

# hype

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ISSUE 22  
FEB · APR 2006  
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Part-time positions available, walk-in interview only.

# EDITORIAL

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## Miss Clarity Café

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## TIMBRÉ

45 Armenian Street



It's time once again for the loveliest time of the year. Or at least the most loving time of year after Christmas.

After receiving all the big fat red packets this Chinese New Year, you'll find many people trying to part you from that in preparation of Feb 14.

This issue hopes to help you along with suggestions for your consideration, including gadgets, games and Dr. Martens and B.U.M. Equipment apparel that we carried all the way to New York and the beautiful New Haven for **hype**'s first overseas fashion shoot!

Of course, we've heard time and again that Valentine's Day, like Christmas, has lost its meaning and become too commercialised. Most of us probably know that, but we choose to ignore it, especially if we're the ones receiving the gifts. Still, we understand how you, like us, would like to economise and so, instead of expensive dinners and huge, overpriced bouquets of roses, we've rounded up some venues that will give an illusion of very affordable class or even the feeling that you've left the country, without having to pack your passports.

Besides dinner, stand a chance to win a Sony Ericsson handphone worth \$500, that you can give your better half. For details, please see page 59.

Why not take up a hobby together or even go on a food-hunting trip? If you're out of ideas — check out our cable-skiing article or learn the joys of wine. Think of it this way, if an activity brings the both of you or even your friends closer, every day can be Valentine's Day.

But if you really love someone, how about helping them to quit smoking? With the rising costs of cigarettes, the increasingly widespread bans on smoking and worrying statistics about cancer in Singaporeans, there's no better time for them to quit. Find out how to support your girlfriends, especially, in **hype**'s anti-smoking feature. That could be your best Valentine's Day gift yet.

Gendoo Zhou

*Caroline*

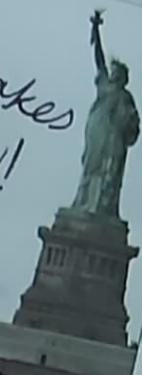


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# PREVIEWS

M1 FRINGE FESTIVAL

Almost as a follow-up to last year's inaugural "Art and War" theme, this yearly M1-sponsored social festival has now come up with the theme of "Art and Healing". As before, various art forms including theatre, dance, film, music, poetry and forum will be showcased through the talents of more than 50 acts hailing from 20 countries, including relatively inaccessible Bhutan, in the different Fringe categories.

Whatever your preferred medium of expression, you can learn about the suffering of people during the Khmer Rouge regime through Cambodia's Amrita Performing Arts' play **Photographs from S-21**, brood over the topic of life and death as Mexico's Delfos Contemporary Dance bring you **In Memoriam** or step into the lives of deaf children with French director Nicolas Philibert's **In the Land of the Deaf**.

Through the heartfelt performances, embrace the power of the human spirit in adversity and the potential of art to heal even the deepest scars caused by traumatic events like heartbreak, the loss of loved ones, an epidemic or even rape. — DANIELLE ANG

Feb 22 - Mar 5, various venues

Visit [www.singaporefringe.com](http://www.singaporefringe.com) for more information on ticketing and show times.



Photo: The Stage Club

Pals Nathan Leopold (Hansel Tan from **The Real Inspector Hound**) and Richard Loeb (Paul Hannon from **Twelfth Night**) are young, attractive, wealthy students with lots of smarts to boot.

As teenagers, the undergrads decide to set out and commit the perfect crime. But in the months leading up to their crime (the kidnap, mutilation and killing of a young boy), they slip and attract more than their fair share of media attention.

Based on a real-life story set in Chicago in the 1920s, this play about Leopold and Loeb's life together as partners in crime, trial and possibly even sex, is presented by The Stage Club.

John Logan, whose screenplays (**Gladiator**, **The Aviator**, **The Last Samurai**) were nominated at the Oscars, took a good 20 years to write this story after thorough research.

Directed by Daniel Toyne (**Twelfth Night**), **Never the Sinner** will leave audiences wondering about the pathological minds and hearts that lurk behind handsome faces. — CANDACE ZHOU

Feb 22 - 25, 8pm, DBS Arts Centre

Tickets: \$40 & \$30 (50% discount for students and NSmen) from SISTIC

NEVER THE SINNER

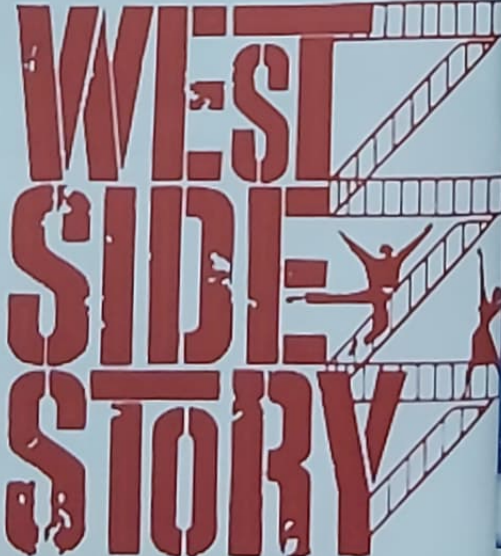
Broadway sensation, **West Side Story**, is finally making its debut in Singapore in April.

An adaptation of **Romeo and Juliet**, **West Side Story** is set in New York City, and tells of young doomed lovers- white boy, Tony and Puerto Rican, Maria, kept apart by ethnic clashes between family and friends that are involved in gang warfare with each other.

**West Side Story** swept 10 Oscars in 1961, when it was adapted from a stage play for the big screen by the genius of choreographer Jerome Robbins, lyricist Stephen Sondheim and composer Leonard Bernstein, who gave us classics like "I Want to be in America" and "Tonight".

How will it fare the transition back to stage in the hands of director Joey McNeely, a multiple nominee of the Tony Awards, the highest honour for stage work, who has composed music to hit TV series like **Dark Angel**? Guess you'll have to catch it to find out. — NG YAN BO

**West Side Story** will be performed every Friday to Sunday, from April 7 to 30, at the Esplanade Theatre. Tickets priced from \$38 can be obtained from SISTIC.



Graphic: Citystate Arts Management



Photo: Singapore Press Holdings

More than 5,000 years, that's how far back the history of Chinese culture takes us.

The biennial **Singapore Chinese Cultural Festival 2006** organised by the Singapore Press Holdings (SPH) is back to shed some light on the richness of the Chinese heritage here.

Into its eighth year now, the festival comprises of 123 showcases and activities to encourage appreciation and understanding of the traditions, arts and crafts of ancient China.

Acclaimed artists, like Wu Bi Xia and Wan Fang, as well as performing groups from China and Taiwan (eg. Wu Xi Comedy Opera troop), will wow audiences with their stunning acts.

Local entertainment groups will charm you with performances (**Ali Baba and the 21 Thieves** by the Hokkien Huay Kuan Arts & Cultural Troop).

The **Singapore Chinese Cultural Festival 2006** will run from Feb 16 to Mar 19. — NG YAN BO

For more information or ticketing details, please refer to the official website at <http://www.chineseculturalfestival.com.sg>, or contact SPH at 6319 6000.

SINGAPORE CHINESE CULTURAL FESTIVAL 2006



## CELEBRATION OF YOUTH X CAPADE Ngee ANN

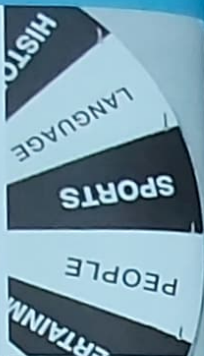
Those who are smart, often flaunt it. But it takes a person with a big heart to use his intelligence for the greater good. That's the premise of **S.M.A.R.T.S**, or **Space Mission: A Reciprocal Treasure Search**, Singapore's, if not the world's, first online charity quiz show created by staff and final-year journalism students from Ngee Ann Polytechnic.

Held in conjunction with Ngee Ann Polytechnic's **Xcapade**, the **S.M.A.R.T.S** finals, which brought the online game to a physical dimension, was one of the highlights of the two-day Ngee Ann Polytechnic talent showcase at Ngee Ann City Civic Plaza. Audience members were kept on the edges of their seats as players answered with lightning speed and spot-on accuracy question after difficult question, posed by gamemaster and former 93.3FM deejay Danny Yeo.

It was a close fight to the finish with individual players beating each other by mere points. Finally it was Yong Zhi Yi, 15 from Raffles Institution and Edwin Tan, 25, who clinched top spots for the school and public category respectively. They each won for themselves a 3G Sony Ericsson mobile phone, a six-month SingTel line and an MP3 player, sponsored by SingTel, on top of a handsome challenge trophy.

Guest-of-Honour, Ms Pam Hu, described the game as a "shining example that combines our youths' love for gaming while giving something back to the community". The Program Director for Community and International Relations at the Media Development Authority of Singapore (MDA) added that **S.M.A.R.T.S** showed us that "gaming need not always be about self-gratification but that it can also be used as a tool to better the lives of others".

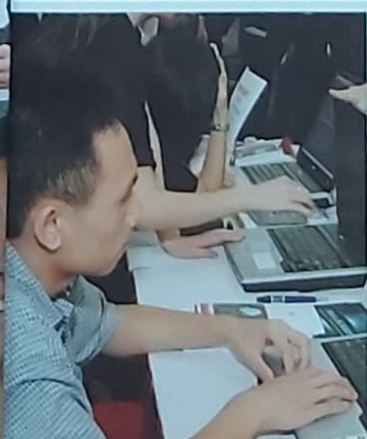
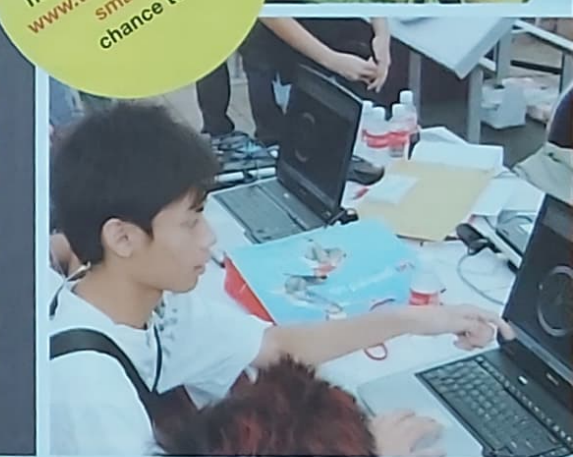
Zhi Yi agreed that **S.M.A.R.T.S** was an original



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[www.theurbanwire.com/](http://www.theurbanwire.com/)  
smarts for a  
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and creative game concept, "Participants get to raise funds for charity and gain knowledge at the same time." Audiences were kept enthralled with vocal performances by Vanessa Fernandez from Parking Lot Pimp and Singapore Idol finalist, Daphne Khoo. To sweeten the deal, 500 goodie bags from the sponsors offering **LIME** magazines and SingTel notebooks, and chances to win other prizes in a National Library competition were distributed. In addition, two iPod shuffles, sponsored by Apple, were given out during audience games.

With \$8,000 raised by the organising team from Royal Brothers Pte Ltd and the Lee Foundation, and realised within three weeks by online players, for Mainly I Love Kids (M.I.L.K), The Choice Initiative and The Straits Times School Pocket Money Fund, Edwin rightfully noted, "There were no losers in this game, only winners." — CHERYL LIM





# LISTINGS

Tired of going to the same old places? Think there's nothing happening in Singapore? **hype** shows you what's new in town.

## Gao Xingjian Experience

The first of its kind in Asia, this exhibition showcases 60 ink paintings by Nobel Prize Laureate, Gao Xingjian, who is also an established playwright and writer in China. Highlights include 10 newly-released ink works.

Nov 17 - Feb 7, 10am-7pm (except Fri, 10am-9pm), SAM Galleries 1.5 & 2.5

Admission: \$3 (adults), \$1.50 (students with student card), free (Fri 6pm-9pm only)

## JamX Prelims and Finals

This yearly rock band competition among tertiary students seeks to heighten awareness of the local rock scene and showcases original songs written by homegrown talent. Having a turnout of 3000 people last year, this year's **JamX**, with **LIME** as the presenter and event promoter, is set to rock the stage once again with new style and aplomb.

Feb 11, National Youth Park (Prelims), \*scape (Finals)

Free Admission

Details on show times unavailable at press time.

## Sentosa Flowers 2006

Chinese New Year is also known as Spring Festival among the Chinese and what better way to celebrate it than with flowers? Enjoy a visual smorgasbord of colour from the 2-million-flower landscape display. Don't forget to bring your camera along!

Jan 28 - Feb 5, Sentosa, Fountain Gardens

Free Admission (excluding Entrance Fee to Sentosa)

## Mosaic Music Festival 2006

After a successful first-run last year, the **Mosaic Music Festival** returns for a 10-day engagement with more exciting jazz and world music concerts/shows. This year's lineup brings you treats like the **Montreux Jazz Special Concert** (from world-acclaimed **Montreux Jazz Festival** in Switzerland), **Kings of Convenience** and also the **Afro-Cuban All Stars Putumayo Special Concert**, which was here in 2005. It's time to throw everything aside and lose yourself in the fine array of world-class music.

Mar 10 - 19

Most adult tickets start from \$48, but student discounts apply. Prices and performance times vary, please check [www.esplanade.com](http://www.esplanade.com) for more details.

## NUS Arts Festival

This month-long arts festival celebrates the National University of Singapore's centennial. As a warm-up to the **Singapore Arts Festival**, immerse yourself in dances, musicals, classical and pop performances by the university's Centre for Arts, Halls of Residence and Students' Union.

Feb 10 - Mar 26, various times, University Cultural Centre at NUS

Ticket prices vary, visit <http://www.nus.edu.sg/cfa/UCC/index.html> for more information

## Singapore Arts Festival 2006

Soak yourself in music by Norway's Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra with UK's John Williams, the man behind **Star Wars'** memorable scores. You can watch the theatre version of **Memoirs of a Geisha** by local theatre group **Theatreworks** and participate in **Dramabox's** quest for identity and nostalgia in **A Stranger at Home**. You can also experience the choreography of award-winning Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker in **Rain**.

Jun 1 - 25, Various venues

Tickets and show times unavailable at press time, visit <http://www.singaporeartsfest.com> for details.

## German Expo 2006

Before the **FIFA World Cup 2006** hosted by Germany kicks off, get to know more about the lifestyle, culture, arts and technology of the host country through this three-day event with its exhibitions on everything German. In addition to the country's niche areas like sports, sciences and precision engineering, you can also drool over fashionable pieces by the Goethe Institut and other major German labels in the various fashion shows.

Mar 24 - 26, 10am-8pm, Suntec Singapore International Convention and Exhibition Centre

Free Admission

## Power Dressing

Take a step back into China's fashion history as 125 pieces of China's silken treasures are put on display. Robes of emperors, priests, concubines and many other kinds of textiles will bring you closer to China's Forbidden City.

Dec 12 - Apr 9, Asian Civilisations Museum

Tickets: \$5 for adults, \$2.50 for senior citizen/child

# PEOPLE

On location at the set of **9 Lives**, Daniel Hutchinson saunters over, looking fresh even after a night of filming. With boyishly good looks, sharp features and a laid-back personality, Daniel exudes charm.

At 21, he has come a long way since his early days as a child-actor in school Christmas pantomimes. Already a professional since 18, he made his mark in the acting circuit as a toy boy in 2004's **The Second Singapore Short Stories**. Daniel has proved himself to be more than just a pretty face, growing increasingly sought after with roles offered in local films and stage plays production companies like **Toy Factory Theatre Ensemble Production** and **Escape Theatre Limited**. He's had roles in **Immaculate Misconceptions**, **Skylight** and **Dangerous Liaisons**.

His upcoming drama series, **9 Lives**, produced by MediaCorp actress and host Tan Kheng Hua, will see Daniel acting alongside home-grown celebrities like Pamela Oei, Adrian Pang and Lim Yu Beng. **9 Lives** tells the stories of nine people who meet in a club and how their lives are interweaved. Playing one of the nine main characters, Daniel reveals more about working with the cast and crew of **9 Lives**. "It's a real experience indeed, working with such big names. Surprisingly, these actors [and actresses] I've worked with are really warm towards each other and so far, I haven't encountered any weight throwing," he said.

Acting, nevertheless, hasn't always been a bed of roses. He once spent seven hours waiting for a shoot. Juggling school with several different acting jobs was also trying at times. But the fresh graduate from LASALLE-SIA College of the Arts, who holds a diploma in Drama, still gushes when describing his love for acting.

"Acting is like a form of expression in art. The adrenaline that rushes through you, the way your heart pumps extra fast and the feeling of your blood running through your veins, it's the same kind of high that parachutists get," Daniel raves.

His next project will be a 3G Mobile game, **Ghost Voice**, which will be released in March. Like all guys, Daniel loves his games and is, not surprisingly, thrilled about actually being in one. "The game's objective is to find clues and stop this evil being, OverLord, from opening the gates of the underworld! I play the mentor, [Mark] the guy who will aid the players in getting through the stages. It's cool, man!"

Cliché as the game sounds, Daniel insists that **Ghost Voice** is extremely well designed and witty. "The next time you see somebody chuckling on the bus and fiddling with his handphone furiously, he's probably hooked on **Ghost Voice**," he added cheekily.

On his seemingly very bright future, Daniel states matter-of-factly, "I will act as long as the industry wants me. Or being a radio DJ is pretty cool too. It has the same adrenaline rush as being an actor." But he adds that he'll always prefer acting. "The art films are becoming more audience friendly and have more things which [a] mass audience can relate to. It's a good thing!"

**9 Lives** will air on Arts Central from Feb 6. **Ghost Voice** is scheduled to be available for download on 3G mobile phones in March.

You may have seen him on Arts Central, stage plays or even heard him on 98.2FM. Soon, Daniel Hutchinson will be appearing on a 3G mobile phone near you. NG YAN BO chats with the young promising British actor about the local Arts scene, acting and his big dreams of Hollywood.

DAN'S THE MAN

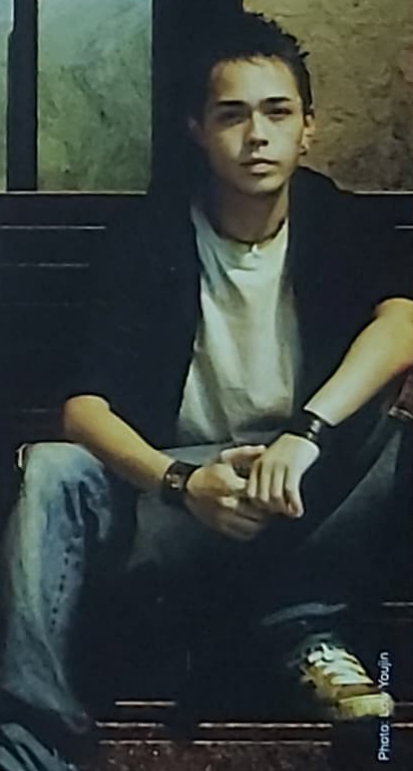


Photo: Lee You-jin



# THE MAN BEHIND THE BANDS

He's recorded established local bands like Electrico, Ronin, Pug Jelly and Parking Lot Pimp, and is considered one of the best sound engineers in the industry. VANESSA FERNANDEZ talks to one of local music's unsung heroes, Leonard Soosay.

Leonard Soosay is sitting on the worn-out staircase outside Snakeweed Studios with a member of local band, A Vacant Affair. They're discussing the progress of a song they've been recording for the last couple of hours. The guitarist, shirtless and wearing baggy jeans that barely hang off his hips, mentions something about rehearsing his guitar lines as he bolts back into the studio. Soosay soon follows – less urgency in his step perhaps, but with the calm assuredness of one who knows that a good song can't be rushed. A half-hour later the crunchy sounds of a heavy metal guitar solo have died down and a bunch of spunky adolescents are saying goodbye. Meanwhile the members from Electrico have arrived for the next recording session and Soosay's ready to rock all over again.

Both new and established bands are eager to record with this well-reputed 39-year-old. Yet he's just as comfortable working with unknowns as he is with bands that have huge fan followings like Electrico or West Grand Boulevard. The truth is he's just too cool to get caught up. "If people say I'm the man or the myth or the legend or whatever, it's not because I'm out there trying to become one. These bands have talent [and] creativity. All I do is press the space bar. That's all I do. [And] if that warrants a knighthood or something, that's ridiculous because all these bands that come up over the years, they are the ones who deserve the credit, not me."

His modesty, although endearing to most musicians, obscures the truth. Soosay has co-produced songs for Pug Jelly, Electrico and Parking Lot Pimp – all MTV Asia Awards nominees. In fact, in the CD booklet of Electrico's album *So Much More Inside*, you'll find a special shout-out to Soosay as the 'sixth member, the

glue that holds everything together'. "The thing about Leonard is that he's almost too humble. The truth is that a lot of bands wouldn't be around if not for [his] expertise and help," says Desmond Goh, bassist for Electrico. Munir Alsagoff, 30, guitarist for Parking Lot Pimp, agrees, "Leonard understands sound styles and how to achieve them in a song regardless of the genre. That is why he's such a good engineer." Bands who have recorded with Soosay consider him about as useless as Jimi Hendrix with an upside-down Voodoo Stratocaster. In other words, he's their right-hand man.

