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hype

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It's a paradox— This year has been a trudge but every day of it has been a mad rush. With looming deadlines, projects to rush and endless tasks mounting, everything just screams for Time. Time. Time. But there never seems to be enough of it, not even with constant sleepless nights.

Daily stuff we used to do routinely suddenly appear to be such chores. Eating, even in this food paradise, becomes less an enjoyment, more a waste of time. Waiting for a friend 20 minutes late, translates into 20 minutes lost from your project, your sleep, your life. Sleep, in fact, is the latest luxury. And last time you checked, you still couldn't afford it.

In my few stolen moments, I tore myself away from work and slipped into Tim Burton's **The Melancholy Death of Oyster Boy and Other Stories**—a bittersweet tale of children existing in this twisted world. The story of "The Staring Girl" opened a window into a character who devoted her life to perfecting her art, only to give up the moment she succeeded. Do the gains justify the losses? Is the pain and sacrifice worthwhile? We are often so consumed by work and seduced by its promises that we forget about weighing the returns against the battle scars.

Maybe it's the end of another year that prompts us to reflect, even if it takes a spa visit to block out other distractions. In keeping with the tight money supply, we share with you how to set one up at home, how to throw that Halloween party and dress like a million dollars, with just a little loose change. Or how to build your own fortune as an entrepreneur or lose it on movie merchandise as the huge Christmas movie releases engulf you.

Even as all the commercialism of Christmas begins to grip us, and **hype** has more than enough ideas on CDs, books, food, techie gadgets in our reviews to hint to your individual Santas, hopefully getting won't be all we're about.

If like our down-to-earth and charming celeb interviewees: MTV VJ Utt, actress Fiona Xie and original **American Idol** Kelly Clarkson, all we learn to be is more **Thankful** for what we have, 2003 won't have to be a drudge at all.

Cheers!
Aileen Lai
Editor

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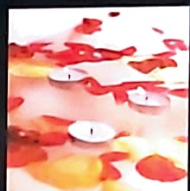
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Charming



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EVENT
PREVIEWS

hype highlights the most notable events this holiday season.



Solo for Two Men at Work, Nov 1, The Esplanade Hip Hop Workshop, Oct 31, The Esplanade

Berliner Niels "Storm" Robitzky and Frenchman Kane-Wung arrive on our sunny shores to hold a hip-hop workshop together at The Esplanade. Following that are two hip-hop dance performances. Solo for Two is a performance by Storm; and Men at Work is a joint performance between Storm and Kane-Wung. This will definitely be awesome, so mark it down in your calendars. Workshop admission is free. Tickets for the performance are at \$25, available at Sistic outlets.

Visit <http://www.goethe.de/so/sin/enptheat.htm> for more details.

GRACE CHUA

Powerboat Championship Oct 25-26, Marina Bay

Experience a pulsating adrenalin rush as the UIM F1 Powerboat Championship - The Singapore Grand Prix heads for local waters. This action-packed event would be the seventh leg of the 2003 UIM F1 Powerboat World Championship. Hold your breath as the 24 powerboats, each commanding a 2.5-litre 380hp engine, fly past the shores of Marina Bay at speeds of up to 240km/h. Come and experience the excitement live, while some 750 million viewers around the world can only watch from their television sets. Prices for two day admission passes are as follows: \$121, \$91, \$41, \$16 from SISTIC.

VALERIE CORERA

Singapore River Buskers' Festival Nov 15-23, Orchard Road

The busker-teers are back! Prepare yourself for some eye-popping displays as the Singapore River Buskers' Festival comes down to Orchard Road for the first time this November. Look out for the exclusive highlight of the festival, the Buskers Parade, and join in this spirited display of peace, joy and laughter. If you're game for some good 'ol gags, fun and clowning, join in the excitement, as the shopping sidewalks light up with buoyancy like never before.

Visit <http://www.singapore-buskers.com/> for more details.

NIMISHA TOH

EVENT
LISTINGS

You can afford to be picky. **hype** lists 10 year-end events to choose from.



Year of Living Digitally: Skinworks

Spell #7's New Media Arts Fest '03, and Bodies in Flight presents a sensual theatrical experience of visual choreography melded with new technology, to explore a tale of variable identities, cyber seduction, and virtual sex.

Oct 23 - 26, The Esplanade - Recital Studio

Tickets: \$26 (from SISTIC)

Explorations: The Body As Media

A part of The Esplanade's education programme, this dance workshop is conducted by Sal Vanilla, a *butoh* dance troupe from Japan. Participants can expect to discover the stirring of their five senses, by a representation of space, time and body as a single medium.

Oct 25, The Esplanade - Rehearsal Studio

Free Admission

Starlight Cinema Halloween Horror 2003

Another endeavor in the well-received Stella Artois series, this Halloween, audiences can expect a scare fest - from classic horror movies to Hollywood blockbusters - under the stars. Better yet, have a say in selecting what's to be screened via online voting at www.starlightcinema.com.

Oct 29 - Nov 1, Fort Canning Green

Tickets: \$10, \$13 (at venue)

Kalaa Utsavam: Yeh Hai Mumba Meri Jaan

A play of contemporary themes spiced with local flavour, performed in English. Teamwork Fine Arts Society presents a larger-than-life, award-winning (Edinburgh Fringe Festival) Bollywood-inspired movie *la Moulin Rouge*.

Nov 7 - 9, The Esplanade - Theatre

Tickets: \$36 (from SISTIC)

Singapore Triathlon 2003

A physically and mentally demanding sporting event endorsed by the International Triathlon Union for the first time, this year's competition, has reached the ranks of a world-class event.

Nov 8 - 9, East Coast Park Field

Free Admission

The Great Singapore Duck Race

The annual duckie parade is back for the sixth year. Do your bit for charity as you watch the Singapore River turn bobbing yellow, while participating in the carnival and festive entertainment. Who knows, you might just win a million bucks.

Nov 16, Singapore River

Free Admission

Storytellers' Showcase 2003:

Evening of Asian Tales

Be taken for an emotional roller coaster ride from laughter to tears, as storytellers from India to America verbally dramatise Asian tales to an audience in rapture.

Nov 16 - 17, The Esplanade - Recital Studio

Tickets: \$29 (from SISTIC)

Cinderella!

Wild Rice's take on the classic fairy tale, with a local twist. A family satire, slapstick comedy, music and Singapore's own Prince "Char Mee". Cinderella! will guarantee you laughs ever after.

Dec 2 - 28, Raffles Hotel, Jubilee Hall

Tickets: \$33 (from SISTIC)

Pesta Raya Outdoor Carnival

A kaleidoscope of Malay cultural offerings to mark Hari Raya at the Waterfront, this carnival hosts outdoor festivities, including plays, dances, and performances by veteran singer, Ramli Sarip.

Dec 5 - 7, The Esplanade - Outdoor Theatre and The Edge

Free Admission

The Nation's Countdown to 2004

Strip down to your swimsuits, and strut your stuff as you countdown to the New Year by the beach. Usher in a new beginning as Singapore bids farewell to a traumatic year.

Dec 31

Sentosa, Siloso Beach

Tickets: Details unavailable at press time.

*Information accurate at press time.



JUST MONTHS AFTER IRON's storyline kept London's West End jaded audiences spellbound, ACTION Theatre presents the Asian premiere of IRON, a dark psychological drama about the relationship between a young woman and her mother, who is serving a life sentence for murder.

Closeted between concrete prison walls of gloom, Fay (Karen Tan, first local actress to win the commendation award for best acting at the Cairo International Festival for Experimental Theatre) still recalls her dark past where she stabbed her husband with a kitchen knife. Daughter Josie (Emma Yong, nominated for Best Actress in the DBS Life! Theatre Awards 2002) is now a 26-year-old success in the corporate world. Josie finally visits her in prison after 15 years; having been stopped earlier by her grandmother, bitter at losing her son to the murderess. A fragile girl, Josie only wants to remember the past before the murder, while Fay attempts to live in the world outside through her daughter's eyes.

Besides the award-winning actresses are Ramesh Panicker (Proof, two-time winner of the DBS LIFE! Theatre Awards) and Serena Ho (Drunken Prawns, Lasalle-SIA Outstanding Student Award (Drama) in 1999), who play the roles of cynical prison guards.

Scottish playwright Rona Munro actually requested to spend time in prisons to research the screenplay. According to IRON's press release,

deep impressions of "unbelievable boredom" and "extreme [intensity]" of a taste of life from the outside world through visitors led her to pen the hauntingly realistic IRON. And at a press briefing, director Krishen Jit said he revels at the thought of putting actress Karen Tan (see hypemag.com for her interview) through "the stark and grim realities of prison life".

But it's not all depressing. Underneath the bleak surface shines the triumph of the human spirit through the powerful bond between mother and daughter, despite the separation by iron bars.

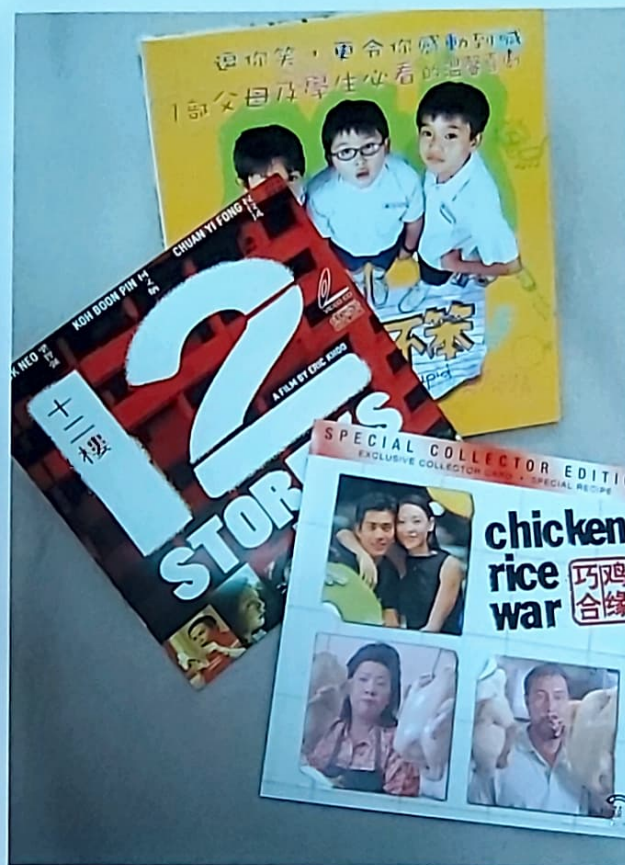
IRON is set to shroud us in darkness, haunting our thoughts on life and love, long after we leave the cast behind.

DATE:
Nov 14 to Nov 23

TIME:
8 pm daily (except Mondays), plus 3 pm shows on Saturday & Sunday

VENUE:
Raffles Hotel Singapore, Jubilee Hall
Ticket Prices: \$22, \$32, \$42 and \$52

* Prices exclude TicketCharge fee of \$1 per ticket.
** Students/Seniors get a discount of 15% for all matinees & Sunday 8 pm shows. Discount not applicable to \$22 tickets



WITH SINGAPORE'S MEDIA 21 strategy recently announcing plans to offer \$25 million over the next five years to promote local movie creation and distribution, the recent relaxation of censorship guidelines and big media players, even internet service providers (TVMobile and Starhub) hosting a local talent showcase of short films and animations, the homegrown film industry looks more promising than it has in years.

Jack Neo's Homerun, the latest local movie to hit screens is certainly giving investors plenty to cheer about, with record takings of about \$610,000 in the first weekend, and exceeding \$2 million by Sep 11, according to Channel News Asia.

Thanks to Neo's Midas touch, this is another success story in a stable that includes last year's I Not Stupid (\$3.7 million sales as of last April), 1998's Money No Enough (\$6 million in box-office takings). The only flop was That One No Enough, which, true to its own prophetic title, bombed after raking in about \$600,000.

But this winning streak has been more an exception in the more than 30 local films that have been produced since 1991 when Medium Rare by Derrol Stepenny Productions lost \$1.87 million. That was the second-most miserable performance in more than a decade, beat only by a Raintree Pictures co-production 2000 AD, which lost a whopping \$5.32 million, according to figures on the Singapore Film Commission



SELLULOID DREAMS

Has the under estimated local movie industry truly hit a Homerun? EULALIA HAN asks as she surveys the encouraging and latest developments in the industry.



Photos by MUHAMMAD ZAKI and LYDIA TEH



(SFC) website. It was obviously a very bad year for the company, as well as Aaron Kwok and Phyllis Quek who fronted the action thriller.

The last good run the Singapore film industry had seen was between the 1930s, when Shaw Brothers first set up their production company, and the 1960s.

These days, opportunities for local exposure have increased even outside of the traditional cinemas. TVMobile screened 11 works (six short films and five animations), many of them prize-winning productions of alumni of the Ngee Ann Polytechnic Film, Sound & Video course, to its 1.5 million viewers. The then-student productions screened eight times a week since the end of August and will finish their run in October.

Where Got Problem?

So if neither money nor exposure is an issue, what will hold us back? In an e-mail interview, Sun Koh, director of *The Secret Heaven* said the popularity of a film "largely depends on how the film resonates with each individual member of the audience". *The Secret Heaven* won the Silver Hugo at the 38th Chicago International Film Festival in 2002 and also won her the Best Director 2002 at the 15th Singapore International Film Festival (SIFF). Koh adds, "Singaporeans tend to be more supportive of films that offer them an insight into their own psyche; which is what films are all about." *Homerun* and *I Not Stupid* enjoyed such smashing success precisely because they depict something most Singaporeans can relate to.

On the other hand, there can be such a thing as being too creative or abstract.

Take the case of *A Sharp Pencil* directed by Gallen Mei and *One Leg Kicking* by local director Eric Khoo. Though these two films were produced in 2001, adopting the same unconventional approach, they targetted different audiences. Mei's *A Sharp Pencil* moved away from the everyday problems of heartlanders into something more obscure. This

film is about Simon – played by Mark Richmond – who is bored with life and becomes a robber. He meets a biker-babe (Beatrice Chia), who becomes his accomplice.

One Leg Kicking, on the other hand, is a heart-warming tale about a rag-tag bunch of laymen defying the odds to qualify for the 2002 World Cup, rather like the underdog Jamaican sled team in *Cool Runnings*. *One Leg Kicking* attracted more moviegoers as Singaporeans are able to identify with the lifestyle and issues portrayed. This show brought in \$700,000 compared to the paltry \$2,000 by *A Sharp Pencil* – the lowest box-office takings for any local film to date.

Lion's Whip

Michael Sim, senior manager and film distributor for Cathay Keris Films says in an e-mail that part of the problem is also because, "most locals do not give enough support to local filmmakers and many are quick to criticise and trash the film".

It is possibly this, more than the oft-blamed small domestic market that makes movie-making so difficult here. In fact, according to the SFC site, Singapore held the world record for being the country with the most frequent moviegoers in 1998; Singapore's population then was only about three million, but we had a cinema attendance of 16 million. However, this figure has been declining.

As with the trend worldwide, cinema attendance is going down as a plethora of entertainment alternatives, including ripping movies off Kazaa, have become part of modern-day living.

So quite apart from the support moviemakers hope to receive from the local audience, they have to not take their craft for granted. Sim says, "We still need the local filmmaker to continue their good work in order to develop a film production industry in Singapore. A film industry is not built overnight. As long as Singapore keeps making movies, improving their technical skills and writing, we will make it someday."

BOX OFFICE



Photo courtesy of CV

MATRIX REVOLUTIONS

Picking up from where *Reloaded* left off, *Revolutions*, the final meteoric instalment of the trilogy, continues with the 12 hours after Zion's invasion. Keanu Reeves, Laurence Fishburne, and Carrie-Anne Moss reprise their roles as the enigmatic trio determined to stop the devastating war against mankind by biomechanical machines. Loaded with explosive action, this Wachowski brothers thriller will blow you off your seats.

