make it in this industry because we don't really get a lot of exposure here in Singapore,' Tiffany remarks.

Yet, Bonnie thrives with a positive attitude, and has never regarded Singapore as a place unsuited for young singers. Instead, she advises aspiring singers to be determined, and most importantly, adjust their mindset because that is what keeps her going.

"You cannot say that Singapore is not a good place for singers. Instead, believe in where you are and tell yourself that Singapore is a good place because the local scene is filled with opportunities for aspiring singers! You must go and find it," she shares.

For those who want to pursue singing as a career, Bonnie encourages them to watch more singing competitions and learn from the judges' comments. She emphasises the importance of being hardworking to be a singer.

Alas, the impassioned individual admits that despite her sacrifices and determination, she has "no big story" behind her passion. She saw a friend sing on stage back in primary school and knew there and then, that singing was her calling.

"I want to sing and let people relate to each of my songs... I see other singers doing what they love and I just keep asking myself 'Why can't I [do the same]?" Bonnie says.

With her passion discovered, the starlet has never considered other career paths apart from the entertainment industry.

It is evident that her heart is set on singing.

"Sometimes I think about what happens if I am unable to sing anymore. I really don't know what I can do. I really don't know.

**MARRYING** THE DREAM Donning only a wedding veil on the cover of her new EP, Kelly Poon reveals to CLARA XU who she is really married to After eight years of plans and efforts to break into the music industry, Mandopop singer Kelly

Poon, 32, Project SuperStar Season One 2005 runner-up has not seemed to hit the peak.

But between Super Kelly, released in 2011, and Miss Kelly, released in August last year, Kelly has been doing many things to change her image and up her ante.

"These three years have been a long time. And in these three years, I've been doing a lot of different stuff like hosting, doing stuff that I've never really liked to do

Kelly says: "Of course [there's] nothing to be happy about. It's actually very tiring if you're not making it big.

Perhaps this is due to the fact that she started singing much later than her peers in the industry.

"I was really a late bloomer. All the singers that I know, people who adore singing and became singers, they all started really young. I wanted to learn singing [then] because singing competitions in Singapore and Malaysia wowed me," she says.

Nonetheless, beneath that dolled-up façade is Kelly's optimism. She forbids even the slightest form of negativity to enter her head.

"All these downsides only made me strive to work harder," she shares. "To me, it only means that I'm not good enough, [so] I need to be better."

Miss Kelly, Kelly's five-track extended play (EP) released under Mode Entertainment in August last year contains mostly self-composed songs that portray an entirely new and grown-up image of Kelly. Project SuperStar 2005's winner, Kelvin Chen, and second runner-up, Derrick Hoh, are also signed with Mode Entertainment.

Featuring songs that are close to her heart, Kelly says of her new release: "In terms of image and music, it's totally different from my previous albums... I've grown up a lot and you can see and hear a different me. This album is definitely not cutesy. There is still sweetness but it's more of a grown-

"You never know whether you can or cannot, but just by doing, you might!"

- Kelly Poon

The singer also revealed the side of her refusing to limit herself. Her goal is to have her own worldwide concert in the future.

"I really don't know if I will ever reach it, but I know I want to do it. So with this knowing, I'll just do it," she says.

Perhaps this marriage to music will open up more opportunities for the new Kelly Poon!

Photo courtesy of Warner Music Singapore MUSIC 11





### The Present

It is apparent that their disparate personalities are the right key to defining the band's success. Their two-week trip to London last August is touted as the "best trip in the world" by the members, and the creative allowance from Bluey's collaboration is a huge hit with the band's structure.

"We recorded twice before in Singapore and the process was always very systemic. The issue boiled down to us doing our thing versus adapting to the records' production methods," says Joshua.

He adds: "With Bluey, [the production] proved to be an easy process. If you want to do something your own way, he makes it happen. He has his take on things as an experienced producer and we have our own take on things as a band... Bluey saw that. He accepted the way the band worked. He would listen to our case, try it, and often it would work."

The sentiment strikes a chord with the other members, especially Aaron, who was initially starstruck when the producer offered to pull his luggage for him when he first arrived at the airport. "You have Bluey, this legend, and then he just says, 'Give me that.' I couldn't take the fact that he was pulling my luggage for me," Aaron shares.

While Bluey was nice, he was all business during the album production.

Aaron explains: "He kept us under control. Sometimes we would have these wacky ideas like prolonging a song with ten thousand solos inside, and he would, in turn, make sure that everything is really concise. He focuses on the things that we don't ever focus on."

The final result is a tease of something dramatically different from what the local audience expects from their own bands, but Jase is not worried about the music contradicting the norm expectation of "cool".

"It depends on how many steps you want to take to make it look cool," he explains. "What is cool to them may not be cool to us. There is a formula to [being cool], and we are not following it. We are just following what we like."

### The Future

Their new album is but a step in the band's leap into their future. While the collaboration serves as a gateway to propel their music to international audiences, they look towards their roots as the biggest motivation. Defining their genre as jazz infused neo-soulfunk, or R&B with jazz chords, their first gig at Blu Jaz Café in Haji Lane hosted fans that were their friends and musicians, and they are adamant in retaining this bona fide bout of energy.

"The main point of us playing our music is because we enjoy what we are playing," says Eugenia as she reflects on their starting point. "I wouldn't change anything. It's all about growth... I think what worked [for the first gig] was the fresh dynamics. The five of us are very different, and that was the first time we played a gig together, or even, met each other. The people who came down were excited to see how it turned out, and the excitement was infectious."

With Japan in mind for their upcoming tour curated by Bluey, it is hard to ignore the fact that one of their biggest challenges was the collective coordination of their respective plans with all the action.

For Aaron, he still has his National Service (NS) ahead of his academic period, and Fabian holds an educational vocation that takes up a big part of the schedule. In asserting the band's adjustment, Joshua is quick to redefine the band's second nature in accordance to this surface incompatibility.

"The point [of The Steve McQueens] is that we are all strange and indifferent from different circles," he says. "Beyond our schedules, just coming together to play and not trying to be one thing actually made a new thing. That is the basis that makes the band unique. We all have different tastes and come from different backgrounds. Eugenia comes from electro-pop and that is a far stretch from the indie music Jase plays, so you would never link them together on a normal day.'

"The Steve McQueens is not a band that will play in a way to sound like something familiar because it was always a weird combination of finding things that work; and that difference becomes the token of our identity altogether."





















"The Steve McQueens is not a band that will play in a way to sound like something familiar because it was always a weird combination of finding things that work; and that difference becomes the token of our identity altogether."

- Joshua Wan, keyboardist for The Steve McQueens



It's a flittingly introspective thought that crosses almost everyone's minds on the occasion: if you had a debilitating illness and only a month to live, what would you do with the time you have left?

For the four-piece punk band, The Caulfield Cult, the idea of escape from the confines of Singapore ignited a trailblazing venture on the rocky road of DIY touring. The obstinate need to spread their brand of punk music round the globe came to fruition during their Sabah show in June 2011.

In 2014, The Caulfield Cult played 56 shows abroad, including two tour legs across Europe, and one leg through the East Coast of USA. Both tours were almost wholly selffunded, save for their air tickets during the US tour that were funded by the National Arts Council. With expenses for a month-long tour costing some \$2,000 for each member, the band collectively worked odd jobs before touring.

Money doesn't come close to being the greatest hurdle. Frontman and lead guitarist Nick Prasat Kumar, 21, singlehandedly organises the band's tours from ground zero each time. Networking is key to securing shows and the success rate is one out of 20 responses.

"A lot of booking [overseas shows] in the punk and hardcore community happens when your friends throw you a bone, but it got harder when we started going to Europe and America because we didn't know anyone there at all," shares Nick.

Singaporean hardcore band Straight Forward went through the same means of relentless contacting when organising their joint South-east Asian tour with the Australian hardcore punk band, Endless Heights. Playing shows in Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand and Singapore, the band's collective fund was the primary source for expenses throughout.

Having started the band as an outlet for expression when they were 16, Straight Forward steadily gained traction, performing at the local music festival Baybeats 2014 and has been staging shows around South-east Asia since.

"We can't be a full-time touring band as yet because of money and time, though we're going to work towards touring thrice annually in the years to come, starting with Australia later this year," says lead singer Kurt Pereira, 22.

On top of putting music above everything else, grand plans and persistence are but the foundations of DIY touring, where challenges atop adversities form token setbacks.

"I know a lot of people who always tell me that they wish they could do this, that I'm so lucky for getting to tour, because playing music is all I want to do," Nick explains. "But when people realise that it's not all glamorous, they start to think otherwise. Not everyone is willing to get so far out of their comfort zones.'

Comfort clearly gets discarded once the band's tour van gets rolling. Playing bar gigs to a crowd of two, sleeping on hardwood floors, being paid lesser than contracted and getting into trouble with the authorities over a paltry driving sticker in Slovenia skim the surface of the many road bumps during The Caulfield Cult's tour experiences.

Last-minute gig cancellations are also common. During their first-ever solo UK tour in early 2012, the band encountered such a cancellation and had to settle for another gig whose organiser did not provide lodging. The four decided to spend the night in the tour van instead. At 6am, Nick woke up, unable to feel his legs from the biting cold. Sprinting round the parking lot to regain some semblance of warmth, he chanced upon their ex-drummer in the gas station, shivering in a hoodie. The drummer had been rooted in the same spot for three hours, as the van was too cold to tolerate.

"The local scene is huge in its own respects but it's still divided by genre and that's not as prevalent elsewhere."

the highs that are a result of The Caulfield Cult's sheer resolve stand as hallmarks of inspiration for many local - Louis Foo bands. After three years of contacting the

While the lows

are hard to bear,

generic information email of The Fest, an annual punk rock festival in Gainesville, Florida, the band managed to clinch a spot at the Loosey's stage. They played one of their most memorable gigs so far, where their albums sold out five minutes after.

For Straight Forward, many of their tours thankfully took a smoother route, though they were more than willing to re-enact some of the amusing encounters they faced abroad. After a show in Malang, Indonesia, a fan approached Kurt to trade band merchandise. To the frontman's shock, the fan proceeded to take off the tattered and sweat-soaked shirt he had on for a fresh Straight Forward T-shirt.

It's the amalgamation of these events that make touring worth the clichéd blood, sweat and not-too-many unmanly tears.

Tours have helped the music of the bands mature and better appraise Singapore's music culture. Between Asian and Western underground music communities, what strikes a chord between the bands in terms of reception, ease and attitude?

"The local scene is huge in its own respects but it's still divided by genre and that's not as prevalent elsewhere," says Louis Foo, 21, when asked to draw parallels between homegrown gigs and those he attended overseas. Louis is a local music supporter and founder of gig series Just Whack.

Completely self-funded, Just Whack is Louis' attempt at revitalizing the DIY style of gig hosting in Singapore, and a way to make a personal statement – that music transcends



the lines drawn by genres and perspectives. He strongly believes that the element of unity should be the primary goal, especially in a scene like Singapore, where there is "no room for elitist rock stars".

Kurt gratefully shares that Straight Forward has a greater crowd connection at their performances now, where attendees put in the effort to memorise the band's lyrics and sing along. While he sees that the hardcore community in particular is steadily growing, he wishes that localised bands would be exalted as much as the Westernised bands are when they play in Singapore. "The lack of interest is a regional problem, and that is something we aim to change,'

Nick, however, has a more laconic opinion that the gulf between music cultures is more of a "hit and miss", and all have the understanding that the genres they play may never have the same resonance locally as it does overseas.

When addressing the music listenership of heavier genres amongst Singaporeans, Nick explains that the genre was never designed to become mainstream, in spite of metalcore and post-hardcore music garnering a greater following over the past few years.

"No way a person who's really into Justin Bieber will ever become a huge fan of bands like Earth Crisis," he jokes. "Even bands like Bring Me The Horizon aren't metal or hardcore anymore, they're just a terrible pop rock band."

Both bands intend to perpetuate their music while retaining the integrity and passion that spurred them into making music, and it is this drive that should be applauded when considering the greater interests of our indigenous music culture, no matter how vast the divides between genres.



16 HYPE Photo courtesy of Caulfield Cult, Straight Forward, and Loius Foo MUSIC 17

## FESTIVAL 2015 STAYING IN THE LOOP

VALERIE WONG SICK WAH finds out more about the compelling duo with the organic electronic strains and impassioned vocals who performed for Laneway 2015



We've all seen our share of peculiar indie band names, but one with a filename extension is considerably unusual.

Electronic duo .gif comprises of Chew Wei Shan, 24, and Nurudin Sadali, 26, who go by the moniker of Weish and Din respectively. The twosome was one of the two Singapore acts at St Jerome's Laneway Festival 2015. Since the debut of Singaporean acts like Gema, The Observatory and Vandetta at Laneway 2014, many awaited a second instalment of local acts. Delightfully, it happened.

Being invited to perform at Laneway 2015 was certainly surreal for .gif. The humble duo's immediate response to the invitation was that of a comical true-blue Singaporean: "Confirm fake one *lah*!"

Starting out from just weekly shows at a small Melbourne bar owned by Jerome Borazio, St. Jerome's Laneway Festival has come a long way, with shows in eight cities: Adelaide, Auckland, Brisbane, Detroit, Fremantle, Melbourne, Singapore and Sydney. Laneway 2015 marks the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary for the Aussie festival and its fifth edition for Singapore.

While they swing as a pair, they have been playing with a bassist recently and decided to pump things up especially for Laneway by including a drummer. Adding a drummer meant more preparation work for .gif, as they had to rearrange and restructure their songs for the drummer. The quartet managed to drop a slew of new tracks at the festival in celebration of their new full album, much to the excitement of fans.

So what does the filename extension ".gif" have to do with the luscious tracks they dish out? Weish candidly replies: "It's just because we like collecting gifs!" Din then elaborated that the looping structure and use of recurring images in their songs and lyrics resemble that of gif images.

The two met in 2009 during their university days. Weish's musical background was in once-off corporate gigs and "In terms of the simplicity and content of the work, we really like that Singaporean feeling we've been trying to emulate."

- Weish

café gigs when she started to pen her own songs. It wasn't till 2012 when she received her very own looper did she began dabbling in electronic music proper. On the other hand, Din used to DJ for fun, but got tired of playing songs he couldn't call his own.

To get to their distinctive sound today, .gif has drawn inspiration from numerous artistes, including local artists like Plainsunset and The Analog Girl.

"In terms of the simplicity and content of the work, we really like that Singaporean feeling we've been trying to emulate," says Weish. The duo define the Singaporean feeling as "wistful, urban and relatable".

While Laneway has etched its permanence on the calendar of Singaporean music lovers, this is merely a prelude of more riveting festivals like Future Music Festival Asia and Camp Symmetry. "Having more festivals in Singapore raises not just the profile of local music but music in general and the enjoyment of it – it is really helpful in raising our value in the market," says Weish.

# HANGING (OUT) WITH THE MOON

MELISSA CHANG talks to Singaporean folk-acoustic band Hanging Up the Moon about their musical style, their expansion, and booking Laneway

On first listen, you might be surprised to hear that Hanging Up the Moon's (HUTM) musical style consists of warm, simple melodies that won't seem out of place around a campfire. After all, band frontman Sean Lam, 40 who started HUTM as a solo project in 2011, was part of Concave Scream, one of Singapore's pioneer indie bands.

"[On the first album] I was just trying to get back at songwriting and I knew that if I were to somehow pull-off an album, it'd had to be a minimalist affair," says Sean. "Going folk allowed me to better focus on the crafting of words."

Sean wrote, recorded, and released the band's self-titled debut album in 2011, with the project's name alluding to the "ungodly hours" of the day during which Sean could work on the recordings. Victor Low, 40, from The Observatory helped to master the album, leaving it low-fi (containing technical flaws) to reflect the "homemade" nature of the recording.

With the release of The Biggest Lie In The World in 2013, HUTM became a group effort, bringing in Victor, Dean Aziz, 41, and Leslie Low, 43, all veteran musicians in their own right. Using digital layering technology, each of them put their own touch on the recording, producing the unique collaborative sound.

"The songs are fuller sounding because there's more instrumentation... There was a conscious effort not to have it over-produced as we wanted it to sound relaxed and natural," explains Sean.

Laneway was one of the largest gigs HUTM has booked so far, and it was also the first time they debut as a five-

piece band with their newest member, Alexius Cai, 38, of experimental-folk project Piblokto.

"[Alexius] added another layer of harmony and counter melody with both his lead guitar lines and vocal parts," Leslie observes. Dean adds: "[I have] listened to Piblokto's [album] Colourless Fields a zillion times. I love his style, input and company."

They performed songs from Hanging Up The Moon, The Biggest Lie In The World, as well as new music from their upcoming album (to be released in early-2015) during their Laneway set.

The folk-acoustic genre has experienced a surge of popularity in the past year, with local acts such as Charlie Lim, Gentle Bones and The Sam Willows gaining exposure and charting locally. Sean attributes the popularity of the genre to its "perceived honesty", and is optimistic about the future of Singaporean musicians, noting that there has been a "positive change the attitude" towards local artists and music.

"Musicians themselves are also more adventurous and pro-active in creating their own opportunities. It is not uncommon to find bands organizing their own tours and playing at festivals and venues from different parts of the world... Things can only get better," Sean adds.

HUTM may have performed at Laneway, but Sean hopes that the gang will find time to savour their moment of success. He adds: "Hopefully, we'll get to catch the sunset together."

### Other Laneway 2015 Acts

### **FKA Twigs**

British-born FKA Twigs brought her mesmerising show to Laneway this year for the first time. Writing, producing, singing and choreographing most of her output, the former professional dancer wowed the crowd with her electronic and R&B beats.

### **Chet Faker**

The Australian electronica musician has had a wildly successful year: a run of top tier overseas festivals, and sold-out headline dates across the globe. It's no surprise that his perfomance during Laneway this year was highly raved.

### **BANKS**

Noted for her eerily striking vocals, the magical BANKS continues to rise at a meteoric pace. Her debut album, Goddess, was released on Sept 5 last year and charted within top 20 in several countries. Nevertheless, she blew the crowd away with her songs.

Photo courtesy of Hanging Up The Moon MUSIC 19

# A CAPPELLA GOES ASIAN

### ANA LARAE RIOS finds out why the voice art is making waves here recently

A cappella, a voice art that remains unfamiliar to most people, is enjoying a revival of sorts and the International A Cappella Festival 2014 could be a major reason.

Talents hailing from Asian countries like Taiwan, Malaysia and Korea, along with their fervent fan base, were flown onto our shores to take part in the annual International A Cappella Festival organised by The A Cappella Society (TAS).

That, together with a touch of local flavour adds to the mix, made the festival an instant hit, making it the Society's most popular show to date.

"We were a bit worried at first, as we used to focus more on Europeans," says Mr Alex Sassarak, general manager for TAS. "Now it's more Asian focused, and we're rethinking our content."

A misunderstood art, a cappella is not as far off from orthodox music as it may seem. "It's an instrumentation of voice. You don't play the piano or the guitar, you choose to use your voice," says Angelina Choo, music director for TAS.

Angelina notes the average age in this industry is between the ages of 25 and 30. However, since the spike in choral groups featured in big screen hits like Glee and Pitch Perfect, a stronger bond and support have been given to this art form, working adults signing up for a cappella classes in recent years.

In an effort to reach out to working adults, TAS used the online social network, meetup.com, to promote their free

programmes. With that, names began flowing in, with 150 members walking through their doors.

"It's not easy to get people to sign up for something like this, so every person who walks in through the doors is really special," Angelina adds with a smile.

The open vocal technique practised by singers all around the world means that anyone with the right understanding of one's physicality's and training, can sing. TAS welcomes this with open arms in their open door policy in their programmes.

The buzz from the music community also helped renowned a cappella group, MICapella, make its mark in Singapore.

"At times, it was a little difficult as a there was less understanding from audiences, event organisers, and the crew about what type of performing set up we have," says Mr Peter Huang, producer and vocalist for MICapella. "We were at times mistaken for a choir or a pop group with a backing track, so that had to be explains further."

MICapella took part in the X-Factor style a cappella competition, The Sing-Off, in Taiwan, clinching the first runner-up position, and putting the spotlight on Singapore's homegrown talent.

TAS is in the midst of providing a diploma for singing instructors all across Singapore.

However, Angelina adds: "The increased awareness is still very superficial, as it's mostly interest with no action. But at least people know what a cappella is, and we no longer have to explain it to them."



20 HYPE Photos courtesy of Willie Lyou

# Rising Cyberspace Threats Driving Demand For IT Professionals With Cybersecurity Skills

Finding cybersecurity experts is becoming a challenge as more companies look to beef up online protection.

With the escalating number of cyber threats happening worldwide everyday, and the sophistication of cyber attacks, the need for organisations to safeguard their cyber assets has never been greater. This has translated into higher demand for cybersecurity specialists and requests for information technology security services.

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# Feminism Moves To Control Cont

One united people regardless of race, language or religion is a credo that our citizens abide by, though where does true equality stand when gender comes into play? BEATRICE BOWERS and CALLY CHEUNG explore the Singaporean brand of feminism; stereotypes, struggles and everything in between

The exchange between Singapore's all-women group, AWARE (Association of Women for Action and Research) and international feminist author of The Beauty Myth, Naomi Wolf during Singapore Writers Festival 2014 held recently, highlighted a local stance on gender politics.

Their panel discussion played up AWARE's "legal exclusion" of men in their organisational course to correct the societal imbalance towards their counterparts. They deem it justified to be wholly feministic - only with the female side of support.

One adverse reaction at the exchange was that AWARE is perpetuating men-hating values. But perhaps we should recognise their actions in a different light: many of our values regarding social hierarchy have been distilled through orthodox principles of tradition. The organisation may promote a worthy notion, but their righteous voices are strained because conformist attitudes prevail.

Consider the extremist decision at hand: to be or not to be a woman in Singapore so as to support feminism. Making a choice between a rock and a hard place, AWARE's role in this home-grown scenario is at the very core of understanding the cultural distaste when broaching topics regarding the quest of women's liberation.

So why does feminism matter if it begets a murky spiral of opposition?

The most basic concept of feminism equates to the demand for gender equality - that all sexes, regardless of race, religion and class deserve to possess equal rights and standing in economical, social and political spectres. From the women suffrage movements of the 19th and 20th centuries to Beyoncé brazenly celebrating gender equality in her 2014 song, \*\*\*Flawless, feminism has constantly evolved, but it never neglects the basic demand for egalitarianism.

On 22 Sept 2014. Emma Watson was named the United Nations' (UN) Women Goodwill Ambassador. To launch UN's HeForShe campaign, the actress presented a passionate speech on feminism and gender equality, currently boasting over six million views on YouTube.