## A SOUND EDUCATION

Soosay is also the preferred choice for many musicians because he's an expert when it comes to recording and mixing a track. That comes from a 20-year love affair with all things musical in nature, starting at the age of 16. "I always had an interest in music and how sound is created. I used to listen to a lot of records – some songs appealed to me more than others and I used to wonder why." Visiting the Yamaha Music School to check out keyboards and recording devices briefly satisfied his curiosity. But the determination to be enlightened soon led him to enroll at the Harris Institute for The Arts in Toronto, Canada, a specialised music school where he studied Production and Engineering and took several classes in music management. It was here that on and off-campus discussions on music and recording techniques led him to a rather simple yet profound discovery.

"When I enrolled in music school in Canada, I got to meet like-minded people. You learn a lot more from your peers, who might not necessarily have the

same tastes in music but somehow it all boils down to the same thing – capturing sound just [requires] a mic[rophone] and a pre-amplifier. But it's how you do it that actually differentiates you from the rest."

Upon his return to Singapore, Soosay started experimenting to perfect his own technique and style. "I would go around with my eight-track machine (recording device) finding bands and asking them if they wanted to record something. I'd just plug in two or three mic[rophone]s and they would play, and I would record it to a cassette tape. Then I'd go home and listen to it and slowly I started to understand the intricacies of sound, like microphone placing."

## SOUNDING OUT

Unlike some sound engineers who, he says, are unwilling to share trade secrets and often dictate the recording process, Soosay is more open-minded. He believes in sharing knowledge and engaging with other musicians in order for recording to be a collective learning experience. But above all he believes in building relationships.

"It takes a lot of patience [and] understanding but bands and musicians should be your friends first, and I find a lot of engineers don't do that. I mean they treat it as a business [and] the minute it becomes a business there's no inspiration. There's no reason to smile because it's just taking someone else's money for that one or two hours."

## GREAT TUNES

Soosay generally doesn't like to admit distaste for anything, which is why he scratches his head and apologetically declines to name any musicians he's recorded with diva-esque tendencies. Probe further and he laughs as he puts his arms up in surrender claiming everyone's a diva. But you can tell from his cheeky smile that he doesn't really mean that at all.

He's less reserved about which bands he considers to have great potential and willingly gushes on about popular rock bands Electrico and West Grand Boulevard. His all-time favourite artiste, however, is David Sylvian – singer, producer, songwriter and the ex-frontman of English band, Japan. He is also a big fan of Brian Eno and Daniel Lacroix, who have produced every album from U2.

When it comes to sussing out a good song, Soosay's criteria is fairly simple: "What makes a great song is its honesty and the artist[es] being true to themselves. It may be a pop song, a reggae song, a techno song, but as long as it feels honest and it represents the artist best then that makes it a good song."

Soosay feels that sometimes good music is compromised: honesty sacrificed for the sake of commercialism, even though selling out has paid off handsomely for many within the industry. The top-selling album of 2004 was, ironically enough, *Confessions* by Usher. This is no small change as the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry calculated global music sales to amount to



US\$13.9 billion (S\$20.8 billion) last year. And although Hillary Duff might never win a Grammy, her album was certified double platinum in the US. That's two million albums!

Another of Soosay's pet peeves is the lack of support for local musicians in Singapore. As he makes some suggestions for improvement, his forehead crinkles and his lowered tone of voice reveals a more serious side to the usually laid-back engineer.

"If all the local labels suddenly stood up and said they're going to sign five local artists this year [and] showcase these talents to the public, and the media helps and tries to create awareness and build bands instead of plugging foreign songs 24 hours a day, we [could] actually create a market and create interest. So that music can be something we are proud of – songs about us, for us and by us."

Still, if you're thinking of becoming a sound engineer in the future and looking for something substantial to learn from, Soosay recommends The Doves and Radiohead's *OK Computer* album.

According to him, the secret is not in expensive equipment or Pro Tools plug-ins. "The secret to good recording is not actually the tricks that go into recording a song. The secret is to capture the artist, to capture the band at their peak moment... because if you can capture a good performance, that performance can last a lifetime."





## 新人档案:

名称: 姚懿珊 (Yao Yi Shan)  
英文名: Dawn  
年龄: 19岁  
星座: 金牛座  
身高: 1.7公分  
嗜好: 唱歌、购物、运动...等  
喜欢的颜色: 粉红色  
喜欢的食物: 雪糕  
代表作: 《星闪闪》-八频道即将播出

# 姚懿珊

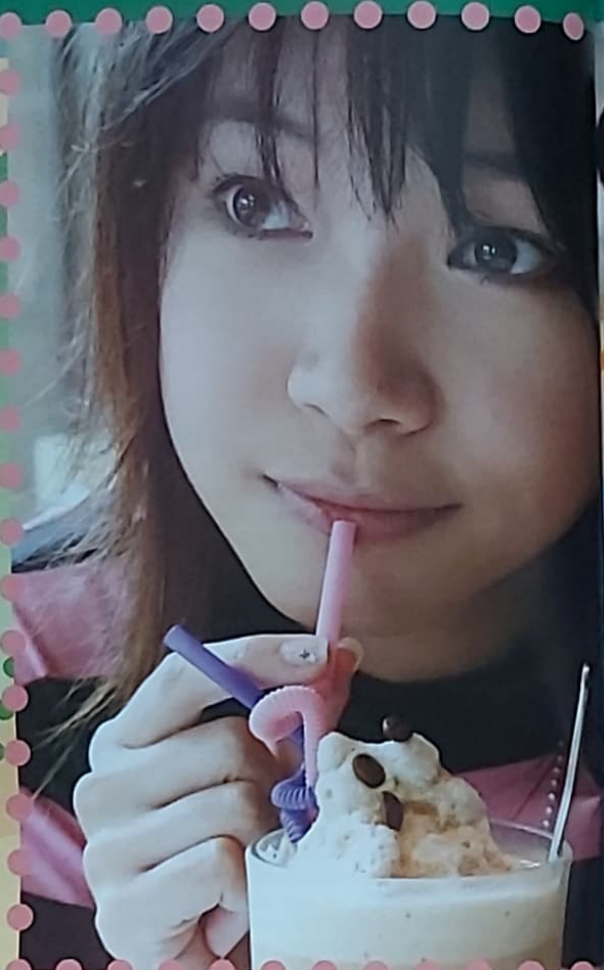
## ‘新闪闪’

...Dawn Yeoi

新的一年,新的面孔, hype 记者黄佳仪为你介绍这位闪耀新人 - 姚懿珊。

## 她,是谁?

年仅19岁的姚懿珊本应积极求学为将来,为事业而努力念书。但她正是为了同样的原因而退学。踏上这‘星光大道’之前的懿珊在义安理工学院修读工商资讯科技系。当时的懿珊和大部分年轻人一样,休闲的时间也爱到乌节路逛街、约好友一起K歌。



## 她,很眼熟...

懿珊16岁那年便开始追逐梦想,开始参加各种模特儿选拔赛。进入 The New Paper New Face 20 强,让懿珊首次引起媒体的注意,也获得了广告商的青睐,开始接起了广告。

懿珊也曾参加优频道举办的《全民偶像新登场》,闯入半决赛的她却因经验不足而惨遭淘汰。虽然参加比赛不时会失败,但这位外表软弱的甜姐儿却坚决为梦想而不断尝试。懿珊以开朗、活泼的语气说道:“失败,当然会失望。但也可以从中学到很多,吸取经验啊!”

懿珊后来获奖成为 Future Stage Artists UK Asia 名下艺人,她也终就在自己的最后一场比赛, Teens Model Search 2004 获得了冠军。

## 她,的梦想:

当 hype 问起懿珊自小的志愿与梦想时,这位小姑娘竟流露出羞涩的神情。在追问之下,才发现原来她的志愿与梦想随着年龄,不断地在改变。其实,那也没什么嘛!懿珊笑着说:“很小很小的时候,我想当老师。(是不是每个人小的时候都想当老师啊?)后来,在大一点儿就想当建筑师,哈哈。到了中学,就想当空姐因为可以常常出国,我喜欢。有想过要当模特儿,所以参加了许多类似的选拔赛,但后来才确定,我真正想当的是艺人、歌手。”

## 她,美梦成真。

明星梦,很多青少年都曾有过。但,不是每个人都如此坚决、勇敢追逐。她是。懿珊以她那天赋的‘Fresh Look’获奖,成为《星闪闪》的第一女主角,阿黎。首次演戏就接了个盲人的角色对懿珊来说并不容易。不过,现实生活中的懿珊与盲女阿黎也有相似的地方-就是她们开朗的性格和坚强的意志。谦虚的懿珊笑着回答:“我没有阿黎那么善良、伟大啦!”美梦成真,也是有代价的。懿珊说道:“我忙着拍戏,牺牲了不少和家人、朋友在一起的时间...还有睡眠!我一天睡不到5个钟头。”

拍戏再辛苦、挨导演骂,懿珊都不怕,但在一次打斗戏里目睹詹金泉错手打伤章缙翔的恐怖场面却把伊人吓哭了。懿珊说道:“我看到缙翔倒在地上,很痛的样子,他的鼻子都歪了。这还不只,当他开口告诉大家他正在喝血时,我就受不了了。但他很勇敢,上救护车前还对我微笑,让我较放心。”

## 她,梦的延续...

懿珊目前刚接拍了下一部由新传媒与新加坡邮政合作的偶像剧《把爱寄给你》(暂名),里头的主要演员有邱泽、白薇秀、刘芷绚、方展发以及詹金泉。剧里,懿珊扮演的是少奇(邱泽饰)的前女友晓雪-配角之一。“演过了主角,我也想尝试演一演配角。我觉得在一部戏里配角是很重要的,所以很高兴可以试试这样这个角色,同时也能了解配角的心声。”目前,懿珊也正在筹备她的首张个人专辑,预期在今年内发行。《星闪闪》将在今年3月8频道播出。对于这样一位闪亮的新人,我们拭目以待吧!





Ezann Lee is one ambitious girl. Since her first official foray into the media industry one and a half years ago, Ezann has experimented with all manner of performing arts, including acting, singing, hosting and dancing. The word, 'official', is used because she actually acted in *The First Time*, a one-episode television special on Channel 8 when she was 14, before withdrawing from the spotlight for a number of years to pursue education in Serangoon Junior College and enjoy her youth.

Not surprisingly, the 24-year-old star could not hide from fame for long - she was discovered by the formidable hosting team of Brian Wong and Kym Ng on the talent-scouting programme, *Snap*, shown on Channel U. Soon enough, she was acting in drama serials on Channel U, and all this happened even before anyone had any inkling that she was related to big sister Ericia Lee.

In Ezann's own words, "Some people were shocked [that we are sisters] because we don't look alike at all. They even say, 'Are you sure the

## EXTREME

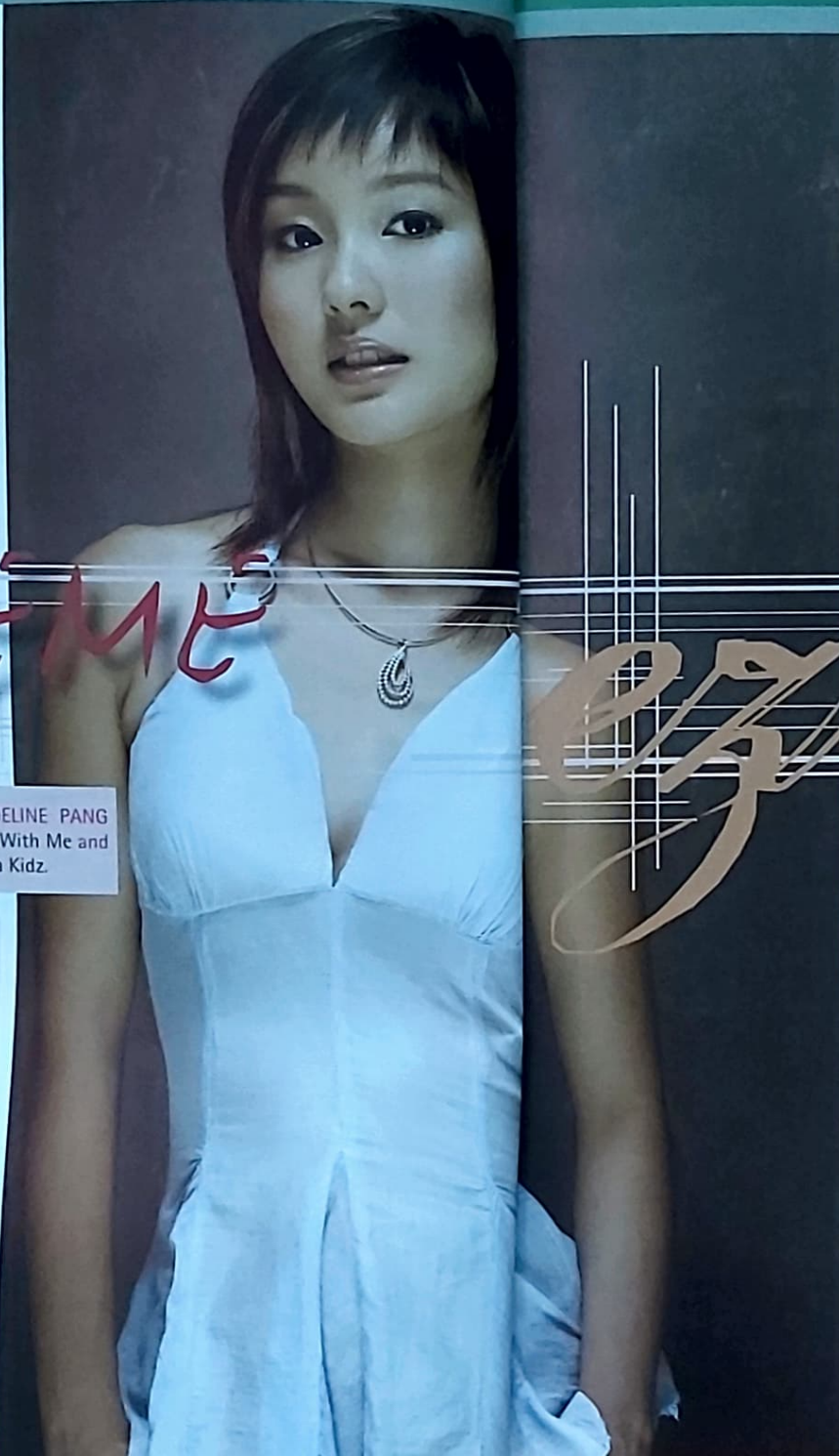
Television's latest ingenue opens up to ADELINE PANG about naughty pranks, that lesbian kiss in *Be With Me* and how much fun she's been having hosting *A Ha Kidz*.

both of you are related?"

They may look different but talent and good looks definitely run in the family. Ezann, unlike other attractive young actresses, is more than just a fresh young face. She's proved that she's got what it takes to wow audiences when she took on one of the controversial leading roles in Eric Khoo's latest, internationally critically-acclaimed movie, *Be With Me*, last year, playing a girl who had an obsession with co-star Samantha Tan.

On that much-publicised kiss that she shared with Samantha Tan, she admits that it had been quite awkward and uncomfortable at first, only because they had been introduced a month before they started filming. The first kiss that they shared actually took place in a pub, when Samantha and Ezann were in reality, already quite tipsy. Ezann recalls that, after that first kiss, she slumped on a couch nearby and felt embarrassed.

On how she eventually managed to overcome



her discomfort, Ezann told *hype*, "It's not that I imagined her to be a guy... I had to stare into her eyes before we kissed, and how can I imagine her as a guy when she's such a beautiful girl? I just told myself to imagine that I really was in love with her."

Ezann showed off her versatility later in the year when she transitioned from dramatic acting to hosting, on *Happy Sunday Kids 3*, an upbeat variety show designed for primary school kids. In her current hosting stint on *A Ha Kidz*, which is, as she describes, "the Chinese version of [popular kids' series] *Hi-5*", complete with three other youthful hosts and two mascots, Ezann is simply, "very happy".

On *A Ha Kidz*, she gets the opportunity to sing and dance too, two passions that she would like to pursue. The children in the show also help to make her job a joy. She recalls a little boy who kept running around until he fell down, only to get up and run around, and fall down all over again, as if it was "not pain at all".

With April Fools' Day coming up, *hype* wondered if the childlike actress has had any memorable experiences, playing pranks or being the butt of someone else's joke. Interestingly, the most memorable prank ever played on her was by adults and happened quite recently. In fact, her sister Ericia had been the mastermind behind it.

During a very eventful trip to Japan last year, where she had a special

guest appearance on *Extreme Japan* (a travel show about Japan, hosted by Ericia and Sho Yokouchi), the entire cast and crew developed an elaborate plot of mischief. Everyone except Ericia switched their rightful roles (for example, Sho pretended to be the soundman) and had Ezann thoroughly confused. The night culminated with Ezann in tears and having to "jing cha" (serve tea, in a formal show of respectful apology) to a fierce Japanese producer, who was in fact a Singaporean cameraman. The pranksters even had the whole trick recorded on tape as a personal souvenir, showing Ezann half laughing and crying at the end.

There were plenty of laughs on the set of *Be With Me* too. In an edited scene, Ezann was supposed to throw a pillow at her on-screen mum when she entered the room. During that scene, her on-screen mum was holding a cute Pomeranian, which incidentally belongs to Eric Khoo. Ezann ended up accidentally hitting the dog with the pillow instead.

The extremely likeable and talented Ezann however, professes to be actually quite an emotional and even pessimistic person in reality. While she can be "crazy" in her wild and happy moments, she prefers to just be quiet a lot of the time.

She need never be pessimistic about her future in the local media, though. Proving her depth and versatility in a tough-as-nails industry in such a short period of time, Ezann Lee's star looks set to continue to rise rapidly.

Catch Ezann Lee in *A Ha Kidz* every Sunday, 10 am, on MediaCorp Channel 8.

## Ezann





WALK THE LINE

We may not have heard of him, but Johnny Cash influenced folk, rock, country and punk music profoundly with his songs of the hard life.

In this biographical movie, we see Johnny's (Joaquin Phoenix) meteoric rise from farm bumpkin to country legend. The movie also reveals the blossoming relationship between Johnny and singer June Carter (Reese Witherspoon), his soon-to-be second wife. However, many issues, including Johnny's unshakeable drug dependency, threaten their happiness, resulting in their divorce and the downward spiral of Johnny's life.

Winner of three Golden Globe Awards (including Best Actor and Best Actress for Phoenix and Witherspoon's powerful performances), this poignant tale of a music legend makes it as sure a winner as 2004's *Ray*. - AARON WILFRED NATHAN



FINAL DESTINATION 3

**Final Destination 3**, the thrilling third instalment to **Final Destination**, promises more action and gore. As with the previous two movies, the main theme of the movie revolves around a bunch of teenagers trying to outwit death. In **Final Destination 3**, high school senior, Wendy Christensen (Mary Elizabeth Winstead), fails to stop the death of a number of her friends, despite receiving a premonition of an impending tragedy that will happen on a roller-coaster ride.

The ones who survive have to deal with a determined Grim Reaper who tries to snuff their candles out in other ways. Wendy and Kevin (Ryan Merriman from *The Ring 2*) frantically try to stay a step ahead of their fates and those of their friends, as they slowly watch each survivor fall into the clutches of death. - STEPHANIE MARILYN MARTIN



THE PINK PANTHER

The Peter Sellers original in 1964, whose series boasted eight movies, now has a prequel in *The Pink Panther* by director Shawn Levy (*Just Married*).

Comic actor Steve Martin (*Cheaper by the Dozen 2*) plays Inspector Clouseau, known for his dreadful sleuthing skills that often result in disasters, the Frenchman's appalling command of English and terrible health. In a nutshell: it's every criminal's dream come true.

In *The Pink Panther*, the clueless inspector lands the case that launches his career when an internationally famous soccer coach is murdered and his priceless diamond is stolen.

Co-starring Academy Award winner Kevin Klein (*De-Lovely*) and pop sensation Beyoncé Knowles (*Austin Powers: Goldmember*), *The Pink Panther* is a gem of a comedy. - NG YAN BO



REAL

**Bend It Like Beckham, Goal**, what's next? **Real** is the latest football themed movie hoping to score a hat-trick at the cinemas. Mixing fiction with fact, **Real** takes you through the lives of five people in New York, Tokyo, Senegal, Caracas and Madrid, itself. Despite their differences, they have a common burning passion in life: Real Madrid football club.

**Real** is the first official film that stars members of the soccer team known around the world for its superb talent, including Raul Gonzalez, Roberto Carlos, Iker Casillas, Luis Figo, and of course, their newest and most expensive addition, David Beckham.