CHEONG EN MIN



Photo courtesy of Shaw

INFERNAL AFFAIRS III

In the final chapter of this critically and commercially successful Hong Kong trilogy, Tony Leung's character cheats death, while Andy Lau's must cope with his past as a criminal, as well as handle a new cop (Leon Lai). Both their characters had died in the prequel, so finding out how they survived will keep you riveted. With four Best Actor winners in the cast, you can expect stellar performances. *Opening Dec 12*

ESTHER YEAP



Photo courtesy of Shaw

CABIN FEVER

A mountain cabin holiday turns nightmarish when one of five friends falls horribly ill from a flesh-eating disease. Disgusted and fearful, her friends lock her away in a shed. But suspicion of infection among the remaining four, as well as the mountain locals, lead to some difficult decisions. What's scarier than the newbie cast and director is the fact that it is based on a real, flesh-eating virus – Necrotising Fasciitis. *Opening Oct 16*

GRACE CHUA



Photo courtesy of CV

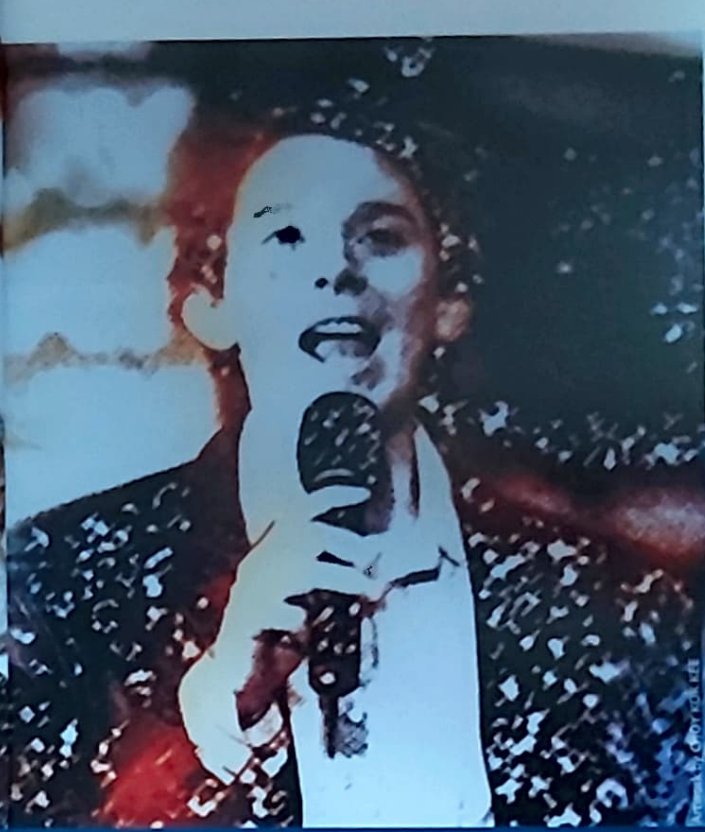
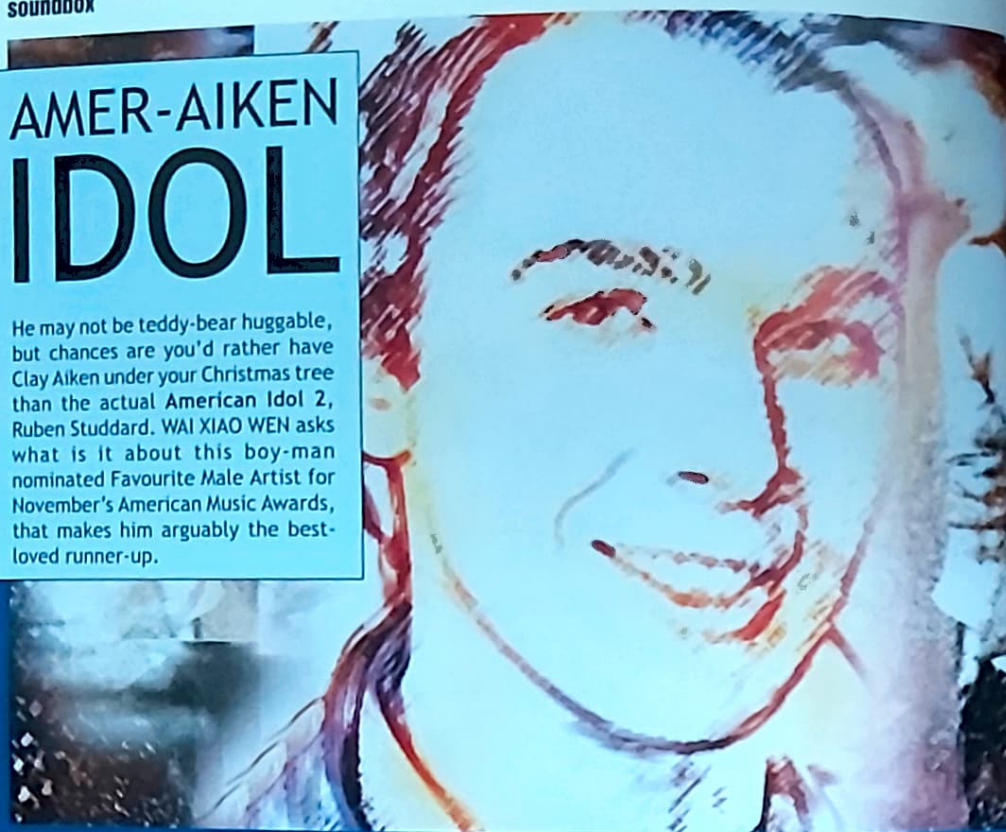
SCARY MOVIE 3

Scary Movie 3 will be matching its predecessors, *Scary Movie 1* and *2*, in terms of humour and gross exaggeration. Moviegoers who caught the earlier two movies will definitely enjoy themselves again, as this time around, *SM 3* will parody movies such as *Signs*, *The Ring* and *Matrix Reloaded*. Along with most of the original cast, some veteran actors will be joining the troupe. Leslie Nielsen, Charlie Sheen and Camryn Manheim help bring the art of parody to new heights. *Opening Nov 27*

LISA TAN

AMER-AIKEN IDOL

He may not be teddy-bear huggable, but chances are you'd rather have Clay Aiken under your Christmas tree than the actual American Idol 2, Ruben Studdard. WAI XIAO WEN asks what is it about this boy-man nominated Favourite Male Artist for November's American Music Awards, that makes him arguably the best-loved runner-up.



CLAYMANIA TRIVIA

- May 16 is Clay Aiken Day as declared by Mayor Charles Meeker of Raleigh, North Carolina.
- Clay's nicknamed Gonzo.
- Clay is afraid of water and house cats.
- Clay is allergic to chocolate, mint, shellfish, almonds, mushrooms and coffee.
- Clay can twist both his feet around.

FROM LOS ANGELES to Miami to London, Clay "The Voice" Aiken has travelled a long way since he embarked on his musical odyssey by auditioning for American Idol 2 in Atlanta, America. Clay's much anticipated debut album, *Measure of A Man* (accurate at press time) to be released on Oct 14 has as executive producer legendary music mogul, Clive Davis, who also masterminded the multi-Grammy winner, Alicia Keys' career.

According to clayaiken.com, Clay has worked with American Idol creator, Simon Fuller, Steve Mac, Cliff Magness, Desmond Child, Steve Morales, and Rick Nowels for his debut album. Erik Hedegaard, contributing editor from Rolling Stone magazine said Clay's album team of music barons strategise in "turning clay

into gold" by targeting "45 million Idol fans into CD buyers".

Much earlier, in fact from the time it hit the top spot on Amazon.com's pre-order list in July, Clay's fans (affectionately known as Claymates), from both Singapore and overseas, have been diligently promoting his album on fan sites and forums. Even the local HMV music store at The Heeren Shops has already started counting the pre-orders for *Measure of A Man*.

No surprises that Clay topped the Billboard singles chart when his platinum CD singles, *Bridge Over Troubled Waters/This Is The Night* are still selling like hotcakes at the local music stores.

Jay, 20, a sales assistant at HMV Heeren said that the first batch of Clay's CD singles was sold out and HMV had another more

than 300 copies of Clay's CD singles shipped from America. He continued, "Every day we are still selling Clay Aiken's CD." Even Clay's July Rolling Stone cover magazine was sold out within a few days after being put up on the shelves.

Clay's daily growing Internet fan base includes fan sites, blogs, forums and chat rooms populated by his loyal fans ranging from young, hormonal teenyboppers to Sinatra-loving grandmothers.

Lycos(TM) revealed that Clay is also one of the "web's most popular musical artist, ranking higher than Britney Spears". Similarly, popdirt.com also reported that the Internet search for Clay is "over 10 times that of the show's champ, Ruben Studdard, during the month of June on pay-per click search

engine Overture.com".

Regional Clay fans were also setting up their own fan bases such as a popular local-based Internet community called *Claysians*, dedicated to Asian fans.

Zahira Tiara Shafiq, 18, founder of *Claysians* said, "I started *Claysians* so that fans living in Asia would get to help out with promotion of Clay's songs and to talk about Clay in general".

But why Clay Aiken?

Ardent fan, Charlene Lim, 21, who is a second-year business management student from Singapore Management University (SMU) said she was "mesmerised with not only the pure timbre of [Clay's] voice, the unforgettable performances, his boyish appearance, but also the morals that he espouses".

In response to an email

interview, one of Clay's American fans, Bonnie Hyde Simpson, 49, from Arkansas, exclaimed, "His singing voice is excellent, and the passion he puts into a song rings a chord in my heart!"

Besides tugging at the heartstrings of many with his captivating vocals, this talented star gives fans more reasons to love him — his golden heart. According to clayitforward.org, Clay inspired Clay-It-Forward, a project for Clay's fans to share their "good works for the communities" and also to "[inspire] more than just listen".

"I saw instant support [Clay] has garnered for various causes. Many people pay lip service to random charities just to make themselves look good, and it usually takes ages before

anything happens, but with Clay it's almost like a flash of lightning: just as soon as he mentioned his autism causes, money started pouring in," said Zahira.

Besides, Clay has also started his own charity foundation called, Babel-Aiken Foundation. This is his contribution to the children with mental disabilities.

Like him, his fans are also avid fundraisers for The Autism Society of North Carolina and the YMCA in Raleigh, where Clay used to be a camp counsellor.

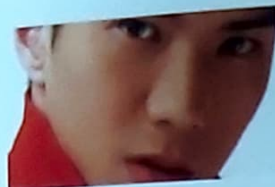
There are many more reasons to love this scrawny devout Christian with the infamous Mickey-Mouse ears, boy-next-door smile and "The Voice".

An idol in the making? Zahira thinks otherwise.

"He's more than an idol. He's an icon."

CELEBRITIES' CHOICE

These albums may not all be certified platinum and some are even obscure, but our stars love them. ESTHER YEAP discovers what six local celebrities' all-time favorite CDs are.



Lawrence Wong, Actor, Moulin Rouge

"My all-time favourite album is Faye Wong's *Japan 2002 Concert CD*... absolutely fabulous... Faye Wong not only delivered her hits 'live' with her heavenly voice at perfect pitch, she also demonstrated the immense flexibility of her voice. Also, she looks really attractive in the CD cover and booklet too."



Melody Chen, Actress, I am Lobang King

"I have so many favourites, but I'll go with *Disgraceful* by Dubstar (EMI records dated 1995). I was very much into alternative bands or groups who dabbled in electronica when I was still studying in Ngee Ann Poly. And this is one album that brings memories back whenever I listen to it."



Amy Cheng, Actress, First Touch

"*Oriental Palace* is my all-time favourite... It's a fusion of oriental instruments like the *guzheng* and the *erhu* mixed with the modern orchestra to create the most heavenly music. I first heard it in the play *Treading Waters*. I found it very soothing and gentle, and have always enjoyed listening to the album."



Darren Seah, Actor, Oh Carol!

"The Soundtrack from *Sister Act* is my favourite music album. It's a great movie with fabulous songs. I find it uplifting, with gospel and classic tunes. I like obscure singers who are not too commercial, but have real talent. The album puts a smile on my face whenever I have it in my CD player."



Terence Tay, Actor, Living with Lydia

"*Dreamscape* by Kit Chan. The music brings my imagination to some place like a lounge, and the relaxed mood simply bowls me over. The music just grows on you each time you listen to it and transports your mind away. [Play] this album on a cool and rainy day indoors with a mug of hot chocolate in hand."



Caroline Cheong, Actress, Light Years

"My choice would have to be the soundtrack for *RENT* the Musical. I really enjoyed the play, and because of that, the songs, which express the deepest emotions within us, struck a chord in me. I play it all the time, especially when I need something uplifting to perk me up, or whenever I'm in a lovelorn mood."

All photos courtesy of FLY Entertainment

THE YEAR IN MUSIC: WHAT'S HOT AND NOT

EULALIA HAN

ARTISTE

Bad boy Justin Timberlake's meteoric rise from boyband member to most popular artiste mirrors his ease with impossibly high notes. Almost all singles in his latest album *Justified* have topped music charts. Like Ricky and Elvis, his dance moves seal the sex symbol image.

Sorry Cheeky Girls, if all you've got are silver hot pants, move over! First hit "Cheeky Song (touch my bum)" is a catchy tune, but the lyrics (written by the twins' mother) are senseless. They look good, but studio recording technologies deserve all the credit for saving their voices...

ALBUM

Curtis Jackson aka 50-cent, and his album *Get Rich or Die Tryin'* are worth every penny, prepping you for a weekend at the club. Though his CD sounds like meaningless rap, they're the lyrical expression of his life. Realistic lyrics and a good tune, he's got it all in one package.

Famed for their irritatingly catchy "The Ketchup Song", Las Ketchup's riding the sauce thin with 11 tracks in the album, boasting four variations of it. At the risk of repeating ourselves (like them), it's addictive but only in moderate amounts. Ketchup's not to replace the main course.

SONG

Tunes like this are getting more and more airtight these days but Sean Paul's "Get Busy" is deservedly getting the crowd dancing. Those with Discmans or MP3s have probably set the repeat button on this track. If nothing else gets you to shake that thing, this will.

"I Can" by Nas has remixed the classic tune "Für Elise" by Ludwig van Beethoven into something of a menace to your eardrums. Most remixes usually ruin the originals and maybe that's personal bias, but people actually sulk and groan when the song's played, especially classical purists.

MUSIC VIDEO

Oops, Justin's done it again with his music video for single "Cry Me a River". It's sung a tad too high but the video's awesome. Marks of his ex-squeeze Pop's Princess Britney Spears are all over. His handpicked co-star is a dead ringer for her and also drives a silver Porsche.

She's sexy and has a butt women would die for, but Kylie's video for "Come Into My World" spells nothing but b-o-r-i-n-g. Shifting away from her previous steamy music videos might be strategic, but move with caution, Kylie... this is a killer loop, if ever there was one.

BREAK-THROUGH

Stacie Orrico's taken the world by storm with her voice, charm and debut secular single "Stuck". She's not your run of the mill 16-year-old newcomer who blends in with the rest. This ambitious young lass is all polished and ready to earn her place in the world of Christian or pop music.

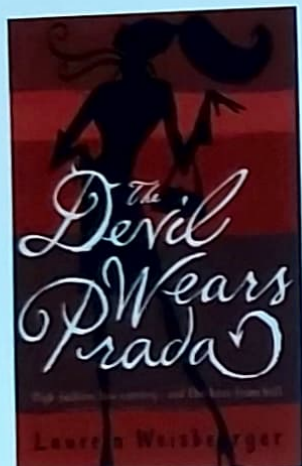
Probably overshadowed by mate, Justin, from his ex band 'N Sync, J.C. Chazez's talented but seriously, the poor chap is lacking in the luck department. Maybe some help from a certain pop princess might catapult him to superstar-dom. Till then, he'll just have to wait in his corner.

COME-BACK

Changing her image put Jewel back into the limelight. Although some prefer her serious side, she made it big by changing her look and repertoire. Just when you thought she couldn't get better than her single "Intuition", her album *Enhanced* turned out to be quite the gem.

Bons bons and tight pants don't you good anymore Mr Latino Sex God; it's time to find original tunes. Ricky Martin's charm still makes women weak in the knees, but his new album isn't as hot since listening to one is like listening to the rest. People want change, Ricky. Give us that!

COVER TO COVER



The Devil Wears Prada: Weisberger

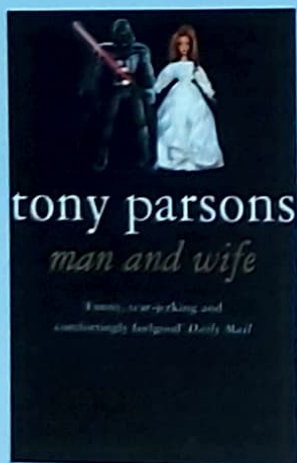
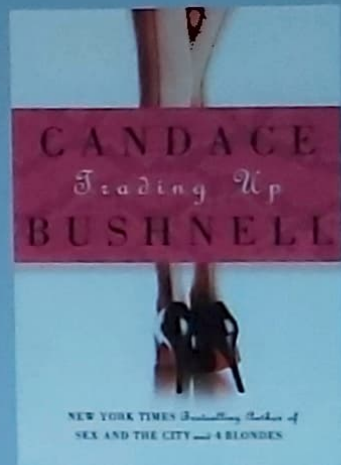
Disgruntled ex-employees often regale friends with stories about the horrors of their previous workplaces. This one published a book. Lauren Weisberger's debut revenge novel stabs former employer Anna Wintour, notorious dominatrix and the most powerful trend-setting woman helming *US Vogue*. Though Weisberger claims the book is not autobiographical, voyeurs are grateful for characters modelled after those at the world's most coveted women's mag. Fresh grad Andrea Sachs, who dreams of writing for *The New Yorker*, ends up at *Runway* magazine, where designer lookbooks are bibles and eating a burger is worse than adultery. Looking at her writing, she'll never make her goal, but you still wouldn't wish her editor, Miranda Priestly, dubbed "the devil who wears Prada" on her. Soon, Miranda's laundry, nanny screenings and hair appointments become Andrea's top priority. She's forced to ask: Does a lifetime supply of free Manolo Blahniks and that New Yorker dream matter more than the people who make living worthwhile?