The HeForShe movement aims to impel one billion males as advocates to cease global inequalities that plague girls and women, and Watson spoke of her feministic convictions: "I think it is right that as a woman... I should be able to

make decisions about my own body...I think it is right that socially, I am afforded the same respect as men. But sadly, I can say that there is no one country in the world where all women can expect to receive all these rights."

The Western view remains a potent definition of what feminism is. While its influence is undeniable, a recent article in The Straits Times, "Lets Not Take Gender Equality For Granted", celebrated the efforts of local feminists. The article lauds the landscape of equality that Singapore now possesses – marginal male to female wage disparity, equal voting, legal and educational rights that women are not excluded from.

Being a woman doesn't make you weaker, more vulnerable or incompetent. Men should [also] be liberated from traditional gender roles of masculinity.

- a HYPE survey respondent

A recent HYPE survey involving 150 Singaporeans across a range of backgrounds searched for the basis of Singapore's outlook on feminism with a familiar flavour. The same liberties from the article paint an idyllic picture of Singapore's feministic landscape, with 65 per cent expressing that we are on a slow and progressive path to wholly embracing feminism with the same fervour that our Western counterparts do. While 53 per cent of the respondents readily identified themselves as feminists, more than half of the total figures relayed that Singapore does not practise gender equality and that the image of feminism is explicitly negative.

The views could be due to an evident struggle between different generations looking at the movement using a definition based on their values, and this is where often the general reaction is to simply point fingers at the media's

"What is worrying about feminism now is the fact that media is placing extremely strong emphasis on women rights only, which could potentially lead to the matriarchy toppling the



patriarchy, which defeats the purpose of equality to begin with," declared a female respondent, echoing the common sentiment of basic equality.

Of the respondents, only 35 per cent are men but the majority of their responses displayed a collective discontentment with the fact that they are seen as villains despite their support.

Said one male respondent: "I agree wholeheartedly on the point of feminism being the support of the 'liberation of men from the patriarchy'. As an individual in support of feminism, I am an advocate of this. I believe that there is a subtle pressure on men in society for them to be domineering, apathetic, and portray a certain aura, which frankly is annoying."

Another man concisely summed it up as "politically correct sexism", with the amusing take that feminism is all about "women who want to be as strong as men".

The question then arises – when assimilating feminism into Singapore, where does the conservatism of our Asian values fall within the brackets of the Western approach?

The answer from The Straits Times is that it does not and it should not fall anywhere near the foreign brackets to ensure an identity "uniquely Singaporean, yet unabashedly Asian".

"[Feminism is] freedom from facing stigmas against your gender. Being a woman doesn't make you weaker, more vulnerable or incompetent. Men should [also] be liberated from traditional gender roles of masculinity. People should no longer be judged based on their genders but be empowered by the individuals they are," says one of the HYPE survey respondents.

A Singaporean brand of feminism works towards the equality of both sexes, while maintaining the importance of cultural values that our nation holds true. Singaporean feminism supports a female's liberty to choose her stand in

Quite simply, Singaporean feminism is the freedom for women to explore and balance the traditional and modern facets of being an individual in Singapore.

It is time for us really acknowledge, as a whole, the allembracing impact from our country's (often disparate) progression into new stages of global development.

Let us allow our people to be regarded as people beyond gender, race, and religion aspects. Let us allow our people to embody individualistic opinions to obtain a sense of self-sustainable equilibrium. Let us allow the Singaporean flavour of feminism to lead the people towards a collective dream to sow the seeds of equality for the nation.

### **Perceptions of Feminism**

Feminism: a buzzword that comes with an ugly slew of negative connotations. Take a moment to consider the common person's perception of what being a feminist entails.

Aggression helms the stereotype. Feminists are often viewed as man-hating women shaking their fists, baring hairy armpits while screaming themselves hoarse at issues that don't seem to bear resonance. They are also seen as being overtly sensitive, quick to bear vicious claws at anyone that goes against the ideology that "women are superior to men".

Proclaiming your stance as a feminist often arouses the same disdain a vegan receives when announcing that they don't partake in the consumption of animal products. It opens the Pandora's Box of invasive questions and intrusive opinions. "So why do you hate men?", "we don't need feminism, it's just an excuse for you to abuse your privilege as a woman!", "do you shave your legs?" and the list goes on.

Societal derision and asserting a tenacious belief go hand in hand, which begets the familiar, "I'm not a feminist but..." caveat before a woman broaches a feministic opinion. Consider rape culture, the patriarchy, the male-to-female dichotomy and imposed gender roles. These are weighted words tagged to critical global affairs that often slide over the rumination of the masses, because rarely does a person ever want to be slighted for personal conviction.

### The Unsung Woman Hero

On Forbes' 2014 100 Powerful Women list, German chancellor Angela Merkel cinched first place, alongside other notable figures such as Lady Gaga, Hillary Clinton, Angelina Jolie and Indra Nooyi.

The list is peppered with politicians, CEOs, highly successful entrepreneurs and celebrities worth millions or more. Commendable role models they may be, it dims the spotlight cast on the impactful contributions of the everyday woman. They may not incite the same media adulation like Emma Watson, or cause controversial waves like the evercandid Miley Cyrus, but these women acknowledge the value of sacrificing personal dreams for a greater good.

With her bronzed tan, immaculately shaped French manicured nails and sleek jet-black hair. Ms Ashton Wendy, 42, looks like the overtly polished suburban mother you see on television dramas à la Desperate Housewives. Then, her muscular physique comes into view. Representing the

Singapore Federation of Bodybuilding & Fitness (SFBF), Wendy juggles her bodybuilding career with being a stayhome mom, caring for three rowdy teenagers.

She explains her ability to strike a balance: "I don't compete every month, there aren't that many competitions to go for. Bodybuilding is more of a passion...a way to push myself beyond my mental limits, but my kids do that for me on a daily basis."

Despite giving up her job as a regional general manager to take care of her family. Wendy does not feel any less empowered than a career-oriented super mom.

She adds: "I've sacrificed a lot for this family – time. personal interests, half my hair has fallen out from stress! This doesn't mean I'm not a modern woman. My choice has nothing to do with the traditional imposition of how women should be homemakers and obedient wives. This is what liberates me."

### What Men Think About Women

It is a common misconception that male sex is discounted from feminism on the assumption that the projected equalities do not apply.

Being told to "man up" is a phrase every male will inevitably hear. Implying the need to maintain strength and negate emotional vulnerability, masculinity falls under a sexist script that forces men to conform. This in turn compromises how a man relates to women, other men and even themselves, subconsciously or otherwise.

As author Shira Tarrant succinctly puts it: "We might come into this world with a penis or a vagina, but we were not born wanting to fix things with a hammer or carry a purse." Oppression is not biased towards a particular sex, and this is the doctrine that feminism aims to abolish.

Said Kenneth Lee, 26, the founder and CEO of a homegrown bridal media company. "I think it's crucial to view women as women...never subdue their identities to be girlfriends, wives or mothers. All these are merely semantic labels that compliment a dedication on their parts towards their partners or children,"

Kenneth is engaged to his social worker girlfriend, and finds himself working intimately with couples of all distinctions. He believes that while feminism still has the potential to progress in the nation, it has already started a wave of change, albeit mild, in the modern mindset.

"At the end of the day when the two stand side by side at the altar, it is man and woman beside each other — both equal and both strong as individuals. It is not a fight for a certain sex to be better than the other, but rather, an establishment of the self captured beyond the gender."

Local artist Zig Shee, 25, says: "At this stage [in Singapore], feminism is a blanket that people pull over themselves while projecting their voices. Support can be given without inching into politics. What is more important at the end of the day: supporting women, or being a supporter of women?"

# **ENTER** STAGE RIGHT



### The stage is set for a career in the arts right here and young people are clamouring for a spot in the limelight. SHALINI **DEVINDRA** finds out more

Here's something we can look forward to in the near future: A stage filled with talented familiar faces and a standing ovation from the enthusiastic crowd at the Esplanade theatre.

It's no surprise as youths are starting to gravitate towards the stage with the increasing opportunities for an unconventional career in local theatre.

"Loads of things are happening in the arts scene in Singapore; there's no real starting point, you just have to dive right in!" says Chow Yaw Wai Wisely, 16. Having been smitten by the arts in secondary school, he decided to continue in drama after his O-Levels.

With the help of Buds Theatre, Wisely has been exploring various options to satiate his hunger for the arts. Ms Claire Devine and Ms Lisa O'Neill, founders of Buds Youth Theatre, later consolidated it into Buds Theatre, which aims to offer youths the opportunity to discover the possibilities in theatre.

"You don't need to have a whole lot of talent, you just need to have a modicum of it. What you really need is conviction,' says Ms Devine. She stressed that the toward the children arts is hardly about financial rewards, and youths who are which has a larger interested should not look into the monetary benefits, but the personal rewards it brings. "Passion, drive and realism are all you really need. You are Singapore society." art, you live and breathe it," she says.

- Mr Huzir Sulaiman Buds Theatre has produced well-known plays such as The Coffin Is Still Too Big For The Hole, and From Scratch. Leading theatre practitioners like Alvin Tan and Beng Tian have been part of many of these productions. They hold 15 different youth programmes but see at least

500 students a week for programmes conducted in school as well as inhouse. With award-winning writers such as Cheryl Lee, Joel Tan and Jean Tay teaching modules, it is no surprise that 95 per cent of their students end up working in the arts industry.

Executive director of Singapore Repertory Theatre (SRT), Ms Charlotte Nors agreed that the theatre industry has grown tremendously in the last decade and has given youths a platform to explore alternative career choices. SRT conducts programmes like The Young Company that teaches youths aged 15 to 25, acting and writing. They have produced popular and contemporary such as Dracula and have performed plays at the Esplanade beginning with Forbidden City in 2002 and the annual Shakespeare in the

With over 300 people employed per year by SRT, it's a positive outlook for prospective careers in the arts.

"It hasn't helped that many schools still do not focus on the humanities and offer drama in schools. But it important for youths to know that there are so many other jobs in theatre which gives great career opportunities and stable employment," Ms Nors says. She is pleased, however, with the quality of theatre that has been steadily improving and with the rise of more educational

"We see a big

of the parents

change in attitude

entering theatre,

long-term impact

on the theatre

scene and the

platforms catered to the arts for youths. "Theatre has always

been my safe place,' muses Tan Hui Er, 19, who has been exposed to theatre since a young age. "Opportunities whether on stage, technical theatre or even in administration are everywhere! The best part is learning and struggling to find your place. It's tough, but I'm sure it will be worth it."

**Checkpoint Theatre** Company has also jumped on the bandwagon of reaching out to enthusiastic youths like Hui Er. Set up in 2002, the main aim is

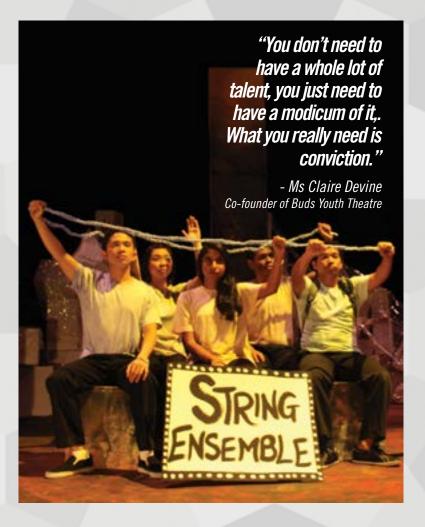
to nurture the next generation and to create original theatrical works with strong performance and direction. An example of this growth in the theatre scene can be seen in Faith Ng's and Shiv Tandan's The Good, The Bad,

And The Sholay, which consisted of only one professional actor and six student actors. The joint Artistic Director of Checkpoint Theatre, Mr Huzir Sulaiman, takes on mentorship programmes to interact with the youths on multiple platforms.

"We see a big change in attitude of the parents toward the children entering theatre, which has a larger long-term impact on the theatre scene and the Singapore society," explains Mr Sulaiman. "Now is the perfect time in Singapore to be an artist for we have attained a certain level of material comfort."

Though some may believe that the local theatre scene could not possibly compare to Broadway, and Western theatre, Mr Sulaiman begs to differ. "Our stories as a country, in Southeast Asia and in Asia is really important and we should think about our societies. cultures and mind this rich set of cultural material."

With these passionate entrepreneurs and youths who are undaunted by the unconventional career options, there are sure to be increasing opportunities for youths in Singapore who are interested in the local theatre scene. As Hui Er affirmed, so long as there is one person who believes in it, this convention is sure to remain.



## HISTORY OF SINGAPORE THEATRE

1940s

1980s

2000s

From the beginnings of English local theatre in 1945, Singapore has grown to cater to individuals who possess this interest for the arts. Spearheaded by raw passion, the first few companies to have ventured into this unconventional scene were The Experimental Theatre Club, Changi Theatre Club and the Tanglin Players, whom have all sparked an unending trail of enthusiastic companies who had aimed to develop the budding theatre scene and cater to the locals.

As the arts scene progressed in the mid-1980s, theatre in Singapore was aimed at creating emotional stirrings and also roping in culture and national identity. This led to the birth of theatre groups like Theatreworks and The Necessary Stage. The mere merging of these art forms with identity then produced the myriad of plays and theatrical performances that are rich in tradition and is a reflection of the larger forces that shape the economic. political and social life in Singapore.

The local theatre scene today, can be viewed as a lens to observe the country in which we live, and its distinct culture - be it plays in Malay. Tamil, Mandarin or English, these performances reflect the racial make-up of our close-knit society. Yet, looking back at these brilliant pioneers is only valuable when we can use these lessons to look forward. Given the richness of this cultural build-up, entrepreneurial theatre companies are now looking to pass on their knowledge and water the seeds of interests in the next generation.



## CALLY CHEUNG pays tribute to a man dedicated to other men in the spirit of Singapore's cinematic heritage

In the name of Ming Wong, void all character distinctions and purge any cinematic appropriation to tailor the visual experience into a tribute art form.

Basing his venture in Singapore and Berlin, next up on the 44-year-old Singaporean artist's plate is a spot in the high profile China art event, the 10th Shanghai Biennale. A revision of what the writer Kathy Acker cites as "pla(y)giarism", Wong's skillset stands amidst his hilarious emulation of familiar roles with new intentions.

His debut at the Singapore Pavilion in 2009 featured the Life of Imitation, a localised addressing of the heritage of Singaporean movies. This branched out to playfully recreate highlights from Douglas Sirk's Imitation of Life, Wong Kar-Wai's In the Mood for Love, and Four Malay Stories, a compilation of P. Ramlee's popular titles. He starred as 16 different roles under the Malay wunderkind's words, decimating gender, race and religious brackets, and elevated a theatrical absurdity to call out the general identity politics recognised by the nation.

For the audience, there was a dedication to disrupt any discernible elements. Picture this: the lines from Sirk uttered by a Chinese man in the role of a mixed-race daughter passing off as white to her black mother, "I'm white! White. White!" The inclusion of the country's ethnic blocs – Chinese, Indian and Malay – juxtaposed by original antics of the racial imposters is enough to lift more than a few eyebrows at the gallery.

"The mix of languages has become such a big part of life there that people take it for granted. It is also my foundation for looking at how audiences react to an artwork," says Wong in a recent Art in America article.

"They have a sense of humour that strikes you here, in the solar plexus. Not a British wit, which is more intellectual, or slapstick, which is baser, but the kind of humour where you identify with something. A lot of stand-up comedy is like that, you know, about things in your backyard."

Perhaps this is the beauty of Wong's work: a duty beyond the screen to juggle with the core issues from the performer to the onlookers. Granted that the impersonation phenomenal first took off as a sincere movement in the music scene when the The Buggs attempted to look and sound like the Beatles in the 1960s, but it is apparent that Wong has adapted it to be more than cultural glorification.

In this vein, the disconnected model of visuals then becomes a platform for the artist to subsist his challenges. While he is no stranger to the foreign counterparts in pictures, his movements have tracked him to countries where the barriers of everyday livelihood posed a problem.

Take his move to Berlin. When it required an alternative introduction to the rough linguistics of the country, he chose to enact Learn German with Petra von Kant. Playing the German "tragic clown" socialite Petra, Wong memorised the bitterness of his disquiet in the film's native tongue, and through the course of her iconic monologue on the floor with a bottle of birthday gin, truly showcased his position.

"Spoken words play only a minor part. Quite a lot depends on who is looking, and what can be seen or unseen. There's quite a lot that goes beyond language. I feel this is becoming more apparent now with globalisation. A lot of conventions are being overturned, so there are no rules anymore," Wong shares in an initiArt magazine interview.

He adds: "There is the breakdown of illusions in the editing, directing, acting, styling, etc. Beyond questions of 'language' and 'identity', is the question of what is filmic language, and what is the role of the audience, questions that are asked in film and performance circles as well. How are we supposed

to act or react to a film installation? Where am I supposed to look at?"

The moral duality of tribute art is not lost on Wong's homegrown fans. "There is a beauty in objectifying art through the screen of roles or actors that have already been assimilated by the viewers," shares Ms Neysa Yang, a Laselle graduate. "In minimising the medium, you shift the message into the spotlight." To her, Wong's methods can whet a desire to develop creative liberties into tangible forms of societal contribution.

Yang adds: "There are times when more work goes into crafting a worthy tribute than offering up an original effort. There are multiple facets to consider and inject purpose into, making [tribute art] something that should be taken very seriously."

The theme of melodrama naturally derives from Wong's comical revisions of the common social forces, and it is this exact sentiment that succeeds as a didactic perspective on the platform of globalised cinema.

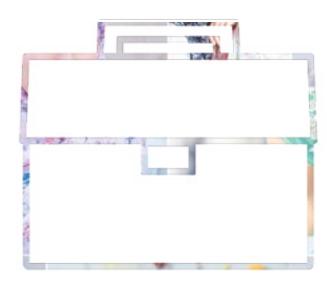
Once the third man comes into the picture, all roles are reduced their roots to be on par – without distractions or discretions. He thinks, and therefore he is – in a line, this is the art of Ming Wong.

28 HYPE

Photos courtesy of (clockwise from left) After Chinatown, Me In Me,

MK Edition Zwart, and Blast Off into the Sinosphere

ARTS 29



## The Under 35 CEO Club

With more young people rising up the ranks, ANA LARAE RIOS and NUR KHALISAH enter the battleground of business to find out what drives these young bosses

What used to be a game for the big fish has now welcomed the small fry alike. Our ever-evolving society has helped to make the passions of budding entrepreneurs a tangible pillar of their business goals, resulting in more companies hiring top players under the ages of 35.

Despite the swift increase of young chief executive officers (CEOs), there are just as many whose passions fell short of supporting their big plans in their first steps. In spite of the hours channelled into putting together the best business plan, things go awry. This is where passion is being put to test, at least for Victoria Tang, 19.

The staunch pescatarian has been a long time advocate for healthy eating and has made it her purpose to share her delectably light lunches with her peers. After collaborating with two of her course mates, plans to launch a healthy snack bar, Calorie, for the students of Ngee Ann Polytechnic were in motion. Paired with business courses picked up in school, the team established their business goals, a probable menu plan, and mode of operation.

Despite this, an essential asset to their success fell through - the location. A quaint space near the poolside was not the most ideal for the Calorie team, as they foresaw the difficulties of drawing in a sizeable crowd.

Paired with their advisor's opinions against their newly appointed location, the Calorie crusade was dropped. "We just got negative vibes from the thought of setting our stall at that location so we decided to give it a miss," lamented Victoria.

Janice Goh, 51, business advisor to Chan Brothers Travel, weighs in her opinion on the fundamentals of business, adding that a setback in location could lead to a myriad of other business options to consider adopting. "Look at the type of customers who frequent the pool, swimmers, or even students who would like to study near the pool," she commented, emphasising the importance of adapting to their new situation.

Failed business plans are a dime a dozen. In Victoria's case, she has taken her dime and cashed it into bigger, brighter plans. Following in the footsteps of Bill Gates, Victoria took her experience from her unsown seeds, and is in the midst of setting up her bakery, The Red Velvet Specialist.

"As an optimist, I would rather think that in order for the word 'inexperience' to become 'experience', you would have to be 'in'-volved in the business – it has to be heart and soul," adds Mrs Goh.

On the flipside lays Atwell Lim, 20, whose passion for business spearheaded her decision to set up Toasties, a halal alternative to Subway sandwiches. However, having dived into the market left her with a more pertinent problem to face.

With such a high demand, Atwell has over 40 employees under her wing at Toasties. "Sometimes I have to stay over in the store because I have to oversee all the workers and train them myself the next morning," Atwell adds with a sigh.

Some may baulk at the idea of waking up to a dilapidated storeroom, or nestling next to the whirring radiator of a refrigerator. However, Atwell possess a dying trait among businessmen both young and old - the willingness to roll up one's sleeves. However, understanding the complexities of management has been a hurdle for CEOs all over the world. As pivotal passion may be in starting a business, a good sense of business management is another key player in the success of an enterprise. Mrs Goh suggests the downscale of Atwell's business, adding that "a good operation model and good training can go a long way."

Single-handedly running a business is no breeze. Would having a partner ease the workload? We'll find that out with the sister duo behind Fictive Fingers.

Aisah and Hani Dalduri, both aged below 35, have been running Fictive Fingers since Nov 2008. With no intention of collaborating, the sisters were on different career paths prior to Fictive Fingers. Back then, the general public were not exposed to a market of people selling handmade goods. Vendors often received requests for a bargain as the general public neither understood, nor appreciated the rationale behind the effort being put into making the items.

The dynamic duo set out to change this perception through Singapore's Indie Craft Fair, that allows artisans to showcase their handmade products so locals can purchase and be exposed to their neighbourhood artisans. From then onwards, people were more receptive to the concept of handcrafted items. Soon after, the sisters started Fictive Fingers and moved their craft projects out of their bedroom, and into a comfortable studio at Crawford Lane. Fictive Fingers holds workshops and classes at their studio, allowing customers to see the value behind the handprinting process of their items.

Equipped with strong passion and moral support, this duo finds it easier to work their way up the ladder of success.

"At the very beginning there were a lot of struggle, but we always find a way to overcome whatever we need to do. If we made a mistake along the way, we never see it as a failure, "A purpose is something long-term, something that you would not want to change even forever. But passion, is something that can and will change from time to time."

-Aida Azlir

but instead a lesson that we learn from ourselves," the sisters shard. "The struggles you have to overcome are the most important lesson that you can learn as a businessperson."

Things are different with Aida Azlin, 27, founder of The Shawl Label, to handle a business single-handedly and still reap success. Her life took a turn to the unexpected, and she found herself happily married and in the exotic land of Morocco. Almost everyone she knew or saw in Morocco had their own businesses, from babysitting to tailoring. Everyone had something to give and gain profit for themselves.

Aida eventually eased her way into a business, putting her passion and purpose together, and founded The Shawl Label. Running for just over a year, Aida has already reached out to more than 450 girls worldwide.