Intertwining actors and professional soccer players requires more than just simple casting and non-Hollywood pedigree directing. Can *The Galacticos* go around the world with this? Place your bets before its release in early February. - SHAUN CHRIS TEO



SYRIANA

Having spent more than a year on research before writing *Syriana* (Best Screenplay and winner of one out of two nominated Golden Globe Awards) has paid off for Stephan Gaghan.

Winner of the Best Screenplay Award for *Traffic*, Gaghan, directs this political oil industry thriller about the people whose lives revolve around the black gold trade. The project includes performances by A-list actors and *Ocean's Twelve* co-stars George Clooney and Matt Damon.

Drawing from a memoir by a former CIA agent, Gaghan merges multiple independent story lines together, ranging from "the players brokering back-room deals in Washington to the men toiling in the oil fields of the Persian Gulf" to give some high-octane fuel for thought. - LOW YUJIN



NORTH COUNTRY

Inspired by a true story, **North Country** follows the trials of a single mother as she ekes out a living for herself and her family as a North Minnesota iron miner after a failed marriage.

Academy Award winner, Charlize Theron, plays Lori Jensen, who despite encountering gender discrimination and sexual harassment in a male dominated environment, continues to push on.

Nominated for two Golden Globes, the actors such as Frances McDormand and Sissy Spacek, alongside a "critically acclaimed supporting cast", deliver a robust performance comparable to *Erin Brockovich*.

The movie is more than just a story about sexual harassment. It is an amazing account of the complexities of human nature when faced with issues that are neither black or white nor politically correct. - LOW YUJIN



# Indie Pendent

More people are riding the independent movie-making wave as technological advances drive down the cost of filmmaking and simplify the production process. YUEN YI YING finds out about the independent filmmaking scene in Singapore.

When people think of movies, they think of multi-million dollar blockbusters with highly paid actors and fantastic special effects. Independent filmmaking is different. Such movies are usually made with low budgets, volunteer actors, lots of goodwill, persistence and little or no special effects.

Mohamad Shaifulbahr, 19, a columnist for MovieXclusive.com, says the main difference between commercial movies and independent movies is that "while major movies provided the audience with escapism, independent ones bring the audience back to earth with the realism of their compelling stories and powerful characters".

He sees an increased interest in independent filmmaking here. He says, "the local scene is definitely blooming! A quick search on the internet reveals a plethora of independent films made by our very own Singaporeans. This [can be] attributed to the wonders of technology that have made the movie-making dream possible in every one who can afford a video camera and editing tools."

Filmmaking isn't just limited to media practitioners anymore. Many people without media experience buy equipment to shoot their script ideas and send these amateur films into competitions like the School Video Award, which has been growing in popularity with just 55 entries submitted in 1999 and as many as 320 entries in 2004. Other competitions include the annual Canon DV Fest, Project Pilot and international film festivals. In addition, funding becomes less of a problem now that there are six funding programmes from the Singapore Film Commission (SFC). The SFC sets aside a budget of about \$5 million annually for film development.

Occasionally, there are free library talks on

independent film making for the public conducted by filmmakers like Colin Goh.

## THE GOOD THINGS

Independent films give the layman a chance to bring his ideas to life. There's always a sense of satisfaction about being able to watch your work on screen. Ismet Bachtar, 30, a Gameaxis magazine editor who has produced 10 short films ranging from three-minutes to 30-minutes, says, "There's nothing like that sense of personal pride from knowing that you've pulled it off and were not subjected to the whims and fancy of anyone else but yourself. Independent filmmaking is a very personal experience unlike made-to-order production work that you get paid for doing."

Ismet continues, "The hook for independent filmmaking, at least for me, is the freedom to experiment with ideas, discovering new ways to tell a story on the strictest of budgets and the chaos of managing very different individuals in any production team. It is always an adventure."

## THE DIFFICULTIES

Leon Cheo, 20, a third-year Film, Sound & Video student from Ngee Ann Polytechnic says that when making independent films, the problems he usually faces are "Lack of money, conflicts and friction with my crew." However, he has some innovative solutions regarding the financial problem. He says, "For money, earn, beg, borrow or steal! Really! Filmmakers are always in search of money for their next project... [W]e can also apply for grants from the Singapore Film Commission (SFC)."

During shoots, it's hard to avoid conflict with your crew members. Leon says, "This friction is always

heightened on a shoot because there are so many people around and the stress level is high. Such conflicts happen all the time, creative or otherwise. The wisest thing is to deal with it immediately. Communication with the crew must always be two-way and frequent because not voicing out any problems will only be detrimental to the crew's morale and the film."

Ismet also experiences difficulties during his shoots. He admitted, "It's hard to shoot films with limited resources on both [time and budget] so we worked on numerous projects where actors volunteered their time and more often than not, the team had to bankroll projects out of our own pockets. In terms of budget, we tried to be as tight as possible, but for our biggest project, *The 4th Door*, we sunk close to \$5,000 for a 20-minute short film shot on miniDV. We did a film fund-raiser that raised enough capital for us to go into production, but even then, I still ate cheese on toast for the longest time afterwards."

He adds, "I've always made a conscious decision to create projects that are within our limitations but ever so often, it takes a lot of convincing and pulling favours to borrow equipment, get actors, or acquire the use of set locations so as a producer, you really got to have thick skin and a lot, a lot of energy."

## COMING UP WITH THE FILM

Charles Ardy, 20, a conscript, entered a Kids in Charge video contest on the now defunct Premiere 12 when he was 12. With two other friends, he made a *Star Wars* show and their entry was aired among other winning entries. Charles was later featured in the Life! section of *The Straits Times*.

Charles now makes spoofs and commercials

for friends' personal entertainment. He says, "My imagination, the world, what I see on the news, Singapore's apparent semi-draconian laws and commercials. Everything I see that inspires me, I turn into satire."

As his shows are usually controversial and political, he doesn't always submit them for competitions. However, there are exceptions - he submitted *Chuck Hardy* as part of an entry test into Nanyang Technical University's (NTU) School of Art, Design & Media. His film was a 10-minute long political satire about a fictional Senator, Chuck Hardy, a character whom Charles describes as an "insane yanky senator who believes that abortion has nothing to do with women and religion but everything to do with cancelling nuclear launches." He was offered a place in NTU, but decided to study at the National University of Singapore (NUS) instead. He submitted the same video to the American Embassy but adds "They never got back to me," he says with a laugh.

## SO YOU WANNA BE A FILMMAKER

Making movies isn't as easy as it seems. Besides a solid script, you'll need lots of hard work and perseverance. Leon advises aspiring filmmakers, "Make more films. The more we make, the more we learn and progress. Blame censorship and the government less."

For Charles, he feels that a good filmmaker must always be "outgoing, have... an open mind, and most importantly, empathy".

Ismet ends off by giving this piece of useful insight. He says, "Get excited about the project and keep the energy going because when it comes to independent filmmaking, your passion is a higher currency than money or time."



# 《生肖传奇》

## 独领本地三维动画片风骚

你对中国神话十二生肖的故事了解吗?新加坡首部三维动画片《生肖传奇》,再次告诉你小时候听过耳熟能详的神话故事。hype记者陈宁颖为你打听这部片子的消息。

本地公司-寰比国际有限公司,在一月二十六日,农历新年之前推出一部约90分钟的本地首部三维动画片《生肖传奇》。该动画片讲述的是家喻户晓的十二生肖神话故事。为什么有十二生肖呢?那是因为玉皇大帝希望人们有时间观念,不然灾难将会发生。玉皇大帝向众生宣告,他要把时间分成十二年一个轮替,还要选出十二种动物作为每一年的代表,人类在那一年出生,那年的代表动物就是他的生肖,而且还会承袭那种动物的特点。

大家并不知道在一个黑暗的沼泽里,有个邪恶的千年树妖已在策划怎么去破坏玉皇大帝十二生肖的选拔赛。

本地作品,当然也需要本地艺人的声音来为动画片增添色彩。其中的两位包括超级红星范文芳和著名93.3FM DJ周崇庆。寰比的商业行销总监(Director of Business Marketing), Mr Wesley Ho表示该公司会聘用这两位艺人的原因在于:他们是最佳人选,因为他们的成就有目共睹,可说是新加坡演艺界和广播界的代表人物。

范文芳在TODAY报章里表示,她一直很希望自己能帮助动画片配音,能参与这部动画片的制作,她觉得十分开心。

剧了解,片子录音工作已结束。对于这两位艺人的表现,Mr Ho 说道:“两位的表现非常好。范文芳对这部片子全情投入;崇庆的表现也很凸出,他简直把那些角色演活了。我们从没想过有人能为这些角色带来这样的色彩。就算是专业配音人也可能无法达到这样的效果。”

《生肖传奇》在制作前,已在康城影展里与中国、泰国和东欧这几个国家签了合约。由于片子当时未制作,而各片商却有信心签下合同,靠的是短短30分钟的预告片。这段预告片得到了媒体发展管理局(MDA)的支持。片子也在数码发展计划下,得到了MDA的资助。到目前为止,《生肖传奇》将会在二十多个国家发行。除了上面提到的国家外,也会在台湾、法国、俄国等地上映。

寰比的执行监制卓韦宾在联合早报的报道里表示:“我们是第一次参加康城影展,《生》是寰比的第一部三维动画英语片,它能获得那么好的反应,给了我们很大的鼓励。我们还在跟其他地方的片商洽谈中,我们估计这次的总交易可以达到至少6位数美元。”

Mr Ho 也表示:希望新加坡人能支持这部本地片子。

这部片子在正式制作前,已得到片商的青睐,走进了国际市场,可见是部让人期待的本地制作。



# MUSIC



DANIELLE ANG catches up with RAFE's talented bassist Juan Chan and guitarist Robin Wau over coffee as they talk about everything about their music.

RAFE was the last group to sign up for 2004's Power Jam organised by Power 98 FM yet they emerged first. Two years from then, they are just as relaxed, but no less assured of the limelight, as they perform gigs, promote their debut album **Everything** released last October, tour with Ronin in the school tour in the first quarter of 2006 and do more power-packed gigs.

Despite their name (Rock And F\*ck Everything), bassist and founding member Juan Chan, 19, defines RAFE's personality as laid-back and mellow. "We're a band [of four guys] just like you and we're having fun. We're down to earth, self-secure and approachable guys that can easily relate to our audience." Decked in jeans and T-shirts, these clean-cut boys have no body piercing, eyeliner or outrageous bleached hair, and look nothing like typical rock bands.

Founding members, vocalist, lyricist and keyboardist Awi Rafael, 19, and Juan started off as jamming buddies with small dreams and a huge passion for music. Robin Wau, 19, of African nationality, was soon recruited as a lead guitarist while drummer Jordan Cheung, 22, joined soon after watching their gig at a club. The birth of RAFE resulted in hit singles, "Everything" and "Perfect Day" (released early October 05) that are constantly on Power 98's airwaves.

Signed on to the Universal label, the guys' debut album **Everything** is out in music stores island wide. The album has a distinct mellow pop-rock flavour, with catchy tunes and emotional self-penned lyrics based on memorable dating experiences and the life

situations of songwriter Awi Rafael. "Awi is a serious songwriter, he has at least three full books [of hand-penned] lyrics. He comes out with the basic [melody] structure, the rest of the band work on our dynamics," piped Juan.

Awi has been writing songs and performing to small crowds since his early adolescent days, which gave him the experience and inspiration for RAFE. Despite being in a band, he is also a solo pub performer at Holland Village's Fosters. Likewise, Jordan Cheung plays regularly with his club band at Indochine.

Juan felt that strong determining factors for new local bands to make it big are good publicity and media coverage. Such awareness sets a stronger trend for more youths to be involved and interested in the local music scene. RAFE hopes to have served as a stepping-stone for other local bands to step out and to broaden the local music scene.

Although they're still establishing themselves, Juan admitted that they do get recognition and praises. Robin added that it's definitely a rush of blood to the head to have all the attention from female fans.

These boys drive the audience so wild that at a recent concert in the Singapore American School, a group of frenzied girls even went onstage to interact with the boys.

However, RAFE feels that they're nowhere near success. Juan says that according to Awi, "the day they finally make it big will be the day a bird hums his song".

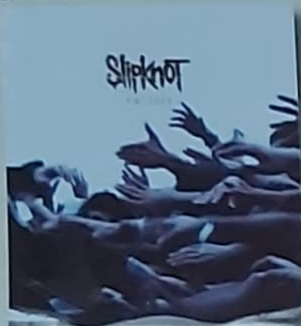
EVERYTHING ABOUT RAFE

Photo: Ivan Azeiteiro



## SLIPKNOT

9.0: Live



These faceless guys continue to bedazzle millions across the globe with their screaming and head-banging antics on this two-CD album.

**9.0 Live** is a compilation of "live" recordings from their world concert tour since March 2004, which included a memorable night of heavy-metal jamming in Singapore last August. This album serves as further evidence of the band's obsession with high notes and their mastery of screaming and head-banging.

Uninitiated Slipknot listeners may find their music too jarring for the ears, but fans will be won over completely as Slipknot continue to bring the house down with 24 non-stop tracks, including immensely-popular ones like "The Blister Exists" and "The Nameless".

You may not quite understand what their music is about, but it doesn't take much to know that their charms will continue to work on die-hard metal fans here. - LOUIS TEO

## INXS

Switch



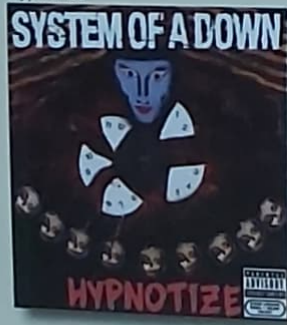
What happens when you create a reality TV show and pick a half-decent singer as the heir to one of Australia's legendary rock bands? You get a bunch of old guys mismatched with a pretty boy for a front man and an album of predictably poppy rock numbers. Michael Hutchence is probably rolling in his grave.

We all hoped that years of experience they had would leave us awestruck at the end of INXS's new album. Instead, **Switch** is a disappointment. Songs like "Devil's Party", "Hot Girls" and "Remember Who's Your Man" are as cheesy as they sound. Although new front man, J.D. Fortune's nice husky voice does good, the lyrics sound like bad poetry. The only songs worth mentioning are "Hungry" and "Afterglow" - which coincidentally sound a little like a U2 song.

Still, you might be able to appreciate it for what it is - commercial pop-rock at its best. - VANESSA FERNANDEZ

## SYSTEM OF A DOWN

Hypnotize



System Of A Down (SOAD) returns with a dual-disc album after a six-month hiatus. **Hypnotize** opens with the band's signature riffing at breakneck speeds with "Attack" and "Dreaming". The quartet's prowess in progressive rock is demonstrated with these two haunting melodies and their highly-infectious beats. Also, the melodious interwoven vocals of vocalist Serj Tankian and chief songwriter-cum-guitarist Daron Malakian on tracks like "Dreaming" and "Tentative" is fast becoming a trademark of the band.

Under the guise of metal music, SOAD continues to surprise and touch us with its sensitivity. After ending off with anti-war anthem "Soldier Side", complete with brooding guitars and bass, the band's political ideologies and worldly philosophies still resound. **Hypnotize** is an avant-garde epic as SOAD continues to distinguish itself from other metal bands with its poignant lyricism and deep tunes. - LOUIS TEO

等了两年, Saya 重新出发。

低沉的嗓音,却没有姐姐-A\*Mei歌声的浑厚有力,于是她唱的是一些商业情歌和流行味较重的舞曲。

主打歌《想念你的歌》翻唱自卖座日本电影《Nana》主题曲。对准了市场,成功为 Saya 这一次重新出击打响第一炮。第二主打《Love Oh Oh》胜在编曲新颖,是专辑里比较突出的舞曲,听久了却像在听蔡依林的歌。其后,一梦蓝的情歌和舞曲倾巢而出。歌曲如出一辙,让人听了就忘。

音乐没有重点,为戏剃头,造型大玩帽子变装秀变成专辑焦点。特地从日本采购回来的“驼帽”和时尚的造型赢了噱头。

等了两年,只听到这样的Saya,心里纳闷:谁还会记得她? - 张启怀

## SAYA

《想念你的歌》



## 恶作剧之吻

电视原声带



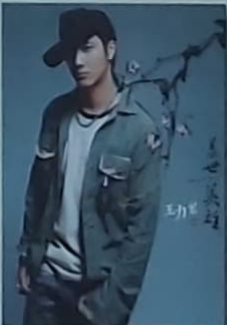
新加坡的朋友也许还没感染到《恶作剧之吻》的热潮,但这个由日本漫画改编的偶像剧已在台湾红翻天。由于是偶像剧,词曲难免离不开情情爱爱。剧中歌曲都紧扣着江直树(郑元畅饰)和袁湘琴(林依晨饰)的爱情故事,一首首动听的歌曲随着女追男情节的发展娓娓唱出。这也是个特别为此偶像剧精心制作的一张专辑。专辑让一些新人崭露头角,其中包括了为张韶涵和范玮琪唱的“如果的事”作曲的王蓝茵。她作词作曲并主唱的片尾曲“恶作剧”,反应不俗,是一首超人气的抒情摇滚歌曲。

铁竹堂成员-Jason与南拳妈妈女主唱-Lara合唱主题曲“Say You Love Me”(rap),加上可爱女声的伴唱,歌曲节奏明快。另外,名作词人-方文山和歌手温岚,也参与了专辑制作。

要是想听些较随意、轻松、以单纯的爱情为主的歌曲,《恶作剧之吻》电视原声带是个不错的选择。- 陈宁曦

## 王力宏

《盖世英雄》



上一张《心中的日月》的Chinked-Out曲风不算首开先河,他却可以大声宣扬其音乐的原创性。所以收到这张的时候,看到宣传稿上打着“Chinked-Out 第二章”,很不以为然。

听了整张专辑,惊艳之情却涌上心头。如果说上一张是开胃菜,那么这次主菜终于上场了。专辑大量运用了京剧的多种不同元素:开场《在梅边》的京剧锣鼓,《花田错》有京剧单字拉音,《盖世英雄》更请来京剧大师本尊李岩来助阵。他玩得义无反顾,单听前三首已感觉精彩至极。之后的《大城小爱》的复古曲调,《让开》和《哥们儿》的中国精神也继续贯彻Chinked-Out 主题。循市场要求,专辑收录了《Kiss Goodbye》和《第一个清晨》,努力延续《Forever Love》和《一首简单的歌》的火热之势。

继续包办所有歌曲制作、编曲和多数乐器演奏,王力宏的才华毋庸置疑,这一次终于把才华和创意发挥得淋漓尽致。恭喜,恭喜。- 张启怀



# 独立音乐响起

独立音乐,英文叫 Indie Music - 非主流、冷门、小众。  
也许你不知道,但它已悄悄登陆了我们这个弹丸小国。hype记者张启怀为你追踪报道。

何谓独立音乐?其实指的就是一些由音乐人自己斥资制作完成的作品。无所谓曲风类型;无所谓低成本与否。重要的是音乐的素质。而去年,我们有机会认识更多独立音乐的狂热分子。

在本地开了一家专门代理亚洲独立音乐的唱片行“梦田制作”,老板-欧伟毅仔细分析了独立音乐专辑在本地普遍销量:陈绮贞的单曲EP在毫无宣传的情况下,销量已在500张以上,最高记录曾经冲破1000张;在滚石唱片公司还没代理发行自然卷的《C'est La Vie》之前,欧老板的店里就静悄悄地卖出300多张专辑。

是的,这样的销售数字不算亮眼。但本地唱片业受中国平行CD和非法音乐下载的影响,主流歌手的唱片销量每况愈下。过去默默做着自己喜欢的音乐的独立音乐人,专辑销量却不退反升,渐渐受到瞩目。

滚石唱片(新加坡)行销经理 Ms Peggy Chang 解释:“网路很发达,大家可以在网站试听。慢慢地,就会有更多人想听到这样的音乐。”

欧老板和乐迷,国立大学中文系学生,陈育能(22岁)也异口同声认为网路是一个很好的传播媒介。

科技的日新月异,促成非法音乐下载的猖獗,却也意外让我们听到了从未听过的美妙乐曲。

《周刊》音乐主编陈宝珠说:“主流音乐越来越难听,不是由‘能看不能听’的偶像主宰,唱的尽是些没营养的泡泡糖歌曲;要不就是一堆翻译曲,毫无原创性可言。幸好还有这些真正为音乐做出努力的‘音乐人’,是lo-fi(低成本),也许并不华丽,却真实诚恳。”

用心做的音乐,终有抬头的一天。不只是在商业上取得小成就,独立音乐人在过去一年也得到了专业奖项和媒体的肯定。

曾担任郑秀文和许茹芸唱片制作人的陈珊妮在台湾金曲奖上勇夺“最佳唱片”和“最佳制作人”。在新加

坡金曲奖的入围名单上,我们也看见自然卷的名字出现在“最佳组合”和“最佳新人”两个组别里。《海峡时报》2005年五大中文专辑中,陈绮贞的《华丽的冒险》和自然卷的《C'est La Vie》也各别占了一席。

但是,大家似乎还是对独立音乐在本地未来的发展缺乏信心。

欧老板说:“新加坡市场太小了,(通常)每张只卖一、两百张,不成气候。”

陈育能希望主流电台能给予独立音乐多一点空间。

Ms Chang 选择乐观地面对:“这个市场还是需要时间,毕竟罗马不是一天造成的。时代会变,你看,庞克音乐也是从以前的非主流变成现在的主流。”

独立音乐人的音乐,我们听到了,也被感动了。你呢?