KAREN KWA

Trading Up: Bushnell

While *Sex and the City* spawned an award-winning series and *4 Blondes* was passable, Candace Bushnell's first full-length novel, *Trading Up*, is vacuous. Despite being touted as a Jane Austen-type satire on the New York social order, it doesn't make it that far. Janey Wilcox, an annoyingly shallow MAW (Model/Actress/Whatever) introduced in *4 Blondes*, returns in *Trading Up* as a Victoria's Secrets lingerie model. This time, the unlikely heroine's decided she's a movie producer too, but not before sleeping with too many rich men, including an Arab munitions dealer. She could well sing a sequel to Charlene's "I've Never Been to Me". It's not just men who have no impact on her. After interacting with other characters with inane names like Mimi, Pippi, Zizi and Dodo, Janey's character never grows. You want to finish the book only for the slightly perverse hope that Janey will meet her downfall. Maybe you know someone like Janey Wilcox, who sure does a good imitation of the damsel in distress. Make this book her pressie this Christmas, because she's probably the only one who'll enjoy it.

GRACE CHUA



Man and Wife: Parsons

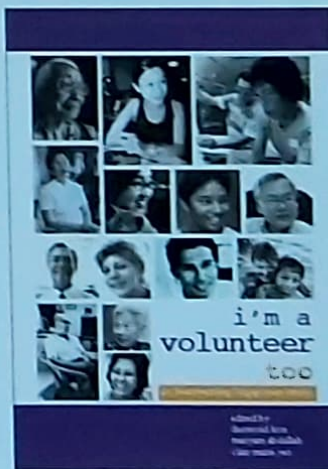
Relationship woes prevail in *Man and Wife*, a modern-day take on familiar issues like divorce, remarriage, stepchildren and infidelity. Harry Silver must survive his "blended family", by adjusting to his new wife, Cyd, a career-minded caterer, and her daughter, Peggy. If that wasn't enough, his ex-wife, Gina and her husband, Richard, unexpectedly plan to relocate to America, taking his son with them. To complicate things, Harry meets Kazumi, an exotic photographer he wants to start an affair with. As a sequel to Andy Parsons's previous bestseller *Man and Boy*, this novel does not disappoint. But his technique of using repeated thoughts, is unnecessary and tiresome to the fast-paced reader. However, this glitch is remedied by Parsons's adeptness in handling inner human drama. Anybody who's gone through relationship problems will be able to empathise with and relate to the character's pain and emotional conflicts. Had this not been written as a novel, Parsons might have scored a best-selling guide, navigating through the thickets of romance, out of the dark, into the bright lights of a thing called love.

KAREN KWA

I'm A Volunteer Too!: Ngee Ann Polytechnic

Launching on Dec 5 – International Volunteer Day – the anthology features individuals as diverse as politician Dr Dixie Tan, war heroine Elizabeth Choy, celebrity Eunice Olsen and common man Knik Pang. The 40 verbatim interviews with local volunteers encourage toiling peers and illuminate the labour of love, sacrifices and power of change in selflessness. There's breast-beating Dawn Kua of the Cat Welfare Society, who sandwiched her sermon with, "I'm a volunteer because I have no life" and ended with "I'm a volunteer because I have a life." Or David Row, whose love for terminal patients of other races/religions is seen in the way he ministered to a Muslim until she died. "The greatest satisfaction, for me, is seeing my patient to the bitter end – where I stay with them and I am a source of comfort to both patient and family." As the love during Christmas and the hope of a new year unshackle self-centredness, this book could jump-start a meaningful chapter in your life. If the title sounds commonplace, its contents surely aren't.

ANDREA LAU



DECK THE HALLS WITH TUNES OF KELLY

FAZLINA FARUK gets comfy with Kelly Clarkson, the fun-loving original *American Idol* who'd rather celebrate Christmas with family, than perch on a pedestal anywhere.



KELLY CLARKSON STOOD in the limelight last June while belting out songs with a powerful, yet innocent voice on the first season of *American Idol*. Since then, this 21-year-old Texan has come a long way, selling 297,000 copies of her debut album, *Thankful*, in the first week of its April release alone and reaching platinum status in just five, according to *RollingStone.com*.

Outside of the recording studio, she hasn't had much of a breather since winning the *American Idol* (AI) title last September. Kelly's starred in a movie musical *From Justin to Kelly* with AI runner-up Justin Guarini, became spokesperson for Candie's Shoes and even performed as 60s singer Brenda Lee on *American Dreams*, a television series.

In Singapore, her second-last stop before she heads back to America, in a worldwide promo tour since January even before the album was released, the pop starlet, who gave us hits like "Miss Independent" and "Low" shows she was serious when she said that she wanted to spread her love.

"I love spreading my music around the world, I mean [to] as [many] people as I can touch with my music."

Being Real On Reality TV

Instant fame can change ordinary people into prima donnas, but its greedy claws can't go near this down-to-earth girl, who meets reporters while clad in an unpretentious black top, khaki pants and just a trace of make-up. Not surprisingly, Kelly "hates reality TV" as the contestants are made to seem like what they're not.

"[But *American Idol*] was actually reality TV that was reality. I got to sing what I wanted. I got to wear what I wanted and I got to be me. There was no image being forced on me," says Kelly.

Certainly here's a young woman with a strong sense of who she is, no doubt formed even when she was a teenager like many of us. In high school, "I wasn't popular, but everybody knew me. We didn't really have the popular thing at my school ... I was well known because I did drama, I did athletics; I did student council, senior council," she adds.

She doesn't say it, but what gets them to sit up and notice her is probably her passion for what she does. When it's passion applied to her talent, she says fiercely, "I don't do it for Oscars [regarding *From Justin to Kelly*], I don't do it for rewards. I do it cause I like it." Way to go, girl.

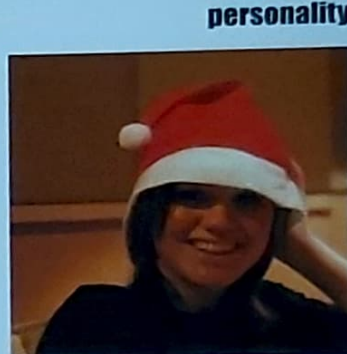
It's Beginning To Look A Lot Like Christmas

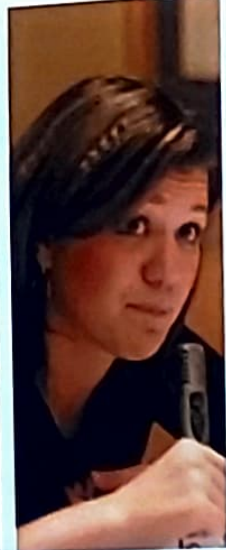
With no trace of diva attitude, she didn't need much persuasion to get into the Christmas spirit for **hype**.

Donning Santa's cap gamely for our shoot, Kelly screams, "I love Christmas! Ho ho ho!"

Her Yuletide memories are made of these: "We're cooking stuffing and turkey and stuff like that. You know, your Christmas dinner. That's my favourite part—just having dinner with everyone because it's so cool to see what everybody brings and how bad it tastes." The chow may pale against the fine cuisine she's fed as a top-selling artiste, but all that matters to her is that warm satisfaction of food cooked with love and shared with loved ones.

The many who get depressed at year's end, brooding that they've neither fame nor fortune, can learn a thing or two from Kelly, who has both but is happier "when I get to go home (laughs)... and





hang out with my friends and my family and stuff ... [and just] be normal."

This Christmas will be an especially joyful one for Kelly, as she'll be celebrating the holidays at her home sweet home.

"I'm inviting my whole family over to my house in Texas. We've never actually had a holiday together since I was like six." Flying her family members across the States for a reunion in Texas is a dream come true since her family couldn't do before because it was too expensive to travel.

Kelly As Santa

While most of us are content with writing e-mails to Santa for presents, the generous Kelly finds joy in giving to others instead.

"I grew up in ... a humble beginning ... [with only] one present a year. So I'm not really into the present thing and I think that's cool that I grew up like that. I think it's cool to buy loved ones a gift but I don't think it should be a timed thing. I think Christmas is about bringing the family together ... I just think that it's a time you should really just [be] thankful for everything you have. And if you're a special person, be thankful for the blessings that have been given to you by someone else."

On that note, she's most grateful for her mother, Jeanne Taylor, a first-grade teacher who single-handedly raised three children. "My mom is such an independent individual. She just taught me a lot and that's why I have such a good head over my shoulders ... and that's why I usually keep my eyes on what's important."

This was true even before her *American Idol* days. Sharing her memories with *hype*, Kelly and her mom once came across a family stranded on the street. At the risk of getting hurt by these strangers, "we ended up stopping and gave them a bunch of money and we got some gas for them, and we got somebody to fix their car because it was overheated," says the Samaritan. "I got late for work and I got yelled at. I gave them all the money I had, I didn't have much." Kelly was working at her first job in a cinema then.

"I just try to help out where I can, because I know what it's like to go without." Aww.

Which makes her the perfect person to be featured solely on the bonus disc accompanying the *American Idol Holiday Album*, due for release on Oct 14.

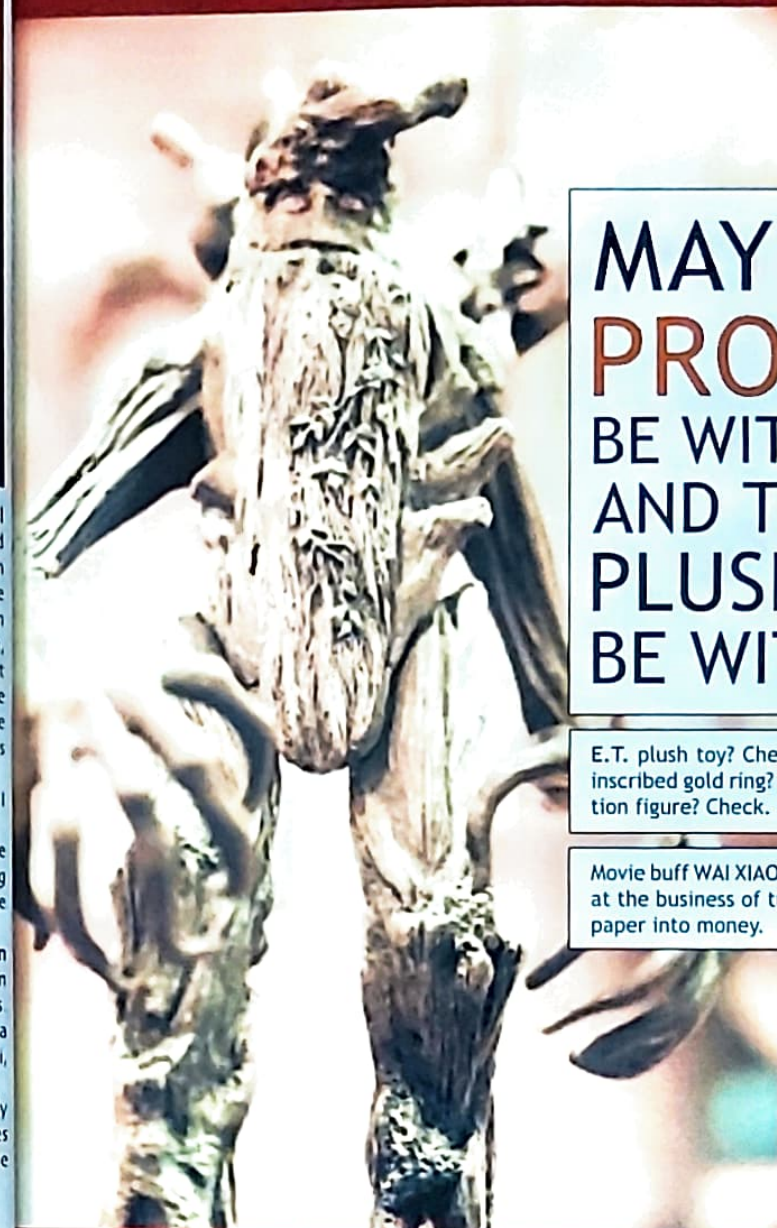
On the album proper, she joins fellow *American Idol* finalists Justin, Kimberly, Clay and more in their interpretation of heart-warming carols. Perennial holiday favourite "White Christmas", a duet by Kelly and rumoured beau Justin Guarini, is the one to look out for.

Put on the album and let the warmth of Kelly and other wholesome singing heroes and heroines into your home. That should put you right in the mood for the season of loving and giving.

Santa would surely approve.

WIN KELLY PREMIUMS!

Log on to www.hypemag.com to win autographed Kelly Clarkson CDs and posters!



MAY THE
PROFITS
BE WITH YOU,
AND THE E.T.
PLUSH TOY
BE WITH ME.

E.T. plush toy? Check. Lord of the Rings inscribed gold ring? Check. Spiderman action figure? Check.

Movie buff WAI XIAO WEN takes a hard look at the business of turning plastic, fur and paper into money.

BY THE END of the *Lord of the Rings* and *Matrix* trilogies in December, Frodo Baggins may have saved Middle Earth and Neo may have rescued humanity. But the battle continues not only for top place on the box office/CD/DVD charts. The fight for even more revenue intensifies as movie fans happily surrender their wallets to film merchandise.

According to an entertainment law site, marklitwak.com, merchandise includes such licensed "spin-off products such as toys, clothing, novelisations and soundtrack albums". They have become a part of late 20th century pop culture after Steven Spielberg masterminded the concept in 1975 for *Jaws*.



Ever since then, movie merchandising has been a major contributor in film revenues of blockbusters like *Star Wars* and the more recent, *Harry Potter*.

marklitwak.com also quoted *Licensing Letter*, a trade publication revealing that "licensed products generate more than \$73 billion [\$5127.8 billion] a year, of which \$16 billion is derived from entertainment such as movies".

BEFORE THE FILM SCREENS

This was certainly the case this year, before the Marvel Comics superheroes burst on to the big screen with the ever-popular tri-packed blockbusters *X-Men*, *Daredevil* and *Hulk*.

With their pre-existing fan base, the franchises were

guaranteed a multi-billion dollar business in merchandising as they were also predicted as box office hits.

Last year's success stories took the same path. According to *tdctrade.com*, Jim Silver, the co-publisher of *Toy Wishes*, a US-based magazine, said, "2002 is a watershed year for film-licensing tie-in with toys" with summer blockbusters such as *Spiderman*, *Lilo & Stitch*, *Harry Potter* and the *Chamber of Secrets*, *Austin Powers In Goldmember*, *Scooby Doo* and many more.

Silver also noted that "It is a sign of studios realising, with the rising costs of making movies, the kind of money can be made through licensing agreements."

If you didn't already know, it's

no coincidence that the releases of both *Lord of the Rings: Return of the King* and *Matrix Revolutions* are strategically scheduled for this holiday season, when purchasing power is higher, and gift-buying tendencies peak.

HAPPY MEAL, HAPPY PEOPLE

Happy Meal puts a smile on not just every child but McDonald's and the studios they tie up with. Serina Tan, associate of Citigate Dewe Rogerson i.MAGE, which is an international corporate communications consultancy for the global burger franchise, says, "McDonald's Corporation and Walt Disney Company® are global alliance partners in an exclusive 10-year multi-divisional, multi-national

relationship. McDonald's has exclusive restaurant industry marketing rights to Disney properties, including film, home video, theme parks and television."

The recent McDonald's Happy Meal promotional tie-in with Pixar's *Finding Nemo*, created an island-wide frenzy among fanatical young adults and



children. "The toys had been so popular that they were sold out way before what we expected," Tan exclaims. Cross-promotional deals have also been popular with other companies such as Pepsi – *Star Wars: Attack of the Clones* tie-in, Burger King – *Lord of the Rings* tie-in and many others.

SHOW ME THE MONEY

Movie fans are not complaining about being fed or courted by various marketing dimensions. Independent filmmaker Shaun Koh admits that while many might see the exploitation in merchandising, "I enjoy it a lot." Janice Tay, marketing director of Twentieth Century Fox Film (East) also sees value in it beyond the revenue, "It is a tool to help promote the [film]."

"[Merchandising] only exploits the consumer weakness by creating a desire for memorabilia items," Tay adds, "It is also to help to keep the property alive such as the *Star Wars* franchise which maintained its popularity even after 20 years."

Director of local movie *Chicken Rice War*, Cheah

Chee Keong or Cheek, believes that movie merchandising has been a "package deal with the movies for the longest time and these days, the marketing plans are just more 'in your face' and so we notice them more".

As many people who bankroll movies are more interested in making films that have lucrative merchandising opportunities, Koh adds, "It is a



legitimate form of business... I have no qualms with that."

Cheek agrees, "Investors need to get their money back, otherwise nobody would put money into films. The more success, both for the film and merchandising, the more money is re-invested into making [films and] leading to more opportunities for all filmmakers." Not only do new films get made, Tay added that merchandising can also "help drive demand for sequels".

Low Zu Boon, a 19-year-old movie buff who has collected 30 movie posters to date, shares, "Regular movie fans would go through great lengths to obtain certain collectibles. For instance, classic movie posters are auctioned on eBay and fans of those classic movies are willing to bid to the maximum of few hundreds for posters like *The Lord of the Ring: Return of the King* teaser poster or *Gone with the Wind*."

