

hype

issue 19
oct-dec 2004
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ROUGE

MTV's femme fatales unmasked

also inside:

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Joanne Peh
AIDS
Vincent Ng
High-tech Hoodlums

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Editorial

Photo by Hedirman Supian

Wrapping up yet another year is like opening an over-wrapped Christmas present - you have to rip through so many layers of paper till the anticipation kills your excitement.

It's the time of year when most of us have to battle procrastination and complete important year-end exams and seemingly endless deadlines and fall flat on our feet, worn out and jaded before we get our well-deserved holidays, possibly to Bangkok like our reporter.

If you've neither time nor money to go travelling, **hype** hopes to help you through these arduous times by suggesting ways you can kick back with fresh things to do and new places to go.

Combat the after-effects of late night mugging with the crime fighting babes from **Rouge**, have a late night chat with **Joanne Peh** and for some eye candy, check out British-born, Asian singer, **Jay Sean**.

If you can't stop salivating or just need a herbal boost, it might be a sign you need sustenance from **The Sheep** Mongolian steamboat restaurant.

After the exams and deadlines are over, catch the **Ocean's Twelve** at another of their scams, **Meet the Fockers** for a laugh on the silver screen, or if you're a sucker for more mental torture, pick up **The Coma**.

In the meantime, continue to trudge on and take hold of what the last few months of 2004 can offer you. Soon, you'll get to wipe the slate clean and start a year anew. As my favourite cartoon, **The Lion King**, aptly sums it all up - "the circle of life continues".

Well Wishes,
Jasmine Oei
Editor

PS: Keep your eyes peeled for our 20th issue in March!



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Zouk Out

Touted as one of Asia's most renowned outdoor clubbing events, **Zouk Out** will return to Sentosa at Tanjong Beach in December for the seventh time.

Seeking to bring the local clubbing scene to the outdoors, world-class spinmeisters will be spinning one unforgettable night.

This time, DJs Paul Van Dyk, Joe Clausell, Timo Mass and Rainer Truby are among the renowned names to grace the 12-hour event.

While names for local and regional acts are unconfirmed at press time, you can expect acts similar or better than last year's, which included DJ Rough from Singapore, J6 from Taiwan, DJ Juri from Japan and Rin from Indonesia.

With three arenas playing continuous dance music, loads of dancing and booze on the beach, **Zouk Out** is the event to be seen at this December. For more details, log on to www.zoukclub.com.

Dec 4, 7pm to 7am (doors open at 6.30pm),
Tanjong Beach, Sentosa
Tickets: Special Happy Hour ticket - \$30 (only 2,000 tickets, for entry before 9pm), Advance tickets - \$40 from Zouk, at the door - \$50

DIYANA ALAN

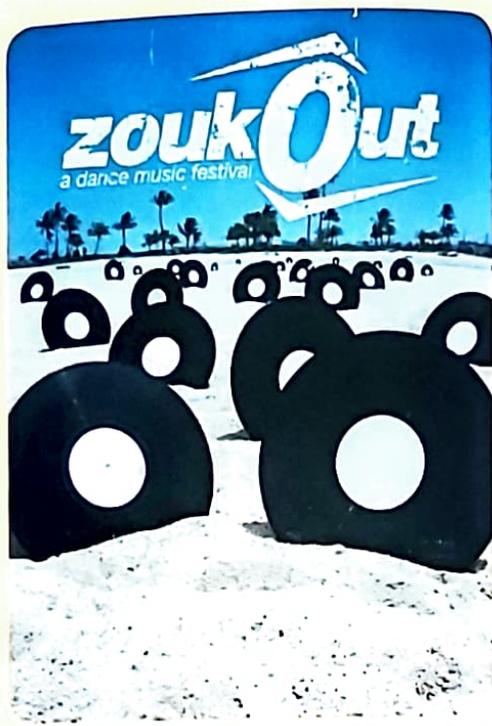


Photo courtesy of Zouk



Photo courtesy of LAMC Productions

Bond Classified World Tour

The sexy string quartet of Haylie Ecker, Eos Charter, Tania Davis and Gay-Yee Westerhoff have proven to the world that they're more than just pretty faces but talented string musicians with energy and zeal.

As a tie-in with the release of their third and latest album, **Classified**, Bond will be playing a one-night only concert in Singapore, organised by LAMC Productions. Catch the girls in their flashy costumes and watch their impressive talent demonstrated in numbers like recent Olympics track "Explosive", and "Samba".

Bond will also be playing in other parts of Asia, Europe, North America and South America as part of their World Tour.

Oct 14, 8pm, Suntec Convention Hall 603
Tickets: \$60, \$90, \$120 and \$150 (excluding \$2 SISTIC Fee)

TANG PIN-JI

Oktoberfest

Despite being a community of less than 5,000 (according to a Singapore census) here, the Germans' annual beer event, Oktoberfest, has been a regular fixture in the local calendar thanks to German restaurants and pubs.

While these celebrations are less festive than their native counterparts, which stretch for 16 days ending on the first Sunday of October, the beer quality is not compromised locally with the same characteristic higher alcohol content and sweet malt taste. You can savour these brews at Paulaner Bräuhaus, Singapore's only German microbrewery and restaurant. Three kinds of beer are available at Paulaner: Munich Lager, Munich Dark and Hefe-Weißbier. A fourth beer will be brewed specially for Oktoberfest.

You can also expect German fare like the cheese knacker sausage, pork knuckles, pork *roulade* and *sauerkraut* at restaurants. Most places will fly in musicians for the perfect ambience, the next best thing to being in a Bavarian carnival.

Paulaner celebrates Oktoberfest from Oct 7 to 13, Marche starts its festivities in mid-Sep.



Photo courtesy of Marche

AMY TAN

Godeatgod

Godeatgod written by Haresh Sharma in response of the September 11 attacks, explores the world of ideological warfare. Despite tackling a serious issue, this performance is injected with humour.

Alvin Tan, director of **Godeatgod** told **hype**, "Geographic borders are more fluid and we are affecting each other in a very dynamic way."

The Necessary Stage's remake of their own 2002 sold-out run of **Godeatgod** hopes to "continue the process of having the personal interact and/or engage with the social and global", he said, and continue to tackle globalisation questions in a personal context.

The highly acclaimed 2002 staging garnered reviews from **The Business Times** then as "a stylish multimedia presentation that weaves together drama, music, multimedia and technology into a thought-provoking whole".

This time, there's a whole new cast with international additions including Japan's Eriko Wada, Rody Vera, from Philippines, and two local actors, Aidli 'Alin' Mosbit and Peter Sau.

Tan said, "This move is to open the work up to more regional/international influences... [and to] change the tenor and fabric of the work."

Oct 28-30, Nov 2-7, 9-14, shows at 8pm,
Oct 30-31, Nov 6-7, 13-14, shows at 3pm,
The Necessary Stage Black Box
Tickets: \$22, \$26 (excluding \$2 SISTIC Fee)

LAURA CHONG

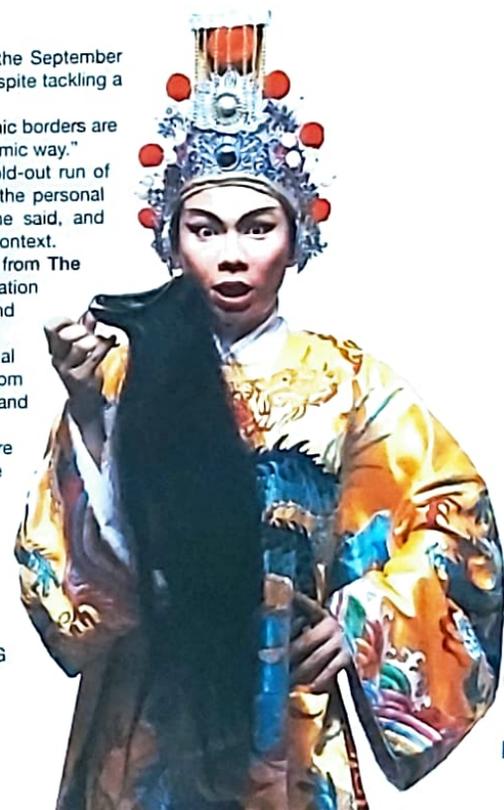


Photo courtesy of The Necessary Stage

Made in Singapore!

celebrating our best

Go local with JOSHUA TAN as he finds out about Made in Singapore.