## 后记:天之骄女陈绮贞

为了这篇文章,访问了杂志主编、唱片公司经理、唱片行老板还有乐迷朋友。每一个人都约而同提到了她。

她今年31岁,出道八年,发行过四张创作大碟。她是陈绮贞。

1998年出道,没有大红特红,大家对她的印象一直停留在《还是会寂寞》和《告诉我》这两首传唱度较高的歌。

没有人预料到,独立制作的《华丽的冒险》销量会在台湾开出红盘,接着的一系列国内外演唱会也场场爆满。

去年十一月,陈绮贞就在本地办了一场音乐会,当时歌迷们把能容纳500个座位的会场给挤爆了。

据欧老板透露,四月的时候,绮贞会再次来到新加坡举行音乐会,所以各位歌迷朋友,千万别错过喽!

在去年众多独立音乐专辑中,为你精心选出四张不容错过的:

《华丽的冒险》陈绮贞  
各大报章杂志的年度专辑。  
听她如何轻轻唱着与生活息息相关的... 伤感的、寂寞的、自私的、琐碎的...  
又是一次华丽的冒险。

《C'est La Vie》自然卷  
简单很美,因为很真。  
自然卷的出现,让其他歌手的音乐和文字显得多余、无聊、做作。  
台湾金曲奖和新加坡金曲奖提名,已是最佳证明。

《还有别的办法吗?》范晓萱  
忘掉唱着儿歌的她吧,给自己一个重新认识她的机会。  
这张lo-fi作品是范晓萱近三年来的生活写照,由她自己包办所有词曲制作。  
格调灰暗深沉,是你未曾睁开耳朵聆听过的范晓萱。

《苏打绿》苏打绿  
属于主流音乐的英式摇滚到了他们手里,变成了美丽的乐章。  
自然卷太另类,泼猴太吵杂,轻松玩太普通。  
苏打绿成为最有可能攻陷流行乐坛的独立乐团。



# Truly Electrifying

Electrico is set to shake up the local music scene again with their new album *Hip City* due out in March. YUEN YI YING reports.

The band settled outside Cineleisure for the interview and, through the pre-interview banter about their plans before their performance at **Lime Sonic Bang** later that night at 8.30pm, you know this group has amazing chemistry together. The four guys and a girl were friendly, casual and generous with their smiles. Of course, the band has had plenty to smile about since they debuted in 2004.

After Electrico's first single "I Want You" hit local radio airwaves, the band shot to phenomenal fame surpassing every other local rock band. "I Want You" hit number one on the Perfect 10 and held third place on Power 98. After that successful first single, they released "Runaway" and "Good Time" - songs from the same high-energy album, **So Much More Inside** only to get an even bigger response from audiences. Their debut album was released regionally and was also on Singapore HMV's best-seller list and they received a nomination in the MTV Asia Awards 2005 for Favourite Artist: Singapore.

All that success must have meant very heavy pressure to do well for their second album. Bass player Desmond Goh, 29, says, "We've got the pressure of not producing this [album] out on time." Indeed, the band had been very busy. Amanda Ling, 20, the keyboardist, was acting in a movie by Kelvin Tong titled **Love Story** due out early this year. Desmond adds, "I go and do modelling actually (pauses). No la, just kidding. Some of us play in other bands, but the main thing is still Electrico. We just want to have fun and do the best for all the things we have currently."

They may seem to be a new kid on the block, but Electrico started out nearly 10 years ago as Electric Company. However, after changes to the line-up, which led to the band becoming a trio, the band became known as Electric Co. for a while. The band revived itself by adding Daniel Sassoon, 30, the guitarist and Amanda before finally coming up with the name Electrico. "I think that's all part of evolution, from 1996 till now," Desmond says of the name changes. Amanda joked behind oversized shades which hid half her face, "Electric, then Elect, then after that E. (laughs)". Desmond jumps in, "Electric E! No la, I think this is the best name." Lead vocalist David Tan, 30, who plays the guitar as well, adds, "We change our name again, we'll have to build it up again, you know what I mean?"

It doesn't matter what the band calls itself though.



Photos: Electrico & Low Yuijin

Daniel explains, "At the end of the day, it's the songs really. You can have things that influence it; like the personality of the band, your performance, how well you interact with the media, how much you push yourself, how hard you work. If you had all of that but you had bad songs, people wouldn't want to listen to you." With that in mind, the band is confident about their new album.

David surprises **hype** by revealing his inspiration. He says, "On the second album, there's a lot about Singapore. A lot of the issues are common in other countries. It's not like Majulah Singapura that kind of stuff, it's really subtle." Desmond explains, "The new one is edgier, less 'poppy', but still catchy and more in your face. It's still as eclectic as the first album, there's fast [and] slow, and different genres."

David continues, "The new album is more Electrico because on the first album, a lot of the songs were written maybe eight, nine years ago, so it doesn't capture Electrico as much as this album does. The new album was totally done with this line-up."

Daniel adds, "The first one, a lot of it we were playing it safe, but with the second, we decided to take a few risks. I think it's also because the band has had time to develop as the five of us, so more of our personalities come out in this album. Dave writes the basic melody and the rest of the band puts it together and adds their own parts. Every song has all of us in it."

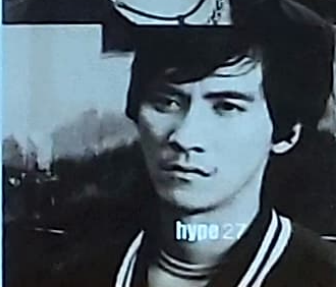
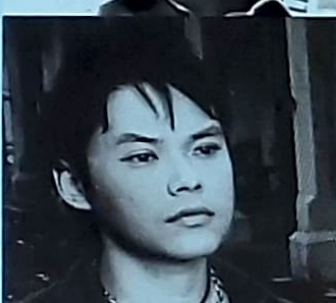
Desmond elaborates, "Each of us has our own styles and influences. This is just a common ground."

On the upcoming album, the band has also collaborated with Rivermaya, a band from the Philippines whom they befriended at the MTV Asia Awards 2005. Desmond says, "We wrote a song, sent it to them and called them to do their magic and what we heard is very awesome!" Daniel adds, "It's a very laidback and beautiful song."

As expected, the local music scene has changed since Electrico rose to fame. Other local bands are starting to become popular. However, the competition doesn't faze the band at all. Daniel says, "The more the merrier, isn't it? It takes more than one band to make a scene. It takes every single band put together to give choices to the audience, I think it's great."

David added, "When we first started, one of the biggest things we wanted to do was to stir up the scene again. The fact that there are more bands means it's working. Everyone can ride the wave." Daniel continues, "It's anyone's game to take it to the next level."

Desmond believes their new album will raise the bar once again. He says, "We believe what we have right now is on par or even better than the first album actually. So we're looking forward to people's reactions to it."





# NEW FIVE/11



B.U.M. Equipment men's 1/2 fitness jacket \$49  
B.U.M. Equipment t-shirt \$19

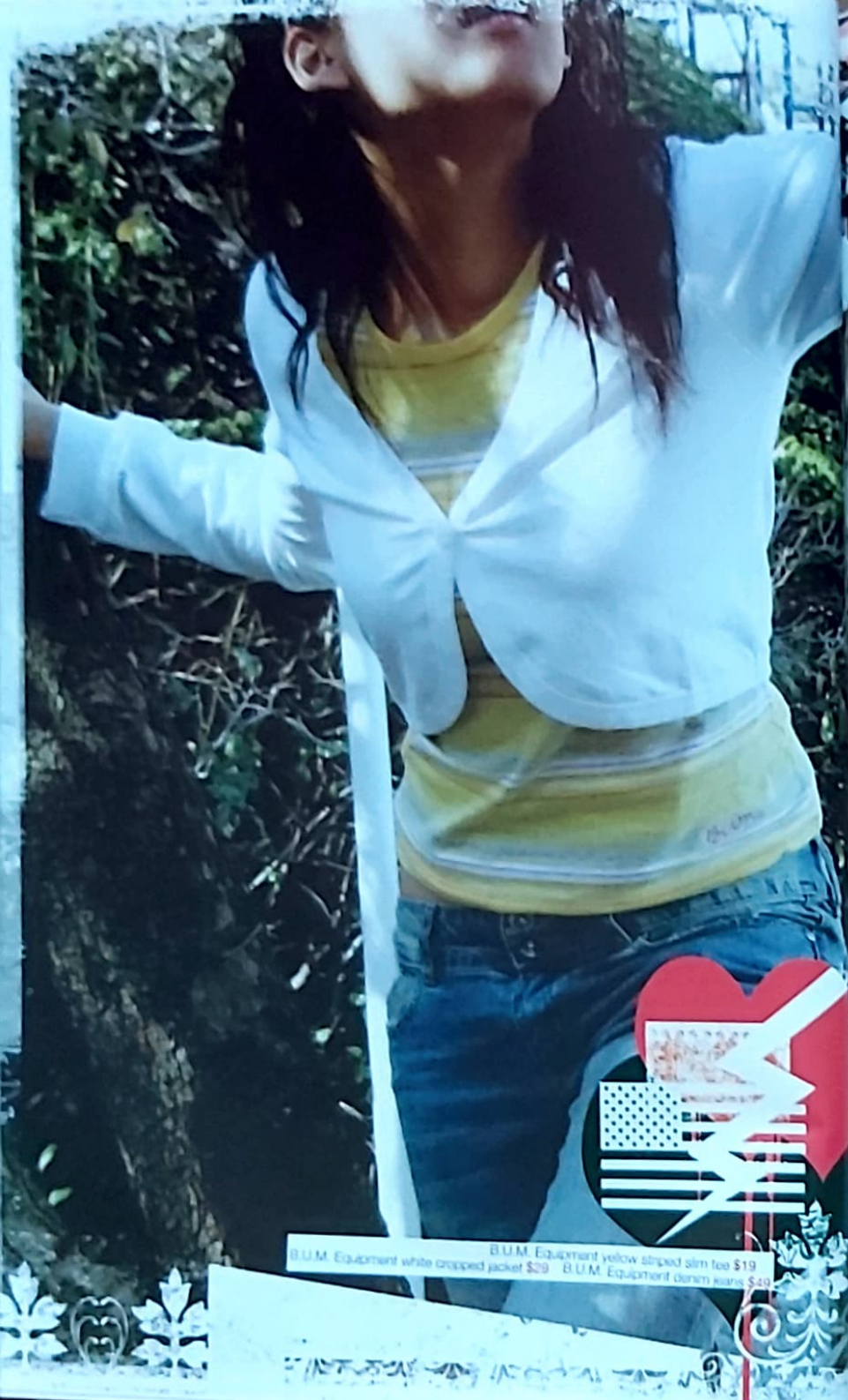


Coordinated by James Tan,  
Stylist and photographed by Christine Cheong  
on location in NYC.  
Models: Benji, Shila & Stephanie.  
Artwork by Lisa Weisz and Kimberly Shan.



B.U.M. Equipment down jeans \$49  
Dr. Martens Boots over foot pumps \$139





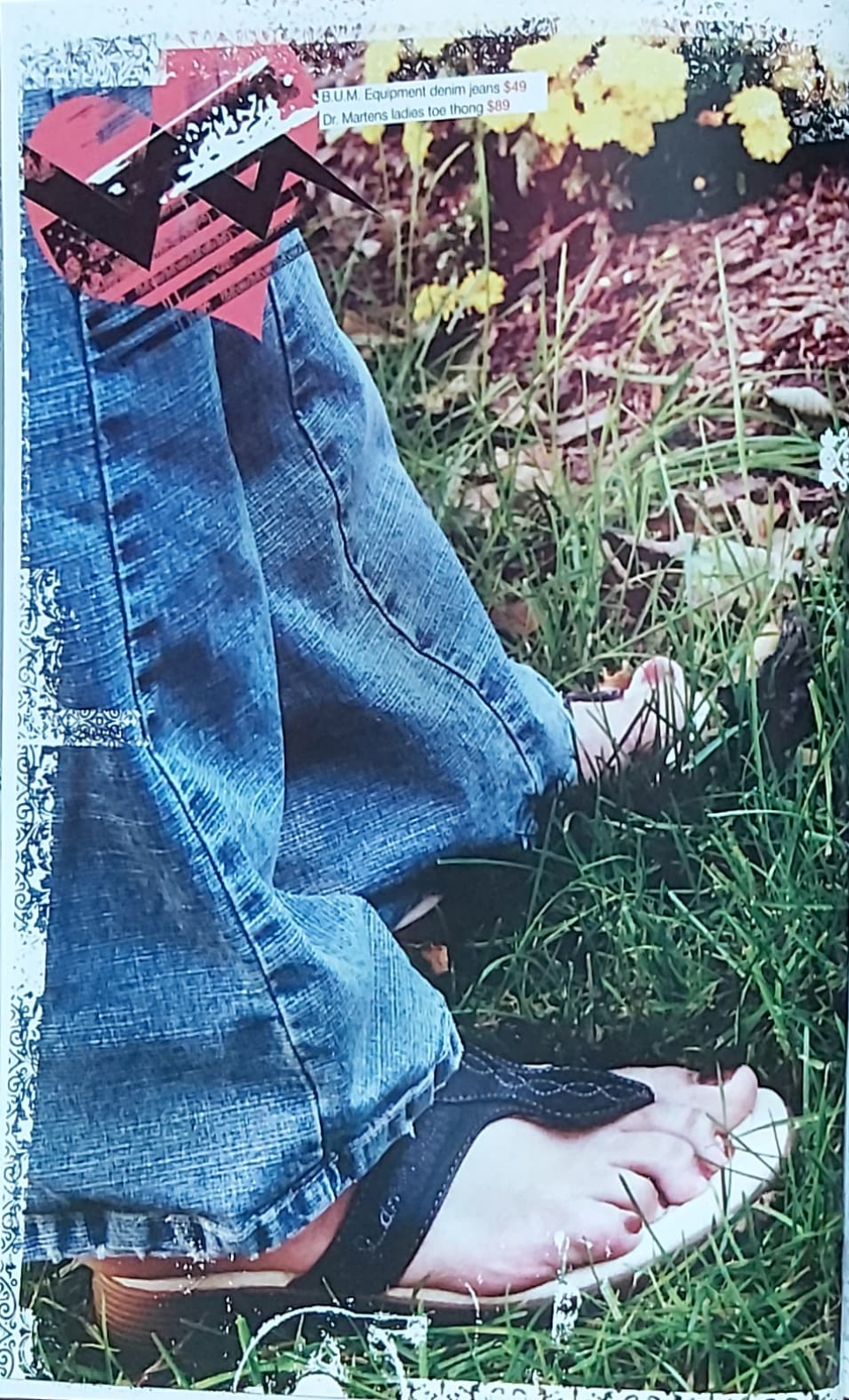
B.U.M. Equipment white cropped jacket \$29  
B.U.M. Equipment yellow striped slim tee \$19  
B.U.M. Equipment denim jeans \$49



B.U.M. Equipment white tank top with motif \$23  
B.U.M. Equipment pink 1/2 cropped jacket \$49  
B.U.M. Equipment long denim jeans \$49

B.U.M. Equipment polka dotted tank top \$23  
B.U.M. Equipment white cropped jacket \$29  
B.U.M. Equipment denim skirt \$29





B.U.M. Equipment denim jeans \$49  
Dr. Martens ladies toe thong \$89



B.U.M. Equipment cargo pants in navy \$53  
Dr. Martens men's foldover collar boots \$179





B.U.M. Equipment white tank top with motif \$23  
B.U.M. Equipment pink 1/2 cropped jacket \$49  
Bag: model's own



B.U.M. Equipment denim jeans \$53  
Dr. Martens Men's cross-strapped velcro shoes \$49



# Breath of Fresh air

You won't be able to light up at hawker centres and eating outlets in July. How is the growing group of new smokers – the young woman, responding to more restrictions and aggressive and targeted anti-smoking campaigns involving celebrities? NG YAN BO investigates ahead of May 31's World No Tobacco Day.

The one thing Clara Ng never leaves her house without is her box of Marlboro Lights. Since picking up smoking three years ago, the 21-year-old freelance photographer spends at least \$300 a month on cigarettes, smoking more than 10 sticks a day.

She's one of many young female smokers in Singapore, whose numbers have been escalating, even as the overall percentage of smokers has decreased to "one of the lowest in the world", according to Health Promotion Board (HPB).

The National Health Surveys say that in 1992, 2.8% of the female population smoked. The figure rose to 5.2% in 1998 and then 6.6% in 2004. Choo Lin, Manager of the National Smoking Control Programme (NSCP) of HPB noted that, "If this trend is left unchecked, Singapore will experience a multifold increase in lung cancers among females in the coming years." NSCP saw laws introduced to restrict the sale of cigarettes to those below 18, the issuing of health

warnings on cigarette packs and the disallowing of tobacco advertising.

On top of hitting consumers in the pocket, a packet of 20 Marlboro cigarettes now costs about \$11, up from \$6.50 in 2002, thanks to increased tobacco taxation, the latest of the government's new efforts to discourage smoking are designating more public areas where smoking is prohibited.

Since last October, smoking at bus-stops/interchanges, swimming complexes, open air stadiums, public toilets, and community centres attracts a fine of up to \$500. You can't light up at hawker centres/coffee shops from July, and after next July, even the traditional smoking strongholds of entertainment clubs and pubs will not allow you a puff or two.

## CAMPAIGNS JUST FOR YOU, GIRL

Supplementing these efforts are campaigns to help

smokers quit and others not to pick up the habit. To some, these almost annual anti-smoking campaigns here are a waste of money and effort.

Eugene Seah, 24, a National University of Singapore (NUS) undergraduate lamented, "I keep seeing these [anti-smoking campaigns] around, but the number of smokers doesn't seem to be decreasing. I walked past another [campaign] a few months ago... the pink one [Fresh Air for Women campaign], and I think a lot of money are being wasted on production cost and everything. 'Cos ultimately, if smokers wanna quit, they can do so themselves."

In response to similar sentiments, the HPB has changed its approach in organising campaigns. Choo acknowledges the "unique challenges while reaching out to younger audiences. These include the target group being highly resistant to traditional, hard-sell anti-smoking messages and that they are largely indifferent to health messages as serious smoking-

related diseases are not seen as relevant to them as they are still young."

Possibly the first campaign to focus on the fairer sex is the Fresh Air for Women (FAFW) campaign, launched last July. Targeting women aged 18 to 24, the campaign hopes to educate and motivate young women like Clara Ng to quit smoking, and enjoy a smoke-free lifestyle.

Joint FAFW organiser with the HPB, is Asian PR Werkz, whose Account Director, Julie Chiang explains, "We evaluated the needs of young women and realised that the current quit smoking services do not provide the emotional and community support that most women depend on. As such, FAFW 2005 was developed to meet these needs and to support females smokers through their quit journeys."

In place of gruesome photos and in-your-face reality ads, FAFW takes a softer and more encouraging approach in:



• Girl Talk Chat Session, where ex-smokers share their experiences.

• Girlfriend Share-Line, where ex-smokers let smokers know that they are not alone, and

• Shop and Step In, where Guardian Pharmacy provides information on smoking, etc.

Instead of using traditional media, the FAFW is also using new media (ie. online marketing, blogging, etc.) to connect with the tech-savvy target group.

To further promote the campaign, the FAFW has a star-studded line-up of ambassadors, including Member of Parliament Dr Lily Neo, Banyan Tree Gallery Managing Director Claire Chiang; host and Nominated Member of Parliament Eunice Olsen; **Gotcha!** host Howard Lo and celebrity blogger Wendy Cheng (better known as Xia Xue).

Chiang said, "The ambassadors are role models for our target audience as they are successful people in their own capacity and respected by our target audience. They show that one does not need to smoke in order to be happy, successful or attractive. As our Ambassadors are also high profile community leaders and celebrities, they can help increase the outreach of the FAFW messages to the audience from ground level."

On Jan 14, they brought a slew of celebrities, including Jamie Yeo and Singapore Idol Taufik Batisah to connect with their female fans at Plaza Singapura.

Jamie is excited to be part of this campaign. "I want to set up a good example to youths who believe that smoking is cool. You do not need to smoke to fit into a certain social group or feel 'grown up'. I have never smoked in my entire life, and I still feel great."