TOYS GALORE

Since Singapore has one of the highest cinema attendances per year in the world, going by figures from nationmaster.com, it stands to reason that we could contribute a fair share to merchandise spending too. So which are the most sought-after items here? "The classics like *Star Wars* and Disney toys are very popular including *Lord of the Rings*," reveals Ann Goh, business development manager of Simply Toys, a toys and merchandise store at Level One, Far East Plaza.

Simply Toys looks at a teen and young adult market as opposed to Happy Meal, which targets children. Goh explains that the merchandise craze starts when a particular movie is first released because, "there will be a mad rush for the merchandise, which lasts for two to three months". However, for Nelson Chew, product sales consultant of Caesars Gun Gallery, "*Lord of the Rings* merchandise are the best sellers." Chew adds, "Customers usually have an interest in that particular movie and they started buying one [of the *Lord of the Rings* swords] and later they ended up collecting the whole set."



"MOVIE MERCHANDISE ALLOW CHILDREN TO DWELL IN THEIR IMAGINARY WORLD OF MOVIE ACTION AND FUN. FOR ADULTS, THESE ARE TANGIBLE SOUVENIRS REMINDING US OF A MOVIE THAT WE HAVE ENJOYED."

I STILL LOVE MY E.T. PLUSH TOY!

On the appeal of these collectibles, Tan says, "Movie merchandise allow children to dwell in their imaginary world of movie action and fun. For adults, these are tangible souvenirs reminding us of a movie that we have enjoyed," Goh reminisces with a smile, "Toys are something close to our hearts and our childhood."

Which may explain why many are unafraid to ask for unthinkable sums for the simplest things like posters. As with many items, age only increases the value. In a recent check of ebay.com, the most expensive collectible for *Star Wars* is a 1977 domestic poster which the seller is willing to part with for US\$2,950 (S\$5,163).

In comparison, the owner of the most pricey *Matrix: Reloaded* poster on auction will let it go for just US\$250 (S\$438), even though it has been autographed by the leads and directors of the movie.

Explaining the escalating value of movie merchandise such as *Star Wars* collectibles from the 70s, Lee Hok Leong, former Ngee Ann Polytechnic Marketing lecturer, cautions, "What is of value to the person who buys it, may not be valuable to you."





Photos by MARK NGAN and NG LIANG ZHI

SHE'S A MAN SHE'S A WOMAN

hype explores that assertive fashion fusion and gets you lookin' like a million dollars – without the moolah!

1. Invest in a pair of well-cut black wide legged pants to finish off that masculine look. It'll last you through the seasons. From Zara (\$109).
2. Forget about the Avril Lavigne style. The cool tie can be worn as a belt or tied round your waist for that dash of quirkiness. From Opptshop (\$39).
3. A fitted, well-cut shirt like this one is an essential piece in any wardrobe, and is especially important for this season's man/woman, boy/girl look. From Jessica Sport (\$65.90) at Takashimaya.
4. A must-have accessory for Fall 2003 would definitely have to be the clutch. Get one in faux alligator skin for that chic factor. From Perlini (\$11) at Tangs.
5. Take your cue from Miuccia Prada. A deerstalker hat in British tweeds is bound to hit a high note with the fashion police this season. From Opptshop (\$69.90).

Photos courtesy of Prada Singapore and Club21



It's a Man's world: Some trends from the Fall 2003 runway.

A pair of black or pinstripe pants

Make sure they hug your hips. The legs should fit loosely, like how men wear their pants.

Tip: Look for low-slung, wide-legged pants at places like Mango and Zara.

A well-cut shirt

The shirt should be fitted relatively close to your body. Don't get one that's too short; you'll need to be able to tuck it into the top of your pants. Try to get something with feminine touches like a ruffled collar or French cuffs.

Tip: Up the contrast by wearing a pair of cuff-links.

A tie

But not for wearing around your neck! Tie it around your hips, at the top of your low-slung pants. Practise a little to get a nice knot.

Tip: Tie patterns or designs are very much up to the individual, but if you're not sure, keep it plain, or classic. No Mickey Mouse or elephant print, please.

High, high, pointy heels

Stilettos are really feminine and sexy without being too sweetie-pie. It completes the man/woman look by highlighting the contrast between the man-cut pants and the feminine shoes.

Tip: If you feel too uncomfortable with heights, try kitten-heel shoes but make sure they're pointy as well.

A hat

Fedora hats are always cool and chic. Shop around a bit to find a style that really suits you and your face shape. Make sure the material is good and will not "wilt" after a few wears.

Tip: Wear it for special occasions, like a party or dinner. Unless you can carry it off, wearing a hat during normal circumstances is sure to get you some strange looks ...

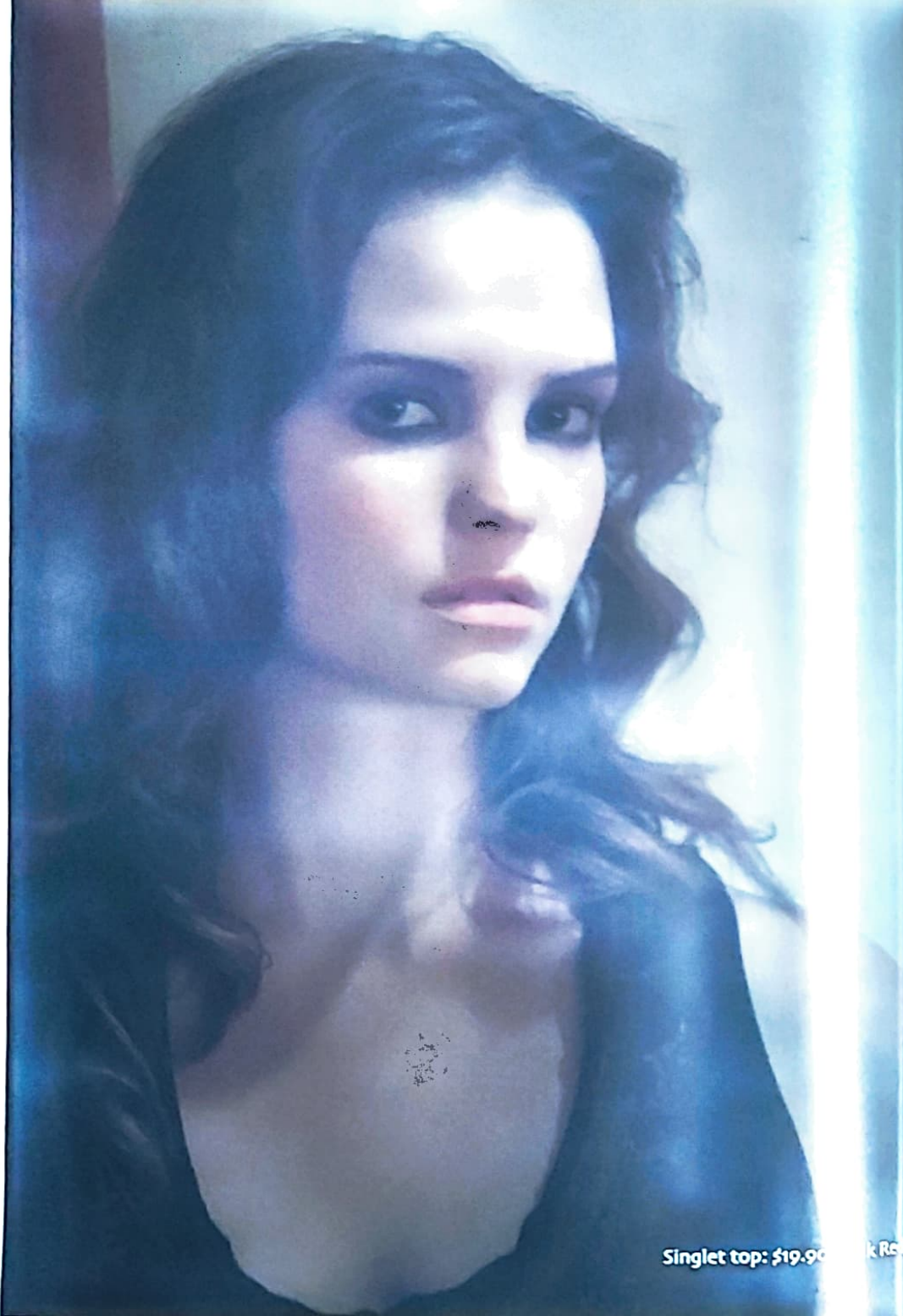
A full-page photograph of a woman with long, wavy brown hair wearing a silver tiara. She is sitting on a plush, red, tufted sofa. She is wearing a white sleeveless t-shirt with a colorful graphic that includes the words 'NARC', 'X-H', 'ZB', 'OK', 'VRI', and '1980'. She is also wearing dark red shorts. Her legs are crossed at the ankles, and she is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

A World Of Our Own

Sometimes, all we need is a little space

Photography: Chris
Styling: Karl
Hair & Makeup: Mil
Monsoon Hair
Model: Adel / Man

Customised T-shirt: stylist own
Bonds briefs: \$16.90, 77th Street
Tiara: Costumes and Mascots



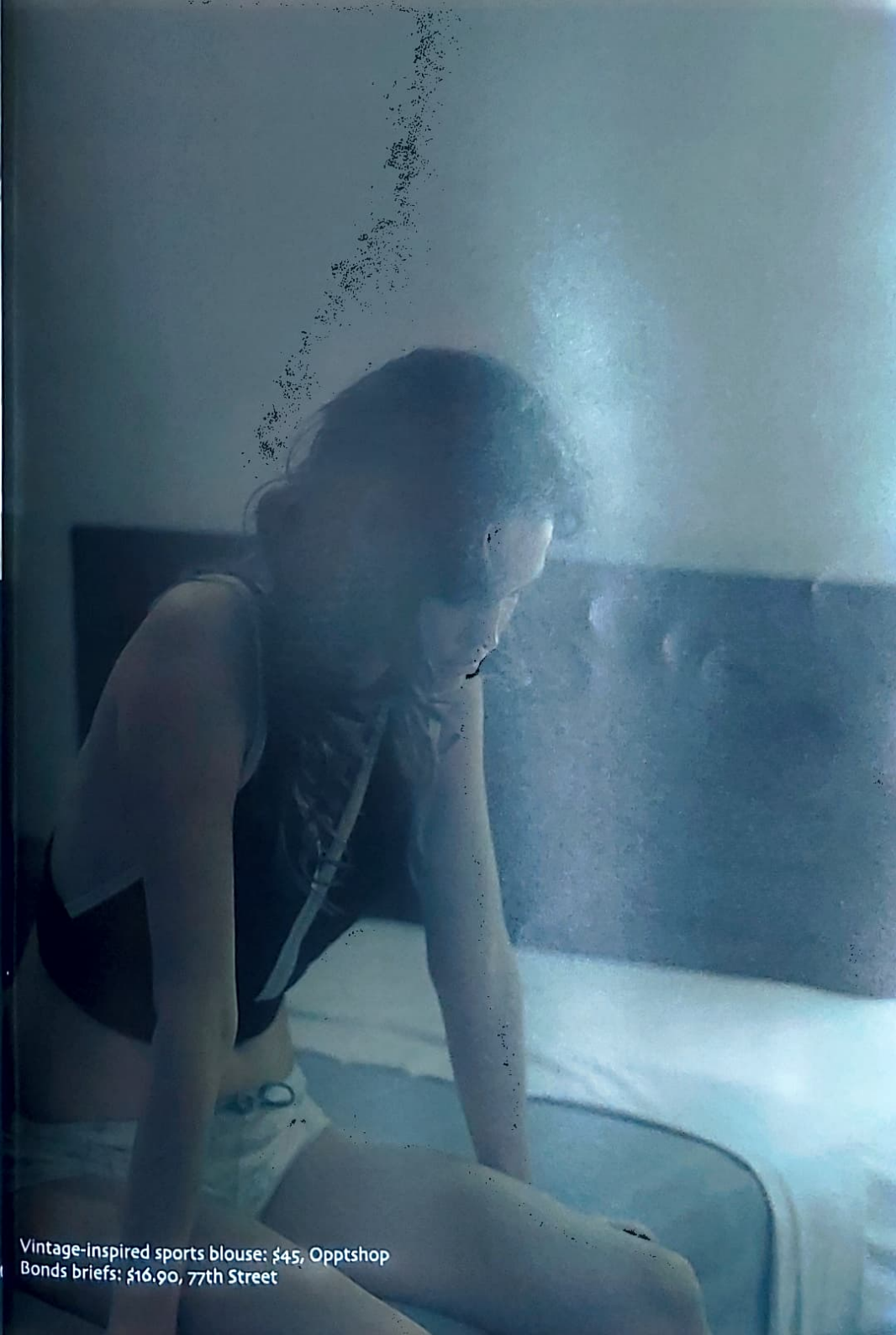
Singlet top: \$19.90



Marc Jacobs corset tube top: Price unavailable, Belle
Bonds briefs: \$16.90, 77th Street



Y-Front singlet: \$39, a.bout



Vintage-inspired sports blouse: \$45, Opptshop
Bonds briefs: \$16.90, 77th Street

YULETIDE CHEERS!

Madam Wong's

27 Mohamed Sultan Road
Tel: 6557 0828

Eggnog Haven: Sitting gracefully at the famed Mohamed Sultan Road, Madam Wong's artfully complements her seductively red decor with an all-oriental interior. On weekends, the club is packed with yuppies who gyrate to the thumping beats of the latest hits. This is a perfect place to toast Christmas Eve.

First Glimpse: Served in a graceful cocktail glass, with a mint leaf on its rim, this eggnog epitomises the fine art of balance. Look out for mistletoe thrown in by the cheeky bartender!



Photo of homemade eggnog by JARON CHAN

Eggnog Recipe

Method: Pour all ingredients into a cocktail shaker and shake it till well blended. Serve it in a cocktail glass without additional ice.

- 30 ml of brandy
- 40ml of milk
- Whipped cream (to taste)
- One small egg
- Sugar (to taste)
- 1 sprinkling of nutmeg
- 1 cup of ice cubes

**Eggnog recipe courtesy of Madam Wong's*

Long Bar (Raffles Hotel)

Raffles Hotel
1 Beach Rd, 2nd floor
Tel: 6337 1886

Eggnog Haven: Fusing modest Asian elements, such as automated straw fans, with stately Western gold trimmings, Long Bar entices weary souls to unwind on its inviting rattan sofas.

First Glimpse: Served naked in a champagne glass, without any adornment, this presentation sits well with purists or minimalists.

Taste Test: Their Christmas generosity with the brandy backfires, since the alcoholic edge is just a little overwhelming. However, the sprinkled

This Christmas, try playing Santa with traditional eggnog. Who knows? If he's too drunk to drive his sleigh, he might have to park all the presents with you. Eggnog has tantalised the palates of many with its rich and creamy alcoholic flavour. LISA TAN checks out a few places that proudly serve the Yuletide concoction.

Taste Test: The subtle bitterness of brandy and bourbon enliven the luscious sweetness of thick cream. Its harmony will enchant your palate till the very last drop. Like other cocktails, this light alcoholic drink is best when its taste is balanced between sweetness and alcohol.

Price: At only \$12.50+++, this is one of the most affordable eggnogs in town.

Have Another: Stellar! It's time to ditch house pours, beers and other cocktails.

nutmeg, which exudes a spicy fragrance, balances it off nicely. With sugariness lingering in the mouth, every sip just gets better.

Price: A drink served without garnish at \$15+++ is a bit steep even if you're in the mood to show goodwill to all men, although that's fairly expected at this grand 'ol dame.

Have Another: Definitely worth a try but check if your pocket is agreeable. 'Tis the season for some indulgence after all, so we'd say, get it!



Indulge in a unique gastronomic experience as The Rice Table Restaurant brings the buffet to your table, serving its dishes a la *Rijsttafel*, a Dutch word that translates into "rice table".

Dishes are served at one go, on metal food warmers, heated by cosy tea lights. While you chat leisurely over dinner, you never need to worry about your food getting cold. Simply sit back and savour the tantalising dishes.

The sumptuous feast lets you enjoy as many servings as you like of *Soto* (soup) and either 13 side dishes for lunch or 19 for dinner. Thumbs up for the restaurant's *Tahu Telor*, *Chicken Satay* and *Beef Rendang*, all of which have been awarded Excellent Food Awards by the same food and entertainment guide.

But what is a great Indonesian meal without fine nostalgic Balinese ambience? The batik table cloths, wayang kulit and cream-coloured flower motif tiles create an authentic Dutch-Indonesian atmosphere to soak in.

For bonafide Indonesian fare, there's no place better than The Rice Table.

Address: 43/45 Cuppage Road, H2O Zone, Cuppage Terrace
Telephone: 6735 9117
Opening hours: noon - 2.45 pm (Lunch)
6 pm - 9.45 pm (Dinner)
Flagship outlet: 360 Orchard Road, #02-09/10, International Building
Telephone: 6835 3783
Opening hours: noon - 2.30 pm (Lunch)
6 pm - 9.30 pm (Dinner)

**Reservations are strongly advised*

CRUNCH TIME

There's something warm and comforting about cookies, especially freshly baked ones. Whether as a potluck contribution to a year-end party or a Christmas gift, they never fail. VALERIE CORERA snubs the common franchises and sniffs out three places that give you the crunchiest deals.