"Passion and purpose are very important, but also very different. A purpose is something long-term, something that you would not want to change even forever. But passion, is something that can and will change from time to time," explains Aida. "These two complement each other very well and if used in the right way, can lead you to success."

With her online shop up and running well, Aida opened up to giving online classes to budding entrepreneurs on doing an online business. Aida has also been offered to speak at the International Forum of Human Resources "HR Days 2014", an Italian forum conducted at an Italian institute in Morocco. This event focuses on employability and also success stories.

"No business can run successfully without passion. There are many good examples, like Steve Jobs. He was still deeply involved in the business although he would have made more than enough to employ anyone to run it," says Mrs Goh.

Looking through the eyes of a budding entrepreneur, we see their kaleidoscopic vision come to life. There are a multitude of elements contributing to the success of a business, such as a never-say-die attitude.

Ultimately, the pillars of success for every entrepreneur are very much a unique composition of varying branches that structuralise their vision.







30 HYPE Photos courtesy of Aida Azlin ARTS 31



### HILLARY KANG and DORETTA TAN check out tips on how to make your hobby work for you

It's no secret that hobbies require some money to upkeep. But what if you could cut out the "hobby" expenditure from your monthly budget and replace it with some positive figures? From walking your dog to unleashing your creative streak on an open canvas, these four individuals have turned their personal passions into moneymaking businesses. They open up on their experiences, and give advice on how you can do the same.

### From Calligraphy to Cash

Though Ms Cherie Batinga, 37, has always been an artist at heart, she never thought that she would paint or draw seriously, especially after she missed the entrance exam for a prestigious art school when she was 16.

However, Cherie's childhood passion found its way back into her life in 2010, after she moved to Singapore from the Philippines. She rediscovered her muse in the streets of Joo Chiat, hidden beneath the colourful facades of traditional shophouse fronts and vibrant Peranakan designs.

"Ever since I moved here, I've been so inspired by Peranakan culture," says the full-time artist, whose East Coast studio is replete with sketchbooks and Moleskine notebooks brimming with vibrant colours and beauteous calligraphy lettering.

Cherie set up her Etsy store, Jar Of Salt, in late 2012 to sell personalised stationery. Although young, the store boasts a global customer base, and it is not hard to see why.

"I started my Etsy store because I wanted to do something fun, and before I knew it, people were actually buying my things!" says the amicable artist, who occasionally breaks off to pet Jones, her Japanese Spitz and the mascot of Jar Of Salt. "It was all very serendipitous."

Despite Jar of Salt's success, marketing and catering to the masses was never on Cherie's mind when she set up her online store.

"I don't think money is something that most artists think of... If passion drips all over your work, it's inevitable that people will discover you. There is no method," she affirmed.

She adds: "Although I really wish there was, so I could have started earlier!"

### **Grooming His Wealth**

Enjoying the company of furry friends as a side job was never on Mr Sean Lim's agenda, until the 21-year-old joined the K-9 Unit back during his National Service (NS).

The now professional dog handler discovered another part of himself during NS – having a natural rapport with dog handling – that evolved into an interest. After receiving ample training and experience, he decided to take a gamble and monetise his newfound passion.

"I published an ad, although I wasn't even expecting profits until my first assignment came," says Sean. "It just went on from there as I started charging money for my services."

Apart from its business aspect, dog walking is more than just holding energetic puppies on a leash. Sean dubs it a "multifactorial discipline", where an established mindset and psyche is necessary.

"You need to take note of your actions, voice, body language, and the way you portray yourself to the dog," Sean elaborated. "You need to be fairly confident with good intentions of grooming the dog, and not just earning a quick buck."

Sean advises: "Start by establishing yourself as the person who can handle dogs, and do it for free at first to get the experience, recognition and brand awareness.... Ask yourself on why you want to do dog training and know the qualities that make you a suitable candidate."

### **Knitting Up Notes**

Knitting is no longer an archaic hobby your grandmother does – as Ms Betsy Toh, 36, demonstrates, it can also help you to earn a bit of cash. This was what Betsy discovered after a "happy accident".

Among the vast array of handicrafts, ranging from cute *amigurumis* (knitted or crocheted stuffed toys) to colourful accessories that Betsy has crafted, a small knitted top serves as the turning point of her life nine years ago. Even before its creation, the former fine arts teacher was already burnt out by her current job. Setting her heart on something new, Betsy left her teaching career behind to pursue her interest.

Having patience is important [in leather crafting] — but my advice is that if you are interested, start now.

> - Mr James Dung, Founder of OGL

The knitter started collaborating with her mother, visiting different cafés to catch up with each other and knit different sorts of crafts. The duo's humble beginnings included the sale of festive Christmas stockings and adorable baby booties. With

increasing recognition, customers soon inquired about knitting lessons.

"By that time, I missed teaching, so then I says, 'Why not?'," she commented with a laugh.

With that, Betsy set up her crafting studio, Knotty Bicsie, in 2006. But Betsy asserts that would-be knitters ditch their tunnel visions for profits, and instead, focus on projects that intrigue them. She remarked that disinterest would be blatant in the product if it isn't knitted with love.

"The product will then speak for itself without you needing to try and sell it," she explains with a smile.

### **Crafting a Career out of Leather**

Homegrown purveyor of leather goods Obbi Good Label – or OGL for short – is on a mission, and founders Mr James Dung, 37, and Mr Johnny Low, are at the forefront.

"Singapore is too rushed," says James, whose label sells an assortment of finely crafted leather goods, each one proudly stamped with 'Made in Singapore'. "There is too much superficiality and commercialisation these days, so we want to show people something different."

Tucked in the bohemian district of Bali Lane, OGL's central workshop is located right next to Atelier Lodge, a leather crafting school that the duo set up to promote their craft. The school, which offers leather crafting classes for students of varying expertise, is but one way that James and Johnny hope to impart some of their passion onto others.

"The gist of fishing isn't about catching the fish – the main point is when you're waiting for the fish," he says. "Leathercrafting is a lot like that. The product can be ugly, but the process is enjoyable, and that is what matters."

James advises: "Having patience is important [in leather crafting] – but my advice is that if you are interested, start now."

32 HYPE Photos courtesy of Jar of Salt, and Knotty Bicsie ARTS 33

# Fiction Rewritten

With the movie release of Fifty Shades of Grey this Valentine's Day, MELISSA CHANG feels it's time to re-evaluate the stigma attached to fan fiction

Let's be shamefully honest – E. L. James's much discussed and debated BDSM series, Fifty Shades of Grey, is a phenomenon.

Earlier this year, The Hollywood Reporter reported that sales of the book series climbed past 100 million worldwide, joining the ranks of Twilight and Harry Potter as one of the top-selling series of all time. The steamy movie adaptation starring Dakota Johnson as Anastasia Steele and Jamie Dornan as Christian Grey will be hitting Singapore cinemas this Valentine's Day.

Not bad for an author who started out writing Twilight fan fiction.

Originally, fan fiction could be defined as a work of fiction produced by fans, featuring characters from a particular film, TV or book series – but today, fan fiction draws characters from any entertainment media. The strong fan-contribution culture of fan fiction has made it a thriving, exciting community.

However, that fervour somehow does not translate to real life. Fan fiction has always had a dorky, uncool stigma attached to it, which makes it an uncomfortable topic in polite company.

"Most people do not think very highly of fan fiction," says Debbi Cheong, 19, who writes Sherlock fan fiction. "They see fan fiction writers in a negative light because the content might be too explicitly sexual or unpolished."

There is basis in that opinion – about a third of the 217,000 Twilight stories on fanfiction.net are M-rated.

However, it would be unfair to label fan fiction as fodder for fangirls. There is the occasional story that is proof of the incredible dedication some fan fiction writers have to their craft. For example, The Capitol Games, a Hunger Games story written by an Australian teenager, has 54 chapters and a whopping 330,288 words. And it isn't even finished yet. In comparison, Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows has 198,227 words, according to The Harry Potter Lexicon.

Quality is another benchmark difficult to quantify in the world of fan fiction. Although Jane Tan\*, 18, who reads and writes fan fiction, doesn't expect original storylines, she appreciates writers who have their own personal flair. "I'm into very cliché plots and genres, and I'll enjoy it if it can make me laugh, cry or feel something... Fan fiction is a form of relaxation and escape for me, I like to imagine my favourite characters doing dumb things that make me laugh."

Even so, opinions regarding creativity differ amongst readers. "Authors have to be resourceful with the characters to explore relationship dynamics," says Wong Cai Jie, 16, who helps fan fiction writer proofread their work before publishing.

Cai Jie adds: "Fresh, imaginative ideas are consistently constructed and developed by those involved in fan fiction, blooming from their passion for the characters."

Ultimately, fan fiction is a labour of love like any other hobby, and an outlet in which fans can appreciate entertainment media on a higher level. "Fan fiction are not novels. They're fan fiction. They're good practice and the more you write, the more you improve," says Jane.

Debbi agrees: "These people are putting a little piece of themselves out there – it takes courage and guts, and it deserves some respect."

\*not her real name

### Published writers who indulge in fan fiction

### Anna Todd

The 25-year-old novelist received a six-figure publishing deal for a series of erotic fiction, titled After, starring a thinly disguised Harry Styles (of boy band One Direction). The film rights to the series have been picked up by Paramount Pictures.

### Neil Gaiman

A writer with bestsellers like Stardust, Gaiman is no stranger to fan fiction of his work. A fan of C.S. Lewis and Arthur Conan Doyle, he's written fan fiction of their works: The Problem of Susan and A Study in Emerald respectively.

### Cassandra Clare

Before the Mortal Instruments series was published, Clare was one of the Harry Potter fandom's most popular writers. The Draco Trilogy spanned more than half a million words over six years and characterised Draco as an angsty anti-hero.

PRINT TO SCREEN



# The widely acclaimed novel, In the Heart of the Sea, is set to hit the big screen. CLARISSA CHEANG anticipates how the stunning masterpiece of a tragic sea voyage will turn out

This is a tale that points out the gripping details of the battle of man against nature, letting readers experience the unbearable conditions of what it takes to survive starvation, dehydration and despair – even if it means eating the flesh of a shipmate.

Written by Pulitzer Prize finalist Nathaniel Philbrick, In the Heart of the Sea: The Tragedy of the Whaleship Essex was inspired by the Essex whaleship that sunk in 1820.

The journey begins as a purposeful expedition to kill whales, but nature bites back by sending a large bull sperm whale to attack the Essex whaleship, leaving it damaged beyond repair. As a result, the 20-man crew falls short on provisions and basic necessities, and they are forced to embark on a 90-day sea voyage of desperation.

Ron Howard, who won an Oscar for Best Director for his film A Beautiful Mind, directs the movie based on this National Award winning book.

The film boasts a strong cast that includes Chris Hemsworth, along with many other acclaimed actors such as Cillian Murphy and Ben Wishaw. Hemsworth plays Owen Chase, the first mate of the unfortunate ship. Fans of the actor who played Thor can look forward to a refreshing side of Hemsworth as the tragic hero.

Shot in the relaxing Canary Islands, it was a challenge to film In the Heart of the Sea. In an interview with USA Today, Howard reveals that the filmmaking process was disrupted many times because of weather conditions. It seems shooting in the sea has its troubles too, as Howard describes water as an "enemy of organised filmmaking everywhere".



Howard promises well-portrayed scenes in the feature film, as he says the book is "dependent on rich characters and nuanced emotional performances, and those are all aspects of the movie [they are] also dealing with under great physical duress".

Expect the film to bring to life the raw experiences of this thrilling tale of graphic sea adventures by unfolding the historic event that happened.

In the Heart of the Sea opens in cinemas Mar 15.



### Prepare a box of tissues as KIAT TAN WEI JIE checks out the melodramatic film adaptation of Nicholas Sparks' The Longest Ride

Directed by George Tillman Jr., filming for The Longest Ride began on Jun 16, 2014 in Wilmington, North Carolina. The film adaptation stars Scott Eastwood, son of Clint Eastwood, as Luke, Britt Robertson as Sophia Danko, Jack Hudson as Ira, and Oona Chaplin as Ruth.

Nicholas Sparks' best-selling novel chronicles the tale of Ira Levinson and Ruth reliving their marriage and the budding romance of Luke Collins and Sophia Danko.

The story starts with Ira veering off a highway and landing in a snowy ditch. Isolated and in pain, the 91-year-old struggles to free himself from the wreckage. As he drifts out of consciousness, his late wife Ruth wafts down on him and pushes him to hang on.

Grieving her death nine years ago, Ira reminisces of the decades spent with Ruth – the first time they met, their subsequent marriage and the sorrows they endured.

A few miles away, a parallel tale of a sorority girl and a cowboy's love unfolds. Luke, a competitive bull rider with superman-esque qualities (perfect gentleman who understands a woman's every need), rescues Sophia from her possessive ex-boyfriend. Of course, Luke and Sophia unravel the passage of love through tests of uncertainty.

With adroit storytelling, Sparks weaves the two couples in the most obscure way imaginable and propagates the timeless sentiment of love never dies. Released on Sep 17, 2013, Sparks' latest novel encapsulates the elements of betraval, loss and honesty.

Sparks revealed in an interview with the NYTimes that he needed more than romance to make the film work. He says: "I'm fairly involved especially in the early stages – the screenplay, the selection of the screen writer, the director, the casting.

"I'm on set quite a bit. I also play a large role in the promotion of the film and working with the studio to come up with marketing strategies," he adds.

Sparks has had eight of his books turned into films – which include Dear John and The Notebook. If The Longest Ride is anything like his previous book-to-film adaptations, novel enthusiasts will surely be pleased.

The Longest Ride opens in cinemas Apr 3.



36 HYPE Photos courtesy of Golden Village Pictures Photos courtesy of Twentieth Century Fox PRINT TO SCREEN 37



## Casting sheep's eyes at someone becomes literal as CALLY CHEUNG discovers the remake of romance among farmers, sheep and the wildest lass in the 19th century

Third time's the charm for Thomas Hardy's literary masterpiece, Far From the Madding Crowd, as the triangle passion between Bathsheba Everdene and her suitors is once again rekindled for the big screen.

The latest adaptation due for the big screen in May is set to fill its 1967 equivalent's large shoes. John Schlesinger's 1967 adaptation, with an ensemble cast starring Julie Christie and Alan Bates won multiple cinematic awards, including the Oscars and BAFTA. It is touted as being most faithful to the original text,

One Day novelist, David Nicholls, whose previous screenplays include Hardy's Tess of the d'Urbervilles for the BBC in 2008, will be collaborating with Danish director Thomas Vinterberg for this year's adaption. The first is no stranger to handling tender topics, and the latter is widely

celebrated for his innovative methods targeting minimalistic aesthetics, known as the Dogme 95 movement in filmmaking, with experimental gems like such as The Hunt and Festen under his belt.

The rustic romance introduces Bathsheba (Carey Mulligan) as a haughty newcomer who catches the eye of young shepherd Gabriel Oak (Matthias Schoenaerts). After saving his life from a fatal fire, she rejects his persistent proposals and moves to a neighbouring village. The next time they meet, she is opulent from an inheritance and betrothed to farmer William Boldwood (Michael Sheen) after a playful love letter.

The hillside story continues with Gabriel working as a bailiff on Bathsheba's farm, while her capricious nature leads to an infatuation with Sergeant Francis Troy (Tom Sturridge) after his alluring display of swordsmanship. Her dismal marriage with Francis after a twisted meeting with Fanny Robin (Juno Temple), the former love interest of the sergeant; and tragic end with William highlights the steadfast devotion of Gabriel, whom she eventually accepts to be the right man for her third – and last – marriage.

The production will flock over the hills of Dorset and Oxfordshire, and the anticipation for the classic's third revival mainly derives from the ageless tale of sexual liberation. Captured at a time where such a notion was uncommon, Hardy mesmerised the 19<sup>th</sup> century society of England with an irresistible image of an independent woman following both her head and heart into triple commitments. Her vanity becomes her strength, and as the devoted Gabriel observes from the start, her only weakness.

Totting up Vinterberg's accolades against the film's irresistible elements from both ends of the romance spectrum, there is a common sentiment of emphatic righteousness in its success – not unlike Everdene's last marriage. But as Bathsheba would say, let's toss this as men do.

Far From the Madding Crowd opens in cinemas May 1.



John Green's flair for rebranding the quintessential teenage love story makes the young-adult fiction writer no stranger to the bestseller charts. With his Edgar Award-winning Paper Towns published in 2008, there is a resurgence of the almost-formulaic approach Green takes when tackling the boy-meets-girl story trail.

Paper Towns portrays the protagonist, Quentin "Q" Jacobsen, a shy and slightly neurotic teenage wallflower, navigating the challenges of his senior year of high school.

Cue Green's personalised cliché of romance of a geeky boy who reveres the cool, unattainable girl, and in his quest for her affections, a melting pot of adolescent troubles ensues.

In the case of Paper Towns, the subject of Q's unyielding affection is his neighbour, Margo Roth Spiegelman. This Manic Pixie Dream Girl-esque character acts as a catalyst for the major story arc, by climbing into Q's bedroom one night, seeking help for a vengeful quest against people who have hurt her. Q agrees, and the two become a tag-team to perpetuate Margo's quest for nighttime debauchery.

What plays out like a predictable romance takes an untimely turn when Margo disappears without a trace the next day. Armed with a series of cryptic clues to decode her location, Q sets out on a road trip to find Margo, with his affable best friends. Radar and Ben. in tow.

Nat Wolff, of Palo Alto and The Fault in Our Stars fame, stars as the self-effacing Q, alongside supermodel Cara Delevigne playing the part of Margo.

As one of Britain's most successful models, and the current face of Topshop and Burberry, Delevigne recently delved into acting with her supporting role in Michael Winterbottom's The Face of An Angel. Green expressed his excitement to have Delevigne debuting her first leading role in Paper Towns. "She understands Margo profoundly!" quips Green on his Twitter page.

The rest of the cast includes Austin Abrams as Ben, Justice Smith as Radar, and Griffin Freeman as Margo's exboyfriend, Jase.

As with every Green story, an unforeseeable ending will inevitably occur, though Paper Town's conclusion brings about more thought than tears. It's a stark contrast against his other heart-wrenching novels, Looking For Alaska and The Fault in Our Stars.

Directed by Jake Schrieder, the film adaptation promises not to deviate too much from the novel. Green will be handling the script, along with the screenwriters for (500) Days of Summer, Michael H Weber and Scott Neustadter.

In a Q&A session with his fans on the John Green Books website, Green expounded on Q's borderline obsession with Margo. He muses: "Whether it's Edward Cullen or the beautiful girl in biology class, I feel like we consistently treat the people we're infatuated with as if they aren't regular people, but something more and better." In this vein, Q's mission to seek out Margo crosses into the genre of mystery, rather than the usual journey to love.

Paper Towns opens in cinemas Jun 6.

Photos courtesy of Twentieth Century Fox Photo courtesy of Dutton Penguin PRINT TO SCREEN 39

### AGAPE EROS PHILIA STORGE A romantic and A warm-hearted An unconditional A sacrificial and and sentimental sensual love and forgiving love altruistic love for between two love between among family all regardless of friends members circumstance people

If you're single this Valentine's Day, don't feel lonely. MELISSA CHANG and VALERIE WONG SICK WAH celebrate love in four different and fulfilling ways!

Chocolates, roses, teddy bears holding both chocolates and roses – year after year, Valentine's Day feels like it's a day just for couples to put their relationship on full display, or for the unattached to lament their singlehood.

However, romantic love, or *eros*, isn't the only type of love. The Ancient Greeks also conceptualised three other types of love - *philia*, *storge* and *agape*. In celebration of non-romantic love, we met a few people who embody these three types of love - hopefully they'll inspire you to celebrate this Valentine's slightly differently.

### "Many might rather do more ad hoc volunteering that has more flexibility and allows one to try a wider range of volunteering activities."

- Joan Peh Wan Xuan

### Philia

Ryan Kueh Jinhao and Boh Jiaying look like a cute couple and are often mistaken for one, but they're strictly best friends. The two first-year Business Administration students in Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) first met in Chung Cheng High School. "We've been through a lot in three years," says Ryan, "It's difficult to find someone who really understands you, but she does."

"We're both emotional people," Jiaying laughs. Although they drifted apart for a while, Jiaying believes that "if you're meant to be, you'll come together", which is the case for them.

Some might find it uncomfortable to discuss their friendship's dynamics with a stranger, but it is evident that they treasure each other's presence, listening to each other attentively, and constantly glancing at each other for reassurance.

It has been says that a guy and girl can't truly be "just friends", and true enough, Jiaying and Ryan can't debunk that, having been through the same stage themselves. "It's taken us two years to get to where we are today," shares Jiaying.

But would they spend Valentine's Day together? "Maybe we'd go out and watch a movie, something casual," says Ryan. "If he's too lonely, then yeah!" says Jiaying.

#### Storge

"Family" and "Valentine's Day" may not be words you would associate with each other but sisters Yeo Hui Xuan and Yeo Hui Ru, final-year Business and Social Enterprise, and Early Childhood Education students in NP respectively, plan to spend Valentine's Day together with their mum.

Being two of four sisters and only one year apart, Hui Xuan and Hui Ru have always shared a very special bond. They did their O-Levels in the same year, moved on to NP together, and they're now in their final year.

"We share similar mindsets and interests," says Hui Xuan. The sisters enjoy experimenting with cooking and baking techniques together.

"Although I'm very close to my friends, there are certain things that I may not be comfortable sharing with friends," says Hui Ru. "I've known [Hui Xuan] for 19 years, and she knows everything about me."

As to what makes their relationship work, Hui Ru says: "You can't hold a grudge with your sister... we're straightforward and we scold each other."

However, each has her own pet interest as well – Hui Xuan's has always been music and Hui Ru is the sporty one. While Hui Xuan is a member of NP's percussion group Baracuda Batucada, Hui Ru is actively involved with the school's Wushu team.

The Yeo sisters feel that there's no reason not to celebrate Valentine's Day together. "It's an opportunity to go out and eat nice food," says Hui Xuan.

#### Agape

Joan Peh Wan Xuan, a second-year Linguistics & Multilingual Studies student in National Technological University, was moved to give back to the community after she became involved in the Hearing Impaired Club in NP. She graduated two years ago with a diploma in Psychology.

Her interest was heightened during her stint as an intern at the then Ministry of Community, Youth and Sports that spurred her to commit to regular volunteering.

"After you meet real clients and then go back to school, there's no continuation, and I wanted to find something I could do," she says.

She currently helps out at two organisations – Wishing Well and TOUCH Silent Club – coordinating events and conducting weekly mentoring for children from less fortunate families.

While Joan believes that more youths are stepping up to volunteerism, the biggest challenge they face is balancing it with existing commitments.