Lin Jing Xuan, 18, of Jurong Junior College visited the FAFW launch at Orchard because she was "curious at what it was about". "Although I don't smoke, I learnt a few stuff like why smoking is bad for health."

Bank teller Wendy Liu, 21, thinks that campaigns like these will help Singapore reduce the amount of smokers. "People need encouragement and support to [quit]. Plus now with all the bans, I think it's an even better time to try to appeal to them to quit."

From August 2004 till December 2005, FAFW has raised about \$3.9 million in sponsorship. Phone calls to quit smoking help lines have also doubled since the campaign, and the official website, <http://www.fresh-air-for-women.com> has seen 4,500 unique visitors. Choo also announced that after a survey of about 200 people, the FAFW campaign and messages has a 90% awareness islandwide.

"The campaigns are here to create awareness,

and provide people with the necessary tools to think and take action. So far, the response has been encouraging," she adds. The full figures from the campaign will be evaluated by a study at the end of the programme this year.

Air stewardess Nurul Rosaline, 25, thinks smoking campaigns might be the key to helping smokers quit. "I'm not ready to quit la, maybe if I get pregnant I will. When the time comes, I think I will [seek] help from these campaigns [because] then I will have someone to talk to. Easier for me to give up [with] encouragement."

#### THE MEN DO GET IT, TOO

If you didn't already know, Singapore Idol winner Taufik Batisah and Class 95FM DJ Glenn Ong used to be heavy smokers.

At 12, Taufik got his older friends to buy cigarettes for him. He even admired how cool he looked with a cigarette. Then, he was affected by a throat infection so bad it almost sunk his music career. By choosing music over cigarettes, he beat Sylvester Sim to be the first Singapore Idol.

But quitting was tough. "Because I have a strong motivation, it helped. I believe my personal determination made it easier for me to say no to cigarettes. My advice to those trying to quit is to find a strong circle of support, be it friends or family, and keep yourself busy and occupied so you have less opportunities to feel bored or restless, which are times when cravings often hit. Exercise is a great way to distract yourself and it also lifts your mood, making it easier to fight the temptations."

The anti-smoking ambassador believes that these campaigns can only help to an extent. "Yes, I am confident that quit smoking campaigns work, which is why I am involved in one now. [But] ultimately, the individual must still take that step to quit."

Class 95FM DJ Glenn Ong used to be described by fellow DJ Rod Monterio as the guy who "goes for smoke breaks all the time". Now, his very happy wife Jamie Yeo will tell you that, "No, he doesn't [smoke] at all anymore. He quit a year ago and never looked back. He just woke up one day and didn't feel like it. I've been praying about it and I know it has to be God who put that sudden distaste for cigarettes in him."

According to Choo, "We want to explain to them that by quitting smoking, there are so much gains, as you can see from the quotes that we've put up - 'more energy', 'better sex' - they are all very relevant to this target audience!"

## WOMEN & SMOKING

Research done by the Royal College of Physicians showed that nicotine makes in cigarettes possibly more addictive than heroine or cocaine.

A Dutch research team has also found out that smoking actually causes more harm to women than men. According to the research, smoking can cut up to 11 years of a woman's life expectancy, while only cutting up to 3 years for males.

Smoking also makes women more prone to breast cancer, and affects the reproductive system. Pregnant moms who smoke instill nicotine receptors in the child, increasing the chances of the child growing to be a smoker.

## WHY WOMEN SMOKE?

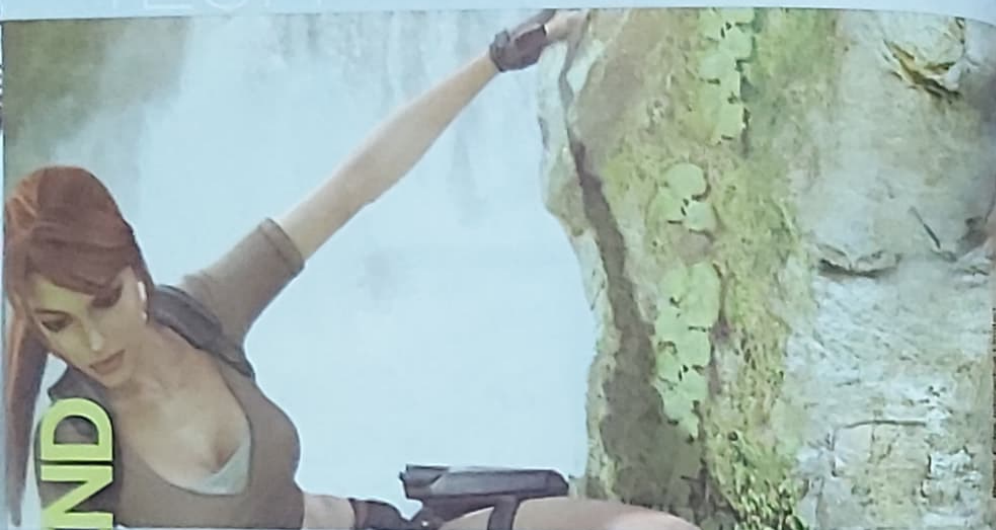
Asian PR Werkz Account Director Julie Chiang gives her theory on the surge of female smokers over the past few years. " [In my opinion], Modern women are independent and earn more than they used to. They no longer feel that they need social approval when they do things. With this independence... socially and monetary, they are doing things that men used to do. Like smoking and drinking. In a way is to show that they have made it and they are no longer the weaker sex. They are equal with the men."

MediaCorp artiste and 98.7FM DJ Jamie Yeo, also believes it's probably from "the perception that smoking is cool from movies. [And women are more successful now,] hence this might increase the number of women having difficulties dealing with stress."

Nurul Rosaline, 25, an air stewardess who took up smoking about 7 years ago, tells **hype** why she smokes, "Everyone around me smokes. It's a way to bond with your friends and colleagues like on smoke breaks. Besides, it's a good feeling to smoke."







Lara Croft is brought back to life in this new instalment of the Tomb Raider series. SERAPHINA WOON gives you the delicious details.

Lara Croft returns leaner, meaner and larger than life and her latest conquest is the Xbox 360. The new Tomb Raider game is ripping at the seams with tons of new features, better graphics and a more agile and realistic Croft.

This time, production company Crystal Dynamics takes over from Core to complete the immense task of animating the lovely but deadly Croft and developing a game that leaves little room for mistakes.

In **Tomb Raider: Legend**, Croft ventures deep into the Himalayas to confront her past, encountering new puzzles and more vicious enemies.

**Tomb Raider: Legend** was designed especially with Microsoft's new brain child, the Xbox 360, in mind. The Xbox 360 is 10 times as powerful as its predecessor, the Xbox, and it's no wonder that the graphics in **Legend** are so incredibly realistic. The majority who don't have Xbox 360 will be relieved to know that the game also runs on the older version of the Xbox. While the previous Tomb Raider games were designed for the Playstation, using the next-generation consoles is a huge step forward for the makers of this game.

The game itself is a visual feast, with especially outstanding improvements leading to Croft's newly enabled agility and fluidity of movement. Much work has also been done to make this dangerous lady more real. Whether you look at Croft's facial features, or her defined collar bones and tendons, you notice that she certainly looks more life-like than ever, which is a good thing since many of us have already seen Angelina Jolie play her.

Fans of the game will also thank Crystal Dynamics

for removing the grid-based system of the game, enabling Croft to now swing and jump seamlessly without having to take awkward movements back, as in the previous Tomb Raider games.

Other features such as Croft's enhanced selection of arsenal such as her new grenade launcher and assault rifle, exciting new locations like the West African wilderness and puzzles make this game a promising revival to the series that was losing its initial buzz.

Jerlyn Teng, 22, a avid fan of Tomb Raider on the Playstation is buzzing with excitement over the new **Legend** game. "I'm quite sure this new instalment is going to be much better than the rest. Just based on what I saw from the preview, it looks much more lifelike than the previous games," she says.

Jerlyn also feels that this move to exploit the Xbox 360's muscle power is a good step forward for the entire Tomb Raider franchise. She adds, "It's always very important to keep up with the latest advances in technology. Especially in the gaming realm, things move very fast and in order to keep up with the trends, you have to constantly upgrade and make use of the next generation consoles and the Xbox 360 is the first one [next gen console] on the market. The graphics alone offer much to get excited about and most importantly, the gameplay will be much more smooth, with more intelligent and challenging enemies".

In case this game sounds too good to be true, a sneak preview of the game is available on the official website, [www.tombraider.com](http://www.tombraider.com) for fans to see. **Legend** is expected to be out in local stores by May.

"I'm going to make him an offer he can't refuse", could be prophetic of this upcoming game that's likely to be too good to overlook, STEPHANIE MARTIN reports.

Like sequels, most movie-based games don't live up to our expectations, and when it's a game based on a really, really good movie, you expect to be doubly disappointed. Which is why even a gaming juggernaut like EA (Electronic Gaming) taking on arguably the best gangster movie of all time – **The Godfather**, didn't inspire much confidence.

Damien Tay, 19, a Mechanical Engineering student at Singapore Polytechnic, summed it up when he said, "I'm an avid player of Xbox games and while I can't wait for Xbox 360 to come out, I'm really wondering about **The Godfather** game because I really loved that movie, and games [like these] sometimes have the potential to ruin a movie's true worth."

Other die-hard fans of the movie are probably as terrified at the prospect of the great legacy being butchered by turning virtual. But one has to remember that EA Games boasts some of the best games in the market like **Black & White 2**, **Battlefield 2** and **Need for Speed Most Wanted**.

Produced by Paramount Pictures, **The Godfather: The Game** is expected out by March for Xbox 360 consoles.

The non-linear videogame will have gamers on the edge of their seats as they step into mafia-controlled New York set in 1945 to 1955. You can expect blood shed, brutal violence and clever manipulation. To retain the essence of the original movie, the game will feature many plot elements from the classic film directed by Francis Ford Coppola and will revolve around the trials and tribulations of the player as he battles between trying decisions such as which sides to take, to kill or not to kill, fighting off rival families and many obstacles to become Don. As in the movie, the main themes – power, manipulation and the desire for complete control, still remain.

Interestingly, gamers will have the chance to take on their own Italian-American character and engage in dirty underground work. However, they will have to bear the consequences for whatever decisions they make in the game. For example, if you require a favour from someone important, you can physically threaten the person to a certain extent, but you will be penalised in your crime-watch level, should you cross the line. It's just like real life, if you want that kind of respect, you've gotta earn it. There is a panel which displays the tasks you have to complete to move to the next level.

The game resembles the movie in many ways, one being the exact physical resemblances of the characters to the main actors like Marlon Brando (Don Vito Corleone) and James Caan (Sonny). T

**The Godfather: The Game** is also alluring because of its open-endedness, meaning there will be endless paths and choices for the player, with their attendant consequences. That's as real as it gets.

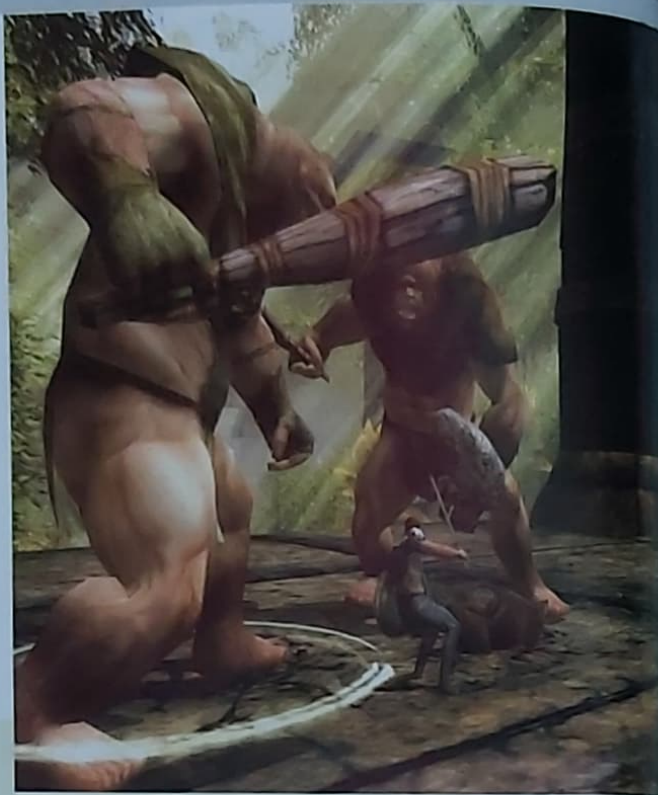
Photo: EA Games

THE GODFATHER: THE GAME



# DUNGEONS & DRAGONS: ONLINE

Photo: Turbine, Inc



Anyone familiar with **Dungeons & Dragons** will realise that this classic pen and paper role-playing game (RPG) is why we have some great computer RPGs. Yet with the advent of Massive Multiplayer Online ones (MMORPGs), it's strange that no one has thought of bringing the dice-rolling classic online till now.

Produced by Turbine, Inc and slated for release in the first quarter of this year, the game takes place on the continent of Xen'drik in the realm of Eberron, one of many **Dungeon & Dragons** campaign settings.

Players can choose from different races and classes as their avatar before they set off adventuring with other like-minded would be heroes.

Stormreach is based on the 3.5 Edition rules of **Dungeons & Dragons** and hopes to differentiate itself from other popular MMORPGs like **World of Warcraft** in gameplay structure. For example the player-vs-player element, found in most MMORPGs, was removed to promote teamwork. Adventurers are also only rewarded with experience points and loot when they complete a quest—instead of getting them off each monster they kill. Only the party that accepts the quest will be adventuring in the particular area.

Stormreach also requires players to be "skilled". Therefore, how well they move or target their enemy determines the longevity of their character, rather than just having an excellent set of equipment. — LOW YOUJIN

# THE ELDER SCROLLS IV: OBLIVION

If you are a fan of **Morrowind** or if you are simply looking for a good single-player role-playing game (RPG) of epic proportions, get ready for **Oblivion** when Bethesda Softworks LLC unleashes it in March.

Set in Cryodill, the capital of the fantasy world of Tamriel, you, the protagonist, must find the heir of the assassinated Emperor Uriel Septim to shut the gates of Oblivion. These gates, which begin to appear without the watchful gaze of the Emperor, are portals to the underworld from which demons try to invade Cryodill and the rest of Tamriel.

Like the rest of the series, the gameplay is non-linear, allowing players to fully explore Cryodill and its surroundings before they embark on the arduous task of saving Tamriel.

Apart from what Bethesda promises to be breath-taking graphics, and new in-game physics that allow players to completely manipulate their environment (shooting a bucket off a table so it will fall into a trap and activate it, for example), **Oblivion** also introduces a revolutionary artificial intelligence (AI) system called Radiant AI. With this, non-player characters can make their own decisions based on their personalities and environment.

**Oblivion** also boasts thousands of hours in the recording studios creating dialogues for the NPCs (non-playing characters). Some of the voice actors are Patrick Stewart, who voiced the Emperor and Sean Bean—Boromir from the **Lord Of The Rings** movie—who voices the Emperor's heir. — LOW YOUJIN

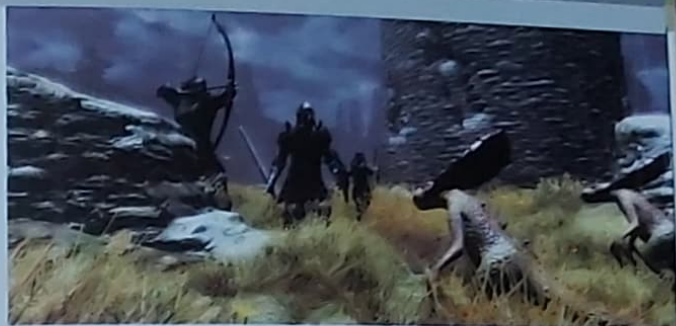


Photo: Bethesda Softworks LLC, a ZeniMax Media company



# SIEMENS AF51

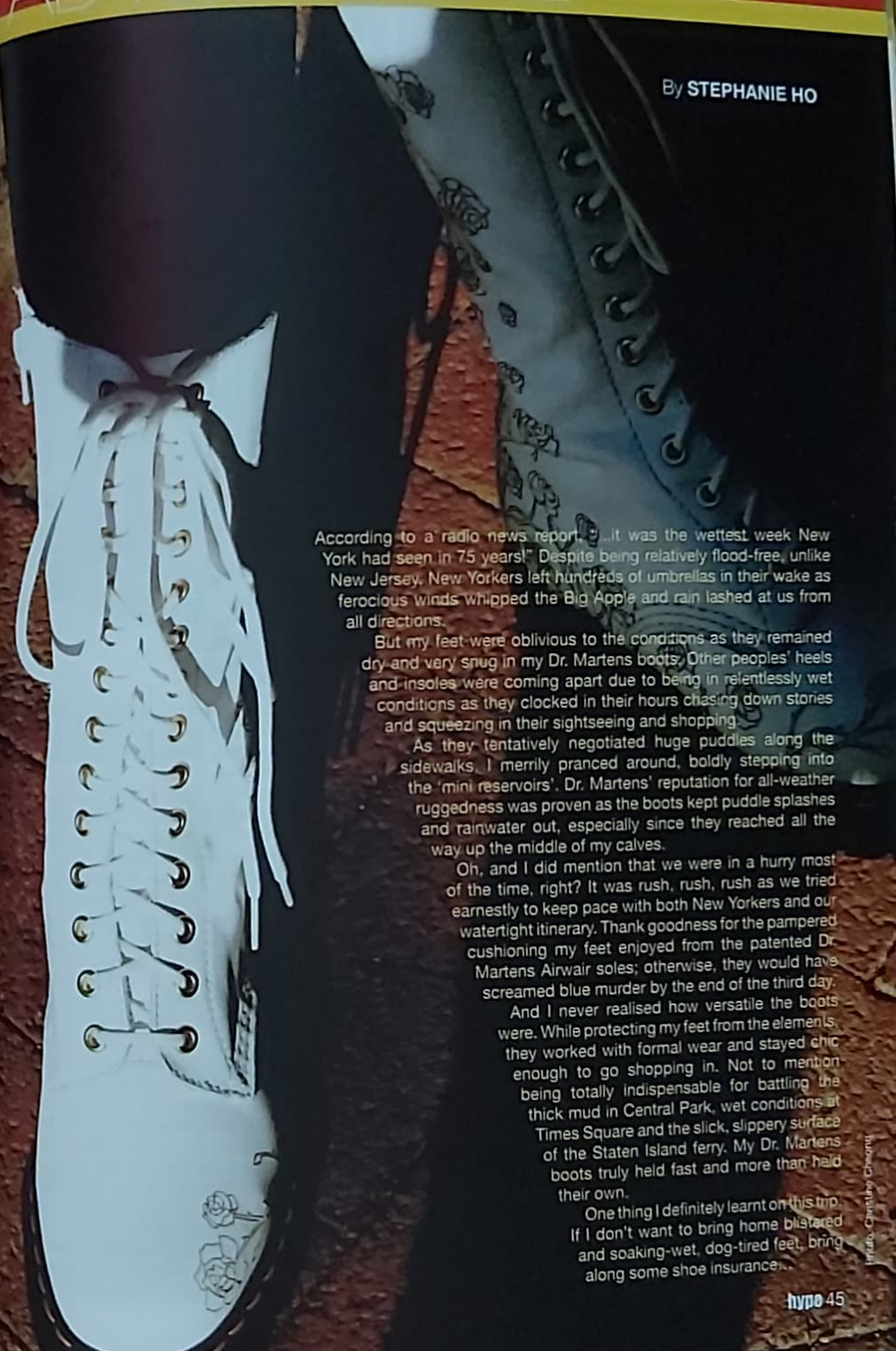


Users looking for stylish yet features-laden Siemens phones at affordable prices can find their answer in the Siemens AF51, one of three phones from the company's new A-series. The AF51 comes with two display screens, an external one, with a reflective effect and an internal one, which has a scratch-resistant surface.

According to BenQ Mobile, Siemens' official licensee, this clamshell phone is the "first in this segment" to provide full colour for both display screens, at 65,536 colours each. Another feature of the AF51 is its Incite Service Light Indication, an LED on the front that lights up to signal that users have incoming SMSes or missed calls.

The AF51 also offers polyphonic ringtones in 32 chords and applications including a currency converter, birthday reminder. It supports GPRS, WAP and J2ME for Java games and comes in two colours, Dolphin Grey and Panther Black. — JESSICA CHIA

By STEPHANIE HO



According to a radio news report, "it was the wettest week New York had seen in 75 years!" Despite being relatively flood-free, unlike New Jersey, New Yorkers left hundreds of umbrellas in their wake as ferocious winds whipped the Big Apple and rain lashed at us from all directions.

But my feet were oblivious to the conditions as they remained dry and very snug in my Dr. Martens boots. Other peoples' heels and insoles were coming apart due to being in relentlessly wet conditions as they clocked in their hours chasing down stories and squeezing in their sightseeing and shopping.