Cookie Man

The Cookie Haven: Cookie lovers, rejoice! Cookie Man, an Australian franchise, offers over 30 kinds of cookies to choose from, though only 16 varieties are displayed.

The Crunch: Among the mouth-watering cookies, Brandy Snap emerges as a clear winner. This signature cookie is baked crisp, thin and with a hint of brandy. The cookie is moist so you won't feel hoarse even after wolfing down tons of them. Thumbs up for the good texture.

Crunch Factor: 4 crumbs out of 5. This is the shop to go to if you're cash-strapped. At only \$5 for every 200g, this is a steal.

391 Orchard Road, #B2-07-1,
Takashimaya Shopping Centre
Tel: 6733 3833
Opens: 10 am - 9.15 pm daily

Olio Dome

The Cookie Haven: Famed for its coffee and gourmet sandwiches, Olio Dome now has another food item to boast about—its cookies. Although the variety is limited, you won't be complaining because they make up for it with rich flavours. Cookies are sold at \$4.90 for 120g.

The Crunch: The Hazelnut and Chocolate Cookie is generously laced with chunks of delicious hazelnut. While very rich in flavor, it's a tad dry. All the better for you to wash it down with Olio's Ice Peach Tea.

Crunch Factor: 3 crumbs out of 5. Good place to read and nibble away on a lazy afternoon.

501 Orchard Road, #03-15,
Wheelock Place
Tel: 6737 7044
Opens: 10.30 am - 10.30 pm daily

Shangri-La Pastry Shop

The Cookie Haven: Initially, you might be intimidated by the posh marble flooring and fine interior of the confectionery, but not to worry, the cookies sold here are not all that pricey.

The Crunch: Macadamia and Coconut Cookie is a wonderful combination of rich macadamia nuts and refreshing coconut shavings. The coconut gives a unique texture to the cookie, and the buttery taste will make you crave for more.

Crunch Factor: 3.5 crumbs out of 5. The cookies come in large and chunky pieces. \$5 for 100g will give you about eight sizeable pieces of cookies.

Shangri-la Pastry Shop
26 Orange Grove Road
Tel: 6213 4180
Opens: 8 am - 9 pm daily



Photos by PATRICIA HO

UTT-ERLY CHARMING

MTV VJ Utt is like a box of chocolates. With gorgeous good looks, and a tongue sweeter than honey, this sought-after piece of imported eye candy is impossible to resist. Contain your drool as AILEEN LAI unwraps each glossy wrapper to reveal the sweetheart within.



GREGARIOUS. VIVACIOUS. CHILDLIKE. MTV VJ Utt is all these and also a can of shaken Coke – sweet, overwhelming and volatile – the more you shake the more effervescence and reaction you provoke.

Utsada Greg Panichkul, more affectionately known as Utt, may be hitting the “Big 3-0” next year, but his saccharine baby face and candid spontaneity veil his true age.

Just throw him a comic book and his entrancing hazel eyes will immediately light up with a childlike twinkle. The proud owner of over 2,000 copies of comics confesses to escaping into the fantasy drawn world ever since he was a kid.

Sweet Little Devil

Speaking of his childhood, Utt’s angelic face broke into a devilish grin. “I gave my parents hell,” he chuckles heartily. “I used to torment and burn insects like cockroaches and lady bugs! That’s really bad but I wouldn’t do it now because it’s cruel.”

During his schooldays, this prankster churned up a whirl of crazy things that left those around him gaping in horror and amusement.

“Go on tell her about the pee thing,” prompted his manager, Melissa Lam, lounging beside us on a deck chair of his District 10 condo. After some merciless hustling, he relented. “I pee-ed in this ash tray.” What! Why?

“I just felt like doing it, so I did. Back then, I’d always do lots of stupid things for no reason.”

So was joining MTV one of them? Absolutely not, when he’s loving every minute of it!

Sweet Beginnings

Growing up in the state of California with his Social Science professor father and nurse mother, young Utt was surrounded by music, and drawn to the magnetic influence of MTV. This spurred his dream of becoming a VJ – a dream that since five years ago, has been translated into a glamorous reality.

Like most stars who started off with less-than-

glam jobs, Utt became a paperboy at nine, earning miserable pennies before he attempted to strike it out on the runways. He succeeded beyond his hopes when he was selected among a multitude of hopefuls during an MTV VJ audition.

From there, things have only been getting better. Earlier this year, his fresh and convivial image earned him the honour of becoming Anchor Beer’s Celebrity Ambassador.

Due to his commitments with MTV, Utt will be based in Singapore for at least the next two to three years, he reckons. (Read: One more eligible bachelor for the lucky girls. And guys?)

Sweet Cravings

For those of you who want to steal a glimpse of this delicious looking hottie or attract his attention like the stalker character, Leon in local movie *Chicken Rice War* which Utt had a cameo on, we’d suggest doing it anywhere that spells F-O-O-D.

But you’ll probably have better luck going in the afternoon because you’re unlikely to catch someone who “hates waking up in the morning” chomping away heartily at his breakfast platter.

The way to this man’s heart is definitely through his stomach, which in this case is his washboard-firm but very greedy belly.

This guy can rattle off all the food he loves – so fond is he of green peas and carrots he’s nicknamed “goat”, fine steak and seafood – but the list stops at durians. “It’s gross!”

Sweet Obsessions

For someone who doesn’t appreciate breath that reeks of the “king of fruits”, this guy has an unexplainable fetish for the weirdest smells.

“I’ve smelt Denise’s [Keller] toes, my own socks and armpits,” he enthuses candidly, without a trace of embarrassment. Please indulge us as we give him another brownie point for his confidence and refreshing honesty.

His other fetish – it has to be the two mounds of



HERE’S WHAT UTT THINKS OF WHEN hype SAYS:

UTT ERLY DEVOTED MY FANS!

UTT ERLY SENSITIVE ERM ... PENIS?

UTT ERLY SEXY KRISTIN KREUK

UTT ERLY SINFUL BILL CLINTON

UTT ERLY NAUGHTY NAUGHTY THOUGHTS OF BEYONCE (FROM DESTINY’S CHILD)

full and firm flesh that form part of the curvaceous silhouette – butt. (What were you thinking of?)

When quizzed further about his idea of a perfect bottom, his cheeky yet matter-of-fact response left this particular reporter blushing crimson-hot and struggling to maintain her dwindling professional composure.

“Yours. Can I smack it first to see if it’s firm?” Then came the devilishly playful grin again. This is a part of Utt that people who’ve spent some time with him realise – that he’s a bundle of fun, bubbling energy and harmless cheekiness. A date mom would certainly approve of.

“OLDER WOMAN? NEVER! UNLESS SHE’S A BABE LIKE DEMI MOORE OR SOMEONE AS SEXY AS ANGELINA JOLIE.”

Sweet Chemistry

But when it comes to matters of the heart, how serious does this eligible bachelor get? “I’m not ready for commitments yet, but what’s most important to me is what’s inside. She must be genuine and everything must come from her heart. There must be some connection with this person.”

With Utt reprising his role as the younger love interest of veteran Hong Kong actress Carol Cheng in the upcoming drama sequel *Oh Carol! 2*, which will probably be aired at the end of this year, the natural question is whether he’ll rule out a more mature woman as his prospective partner.

“Older woman? Never! Unless she’s a babe like Demi Moore or someone as sexy as Angelina Jolie,” he shoots back.

Sweet Essence

Give him either of those babes (or both!) or an Armani suit, and this guy will fling open his arms shouting, “Bring it on!” But when the cameras stop rolling, lights dim and the Armani suit is peeled off, what remains is a reflective soul.

“The greatest contradiction in my life is living the life that I’m living now because I used to imagine myself having a normal 9-to-5 job.” So what will this VJ do after he stops gracing our MTV screen? Probably go “behind the screen” and dabble with the production aspects, he says. But for this free-spirited lad who leaves things to nature, nothing is cast in stone except the sweet reality of the present.

“Life is like a path where different people go for different things. I’m confident in my own skin and I’m very happy to be doing all that I’m doing now.”

TOP TECH FAVOURITES

Before you whisper to Santa, and slip into a shopping spree of unbridled passion, allow CHEONG EN MIN to introduce you the best gadgets of 2003. Just plug and play.

IT'S BEEN A YEAR of rapid technological advancements, with plenty of consumer products to show for it. Here are **hype**'s 10 favourites. Let's zero in and check out the ones which made the list.

1



Apple iPod - The Sound of Music

Which MP3 player can possibly match up to the genius of the Apple iPod? What with its extensive memory capacity (it can store up to 7,500 songs), and attractive aesthetics, it boasts cutting-edge technology that will have you singing its praises. The version released in August is more than you could ever hope for. With its practical, intelligent design, the new iPod features a multi-functional user interface and sleek LCD screen, which screams user-friendly at its most chic. At just 0.62 inches thick and a mere 160g, the iPod will fit right into your palm, and lifestyle.

Price: \$299

2



Philips Onis 300 - Drop Me A Line

The low-down is you don't need a mobile phone subscription to keep up with your friends any longer. Introducing the Onis 300 - the answer to fixed-line messaging. The brilliant cordless contraption allows you to compose messages easily, and comes with a built-in text editor to boot. Equipped with a 100-entry phone book storage capacity and a selection of ring-tones to choose from, you'd think you had bought yourself another cell phone. And the line between cordless and mobile becomes even more indistinct with the Onis 300's roaming range, which provides you with the freedom of mobility to wander away from the base phone.

Price: \$268

3



Sony RDR-GX7 - Rewriting the Rules

This little device will make piracy more irresistible and harder to curb. The Sony RDR-GX7 DVD Recorder can zap any TV programme or movie straight onto a DVD-R in record time. Extra perks include, for both linear and non-linear editing, a Variable Bit Rate, plus a Digital to Analog Converter. More reason to get your hands on one of these gems is the powerful DTS and Dolby Digital audio output, coupled with TV Virtual Surround with four Surround Modes. The RDR-GX7 experience is sure to leave you deliciously breathless.

Price Range: \$548.99 - \$799.99

4



Casio Exilim EX-Z3 - Point and Shoot

Get up close and personal with this killer. Barely an inch thick, the Exilim EX-Z3 is photography made simple, with a two-inch LCD and 3.2 megapixel screen. Snap shots of pristine quality with the 3x optical zoom, and capture some action with the camera's video-recording option. This neat gizmo can save up to 30 seconds of footage with sound, and has an internal storage memory of 10MB. The lithium-ion battery can be charged while you use the camera, or hooked up to an external charger. So don't worry about having professional fun with the EX-Z3 at all.

Price: \$399.99

5

Nokia 6600 - Push Some Buttons

Turn this phone on and be tantalised by all the surprises it has tucked away. Although slightly bulky, the 6600 sure doesn't hold back, and compensates with its technologically rich features. It comes with Bluetooth technology, video-streaming capabilities, and a funky video-recording VGA camera, which can also capture still shots with an effective 2X zoom. All your moments will be preserved in either an MMC card or the phone's 6MB memory. And what better way to see all this than through the 65,536 pixel-colour screen? Delicious.

Price: Not Available

6

Fossil Wrist PDA 2004 - Watch It

Brace yourself for the moment you've been anticipating. Buckle up, strap down and prepare to be swept off your feet by this personal organiser masquerading as a wristwatch. The Fossil Wrist PDA is handy with an assortment of functions such as a to-do list, calendar, address book and a memo pad. The digital appearance can be customised with a touch of a button to suit your individual preferences, and is perfect for mobile warriors.

Price: \$295

7

Microsoft X-box - Out of the Box

Gaming has risen to a whole new level. Don't shoot down its rather nondescript, minimalist appearance. Using nVidia's customised 250Mhz Graphics Processing Unit, game characters spring to life in a burst of colour and fluid movement, amid stunning resolution. The gamebox itself has a 10GB HDD memory, allowing for rapid DVD streaming, and it can rip CDs too. For thrilling multi-player games and downloading add-ons, count on the companion Ethernet adapter.

And of course, how would you be able to kick-butt without a controller? The X-Box has one that's delightfully ergonomically designed - extreme comfort for extreme gaming. We feel trigger-happy already.

Price: \$218

8

Creative Megaworks THX 5.1 550 - Hear Ye

Get blown away by a cacophony of acoustic fireworks. Creative and Cambridge Soundworks get cosy with each other - to produce a compelling sound system powerful enough to create a sonic boom. The dual-ported sub-woofer belts out Low-Frequency Effects for the total cinematic experience. And a wired-remote will allow users to control and adjust various settings right from their desktop.

Price: Not Available

9

NEC LCD4000 - Flat Chance

Guys will be giving curves a miss once they've seen this beauty. Slim and visually titillating, the LCD4000 is a sight to behold with brilliant colours achieved by its 1280 x 768 pixel screen. Enjoy the 170-degree wide-screen angle for greater viewing pleasure.

We're sure that very little can stand between you and this tempting model, except for the astronomical price, that is.

Price: \$5,220.99

10

HP Compaq nc4000 - Get A Load Off

At only 1.59kg, the nc4000 is as lightweight as its hardware is heavyweight. With the integrated Bluetooth technology and wireless LAN, this Wi-Fi enabled notebook will keep you connected anytime, anywhere. Running on the Intel Pentium M 1.3 GHz CPU, the ultra-portable powerhouse is fast and efficient. It has 30GB of HDD memory, plus 256MB of RAM installed, not to mention a satisfyingly large 21-inch screen.

Oh yes, did we mention how light it is?

Price: \$3,514.55

DEVELOP YOUR PHOTOS AT HOME

Does your rickety printer take ages to print a photograph that only turns out dull, grainy and entirely unrealistic? If so, TIMOTHY FERNANDEZ gives you two more reasons to consider a new inkjet printer.



Photo courtesy of Canon Singapore

Since the advent of digital photography, companies have been pushing the envelope to produce feature-packed inkjet printers for consumers with shoestring budgets. High resolution inkjets with resolutions of up to 5,760 dots-per-inch (dpi) – once sole possessions of demanding professionals – are now becoming quite commonplace in many of our homes.

If your current photograph printouts do not remotely resemble, well, actual photographs, then you might want to consider these affordable inkjets by Canon and Hewlett-Packard (HP).

Photos For Everyone

If cost is the main concern, fear not as Canon's new entry-level i255 inkjet will leave you with enough change for a couple of extra print cartridges. At \$129, this very polite-looking printer gives consumers as much bang for their buck as possible.

Sharing the same tubular form as its predecessor, the XNU i320, this printer boasts added resolution and more zippy performance, at 20 bucks less. Besides making your desktop computer very envious of its good looks, the i255 will give you a nice, full page colour printout in just under two minutes, if you could just excuse the thin white border. The i255 prints photos at a crisp 4,800 by 1,200 dpi, a resolution that is common among many of the latest inkjets. The printer's performance is optimised when used with compatible Canon digital cameras. The included Vivid Photo mode allows it to print a wider spectrum of colours, thus making pictures more true-to-life.

For Discerning Photographers

If professional performance and border-free prints are what you want from a printer, then HP's DeskJet 5652 should fit the bill perfectly. With its no-frills design, an optimised print cartridge option and impressive all-round performance, the DeskJet is targeted at more demanding users.

It boasts a maximum text print speed of 21 pages-per-minute in black and is capable of producing very vivid photo prints. Keeping the budget of consumers in mind, the DeskJet is priced at an affordable \$299, requiring the separate purchase of a second colour print cartridge to get the best photographs. This additional cartridge works together with the basic cartridge supplied with the printer to give more accurate colour representation. The DeskJet is also PhotoRet IV enabled which equates to more saturated colours and smoother tonal transitions in photographs.



E-ASY CARDS

Christmas is coming and you've forgotten or can't afford to get a gift for your friend. Don't fall back on the same e-greetings you've always sent when MELISSA CHIN has other suggestions.

Greetings, naturally

During the season of giving, why not spread your love beyond your friends to the World Wildlife Fund, which gets part of the proceeds of this site? It's part of how www.e-cards.com honours its promise to offer "online greetings and gifts with [a] global, educational and environmental twist". Colourful graphics and letters outline some of the 30-plus card categories (eg Holidays, People, Endangered, Floral and Animation) against an amateurish yellow background. The nature photography, however, is wholly professional.

One great distinctive is that the space for your message is unlimited. And if you need to say "Hello" in French or "Thank You" in Swedish, e-card.com will teach you how. The rest is much like other e-mail greetings. E-cards can be sent to 10 people at a go, so this is a sure-pleaser for those who are time-strapped, have too many friends or can't be bothered to customise each greeting.