"We are still exploring around, trying to find something that we really enjoy doing," she says. "Many might rather do more ad hoc volunteering that has more flexibility and allows one to try a wider range of volunteering activities."

Balancing volunteering with school may be challenging, but Joan advises that seeing volunteerism as a continuous effort and learning experience, instead of a commitment, puts things in perspective.

"When I first started volunteering, I thought that just by volunteering for say one event, I will be making a difference to society, but now I don't think this way any more. It's the continuity and the sustainable efforts that really create the impact, as you witness the clients grow and benefit from your work over time," she says.

She adds with a beaming smile: "Valentine's Day is not just about romantic love. There are many ways to show love and one way is through volunteering."

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# **DATING UNDER**

All vou really need is the hand of your partner and \$30 in your pocket to have a good time. **FAITH KHONG shows you** five things you can do in Singapore on a budget

Let's face it: dating can be costly. And as much as you want every date to be an out-of-this-world fairytale experience, your wallet will be telling you otherwise. Most times, the simplest dates are the most memorable.

### Go hawker hopping

Fine dining at fancy restaurants or hipster cafés is an experience we all desire. But when you would rather throw etiquette to the winds and be clad in shorts and slippers, digging into a \$3.50 plate of artery clogging but oh-so-good *char kway teow*, there's always hawker hopping.

With the wider variety of food choices, you don't have to be stuck eating the same all-day Eggs Benedict breakfast from the five different cafés you visit. At hawker centers, the general rule is that the stall with the longest queue dishes out the best food. Even if you have to wait 20 minutes, you're sure to get a satisfactory meal that doesn't break the bank.

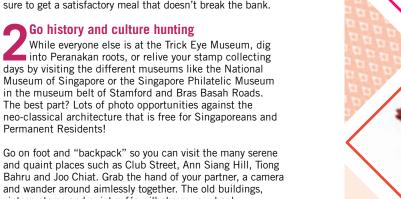
into Peranakan roots, or relive your stamp collecting days by visiting the different museums like the National Museum of Singapore or the Singapore Philatelic Museum in the museum belt of Stamford and Bras Basah Roads. The best part? Lots of photo opportunities against the

and quaint places such as Club Street, Ann Siang Hill, Tiong Bahru and Joo Chiat. Grab the hand of your partner, a camera and wander around aimlessly together. The old buildings, vintage stores and quiet cafés will charm your bank.

Shop at flea markets and thrift stores Instead of crowded shopping malls with fixed prices, head for the flea markets and thrift stores. These places are less crowded and offer a variety of quirky and unusual things at a steal! Browse the shelves filled with old books or sift through countless old items together. You might just end up finding gems and even if you don't buy anything, the experience will count for something.

Watch free performances Concert tickets can be expensive. But there are performances going for free at the Esplanade, for instance, dance and music showcases and poetry recitals. The Esplanade's indoor performance area, At The Concourse, features such performances throughout the year, giving the public the opportunity to watch amateur, semi-professional and professional performers. Music festivals like Baybeats are also organised annually, treating the public to a slew of programmes - both ticketed and free.

Visit the Omni-Theatre Remember when you were in primary school and you had annual trips to the Science Centre? Relive those memories by taking your date to watch an educational film at the Omni-Theatre. For only \$12 per person, you get to enjoy the IMAX technology, and the dome-shaped design of the theatre, which heightens the viewing experience. The Omni-Theatre building also houses the Science Centre Observatory. It has free admission and is open from 7.50-10pm every Friday. Bring your date on a stargazing session and try to figure out the constellations together. Depending on the period, you'll get a chance to see different planets!





**HYPE #40** Giveaway

THETRUT

ABOUTTHE

AFFAIR

CHRISTIA

nam

**SET A contains:** 

• a blank tote bag • a blank pencil case

• a set of fabric markers

a Belzhar notebook

• a signed book

a necklace

**SET B** 

· Bonnie's self-titled album

To thank *you* for *your* loval support. HYPE is holding a photo contest giveaway!

We have **five** goodie bags containing items from Set A and a piece of random jewellery from Set B!

On top of that, the Most Creative Photo will stand a chance to win Set C!

To take part, simply do the following: 1) Like our page at **fb.com/HYPEsg** 2) Take a photo with this issue of HYPE and upload it to Facebook!

3) Caption and tag us at "HYPE Magazine"

It's that simple!

Contest ends 1 March 2015. Winners will be announced via Facebook.

### Sponsored by:

Charlee Charms, JTStatement, Penguin Books, and S2S Pte Ltd



- Gareth Fernandez's self-titled EP
- a Yankee candle • tie clip









# NewYear OldTraditions

### The Chinese New Year celebration of family unity is still much treasured among the youth, as **CLARISSA CHEANG and FAITH KHONG discover**

For Anwar Tan and Vanessa Chong, both polytechnic students, Chinese New Year is family glue. Even if this glue makes the family – usually the extended family – stick together once a year, the family spirit that comes alive is what makes both enjoy Chinese New Year traditions.

For them, more than receiving hongbao (cash packets), Chinese New Year is about togetherness, the strengthening of bonds, and most importantly, the meaning of family.

### Anwar Tan, 18, Ngee Ann Polytechnic

Doted on, adored and loved, Anwar, who is Chinese-Malay, has always been the favourite grandson. His grandfather would always shower him with never-ending affection, play with him and give him toys so he would never feel left out. Those were the most blissful times in Anwar's life.

However, when his grandfather was diagnosed with dementia. Anwar's life was changed as his grandfather's condition deteriorated. The illness took away his grandfather's memories of him and the love and affection his grandfather used to display. Confining himself to his room, Anwar's grandfather stopped playing a role in family affairs and slept throughout the day instead. Gone were the moments when Anwar could spend quality time with him.

Now, Anwar eagerly counts down the days to Chinese New Year, the only occasion he has seen his grandfather fully enjoy himself in recent years. Out of all the traditions of Chinese New Year, Lo Hei is Anwar's favourite as it presents him with the rare opportunity to interact with his grandfather, giving him a glimmer of hope that the old man would recognise his grandson again.

> Every year, his grandfather willingly agrees to join his family for Lo Hei. Although dementia has clouded his mind, one thing has remained clear - his promise to his wife when she was on her deathbed three years ago to take care of the family.

To Anwar, this promise was more than just words. He could see his grandfather putting in the effort to fulfill his duty as the head of the family, despite carrying the burden of not being able to remember his family members well. Now, Anwar's grandfather enthusiastically joins the family for Lo Hei, something that Anwar's relatives had to consistently coax him to do before.

Anwar fondly recalls: "As we were tossing the salad, he actually started smiling. But he got tired after a while and started putting food into his mouth. Everyone found this very amusing and endearing. It was the first time in many years that I remember the whole family enjoying this time with him."

Chinese New Year, for Anwar, is the time for him to embrace his Chinese roots and to reconnect with someone who has been a significant part of his childhood.

### Vanessa Chong, 19, Singapore Polytechnic

On the eye of the Chinese New Year celebrations. Vanessa's aunt's kitchen will be crowded with her relatives. Under the strict guidance of her grandmother, all hands will be busy with the chopping and mincing of ingredients, and a mixture of fragrant smells wafts through the house.

For Vanessa and her family, the annual reunion dinner is the pinnacle of their Chinese New Year celebration.

Vanessa's grandmother, the strict but loving matriarch, believes that the annual reunion dinner should be prepared with the efforts of every family member. Being the oldest in the family, she takes it upon herself to keep a firm hand on all Chinese New Year preparations three weeks before, by planning on who should prepare which dish, and expects nothing less than perfection.

"As we were tossing the salad, he [my grandfather] actually started smiling."

- Anwar Tan

### Lo Hei

This is a Cantonese term meaning 'tossing of good fortune'. Says to have originated from Singapore, Lo Hei is a practice where friends and family gather around the table to toss a raw fish salad, called *Yusheng*. It is believed that the higher the ingredients are tossed, the greater the fortunes will be. Well-wishes are also shouted throughout the salad toss to usher in the new year.

### **Reunion Dinner**

Reunion dinner: Families will put aside their commitments on the eve of Chinese New Year to catch up, interact, and bond over a feast. While some might prefer a steamboat dinner, others might enjoy a banquet of dishes such as fish, dumplings, noodles and spring rolls.

### Fat Choy

This Cantonese delicacy is says to bring prosperity. Popularly eaten during the Chinese New Year period, it is often cooked with mushrooms, scallops, or braised oysters.

More important than the meal itself, the preparations symbolise the tightening of family ties, with every dish drawing the family members closer to one another. Amidst all the tough work are the sounds of laughter, teasing, and light-hearted conversation - the favourite parts of Vanessa's Chinese New Year.

But her fondest memories come from watching her grandmother painstakingly create her signature dish, Fat Choy. Many of Vanessa's family members have tried to replicate the grandmother's Fat Choy, but to no avail.

> "Grandma does not tell us exactly how to make it, she just gives us her comments. She never tells us what to put in, you have to watch very closely and try and try until you get the taste she approves of," Vanessa

Grandma's Fat Choy may look like a simple dish but there are many elements to be mastered so that it comes out perfect. To ensure the

right taste, everything, from the amount of ingredients to the execution for each step, has to be precise.

For Vanessa's grandmother, cooking is not merely a procedure, but an art that she takes very seriously. Watching her grandmother perform gives Vanessa a deep sense of pride.

Vanessa's grandmother is the essence of the household and the reunion dinner is the essence of Vanessa's Chinese New Year. These two elements knot the family together.





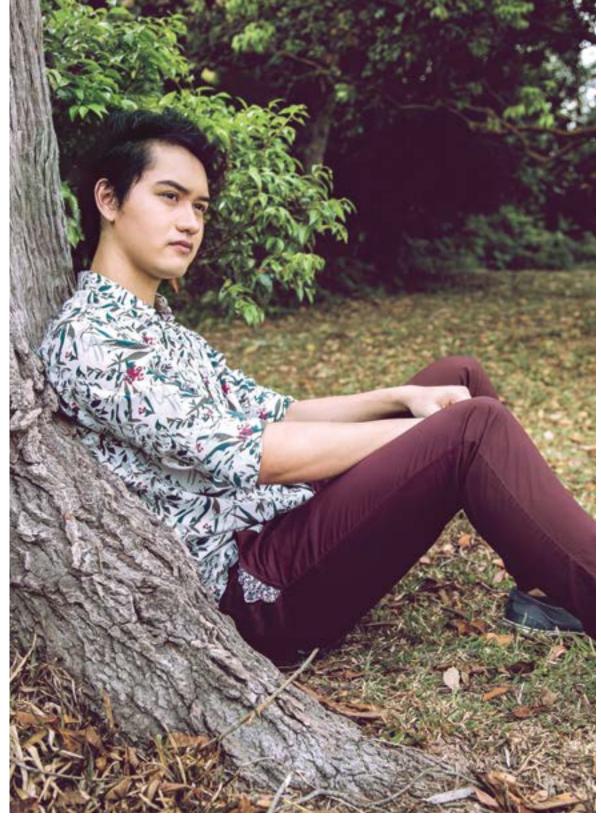












AARON WEARS
DR DENIM PINE REGULAR SHIRT
IN GREY FROM *ACTUALLY*COLLINS MAROON PANTS
FROM *FLESH IMP* 

**Gentle Petals** 

True to its delicate nature, nothing spells demure and bashful quite like the pastel petal. Play with volume using wispy chiffon textures or inject cheekiness with sheer panels revealing subtle skin. For the guys, a brightly printed floral shirt might just be the key staple in your closet to garner attention from the ladies.



ESTHER WEARS
BABIN' TIME TOP &
STROLLING BOTTOM FROM FEMMEX
FLOWER CROWN, STYLIST OWN

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### DESIGNER DREAMS



## COME TRUE

Exclusive designer goods are being redefined with the upsurge of collaborations between top designers and mass appeal labels. Hot on the heels of this exciting global trend are youths like NAOMI THAM and SHALINI DEVINDRA

It's 8am on Nov 6, 2014 and a snaking queue has formed outside the H&M store at the Orchard Building on Grange Road. The reason is not just the 10th anniversary of H&M but also the launch of the Alexander Wang x H&M Collection.

The immensely anticipated designer collaboration collection is a key milestone in the the long and arduous iourney of fashion collaborations. Ten years ago, H&M teamed up with Karl Lagerfeld, the iconic creative director of Chanel, that marked the first partnership between a mass retailer and a high fashion designer.

However, the history of fashion collaborations dates as far back as 1983, Roy Halston Frowick, an American fashion designer, signed a US\$1 billion dollar deal with JCPenney, one of America's largest retailers. The idea was simple: To make clothes affordable for the masses.

However, the clothing line was poorly received, an indication that this collaboration might have started 30 years too early. Now, this business model is booming with opportunities and media recognition.

As Isaac Mizrahi, 53, a renowned American designer once says in regards to collaborations, "You're not selling out, you're reaching out."

It would seem that, media attention determines the collaboration's success.

apart from the profits earned. H&M's website was temporarily down even before the Alexander Wang collection went live due to the overwhelming number of site visitors. A quick hashtag search on Instagram for '#alexanderwangxhm' would garner over 66,000 posts.

Other major retail brands have also bought into the trend of designer collaborations. Last year, Uniqlo collaborated with Helmut Lang's designer, Alexandre Plokhov, while Topshop paired up with Marques

While the H&M collaborations have achieved a roaring amount of attention, Topshop and Uniglo have a much smaller reach, with a little more than 1,000 posts on their social media.

### Affordability: Stretch your Dollar with Style

Sean Tham, 20, a fashion blogger on horseweave.blogspot.com, loved the idea of these collaborations, thanks to the affordable price range targeted at the masses, especially youths. For instance, an Alexander Wang sweater, which would usually cost over \$400 off the runway, costs less than \$100 as a result of this collaboration.

He says: "If not for the collaborations, I'll only be able to get a designer piece once in a blue moon. We're young, and we don't earn a lot. I'm now able to get designer clothes at a cheaper price.'

Sean was among 50 other shoppers who gueued for more than 36 hours despite the rain to get his hands on all the coveted items from the collection. He, along with the first nine people in line – who were all youths - was rewarded with a limited edition Wang backpack and stool as an incentive.

The collection's items ranged from \$14.90 for a key ring to \$599 for an authentic leather jacket.

Most youths in the queue says that they were willing to spend from \$600 to \$1,000 on the collection. However, only 40 per cent of 75 youth participants that HYPE conducted a survey with, felt that they would buy if it were worth the money.

Having completed her O-levels just two days before, Dione Ng, 16, pulled out more than 15 pieces of the collection's items from her shopping bag.

"I've been saving up ever since they announced the collection!" she gushed, explaining that she saved up from her \$40 per week allowance for the past seven months.

### **Fashion Design:** An Aesthetic Seduction

Most of the vouths surveyed says they would buy these clothes if they liked the designs, if the clothes suited their style or if the items involved a well-established designer.

Indeed, Alexander Wang's sporty aesthetic appealed a great deal to the masses. Real sportswear

materials, such as quick dry cotton and scuba textiles were used, allowing one to hit the gym and survive Singapore's humidity. Most of the items were emblazoned with repeated 'Wang' logos inspired from his most recent Spring Summer 2014 collection, and a selected

> few were reiterations of popular designs of his past collections.

When H&M magazine asked how he relates his designs to his consumers. Wang says: "It's about function, but also a connection to something that is familiar, that people see as part of their wardrobe and can be comfortable in."

- Sean Tham

"We're young

earn a lot, and

to get designer

cheaper price."

and we don't

I'm now able

clothes at a

Intending to purchase more female items than

male, Sean says: "His works are not very feminine, so guys and girls can both wear them. Guys can't really wear female clothing, but he makes it feasible."

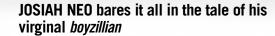
For instance, the monochrome palette apparel was tailored for both genders, with easy interchangeability.

Dion Victoria, 19 says: "I love the [Alexander Wang] collection, because of its unique one-off pieces. I wouldn't spend the same amount of money on something

Perhaps the real allure of these fashion collaborations goes beyond collecting exclusive designer goods.

The heart of the collaboration lies in having more options to empower individual sense of style and elegance, thus creating your own brand of identity and lifestyle.

# NOT THE TYPICAL HOUSE OF WAX



"This is going to hurt."

To say I was petrified was a colossal understatement. There I was, lying on a bed in a dark, unmarked backroom of a discrete store along the bustling Eng Hoon Street of the Tiong

As a warm concoction of wax was slowly smeared onto my crotch, I braced myself for the inevitable burst of pain.

It was a humid afternoon, but at the men's grooming nirvana, We Need A Hero, I felt none of that stifling weather as hairs were ripped from the follicles one patch at a time. I fought back the urge to cry out in pain for just outside the walls were well-dressed men getting their hairs removed as well – only from their head and not their crotch.

An article published in 2012 in The New York Times also revealed that 70 per cent of the weekly business at the Manhattan-based salon Face to Face came from the *boyzillian* appointments that business executives and underwear models were secretly going for.

The trend in men getting a *boyzillian*, or the male version of the brazillian wax, has been on a constant rise in Singapore ever since vanity and hygiene took precedence over looking tough in the bedroom. It's all in the name of looking fresh and sexy, despite it being a literal pain in the a\*\* and the constant comparisons of your skin to a baby's butt.

It's a tricky subject to tackle, especially since the only concept of hair removal known to men for centuries would be the routine \$10 haircuts at the neighborhood barbershop and the only wax that should concern them was the one dripping from a candle. What is waxing, and why should I spend my money on a torturous ordeal?

### All Wax and No Wane

Women have perfected the art of hair removal for years, with the popular franchise Strip taking the reins of Singapore's waxing industry. Swimmers and divers have been shaving their bodies since the day a coach realised that body hairs slow you down in the water – have you ever seen a strand of hair on Michael Phelps? However, having chlorine enter a shaving cut is not even something that I'd wish on my worst swimming rival, so these athletes slowly turned to this process of semi-permanent hair removal.

Its road to the masses was a different one altogether. No longer did males want a dense jungle living in their pants. Shaving presented a multitude of problems, with a prime example being cut accidentally. It was a routine chore.

Waxing then entered the picture as discreetly as the men headed for their *boyzillian* appointments. It was a sacrilegious act for macho males to partake in this moment of self-obsession, but they still did it anyway.

"Going for a wax is so much more convenient than having to shave constantly," says Erman Lim, 20, who has been going for bi-monthly wax appointments for the past six months.

Being smooth all-around down there takes some getting used to, and it brought me back to the days of being a prepubescent boy that only cared for cartoons and junk food. But it made me feel more confident, both on the streets and in the comfort of my bathroom. I didn't have to worry about my hairs trapping anything that wasn't supposed to be trapped (I'm talking about my 3-ply toilet paper!) and I couldn't help but smirk when a friend was grumbling about his after-shave irritation.

Alas, waxing has its limits as well – it isn't permanent, as much as I hoped it would be. Like all the hair on your body, any part waxed will grow back eventually, even though it would be sparser and thinner this time. Still, my waxer, Adniah advised me to not shave at all after waxing, and instead start a good wax routine monthly. This wasn't a trick to have me take out my wallet, but shaving causes the hairs to be coarser, which will result in more pain if you decide to wax again.

Shaving before the appointment also makes for a longer session, contrary to popular belief. The wax, coming in a chocolate, strawberry or lavender scent at We Need A Hero (their waxing technique is the same as Strip's), won't be able to cling properly to the short hairs, and the only thing that would be clinging on to anything for dear life would be your hands to the bed as you try to muffle your shrieks.

During the 30 minutes that I spent with Adniah, every fibre of my being was as tense as a soccer player who just tore a ligament, anticipating each rip of the wax strips off my body. I had a second or two to cool down before more wax was applied, and the pain game repeated itself.

It helped that I had slightly longer hair, as the process was a full 15-minute shorter than what it was supposed to be, and I was thankful it was over and done with, partly because I also wanted to take a look at the fruits of my endurance, but mostly I just wanted the pain to stop.

Adniah left me alone in the room after applying a soothing ice gel to help with the after-care. I was smooth again. The deed was done, and I was so happy I almost cried tears of wax.

## REINVENTING TRADITIONS

## NAOMI THAM finds out if cultures can be preserved in the ever-changing world of innovation and modernity

Taking a quick tour around Singapore, our visuallystimulating city that is full of history and traditions, proves that our vibrant cityscape is a hotspot for Asian culture.

From the trishaw riders in Chinatown, the variety of textiles sold in Arab street, to the *roti prata* stall we often visit to satiate our 2am cravings; these are just some elements that form our unique multi-cultural society.

With constant upgrading in Singapore, these traditions are slowly vanishing and may perish altogether in the near future. In a poll done by HYPE with 60 youths, 90 per cent expressed a lack of interest in incorporating traditional attire in their closets or even donning them during festive periods. It is no wonder then that the elders are worried that no one from our generation will take over the torch of tradition.

Despite the gloomy future for traditions, some have chosen to rise against this downward trend and are determined to reinvent old traditions for the modern Singaporean. One of the more established Singaporean local labels, Ong Shunmugam, is proof of persistence in preserving the traditional elements of the *qipao* and *kebaya*.



kurung on their website.





catering to a whole new market of fast-paced fashionistas who prefer to buy their traditional apparel online.

However, the question is whether traditional designs are still relevant in modern Singapore.

Aspiring fashion designer Anzahari Taib, 20, seems to think so. He recently submitted his Satayman design to the annual Men's Folio Designer of the Year competition, and was named Most Promising Designer. The happy memories he had at East Coast Park eating satay with his family inspired him to pay tribute to the satayman standing behind hot burning charcoal for hours, undeterred by the heat.

"I truly feel these people who has helped define Singapore's culture are under-appreciated, and one of them for me is the unsung hero – the *satayman*," says Taib.

Fueling his eagerness to satisfy his imagination was to create the answer to the question: What will the *satayman* look like if you were to hire a designer to 'reinvent' his attire?

"It is comforting to see that my culture is still alive and thriving. I would love to do that for every culture."

- Anzahari Taib

His design consists of three main elements; blue to illustrate the phrase, "True Blue Singaporean", the silhouette of the ensemble influenced by Malay culture, as well as the Satayman's iconic components such as the mesh of the grill and the gingham towel around his neck.

To Mdm Christina Chia, 46, who has been diligently wearing the *qipao* every Chinese New Year, the traditional *qipao* exudes elegance and sophistication for every woman.

The mother of two daughters says: "The shape and style of [the *qipao*] have flattered women for generations in the past and it will continue to do so if the next generation learns to appreciate it."

Adds Anzahari: "Hari Raya is one of my favourite holidays because we get to see families walking around proudly in their *baju kurung*. It is comforting to see that my culture is still alive and thriving. I would love to do that for every culture."