As they tentatively negotiated huge puddles along the sidewalks, I merrily pranced around, boldly stepping into the 'mini reservoirs'. Dr. Martens' reputation for all-weather ruggedness was proven as the boots kept puddle splashes and rainwater out, especially since they reached all the way up the middle of my calves.

Oh, and I did mention that we were in a hurry most of the time, right? It was rush, rush, rush as we tried earnestly to keep pace with both New Yorkers and our watertight itinerary. Thank goodness for the pampered cushioning my feet enjoyed from the patented Dr. Martens Airwair soles; otherwise, they would have screamed blue murder by the end of the third day.

And I never realised how versatile the boots were. While protecting my feet from the elements, they worked with formal wear and stayed chic enough to go shopping in. Not to mention being totally indispensable for battling the thick mud in Central Park, wet conditions at Times Square and the slick, slippery surface of the Staten Island ferry. My Dr. Martens boots truly held fast and more than held their own.

One thing I definitely learnt on this trip. If I don't want to bring home blistered and soaking-wet, dog-tired feet, bring along some shoe insurance.



# The Wonderful World of Fan Fiction



Watch a movie or read a book and you often end up hating the ending. Most of us believe we'd come up with something better given half the chance, and that is the first step into the magical and private world of fan fiction, discovers **SABRINA CHEW**.



JK Rowling announced that she will be writing the final book in the **Harry Potter** series this year. But you don't have to wait to 2007 to satisfy your craving for the further adventures of Harry, Hermione and Ron. As often as every week, writers from all over the world take part in fan fiction writing challenges on **The Sugar Quill**, a website dedicated to Harry Potter fan fiction.

According to encyclopedia **Wikipedia**, it "is fiction written by people who enjoy a film, novel, television show or other media work, using the characters and situations developed in it and developing new plots in which to use these characters".

While some sites have dated fan fiction to the late 1960s, in response to science fiction series like **Star Trek**, with its legions of fans, interest has been overwhelmingly renewed with the **Harry Potter** series which has captured the imagination of millions.

An Internet search on "Harry Potter fan fiction" alone will offer you more than five million results, and that's just the tip of the iceberg.

In these forums, authors post their stories online for people to read and critique. Sometimes, the stories

posted can even come in instalments, so you don't get to know the ending until you follow each instalment to their conclusion. As with all stories, fan fiction can be split up into many genres.

Jennie Levine, 33, a.k.a. Zsenya, is a co-founder of the popular Harry Potter fan fiction site called **The Sugar Quill**. Speaking of her motivation in creating the site in an email interview with **hype**, she said, "My friend Arabella and I wanted to create a website where we could not only archive the fan fiction that we liked, but also where we could help other writers improve."

The writers may not be professional in this case, but the process of getting published is pretty serious. According to Jennie, "A big part of **The Sugar Quill** is the beta-reading (editing) system. Authors are required to work with one of our official beta-readers before posting a story, so you know that a lot of work and thought has gone into the stories in our archive."

As a writer of fan fiction herself, Jennie draws her inspiration from just about anywhere. This includes sources like "people we know [and] experiences we've had". She added, "For example, I lived in Budapest for a year, and always loved the Margaret Island there. In one of my stories, I mentioned Margaret Island, in passing, as a place with a lot of magic. It's fun to be able to write about places that you know."

These forums and websites are frequented by lovers of fan fiction and comments are freely given to those who post their stories online. For those unfamiliar

with this imaginative community, it might be hard to understand why some people are so passionate and sometimes even obsessive about shaping and enriching this make-believe world.

According to Jhonny Su, 16, a high school student from Cerritos, California, USA, over an online fan fiction forum discussion, "The interesting thing about fan fiction is that it uses plots, characters, and settings from the base [story], yet opens up a new storyline and side-characters with it."

As an avid reader of fan fiction, Ouyang Songde, 23, a National Serviceman, feels that it is "a great avenue for fans to contribute their ideas to the original storyline". He added that fan fiction "helps fans to improve their writing ability too". Songde also indicated that fan fiction can also be a big source of entertainment. "[I get a] sense of awe, wonder and fulfilment of how much greater the story [had become]."

In light of this, fan fiction instantly becomes yet another avenue for budding writers to explore and a place they can 'test the market'.

With so many genres and writers to choose from, how does one separate the good from the bad? While we're always criticising, we should probably bear in mind that the definition of what's good and what's bad is highly subjective.

According to Jhonny, "A good fan fiction has to be relevant to the main [story], but at the same time very unique that it can stand on its own, without the main

story as a guide."

Songde, on the other hand, feels that bad fan fiction is "illogical nonsense that deviates largely from where [the main story] had continued."

He believes that, "[In] a work of fiction, there are boundaries which the writer should adhere to."

Bad fan fiction can sometimes get readers quite emotional even though the authors are amateurs and hardly receive any compensation for their efforts. Songde admitted that he sometimes feels "disgust at [the] author's lack of proper vision...However, [my] view on [the] original won't change".

Though there are many supporters of fan fiction, there are probably just as many who are either unaware of its existence or uninterested. As compared to Singapore, one can find more passionate fan fiction readers and writers in countries like Japan and the United States.

Meiji University Law undergraduate, Takayama Hiroto, 23, says that in an email interview, he doesn't really read fan fiction because "some of them are too 'dirty'". True, some fan fiction is laden with erotic undertones but fortunately, in many sites, fan fiction with any sexual references are labelled accordingly.

In spite of the risk of reading something you might hate, fan fiction still holds the lure and appeal of creative stories by imaginative authors. Who knows, you might just chance upon the ending you, yourself, had in mind.



## FOREVER ODD

Dean Koontz



Celebrated novelist Dean Koontz returns to the shelves with the highly-anticipated follow-up to 2003's *Odd Thomas*. Koontz, whose numerous suspense novels take up top positions with amazing regularity in *New York Times's Bestsellers* list, revisits the bizarre yet endearing Odd in this sequel. The protagonist is still both blessed and cursed with the uncanny ability to communicate with the dead.

The thriller resumes where Koontz last left Odd – in the company of a colourful cast of spectres. However, things turn awry when Odd's childhood chum gets abducted by nemesis Datura and her cronies of extraordinary devilry. Pummelled by a host of adversities, Odd draws on the company of his comrades, both living and dead, and devises a master plan for an onslaught against the fiends.

Not one to be outdone by the curse of the sequel, *Forever Odd* attests to Koontz's masterful craft in creating an exceptionally memorable character whose oddball candour is both much-adored and unparalleled. – LEE WEICONG

Available at Borders Bookstore for \$27.30

## LOVE ETERNALLY

Deborah Wright

Dina's the girl pal that dead guy/friendly ghost, Steve, is trying to profess his love to. However, he never got to as he died abruptly on his 30th birthday after a night of hard partying. Although, Dina can't see or hear him. On the other hand, Dina can still sense his paranormal presence from time to time and misses him as dearly as an old friend would.

But it's not enough to stop her fighting with a bitchy young co-worker for the affection of a hot new patron at her café, Archie. He turns out to be less the gentleman Dina believes him to be, but she's too blind to realise. Poor Steve has bigger problems as he realises that unless he tells Dina, he'll remain a ghost eternally. Will true love cross all spiritual boundaries and how will the star-crossed friends finally get together?

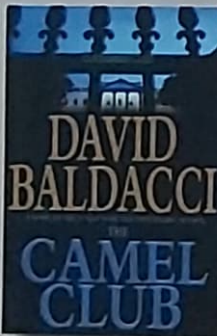
Brace yourself for a beautiful and unexpected ending to this unconventional romantic thriller. English author Deborah Wright certainly has a different perspective on life, love and love after life. – DANIELLE ANG



Available at Borders Bookstore for \$17.35

## THE CAMEL CLUB

David Baldacci



David Baldacci, author of suspense thriller bestsellers, *Last Man Standing* and *Split Second*, returns to thrill with his anticipated 12th release, *The Camel Club*.

In his new yarn, Baldacci extrapolates about a dangerous society whose hope rests in the hands of a rag bag team of four men, who meet for a common cause – to save their world from a diabolic force within the country.

In a society where the elite have dark secrets, the oddly-named group, The Camel Club, believe there are conspiracies all around. Their paranoia is fuelled when they witness the murder of a Secret Service member. Baldacci strikes fear by depicting vivid images of events in a world not much different from the one we live in.

As with his other books, Baldacci's imagination zips us through a whirlwind ride, weaving in labyrinthine subplots and twists. The realistic dialogue also aids the urgency of the plot of this page-turner. Despite the clichéd anti-American rant this book adopts, it's one read that will satisfy fans and first-time Baldacci readers with its vigour and non-stop action. – SERAPHINA WOON

Available at Kinokuniya for \$29.35

## TALK TO THE HAND

Lynne Truss



Take up arms, all ye oppressed by thy boorish brethrens, for this is thy holy grail. Appropriating an almost diva-esque quality with the book's title, British journalist-radio host-novelist and all-round stickler, Lynne Truss, launches into yet another tirade. Best remembered for policing the perversion of punctuation and grammar in *Eats, Shoots and Leaves*, Truss now hurls her literary vitriol at the rude, the ill-mannered and the ugly.

Not above being rude in her comments as well, she humorously rallies people against this deadweight of modern life, and bemoans the harrowing reality that "thank you" and "excuse me" are but tacky terms of yesteryear.

Taking references from a copious amount of material, ranging from TV programmes to poetry, *Talk to the Hand* firmly asserts that the individual's "bubble world", consisting of mobile devices and other newfangled gadgets, has led to the decline of a once gracious society. – LEE WEICONG

Available at Borders Bookstore for \$25.20

## PIGTOPIA

Kitty Fitzgerald



Irish playwright Kitty Fitzgerald (*Small Acts of Treachery*) tugs at our heartstrings with her latest novel, *Pigtopia*, a beautiful and moving tragedy.

Disfigured at birth, Jack Plum grows up without an education, abused by his mother and ridiculed by his neighbours who shun him. He seeks solace with his pet pigs at "Pig Palace", in the basement to shield himself from the cruelties of the outside world, much like *The Phantom of the Opera*. When he meets a lonely teen, Holly Lock, an extraordinary friendship begins to blossom between these two unlikely people. Their friendship offers the two outcasts a chance to accept each other's inner beauty, but rallies the neighbours to destroy their sanctuary because they think of Jack as a freak trying to lure an innocent girl into his lair.

Fitzgerald cleverly weaves a story told through two distinct voices and perspectives. A novel about how ugly a society can get, while dealing with superficial ugliness, *Pigtopia* is a thought-provoking, heartbreaking, yet deeply satisfying read. – NG YAN BO

Available at Kinokuniya for \$28.88

## DESPERATE HOUSEWIVES: BEHIND CLOSED DOORS

Amy Sohn



If you're a fashion lover or fan who's worn down the pause button on your DVD player to linger on Eva Longoria's provocative outfits and stylish lingerie, you're better off buying *Desperate Housewives: Behind Closed Doors* where she models them in a mini fashion spread.

With behind-the-scenes and on-set pictographs, witty quotes, profiles, and juicy set gossip, this book is a must-have for any housewife.

Other delicious details aren't forgotten, so even if you can't look like the housewives, you can try out recipes from Lynette's fried chicken to Bree's infamous blueberry muffins. Also, feast your eyes on the sexy male cast from gardener John Rowland to mysterious convict James Denton in the desperate housewives section. However, this guidebook may be a bit too wordy and overly detailed.

But as Bree said before: "It's the age old question, isn't it, how much do we really want to know about our neighbours?" – DANIELLE ANG

Available at Borders Bookstore for \$22.95



## PASIR PANJANG, EAT YOUR ♥ OUT!

Pasir Panjang Village is quickly turning into a trendy stretch of nightspots, catering to revelers who want a good time without busting their budgets. Its location next to South Buona Vista Centre and the restored pre-war shop houses that the village is made up of all contribute to its quaint, otherworldly charm. ADELINE PANG explores the village's two most popular haunts.

You know that Boston pub at the centre of 80's sitcom **Cheers**, where "everybody knows your name"? To its customers, Hoo Ha! Café is that pub. The place thrives on the original concept by co-owner Victor Lee, where Hoo Ha! Café acts like a friend's home that constantly hosts private parties where all the customers are invited guests. Every weekend come 11 pm, you're invited to a party, complete with drinks, hearty grub, 'live' music and karaoke.

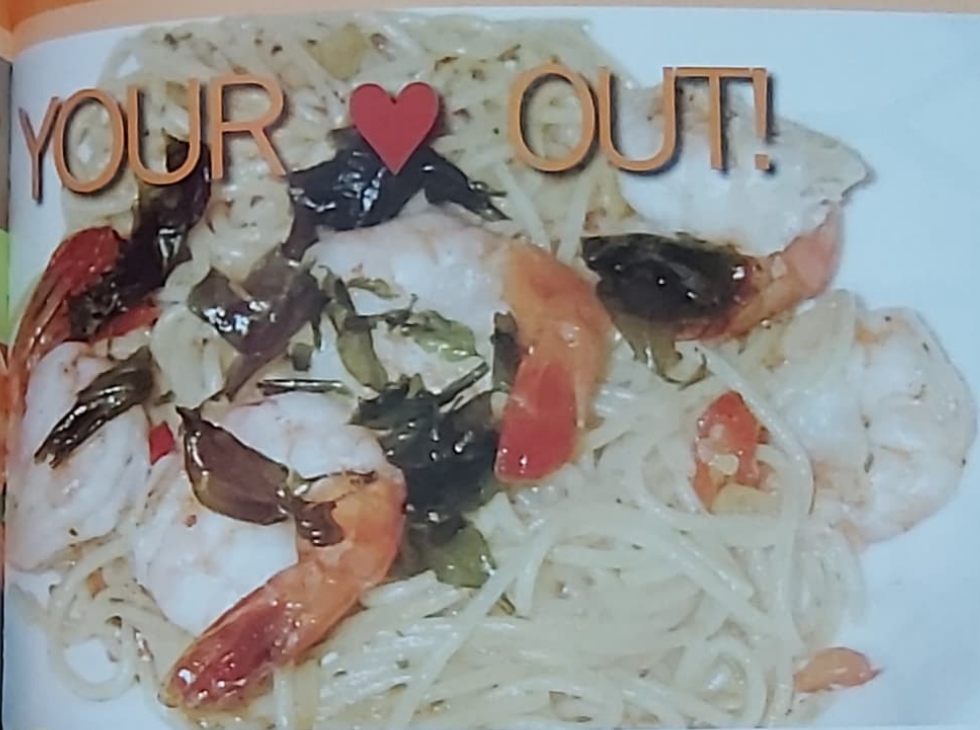
Jamming and chilling with a few beers sounds great but the Hoo Ha! *Laksa* tastes even better. A little pricey at \$7.90 a bowl, it lives up to the chef's proclamation of being RA (rated addictive), with its seductively fragrant coconut milk gravy, fresh cockles, large juicy prawns and chewy fishcake. One portion is pretty big too, guaranteed to be able to satisfy any ravenous appetite. Sharing is not recommended, though, because, trust me, you'll want the whole bowl for yourself. No secret ingredients were divulged but apparently, the recipe deviates from traditional Nonya *laksa* recipes by using more curry powder and less coconut milk. This makes it, in Lee's opinion, more appealing to all, as it is "healthier" and has a lighter taste than usual. I would have liked it a little spicier, but that's because I have a higher tolerance for spiciness.

This might be a pub, but don't feel obliged to pair only beers with your *laksa*. By experimenting with wine, Lee recommends full-bodied reds like the Montes from Chile (\$8 per glass), you may find it complements the *laksa*'s flavour by neutralising the palette and evening out the taste.

So, put on those flip-flops to make your way down to another home away from home. And yes, remember to put on your eating pants because you can forget about picking up any chicks or dudes here. The crowd ranges from young punks in their early 20s to those in their 40s, all there just to have a good time and kick up as big of a ruckus as possible within the pub's specially soundproofed walls.

220 Pasir Panjang Road, Pasir Panjang Village.  
Tel: 64752210

Karaoke nights are Fri to Sat 11 pm to wee hours in the morning (Please call at least two hours in advance to reserve a table). Happy hour is 10 pm to 12 am (20% off all drinks).



There's an ideal restaurant for everyone. Young courting couples with a mid-sized budget and a large appetite for romance and imagination will find their match in The West End, a boutique restaurant beloved by its customers for its reasonably-priced, international fusion dishes. However, the most memorable detail of the place is its exquisite *al fresco* setting.

The West End is a perfect hideaway, complete with the flora and fauna of a fairytale aquatic woodland. Charming murals depicting curvy trees, exotic blooms and colourful fish, fill the restaurant's shophouse walls, while long lines of fairy lights strung across the tented ceilings emanate a warm and cheerful orange glow.

Diners may also eat indoors, under the flattering rosy light of medieval-looking lamps hanging from the ceiling. Inside, posters of famous musicals and plays decorate the walls. Not surprisingly too, since The West End is modelled after the well-known theatrical district in London of the same name. For the first year of its opening in 2001, it used to have a stage where local actors would perform scaled-down productions of famous musicals like *Miss Saigon* and *Phantom Of The Opera* on selected nights.

The drama mamas may be gone, but the food

remains a good attraction. Dishes recommended by the chef include the popular Lamb Shank (\$21.90) and a mean Aglio Olio Pasta (\$15.50)—tasty, without leaving any clingy olive oil aftertaste. If you're a hungry customer, you'll be satisfied with the gourmet Norwegian Pizza (\$15.90) that is filled with generous toppings of quality smoked salmon and mozzarella cheese.

Should you be dating Shrek and relish getting your hands dirty with seafood, you'd do well to try the Chef's Special Mussels in Spicy Cream Pasta. The pasta's unique creamy taste has a slight spiciness that excites one's taste buds without overwhelming them, while the fresh mussels drowning delightfully in the creamy white wine sauce are to die for. Be prepared to make lots of eye contact and small talk, however, because while the staff are friendly, they tend to dawdle and may take quite a while to serve your food.

Part of the theatrics? One never knows, but the entire experience is good enough for an encore.

216 Pasir Panjang Road  
Tel: 64766120. Open Monday to Sunday  
11.30 am to 2.30 pm (last order at 2 pm) and 6 pm to 11 pm (last order at 10.30 pm). Happy hour is 10 pm to midnight (20% off all drinks)



# CELEBRITY SKINNY



Advertisements for slimming products featuring famous faces are everywhere. But how effective are these celebrity endorsements? VANESSA FERNANDEZ gets the skinny.

Andrea D'Cruz's highly-publicised and close encounter with liver failure in 2002 fuelled our distrust of slimming pills, prompting advertisers to do some serious damage control, which has proved largely effective. The Slim-10 furor has fizzled, and our confidence in the safety of such products has been reinstated thanks to clever communication strategies, many involving celebrities. Local television personalities Fann Wong, Zoe Tay, Fiona Xie, Michelle Chong and Michelle Chia, have all jumped on the get-slim bandwagon. It's a message that's even going places, seeing that Ivy Lee's splayed across buses in Mary Chia ads.

The media has made it almost impossible for us to escape the cult of thin. While media queen, Oprah Winfrey, can put her portly self on the cover of her own magazine, *O*, far more magazines prefer to keep tabs on the ever-protruding collarbones of Nicole Richie and Lindsay Lohan, while a pencil-thin model is posing provocatively on the next page, clothed in some expensive brand or another. In between *America's Next Top Model*, a slimming centre ad is telling you life's a celebration. And next to articles reporting the latest local news and world events you'll find Caldecott Hill Queen Zoe Tay endorsing a meal replacement supplement.

While celebrities may have a powerful influence on our skinny aspirations, are there other more cogent factors affecting our battle with the bulge – culture and peer pressure, for example? Are we gullible enough to buy a product simply because a thin celebrity tells us it works?

Advertisers seem to think so, considering how many of these ads are fronted by famous faces. But following Slim-10, they are also more specific about the safety of active

ingredients in their slimming formulas, and the new trend is to deliver a unique selling proposition that promotes a "natural" product. Take one of the most popular products, Xando Meal Replacement, which claims to be derived from natural sources, for example.

Dr Ho Ting Fei, an associate professor at the National University of Singapore Faculty of Medicine, explains that laboratory testing is vital to the validity of slimming formulas and cautions consumers to be wary of the use of puffery in advertising.

"The word 'natural' is misleading. The moment we see it, we think it must be good. In the back of people's minds if something is natural, it's safe because it's not coming from a laboratory. We forget that those medications made in laboratories are well formulated, have gone through proper testing and have side effects that are known to doctors. When someone says natural products are safe, you can't be sure because a lot of natural products can be harmful – you go into the woods, see a mushroom and go home and take it, but it may be poisonous and kill you."

That said, Xando packaging clearly states on that it is "thoroughly tested to maintain the highest standard and quality".