The hat-tossing over our Singaporean identity will not have stopped in August, but will carry on in October if organisers of **Made in Singapore!**, a three-day celebration of some of the best local talent, have anything to do with it. "We're aiming for an event that inspires people... a chance to watch these talents and feel like 'Wow! They're all Singaporeans!'" said Audrey Perera, 43, the event's artistic director and the founder and festival director of **WOMAD** between 1995 and 2001.

Hosted by the zany Adnan Pang and Kumar, the indoor concerts, with tickets starting from \$25, feature popular artistes Lin Junjie, Parking Lot Pimps (previously known as Urban Xchange) and Sheikh Haikel. The spotlight, however, is not only on relative newcomers, but on veteran acts as well. Legends Dick Lee, Gingerbread and S K Poon (a familiar favourite with elderly housewives) will grace this event alongside Jazz greats Jeremy Monteiro and Jacintha Abisheganaden.

Despite attaining international acclaim, these artistes are also psyched about the entire concept. Audrey said, "All of them, Dick Lee, Jeremy Monteiro, Jacintha, Urban Xchange, Universal Blues Band and so on, as soon as they heard the concept, [they said] great, count us in."

The free outdoor "live" concerts are expected to attract some 30,000 people over the three nights. The idea behind these is to cater to the general audience and expose them to Singapore's finest without any financial expense. From its conceptualisation, organisation, sponsors and talents, only Singaporeans are involved with **Made in Singapore!** The organising team consists of equally big names like actor-director Glen Goei (*Forever Fever, The Revenge of the Dim Sum Dollies*) as artistic consultant and the music director is Dr Sydney Tan, who was behind the Kit Chan musical *Forbidden City: Portrait of An Empress*. Both men were also involved in the last two National Day Parades.

"It's not about saying we're the best. It's just about being proud of what you have. I think we all have this habit... still have this 'West is Best' idea... we just don't give local artistes the same respect and we really felt [that] as Singaporeans, let's change that," said Audrey.

Oct 22-24, 11am-7:30pm to 9:30pm for indoor programmes, 7pm till late for outdoor programmes, The Esplanade, Theatres on the Bay
Tickets: \$25 up for indoor programmes, free for outdoor programmes



Event Listings

Wondering what to do during the holidays? **hypo** suggests 10 year-end events to choose from.

SENI Singapore 2004: Insomnia48

The opening event of SENI Singapore 2004, an annual event that discusses social issues through visual contemporary Southeast Asian and Asian art, promises two full days of sleepless fun. Expect non-stop music, clubbing, workshops, installations and much more packed into 48 hours. This event is organised by the National Arts Council and the National Heritage Board.

Oct 1-Oct 3, 8pm,
The Arts House at the Old Parliament
Free admission

American Idols Live!

Eight of the top 12 finalists of the third season of **American Idol** will perform live in Singapore for one night only. According to organisers, LAMC Productions, **American Idol's** performance in Singapore is its "only international concert date added to the American Idol US Tour". Look out for your favourites like the third **American Idol** winner, Fantasia Barrino, runner-up Diana DeGarmo and others like Jasmine Trias, George Huff and Jon Peter Lewis belting a song or two before your eyes. Win \$136 tickets at theurbanwire.com.

Oct 5, 3.30pm-8pm, Singapore Indoor Stadium
Tickets: \$59, \$79, \$106, \$136 and \$158, from SISTIC

Singapore - Johor 2nd link Bridge Run 2004

Why run cross-country when you can run out of the country altogether? And the best way to beat the jam going into Johor Bahru is simply to lace on your running shoes and jog across the second link bridge. Sure the food isn't as great as across the causeway and the great sales are over, but even Forrest Gump couldn't claim to have run into another country.

Oct 10, 6am, Tanjung Kupang Toll Plaza in Johor Bahru, Second causeway link
Fun 10km race: \$5
Competitive 10km race: \$8

Hubbies4Hire

Presented by ACTION Theatre, **Hubbies4Hire** is a comical play based on women being in power. The play revolves round a new service where women have the ability to hire men to be good husbands. This makes the women happier and able to lead more fulfilling lives. Written by ACTION Theatre's Associate Artistic Director, Desmond Sim, this is directed by Australia's award-winning director Darren Yap, who directed *Miss Saigon* in Asia and the United Kingdom.

October 22-31, Jubilee Hall
Tickets: \$25 to \$45 from TicketCharge

Regional DJ ThirstAsia

The Heineken ThirstAsia Semifinals are back at Zouk, bringing in another pool of fresh DJ talents to heat up the decks. The winner will go on to compete with other regional finalists at the ThirstAsia Finals to be held on Nov 20 at Zouk KL.

DJs Daniele Davoli, Miss Motif and Pete Tong will be at the finals anticipating the birth of another promising DJ. Not keen to make the trip for the mammoth DJ finals? Then catch some great footage of the ThirstAsia finals on MTV Urban Beats.

For more details log on to www.zoukclub.com.

Oct 23, Zouk
Tickets: Details unavailable at press time

57th SCC International Rugby 7s 2004

Come watch 24 local and international Rugby 7s teams tackle and race in this exciting two-day tournament. Touted by the Singapore Sports Council as the "biggest sporting event held on the Padang", this annual tournament will showcase seasoned talents like South Africa's Durban Harlequins and Taradale from New Zealand, of the 14-minute version of Rugby.

Oct 30-31, The Padang, Singapore Cricket Club
Free admission

Concert In The Park: Feel Like Dancing?

Join local and foreign dance groups and creative directors Hatta Said and Gani Abdul Karim as they bring the Botanic Gardens to life with an exciting mix of Hip-Hop, Lindy, Ballet, Ballroom dancing and much more. Brought to you by the National Arts Council and ExxonMobil, the **Concert In The Park** dance party will set you on your feet and moving to the groove.

Oct 31, 4.30pm-6.30pm, Singapore Botanic Gardens, Palm Valley
Free admission

The Women's Fair 2004

Women who want to celebrate womanhood with their favourite magazines like **Her World**, **Citta Bella** and the newly launched **Shape Singapore** magazine can do so at The Women's Fair 2004. In its seventh year, the fair will showcase exclusive bargains and deals from leading women's products. To complete the event, there will be dance performances, fashion shows and celebrity performances by Mediaworks artistes.

Nov 11-14, 11am-8pm, Suntec City, Tropics Atrium
Free admission

Top Band 2004 Competition

The search is on so hop down to the Esplanade Park, where bands will perform and vie for cash prizes and endorsement packages worth up to \$50,000 and the debut title of Top Band 2004. This event is jointly organised by Swee Lee Music Company and the National Parks Board in conjunction with National Family Week. Application forms can be downloaded from www.sweelee.com.sg.

Nov 15-Dec 12, Esplanade Park
Free Admission

Christmas At Esplanade III

The Philharmonic Choral Society performs for the third time at Esplanade with hymns by Urmas Sisask, Rachmaninoff and others. The Singapore Bible College Choral performs alongside them, bringing you Christmas carols and evergreen songs of the festive season. An exhilarating line up of yuletide tunes to set you in the mood for the season of goodwill.

Dec 4, 7.30pm, Esplanade Concert Hall
Tickets: \$12, \$18, \$24, \$28, \$36 from SISTIC

Rouge and roll

Rouge is the first regional 14-part made-by-Singapore drama series. This inaugural collaboration between Mega Media Pte Ltd, MTV Asia and the Media Development Authority of Singapore (MDA) marks a new milestone for each party as it is their first foray in producing a TV series.