60 HYPE Photos courtesy of Anzahari Taib FASHION 61

# HIDDEN

CLARA XU shows you how thrift shopping snags you the best deals to give your loved ones, and how it helps others at the same time

The arrival of February signifies yet another round of gift shopping for your loved ones, as Chinese New Year and Valentine's Day advance towards the first quarter of 2015. Instead of racking your brain and brainstorming hard which mall to conquer to find that perfect gift, how about an attempt to hunt for the hidden good?

Keeping these two occasions in mind, these are the items I had thoughtfully picked out after travelling to the opposite ends of Singapore - the Salvation Army and Something Old Something New (SOSN). Capping my budget within \$25, who would have expected the possibility of getting not just a few, but a total of seven beautiful finds, which made everything worth the hassle.

As I revel in the abundance of the available items, digits stated on each price tag came as a surprise to me as some are priced as low as a dollar.





Joey Toh, 19, an avid thrift shopper, expresses: "Other than it being much more affordable, I enjoy the fact that every item in the thrift store has a story to tell, and that is what really attracts me to it. As the saying goes, 'one man's trash is another man's treasure' and I truly believe in that."

The idea of thrift shopping was originally derived from the western influences, where 'hipsters' enter huge warehouses in search for the cheapest vintage finds that would suit all-things retro. We might not have fancy boutiques thrift stores here in Singapore, but we do find an increasing number of thrift shops opening up, all aimed to provide that diverse range of items a new lease of life.

While the Salvation Army offer shoppers with an enormous shopping space and facilities such as its air-conditioned arena, SOSN is slightly different.

Located in the East side of Singapore, SOSN's outlet in Bedok North is disguised like an ordinary shop house that stretches across two units. No doubt smaller in size, the wide range of products did not fail to amaze me the moment I stepped into the shop. From quirky display items to vintage vinyl records, they have it all. If you do not mind pre-owned clothings, you can even attempt to browse through the store's clothing section.

SOSN is a social enterprise of the Singapore Anglican Community Services owned by Simei Care Center. It serves as a business platform for customers who are interested in making donations, and/or buying new or used items. From there, they provide employment opportunities to individuals who have previous mental conditions, as volunteers pass on skills such as sorting, arranging,

displaying as well as selling the donated items to them. In addition, SOSN has three other outlets at Yishun, Pasir Ris and Simei.

Indeed, as the idea of thrift shopping appears to be increasingly favoured among youths, many are beginning to know of their existence within this tiny red dot.

Situated at Waterloo Street is New2U, a thrift store opened in 2000 and is owned by the Singapore Council of Women's Organisation (SCWO). Witnessing the trend sparked by youths, Denise Belhechet, Programme Executive of SCWO mentions some plans the organisation is undergoing which may appeal to youths:

"We have half-priced for students every Tuesday. We used to have a Blogspot and we have a Facebook page, although this in particular is not aimed at youths per say, I feel that it is a way of engaging younger people, seeing as they tend to be more tech-savvy."

Other than the thrift stores mentioned above, others include Shop@RedCross, where proceeds go to supporting the Singapore Red Cross' local humanitarian services, as well as MINDS Shop, a thrift shop for the intellectually disabled, in order for them to have a chance at interacting with customers.

Additionally, the advantage from thrift shopping is not having to worry about mindlessly overspending as the proceeds contributed will be generated for a good cause.

Indeed, what is better than an ordinary shopping trip is the chance to have a meaningful one!

### Thriftshops in Singapore

Feel free to donate your pre-loved items (in good condition) to these places!

### New2U

96 Waterloo St Singapore 187967 Mon-Fri: 10.30am-2.30pm

### MINDS Shop@Woodlands

30 Woodlands Ring Rd Singapore 737883 Tel: 6366 3966 Tue-Thu: 10am-3pm

### **SOSN Pasir Ris**

Blk 534 Pasir Ris Dr 1 #01-266 Singapore 510534 Tel: 6582 2335 Mon-Sat: 9am-4pm Closed on Sun and PH

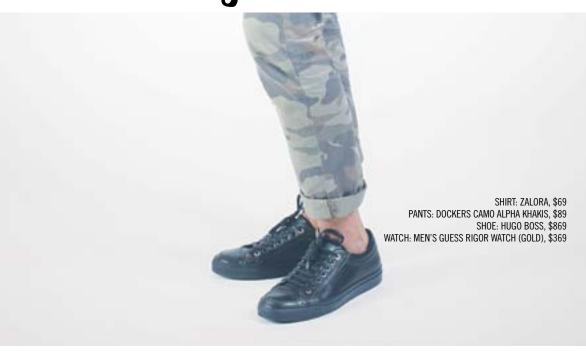
### Praiseheaven Family Megastore (Salvation Army)

500 Upper Bukit Timah Rd Tel: 6349 5312 Mon-Fri: 9am-5pm

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# Instagramtification



### Teenagers seem to be turning to luxury goods to get that double-tap as a sign of validation. JOSIAH NEO and DION TOH dig deep behind the screens to find out the dangers therein

Joyce Wong, 19, steps through the glass doors and into the fully carpeted store. Bags stamped with a single word, "FENDI", stretches down the aisles and racks as the stink of oiled leather coats the air. Colours leap out and danced, sequins gleam and sharp-toed boots beckon her for a gander. Soon, she'd carefully pick one item and make a purchase – the focus of her next Instagram update. Sounds familiar?

More youths in Singapore have been populating their Instagram feeds with meticulously edited photos of frivolous spending. From the café-hopping adventures at quaint locales to the shopping hauls from Gucci and Prada, where does the rising generation get the money to support their lavish lifestyle?

### **Behind the Screen**

We are well acquainted with Instagram's mechanics - our friends post a photo, and we double tap to "like" it. As we accumulate more followers who can view our photo updates in real time on their Instagram feed, our likes grow exponentially, and so does our social standing.

But what drives these likes? "If I'm more interested in something that the person posts, say cats and food, I'd be more inclined to like it," said Gene Png, getting age. That, however, isn't always the case, as she also tends to like all the uploads from her good friends, regardless of the subject matter – but then again, who doesn't do that?

The Instagram population as a whole is giving out a total of 1.6 billion "likes" daily, and that is just one part of the 20 billion photos that have been shared on the social platform.

And to keep up with the times, brands from all corners of the globe, be it boutique startups or multi-national organisations, are making their online presence known. From the fashion emporium Chanel (@ChanelOfficial) accounts to those of champagne houses, Moet & Chandon (@MoetOfficial) and Veuve Clicquot (@VeuveClicqout), it is hard to find a brand that isn't posting regularly on the social network.

Thanks to the exposure that these brands are achieving, more teenagers are latching on to what is known as Affluenza.

Described as "a painful, contagious, socially transmitted condition of overload, debt, anxiety, and waste resulting from the dogged pursuit of wanting more" in the book Affluenza: The All-Consuming Epidemic by David Wann, this 21st century quasi-infection has hit our shores in the forms of cashmere coats and leather loafers carefully framed in a square box.

Just look at the Instagram feeds of our local bloggers Tammy Tay (@ohsofickle) and Sherlyn Chan (@sherlynchanwp), where not a post gets uploaded without some form of brand recognition in it – the Hermes Birkins, Yves Saint Laurent clutches and yacht excursions are all prominently highlighted, and the "likes" could go upwards of 3,000.

### "Even if they have taken up part time jobs for some extra allowance, that money can be better channelled into other avenues..."

- Selenium Chai

While some social-celebrities are born into a family of wealth, others have to take the long and laborious route. One is Savina Chai, designer for her label Eight Slate, who is working three jobs after graduating from Temasek Polytechnic. Her Chanel and Givenchy bags are often a subtle feature in her uploads, and she tells us she only spends "\$200 to \$500 every month on a pair of shoes".

On the other hand, Harvey Teng, focuses on the name of the product rather than the aesthetics on his Instagram feed. Hashtags like #saintlaurent and #rickowens often appear in his captions to attract the attention of like-minded people who search for these tags. He explains his focus on luxury goods: "I'm just following the trends that I see. And it happens that the apparel worn by my favourite celebrities are branded, and I don't want to settle for anything less."

It should come as no surprise that the term "luxury" has been hashtagged over nine million times on Instagram, with other variations like #luxurysg and #luxurylifestyle also reining in a significant amount of uses. A quick peek would see the full extent of affluenza – unboxing videos of purchases, entire wardrobes blinged out with Christian Louboutin shoes, and weekend vacations at the Bulgari Hotel in Milan.

### What Now?

But when these luxurious splurges can cost an upwards of \$\$1,000 for one item, it raises a lot of red flags. Should teenagers be indulging in lavish spending?

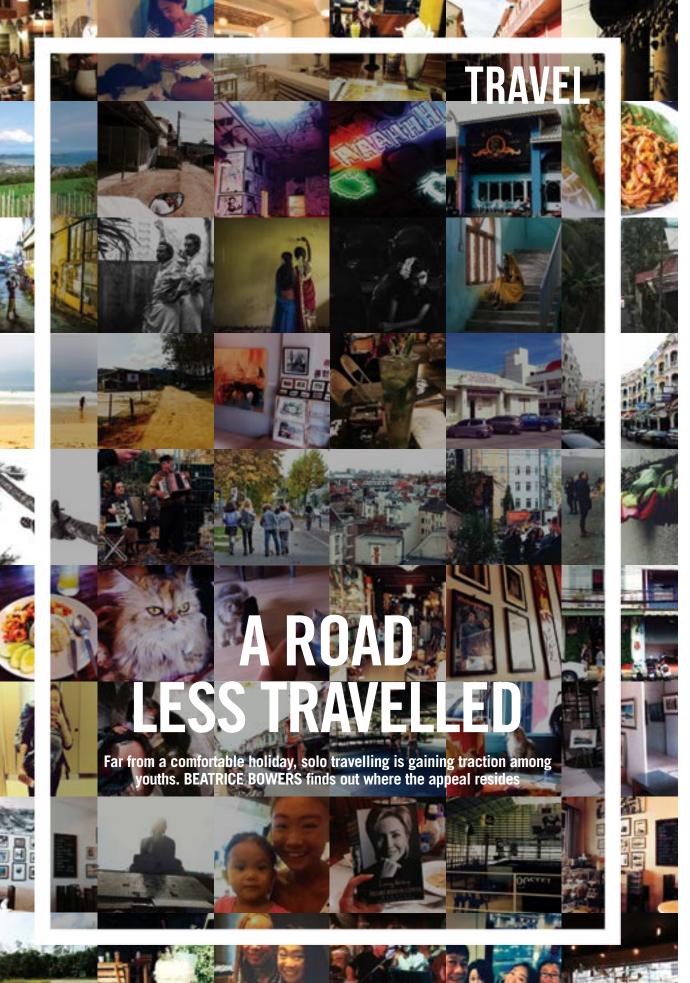
"It's not ideal for a young adult to be thinking about spending so much money on a bag or a pair of shoes, because when they grow up they're going to think it's just all about shopping, shopping, and shopping," said mother-of-three Selenium Chai (unrelated to Savina Chai). "Even if they have taken up part time jobs for some extra allowance, that money can be better channelled into other avenues, such as their university education or savings."

How then, do we get teenagers to stop squandering as though money grew on trees?

"They have to be taught the value of money from a young age," said Alice Tan, mother of two sons. "One way to do this would be to get them to spend within their means, and to teach them to work hard to achieve their wants."

It won't be easy, but it's a step in the right direction. Give or take a few likes, this might very well be the cure for affluenza.

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Wanderlust is a state of mind defined by the strong need to wander or explore the world. And doing it solo is becoming a more attractive option.

Whether credited to globalisation, rising affluence or mass media enticing an individual's desire to explore the unknowns of other countries, travelling is ultimately characterised as the escape from the comfort zone of one's home country to broaden one's cultural perceptions beyond souvenir hauls.

Mr Francesco Chua, 25, a banker, has embarked on two solo backpacking trips, cumulating five months away from Singapore after completing his National Service in late 2010. Having explored Asia and Europe, he justified his ventures with the need to attain a true sense of independence.

"Since I was a child, I've always travelled with my parents, and it's the same experience each time. We would fly business or first class, stay in the upper range of hotels, and drive around cities in cars. But I wanted to understand the thrill of rushing for a bus or being stranded at an off-road bus stop," he explains.

Both trips succeeded in satisfying his need to deviate from extravagant vacations, and allowed him to indulge in a heightened sense of discovery.

Extolling upon one of his memorable adventures on a bus ride in India, he recounts sharing a bus with chickens, goats and cows. "As long as it can fit on the bus, it can board," is the cardinal rule employed by local drivers there.

In Singapore, where durians are prohibited on public transport and the city revels in its cleanliness, disdain would be expected. Francesco found it intriguing, only more so when a litter of puppies were discovered in the luggage compartment after one innocent pup decided to climb onto the deck. "These are the things you'd never be able to see here," he adds.





### "I wanted to understand the thrill of rushing for a bus or being stranded at an off-road bus stop."

- Mr Francesco Chua

On average, a run-of-the-mill vacation costs from \$1,000 a person, though the cost varies. This is expensive for a student with no financial stability.

Superfluous luxuries like hotels and restaurants don't exist in the vernacular of an earnest traveller. Ms Tricia Tan, 21, believes that careful budgeting is integral when travelling alone.

Through her 10-day trip around Phuket, she set aside \$800, inclusive of budget airfare. She staved in hostels through her trip, spending on food, drinks and exploration instead of shopping. "The worst thing that could possibly happen is for you to run out of money and have to sleep on the streets!" she jokes.

Ms Jasmine Lim, 23, echoes the sentiment of seeking hostels that are geographically convenient and affordable. She advises that lodging in cities can be expensive.

When exploring a country or continent, routes pose endless possibilities that require meticulous planning and tenacity to navigate through. Tricia advises on exhaustive research and mapping out routes prior to the trip.

Public transport in less developed areas rarely follow strict schedules, and congested traffic can delay a trip, so Francesco recommends that travellers have buffer time and alternative routes when crossing through cities.

The solitary nomadic life may seem enticing, but untold dangers remain a source of concern. In an article for Yahoo Travels, crime analyst Marcus Felson notes that tourists are more victimised than locals, with more than 158 million reported cases worldwide per year. Theft is not an unknown risk.

Street criminals seldom have limits. "If they are willing to steal, they will steal anything," intones Francesco. His roommate in London was robbed at knifepoint during his nightly jog, and the robber made away with a meagre £10 in his pocket, a plastic Casio watch and his cheap running shoes.

Over the past three years, Interpid Travels reported a rising trend in women travelling alone, contributing to 63 per cent of every 100,000 solo bookings. The risks become increasingly pronounced for a lone woman.

"There's a huge possibility that you may be taken advantage of. If I order a gin and tonic at a bar, there's a chance that it comes with something else I didn't order," Tricia warns.

Security shouldn't be taken for granted. "You have to be responsible for yourself, so there's a huge disincentive to make bad choices," says Jasmine.

The trio agree that solo travelling requires a resilient state of mind, as unexpected (and often bad) things will inevitably happen.

Travelling is not all about constant vigilance, however. There's also the beauty of interaction with locals from varying walks of life. From learning how to make salt pretzels at 4am in Germany from a kind baker, to a profound conversation with a Sudanese woman about her dreams, or speeding down a highway in Thailand at 200 km/h without a helmet, subtle fallacies impact the traveller with a story to tell.

As Tricia succinctly puts it: "The fear will come and go, but the fun will come and it will stay. It will make you want to keep going, it's like an addiction."



Born in a vertical city propelled by the fervour for progress, Dr Kumaran Rasappan, 30, is the quintessential Singaporean. He lives in a HDB flat and enjoys the occasional *roti prata* at the *kopitiam*.

But beneath the calm demeanour of the bespectacled, soft-spoken man is a risk-taking wayfarer with a heart of gold.

The medical doctor at Tan Tock Seng Hospital, still dreams of the vast countryside and snow-capped mountains. The catalyst for travel started during a community service trip when he was a secondary school student at Raffles Institution (RI). He caught a glimpse of the Nepalese mountains during a hike in the Annapurna mountain range and wondered: "Can I ever climb that?"

Dr Rasappan enthuses: "The seeds of adventure were planted but as a young student, I was still immature and oblivious to the world."

Thirteen years later, he saw a picture of his Romanian friend atop the peak of Aconcagau – the highest mountain in South America – and that was when the seeds sprouted into the zest for adventure and altruism. Dr Rasappan travelled to Africa and climbed his first mountain, Kilimanjaro, in his third year in medical school.

"I graduated from the NUS School of Medicine in 2010 and started work at Tan Tock Seng Hospital. From then on, I set an arbitrary goal to reach the peak of Everest and, in the process, raise funds for needy patients in my hospital," he says.

Dr Rasappan thus dedicated a year of no-pay leave to his project, No Mountain Too High, but funding was a stumbling block as he faced scepticism from colleagues and friends when he asked for sponsors. Devastated and in dire need of support, he almost gave up his dream but eventually managed to clinch interested sponsors.

Dr Rasappan went on to scale seven mountains from Asia to South America (such as Ama Dablam in Nepal and Ojos del Salado in Chile) to prepare for his 60-day Everest climb.

"I realised that we

are only so small in

such a big world."

- Ms Jocelyn Yeo (left)



"During my climbs, I infused sight-seeing to fully immerse myself in the culture and traditions of the country," he says. Using his passion for medicine and mountaineering to help others in need, Dr Rasappan came into close contact with the Sherpa community of Nepal during his preparation to climb Everest. He realised that the villagers had poor medical facilities and only had basic medication such as Panadol.

"The Sherpas, who are the locals who helped us with the climb, had very little support and earnings in the region. I wanted to give back to them in some way."

He adds: "Along with the locals, I refurbished a make-shift shelter into a clinic for the residents of Phortse. Then, I gave the locals advice and educated them to take responsibility of their own healthcare."

Even so, Dr Rasappan's heart was lingering in Singapore. He raised more than \$40,000 for Tan Tock Seng Hospital after reaching the summit of Everest. As he reminisces about his trip to Cho Oyu, Tibet, where he provided medical consults and advice for the villagers, Dr Rasappan feels that it's the simple act of helping others that matters the most.

"With every person that I help, I feel that there's a greater impact on me than on them. As a doctor, it's always a calling to help people," he says.

It's no surprise that the doctor was conferred the Singapore Youth Award 2014 for his outstanding community service contributions. For now, he waits for his next patient, calmly planning for greater things to come.

Ms Joycelyn Yeo, 23, is a different type of traveller. The student from National University of Singapore (NUS) has travelled to a plethora of places including Cambodia, the Philippines, Hongkong and Australia.

Like Dr Rasappan, she strongly believes in helping others during her ventures. Her inclination to help others, as she described, was a passion that blossomed over the years.

"From young, I was brought up in an environment where travelling and helping others is the norm. When I was 11, I tagged along with my father to do community service in Malacca, Malaysia," she says.

She recalled that her most impactful trip was at 17, when she embarked on a community service trip with 10 others to the Philippines. She visited five slums over nine days, carried out English classes with the villagers, and distributed food, water and basic necessities to the impoverished.

"I realised that we are only so small in such a big world. There are so many people out there who really need help, and things you will never get to experience in Singapore," she says.

Joycelyn's most recent trip was in July last year when she travelled to the North Cemetery in the Philippines alone. It was for her Final Year Project to craft a thesis essay on communities in South-east Asia. The North Cemetery, which is Manila's largest cemetery, spans 54 acres with more than one million buried, and where a thousand others live. She expresses that the sea of tombs, however, is a thriving hidden city where children play and families flourish.

For a month, Joycelyn went down five times a week and visited the families to conduct interviews. Even then, she still helped others in her own capacity.

"There was a lady with 10 kids who were living in poor conditions. So, I gave her money from my own pocket for milk powder," she says.

In the future, the chirpy lady plans to use her expertise in South-east Asia anthropology (she is currently taking a South-east Asian Studies degree at the National University of Singapore) as a platform to help more communities in need.

Joycelyn sums it up neatly: "I know what I'm doing may not be substantial (with so many people out there who need help)

– I may not even impact one person – but I'll do the best I can. That, itself, is most fulfilling for me."

Photos courtesy of Kumaran Rasappan, and Jocelyn Yeo



### "The tower stands tall and we can look afar."

- Mr Xiao Yulong

## 24HOURSTIANJIN

Tianjin... or Beijing? Why not both when they are separated only by a 30-minute bullet train ride. YONAS NGATURI shows you how you plan a getaway in Tianjin with 24 hours

You leave the illustrious history in Beijing for the slow pace of Tianjin. You take your first step out of the train station and into the threshold of your one-day getaway. The adventure starts now.

Situated in west Tianjin is a 415-metre radio and TV tower, boasting an observation deck at 253 metres.

"The tower stands tall and we can look afar," says Mr Xiao Yulong, 35, a teacher, as he looks intently at the city he calls home. His 10-year-old son is brimming with excitement and curiosity. The world beneath his feet has shrunk. Coupled with the deck's arcade music blaring, gazing feels like a video game.

At every few streets, the architectural style changes, reflecting the different foreign concessions. The ubiquitous rivers and pockets of water show how important waterways are to Tianjin as a source of life and economy.

Meander around Ancient Culture Street and you'll find 687 metres of Qing Dynasty architecture and carts selling food or cultural stuff such as accessories, paintings and pottery.

"I came here to soak in the culture and get items here, like this wristlet," Mr Zhao Haoran, 26, self-employed, says, flaunting the wooden wristlet.

Tianhou Palace is a temple dedicated to the goddess Mazu, the protector of all seamen. In 1326, it was ordered for construction by the emperor in order to pray for the protection of Tianjin's seamen. Tianjin's waters wreaked havoc and accidents happened at sea. The river-facing temple is a sanctuary to pray.

Food is an integral part of Tianjin's culture. The traditional Tianjin pancake sells like hotcakes. For just 10 yuan (\$\$2), you get a green bean crepe fried with an egg, nestling fried wanton skin and a medley of onions, parsley and mint. Holding all the ingredients together are fermented flour sauce, dried chilli flakes and a signature beancurd sauce.

To experience the essence of Tianjin, take the motorised trishaw. Like Thailand's tuk-tuk, it is a precarious, yet agile, vehicle able to weave through traffic, getting you to your destination quickly.

Alfresco dining is a must. The first days of Spring invite a comfortable night temperature of 18 degrees Celsius. At night, neon lights bring the street to life. Restaurants go one up and turn on the fairy lights enhancing the spectacular ambience. Live bands also perform echoing across the street.

Having immersed yourself into Tianjin's culture and food, there's still one thing left to do: take a short walk to the northern part of Haihe, the converging points of nine other rivers in Tianjin. The locals regard Haihe highly and make frequent trips to the river. For some, Haihe is their bread and butter. You can spot people fishing in the river, offering their haul (including turtles) to hungry mouths in eateries and restaurants.