## PUSH OR PULL

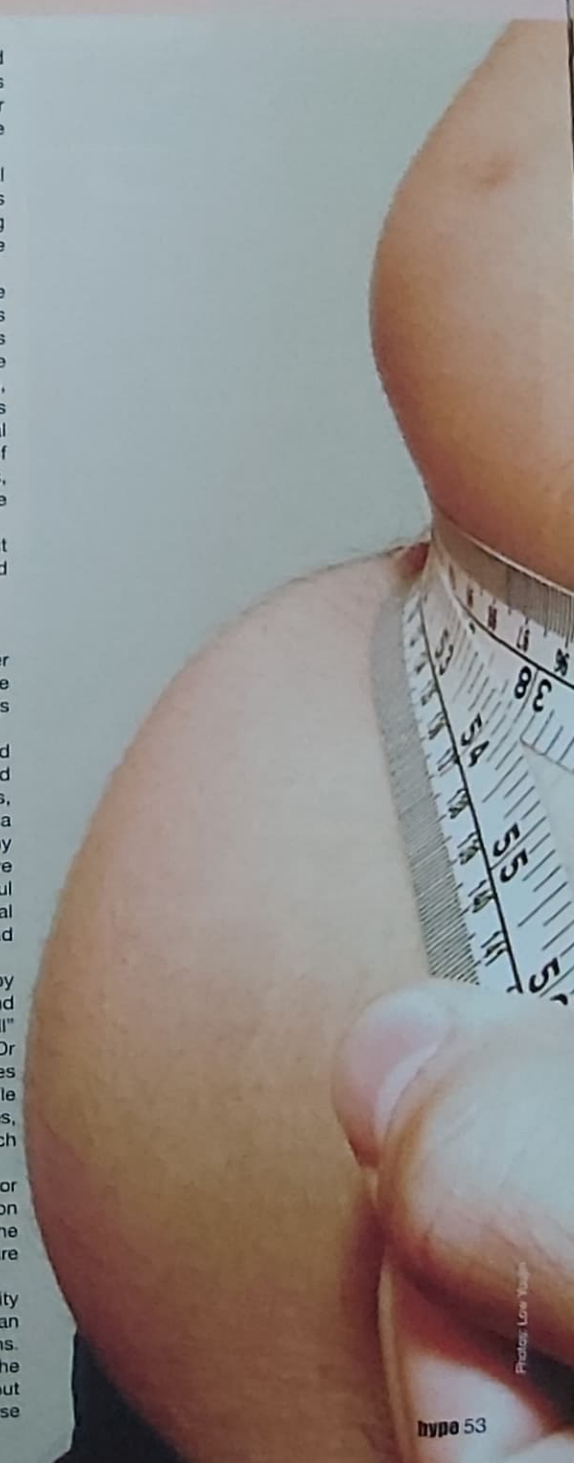
Anoushka Beh is a psychologist and associate lecturer at the Singapore branch of James Cook University. She explains the role of the media in shaping our perceptions and associating thinness with beauty.

"What we decide is beautiful and our widespread understanding of beauty is very much determined and facilitated by the media," she says, adding that thinness, which is associated with beauty by the media is really "a non-descript, in other words it doesn't really have any meaning on its own right. Social paradigms, and what we come to understand as social norms, are very powerful [and] the media facilitates the construction of our social norms, [which] determines our attitudes and beliefs and how we behave."

An article in the *Singapore Medical Journal* by psychiatrist, Dr E.K. Ung, entitled 'Thin Desires and Fat Realities' explains that there are "push and pull" factors behind an individual's concerns over weight. Dr Ung explains that "push factors" are societal pressures which lead us to think of being fat as undesirable. While advertising and television and print media – TV series, movies and fashion magazines – are "pull factors", which encourage the desire to be thin.

Celebrities are a combined push and pull factor because some are role models who are seen on television, and therefore simultaneously perpetuate the undesirability of being fat, while encouraging the desire to be thin.

But some, like Joanna D'Cruz, 20, a university undergraduate, admit peer pressure, more than celebrities, is the reason behind their weight concerns. "When you're with a group of friends and [you're] the only fat one, you feel insecure and you can't help but sometimes wish you looked like the skinny girls, because





## DID YOU KNOW...

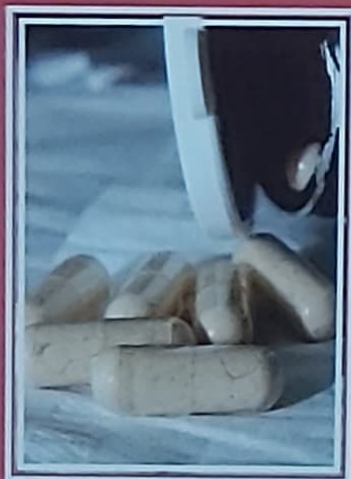
In Singapore, all health-related drugs are regulated by the Health Sciences Authority (H.S.A.).

During an episode of America's Next Top Model, you'll see a minimum of two Expressions Wellness ads.

In 2002, a study by Singapore's Institute of Mental Health of three popular local women's magazines found an average of eight slimming ads in each issue.

The same study found that 53% of females and 28% of males want to be thinner.

One of the first celebrity endorsers was a Warner Bros. cartoon character, Wile E. Coyote, for a burger chain called Joe's.



they look better [and] get more attention.

"Celebrities you look up to, but friends make you more self-conscious, because your friends are more real to you. [They're] not rich or famous and on TV, and they don't have all that money to make them look as perfect," she adds.

### CELEB CRED

Celebrities have a personal power and influence over an audience and therefore, have a far greater ability to persuade them than the average Joe - this is the reason companies use celebrities to endorse their products in the first place.

But consumers are still clear-headed enough to judge the credibility of the endorser. Celebrities like Irene Ang and Olinda Cho were slightly on the plump side to begin with, thus seeking the services of a slimming centre made sense.

Irene Ang, for example, is quoted on the Marie-France website as having the "confidence to be the babe in the show" as a result of her new svelte figure. Fans are not only convinced by the "before" and "after" shots, they may also rationalise that celebrities are endorsing slimming products because these actually help those who are overweight peel off the pounds, which then boosts the individual's confidence.

Marketing executive Angela Tan, 22, explains, "I'll believe that a slimming product works if the celebrity using it is [overweight] in the first place. Then you can see the difference the product makes and if it is really effective."

However, there are plenty of other celebrities endorsing slimming products who were never overweight to begin with.

Zoe Tay, the newest celebrity endorsing Xando, has (according to Dr Ung's article) a BMI (body mass index) of 17.4, which is 2.3 points below the healthy weight range, thereby placing her in the underweight category.

Jaymee Ong, 25, an actress/model on the Channel 5 series, *Tiramisu*, says she disagrees with endorsing slimming products. "[Slimming pills] are a business and there's a lot of money involved and maybe people who don't agree with it cash in on it because of [the] money,

and I don't [like] to comment on it but I personally would not do it. I want to promote something else, something healthy."

Other celebrities, like Sheikh Haikel, don't even see the need to attain physical perfection. "It's just more than having a beautiful body - it's about being able to express yourself... a beautiful [body] is just a shell that covers what's inside, which is our talent. A good body doesn't really fall into my category of something that is very necessary."

### MIND OVER BODY

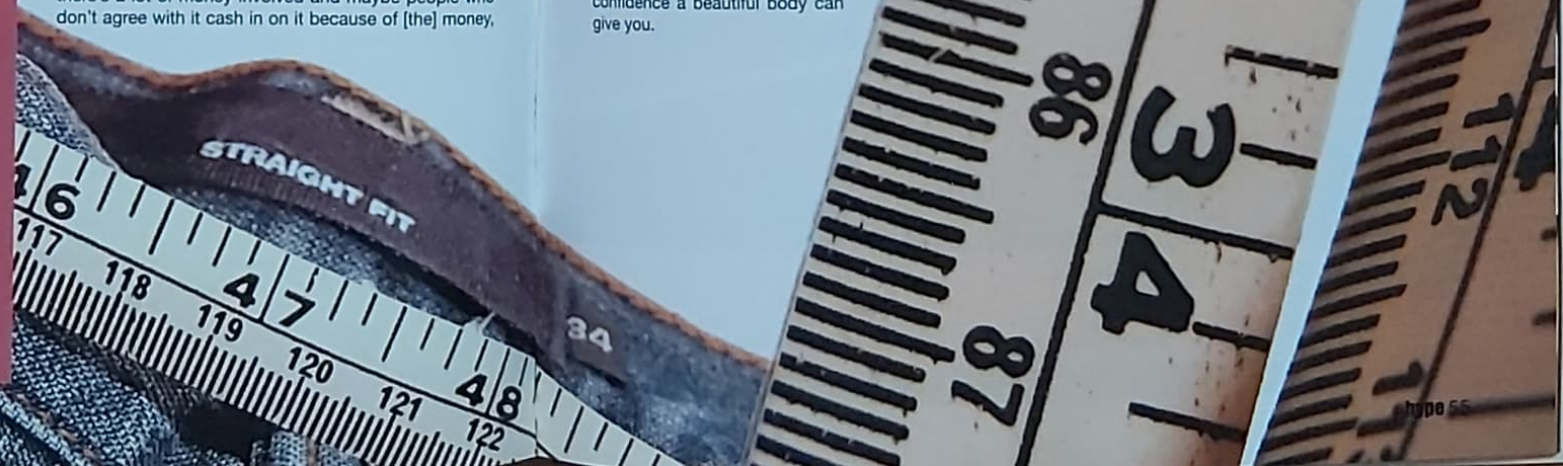
Ultimately individuals need to evaluate our own sense of self-worth, regardless of what friends or celebrities look like. Dr Ho points out the importance of evaluating whether weight loss is necessary to prevent health complications or a simple matter of vanity disguised as "self-improvement".

Beh adds, "We all have different susceptibility to our acceptance of what is a social norm. In any given scenario your behaviour is not just determined by the social norm but also how much of an individual you feel you are. How separate you are comes down to upbringing and strength of character. It's really about personal individual traits and characters."

Jaymee agrees, "It's silly to think that if you're thin you'll be more popular or boys will like you or you'll have friends. And if you do, I think you have to think about that, because those are superficial reasons. You have to be happy from the inside and you're not going to gain happiness from being thin."

Whether the decision to use slimming products is affected by culture, friends or celebrities, it is important to recognise that we, and not others, have the ability to control how much we allow ourselves to be pressured into doing something that can hurt us.

Such an idea can be so much more empowering than any confidence a beautiful body can give you.





# Out of this COUNTRY!

Who wants to romance their date on Valentine's Day at somewhere unimaginative where you'll bump into several other people you know? JESSICA CHIA recommends three places guaranteed to give your special night a living start.

## PREPARE FOR TAKEOFF

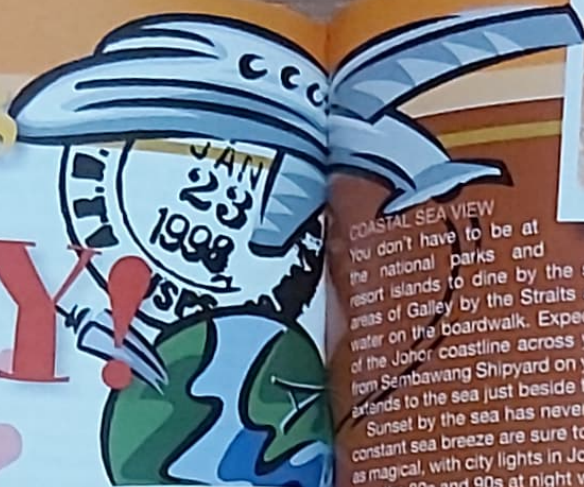
Ah, the romance of travel. You don't have the money or time to jet off for dinner, so the next best thing is probably being able to watch planes land and take off from the comfort of your window seat. Pasta Fresca Da Salvatore's branch at Changi Airport is one of the few restaurants that offer this. "I would say this is a lovely place because, especially in the evening, you can see the planes landing with the sunset in the background," says Thomas Beh, Sales and Marketing Executive of the restaurant.

The ambience is just as romantic. With soft instrumental music playing in the background and the warm glow of lights, this restaurant is cosy enough for couples. Tucked away at the third storey of Terminal 2, you're unlikely to bump into anyone you know, thus avoiding awkward meetings with nosy friends or people you know. "The atmosphere here is accommodating," says Beh. "Couples who come here will [be able to] have their private moments."

Serving South Italian cuisine, this restaurant allows you to choose your own pasta and sauce combination. Chef recommendations, not in the menu, are available and change every few days. Dishes worth trying out are Spaghetti Alla Marinara (seafood pasta, \$11.90), Zuppa Di Mare All'Amalfitana (tomato-based seafood soup, \$14.20) and the frequently-requested Lasagne Gratinata All'Emiliana (beef and pasta coated with cheese and Bolognese, \$15.50). If you can afford it, indulge in a bottle of Soave, premium Italian Garganega white wine (\$48).

Beh said this restaurant, which opened last April, is Pasta Fresca Da Salvatore's newest outlet. At press time, part of the restaurant was being refurbished to enable window views for some seating areas and establish a waterfall-themed concept. Renovation is scheduled to be completed by February.

**Pasta Fresca Da Salvatore (Changi Airport Branch)**  
Terminal 2 Viewing Mall, Level 3 Lot #036-057  
To book, call 6542 8044. Opens 11am-11pm every day  
To get there, take the MRT and alight at Changi Airport



## COASTAL SEA VIEW

You don't have to be at the national parks and resort islands to dine by the sea. The dining areas of Galley by the Straits are built directly over water on the boardwalk. Expect an uninterrupted view of the Johor coastline across you and a good look at the shipping vessels from Sembawang Shipyard on your right. Located within the SAF Yacht Club, the slipway for yachts extends to the sea just beside the restaurant on the left and is a perfect place for evening strolls.

Sunset by the sea has never been this romantic. A birds-eye view of the sky's magnificent workings and a constant sea breeze are sure to fan loving sparks. Sunset here is at 7pm. Even after sundown, the view is just as magical, with city lights in Johor and ship lights glowing in the distance. Live performances of familiar songs from the 80s and 90s at night will get you in the mood for love.

Forget about the 3-course French dinner, the fare here is, not surprisingly, Chinese seafood and Western cuisine, though poultry and beef are available. Barbecued meat, not in the menu, is prepared on weekends and on Valentine's Day itself. Specialities include Marsala Fish and Chips (comes with spices and herbs, \$13), Smoked Sashimi (small: \$12, medium: \$14) and Assam or Curry Fish Head (small: \$20). If you can afford to splash on cash and feed each other finger-licking food, give their popular Chilli Crab (\$38) a try.

Though it opened three years ago, this restaurant is still a hidden gem. "Because we are [situated] within the SAF Yacht Club, a lot of people think they cannot come in when actually the restaurant is open to the public," says Sim.

## Galley by the Straits

SAF Yacht Club, 43 Admiralty Road West,  
To book, call 6757 9026 / 6759 7310. Opens 11am-10pm every day  
To get there, take a taxi from Sembawang MRT (below \$4 per ride)

## CLOUD 9

They say you can't get a decent mountaintop dining experience in Singapore without busloads of tourists bumping into you. But The Olive Restaurant @ Labrador Park is just the place to prove them wrong. Perched on a secluded hill with dense foliage, this restaurant offers one of the best levels of privacy. Complete with unpredictable yet frequent rainy weather and moist, cool air, dining up here is like being on one of nature's untouched mountains.

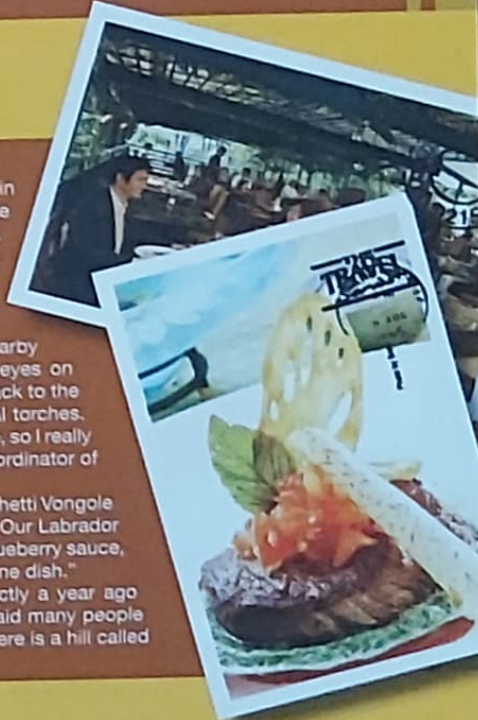
Couples will find the nearby vantage point at the jetty at the nearby 30m-high Labrador Beach a sight to remember as they feast their eyes on beautiful sunset skies and ships at the harbour before taking a stroll back to the restaurant and enjoying a candlelight dinner amid the glow of artificial torches. "Labrador Park is said to have the best sunset in the whole of Singapore, so I really recommend it for Valentine's Day," says Kio Lin, Customer Service Coordinator of The Olive Restaurant.

Recommended dishes include Labrador Seafood Platter (\$17), Spaghetti Vongole (pasta with clams drenched in white wine, \$14) and Tiramisu (\$8.50). "Our Labrador Seafood Platter consists of prawns, scallops, caviar with our special blueberry sauce, so it's very sweet and tangy," says Lin. "A couple can actually share one dish."

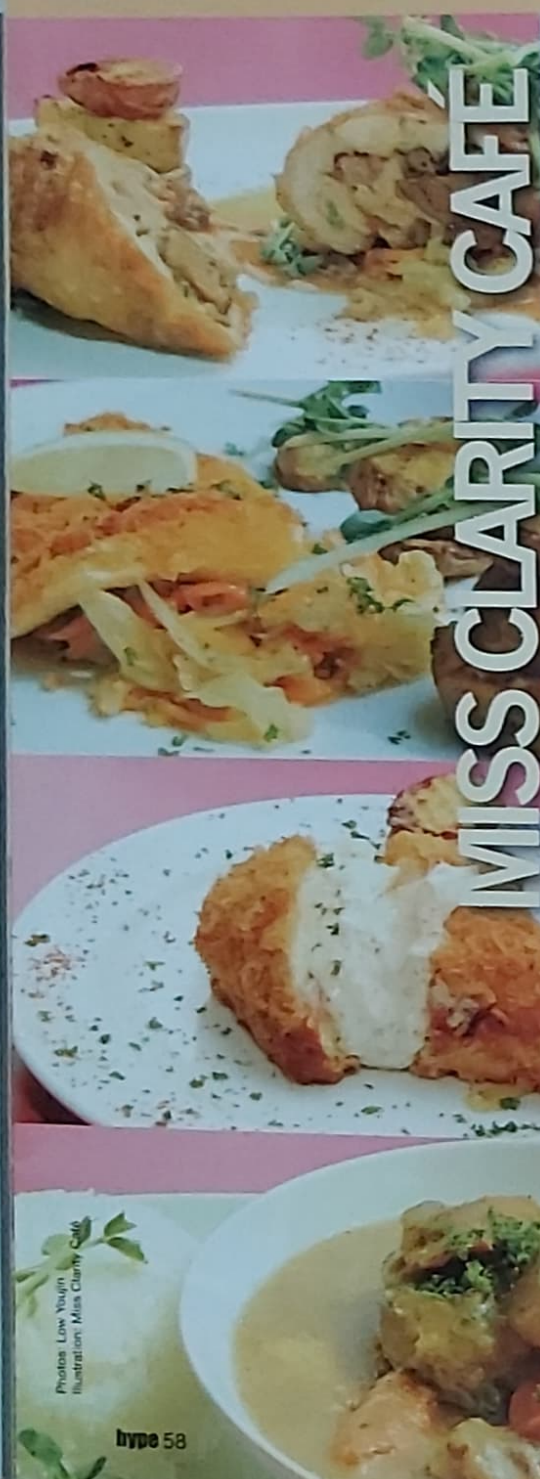
This restaurant is still relatively unknown because it opened exactly a year ago and Labrador Park is not a place many Singaporeans frequent. Lin said many people know where the PSA Building on Alexandra Road is, but few know there is a hill called Labrador Park, where the restaurant is, at the opposite road.

## The Olive Restaurant @ Labrador Park

Labrador Villa Road, Carpark A  
To book, call 6479 2989. Opens noon-11pm every day  
To get there, take bus 408 (weekends, Public Holidays only) or a taxi from Harbourfront MRT (below \$4 per ride)







## MISS CLARITY CAFÉ

They say overindulgence is a sin. We at **hype** couldn't agree more. So this time, we're promising not to overeat or indulge in anything too fancy, nothing too ostentatious. But since we all know that promises are easier made than kept, what better way to break our word than to dine at Miss Clarity Café.

You don't expect your tongue to trip over French pronunciation, "Balsamic Buerre Noisette", in the menu at an eatery that charges less than \$10 for a main course. But surprises are the order of the day at Miss Clarity Café.