Rock stars by day and secret agents by night, **Rouge** is a team of sophisticated and well-trained women professionals, armed with good looks, musical talent and awesome martial arts skills. They journey across Asia, in the name of justice.

More than 2,000 from seven countries auditioned for the roles.

Brace yourself as MTV's new über cool secret agents kick villain ass, rock-star style. PAMELA SIA lets you in on the series and gives you a Who's who in Rouge.

And the chosen five who made the cut are: Desiree Ann Siahaan (Ling), Veronica Ngo (Thuy), Mariel Rodriguez (Pam), Denise Laurel (Pat) and Pamela Fields (Jazz).

"Rouge was a crazy little idea that was mooted by Mega Media's creative team," said Jonathan Foo, 32, Managing Director of Mega Media. He was one of the three directors on Rouge, along with Kim Lim, a producer with an international ad agency, and Cheek, MTN Vice-President, Creative and Content, MTV Networks Asia. In an email interview he

told **hype**, "The youth audience is a very worldly-wise audience and they want some substance. With a rough concept in hand, we approached the MTV Creative team and with their buy-in, we eventually also got MDA on-board as a partner."

"When we planned for the stories, we told ourselves: Global, not local. The only guidelines we set were a good-looking cast, good music and fast action. Another challenge has been to create the texture of the various cities of Asia right here in Singapore. Our Art Department, led by Production Designer Andy Heng have done a fantastic job with amazing sets and some of the weirdest props."

Andy Heng, 34, Rouge Production Designer/Art Director said, "Effort was put into hyper-realism." He added that one of his more satisfying sets was "the control bridge of a spaceship"

which was to resemble one "straight out of a C-grade movie" for one of the later episodes.

Jonathan adds, "We are very optimistic about Rouge becoming a success. We believe that it will be a matter of time before Rouge attains an iconic status with our Asian youth." He said that a Rouge album, book and fan website are being discussed.

"Will there be a second season? Well, the audience will help decide that."



Desiree Ann Siahaan

Origin: Singapore
Age: 23

Ling's Speciality: Former special forces captain
Desiree vs Ling:

"Like Ling, I can be tough and very focussed in the things I do. I have more of a sense of humour and fun than she has and I'm definitely more feminine."

Which superhero would you wanna be?

"I'd be like Mystique from X-Men because she has extraordinary powers. But I'll be on the side that fights evil."

Veronica Ngo

Origin: Vietnam
Age: 25

Thuy's Speciality: Martial arts expert
Veronica vs Thuy: "I am outspoken and love to laugh a lot whereas Thuy is a very quiet and gentle peacemaker. I protect my loved ones who are close to me and Thuy is protective over the other girls."

Which superhero would you wanna be?
"Catwoman! ... [She] is very sexy, very tough and sensitive when it comes to love."

Mariel Rodriguez

Origin: Philippines
Age: 19

Pamela's Speciality: Investigation Specialist
Mariel vs Pam:

"We are both cheerful people and are very talkative! I dress the same as how Pam does. I guess our difference is that I am not as naive as she is."

Which superhero would you wanna be?
"I'd be Superman! He can fly and I would love to fly! How cool would it be to fly, run that fast or have X-ray eyes? It's perfect!"

Denise Laurel

Origin: Philippines
Age: 16

Pat's Speciality: Computer Techie and Hacker
Denise vs Pat:

"Pat and I are very much the same. She's just more bad-assed than I am. Which superhero would you wanna be?"

"Haha! I'd want to be a mixture of Rogue, Superman and Batgirl/Batman."

Pamela Fields

Origin: United States
Age: 19

Jazz's Speciality: Computer Whiz
Pamela vs Jazz:

"We are both generally very independent, low-key, very perceptive of our surroundings and... have very dry, sarcastic sense of humour. Jazz can be unapologetically self-seeking and manipulative, whereas I tend to be the cordial one who makes sure the people around me are comfortable and enjoying themselves."

Which superhero would you wanna be?
"An earlier, more classic version of Catwoman. She is a symbol of an independent woman and female power."



Rouge premieres Oct 7 on MTV Asia, in a one-hour special at 9.30pm.

Behind the scenes Special

Jonathan's take on the shoot (in an email interview):

"[A] shooting period of 4 months... pushed us to the limits. The production of *Rouge* was equivalent to shooting 3 feature films back to back. Quite a feat really, and we have finished the entire production exactly on schedule. We've been very lucky to have assembled an excellent team, that has support[ed] the production amazingly. We are on schedule, on budget and everyone's still on speaking terms. For those who know production, that is a feat on its own."

“The girls, have in fact **impressed** me... they not only survived it, they **excelled!**”
—Jonathan Foo (director)



Under Cover
Desiree
twisted her
ankle during
a fight scene.
Clever use
of boots to
cover up her
bandages and
hide her pain!



Filming their single, "Free Me"
The girls stood on a round mechanical elevating platform that, according to Andy, was "precarious" because the girls had minimal standing space. They had to look cool and perform to the song while trying not to fall off. But few complaints were heard. Phew, what troopers!



Hunk Alert!
Pierre Png, as
Agent Hong,
getting his hair
done

Vincent Ng- One Heck of a Son-in-law

Why the singles ad for Vincent? Well CHRISTINE NG think he's been single long enough.

If you're a fan of the regional *wushu* champ-turned-actor-turned martial arts school owner, you'll know the local media's obsession with his drool-worthy physique. Vincent wails in English, "You have to do me justice! Audiences... may assume that Vincent loves stripping."

But the truth is he's as squeaky clean as his neighbourhood police officer character in *Heartlanders*.

"I am not comfortable baring, especially when I have to take off my clothes at the wrong places like photo-shoots." He recalls feeling awkward and uncomfortable when "at studio shoots, everyone had clothes EXCEPT me! All they gave me was a skimpy pair of shorts. The most outrageous was when they wanted me to pose topless lying seductively on my Vespa."

13 going on 30?

It's easy to mistake Vincent's exuberance and energy for childishness. "Due to my Chinese martial arts background, I am very sporty, constantly seeking heights and speed," he says, adding that, "Normal people walk across the room just like that, abnormal hyper people like me, walk across the room thinking of 10 ways to get across."

Still, the 29-year-old shows uncommonly mature thoughtfulness. Vincent actually enjoys an infotainment programme on senior citizens shown on Channel 8 every Saturday evening.

And not only did the only son create a garden for his mother to potter around in his new home, he says he'll be open with his future in-laws and "I'll take great means to make them happy."

In fact, he told *hype* he'll readily, and without complaint, eat a very undercooked pot roast and laugh at lame jokes by his prospective in-laws.

Hero

Call him hypocritical for not telling their faults to their face, and he says, sighing, "You can call me a 'two-headed' snake. I... like to try and please everyone [so] that often I tend to forget my own best interests."

You can attribute his accommodating nature to his belief in retribution and *feng shui*.

More likely, it's due to his understanding that young fans sometimes emulate actors and so he's conscious of keeping his behaviour in check to "be a good role model for the rest".

One thing they probably won't want to mimic, though, is Vincent's pinkie, a hideously long nail for a man. "But it's not for anything dirty [like digging your nose]," Vincent immediately protests. It's for *feng shui* in helping him save money. Right.

Mean Girls

Tight-lipped about his previous relationship, Vincent promises only his next girlfriend will know. Cynical people will tell Vincent to grow up but this hopeless romantic still believes in whispering sweet nothings over the phone and 'accidentally' brushing her hands.

The eligible bachelor, quite sensibly, says he will drop any woman like a hot coal should she bitch about others.

"If she takes too long to doll up, not a problem, and if she takes too long to make up her mind, also not a problem. However, when she starts to whine and complain too much about other people, [that] is a problem."