Dinner is now fully digested. Fatigue levels are high but you know you've had a good day. It is 700 metres to the train station. Knowing there's a lot more to see; you stop to think: "I might just stay the night here."



# A Little Bit of Italy

## EMILY YEO enters a town unlike any other in Tianjin, attempting to uncover a different dimension where time flows at its own pace and the outside world is ignored

Long before you reach the Italian Style Town of Tianjin, in the north-east of China, you can already see it.

The century-old architecture that was part of the Italian Concession gives you the feel of being in a Western land.

The quaint town is south of the Haihe River, north to the Tsuyama railway, and opposite the Tianjin French Concession. The Italian Style Town has an area of 771 acres, and is nestled within the confines of restored buildings, much like a place frozen in time, with a unique life and story of its own.

Tianjin, a mere 30-minute bullet train ride from Beijing, is a place rich with foreign culture; a result of having had nine concessions or foreign-controlled zones, between 1860 and 1945.

"This place has a very strong southern European feel to it," says Mr Lukas (not his full name), 20, an assistant teacher. "I like how there are many different European cultures mixed into one street - it makes the place very unique."

Early Victorian architectural styles jump out at you from every corner, and Italian squares with fountains are the perfect spots for photographs and relaxation. The hustle and bustle of the crowd livens up the otherwise quiet town, and the alfresco dining along the stonelined paths make for quite the beautiful picture. In fact, because of the scenic nature of the place, many people from all over China head there just to get their photo shoots done; in particular, for wedding pictures.

"We get at least five to six couples a day, applying for these permits," says Ms Wang, a customer service worker who handles photography permits. "Some even hail from far-off Shandong and Hebei," she addded. "Numerous cosplayers come for the architecture. It really is a popular photography place."

The Italian Style Town is a hotbed of tourist activity, especially around two to four in the afternoon, when the sun is at its peak and so is the energy. Hungry customers pack themselves in the many restaurants lined up in rows, eager to fill their stomachs while enjoying the peace of the place.

"I like how clean the entire place is," bubbled Ms Astrid, 19, a Danish substitute teacher. She adds: "It is far from the big noisy streets and I can relax here; it is a very special and unique place."

The area is not only home to Italian restaurants like Venezia Club, but also to French restaurants like La Seine. Alcohol lovers can go to Paulaner for drinks, and those craving for something a little more Asian can head for Chenggui Restaurant, Pattaya Thai Cuisine as well as a Goubuli restaurant.

There are also a whole variety of souvenir shops conveniently tucked away within the alleyways. They also sell mostly western souvenirs rather than the typical, Chinese things one would expect to find when in China.

"A portion of my goods are imported," says Mr Xiao Chen, 28, a storeowner. Regarding the peak season, he adds: "[The business] gets busy from May to October, when the holidays start."

A picturesque perfection be it night or day as the flow of people changes like the tides, the Italian Style Town is definitely a little piece of heaven frozen in time with its own story to tell.



70 HYPE Photos by Yonas Ngaturi Photo by Emily Yeo



# Not Juiced Same

### Cleansing elixir or nutritional pariah? HILLARY KANG aims to find out if the hype behind cold pressed juices is really all that it seems

Three meals a day is passé, all you need are three cold pressed juices – or so say devotees of the burgeoning juicing craze. Though many nutritionists have scorned strict juicing – where one subsists on a purely liquid diet of cold pressed juices – there remains much to be said for the liquid "elixir".

In Singapore, a plethora of cold pressed juice bars have popped up to satisfy this clean food movement. The adage "money can't buy health" is definitely in full force here, but be prepared to fork out almost \$20 for a bottle of cold pressed juice, and even more for an entire cleansing routine.

But how do cold pressed juices differ from typical juices or blends, and do they justify the extra cost?

One local juicing company that aims to make juices more accessible and relatable to health-conscious foodies is the aptly named A Juicery. With regional produce like lotus root, water chestnut and winter melon featuring widely in their gastronomic oeuvre, A Juicery aims to provide a local slant to the cold pressed juice trend whilst making it more affordable.

A Juicery's co-founder Ms Lee Su Yi, 27, explains: "Normal juices are made using centrifugal force. There's a lot of friction and heat involved, which destroys a lot of enzymes in fruits and vegetables."

"The cold pressed juicer uses hydraulic pressure to squeeze the juice out at high speed, but low heat. The difference is huge, because the enzymes are not destroyed in the process, and taste wise, you can also tell that it is nicer." she adds.

Another boon of cold pressed juices is the use of ingredients that can't normally be blended.

"If you were to blend vegetables [in a normal blender], nothing would come out. Within one bottle of cold pressed juice, there will be six to seven ingredients, including really healthy ingredients like turmeric — which you wouldn't normally eat on its own," she says.

Ms Lee adds: "I don't think it is just hype – there is research behind each juice."

Nutritionist and director of Health Can Be Fun, Ms Fiona Chia, 27, agrees that cold pressed juices "definitely do contain more nutrients" than juices made with ordinary blenders.

"It's quite remarkable how Singaporeans are evolving to be more conscious about how their juices are done," says Ms Chia. With regard to the hype surrounding juicing, she says: "Nutrition does not revolve around being obsessed over a certain diet or particular food – it is about the wellbeing. If fluicing makes you feel positive, why not?"

Like Ms Chia, Mr Clement Gan, 25, nutritionist at Eat Right, affirms that cold pressed juices do "offer many advantages", despite the flak that it has drawn.

"[Cold pressed juices] provide heaps of vitamins and minerals... that are more easily absorbed in the body," explains Mr Gan, who lists vitamins B and C, potassium and magnesium as some of the benefits that cold pressed juices can bring.

"Psychologically, dietary fibre acts like a hand clutch in a car — it signals your mind to say [to your body], 'Whoa, that's enough, you're full!"

- Mr Clement Gan, Nutritionist at Eat Right

He does, however, warn that "too much of a good thing is bad", when it comes to cold pressed juices.

"Juicing removes most of the dietary fibre made only available in whole fruits and vegetables," explains Mr Gan. "Psychologically, dietary fibre acts like a hand clutch in a car – it signals your mind to say [to your body], 'Whoa, that's enough, you are full!"

Despite acknowledging the benefits of cold pressed juices, both Mr Gan and Ms Chia agree on one thing: fresh fruits remain king.

Though he says that juice lovers should not "completely omit" their beloved juices from their diet, Mr Gan advises them to load up on lots of fresh fruits as well. He says: "Remember that the Health Promotion Board recommends two servings of fruits and vegetables respectively."

Whether you like your juices pressed or blended, Ms Chia advises: "Regardless of whether it's a cold pressed juice or a traditionally blended one, it is ideal to constantly have a good, healthy dose of vitamins and minerals."



We aren't strangers to this new dessert with many names making its rounds in the local food circuit: the churro.

Known as the Spanish doughnut or the Mexican cruller, the pale-brown pastry is usually coated with cinnamon sugar and drizzles of rich chocolate sauce. It comes in a short stub or one long piece

But in the midst of the hubbub that the churro is stirring up in cafes like 2am:dessertbar, Churrosity, or Common Man Coffee Roasters, we might have missed one important detail - it looks and tastes almost the same as its purported predecessor, the youtiao (fried Chinese breadstick).

Both delicacies are deep-fried in oil, best eaten at breakfast accompanying a cup of coffee or Milo, and full of flavourful history, though the story of the churro's beginnings are a little blurry.

A few theories run wild regarding its roots, with it being either Spanish shepherds inspired by the horns of their sheep or Portuguese sailors discovering it in China and the churro being their version of the "oil-fried devil"

No matter Spanish, Portuguese or the Chinese, what counts is that the churro has landed in town, but can it replace the youtiao in our hearts (and tummies)?

#### **An Oily Situation**

One general consensus is that the voutiao is much more oilier than the churro. "The youtiao is so much oilier, while churros remind you of Christmas," says Ms Chee Minru, 18. "I'd imagine dipping the churros in chocolate sauce in winter, while youtiao has more of a Chinese family breakfast feeling to it."

Ms Candice Ng, 24, also agrees, and thinks that the churros are a closer alternative to donuts, cronuts (a donut-croissant mix), and the cinnamon pretzel from Auntie Anne's than the youtiao.

Taking a look at what's needed to make the voutiao and churro, both call for the batter to be deep-fried in at least an inch-deep of canola or vegetable oil, but the churro's oily bite is masked by sugar.

#### A Sweet Sensation

While you might enjoy your youtiao's with a kopi-O, it does lack the sweetness the churros possess. "The voutiao is fluffier and saltier, while the churros are sweeter," says founder of Mr You Tiao, Mr Daniel Hui, 40.

A blend of sugar and vanilla extract (amongst other ingredients) makes up the batter for churros, and the

final product is rolled in a mix of cinammon sugar to give the churro its sweet flavour. As for the youtiao, its fluffiness can be credited to the yeast and baking soda present in its batter.

However, the jury is still out on whether this sweet treat would have its own sweet success here on our shores, but here's a toast of hot chocolate to hoping it's here to stav.

#### Where to get youtiao

#### Xin Xin You Tiao

Hainanese Village Food Centre Blk 105 Hougang Ave 1, #02-19 Tues-Sun: 6am to 11am, Closed on Mon

#### Yong Hua You Tiao

Bedok South Rd Market & Food Centre 16 Bedok South Rd, #01-18

#### Mr You Tiao

Square 2 10 Sinaran Dr. #02-08/09

## WINGIN' IT RIGHT

Crispy

Chicken

11am-11pm

Sunset

**Grill & Pub** 

259 Jalan Kavu

Tel: 6482 0244

for six wings at

ANA LARAE RIOS dishes out four places to hit up when you're craving for the perfect wing on a weekend



The humble chicken wing has evolved dramatically in recent





#### **North BBQ Chicken Wings** #01-02, Fengshan Food Centre.

Blk 85 Bedok North St 4 Mon-Sun: 4.30pm-1am

> Starts from \$1.20 per wing.

#### The Quick Break Before Class

The spiced fried chicken outlets are popping up island-wide, offering five mouth-watering concoctions on their menu: seafood and sandwiches, rice boxes, salads, sides, and specialty chicken. Fans of Koreanstyle fried chicken can now dive into a bed of kimchi coles law paired with succulent soy garlic drumlets. 4 Fingers may not hail from the Land of the Morning Calm, but we thank the fusion food heavens for the solution to our chicken cravings.

#### A Casual Evening with Friends

There's something truly magical about how food tastes better in the presence of good company. What better way to spice up your conversation than with old school delights? Classic barbecue chicken wings may reign at hawker centres, but those from Sin Bedok North BBQ Chicken Wings are close to heavenly with glistening, crispy skin envelops the tender insides. With wings going for \$1.20 each, you'll be able to indulge in a plate of homemade goodness, without breaking the bank.



#### **Last Day on Earth**

Tucked away alongside the shophouses along Jalan Kavu, this laid-back diner is home to the infamous Level 35 Buffalo Wings that pack a punch on the spice scale. The tongue-torching bites have garnered the humility of avid chilli fans, whose faces of survival are gloriously displayed on the walls. Thrill-seekers curious to know the true price of pain can help themselves to half a dozen Level 35 wings for \$48. For those with less of an iron stomach, Levels 1 to 34 are still available with glasses of water aplenty. The spice recipe remains an enigma, as chef and owner of Sunset Grill & Pub Jerry Griffis keeps his lips sealed.



#### A Trip to The Arts Museum

Take a bite out of San Francisco with 10 unorthodox chicken wing flavours at Wings World. Owner Jimmy Hsiao, former chef and founder of California Bistro and Bobby Rubino's back in the States, offers the taste of true fusion food at his casual restaurant in Katong. From Mango Habanero to Citrus Pepper, Wings World has quickly become the haven for flavour experiments gone deliciously right. Jimmy's concoctions are sure to please flavour palates from the east to the west even the health nuts – with all orders accompanied by a lovely bouquet of celery and carrot slices, and a creamy blue cheese dip.

# Eat Till You See Stars

#### CALLY CHEUNG serves up the best sides of celebrity to go with their restaurants' main courses

The anticipated opening of Gordon Ramsay's Bread Street Kitchen is the latest addition to Singapore's dining directory garnished with a key ingredient: celebrity.

Take Jamie Oliver, the British household moniker known for flashing his innovative kitchen footsteps on television. His Italian restaurant opened two years ago in VivoCity to a wave of hype that preceded the tasting of any rustic dish on the menu. However, fast-forward to today and Jamie's Italian barely holds two stars on the HungryGoWhere page.

Therein lies the mystery of the common experience: expectantly disappointing and cautiously excited. The first because it is no surprise to compromise quality when there is quantity, and the second because that creamy risotto might justify years of screen loyalty. While the general disparity between the celebrity fanfare and actual dishes often leave a bad taste in the mouth, sometimes it can just boil down to finding the singular star of the restaurant to continue playing the fame game.

#### Jamie's Italian - Jamie Oliver

Deemed the "Naked Chef" to showcase his preference for organic and simplistic dishes; Jamie's Italian gives a traditional take on pastas and burgers with a homespun twist of healthy offerings. The homely restaurant rotates its dishes in two sizes (appetiser and main servings), and strives to revamp popular choices with nutritious additions.

Although the waiting list runs into the new year, the menu has already been marked to bring out the best experience at the diner. Start with the Baked Mushrooms (\$12.50) or Tuna Polpette (\$12.50) as antipasti, and move to mains like their juicy Rump Steak (\$28.50), 30-day-old chargrilled Prime Ribs (\$59.50), or the lingering presence of Truffle Tagliatelle (\$23). The Raspberry & Chocolate Rippled Pavlova (\$11.50) triumphs over the other desserts, but if a lighter alternative is preferred, go for the Lemon Meringue Cheesecake (\$10.50).

When it comes to the star of the restaurant, it has to be the Pink Snapper Acqua Pazza (\$32). This is a beautiful pink snapper pan-fried to its crisp ocean freshness decorated with an array of traditional Italian elements: baby plum tomatoes, olives, capers, parsley, and garlic. As the Italians sav. "Questo cibo e molto buono!"

#### **CUT - Wolfgang Puck**

Located in Marina Bay Sands, expect nothing less from the remake of the classic American steakhouse by Wolfgang Puck. The man himself has been featured on some of the most intensive seasons on television; including Hell's Kitchen, Keeping Up with the Kardashians, and Iron Chef America's Battle of the Masters.

Local food bloggers, including Ladyironchef, have cited CUT to house one of the best steaks in the country, and the USDA Filet Mignon (\$72) does its reputation justice. Go for the Yukon Gold Potato Puree (\$18) or Bone Marrow Flan (\$26) as appetisers to share, but be sure to save space for the meat of the matter: steak, steak, and steak. When it comes to desserts, their Dark Valrhona Chocolate Soufflé (\$26) shines. The airy nest of the chocolate body allows the ice cream to sink into every spoonful of dark liquid that results into a velvet explosion engulfing the mouth. It is no exaggeration when we say that this is what the sweetest dreams are made of.

#### The Study - Jason Atherton

Straight from the kitchen of Ramsay to the debut of his one Michelin Star flagship restaurant, Jason Atherton has come a long way since BBC Two's Great British Menu. His sharp take on the British comfort flavour is embodied in The Study, which used to house Keong Saik Snacks.

Everything on the menu, from the Iberico Pork & Foie Gras Scotch Egg (\$17) to the Rangers Valley Sirloin (\$42) can be appropriately described as quaint. The appeal is for a laidback Sunday brunch off the beaten track of hectic Singapore, where the table can enjoy stacks of Coconut & Ricotta Pancakes (\$19) or Triple-cooked Duck Fat Chips (\$9) and watch the world pass by.

When it comes to defining the star of the show, the candidate would be warm doughnuts served with cinnamon sugar and homemade salted caramel cream (\$15). The unassuming pairing of the two components leads to multiple bites of a fluffy marriage, always encouraging the next move with its savoury nature. If you want to eat till you see stars, this is the ultimate sugar-packed race that will leave you in circles.

#### Locate them!

#### Jamie's Italian

1 HarbourFront Walk, VivoCity, #01-165/167 Tel: 6733 5500 Sunday to Thursday: Noon-10pm Friday/Saturday: Noon-11 pm

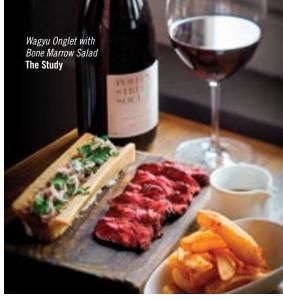
#### **CUT Singapore**

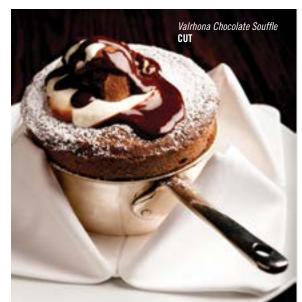
The Shoppes@Marina Bay Sands 2 Bayfront Avenue, Suite B1-71 Tel: 6688 8517 Sunday to Thursday: 6-10pm Friday/Saturday: 6-11pm

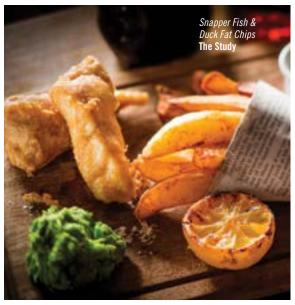
#### The Study

49 Keong Saik Rd 6221 8338 Mon: 6-11:15pm Tue-Thu: Noon to 2:30pm, 6-11:15pm Fri: Noon to 2:30pm, 6-11:45pm Sat: 11am-3:30pm, 6-11:45pm Sun: 11am-3:30pm, 6-10pm









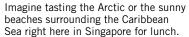






# Taste the World

### DORETTA TAN delights her tastebuds with unique cuisines from around the world here in Singapore



The myriad of international food outlets that have set up shop here on the Little Red Dot means you only need to travel around the island for a taste of foreign cuisine.

#### **Buyan: From Russia with Love**

Mention Russia and frigid winters and excellent vodkas may come to mind.

But Buyan aims to challenge these common Russian stereotypes through its delicious cuisine, and present Singaporeans with a taste of Russia.

Located among the bustling shop houses of Duxton Hill, the Russian restaurant and caviar bar is named after the infamous mythical island in Russian mythology.

Dishes like the beef *stroganov* (sautéed slices of beef cooked with sour cream sauce) and *pirozhki* (fried or baked pastry filled stuffed with various fillings like mushroom or meat) are fine examples of packing culture into food.

"If you visit Russian families, you have no chance of escaping being fat and Russian mamas would feed you till you almost burst and cannot move," explains marketing director of Buyan, Ms Natalia Makarova, 38. "This is part of the Russian character, and we wanted to share it through food."

Savouring a quality meal enhances not only your tastebuds for hearty Russian dishes, but also your interest to learn more about Russian culture. After all, not many would be able to decline the warmth of Russian hospitality once they have had a taste of it.

#### Lime House and Deli: Sailing the Caribbean

Lime Deli, established in the heart of Singapore's central business district, is an extension of the Lime House restaurant. It graces Singapore with delicacies from the archipelago of islands down in the Caribbean.

The owner of Lime House and Deli, Mr Chris Morris, 41, explains his inspiration for establishing the Lime brand: "I wanted to create what I call a 'cultural embassy' here in Singapore, I wanted to bring an essence of my [former] home to my new home, to bring a little bit of the Caribbean culture into Asia."

Based on the Caribbean term of "liming", which can be simply described as hanging out with friends, Lime Deli brings about this particular culture into Singapore with the introduction of Caribbean food.

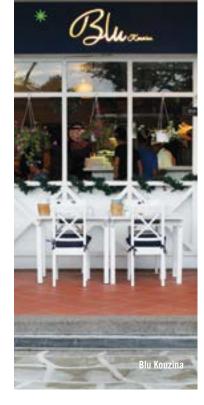
"We found that it is a concept that resonates among multiple different cultures," adds marketing manager of the Lime brand, Ms Aquila Morris, 30. "Pretty much everybody has some sense of liming where everyone gets together over food and drinks to enjoy spending time with friends and family."

A handful of the dishes from Lime Deli use the culinary technique from Jamaica known as "jerk", where meat is marinated with a spicy mixture of various herbs and spices.

Patrons get to feast on these exquisite and flavourful Caribbean dishes in a relaxed and casual atmosphere, indulging in the serenity of the island paradise life and swaying to the beat of some quality Caribbean music.







Some popular ethnic dishes include the Jerk Chicken (heavily marinated chicken grilled and served with barbecue sauce) and Catch of the Caribbean (fish fillet with tomato creole sauce) that would certainly whet your appetite.

Even if you do not have the time to kick back and relax for their meals, Lime Deli also offers grab-and-go sandwiches for busy individuals who are craving for that Caribbean flavour.

#### Blu Kouzina: A Greek Classic

Revel in the richness of the Greek culture at the Blu Kouzina, a humble restaurant tucked in the residential area of Bukit Timah which serves an assortment of authentic Greek dishes.

Some popular dishes include *xoriatiki* (a salad containing olives, tomatoes, cucumbers and feta cheese) and *spanakopita* (spinach pie), all enhanced by the rich taste of olive oil.

#### "I wanted to create what I call a 'cultural embassy' here in Singapore."

- Mr Chris Morris, Owner of Lime House and Deli

Aside from olive oil, key ingredients such as sea salt, oregano and feta cheese are also incorporated into most of their cooking, as Blu Kouzina strives to add in the Greek touch to everything and create a charming and relaxed atmosphere similar to that of the islands and villas in Greece.

The Greek cuisine culture is closely linked to the Mediterranean diet with its use of produce fresh from the gardens of Greece, making the food all the more healthy.

"Not many people are well educated about the authentic Greek food and products," the general manager of Blu Kouzina, Mr George D. Kokkinis, 40, explains. "That is why we try to educate and guide them on how to eat by combining the [correct] elements of Greek cuisines."

The food also conveys how Greek families treat their guests with hospitality, making sure that they feel at home.

Their passion for the Greek mentality has certainly been reflected in their quality dishes, and you would not even feel the least guilty after your indulgence, as you have just consumed your healthy fix of the Mediterranean diet.

#### Locate them!

#### Buyan

9 Duxton Hill Singapore 089593 Tel: 6223 7008

#### Blu Kouzina

893 Bukit Timah Road Singapore 589615 Tel: 6875 0872

#### **Lime House**

2 Jiak Chuan Road Singapore 089260 Tel: 6222 3130

#### Lime Deli

51 Telok Ayer Street #01-02 Singapore 048441 Tel: 6222 7751 15% OFF AT **BUYAN** 

Just flash this copy of HYPE in store! Promo ends July 2015.