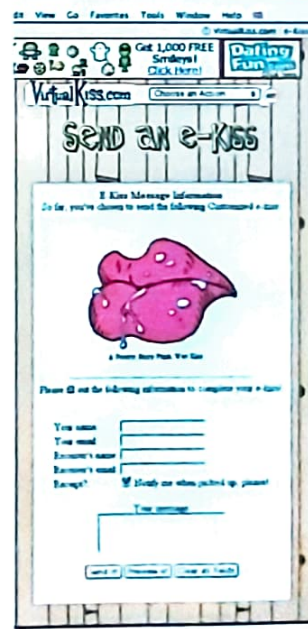
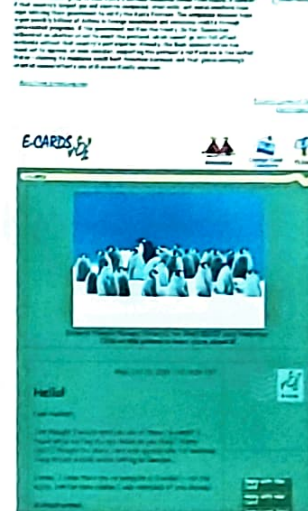
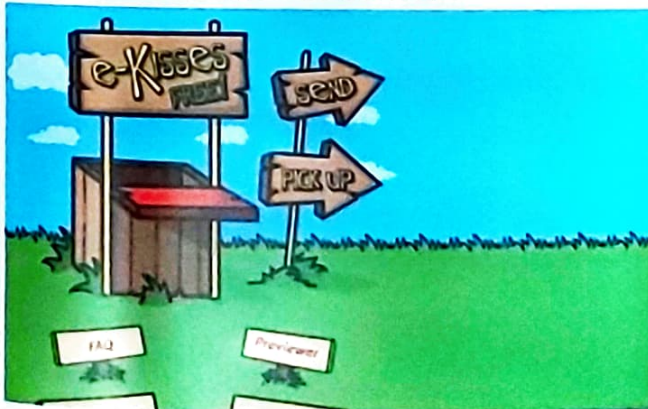
Mailed With a Kiss

E-Kisses (www.virtualkiss.com/)

Why send a card when you can send a kiss?

For a fun and flirty smooch, choose the rosy pink Leopard Skin Kiss or Martini Kiss, all nice and cold in a martini glass topped with a cherry. Or take the E-Kiss Me Tender that looks just like Elvis Presley or Missing You for a sweet romantic kiss that is bound to touch the heart. If your receivers are sporty people, send them the Soccer, Hockey Player or Olympic kiss, complete with sporting gear.

Besides being tickled, the person could be so touched he/she flies to you for the real thing. In that case, enjoy!



SHOW ME THE MONEY



Instead of waiting for a miserable share of the corporate pie, MELISSA CHIN shows you how to take your cue from some young entrepreneurs whose businesses are thriving

FACED WITH A sluggish economy and an almost barren employment market, there are two options – sit at home and sulk or take the plunge and start your own business.

In light of the current economic situation, i.e. increasing retrenchments, pay cuts, lowering business costs, many fresh graduates are opting out of joining the conventional workforce.

In a survey done by Global Entrepreneurship Monitor in 2002, almost six out of every 100 in Singapore are involved in starting a business or own/manage firms under four years. This ranks Singapore 21 out of 37 countries, outstripping even Hong Kong and Taiwan, in overall entrepreneurial activity. This study also showed that people between the ages of 25 and 34 (about nine percent) were the most potential risk-takers.

But before you ditch the recruitment ads, and figure yourself another Creative Technology boss Sim Wong Hoo, be warned that the process is never a bed of roses.

Sure you can formulate an idea and try to translate that into a good business strategy. The bottom line is making this concept sell and bring in the profits. Three success stories illuminate some of the lessons and potential pitfalls.

BIRTH OF A LABEL

2001 Asian Young Designer's Award winner, K.Mi Huang, 25, owns nine-month-old Womb. Situated at the funky Level One of Far East Plaza, the shop is her first attempt in the fashion market.

Unlike others who'd jump at the chance of joining big fashion houses in the wake of a prestigious award, this feisty designer looked beyond the security, and chose to pursue her own dream. Owning a label gives her absolute control over her designs, a luxury you can't afford under the wings of a big fashion house.

Armed with burning passion and ambition, she refused to be daunted by the fear of possible failure. "Have guts and believe in yourself. I don't

want to look back and think to myself, 'Why didn't I do this or that?'" says Huang. "Besides I'm still young and I can afford to take the risk."

Her target market are women in their mid-20s to 30s, who have a penchant for unique styles and designs. Accurately capturing the preferences of this target group, she adopted the strategy of designing one-off pieces, instead of going into mass-production. Her line of avant-garde clothing became a quick hit with customers who treasure their individuality.

But it's not just creative decisions she has to make. "Ultimately you have to take into consideration whether it is practical and worth to produce," says Huang.

She's certainly had to pay her dues. When Huang first started out, her inexperience caused her to be cheated by her supplier who made her pay three times above the market rate.

Her second setback came when the economy dip took her business down 30 percent. She refused to give up. Instead, she employed an assistant to tend to the boutique while she channelled all her energy into designing and production. In fact with the current operations doing well, Womb looks set to welcome a new baby in Bugis early next year.

REEL CHALLENGES

Creative Director of Oak 3 Film Productions, Jason Lai, started the company with two friends for one simple reason – their love of filmmaking.

Their first commercial film *The Road Less Travelled* in 1996 depicted the struggles of four friends armed with dreams of pursuing careers in music and the media arts. This film was distributed by Cathay and Golden Village cinemas, and it provided the seed money for then fledgling Oak 3.

Diminishing budgets for TV programmes, falling advertising revenues coupled with changes to the media industry, called for Oak 3 to be flexible and focussed – everything is done for an audience and a purpose. Oak 3 continues to work with investors to gain experience and they're investing in their own product. By doing so, Oak 3 gets rights to the content they produce and they are able to market it elsewhere, opening their films to international markets.

Not surprisingly, Lai says, "Convincing people to give you the money is tough."

Funding is definitely a huge obstacle for most start-ups. The lack of experience counts even more against you when you are knocking on doors asking/begging for capital.

However, the way to succeed is to always stay positive and remember your goal. These are the drivers that turn dreams into reality.

GETTING THE MESSAGE ACROSS

A year after it started, eFusion received funding from angels and started to focus its attention on Mobile Messaging.

This company is the brainchild of another gutsy lad who has taken a step closer to fulfilling his

dream of a global business empire. At 20, Samuel Lim started up his then online dating portal in July 1999. Now, after about four years of hard work, he is the acting CEO of eFusion Group of Companies.

eFusion's growing success is attributed to its customer focus and adeptness at dealing with the changing market conditions.

Barely two years after it started, eFusion has already attained a strong local market leader position and established positive partnerships with neighbouring countries.

Surprising to note, wealth and assets are not the driving force behind the dream of this young entrepreneur, who had wanted his own business since he was 13.

"Money is never the main reason why people should get into business. When times are hard, if your only reason is money, you will quit."

In Lim's opinion, true and successful entrepreneurs are those driven by a passionate

desire, an inner strength and a motivated force – qualities that many aspiring entrepreneurs these days are lacking in.

Both Lai and Lim feel foundational courses in business management are helpful, equipping the first-timer with basic business skills and providing useful knowledge that will help you make prudent and informed decisions.

Besides these, it also helps to have adequate mental preparation. Understand why you chose this path, because these incentives will keep you going in the face of adversity.

After all, some of the world's most famous thinkers and business leaders such as Thomas Edison faced bitter failure for years before their ideas took flight. The right mindset and stamina to stick to your convictions are as important as having sound business skills.

CHARLIE'S ANGELS

Fortunately, yours isn't a lone battle. Aspiring entrepreneurs

can turn to self-help group Entrepreneur's Resource Center (ERC). ERC's vision is to groom the next generation of hot-blooded businessmen, who have the potential to make it big.

After doing some primary ground research and evaluating the findings, the company decided to adopt a holistic approach through offering specialised training programmes and a funding and mentoring scheme.

"We function like the business angels," says Trevor Soh, director of the ERC.

Under a scheme/programme called Equity Funding, ERC guides their participants through the process of obtaining funds from sources such as venture capitalists and also provides small start-ups with the necessary financial support for their business ventures. To date, ERC has already funded four companies with another three in the pipeline and each investment is estimated to be from \$50,000 to a quarter of a million. "All four companies have broken even," says Soh.

Under this scheme, ERC automatically becomes a shareholder of the company under its aid.

"We believe to a certain extent your success can come about with proper care and handholding," says Soh.

AN ENTREPRENEURIAL CULTURE IN SCHOOL

One finding of the GEM study was that the Singapore educational system can also do more to foster a culture of creativity and risk-taking. This echoes what Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong was saying in his National Day rally speech last year: Entrepreneurial instincts and skills can, and should be developed from young.

The flagship NUS Enterprise established by the National University of Singapore (NUS) recognises this and has taken a step in that direction.

"This Free Enterprise Zone will be where innovation and creativity are freed from traditional rules, allowing greater flexibility and faster response," says Lawrence Chai, 32, public relations manager of NUS Enterprise.

In June, they launched **Enterprise at NUS: A Handbook**, a comprehensive guide book covering topics from funding and assistance, to starting a small business in Singapore.

For those interested to get some insights and helpful tips, the Enterprise has uploaded a copy of this new guide at www.enterprise.nus.edu.sg/handbook.

"As a national university, NUS has a social responsibility to help the surrounding communities and thus we have made this handbook available on the web for all to access," says Chai.

Another tertiary institute determined to bring out the creative and entrepreneurial spirit of its students is Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP). Launched by InnoHub, a one-stop centre for potential technopreneurs, EnterpriZe! is a funding scheme for all full-time NP students to jump-start their business ideas through financial help, mentoring and legal advice on intellectual property rights.

Applicants are assessed on the innovativeness and feasibility of their submissions. The successful ones will receive funding of 70 percent, up to a ceiling of \$3,000.

Moving out of its comfort zone, last month NP's School of Life Sciences & Chemical Technology (LSCT) organised a two-day "Be My Boss Fair" at the school atrium. Initiated by LSCT

Deputy Director Dr Phang Chiew Hun, the fair saw booths manned by 200 students and lecturers. They sold products including handmade beaded accessories and pizzas, among many others.

NEXT STEP, THE WORLD

Recognising the importance of incentives, the Shell LiveWire Award programme was launched last August to honour entrepreneurs younger than 30 who attain international success.

Each year, six candidates are chosen based on the profile of their business, originality of idea, the commercial viability of success, and their technical and business skills.

"The winners will be exposed to media coverage and all participants will get very good training from the professional Shell Live Wire trainers," says

Roger Lee, 46, chairman of the Shell LiveWire Award committee. Last year's top winner was teacher-turned-businessman Pok Vic Tor, chief executive officer of Litespeed Education Pte Ltd. Pok's vision is to re-invent education globally through Educational Technology.

Together with his brother, Pok started a line of e-learning software entitled "Dr Series", specially tailored for primary school children.

So, quit sitting down and waiting for career opportunities to fall on your lap. Follow your zeal. Be inspired.

If you can't find a job, go out and create one.

For some tips on how to start your business with minimum budget, or how to run an effective kiosk business, check out www.entrepreneur.com

SOUTH OF THE BORDER

Let JACHIN POUSSON take you south of the border for an authentic Mexican adventure. Experience the sights, smells, and tastes of the historical border town of Juarez (*wua-rez*) under the South American sun.

EVERY EXOTIC SMELL, taste, sound, and sight of the West can be found in Mexico. And no town spells out the Mexican adventure better than the border town of Juarez. From the pigeon-pecked cobble stones below to the brilliant blue sky above, a day in this city of two million is a carefree blaze of colour and delight.

But let's not pretend that it's a decent town. Its narrow streets are crowded and dirty, with a den of swindlers and pickpockets forming the majority of the community.

Just across the border from El Paso, Texas, Juarez is as easy to get to from there as a ride to Johor Bahru from Singapore. And the fleet of competing van drivers on both sides of the border only makes it easier, or so it seems.

The small eight-seater van with its broken air-conditioning system rattling, leather seats scrubbed thin, chugged across the bridge over the viaduct,



Photos by JACHIN POUSSON



separating the land of the free and the land of the fleas. The driver wouldn't stop talking in his Spanish-accented English, making suggestions, pointing out street names, while the heat off the stone roads shimmered and rose, permeating the van with the smell of hot leather.

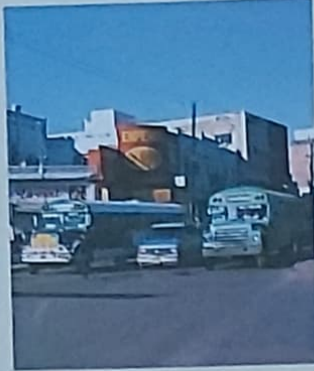
Destination: Juarez Marketplace

A place teeming with life, bargains and chilli drying in the sun. The van jerked to a stop outside a little shop house. A lone shop house painted red, on a road as bustling and as filled with life as the moon. A yellowed newspaper glided

across the street and an old black dog watched it as it flew.

"This IS Juarez marketplace!" the driver insisted. "It's all what's left of it... a year ago the original burned down. You can still see the burn marks on the walls over there!" The supposed burn marks looked more like dirt caked on the brick. The driver was in cahoots with the shop owner, who, having a store far away from the action, probably hired drivers to tell this fib. It was obvious. But in Mexico, money will get you anywhere, so a few more greenback notes bought a ride to the original destination. The driver was mad as hell, silent now as he drove. Thank God for that.





A Bouquet of Sights and Smells

Arriving at Juarez marketplace was like arriving at a crowded zoo full of escaped animals at feeding time. It was a frenzy like none other, a canopy of tents and umbrellas sheltering traders of every kind from the weather. There was a man with his son selling Peregrine Falcons on their wrists. The eyes on those birds were so fiery it was like staring into the sun. A woman selling alarm clocks, who apparently figured the best way to advertise would be to set all the clocks to ring permanently throughout the day, was almost completely deaf. A boy caught with his hand in the back pocket of a man was scuffed and slapped till his lip burst into a geyser of crimson and was given a boot to the behind to help him on his way. This is the way things are in Mexico. They used to be even less civil when dealing with a thief. If it was 30 years ago, that kid might not have lived.

We're Robbing the Natives

Everything's a bargain in Mexico. If you hate shopping to the core, this is truly the place that will transform you. The trick is this: Dress simply, don't carry a backpack, learn a few Spanish phrases, and stop looking lost. If they think you're a tourist, they'll jack up the price five times. A gold watch (probably stolen), a straw hat, a donkey saddle, a scarf with more colours than a rainbow, an ornate pistol, a sword just like Zorro's, a headdress for an Incan king. You can usually get whatever you want down to half the price they originally state, sometimes less. Imagine if one day you could buy that pair of jeans you always wanted at \$30 instead of \$100. Sounds like a regular day in Juarez.



EASYSPEAK

English

How much will it be?
Yes
No
Thank you
Excuse me! (to catch attention)
I want a refund
I don't understand
I've been robbed

Spanish

¿Cuanto me costará?
Sí
No
Gracias
¡Oiga, por favor!
Quiero devolverlo
No entiendo
Me han robado

Pronunciation

kwan-to me kos-ta-ra
see
no
gra-tias
o-ye-a por fa-vo-r
kwe-ro de-ber-lo
no en-ten-do
me han ro-ba-do

GETTING THERE

Juarez isn't hard at all to find on the map, but here's advice on airfares, car rentals and accommodations.

By Car

When renting a car, double check that

- The rental company allows you to take the car to Mexico
- Daily rates should fall between US\$25-30 (\$44-53) per day.
- Insurance rates are no more than US\$30 (\$53) a day. (Alamo car rental has good offers)

By Foot

Walk over the Santa Fe Bridge from El Paso, Texas to hire a cab. It can be up to 10 times cheaper, with fares ranging from US\$3-15 (\$5-\$26).

By Air

If you're flying in from the States, flying to El Paso will be cheaper, if from Mexico, Juarez airport (CJS) will be cheaper. From Singapore, for most airlines it will be cheaper to fly to El Paso (ELP).

- North West Airlines \$51388.87 for a 24-hour-40-minute flight to El Paso.
- United Airlines \$52118.19 for a 27-hour-24-minute flight to El Paso.

Accommodations

According to a website by a Juarez local, only two are worthy:

- Hotel Lucerna US\$71 per night (\$124) 5-star hotel, with all the works. Its location near Sanborns, a good bookstore cum restaurant.
- Hotel Villa Manport. US\$28-\$38 per night, (\$49-\$67) Clean and Safe. Location near the Santa Fe Bridge, and close to popular local eateries like the El Herradero Steak House.

Taste the Sun

Ask anyone who's been south of the border. None of them will ever eat at Taco Bell again. What's so different about Mexico though? What makes its local food any better than say, eating pasta in Italy, *sushi* in Tokyo, fish and chips in England, or *laksa* in Penang?

The difference lies in the eyes and hearts of the people who make the food. In Mexico, they really sing. They sing loud and mellow. The food vendors are the soul of the South. And you can taste their song, their hearty generosity and the sincerity of their joy as you take a big bite full of chilli, beef and melted cheese. Somehow it tastes better when you sit on a curb in the street and eat these things.