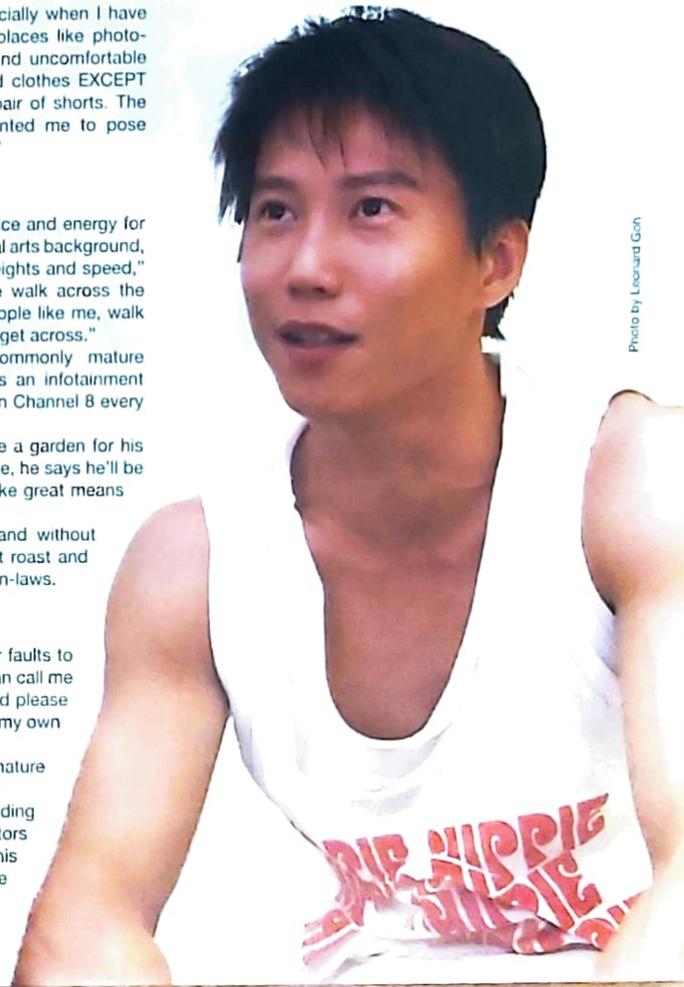


Photo by Leonard Goh

三星鼎立

陈心瑜著

三位非常杰出的本地新一代创作型偶像歌手 - JJ 林俊杰, Stella 黄湘怡和黄义达都在2004年发出了全新的专辑。随着这一年即将结束,我们请来了专业的知名音乐老师与制作人来为这三位炯然不同的歌手在他们的形象、唱功与潜力上打打分。

JJ林俊杰

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第二张《第二天堂》2004年6月发行

形象

张泛老师,海蝶音乐的音乐总监在受访时,强调说,他不是因为JJ是他公司旗下的徒弟,而对他有好的评语。他说道,JJ的第一张和第二张的专辑都动感十足,舞感也有明显的进步。这位同社的师弟是在1999年海蝶音乐举办的第二届《非常歌手训练班》毕业后成为歌手,但他也认为JJ和义达的形象还有待加强,因为在接受媒体访问时,他们很多时候讲话都不太自然。

隔楼音乐文化的音乐老师兼筹备要出专辑的音乐人黄烈传则觉得JJ的形象很boyish(邻家男孩),很吸引年轻少女们的支持与喜爱。

形象指数:★★★☆☆

唱功

隔楼音乐文化的总裁,谢文龙认为在这三位新人当中JJ的歌唱实力是最强的。谢文龙觉得JJ很勇于尝试不同类型的音乐,像是电玩快歌,R&B,舞曲以及抒情慢歌,他都能诠释的很好。

JJ这位能唱,能跳,能自己创作歌曲的全方位艺人在张泛老师的眼中,是位非常努力的歌手。音乐人黄烈传说:“JJ的声音很ogle(灵活),也很耐(强有力),可以做到 tight turns(做高难度的转音)。”

唱功指数:★★★★☆

潜力

谢文龙本身觉得JJ是有很有潜力的,因为他有多方面的才能,而且也会看走势,像是江南这首歌,他觉得就是对准中国市场的,但是成功,文龙说:“JJ不能做大杂(的音乐),虽然有多方面的尝试,但他需要在音乐上找到自己的定义。”张泛老师认为JJ唱沧桑的歌曲不能太多,毕竟他吸引的都是比较年轻的听众。音乐人黄烈传认为JJ的卖点非常的多,如果他能延续现在的走势,JJ的潜力将是无限的。

潜力指数:★★★★☆



Stella 黄湘怡

专辑:第一张《等》2001年2月发行
第二张《快速爱情》2002年10月发行
第三张《Stella狂想曲》2004年6月发行

形象

对于这位漂亮的甜姐儿,张泛老师说:“她的形象是属于比较‘娃娃’气的,很可爱,比较少女‘babyish(孩子气)’的,所以这样的形象会吸引广告商,拥有‘音乐小甜心’美称的Stella,在张泛老师的眼中,是非常自然的。他说:

“我觉得image(形象)自然是最好的,Stella的形象最自然,可能是因为她比较有经验,也有尝试演技方面的发展。”谢文龙则认为Stella是位很上镜的偶像歌手。黄烈传觉得Stella给他的感觉很像早期的伊能静,而且在这张新出的专辑内,Stella的形象显出逐渐成熟的味道,形象塑造的非常成功。

形象指数:★★★★☆

唱功

张泛老师说:“我觉得Stella babyish(孩子气)的声音不是装出来的,是很自然的,这样的声音在华人市场是很少有的,这对她来说,可能不是那么有利,但我觉得这就是她的character(性格)。”他也说道:“Stella的声音有limitations(局限),她唱的歌,range(幅度)不能太宽,在recording的时候,(唱)太高的歌,她不太能reach(达到),好像在呐喊那样,我相信这点,她自己应该知道。”谢文龙则认为从第一张到现在的第三张专辑里,Stella在唱功上没有明显的进步。

潜力

黄烈传觉得Stella是很有潜力的,因为他认为像这种可爱少女形象在哪里都是很受年轻人的欢迎。张泛老师说:“吸引的听众群可能比14岁还要小,这些小生可能把Stella当大姐姐看。”文龙则认为Stella是很能吸引广告商的注目的。

潜力指数:★★★★☆



黄义达

专辑:第一张《无法定义》2004年4月发行

形象

谢文龙觉得义达的青春形象在三人当中是最强的,因为他俊美的外形,有男版‘孙燕姿’之称,有着很强的音乐老师的背景,三人都一致认为义达给人很有年轻李德政、伟菘的感觉。张泛老师和文龙异口同声地认为义达的形象和音乐有大出路。张泛老师说:“他的声音和歌曲很成熟,但是形象很青春,所以我觉得他的image(形象)和歌曲有距离感。”他猜想塑造这样的感觉和形象是为了要配合专辑的名称《无法定义》。

形象指数:★★★★☆

唱功

张泛老师说:“[义达的]唱功很不错,但是歌曲分配不够多,有比较多的慢歌,所以比较沧桑,但他却有张娃娃脸,或许他应该走向孙燕姿的风格,歌曲前卫一点,多一点world music(世界音乐)。”有过同台经验的黄烈传觉得义达虽然写歌的hook(抓到对的音乐感觉)很强,但是唱现场可能就没有那么理想。