Located close to Raffles Hotel at Purvis Street, the seven-month café almost screams out at you with three vibrant colours—green, orange and pink. What a contrast to its dour neighbours.

And who would have expected former Raffles Grill chef, Jonathan Koh, helming such a humble kitchen? No wonder you get innovative combinations, like Vanilla Caramelised Honey Pineapple, Rose & Raspberry Sorbet & Orange Chilli Crunch, being served up as dessert for their Valentine's Day menu.

But even on less than special occasions, Miss Clarity has garnered for itself a loyal following. With its 5-star-hotel-standard food at heartland prices, it's no wonder students from neighbouring institutions (Singapore Management University, LASALLE-SIA College of the Arts) flock to its open door. On top of its youthful vibe, its food is as inviting as its interiors—served tastefully on pristine white plates.

Try one of Koh's tantalising house specials, Chicken Ballotine (\$7.50)—chicken stuffed generously with mushrooms and accompanied with roasted potatoes. Other crowd-pleasers include Chicken Cordon Bleu (\$7), breaded chicken breasts stuffed with ham and cheese, and Garlic-Coated Dory (\$7), tender fish fillet encased in a crunchy coat of garlic. Succulent offerings that will placate even the most fussy of eaters, these dishes are as easy on your wallet as they are on your palate.

But leave room for dessert. With selections including chocolate fondue, made with premium French Valrhona chocolate, and bread pudding (\$10.50–\$15.50) you'll be excused for kissing the diet goodbye.

And, of course, with free wireless internet access, you may never want to leave your seat. With sets that start from \$8.80 and meals that just scream comfort food, Miss Clarity Café is clearly reason enough for us to eat our words. — CHERYL LIM.

Miss Clarity Café

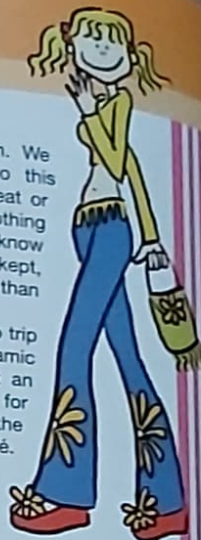
Open: 7am – 11pm (Mon – Sat)

Public Holidays: open only for dinner

5 Purvis Street

Tel 6339 4803

claritycafe@yahoo.com



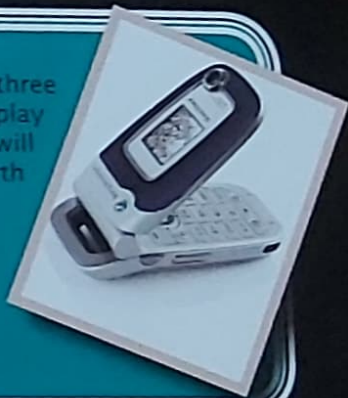
## CONTESTS

### S.M.A.R.T.S

You may have missed the chance to contribute to our three charities, or to win \$10,000 worth of prizes, but just play S.M.A.R.T.S from now till **March 31, 2006** and you will enter a lucky draw to win a Sony Ericsson Z520i (worth \$500), sponsored by SingTel.

Register today at [www.singtel.com.sg/smart](http://www.singtel.com.sg/smart)

Many other prizes and stories, including **hype** online exclusives, are available at [www.hype.sg](http://www.hype.sg)



Stand to win one of the 3 limited edition Singapore Idol goodie bags. Simply log on to [www.theurbanwire.com/hypecontest](http://www.theurbanwire.com/hypecontest) and answer the following question!

Q: The \_\_\_\_\_ season of Singapore Idol will be coming soon to channel 5.

- A) First
- B) Second
- C) Third

Contest ends Mar 31, 2006

For more details log on [www.singaporeidol.com](http://www.singaporeidol.com)

We have 3 sets of exclusive American Idol premiums up for grabs! Simply log on to [www.theurbanwire.com/hypecontest](http://www.theurbanwire.com/hypecontest) and answer the following question

Q: Who is the American Idol judge who enjoys wearing body-hugging black t-shirts?

- A) Paula Abdul
- B) Simon Cowell
- C) Randy Jackson

Contest ends Mar 31, 2006

For more details, log on to [www.ch5.mediacorp.com](http://www.ch5.mediacorp.com)





# IN THE MOOD FOR WINE

The term 'alcoholic grape juice' does not do much justice to the increasing appreciation of wines among youths, says LEE WEICONG.

Wine may be a classy social lubrication but for the longest time, it's been deemed an exclusive indulgence of cultural elites who need many lessons and sensitivity to tell bouquets and vintages apart. Sabotaged by such a stereotype, the ambrosia has an intimidating reputation and few dare to tread further than the cursory sampling at special occasions.

But wine consumption has seen an increase of about 20 percent for the last five years in Singapore. According to statistics site Euromonitor.com, Singapore is expected to experience extreme growth in both consumption and social value of wine in coming years, thanks to more young adults taking to wine-drinking as a symbol of refinement. Interestingly, once-popular spirits, such as gin and brandy, are experiencing dipping sales. The wide availability of attractive yet affordable mass produced and classic wines means that drinking wine has become a far more common practice for Singaporeans.

More appreciation clubs and societies are forming, with a number of them heralded by young adults and undergraduates. One such association is the Nanyang Technological University's (NTU) Wine Appreciation Club. The club boasts a 120-strong membership, a significant leap from its original 30-man group in 2002. It is subsidised and supported by big suppliers such as The Ninth Vine.

Club president, Alex Seo, 22, feels that it's no surprise why young adults like him are paying more attention to the finer details in life. "With basic wine knowledge, it would definitely be advantageous in social gatherings. It's a social etiquette that one should learn and observe." Citing one of the club's aims to dispel the myth that drinking wine is only for the posh and the rich, Alex says that the club's strong growth in its membership is testament to the media's influence on wine appreciation and the society's outreach to young adults within NTU.

This is a trend that Mr Randy See, 31, Chief Sommelier and Group Manager of Les Amis Group, fully welcomes. "If you look at the bistros and smaller restaurants these days, wine takes centre stage over beer and spirits most of the time. At discos and pubs these days, champagne is more frequently poured than before," he said.

Randy credited globalisation as one of the main contributory factors that encouraged wine appreciation among Singaporeans, especially in

young adults. "Our forefathers were not often exposed to wine. Young Singaporeans today, however, would have travelled to Australia and the UK for further studies. When they return, they bring back with them the wine-drinking culture."

New World Wines, from non-European countries such as South Africa and Australia, are comparatively new in terms of wine production. Their emergence and acceptance by the market are among the most important reasons why wine appreciation is getting more popular among youths, Randy acknowledged.

"Australian wines, which are more affordable than the top French wines, are easier to appreciate," commented Randy. "They tend to be more fruit-driven and thus appeal more to the Asian palate."

Student enthusiast and intern at food and beverage magazine, *Wine and Dine*, Frank Yu, 20, agreed that drinking habits among young adults have evolved.

"There is definitely a growing group of young drinkers who appreciate their wine," he said. "These days, you find a great number of youngsters who spend all evening long sampling a great variety of wine on the wine list at a bistro."

Of the increasing popularity in wine appreciation as a leisure activity for the young, Frank said, "It is a change and a good change indeed, as it signifies how youths, even with limited budgets, are paying closer attention to the finer side of life."

It helps that this hobby does not have to be extraordinarily expensive.

"There are affordable wines served by the glass at pubs and cafés for about \$10," he quipped. "And, of course, [at] your regular aisles in supermarkets, too, a bottle of good wine is easily available for about \$30 and that is not a lot of money to part with for a journey of discovery that can last a lifetime."

Wine retail shops, such as Wine Culture along Bukit Timah Road, have also acknowledged the rise among these young connoisseurs, and no longer cater exclusively to a wealthy clientele. As sales executive, Tony Teh, 26, puts it, there is now "a more diverse customer base".

"While we do stock bigger and costlier labels from France, we do recognise the affordability of good quality wines, such as Tempranillo from Spain," said Tony. "We have managed to achieve a balance with New World and Old World Wines, [as well as] a blend of expensive selections and

cheaper alternatives in order to cater to all."

Appreciating wine can be as simple as bringing together a small group of friends for a sharing and appreciation session on a fortnightly basis. With each member taking turns to bring an affordable bottle of wine from a particular family of grapes, say Chardonnay, subtle viewpoints and notes can also be exchanged while you enjoy the wine.

Speaking for himself and younger enthusiasts, Randy used an analogy to explain how a fascination with wine will mature with time: "Drinking New World Wines is like listening to pop music. It's very catchy and the tones are easily appreciated. [Having] Old World Wine is like listening to Mozart and Bach. The first time you listen to them, they put you to sleep. But if you truly understand the essence of Mozart, you'll realise that it's more than it meets the eye. And [then] it gets more interesting."

## RANDY SEE'S 5 AUSTRALIAN WINES & LABELS FOR BEGINNERS

### BROWN BROTHER'S TARRANGO

A very light and fruity red, almost like a rosé, it is best served chilled.

Price: \$27.95 (2002 vintage)

Availability: Supermarkets

### JACOB'S CREEK RIESLING

A stunning white with hints of flowers and citrus that has crispness and a well-balanced dryness.

Price: \$19.50

Availability: Supermarkets

### BROTHERS IN ARMS

A successful label renowned for their Shiraz and Cabernet Sauvignon.

Price: \$38 up

Availability: The Ninth Vine (Frontech Centre, Jln Kilang Barat off Jln Bukit Merah)

### MITOLO

An estate of beautiful red wines, best known for their Shiraz.

Price: \$35 up

Availability: The Ninth Vine

### WYNDHAM ESTATE

Boasts an accessible variety of value-for-money whites and reds that are easy to drink.

Price: \$24 up

Availability: Supermarkets



# Sun sand & cheaper surf

Why walk on water when you can jump on it? NG YAN BO finds out more about Singapore's latest water-sports sensation, Cable Skiing, due to make waves here in March.



Don't be alarmed if the next time you stroll along East Coast Park, you see people seemingly flying, hopping, jumping on water and even doing twists in the air in a new lagoon. They are likely to be cable skiers flaunting their moves in the new Ski 360° Cable Ski Park.

Singapore's most popular recreational area, East Coast Park, which attracts an astounding seven million visitors a year, is going through a facelift to enhance park users' experience. Over the next few years, we will see a visitor centre, underground car parks, a bougainvillea garden, etc. One of the earliest improvements we can expect is Singapore's first Cable Ski Park, Ski 360°, which is causing a lot of excitement among local water-sports enthusiasts.

For those not in the know, cable skiing is similar to wakeboarding or water-skiing. Instead of being pulled by a boat on water, the participant is pulled by an overhead cable in a lagoon. This cable swings the participant anticlockwise round the lagoon and goes from 24 km per hour (kph) to as fast as 58 kph. Jumps and tricks similar to that of water-skiing or wakeboarding can be performed on Kickers and Sliders (a raised platform which propels skiers or wakeboarders into the air to perform tricks).

Ski 360° is equipped with eight carriers that carry one person each. For the more advanced skiers, a carrier can hook up to three persons at the same time. However, at any one time, only up to eight participants can ski or wakeboard on the cableway, adding up to about 300 participants a day.

Measuring about 300m long, 2m deep and costing a hefty \$2 million to develop, Ski 360° is developed by TTJ Leisure Pte Ltd. It stands on the existing East Coast Lagoon which was further dug out, beautified, filled with fresh sea water and fitted with equipment.

TTJ Leisure's Business Development Manager, Roy Teo, encourages people of all ages to try this new water-sport.

"Children of six years old up to adults of maybe 70 or 80 are welcome to engage in cable skiing or cable wakeboarding. And [there is] no problem to those who can't swim because life jackets will be provided. We [also] intend to have a class or a school where we provide some basic cable wakeboarding or cable skiing coaching."

Over the past few years, Singapore saw a surge

of water-sport activities around reservoirs. Which is why, Roy notes, that there has never been a better time to set up Ski 360°. "Cable ski parks are nothing new. They have been around for over maybe 30 to 40 years in other countries. [Moreover], right now, the government is opening up reservoirs to people for water-sports so I think it's a great time to have this kind of wakeboarding [venture]."

Ski 360° also hopes to lure the crowd away from East Coast Park's overcrowded area C, better known as the 'McDonald's Area'. Said Roy, "Hopefully, [the cable ski park] will [be able to] attract more crowds and make this place more vibrant. Because right now, it seems like [in the whole of East Coast Park], only the McDonald's side is crowded with people."

Being a small island, Singapore's wakeboarding and water-skiing scene is also, sad to say, constrained, because of the lack of land space and high cost.

Adrian Lock, 24, captain of Ngee Ann Polytechnic's wakeboarding team agrees, stating that, "venues for wakeboarding [are] getting limited, especially in Singapore. Punggol operators will be affected sooner or later because the government is taking the river away for some reclamation. So wake boarders have to go other places to wakeboard. Cable skiing in Singapore is another alternative."

Roy agreed that limited land space for wakeboarding is one of the reasons why Ski 360° was set up. "We hope that with [Ski 360°], we can encourage more people to take up the sport. And another thing is that Singapore boat operators are not as many as [other countries]. So our cable way is good [as] it caters for many people to come and try it."

The most attractive feature about the cable ski park is its price, which is less than half the cost of regular wakeboarding or water-skiing. The cost of renting a boat for wakeboarding or water-skiing ranges from \$80 to \$120 or more per hour, against cable skiing costs of \$35 to \$45 per hour.

Amar Zan, 22, a skim-boarder who has made the East Coast beach his training ground claims to love anything to do with water and board sports, but draws a line when it comes to wakeboarding. "It's too expensive lah, so I stick to skim boarding."

A quick survey of about 25 people at East Coast Park saw that while fewer than half knew about the upcoming Cable Ski Park, most of them were ecstatic about it.

Pamela Goh, 20, a second-year undergraduate at Nanyang Technological University (NTU) added that

she cannot wait to try it. "I've never really done any water sports but it certainly looks interesting enough. Besides, it's not that expensive, so I'll definitely give it a try."

Adrian, who still prefers wakeboarding over cableboarding added that he wouldn't mind "giving Ski 360° a go". "Personally, I would prefer the traditional way of doing wakeboard in a boat because of the human touch— the coach communicating with you and all that, and the wakeboarding lifestyle. Doing it by cable is good for its flexibility and convenience. However, I would advise beginners to use a normal wakeboard boat because the speed of the boat can be controlled and the coach will let you know your mistakes. But once you attain a certain level of wakeboarding skills, you have no problem with doing cable skiing, cable-wakeboarding. Cable skiing/wakeboarding is good for people who want to practice tactic tricks, like board rotations, fakies, or other surface tricks."

Adrian is confident that Ski 360° will do well. "It's definitely cheaper as compared to a wakeboard boat. A lot of Singaporeans are interested in water-sports and they pay \$80 to go to Batam to cable ski for 1 full day, even though the queue is very long on weekends. The cable ski park in Batam has unlimited rides but one can wait for as long as one to two hours to do just one ride. Personally, I feel that a lot of people will divert their attention to Ski 360° to do cable skiing. However when there's such a supply, the demand will be very high. I can foresee the queue being very long."

Basic necessities like lockers, toilets and shower facilities will be provided. Complementing the cable Ski Park is a restaurant, a cafe and bar counter, as well as a shop selling equipment like wakeboards, skis, board shorts and more.

Said Roy, "We hope that this cable ski park will actually boost up the number of wake boarders and skiers in Singapore. In the future, we will tie up with the Singapore wakeboard and water-ski federation to bring in some international competition or events here in Singapore, and hopefully we can create some world champions here."

Ski 360° is situated at East Coast Lagoon (East Coast Park, Area F).  
Operating hours and charges are:  
Weekdays: 10am to 7pm at \$20 per hour  
Weekends, Public Holidays & School Holidays: 9am to 7pm at \$40 per hour  
Boards and life vests are provided

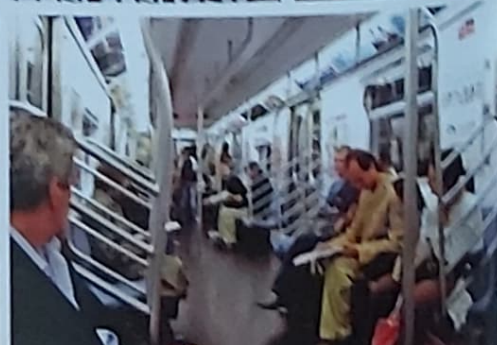


# TRAVEL

## hype TAKES

# NEW YORK!

New York City is legendary and unless you never watch TV, movies or read the papers you'd have to have heard something about New York. But even the world's best-marketed city is sometimes shrouded in a cloak of myths as YUEN YI YONG found out.



# NEW YORK!



## NY IS AN EXPENSIVE CITY

With a third of America's acting community calling New York City home, according to a December 2003 report by think tank Center for an Urban Future, it stands to reason that the standard of living there is very high. But you can still survive there on a fairly modest budget if you know where to look.

For cheap clothes that look like they come from Topshop, you'll find your haven at Conway. You can buy a fancy top for as low as US\$13 (S\$21.20) and a flowing gypsy skirt at just US\$10, against about S\$40 in Singapore. The downside is that Conway tends to look disorganised, it doesn't stock brand names and there are no dressing rooms. Besides clothes, you'll also find cheap accessories, snacks and cosmetics. A French manicure kit from Sally Hansen costs just US\$1.99 here. You can locate Conway stores at the cross sections of 35th Street and Broadway as well as 42nd East and 3rd Avenue.

Even at 100% touristy Times Square, packed with shops, larger-than-life billboards and brightly lit scrolling marquee signs, you can buy the 'I love NY' t-shirts for your friends for as low as US\$2 each.

Although a regular meal of a sandwich and drink costs about US\$7, dining need not be more expensive than at home. The popular Wendy's fast food chain sells a large salad, regular burger, chicken nuggets and fries each for just under a dollar. Or pick up a stack of wraps and a block of ham, a can of chunky soup or a one-pound bag of M&Ms from dollar stores like Jack's 99 Cent Store at 110 West 32nd Street, and you'll eat fine for very little. While you're there you can also do your souvenir shopping and be everyone's best friend when you return, without spending much.

You can also get a large pizza about twice the size of a local one for just US\$13 at Ray's Pizza outlets which are sprinkled across the city. Eat a buffet at Chinatown for just US\$4 or warm yourself with a bowl of Century Egg Congee at US\$0.75. Of course, these prices do not include tax and a 15 per cent tip, which almost always needs to be paid unless you're at a fast food joint or hotdog stand.

In a cultural city like New York, get free entertainment at places like Central Park, where buskers at different corners play anything from jazz to classical to 80s pop. Otherwise, get your fill of busking at subway stations where you can usually catch break-dancers



and musicians showcasing their talents. For a unique experience, Times Square is the playground of the famous Naked Cowboy, who plays the guitar in his briefs, decorated in the American colours of red, blue and white. If you want to take a picture with him, he'll ask you for US\$2 but he'll also let you grab his burn.

If you want to catch world-famous Broadway productions, TKTS at Times Square offers half-priced tickets for same-day shows. However, it is still quite costly as you might have to pay US\$50 for a balcony seat for the *Phantom of the Opera*.

Get the best view of the Statue of Liberty on a free, I said free, ride on the beautiful Staten Island Ferry. The return trip will give you better views as the ferry takes a route closer to the statue on the way back to New York City. However, you might be disappointed to find that from there, the statue is quite small and not as grand as movies and the media have hyped it up to be.

Alternatively, if you want some tranquillity amid all the hustle and bustle, stroll around Central Park, New York's green lung which at about 341 square kilometres, is almost twice as big as the world's second smallest country, Morocco.







# LAST LOOK

## 10 Things not to say to your date on Valentine's Day

Love may be blind but certainly not deaf, says VANESSA FERNANDEZ.

1 Do you mind if my mum comes along?

2 Flowers? Oh, I thought you said "showers".

3 Darling, to make a statement I think we should spend Valentine's Day at McDonald's.

4 Where's my diamond necklace?

5 Let's watch *Titanic* on DVD!

6 You know, I was so happy when you agreed to be my Valentine. I've been watching you silently for the last 2 years. 'psychotic eye-twitching'

7 Actually, I only asked you because Angelina Jolie is dating Brad Pitt.

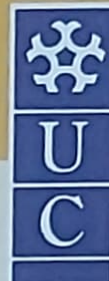
8 If only you were Jake Gyllenhaal.

9 I didn't have time to get a card so I wrote down the Hallmark website address for you.

10 Roses are red. Violets are blue. Sugar is sweet, and I'd love to shag you.

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Admission Requirements (Intakes in January, April, July and October)

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- University Preparation Program - Diploma of Business Administration from Asiainstitut of Management, AM School of Business Studies.
- 2 GCE "A" level at least grade C.
- Diploma from other recognized professional institutions.

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Admission Requirements (Intakes in January, April, July and October)

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b.u.m.  
equipment



Bum Equipment

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