As they flip a taco, or wrap a burrito, you know it; their food is made with love. Every onion chopped with love, every flake

of pepper ground with years of affection behind it. And the best part is, it's dirt-cheap. Two American dollars will buy you a Mexican meal unrivalled by the best Mexican cuisine you've ever tasted in Singapore.

Did you ever come across a place so charming in its authenticity that you wanted to just become a part of it? Juarez has that effect on people. It makes you want to give up everything, give up your studies, taxes, bills, job pressure and promotions and become a fruit seller. "That's an absurd idea!" you cry. "A fruit seller?" Yes, a humble fruit seller. A fruit seller who would wake every day to the smells, tastes and sights of Mexico. To the full exotic richness of life in a town, where from the pigeon-pecked cobbled stones below to the brilliant blue sky above, it is a carefree blaze of colour and delight.



BUBBLY RETREAT

The arduous year's over and it's time for that well-deserved pampering and dose of rejuvenation. But you don't have to get into debt for that luxe spa getaway. Let NIMISHA TOH show you the budget-friendly alternative.

IF RICH WHITE foam, and a warm comfortable soak sound appealing to you, but the \$100 tag and the need to make appointments that come with it don't, take heart, you can achieve the same effect with a home spa treatment that will still leave you feeling like a million dollars.

That's what Maureen Chan, a 19-year-old business student from Singapore Polytechnic, does. After being at it for the past eight months, she is pleasantly surprised by the results.

"I have more 'glowy' skin and my skin is a lot smoother and fairer. Furthermore, compared to a spa salon treatment, it's a lot cheaper," she raves.

Besides soothing your aching body, regular spa treatments are also believed to be good for helping you lose weight. Accompanied with a healthy balanced diet, Maureen lost approximately two kilograms in just two months.

Before the Spa

If you are looking for an all-rounded experience, plan a session and make sure that all your five senses are well taken care of.

To create a cosy, serene mood, put on some soft music on your stereo, but if the long anticipated silence and solitude is what you are craving for, feel free to bask in the soothing music of silence.

After taking care of the aural aspect, consider lighting up your bathroom with natural warm light. Use as many candles as you desire, to create that warm, comfortable ambience. But before lighting up your candles, do check to make sure that they are not dangerously high in lead content.

Mark Goh, manager of Blizz, which specialises in home spa products, gave **hype** some tips in selecting safe candles.

"Before lighting up the candle, take a piece of paper and using the wick of the candle, try drawing something on the paper. If you see a black line, that means that candle is high in lead content," says Goh.

Also remember to ensure your bathroom is well ventilated, as candles burn up a lot of oxygen. The light-headed feeling you get from a lack of oxygen

should not be taken for granted, because you can easily faint from that.

To take your relaxation up another notch, use aromatherapy candles instead. Either way, remember not to leave those candles unattended, because romantic or not, they are a major cause of fires. A safe alternative is simply to spray some scented oil mist around the bathroom. Also prepare some sparkling lemonade and soft thirsty towels to dry yourself off after the treatment.

The Spa

First, fill your bathtub with lukewarm water right up to the three-quarter mark. Next, be generous with the bath salts or bubble bath solutions for that splendid luxurious touch.

For a therapeutic experience, add three to 10 drops of essential oils in your bath, depending on whether you seek a mildly therapeutic sensation or a deep restorative experience. Your choice of a scent also varies according to the kind of effect you are looking for or hoping to achieve.

Jillian Ching, manager of Scents of Beauty at Novena Square, that specialises in such aromatherapeutic products, recommended some scents for students. "Lavender and orange essential oils are really suitable for stressed out and depressed youths because lavender is relaxing while orange is uplifting."

"Oils are mainly for moisturising and detoxification, but they can also stimulate your nerves to give you that refreshed feeling, so these oils are very important when you go for a spa," Ching explains the added benefits.

Directly after the 30 to 45 minute soak, gently rub a little body oil all over your body, and dab away the excess. This makes sure that your body stays hydrated and moist.

If you have been losing sleep due to stress or insomnia, a spa treatment could be an answer to all your sleeping problems.

"A spa treatment would help you relax and calm down, so that you'll be able to sleep better afterwards," shares Goh.

Taking a soak before turning in, could literally help melt your worries and anxiety away.

Those few precious moments you spend relaxing in the tub, may seem insignificant but they could really help to soothe your exhausted body and mind, and therefore improve the quality of your beauty sleep.

But do not soak for too long, as that could lead to "wrinkly skin", which might leave you emerging from the water looking like a dried prune.

Also carry out your spa treatment no more than twice a week, as too much treatment could damage your skin, and especially so with sensitive skin.

Quick Fuss-Free Rejuvenation

If you are looking for a quicker alternative, try bath salts instead of the complete bath spa.

These not only exfoliate your dead skin cells, they also help remove impurities and improve your blood circulation, leaving you feeling re-energised and raring to go.

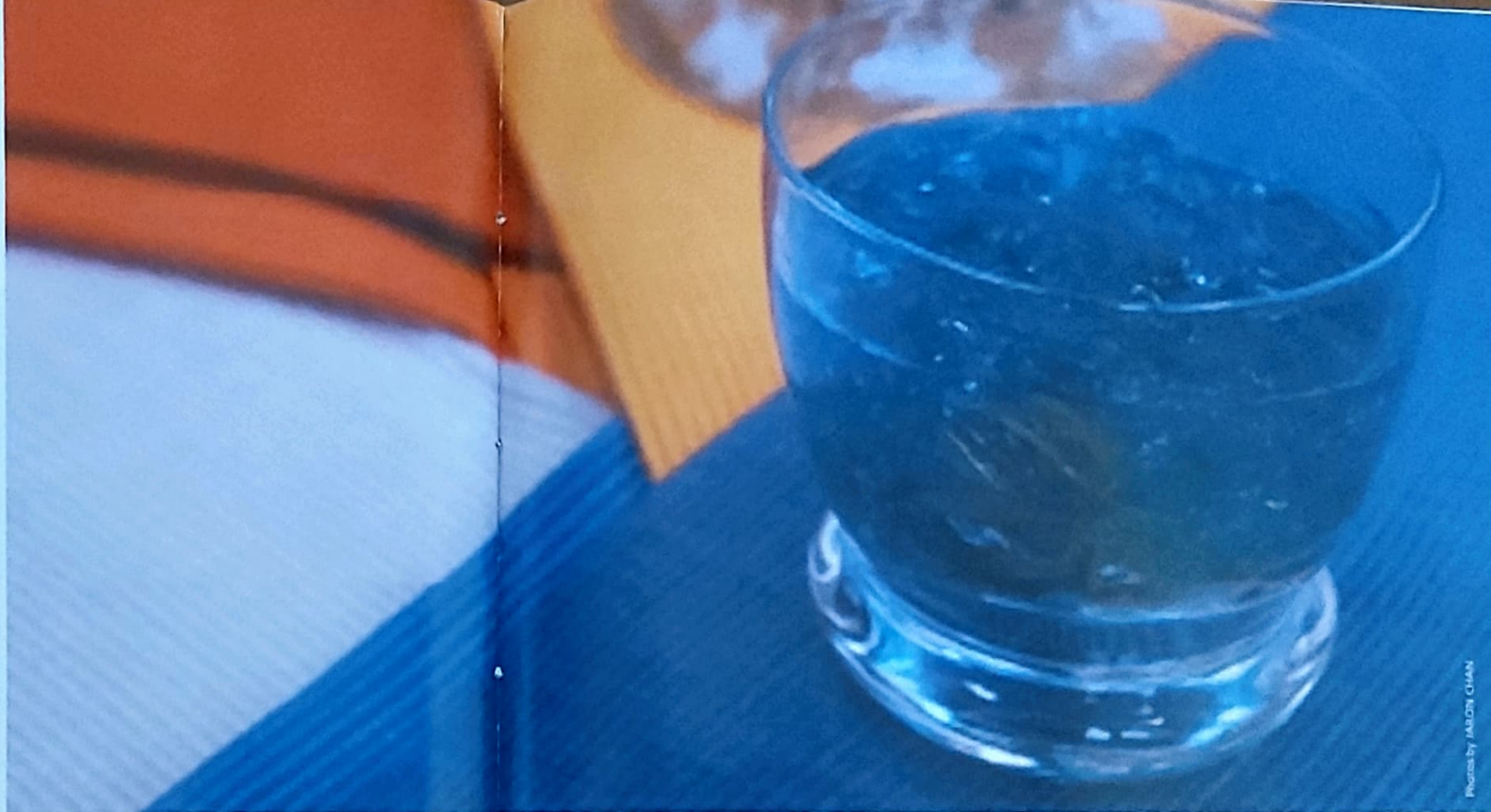
Rub the salt all over your body and when you're done with your body scrub, just douse yourself with water to wash away the excess salt.

Be it fatigue, stress or the after effects of a brain-draining semester, start your holidays feeling like a star, by detoxifying, with a simple tug of the plug.

	Home Spa*	Spa Salon
Bubble Bath	\$9 per 200ml bottle	
Bath Salts	\$3 per 40g	
Essential Oil	\$6 per 10ml bottle	
Body Oil	\$12 per 150ml bottle	From \$70 - \$120
Oil Mist	\$8 per 250ml bottle	
	Total: \$29 - \$35	
	* For multiple treatments	

RELIGHT YOUR CREATIVITY

The end of the year begs for natural illumination whether you're celebrating Deepavali, honouring Christmas or simply in the mood to reflect on the year past. EULALIA HAN sheds light on some innovative candle-making ideas you can try at home.



Photos by JAMIE CHAN

THE MOST ROMANTIC of electric lights can never hold a candle to a glowing wick. Be it in the form of soy, wax or gel, the humble candle still possesses a rustic charm in this wired age.

During the Christmas season or any other special occasions, these light-giving pieces never fail to inject warmth and hope into the lives of many.

Instead of burning midnight oil searching for that perfect candle, either for a gift, or for your own, why not save yourself the legwork and create one yourself.

These exquisite creations are sure to melt the hearts of your loved ones but we guarantee they certainly won't burn a hole in your thin pockets.

Gel-O-Candles

Unlike the conventional wax candles, gel candles are made using special types of gels like *Penreco Versagel*, gel scents and Gelwick (special wick for making gel candles), all of which can easily be bought from craft shops like Creative Hands, Art Friend or any art shops at Bras Basah Complex.

These crystal-like candles burn twice as long as the traditional wax candles and are becoming increasingly popular with candle aficionados.

You can have hours of fun playing around with different colours and designing your own "thematic" candles. Earth-friendly types will also get to recycle discarded materials like bottles and the odd glass pieces. These will make great holders for your candle.

At the same time, pick up other "little treasures" lying around like crystal beads from your broken necklace, leftover decorations from Halloween, scraps of colourful paper or the broken bell from your good old stuffed toy. Instead of condemning them to the bins, why not throw them into your gel pieces for that dash of playfulness and personal touch.

The hardest part of this project is really coaxing your mom into letting you take over her jealously-guarded stove. You wouldn't want her all heated up before your gel does. We propose bribing her with the promise of a beautiful and nice-smelling potpourri gel candle as a gift. Now budge!

Gelling It Together

All you need is a glass container for holding the completed candle, an ordinary pot, a stove and you're ready to go.

- Step 1: Fill 3/4 of the container with the gel (not the ones your brother plasters his hair with!).
- Step 2: Heat it gently over a slow fire till the gel liquidises.
- Step 3: When the gel has melted completely, add the colour dye and scent.
- Step 4: Mix the colour evenly with an unwanted spoon, before you turn the stove off.
- Step 5: Continue stirring for a minute and pour the liquid mixture carefully into the container with one hand holding the Gelwick held firmly in the middle.
- Step 6: Before adding the decorations, wait for the gel to cool slightly. Use a pair of tweezers and place the decoration elements as desired.

Gel-O-Decor

Once the candle is done, here's the really fun part—Decorating it! But always remember to let the gel cool for about 45 minutes first before putting in your desired decorations.

Other things to take note of:

- If you notice unwanted bubbles trapped within the gel, use the curved surface of any spoon and gently even the bubbles out by pressing it against the candle holder.
- Lift the holder till the wax dries off completely. This step prevents unwanted wax from drying up on the table.
- If you're intending to use sand as the base for your gel candle, pour in the gel solution slowly and wait for 30 minutes before moving the holder. This will prevent the gel from mixing with the sand. If you're doing a beach-themed candle, you don't want your sea water to be murky, do you?
- Pay close attention to this last point and our best tip—Let your imagination run wild and be as creative as you can!

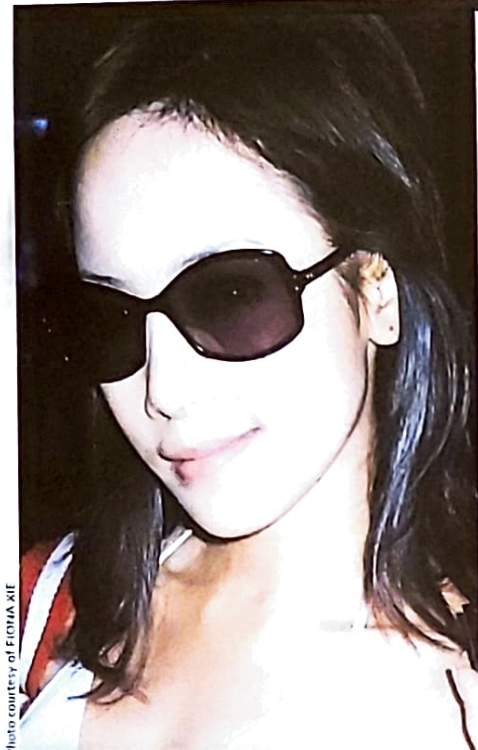


Photo courtesy of FIONA XIE

STAR-RY STAR-RY NIGHT

BURSTING WITH ENERGY one moment, sensual with a seductive smile the next, MediaCorp's bohemian babe, Fiona Xie can heat up any dance floor. At 21, this pixie-faced beauty's already graced the covers of numerous magazines like *Her World* and *Style Weddings*. The cutie from sitcom *My Genie*, also appeared in local movie *One Leg Kicking* and is a regular host on variety show, *City Beat*. She's also courted by several advertisers and is now the proud ambassador for Casio Exilim digital camera, and Focus Dailies astigmatism contact lenses.

Hang on as the sexy genie takes AILEEN LAI on a midnight carpet ride, and lets you in on the dark revelations inside her gin bottle.

**The following interview was conducted via e-mail*

hype : Name some concoctions you love to down and those you absolutely swear off.

FIONA: Probably Lychee Martini, Bellini, Sex on the Beach, Apple Shots or Champus. I try to stay off the flaming ones as far as possible.

hype : Tell us. When I am tipsy, I...

FIONA: Know I am in good company of friends who will take good care of me. That's very important.

hype : Has your nightlife changed after you became a celebrity?

FIONA: I doubt anything has changed really. Besides the toss-up between the bed and good sleep, or friends and some booty shake, and then dreading to go to work at six in the morning.

hype : With your packed schedule, is there any time at all to let down your hair and unwind?

FIONA: Besides the incessant fiendish filming, I unwind by answering interviews as such and praying that my brain can take a leak! (Laughs) On a more serious note, I indulge in good food, a warm fuzzy bath and definitely great company.

hype : Guess getting stares and scrutiny when you party at clubs comes with the territory?

FIONA: Sometimes... but I would like to think that I have long abdicated from my "throne" of actress-dom and I never brought the job title around. My friendships have been cemented through the years and they surround me with enough warmth and company to let me lead a normal life.

hype : Any particular dress-to-impress ensemble when you party?

FIONA: I don't have one and don't want one. Heck! I've even been to Zouk in my PJs (pyjamas) and flip-flops. All that was missing were the hair rollers!

hype : What's the fashion bible for the dress-to-kill wannabes?

FIONA: I think everyone should just be impervious to fashion trends and just be comfortable with your own identity. You stand out when you feel and ooze the vibe. No amount of camouflage cream or snazzy expensive tog will earn you your stripes.



hype : Share with us some hotspots for babe and hunk spotting.

FIONA: House parties win hands down. That's where all the real vibe stems from. Velvet? Zouk? Whitebait and Kale? I don't know really. But why spot others when you can be blanketed and corseted in the embrace of your own dear friends.

hype : Recall any "indecent proposals"?

FIONA: Marriage proposals are too scary to remember!

hype : Your best friend is drunk and starts to get intimate with a guy who was trying to take advantage of her, what will you do?

FIONA: I know for one my friends will never sell themselves short and be in that position to start with. But just for you, I would say we'd head right home before any salacious gossip can take root.

hype : Picture this: You can't tear your eyes from this eye candy two metres away. He's been stealing glances at you too. You will..

FIONA: Wait for eternity to be bridged.

hype : How do you respond to the ones who mastered enough courage to hit on you?

FIONA: I don't pay heed to any belligerent drunks.

hype : What sets your heart fluttering?

FIONA: A charismatic presence is all it takes.

hype : Now that we can all boogie on bar tops, will we be seeing you flaunt your stuff up there?