唱功指数:★★★★☆

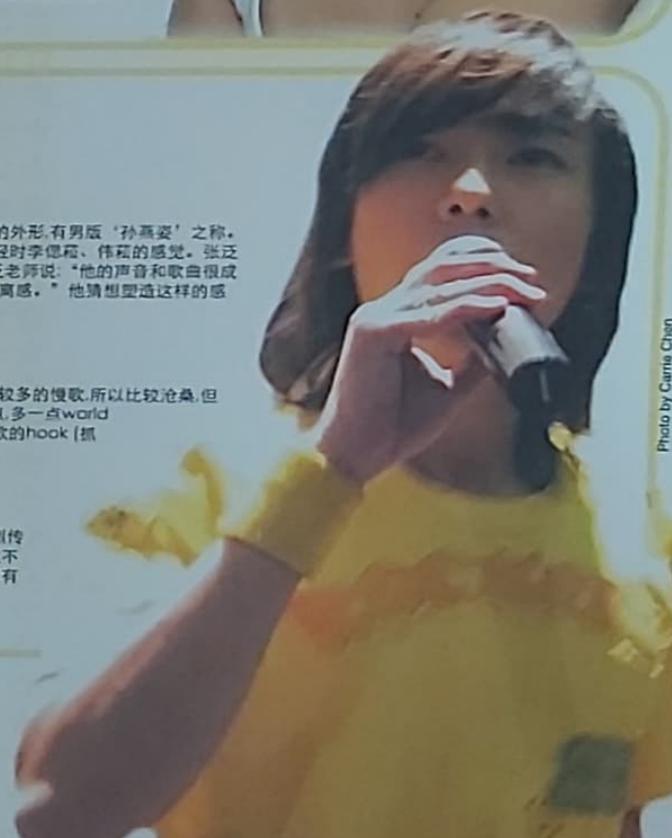
潜力

拥有很强的可塑性,义达在很多音乐人眼中,是很有潜力的。黄烈传认为义达在创作方面是很有天份的,所以他觉得如果有一天义达不想再唱歌了,他还可以退到幕后当制作人。谢文龙则认为义达很有吸引力,很多年轻的少女们会为他着迷。

潜力指数:★★★★☆

要在多变的演艺圈里占有一席之地,并不容易。张泛老师说:“三位都是新加坡的人才,都很辛苦,希望听众多给我们自己的artistes(歌手)打气。”

我们期盼也满怀希望这三位年轻又出色的本地歌手,能在听众的支持与掌声中,继续在娱乐界绽放异彩。让我们拭目以待吧!



“一”然是 Linda

陈品吉著

两年前曾出过《7号 Linda》首张专辑,23岁的 Linda 在今年夏天再度回到歌坛上。

“爱跳,爱动,爱唱歌”的她,已在一年前时,在MTV中文台的《MTV 新欣货》以她活泼,又专业的主持风格捕获了许多年轻观众的心。

主持,唱歌和跳舞都难不倒这位曾经在校园里炫出令人骄傲的学业及体育成绩的 Linda!

那就让我们与 Linda 这位长的像似日本天后“安室奈美惠”的活泼女生回味她人生中许多的“第一次”经验吧!

第一次接触音乐的时候?

很小就接触音乐,因为妈妈以前好像有唱歌,只是 maybe just for a performance 那么小小,不是那种发片之类了。那她就会常常唱歌给我们听啊,可能我怀在妈妈的肚子里就已经听了。

你第一首学会唱的歌曲?

“虎姑婆”吧, [唱一段]
“好久,好久的故事,妈妈告诉我,
好深,好深的夜里,会有虎姑婆。”

它是台湾小时候的一个如果你不睡觉啊,你不早点睡,虎古董这个 creature (怪兽) 会来找你,所以这是 [来] 吓小朋友的。

那你第一次上台表演的时候呢?

“不知道... 我很小就在表演了... 还在台湾的时候就已经有参加合唱团的表演, [Linda 在国小六年级时与家人移民到加拿大居住]

在加拿大有很多合唱团的表演, actually 我有演很多 drama, 就是 Broadway shows (所谓舞台剧), 我们自己有演 Westside Story 啊, Camelot, 然后... ”

第一次我真的不记得耶... 太多, 太多了! 在发片前就已经有很多演出的经验了, 不管是演舞台剧好, 还是唱歌也好。”

你初恋是几时呢?

15岁。

你第一次接吻呢?

16 [岁], 第一次交往没有, 第二次才有接吻。

你第一个所有的宠物呢?

“小鸟, 啊, 就三年级... 九岁, 我记得, 这是很悲伤的故事。”

因为吧, 那时候台湾很热, 我放学回来, 小白 (小鸟的名字), 它放在我的阳台上, 然后好热, 好热, 好热... 我看到小白, 我就在那边想: ‘小

白一定很热, 我就把它从阳台拿进来, 想把它放在冰箱一下, 然后去看电视, 后来, 我是忘了把它 [拿出来], 我想说是 cool down 啊, 妈妈在煮晚餐的时候, 小白就已经离我们而去。妈妈拿青菜, 拿肉啊, 就被吓一跳, [尖叫] ‘啊!’ 这样子。这是我小时候的第一个宠物, 小白, I miss you so!’

你第一次到国外旅游的地点?

“第一次到国外好像跟全家人去香港吧, 因为 [距离] 最近, [那时年纪] 很小的时候... 所以, 记忆不太好, 但是我记得另外一个记忆比较深刻但也是小时候, 就是... 第二次出国, 是到夏威夷。”

妈妈那么想把我们的三个小朋友都穿一样的衣服, 就是 jeans (牛仔裤), 然后上面穿的是 white t-shirt (白色T恤) - 都是三个人一模一样, 所以, 出国玩的时候就都很丑, 每个人都是 “哇! 这个 family... ”

第一次来新加坡的经验?

“第一次来新加坡就是参加 MTV Asia Awards (MAA - MTV 亚洲大奖 2004)。I was there hosting the red carpet, I fell in love with Singapore right when I got there. (我在那儿主持艺人们走星光大道的项目, 到了那里我立刻爱上了新加坡。) 很高兴啦... 这么大的 event! 我访问很多, 很多人。”

[现在] 第二次来, 更爱, 我喜欢 Chomp Chomp 的东西, 我昨天前天都到 Chomp Chomp 吃!

[我喜欢] 新加坡的 buildings (高楼大厦), 因为 they remind me a lot of Canada (它们会让我想起加拿大)。然后 the people here are so nice (这里的人很好)。而且像我的话, I know how to speak English, Mandarin (我会讲英语, 华语), 台语, 日文, 还有广东。这边的人也是这样子 - 现在的 style 是 mix and match, 他们可能会 mix and match the language 让我觉得很有趣, 很好玩。”

Linda 刚推出了第二张个人专辑 <<我挺你>> 之后, 预测会在年底到中国做宣传, 闯进中国音乐市场。她也可能在年底演出一部全新的偶像剧, 我们期待这颗闪耀的星星在演艺圈大放光彩吧!

Jay-Walking

HEDIRMAN SUPIAN thinks that very soon, people will be doing the Jay-walk.

Jay Sean has certainly got things going for him at the ripe age of 22. It might not have seemed so when the straight-A student left medical school to pursue his music career. But he's proved naysayers wrong with his debut single, "Eyes On You", climbing the UK and local charts. The British-bred South Asian was discovered by renowned British producer, Rishi Rich, who's known for infusing Asian sounds in his work. Samples of Rishi's work include the Bhangra beats on Britney Spears's "Me Against the Music". As such, "Eyes On You", features Bollywood-esque Asian sounds and R&B beats that sound like they were made for each other.

Lyricaly however, it's not a good sampler of the rest of the material on his second album, *Relentless*, due out on Oct 25, he tells *hype* in a phone interview. "The thing is man, I'm trying to concentrate on being a bit more innovative and a bit more creative. And lyricaly I'm trying to be more interesting than just your normal 'Hello girl, you're so beautiful. I love you'. You know what I mean?" No surprises there, you'd expect a brainy person to set his sights on something higher than the mediocre mainstream garbage appealing to the masses. He writes songs about his "journey through music", his "experiences in life" and infuses his heritage and Asian roots in his musical style. For instance, he's written one called "You Don't Know Me" that chronicles "what it's like being an Asian guy trying to do black music in a predominantly white country".

So expect a mix of hip-hop, new soul, R&B, even more Asian sounds and lyrical substance.