Photos by Doretta Tan APPETITE 79



Jerk Chicken



## In the 21st century where "in with the new" is often said, CLARISSA CHEANG finds out why traditional snacks are gold even though they are old

Many youths may have often eaten *onde onde, kacang puteh* and *ang ku kueh* when they were children but today, it would seem they would not touch them with a 10-foot pole.

Rich in colour and flavour, traditional snacks are our history, the stamp of our ethnic diversity and the topic of nostalgic conversations at the kopitiam. However, youths would rather pop a macaron into their mouth than take a bite of a *kueh lapis*, thereby putting our food heritage at stake.

"Youths consider these snacks too old fashioned and uncool," says Mabel Koh, 18, a Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) student.

A recent poll done by HYPE revealed that most youths hardly eat traditional snacks. From the poll, they are more interested in trendy foods to see the significance of the traditional snacks.

For example, when Spanish frozen yoghurt store Llao Llao opened in Singapore last year, many youths queued for more than an hour for that cup of frozen yoghurt. Jasmine Ang, 19, shares that many of her friends only tried the new yoghurt so they could upload a picture of it on Instagram because "everyone else is doing so". In contrast, traditional snacks have been around for so long, they are not seen as Instagram-worthy or important anymore.

Says acclaimed writer of Makansutra, KF Seetoh: "This will kill or diminish what this great culture has left, and traditional food in the future will fade with no recognition and manpower supporting it. Our rich heritage will become devoid of soul. No one will be selling [traditional snacks] to our future kids or grandkids nor will they know about it."

To him, photo-worthy or not, traditional snacks are the comfort and taste of childhood, the bonding and rooting of our culture.

In the past, the snacks were usually sold on streets, ordered from bakeries and sometimes, homemade. Regardless of race or culture, Singaporeans loved these delicious goodies. More than just a midday snack, some signified a celebration or made into much coveted gifts. They were testimony to the skills of our grandmother's generation, as time and patience were needed to master the art of making them.

Mr Philip Chua, 65, remembers affectionate moments he shares with his brothers. His favourite memories come from *kacang puteh*, a treasured snack he enjoyed every time he went to the cinema.

"My father could only take us to watch movies when he received his pay, and that was rarely. I have many brothers, but we shares one *kacang puteh* among all of us. We fought for the nuts because they would disappear very fast as they were in an inverted cone. But those moments fighting over *kacang puteh* are happy memories of how I spent my childhood with my brothers. Those times were simple, yet contentedly spent," recalled Mr Chua.

Sadly, our traditional snacks have lost their touch with many of our youths today. As our celebrity foodie KF Seetoh affirmed, our food heritage solely depends on our younger generation.

"Learn to cook and appreciate traditional snacks. Learn about it to teach and train others. One does not know where

"This will kill or diminish what this great culture has left, and traditional food in the future will fade with no recognition and manpower supporting it. Our rich heritage will become devoid of soul."

- KF Seetoh, Founder of Makansutra

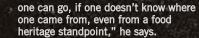


#### Onde onde

A Malay traditional snack, onde onde is a soft green glutinous ball with a gula melaka (palm sugar) filling. It is coated with grated coconut and pandan leaves are used for stronger flavour. The gula melaka is usually pounded so it oozes out when bitten into.



Known as the popcorn of old Singapore, kacang puteh is an Indian snack served in an inverted paper cone. The cone is filled with a variety of nuts such as peanuts, chick peas, broad beans and cashew nuts.



With the popularity of our heritage food in the West, he adds that youths should "take full advantage" of our traditional food "for future opportunities in business and history".

Mabel is one of them. Fervently wanting to relive our food heritage, Mabel and two of her friends pitched the idea of re-igniting traditional snacks at the annual NP Ideawerkz Innovation Challenge (IIC) last year.

The team pitched three innovations to encourage the consumption of traditional snacks, including a steamer to keep *kueh tutu* warm so that it will stay fresh for longer. Their idea clinched them a merit award.

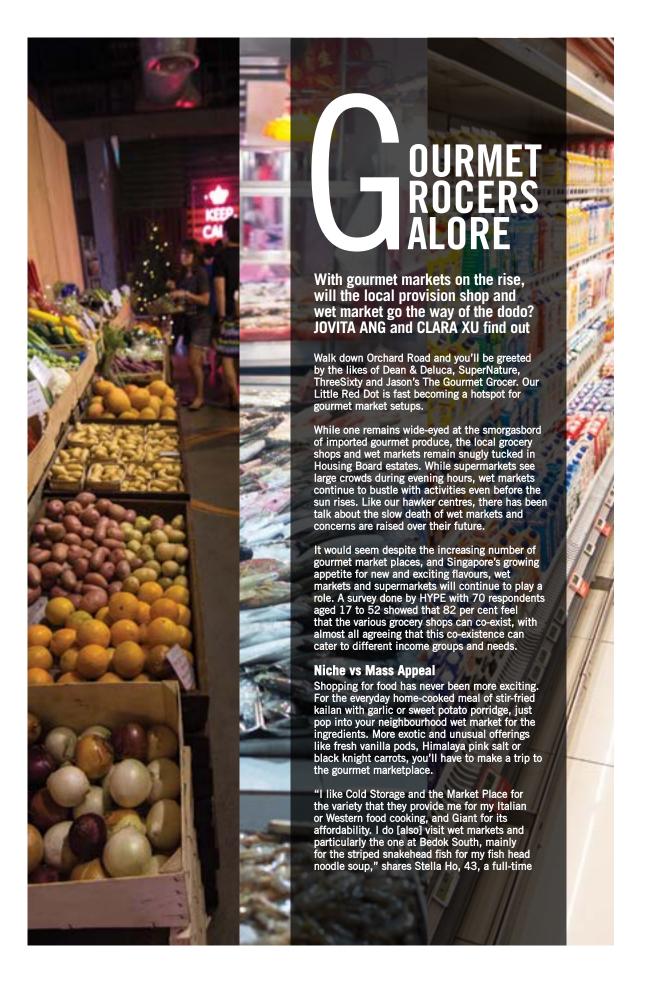
"Without traditional snacks, Singapore wouldn't be unique but boring instead! Without Singaporean food, Singapore wouldn't be Singapore anymore," says Kwa Li Ying, 18, Mabel's teammate.



#### Ang ku kueh

Also known as the Red Tortoise Cake, this is a glutinous rice flour cake with sweet fillings such as ground peanuts or mung beans. Traditionally, this snack was given to friends and family to signify weddings, birthdays and the birth of a newborn.

80 HYPE



working professional and mother of three. Wet markets promise fresh quality produce at affordable prices, and also ingredients that are unique to our local roots. One kg of chicken fillet costs only \$8.50, compared to \$10.40 at the Sheng Siong supermarket. Similarly, one kg of white pomfret can be cheaper by as much as \$6. While supermarkets store similar products, they also provide for lifestyle shopping: kitchenware, toiletries, and body products. Gourmet markets host a range of international flavours for the more adventurous palates.

"I can find traditional old school ingredients like fermented bean paste, freshly grounded coffee and ikan bilis in wet or supermarkets, things that I can never get in a gourmet setting. And this works vice versa," says Elisabeth Li, 20, a food enthusiast.

Over half of the survey respondents visit both wet markets and supermarkets, while 38 per cent have already visited a gourmet market.

"People are looking to spend more time creatively in the kitchen of late. They get recipes online so easily and now entertaining is a joy," says KF Seetoh, founder of Makansutra and acclaimed "Food Guide Maven", as the New York Times calls him.

#### **Blossoming Gourmet Market Scene**

In the past 10 years, Singapore has seen a growing gourmet market: Culina, retailer of fresh and imported fine, quality food and beverage (1994), SuperNature, Singapore's leading retailer of organic and natural products (2001), Jones The Grocer, a gourmet food place for everyday living (2007), Huber's Butchery (2007), and PasarBella, Singapore's first multi-sensory grocery shopping place (2013).

"They all provide different experience touch points for a range of local and international customers now in our midst, accustomed to different shopping styles," says Seetoh.

Celebrity chefs have been quick to recognise Singapore as Southeast Asia's culinary capital. Jamie Oliver of Jamie's Italian, Wolfgang Puck of CUT, Joel Robuchon of L'Atelier and Tetsuya Wakuda of Waku Ghin not only make us a vibrant food city but have also ignited the desire for ingredients from around the world. "People are more well-travelled these days. Food and business offerings also make people want to experience. Take truffle fries for example, it's available in so many places, burger shops and even the kopitiam. Even for people who don't cook, [they'll be keen] on making such simple food that taste good," says Clovis Lim, 25, co-founder of PasarBella.

Reality food shows like Masterchef also helped to "spark interest". Elisabeth says: "Such shows pushes me to experiment more, using different ingredients that are available in the different types of markets. [I like the idea] of being able to create something that you think might never work, but it does."

#### **Wet Markets Go Gourmet**

With our status as a "leading food capital" and the ceaseless string of celebrated chefs cooking on our shores, the local gourmet scene seems to show no signs of slowing down. The folks at wet markets have also been quick to step up their game, taking to importing produce from as far as Ecuador. So don't be surprised when you see those luscious habanero or romanesco cauliflower in the wet markets.

"I'd hope to see more gourmet Asian imports... Asian ingredients can be gourmet too."

> - Mr Leslie Tay, food blogger

"It's because of the new normal migrant culture, we have folks from all over the world who want range and familiarity. More new ideas on gourmet shopping may surface in future, like a food emporium truck container," says Seetoh.

Food blogger Leslie Tay also sees this gourmet trend as an opportunity to "expand the Asian produce" scene. He says: "Truffle oil is good, but I'd hope to see more gourmet Asian imports. Things like artisanal soy sauce, sesame oil from Japan, China and Vietnam. Asian ingredients can be gourmet too."

#### Where to go for gourmet finds

Four Seasons Gourmet Market

Marina Bay Link Mall 8A Marina Boulevard #B2-49

PasarBella 200 Turf Club Road Dean & Deluca

#04-23/24 Orchard Central 181 Orchard Road

SuperNature

Forum the Shopping Mall 21 Orchard Boulevard

Foodie Market Place 225 Outram Road

Huber's Butchery & Bistro at Dempsey 18A Dempsey Road Singapore 249677



## CAVEMAND LIFESTYLE

#### Sharpen your spears – it's a throwback to millions of years ago, as VALERIE WONG SICK WAH discovers

Vegan, Mediterranean, Ornish, Atkins, DASH – diets are popping up like mushrooms after the rain. But what if I told you that people are turning back the clock to eat and behave like our Stone Age ancestors?

No one is hunting game or foraging for edible shrubs and grubs. This relatively new lifestyle is known as the paleolithic lifestyle, or more popularly referred to as the paleo or primal lifestyle.

It sounds utterly insane but the paleo lifestyle has been around for about 40 years. Still in its infancy in Singapore. the practice is seeing a steady growing community. The most fascinating and intriguing part of the paleo lifestyle is probably its diet.

The paleo diet encourages the consumption of meats, eggs, seafood, fats from plant sources, nuts, seeds, fruits and vegetables.

Grains being in the list of banned foods just screams panic. Do no grains mean no carbs? And wouldn't it just be another Atkins diet? Mr Vincent Chan. 42, who has led the paleo lifestyle for over two years jokingly says: "If I were to get a dollar each time I was asked that question, I would be really rich!"

He explains: "We eat nutrient rich [carbohydrates] like sweet potatoes. yams, turnips, carrots. Even vegetables have carbohydrates. The reason we avoid rice, bread and noodles is because those foods have zero nutrients and do not truly satiate us, hence making us want to eat more of them. This causes people to over eat."

Mr Chan took on the paleo diet in the hope of remedying his chronic knee pain. Legumes are nutritious but are known to hinder the recovery of injuries.

Being on the diet for more than two years, his knee pain is no longer an issue, so what's keeping him on?

"We don't count our calories when doing paleo. That's the beauty of it! You won't starve. You tuck in as much meat, good carbohydrates, vegetables and fruits as you like," says Mr Chan beaming.

Paleo meals are not readily found in Singapore. Hence, most people who lead the paleo lifestyle often prepare all their meals. This passion for cooking one's own meals and sharing recipes is probably one of the factors that pull fellow paleo dieters together.

Tan Yi Mei, 26, a business development manager who leads the paleo lifestyle brings out two containers of food everyday – one for breakfast and the other for lunch.

"I induct a whole mix of paleo carbs, protein and fats in my daily meals!" she says. She tucks into goodies like sweet potato pancakes after workouts and snacks on almonds, sardines and fruits in the day. But she admits that she does have her cheat days, "I love dark chocolates and peanut butter. They're reserved for the weekends."

Preparing one's own paleo meal is just too daunting a task and seeing the business potential is Mr Michael Tan, 44, founder of paleo food café Caveman Food.

Mr Tan has had extensive experience in the local food business but decided to delve into the paleo diet after a friend's recommendation.

Having tried out the paleo diet before. he admits. "It's hard to maintain [the paleo diet] 100 per cent because it is hard to find really clean and healthy food outside."

The beauty of the paleo lifestyle probably lies in the fact that you can begin bit by bit and make it an integral part of your life. Try swapping sugar with honey for your next cuppa, or table salt with sea salt for your salad.



"We don't count our calories when doing paleo... You tuck in as much meat. good carbohydrates. vegetables and fruits as vou like."

- Mr Vincent Chan





If you get bored easily with doing the same routine, then CrossFit might just be the workout to make you want to get off your butt.

CrossFit is a strength and conditioning programme that requires functional movements of the body such as squatting, pushing, and pulling. These movements are varied and exercises are constantly being modified to ensure that different metabolic pathways of the body are used.

"CrossFit is so multi-faceted, [it involves] weightlifting, gymnastics, and cardiovascular ability. I get bored very easily, but with so many types of exercises, there is no room for boredom," says Mr John Cheah, Head Coach of CrossFit Statera.

Altering and alternating the exercises continuously produce different kinds of body responses, which prevent the body from getting too used to the same stimulus and regime. When performed at high intensities, CrossFit produces noticeable results for both men and women of all ages.

> Made popular in the US in the early 2000s, CrossFit is now gaining ground in Singapore.

> > John says: "We can have a guy who is 22 years old, in peak condition, and a national athlete, training next to a 55-year-old man who has no cartilage in his knees and has a shoulder injury. That has happened before: it's all a matter of how we scale the exercises for everybody."

Workouts can be modified according to fitness levels. More than just results, CrossFit provides a sense of community that draws people back all the time.

John adds: "People usually do CrossFit in a class, so when you have people around you cheering you on, it makes people want to come back."

#### **Indoor Cycling (With a Twist)**

Indoor cycling benefits cardiovascular health, builds up endurance and power, and is mentally challenging. Despite its level of intensity, indoor cycling is low impact, and is in fact recommended for people who are going through physical rehabilitation.

But what better way to make cycling more interesting than to pair it with fast-paced heart pounding music? Imagine cycling along to the beat of Martin Garrix's Animals with laser lights flashing in the background – all on a normal stationary bike. Without compromising on results, the workout sure packs a punch!

Owner and instructor at 7Cycle, Ms Debbie Soon says: "Music is scientifically proven to help people work out together better, and cycling is the only activity where you can do it to that same kind of cadence."

"The activity also allows people to adjust the resistance based on their own individual levels. I think it's the only activity where you know you can have an iron man riding next to a complete amateur, and you're still going to get a kickass workout, in the same room, in the same class," she adds.

#### **CrossFit Statera**

37 Lorong 23 Geylang Singapore 388371 Opening Hours: 6.30am-9pm Prices: \$165/month entitles you to unlimited CrossFit classes and unlimited open gym sessions.

#### **CrossFit Fire City**

111C King George Avenue Singapore 208559 Opening Hours: Mon to Fri, 6.30am-8.30pm | Sat, 11.30am-12.30pm. Prices: \$290/month entitles you to unlimited classes for 12 months.

#### 7Cycle

27 Boon Tat Street Singapore 069623 Opening Hours: Mon-Sat, 9am-9.30pm Prices: \$49 for a one-week unlimited trial for newcomers. Individual classes start from \$29 per class.

REINVENTED **FAITH KHONG** waxes lyrical about workout regimes that take the routine out of repetition

**FITNESS** 



# AIMING HTGH

Singapore's game industry has produced numerous indie and mobile hits to date – but is it ready to create a big budget game of its own? HILLARY KANG talks to industry experts

You might not realise it, but the latest video game you're playing is probably developed in Singapore. From the popular mobile simulation game, Pixel People, to Singapore's first release on the Playstation 4, One Upon Light, Singapore is the birthplace of numerous video games, most of which are mobile games or smaller, independent titles.

In addition, the Singaporean chapter of video game developer and publisher giant Ubisoft has also famously contributed numerous levels, missions and assets to the renowned Assassin's Creed series.

It seems like that last thing that Singapore's game industry has to check off its list of to-dos is to actually produce an AAA game of its own. Only the highest echelon of video games are bestowed this classification, and they typically entail huge development and marketing budgets – think of titles like Dragon Age, Assassin's Creed and Battlefield.

Which then begs the question: can the local game industry place a 'Made in Singapore' stamp on the next big AAA title?

The short answer? Yes – but it is going to take some careful nurturing. This optimistic sentiment echoes true among numerous game developers in Singapore, from independent indie start-ups to big international companies.

Mr Paul Fu, 34, an Associate Lead Designer at Ubisoft, believes that Singapore is "well on its way" to developing more big titles on its own. He says: "Singapore's video game industry is growing pretty fast. When I first started out more than 10 years ago, there was almost no industry to speak of. The industry has come a long way."

Paul, who oversaw the production of Assassin's Creed Rogue and numerous other editions of the franchise previously, adds: "There are a lot of talents here, and I strongly believe in them. In fact, a huge percentage of those who contributed to Assassin's Creed's naval combat are local."

"I think we have a lot to learn from the bigger [video game publishers], but I think we are really, really close to producing an AAA game," says Paul.

Some learning points that local developers would need to take note of would be to expand their repertoire beyond just developing, as Miss Gwen Guo, 26, co-founder of IMBA Interactive, would say.

"Being good in your craft is a given," says Gwen, whose startup specialises in sound design for video games. "But the days of making games in one's garage and expecting it to sell are over – nowadays, we have to go beyond that."

Gwen states that knowing "a little bit of everything from marketing to finance" is essential for local game developers to bring their games to the AAA sphere. "The more you know about these things, the less likely they are going to be intimidating to you," she says. "That investor who you were previously scared to talk to is now very approachable and

real, because you know the language they speak."

And speaking to an investor to help secure funding for a home-grown AAA game is essential, since such games often require a sizeable amount of capital. This

"I think we have a lot to learn from the bigger [video game publishers], but I think we are really, really close to producing an AAA game."

> - Paul Fu, Associate Lead Designer at Ubisoft

is a challenge that Mr Ken Poh, 36, co-founder of PD Design Studio, believes that local game developers will face in their quest to create Singapore's first home-grown AAA game.

"Unless you are an established company, such as Ubisoft, it is very difficult to justify the kind of investment that is required to independently produce an AAA game in Singapore," he says. "But in terms of skill and talent, (Singapore) can pull it off."

In recent months, one locally produced game has been making headlines in the gaming sphere, and is a sign that Singapore's game industry is rife with potential. That game is One Upon Light, which has picked up numerous mentions in international media, and several awards, including Best Game 2013 at the Independent Games Festival China.

"I'd say with sufficient funding and talent, it's not particularly hard for any small to medium studio to top what was achieved with One Upon Light, even on a larger scale," says Mr Justin Kang, 31, lead designer for One Upon Light.

"We'd first need a local company or team with AAA experience, say from Ubisoft... Maybe if they keep doing good work on their segments of Assassin's Creed, they might be entrusted with a title on the franchise, just like they were with Ghost Recon," adds Justin, referring Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon Phantoms, an online tactical shooter that was developed by Ubisoft Singapore.

The successes of the local game industry have potentially paved the way for a Singapore made full scale AAA game.



## PAY TO PLAY

### DORETTA TAN decodes the phenomenal rise of micro-transactions in the gaming industry

Imagine being engrossed in a game of Candy Crush Saga, rising through the levels with ease until a notification disrupts your winning streak. "Do you want to purchase a power-up to help you pass this level?" the game prompts.

Micro-transactions are in-game purchases that are prevalent in free-to-play games on mobile, PC and even console. On the other hand, downloadable content come with bigger and a fixed amount of content already packaged for gamers to purchase or download for free.

Micro-transactions provide content that are offered in smaller amounts, and will always require real money. Thus the number of exclusive content purchased will always be dependent on the amount of money gamers spend to obtain those special privileges.

Gamers are no strangers to ambition in cyberspace, and micro-transactions are designed to push them to greater heights with a range of virtual content. Content such as resources in game are common in casual games, like in FarmVille, where the game entices players to purchase Farm Cash or Farm Bucks to advance swiftly through the game.

If you want to enjoy some eye candy in games, costume customisation are also available through micro-transactions for you to parade and slay opponents on the virtual battlefield with style.

Even if gamers are burnt out by the relentless grinding to level up or obtain premium weapons, micro-transactions offer experience points boosters and weapons and provide gamers with an enhanced gaming experience.

This ubiquitous trend in gaming has slowly but surely found its way to the realm of paid games, leading to the exponential rise of micro-transactions.

Major gaming companies such as Electronic Arts (EA) have started to embrace the idea of implementing microtransactions in paid games, like in Dead Space 3, where real money transactions are needed to purchase additional crafting materials before gamers get a chance to flaunt their new weapons in the game.

EA's Plant VS Zombies: Garden Warfare has also steered towards this rising trend, providing gamers with special items and character content for faster advancements at a small price.

Such developments in the paid games of today have left a veil of contempt among the gaming community.

Game planner and production assistant, Ms Carol Teo, 25, attributes the negative attitudes towards micro-transactions to the fact that gamers triumph over their opponents by spending of money rather than fair gameplay

Other gamers bristle at the thought of having to spend extra money for special features and privileges after purchasing their games at full price.

The founder of local gaming company, PD Design Studio Pt Ltd, Mr Poh Keng Jin, 36, adds: "They feel that since they've paid [the full price] for the game, they should be entitled to the full experience."

Despite the huge outcry on the Internet among gamers against the idea of micro-transactions, gaming companies are still expanding on the usage of micro-transactions to market their games.

"Games nowadays are getting more expensive to develop and the budget needed is getting higher and higher with better graphics and consoles like [the launch] of PlayStation 4 and Xbox One," says Mr Raymond Teo, 31, founder of indie games development studio, Secret Base Pte Ltd.

Keng Jin agrees, explaining that the "gaming industry is getting a lot tougher" and that micro-transactions help to persuade players to be more invested in a game to maximise their gameplay after spending so much on the content.

"It could also be a way to combat piracy and making sure that people pay for their games," he adds.

"It could also be a way to combat piracy and making sure that people pay for their games."