FIONA: I highly doubt it... the scene here doesn't warrant such an effort.

hype : Besides clubbing, what else do you do in the hours after dark?

FIONA: Honestly, working. If not, it'll be having a chilled out night with friends at someone's place, feeding the insatiable urge to laugh at everything and anything. Comfortable companions indeed.

hype : Where are the best places to grab late bites?

FIONA: The usual I suppose. Boon Tong Kee, Newton, Hyatt Café, or at home whipping up great food with friends. Cold pizza.

hype : What's one most outrageous thing you've done at night?

FIONA: Everything! Enough said.

hype : Where can we expect to see you this Christmas?

FIONA: Hopefully I'm not working and out of the country.

hype : Complete this. To me, the night is...

FIONA: To me, the day is the playground of the unimaginative.



Photos by LYDIA TEH

RETROSPECTIVE RETREAT



Slip into the past as you enter **C.A.N Café** to find a cosy, inviting and richly nostalgic cove.

With well-coordinated settees sandwiched among numerous collectibles from the 70s to the early 90s – from vintage Coke bottles to posters of past and present popular music artistes such as Bewitched and Kylie Minogue – the heart-warming clutter alone, unlike the polished décor in many other joints, is enough to entertain and give you reason to clam up appreciatively.

Choose from favorite finger food like fries and chicken wings (affordably priced between \$4.50 and \$9.50) to satisfy any midnight pangs. The selection of alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages will keep you well-watered as you yak the night away, nodding to the beats of old hits like "Hey Mickey". Or challenge your friends to a game of scrabble or poker, and enjoy hours of fun with the games available in the café.

Filled with the good 'ol nostalgia of the past, **C.A.N Café** is a wholesome alternative to clubs for a late night chilling session with your best buds.

JEAN HEE

Christa & Naomi (C.A.N) Café, Liang Seah Street #01-12/13/14, Liang Seah Place. Tel: 6337 3732. Open daily from 3 pm to 2 am. Check out the promo on pg 63.

AN ARABIAN NIGHT



Lounge in **Al Majlis** (the Arabian sitting room) while you satisfy nocturnal cravings for sustenance in a Middle Eastern ambience.

For your intro to its cuisine, we recommend grilled quail and fatoush salad, a refreshing salad served with cold cuts (\$3.50 to \$7). But food (sandwiches, kebabs and poultry dishes) isn't the main draw of this joint.

Most are here for an Arabian night experience, complete with carpets and *shisha* (water pipe). It's supposedly non-addictive to inhale the slow-burning concoction of tobacco, molasses and fruit preservatives, but only those above 18 may do it. Choose from sweet flavours like strawberry, cola and mint, with the favourite being apple, according to Arab owner Ameen Ali Talib.

The late opening hours and tranquility afforded by this hideaway make **Al Majlis** worth a visit. So the next time you fret over where to go at night, make this your next stop.

JEAN HEE

Al Majlis Food Court, No. 39, Arab Street. Tel: 6292 0979. Open daily from 10 am to 4 am

It doesn't sound like it, but a great place for that perfect date is **H.O.M.E** (Home of Miami Entertainment). Situated in the heart of Robertson Quay, this place offers riverside dining where you can lay back and enjoy the breeze and star-filled sky with your special someone, while deciding what to eat. Just pray for fine weather so the staff won't have to rescue your drenched dinner.

Designed like a fisherman's wharf, the menu is slanted towards American fast food with seafood in most dishes. Prices here are reasonable; appetisers start at \$6.50 and main courses at \$12.90.

The Mushroom Cheese Balls (\$9) and Mississippi Crab Cakes (\$10.90) are crispy on the outside and soft inside with melt-in-your-mouth fillings. The succulent sirloin steak stuffed with fresh oysters at \$21.90 is a great follow up to the appetisers.

To complement these dishes, ask for a slightly alcoholic flavoured Margarita or The Beach for only \$12. With those lovely smiles still on your faces, complete the wonderful evening with a romantic walk down the river. If you don't know how to impress your date, at least try to with an original location.

MELISSA CHIN

H.O.M.E Beach bar, 15 Merbau Road, Tel: 6835 2413

At first glance, **Mitre Hotel** doesn't seem the kind of place you'd ever dream of spending late hours in. It's not the classy five-star chandelier-decorated establishment you even associate with the word hotel. With a lonely, unlit lane that leads to a big, rustic-looking mansion, it brings to mind a haunted mansion instead. A hit with foreign sailors, expatriate, and local students, this hotel entices precisely with the spooky lure of its façade and goodies within. The beauty of the place will reveal itself once you take the first step forward.

Here's where you can get a chilled bottle of Heineken beer for \$4.50 and a large glass of vodka sprite or bourbon coke for \$4 each. The drinks are mixed strong so you are definitely getting value for money. Like the uncles still time-warped from those hippy days, **Mitre Hotel** may not be a looker, but it offers you affordable drinks in a charming vintage ambience.

VANESSA YEO

Mitre Hotel, 145 Killiney Road, Tel: 6737 3811

NO PLACE LIKE H.O.M.E.



Photo by MELISSA CHIN

MITRE HOTEL



Photo by VANESSA YEO

IN THE LOCKER ROOM WITH MIKE

NATASHA NUR SINGH dribbles into the locker room with Mike Wong on being the coach for Singapore's National Women's Team for the SEA Games.



Requirements to be a coach:

To secure an Asia Football Confederation (AFC) 'C' licence: Training is one evening for a week. You can further this with a 'B' licence: Whole day for two weeks. 'A' licence: Every day for a month.



NEVER GET A MAN to do a woman's job. Try telling that to football coach, Mike.

"It may be a man's sport but as long as they [the women's team] are as fit as the guys that I coach, there's really no difference." Fair enough.

Mike Wong, 38, an 'A' license coach (the highest) has been coaching for a good six years. "I started off playing for the national youth team, then I went on to play in Singapore's league." His area of interest has always been in soccer, thus prompting his move to be a coach. "There's a certain satisfaction... You organise a team, your players abide by your game plan, and you get to follow them through from the start."

To achieve this satisfaction, you have to be a good coach. "You have to be mentally strong. You're training 22 young women who come from different backgrounds and have different styles, and you're trying to bring out their outstanding qualities and mould them into a team." Hence

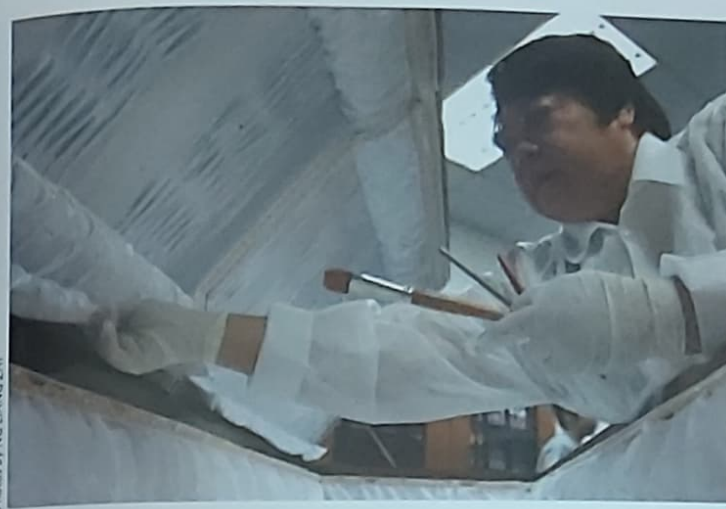
having a positive attitude and being understanding are important requisites of a coach too.

Bossing 11 women around on the field may look easy, but it's a lot of hard work. "You have to build a rapport with your players so they know what you expect of them." He doesn't stop at that either. He makes his women's team keep a booklet of everything they eat – even right down to a piece of potato chip – which he checks every two to three days. He also needs to know what they're doing besides playing for the team. Sounds like an overly possessive boyfriend, "but that's what I have to do. Fitness and getting enough rest is very important".

So who's better? Girls or Guys?

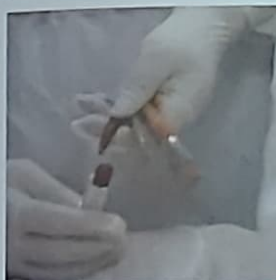
"Girls are physically weaker [in strength] but fitness level wise, they're on par. Boys are generally more skilled in terms of handling the ball." Is that the case? Well, we'll just have to wait and see. The 22nd SEA Games is slated to start in December 2003 in host country, Vietnam.

Photos by NG LIANG ZHI



IN THE FUNERAL PARLOUR WITH IRENE

VALERIE CORERA crosses the living realm into the surreal with embalmer Irene Heng to find out what goes on beyond closed mortuary doors.



HER APPOINTMENTS ARE with the dead.

During her one-sided consultations, Irene Heng breathes life into the deceased by making them look natural and presentable; which she believes serves as the utmost comfort for the bereaved.

Faced with sights of charred bodies, protruding tongues and facial features shrunk to a tenth of their usual sizes, embalming is no job for the faint-hearted, Irene warns. But a strong stomach is not the only requirement of the trade; proficient human skills are also necessary when interacting with the bereaved.

"While a decomposed body may take an extra hour or two, a typical embalming process for a body with no excessive wounds usually takes about two hours," explains Irene, who claims to be the only qualified embalmer in Singapore to have been trained overseas.

She describes her routine: The body is first cleansed with disinfectant, and wounds spotted for dressing. Embalming chemicals are injected into major arteries, like the ones in the neck and thigh, through small cuts, after which the body is clothed with a mortuary outfit. During this process, Irene works her magic on the faces of the dead using mortuary-designed make-up.

"Unlike commercial make-up, mortuary designed make-up serves the similar purpose as embalming chemicals. It contains chemicals that disinfects and re-hydrates the body," says Irene, who's also the only female of her trade in Asia. Once applied, mortuary make-up is expected to last for five to six days.

Recounting her most memorable assignment, Irene once transformed a teenager into a vision of purple. She was clad in a purple outfit, with dyed purple hair and purple mascara was applied to her eyelashes. "It was a special request made by her family members as purple was her favourite colour and that was the sight that they remembered her to be most beautiful in," Irene recalls.

Apart from having to deal with challenging facial restorations and the risk of being infected by decomposing remains, Irene also has to cope with the ignorant majority who label her as "a different kind", "morbid" and "weird".

Labelled an outcast by her peers, Irene isn't the least offended. She attributes their behaviour to their "ignorance [that] made them irrational". There's nothing bizarre about being an embalmer. To Irene, "As long as there is life, there is death."

IN THE STUDIOS WITH FIONA

Fiona Elizabeth Pawelski, 37, is a self-confessed food addict. When she isn't painting a tomato or waxing an apple, she's whipping up a feast as the head chef of ProjectShop BloodBrothers café. Join KAREN KWA as she finds out what it's like as a food stylist.



Photos courtesy of FIONA PAWELSKI

The Real Deal: "My job requires me to style food for photo shoots or displays, and to make them look as appealing and real as possible."

Getting Started: "Try to put together a good portfolio and be proactive by going from agency to agency, publication to publication, to show your work. If they like what they see, jobs will start coming in because... there are only about two food stylists in Singapore."

The Dough: "Your earnings vary all the time. It largely depends on the number of assignments you can get hold of, and the budget that the advertising agency or publication has. From there, you negotiate... The highest amount I got paid was \$2000 for a one-day shoot, which only required me to style for two shoots. The average styling rate for advertising is usually between \$500 to \$1,000; and \$500 for a five-page editorial spread. The budget may not include the cost of props, so... negotiate. Ingredients can cost up to \$200."

Brownie Points: "Good product knowledge of the foodstuff... You gain credibility when you have the knowledge to back up the way certain food arrangements are done."

The Downside: "Shooting still-life is always the most difficult because you have to make a motionless object 'pop-out' and make it look alive. You have to experiment using different ways to perfect the finished product. The process is usually time-consuming and patience is definitely a good virtue to have."

An Asset: "Creativity is a must. It's basically all about nice arrangements and tasteful placement of the foodstuff. Very much like French serving. You must also have an eye for detail and good colour co-ordination."

Tricks of the Trade: "This is a trade of tricks! Of course, we always try to use the freshest food and avoid 'faking'. However for ingredients that simply do not look fresh or tantalising enough, we enhance the colours and texture by using paint. For that splash of freshness, a spray of water or oil is all it takes."

Stylist Wannabes: "Always have a clear idea of what you want and make sure you stand by it. You're working with people like photographers and art directors who tend to be very opinionated people. So, it's important to have confidence in your concept and not be a pushover."

WIN KELLY CLARKSON AUTOGRAPHED GIVEAWAYS AND TWO \$100 FABULOUS FIZZ VOUCHERS!
Log on to www.hypemag.com for more details.

NOOCH The Noodle Bar
20% off a minimum bill of \$30

- Valid till Nov 30
- Not valid with other promotions

Outlets: Wheelock Place, City Link Mall, The Paragon



C.A.N Cafe 10% off every \$20 spent

- Reusable as long as coupon is shown upon payment
- Valid till Nov 30 2004

1 Liang Seah Street, #01-12/13/14, Liang Seah Place

*Check out the review on page 58

Gelare Cafe
50% off beverage purchased with large Gelare Waffle

- Valid till Nov 30

Outlets: Suntec City, Choa Chu Kang Centre, Upper East Coast, East Coast Recreation Centre, Far East Plaza



Chocolate Box
50% off second box of 5pc or 12 pc chocolate giftset

- Valid till Nov 30

Raffles City Shopping Centre, 252 North Bridge Road, #B1-02



Tannlines 20% off

- Valid for ladies swimwear and Running Bare activewear
- Valid till Nov 15
- Not valid with other promotions

Outlets: Wisma Atria, The Paragon



Skirting Issues
10% off on published prices

"Hype is skirting the issue"
Place the above phrase in your online order for the discount

Valid till Dec 31
www.skirtingissues.com



Blizz
20% off storewide

- Valid till Dec 31

Far East Plaza, Level One, 14 Scotts Road



Poster Connection
\$10 off with minimum materials purchase of \$50

Valid till Dec 31

Peace Centre, 1 Sophia Road, #02-05/20



The Rice Table 10% off (lunch & dinner)

- Not valid with other promotions
- Not valid on public holidays & eves of public holidays
- Valid till Apr 30 2004

Cuppuge Terrace, 43/45 Cuppuge Road, H10 Zone International Building, 360 Orchard Road, #02-09/10

*Check out the advertorial on page 35

Ollo Bites

\$1 off Single Scoop Gelato

- Present coupon upon ordering
- Limited to one coupon per item
- Not valid with other promotions
- Valid on weekdays till Dec 31
- Redeemable at Ollo Bites

Wheelock Place, 501 Orchard Road, #02-09



GAPZ

One free buffet with purchase of three adult buffets

- Valid till Nov 30

Pacific Plaza, 9 Scotts Road, #03-09



Savoury Fare

10% off minimum bill of \$25
20% off selected ice-cream cakes

- Valid till Dec 31

699 East Coast Road



Aztec Rose 20% off

- Valid for all regular items
- Valid till Nov 15
- Not valid with other promotions

Outlet: Wisma Atria



Nail Art

Free nail art (2 nails) with purchase of manicure or pedicure @ Backstage salon

- Valid till Nov 30

The Forum, 538 Orchard Road, #02-14



Liliputt Mini Golf
10% off \$15 ticket(s) and merchandise

- No restriction on number of tickets if bought at the same time
- Valid till Apr 1 2004

902 East Coast Parkway



Present this coupon for a limited edition sticker with any purchase from Soundspa

Visit the website for details



TOP 10 SIGNS THAT YOU'LL SURVIVE THESE TOUGH ECONOMIC TIMES

AILEEN LAI

1 YOU BLAME YOUR "battery-cannot-last-for-some-reason" phone and poach your friends' mobiles for free calls. For some inexplicable reason, it comes alive with incoming calls.

You hop into a cab out of breath and beg the uncle to drive faster because you're rushing home to pack and catch a plane. Actually, it's just that few cents you hope to save.

Coffee sessions with your mates are faithfully held at Café Cartel and KFC Lido. What they both have in common – unlimited free stuff. Bread at Cartel, drink refills at KFC.

7 You know by heart which clubs hold Ladies' Nights for just about every day of the week, and only nurse the free drinks until you can get someone to buy you another round.

6 You've dug out that discontinued one-cent coin, the perfect "limited edition" pressie you'll be bringing to all present exchange sessions this year. But not before wrapping it with layers after layers of torn-out Today sheets. Tip: Use hype pages, they'll make you look even better and we're also free.

You beg your friend to buy this gorgeous top telling her she looks incredibly slim in it. Never mind that the seams are bursting when she wears it; you just want to borrow it.

You suddenly decide that potluck parties are the best activities, especially if you're the one deciding who's bringing what.

3 You make it a point to drop by the cosmetics counter to spray on some perfume first, whenever you meet your friend in town.

You start looking out for and collecting receipts that people throw away so that you can accumulate enough to exchange for that privilege card.

1 You think that the McDonald's 60-second Challenge is the best sale tactic invented. It's their own fault if they forget that people like you can simply turn the hour glass the other way. Free apple pies, anyone?

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