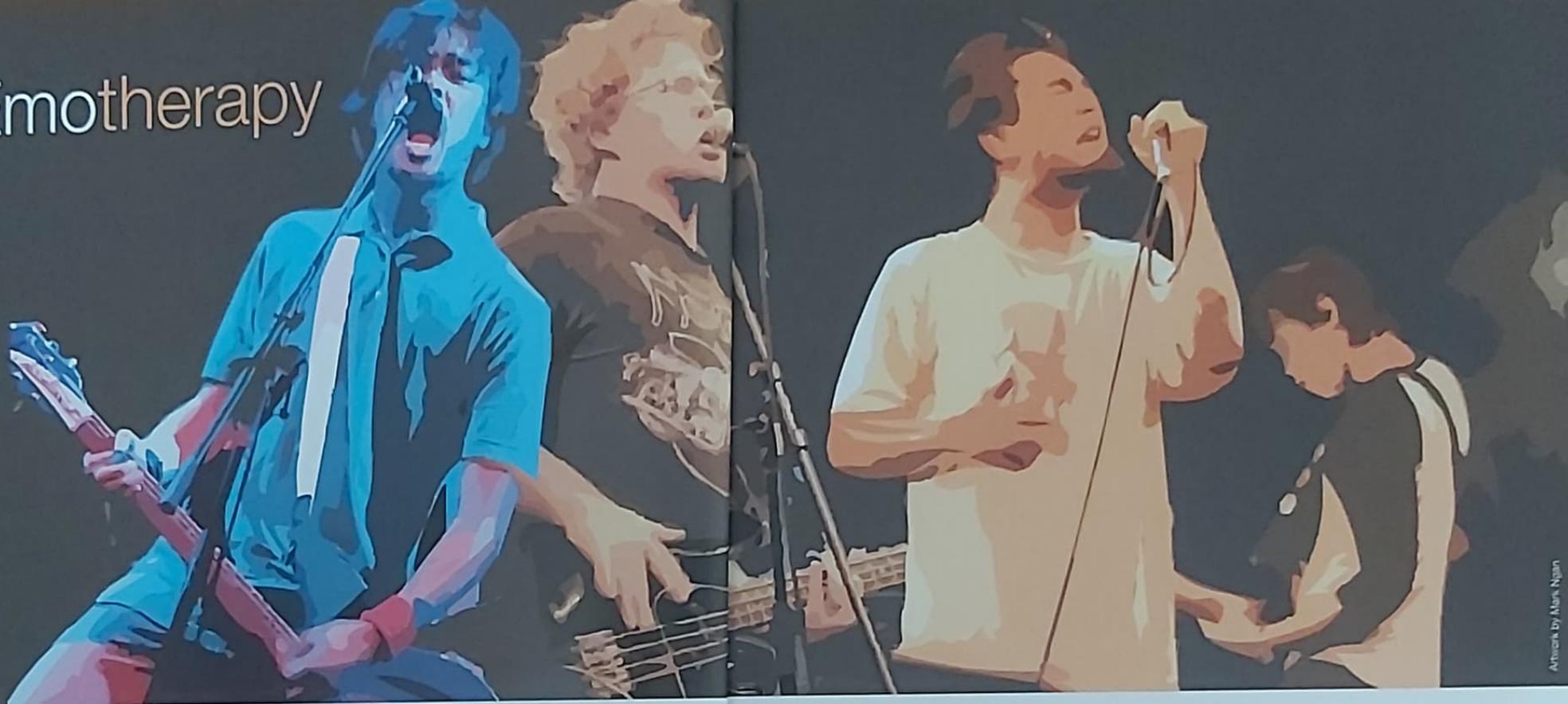
Jay maintains that he's "just as much British" as he is Asian - "I've grown a lot in different ways, definitely. But I haven't let go of my Asian values and traditions and ultimately what it comes down to is about balance between the two. I don't want it to be that somewhere down the line my culture doesn't transcend and gets lost or diluted in the next generation. I want to pass that culture and tradition on because it's very hard living in England. [While] living in Britain, away from your motherland, it's very easy to lose those Eastern ways. So for me, I've always made a conscious effort to practise those very traditions that keep me the person I am 'cos ultimately, that's my identity."

In fact, in keeping with his Sikh roots, he's looking forward to Deepavali in November. "It's celebrated by fireworks, by candles around the house - great family reunions. The extended families will come to a house and have a massive dinner then go out and watch the fireworks at a local park. It's just a time when the community comes together and celebrates. And more so than anything, it just gives us an excuse to get together once in a while because it's very hard - everyone's very busy."

So what does Jay think of the Asian stereotypes that are held in the Western world?

"We ain't that different after all... even though our culture and our lifestyle might be slightly different, behind closed doors, ultimately, we shouldn't be closed off to the same opportunities our black and white counterparts have, simply because of skin colour or because of our religion."

Emotherapy



Artwork by Alan Ngan

You sing along to Yellowcard's "Only One", Jimmy Eat World's "Sweetness", Finch's "Letters to You", and you hear people saying it's Emo this or Emo that. JOSHUA TAN ponders, what's Emo music anyway.

The Emo Theory

"It's all about singing your heart out." That's how John Chiong, 29, co-founder of Wake Me Up Music, defines Emo music. His label imports a wide variety of music from independent labels.

Emo stems from the word emotional and represents a genre of music where the songs and lyrics are immersed in heartfelt sentiments. These heart-wrenching songs are characterised by intense vocals and lyrics. Such songs achieve an impression of great depression and lament. Though some people find them whiney, pardon them – they're just "lost in emotion". "Emo is something written with complete brutal honesty, heart on the sleeve lyrics... one hell of an intense and heartfelt offspring of rock," said Aaron Leng, an 18-year-old Visual Communication student from Temasek Polytechnic.

The genre has started to gain mainstream appeal with bands like Dashboard Confessional topping charts worldwide with the release of "Vindicated", featured on the original soundtrack of *Spider-Man 2*. What started as an underground subculture of independent bands doing their

own brand of music finally gained critical mass through increased media exposure and international tours.

"A lot of the Emo bands don't want to be called Emo bands, especially the older ones. It's not degrading, but it's just that they feel that they're just making their music... At the end of the day, Chris Simpson (previously front man of Mineral and The Gloria Record) even told me, it doesn't really matter whether it's Emo or not, because they don't care," said John.

He also adds that the Emo scene following here is building up steam. Emo fans are mainly youths between the age of 13 to late 20s and there are also adults who enjoy listening to the Emo classics such as Rites of Spring, Sunny Day Real Estate and Fugazi.

Apart from local radio stations, most get their dose of Emo from MTV as well. The genre has also spawned a few local bands that are proud to brand themselves Emo. "Yeah, Emo has made me ditch my responsibilities and join a band," laughs Aaron, who is the guitarist of local Emo-influenced band, A Vacant Affair.

Getting Emotional

The genre first emerged from Washington DC in the 80s. It's evolved and other bands have formed new sub-genres by fusing it with other kinds of music. Here are the few that have stood the test of time.

Emo Rock

It's probably the most mainstream and commercially successful of all the Emo influenced sub-genres. Emo Rock bands are four or five-piece outfits- expect straight-on rhythms and modern rock guitars. Though it might not sound like anything new, at least you'll be able to make out what the singer's saying. Famous names include Jimmy Eat World, Saves The Day and The Get Up Kids.

Screamo/Emocore

Take a moment to picture this – imagine depression that's so pent up it becomes unbearable to contain it, you scream and shout, breaking free from the chains of melancholy to vent your hurt and frustration. Screamo is driven by tyrannical sounds of chunky distorted guitars, wild insane beats and the double bass-drum kicks. It's so chaotically fast you might have a hard time catching up. A good number of Emo-influenced bands fall under this sub-genre - Thursday, The Used and Funeral For a Friend.

Indie-Emo

Indie-Emo is much gentler, with a distinguishably more melodious musical bed sprinkled with Emo-ish vocals. Compared to Screamo, the difference could be as great as comparing the surface of tarmac to paper. Even though it doesn't sound as jarring as the rest, the contrast of its emotional intensity is on par or perhaps even more "ferocious" – quiet is the new loud. One of the prominent Indie-Emo bands includes the disbanded Mineral.

Emo Punk

As the sub-genre suggests, it's a crossbreed of upbeat punk rhythms and train-like chugging guitars, bound with the usual dose of intense lyrics and vocals. Some may find the idea totally contradictory. But hey, who said punks don't get down? No one said they had to be all skippy and happy in their leather and chains. For a clearer idea of how this sounds, go check out Yellowcard's "Only One", from their *Ocean Avenue* album.