- Mr Raymond Teo, Founder of Secret Base Pte Ltd

Raymond also pointed out that with more money being thrown into developing a game, gaming companies also expect more revenue in return, turning to more lucrative means to get more content in for existing games and products to earn higher profits, at the same time trying to get players to be more attached to their games with more additional content.

Despite the unhappiness over micro-transactions, gamers still comply with its mechanisms to enjoy their games. However, it's not clear it would be sustainable in the near future.

# ROLLING IN THE

### Gear up with CALLY CHEUNG as she explores the transformation of today's gadgets in the age of protection

There is more to the seven-metre tall robot at the Singapore Science Centre (SSC) than meets the eye. Part of the ongoing Transformers 30th Anniversary Exhibition, Optimus Prime's catchphrase, "More than meets the eye", has come to promise a new gizmo generation.

"I think the fascination with Transformers comes from a fascination of allowing inanimate objects to change life itself," says Mr Lui Kin Fung, 22, an avid collector of the series.

In a bold statement, today's gadgets are expected to solve tomorrow's problems; and the more personal the problems, the merrier. Futuristic sights of Hondas turning into Sirivoiced automatons aside, market devices are inching towards the hardware upheaval to appeal to a generation of gadgets that have both inordinate functions and sleek designs.

"A successful gadget is one that has a very clearly segmented market of users with a major pain point, and are willing to eradicate that pain point with cash," shares Mr Mohan Belani, 31, CEO and co-founder of the regional technopreneurship newsblog, e27. He explains that this sentiment further translates the underlying notion for gadgets to modify themselves into alter egos of the users, actively taking the problem head on in the current age of reformulation.

When it boils down to sifting out the current inventions in the omnipresence of the Transformer's technology, three picks come to mind: The Defender, Uzi Tactical Defender Pen and the homegrown favourite, Rotimatic. From a pepper spray that stares down your attacker to a robot that cares about you getting the best homemade roti, they are the next batch of bots ready to roll out.



#### THE DEFENDER

Don't let its initial pepper spray appearance deceive you - or your attacker. The Defender is a portable protection plan packed in a rod-like structure, and it lives up to its name. Upon activation, The Defender does the following: It blasts out a loud siren to alert your neighbours, captures a photo of your attacker, fires both the photograph and your exact location to an international emergency centre (who will redirect the signal to the nearest aid outlet to dispatch), and all the while also discharging painful fumes of pepper out.

The Defender retails for \$235 at getthedefender.com.



#### THE UZI

The adage, "the pen is mightier than the sword", turns literal with the Uzi Tactical Defender Pen. Crafted with aircraft aluminium. the pen's heavy-duty ability surpasses the expected role of any writing utensil. Its head doubles as a glass breaker, but just in case your wrists aren't free, the top of the pen also unscrews to a hidden handcuff key. The material further allows the pen to be used underwater, upside down and in all examination papers because it accepts the standard Parker and Fisher Space Pen refills.

The Uzi Tactical Defender Pen retails for \$21 at uzi.com.



#### THE ROTIMATIC

Sometimes the only thing worth protecting is our appetite, and Rotimatic is definitely up to the task. At first glance, the product may be mistaken for a designer appliance with the warped body of a mixer. Developed for the local tastebuds by Zimplistic, this robot loads up to 20 personalised rotis at one go to ensure that you always have a partner-in-crime to go with that creamy curry. Victory has never been this satisfying, or delicious.

The Rotimatic retails for \$790 at rotimatic.com.



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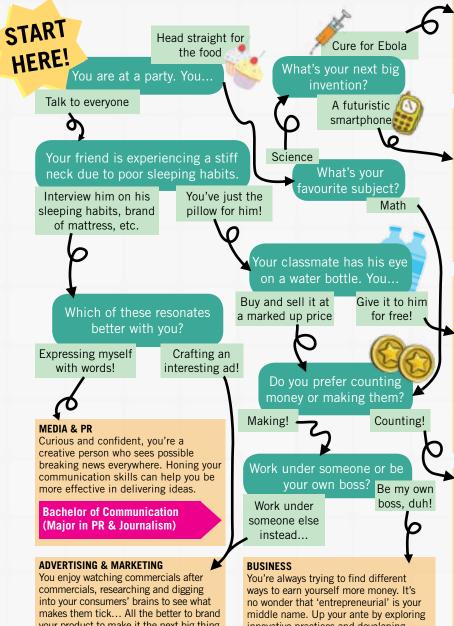
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#### CUT IT OUT WITH CAFÉ CULTURE

by beatrice bowers



Artfully positioned brunch foods coupled with latte artendowed cups of coffee are a ubiquitous sight that you'd be hard pressed to avoid on social media. I can hardly remember a Sunday morning when the sheen of hollandaise sauce atop poached eggs and rosettes of smoked salmon have not invaded my Instagram feed, quietly projecting its \$20 (or more) price tag.

While these photos are aesthetically amplified with high fade filters and a #minimalistic touch, we never consciously acknowledge why local dishes don't receive the same treatment.

Consider the humble kopitiam breakfast staples – kaya toast, soft-boiled eggs and an unassuming mug of kopi; bowls of steaming prawn noodles and plates of decadent nasi lemak. Delicious, and at a fraction of the price, these dishes never seem to incite the mandatory reaction of whipping out your camera phones.

Filters don't seem to enhance *char kway teow* against a yellow plastic table as much as it does a rainbow cake.

The appeal of cafés can be easily understood – one notch down from stuffy restaurants, cafés usually come with a cosy, casual atmosphere. Throw in kitschy décor, artisanal beverages, visually appealing and indulgent food and it answers why masses consistently flock to scout out the next best offering, even if it pulls them to the most obscure end of Bukit Timah.

Since 2010, the Westernised notion of café culture began hitting our shores, which only spurred a rampant growth that persists. In 2014, an estimated 180 cafes opened their doors, with local food blogs such as Daniel Food Diary and Café Hopping Singapore curating regular lists of new cafés and reviews of each establishment's niche allure.

It's no secret that Singaporeans love food. We even integrate our collective passion for eating into our national identity. Purveyors of taste and queuing, Singaporeans unabashedly subscribe to every new food trend that lands in our small city. Doughnuts, bubble tea and Korean frozen yoghurt have the ability to generate snaking queues longer than any anaconda Nicki Minaj raps about.

So you may argue that Singaporeans do posit the same amount of dedication to queue for local food – take Sungei Road's famous *laksa* for instance, but you'd usually spot an older demographic waiting in line. Furthermore, the craze fades doubly fast, while Llao Llao still has teenagers patiently queuing for fruity fro-yo.

Do we, as the next generation, take local food for granted? Mention a weekend venture into kopitiam hopping and you'd definitely be met with more laughs than agreement. The packet of chicken rice you have for lunch doesn't come close to being as memorable, because price and proximity have made it an easily attainable commodity.



It's surprising how truffle fries aren't ascribed the same level of detachment when novelty aside, it possesses the same level of monotony in taste across many cafés.

The fading hawker heritage becomes a pressing national problem, partially due to a lack of younger adults willing to pursue the unglamorous profession of running a food stall. On the flipside, young entrepreneurs are responsible for starting up many such establishments, creating a "café bubble".

In a recent My Paper article, many experts credit the rise of café culture to Singaporeans' evolving tastes for gourmet coffee. But it leaves much to be desired when an \$8 cuppa reigns over a modest *kopi si peng*. Both celebrate coffee in its own unique way, while one makes the burn in your wallet significantly less.

I bear small hopes for our generation to recognise, and even celebrate our extensive local cuisine. Food is what binds us our nation together, not the image-driven culture of café food.

#### BRINGING BOOTY BACK?

by valerie wong sick wah

Music is often highly personal yet universally accessible and therefore a unifying medium. But are body-positive songs beginning to get shut out by the negativity of its audience?

Meghan Trainor's bubble-gum pop song, All About That Bass, was released in June 2014 and peaked at No. 1 not just on the Billboard Hot 100, but also on international charts. Well, just like how with great power comes great responsibility, with great fame comes great flak. For what she intended to be a fun song about loving one's body (or booty), many have come down hard on her for ostensibly hailing notions of anti-feminism and skinny-shaming.

The proliferation of the Internet is making us smarter and more discerning. In turn, we become more sceptical about the information we consume. However, this scepticism seems to be translating into an obsession to sift out negativity. No matter how positively the issue of body image is presented, critics poke and prod at the lack thereof in lyrics, rather than what there is.



Meghan Trainor's controversial song All About that Bass

While Trainor sang that "boys like a little more booty to hold at night", critics saw it as boys not wanting to hold skinny girls. If this was the case two decades ago, we'd have people calling out Michael Jackson's Black or White number for marginalising yellow-toned Chinese or brown-toned Indians.

It is heartening to see that the world has made a somewhat radical mindset shift from the days of "thin is in". During those days, people who felt most vulnerable to the trend were those who were of above average weight. Now that body acceptance is making its mark, it gives the once vulnerable a platform to love their larger bodies.



And finally now when people have mustered up the courage to sing about it, we are putting them down yet again for shaming the thin. Bouncing between skinny-shaming and fat-shaming seems to leave us with a thin margin of "acceptability" and "ideal beauty" that we have been trying so hard to deviate from

It is scary that our relentless finger-pointing of who is shaming whose body will continue to be a vicious cycle. Looking at the cyclical nature of trends, it won't be long before skinny becomes de rigueur again and we'll be fat shaming. It's hard to imagine the turmoil that will ensue should a variation of N.W.A's Fat Girl number set foot on our music charts. The concept of beauty portrayed by the media and music will forever remain tantalising and controversial, because it is precisely this vicious cycle that they ride on.

It would seem also that the issue of body shaming overshadowing an artiste's true intentions is not confined to pop music. Tara Erraught, a soprano casted in Strauss' Der Rosenkavalier, a German comic opera, was faced with insults not on her performance but on her physique. She was called "dumpy" by The Telegraph and "a chubby bundle of puppy fat" by Financial Times.

I think it's safe to say that the day when body-positive songs are written with the intention of being politically correct is also the day when we will end the blame game of who's shaming whom.

Till then, why not make ourselves slightly more contented by halting our incessant need to weed out shaming messages and turn our attention to far more interesting aspects of a song. Perhaps in Trainor's case, we can look at how she conjured up such a sickeningly catchy melody that we basically cannot un-hear, or how despite being only 20, she has already co-penned songs for Rascal Flatts.

92 HYPE Photos courtesy of Russell Wong Photo courtesy of Epic OPINION 93

#### LOCAL LAND LOVING

by ana larae rios



2014 was a fruitful year for our sunny island, with more trophies to place on her shelf. Singapore has earned herself prestigious titles such as the world's most business-friendly location, home of the best airline, and the seventh-largest ecological footprint.

The fact is we won't be hearing of the latter at the National Day celebration any time soon.

How could a country which has advocated green living, adopted one of the most extensive water treatment facilities and even taken on the title of "Garden City" be hurting Mother Earth so much?

Let us try to understand how Singapore's economy revolves. With the constant race to grow and improve itself as a sovereign country amongst big players like China, we are forced to rely on imports due to our lack of natural resources.

Although we may have the greenest trees and neatest trimmed hedges, our continual use of foreign goods has quickly raised

the numbers with our carbon emissions. According to the Living Planet Report by World Wide Fund for Nature, most of our imports are food and services.

But before you beat yourself up for choosing Australian trail mix over *kachang puteh*, it can't be denied that this fervent import and export culture has helped us appreciate other cultures. Where else but Singapore (and perhaps a few other countries) can we get French cheese, Italian pasta sauce and German bratwurst in the same aisle of a supermarket?

Singapore's foundations are based upon an eclectic mix of people from our neighbouring countries. Therefore, it's no surprise that we've broadened our horizons (literally, with land reclamation) to better suit our growing ecosystem.

So where do we draw the line between improving the economy and hurting our environment?

We can't deny the troubling stretch of landscape that has been fabricated. Although the vegetation has been a huge plus in adding more colour to our streets, it is lacking in biodiversity. From parks to beaches, common areas have been painstakingly carved out and polished to appear natural. All of which to better serve not just the locals but tourists as well.

Now before you grab your pick axe and start boycotting international businesses or forming human chains at international food aisles, little is needed to make a substantial change in our society.

To be fair, we cannot ignore Singapore's efforts to make up for the slightly grey skies. The adaptation of solar power has been a slow journey for us, with our first solar leasing project launched in 2011, and due for implementation in 2015.

As youths, we often feel powerless to eradicate the inevitable symptoms of globalization. However, the power of influence and group thinking culture can have massive effects.

The simple act of raising awareness of local products in Singapore would get the wheels turning in our journey to clearer skies. With social media providing the world at our fingertips, who's to say #locallandloving won't be the new #cleaneats?

I guess we all secretly revel in the feeling of sitting along the Riviera in France, sipping red wine from Bordeaux, accompanied with cheeses whose names are too difficult to pronounce. But, with simple acts of awareness and basic knowledge of sustainable food, Singapore can find a bridge to unite both economy and environment, with neither entity needing to fall behind.



## GETTING CREATIVITY RIGHT by jovita ang

Leonardo Da Vinci created Mona Lisa during the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and till today, it stands as one of the most prized artworks in history. Tech giant Apple launched its revolutionary iPhone back in 2007, and it is reported to have sold 39.3 million pieces in the last quarter of 2014 alone. When Auckland singer-songwriter Lorde released her debut single Royals in 2013, she swept up awards at the prestigious Grammy's and since then, has been riding the red carpet up to the top. Beijing-based sculptor Li Hongbo impressed with his porcelain-like stretchable sculptures made entirely out of thousands of papers, and today, they are exhibited at the Klein Sun Gallery in New York.

These individuals have made headlines. They boast media coverage and social media likes and views rising faster than our bank accounts. They are just a handful of the many individuals that have defined creativity. On another side of the page stands the "arts" people: painters, sculptors, filmmakers and designers, people who create brilliant material art. It seems these days, creativity is a divine trait only a select few possess. But it isn't.



Creativity, as explains by America's most sought-after keynote speaker, Dewitt Jones, "is a matter of perspective". Also a photojournalist with National Geographic, his years of experience have led him into one creative endeavour after another. This widely misunderstood term is neither mystical nor magical. It is not confined to merely material pieces or the next big revolution.

Creativity is about opening different windows, being resourceful, hitting the world with abundance not scarcity, turning problems into opportunities and learning to be uncomfortable. It is about changing perspectives, about creating many different right answers, about learning to embrace change.

#### Sounds fancy but the bottom line is your life can be your art.

Ruth Richards, a leading researcher on creativity in daily life, shares that the everyday creativity is the way an individual "adapts flexibly, improvises and tries different options" in various aspects of each 24-hour day. Essentially, it is one's innate radical survival capability.

This is a real theory that is, as Richards argues, often "under-recognised, under-developed, and under-rewarded". Before you jump to disagree, when was the last time you tried to suggest to your superior a more effective method of handling a situation? Or have you never? When was the last time that one big mistake deterred you from trying ever again?

Compare a video of a New York artist creating the skyline out of spray paint and your regular Joe cracking open a pomegranate in a different, but effective way. Who's creative here?

No matter you, or me, or that person sitting opposite at the cafeteria, or that group playing football out in the field, we all possess a creative mind. The challenge is to accept that creativity, though largely marginalised by great successful people and conventional woodblocks who believe that it means dabbling in insignificant hobbies like the arts, is in everyone.

American psychologist Abraham Harold Maslow best known for his idea of "self-actualisation", found that creativity stems from such a principle. It springs from the personality and the ordinary affairs of life, the tendency to do anything creatively, whether teaching or mundane chores like housekeeping.

To recognise the everyday creativity is critical because single personalities or specific industries no longer form the perimeter of this big C. It is only when you begin to embrace this theory, then can you ride onwards and into amazing life alterations, reaching new personal heights.

So the next time someone says he's not creative, tell him he might have gotten creativity all wrong.

94 HYPE OPINION 95

#### IN DEFENCE OF LITERATURE

by shalini devindra



Imagine the widespread horror and panic should Mathematics and Science ever be questioned about their relevance in the Singapore education system. Parents would jump to its defence and students would agree that they are undoubtedly important in the fundamentals of learning. Yet, there isn't so much as a whimper when literature is threatened.

It would be a loss to have a whole generation with no idea what Literature is, just because schools decide arbitrarily discontinue offering this subject as part of the curriculum on the assumption that students will not perform well.

The whopping 16,970 students who took the subject in 1992, has recently dropped to a dismal 3,000 students per year. A primarily English-speaking nation, with an English-based education, should have made Literature one of the

"Literature adds to reality; it does not simply describe it"

- C.S. Lewis

most important subjects in the syllabus.

The necessity to excel in examinations and the prevalent perception that most Literature graduates will not be able to get a job where the demand is in technological and scientific sectors, is a barrier for anyone who has an interest in studying Literature. Then there is also the ridiculous perception that it is difficult to score an "A" for Literature.

Yet, an analysis of the statistics from the Ministry of Education (MOE) in February 2013 suggests otherwise. In fact, students have been performing very well in the O-Level Literature examinations. What's more, there has been an upward trend in the students' success rate for Literature, ranging from 90 per cent in 2002 to 95 per cent in 2012. The percentage of these students scoring distinctions in this subject has also risen from 35 per cent to 40 per cent over the same period. These are the tangible figures in determining "success" from the Asian perspective, where grades and the paper chase are of paramount importance.

However, most students fail to understand that the analytical skills and knowledge acquired from studying Literature early in their lives, although intangible, would be applicable for the rest of their lives

Some may argue that Social Studies is sufficient to cultivate critical thinking, and to transmit moral and social values. However, Literature can help instill far more than that. The lessons that Literature teaches us range from the simple expansion of our vocabulary, to understanding the complex nature of the human experience. We are able to benefit from the different insights of acclaimed writers and poets, and learn how to appreciate people and societies the way they are.

We are able to explore the numerous cultures and beliefs or time travel back to the past or far into the future. Literature allows us to develop empathy and refine our own opinions and judgments. It broadens our mind and gives us the freedom to interpret and trust in our own interpretations, while accepting the views and opinions of others.

Literature forces students to question and think critically. It is a distinctive mirror reflecting one's own personality or values. It has the potential to empathise with those whom we have never met by expanding our physical realm beyond what we see every day. And as a by-product, the student gets to master the English language, that has the power to bind nations.

There are countless career prospects for Literature graduates. A study by the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences of the National University of Singapore in 2012 agree that Literature graduates are well equipped for jobs in journalism, television, public relations, teaching and publishing.

It is important for Literature to be left well alone and allow the next generation to continue enjoying the subject.

## NOT YOUR AVERAGE GAMER GIRL

by doretta tan

In August 2014, hostility towards females in the video game industry took it up a notch with the advent of the Gamergate controversy. #Gamergate, a term coined to describe the ethics crusade for gaming journalism, soon twisted into a raging hate movement targeted at women in the gaming community.

Misogynistic netizens took this spin-off of the original movement to their advantage, posting and tweeting death and rape threats only to the female figures in the gaming industry. This entire controversy is only the tip of the iceberg regarding the general hate towards women in the gaming community and industry.

An annual report by the US Entertainment Software Association stated that 48 per cent of the gaming community is made up of females. More males have become accepting to the rise in the female gaming population. Yet, it is sad, that some narrow-minded guys still scorn the idea of increasing female individuals entering the gaming scene.



Anita Sarkeesian was targeted by an online harrassment group following her Kickstarter project launch to fund a game series



A study by Emily Matthew on blog.pricecharting.com in September 2012 shows that 63 per cent of the women in the gaming community have been victims of sexism in video gaming.

Victims reported that they were sexually harassed, verbally abused with a whole array of multi-coloured derogatory terms. The women were asked to "get back into the kitchen" and "make a sandwich" once the male gamers found out that they were actually females behind the computer screen. No matter how competent these female gamers were in game, all of them were subjected to hate from the male gaming community online.

I have had my fair share of insults while gaming online once fellow gamers learnt about my true identity. Coupled with a whole torrent of threats and contempt being hurled my way, was also this instance where the whole opposing team decided to nail a target on my back before coming after my head in game. I can't comprehend how individuals even find it amusing or fun to coerce people to leave the game. Let's face it – these sorts of discriminations are just too emotionally sapping and tiring to deal with.

According to a study in the book, Hate Crimes in Cyberspace, by law professor and author Danielle Keats Citron, about 70 per cent of female gamers have admitted to playing male avatars in game under the pretence of being a male online just to avoid sexual harassment.

So where is all this hate towards the female gaming community coming from?

Traditionally, the gaming industry and community used to be dominated by the men, which is why most of these male gamers would only accept fellow males as the average gamer. Females are not welcome in this "sacred" virtual realm, and if any of these women even attempt to step into their world, they would immediately become subjects of discrimination and hate.

It really is appalling how the men are unable to shake off the prevailing stereotype of how only males are able to fit the bill as a gamer. Some even fly into fits of fury after being shot down by a female. The men justify their actions with the reason that gamer girls are out to attract the attention of the opposite sex. Female gamers are just like the rest of the male community: We want to have fun and enjoy the game.

Women should not have to hide behind their computer screens under the pretence of being a male just to avoid being subjects of pejorative euphemisms or slurs. All we want is to be treated with respect, like competent equals who just want to play the game as much as they do.

96 HYPE Photo courtesy of anitasarkeesian on Flickr OPINION 97

# Eugenia Lip

- 1 The proper way to eat a pau (chinese bun) is to: To devour it layer by layer! The skin first, followed by the fluffy pau, and then the filling.
- 2 If you're a new addition to the crayon box, you would be black because black is a very useful colour, you can draw plenty of ants with black.
- 3 When your hysterically drunk friend calls in the middle of the night, you would...
  - a. Listen and say, "It's okay" over and over for the next 25 minutes
  - b. Listen for a minute and hang up
  - c. Off your phone and throw the battery
  - d. Confuse my drunk friend by pretending to be the one who called.

#### 4 In a typical haunted house movie, you would be the character who...

- a. Runs towards the noise coming from the dark corner with a baseball bat
- b. Abandons the group in an attempt for self-preservation
- c. Sits and cry about your bad luck
- d. Turns out to be creepier than the ghosts.

**5 My ideal Singlish DJ name is:** *DJ You Tiao (dance)* 



#### 6 You enter the MRT and see an empty "Reserved" seat, you...

- a. Avoid it. It's reserved for a reason
- b. Sit down and proceed to take a nap
- c. Sit down and keep watch for any approaching elderly

7 On receiving an extra dollar back from the supermarket, you throw it into the donation box they usually have at the side. It's all about passing on the good luck!

#### 8 You are stranded on an island and the only album in your suitcase is:



Michael Jackson's Dangerous





Introducing Brad Mehldau



Now That's What I Call Music! 4





Oz Noy's Ha!





McCoy Tyner's Infinity





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