Wicked Aura Batucada has been making waves in the local music scene and are gaining well-deserved popularity in the region despite their fairly recent formation. It comprises 13 beat-bursting percussionists playing samba grooves. They formed on a last minute hunch to perform at ZoukOut (see pg 4) 2003 and have not looked back since.

The self-managed band takes pride in marketing and branding for themselves. "We don't get people looking for us," said member Aidan Bhamra, "we go out looking for people," he continued, "we believe in ourselves. We come up with our own ideas and we approach different people and sponsors or event organisers to push our ideas, instead of letting them come up to us and tell us what they want us to do."

Even though these World Music enthusiasts formed only in last July, they've been keeping themselves busy. Their numbers have almost doubled from the initial seven.

Regional appearances like the recent Songkhla Festival in Phuket are notable indeed for a band that's only a year old. They were also the opening act for Black Eyed Peas in February and impressed many at this year's Singapore Arts Festival and Latin Music Festival. Their extensive portfolio and their brand of uniqueness in mainstream Singapore has caught the notice of many.

There's no denying their enigmatic stage presence. If anything, they are easily remembered as the band who knows how to get the crowds on their feet - their showmanship is energetic and attention-grabbing.

"One thing about Wicked Aura is that it's more mobile. We can just strap up on the streets and play, unlike a band that will need equipment and amplification. To me, Wicked Aura is more accessible," said Syed Ahmad.

Clearly, their acceptance in the local and international music scene has not been as trying as other local bands' efforts. Their performance at this year's World of Music, Arts and Dance (WOMAD) at Fort Canning Green was impressive enough for the band to be invited to play at next year's WOMAD Spain and UK.

Possible collaborations with several famous World Music artistes are also in discussion. Yet despite the popularity of their performances, the band remains down-to-earth.

"I guess World Music is an appreciation of traditional music. I don't think we really had the intent of going into World Music, we just enjoyed samba very much," Syed said on their exploration of batucada music, a percussion-charged genre of Samba.

The band's success could be attributed to their passion for what they do. Bhamra said, "Our success is not only what we've played and what the crowd has responded to. We manage ourselves and it's a whole collective effort. Performing is what we do, we love it. There's no question about that."

So really, what is the secret to their success? Band member, Irwan Iskandar answered, "We don't wait for things to happen. We make things happen. I hope that it's a good example for other bands. If you want to pursue music, then don't just wait for things to happen."

Wicked Success!

Invitations to perform at World of Music, Arts and Dance (WOMAD) Spain and the UK are badges of success for this new local act. DIYANA ALAN finds out why Wicked Aura Batucada is the next big thing.



Simply Electric

Here's the latest Universal Music signed local rock band. They've just released their debut, **So Much More Inside**, and have returned from an Australian Tour. So let's find out if Electrico is any more than just Rock n Roll. So come squeeze in with JOSHUA TAN and Electrico on their small comfy couch and find out just what's inside.

It's an early Wednesday night and Desmond strolls through the studio's front door, visibly tired, holding the freshly printed design for the debut album. Daniel walks in with the contracts 15 minutes later. David then arrives drinking a large Coke and carrying a large brown Burger King paper bag. It's a rough edit of an imaginary documentary. This is *Electrico*, Singapore's next best shot at breaching the almost bullet-proof international music scene.

There's David Tan on vocals and guitars, Daniel Sassoon plays the lead guitar, Desmond Goh is on groovy bass, William Lim Jr provides the backbeat and Amanda Ling tinkers with keyboards. The band started out as Electric Company in 1996 and went through a two-year hiatus that saw the departure of their previous guitarist, serving National Service.

A cure to the itch to be international Rock Stars, Electrico reunited and recruited new members Daniel, a guitarist from former local band Livonia, and Amanda, Throb's former keyboardist. After six years in the local music scene, their hard work finally paid off as the locally renowned group has signed a licensing deal with industry giant Universal Music Singapore. This is the first Singapore band in the last four years to be signed by an international label.

Electrico's producer and the man behind the sound is local audio engineer Leonard Soosay, 38, who has recorded Energy, Urban Xchange, Pug Jelly and done numerous remixes for international stars like Kylie Minogue, Maksim, Jemelia and the late John Lennon.

"I believe that Electrico has the potential to be the first band in Singapore to make it into the international scene," said Leonard.

"Reason being they have a sound that will appeal to the mass market and they have the backing of a major label that is willing to support them and push them overseas... The band comes as a total package. They have the looks, they have the moves on stage and are very focussed on their objective, which is to make it overseas," he added.

On live sets, the guitar-and-bass driven band kicks into overdrive, mirroring how fun, spontaneous, energetic and even how cheeky they are. They're certainly young at heart with their playful teasing and drag-like impersonations of The Darkness, but who would have guessed that all the boys in the band are already in their late 20s.

It's intriguing how 19-year-old Amanda, the youngest one around, fits in so well.

So Much More Inside maintains their distinctive accent of Alternative-Brit Rock n Roll. Besides the sound of their music, there is so much more to the story behind these five individuals, on their greatest journey to pursue their passion.

"I was actually on the verge of calling it quits with the band because I was absolutely exhausted and I couldn't focus at work. I also deejay on the sideline, so I had absolutely no time for myself," said David, who worked as a programme producer at Nickelodeon. But the band trudged on as David realised he could never abandon his love for the music.

Apparently David wasn't the only one taking the rough ride during the nine-month recording of **So Much More Inside**. "It brought us very close together, and at certain points it almost seemed on the verge of tearing us apart because it was just so much pressure," said Daniel.

In the midst of the recording period, Daniel broke up with his girlfriend of seven years. "It was pretty taxing to go to work, record, finish at about 2am, go back to where I was living with her and just fight till five and then crawl out to work three hours later."

Like David, Daniel's exhaustion was also affecting him at work. He was a lawyer by profession and handled the legal matters for the band. He did research, planning and pitched these strategic plans to the band before proceeding with plans. These duties eventually caused Daniel to leave his job and take some time off to concentrate on the band. Similarly, in July, David left his job to focus on the music.

"This is something somebody said that is stuck with me. When you know your passion and you apply your mind to it a 110%... somehow everything just works out. And I believe that to be the case if you really focus yourself," said David.

"Of course we can't just totally say I'm just gonna quit and I'm not gonna look after myself, rock and roll is gonna take care of me, yeah! To keep this band together, we really have to keep our heads on our shoulders as much as we want to rock out."

Tall and gangly William also broke up with his girlfriend while *Electrico* was in the studios, but he's starting afresh in a new relationship with his Thai girlfriend.

Desmond had to convince his conservative parents about the merits of making music for a living. "I told them about the recording, but they wouldn't understand what I'm going through". Amanda got roped in halfway during their recording and has added another feminine yet magical dimension, to their sound that was never apparent before.

Exhaustion, financial/emotional woes, social pressure, broken relationships and misunderstandings were the tip of the iceberg of a new beginning for the band.

"Towards the end of the process I really started appreciating the band and the people around me a lot more. Despite my head being in another world because of my exhaustion, they were always consistent and passionate about it (*Electrico*). And if I didn't do it for myself I'll do it for them," said David.

album previews

Greatest Hits: My Prerogative Britney Spears

Britney's long overdue for her own collection of greatest hits. There may only be four new songs in mid-November's **Greatest Hits: My Prerogative**, but her legion of teen fans are likely to buy it to great heights. The first single, "My Prerogative", is a techno cover of Bobby Brown's 1988 hit. Don't expect it to sound anything like the original though. It'll likely be laced with some production whiz-bang magic much like "Toxic", a groovy song with an electro beat to freshen it up for the 21st century.

Her songs have always been a reflection of her life (think "Overprotected", "I'm Not A Girl, Not Yet A Woman") and the first single is no different. Only now, the lyrics apply to the media frenzy she's facing over her engagement with fiance Kevin Federline, and the end of her lucrative recording contract with Jive Records.

She sustained a knee injury while filming the video for "Outrageous" which will find its place in the greatest hits album as well. "My Prerogative" will be released as a single between September and October. Looks like we'll see more of everyone's favourite pop princess in the coming months.

PRASAD NAGAS



Courtesy of BMG Singapore

Greatest Hits Robbie Williams

You could say Robbie's proven his worth after leaving Take That nine years ago. It's high time he puts his achievements down in stone with a **Greatest Hits** album. Someone less kind might say that two new songs since 2002's **Escapology** is a sign he's running out of steam but who can blame him for cutting some slack? To date, the man who's ranked 37 on Forbes' Top Celebrities list has had five chart-topping albums, 16 top 10 singles, sold 32 million albums internationally and enjoyed record-breaking attendance at his concerts.

"Radio" and "Misunderstood" are his latest singles included on the album. The former, his first single, is due for release as a prelude to the album while the latter is to be featured on the soundtrack of *Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason*. (See pg 21)

Other than that, most of the other tracks are old favourites like "Anger", "Kids" (with Kylie Minogue) and "Feel". The last track also happens to be the title of his biography just released in September, which would be more of a deal to purchase than the album. There's nothing much to expect from **Greatest Hits** for ardent fans but it's a good primer for new Robbie converts.

JASMINE OEI



Courtesy of EMI Music

Monkey Business Black Eyed Peas

Talking about business, they've been at it for six years and have kept themselves afloat by constant reinvention. For **Elephunk**, their third album, they even went so far as to rope in a female vocalist, Fergie.

The Black Eyed Peas survived a fire that nearly destroyed their studio but **Monkey Business**, their fourth major release, has risen from the ashes. However, a departure in their signature sound is apparent.

The title might conjure up images of the group fooling around and having a ruckus, sure, of course, but the album is anything but. Catchy, pure pop should be their new tagline. Collaborations with legends such as Gang and James Brown also signal how the group has finally reached the mainstream big-time. But such alliances haven't diluted their unique brand of hip-hop. Come November, get ready to do some **Monkey Business**, Black Eyed Peas style.

GURGA PANCH



Courtesy of Universal Music Singapore





Ocean's Twelve

AMELIA YEO

Academy Award-winning director Steven Soderbergh is at the helm again for **Ocean's Twelve**, the sequel to his 2001 **Ocean's Eleven**. The A-list cast of George Clooney, Brad Pitt, Andy Garcia, Julia Roberts and Matt Damon remain, with the addition of Catherine Zeta-Jones.

Terry Benedict (Andy Garcia), whose three casinos were earlier burgled by Danny Ocean (George Clooney) and his 10 associates, is back to get his revenge, but the slippery Danny has plans of his own.

Armed with another seemingly brilliant plan, Danny rounds up his team to carry out another big-scale heist not in Las Vegas this time, but in Rome.

Things seem to be going smoothly, until a spanner, Europol agent Isabel (Zeta-Jones), is thrown into the works. To complicate matters, she is Rusty Ryan's (Brad Pitt) ex-fiancé.

As before, the way Danny Ocean executes his elaborate schemes will impress and rivet audiences, but the addition of Zeta-Jones's character seems like another crass Hollywood ploy to garner box-office ratings for an otherwise repetitive storyline.

Photo courtesy of Golden Village

Photo courtesy of UIP



Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason

GERALDINE GOH

The makers of **Bridget Jones's Diary** probably should have quit while they were US\$255 million (S\$437 million) ahead in world box-office takings.

Instead, they're back three years later with Renée Zellweger, Colin Firth and Hugh Grant in **Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason**. Where Bridget (Zellweger) amused us with her idiosyncrasies, indulgence in food and cigarettes (which many relate to), love and work problems before, the same formula is tiresome.

Bridget's short-lived romance with her perfect lawyer boyfriend, Mark

Darcy (Firth), thanks to his character flaws and a new rival, drive her to break up and take the worst holiday of her life in Thailand. This gives her former boss and worm of a crush, Daniel Cleaver (Grant), a chance to re-enter her life, rekindling the rivalry between the two leading men.

The repetitive plot is not helped by its director Beeban Kidron, who, while known for serious and TV work, hasn't been directing movies for nearly 10 years. Expect the kind of dry humour and sappy romance found in British romantic comedies like **Notting Hill**.

Photo courtesy of Buena Vista International



The Incredibles

JERMAINE ANG

Pixar, which brought you **Finding Nemo** and **Monsters Inc** has shifted its focus to humans, or rather superhumans, in its latest animation movie **The Incredibles**.

The world's greatest crime fighting family decides to quit and blend into the neighbourhood; they even shift to the suburbs away from danger. Father and leader of the team, Bob Parr a.k.a. Mr Incredible, now fights another kind of peril - a boring life as well as his ever-expanding waistline.

Unable to defeat his true nature, however, Bob is lured to a remote island by his old nemesis and the whole family leaps into action to save him.

This part of the plot bears an uncanny resemblance to another crime fighting movie, **Thunderbirds** with just a pinch of comedy.

We have a well known cast here; Craig T. Nelson (**Wag the Dog**), multi-Oscar nominee, Holly Hunter (**Thirteen**), and Helen Parr lend their voices, while Samuel L. Jackson (**Kill Bill Vol: 2**) joins in as Frozone/Lucius Best.

Unlike its other Pixar predecessors, this picture is let down by a not too clever plot. And where the saving grace should be Pixar's excellent animation and effects, even this pales beside Nemo's underwater world.



Intermission

DIYANA ALAN

The break-up of John (Cillian Murphy) and Deidre (Kelly MacDonal) is the trigger that messes up more than a dozen people's lives in their shabby Dublin town.

Following this, John and his sex-starved friend Oscar (David Wilmot) decide to join foul-mouthed ruffian, Lerhiff (Colin Farrell), in a bank robbery. A series of other unpredictable events unfold as other characters related to these three friends fall into an unnerving cycle of overlapping encounters.

This may be director John Crowley's

debut feature but it has already earned the movie comparisons to Quentin Tarantino's **Pulp Fiction** for his stylish directing. While we are unfamiliar with the Irish and Scottish actors, except for Farrell, this unconventional masterpiece is star-studded by their own reckoning.

The intertwined storylines is much like **Love Actually**, which leaves you marvelling at the cleverness of the screenplay. The mix of violence, emotional whirlpool, humour and a raw filming approach, should make **Intermission** a staple movie for all indie film junkies.

Photos courtesy of Golden Village

Photo courtesy of Sony Pictures



Christmas with the Kranks

JERMAINE ANG

Upset and angry that their only daughter Blair (Julie Gonzalo) decides to leave them behind and go abroad during the Yuletide season, Luther (Tim Allen) and his wife Nora Krank (Jamie Lee Curtis) decide to boycott Christmas, and spoil it for others including their neighbours.

When Blair, however, announces that she's returning for Christmas after all, there's lots of undoing to be accomplished in just 24 hours.

Tim Allen's, who's been up to rather similar antics in his first two festive

movies, **The Santa Clause** (1994) and **The Santa Clause 2** (2002) is in his element here.

It's also amusing to see the various laughter-milking disasters Allen can get into, for example, throwing a large snowman from the roof and driving a Christmas tree up the wall.

Christmas with the Kranks, based on John Grisham's 2001 book **Skipping Christmas**, will prove to be another heart-warming yet hilarious family comedy to bring in the festive mood.



Meet The Fockers

PRASAD NAGAS

Meet The Fockers is the anticipated sequel to the 2000 comedy **Meet The Parents**. Earlier, we'd cheered as born loser Greg Focker (Ben Stiller) finally won over the parents of his fiancé, Pam Byrnes (Teri Polo) - especially her hard-to-please father played by veteran actor Robert De Niro.

Now poetic justice is served as Pam

and her conservative family meet Greg's liberal parents Bernie and Roz Focker (Dustin Hoffman and Barbra Streisand, in her first starring role after eight years since **The Mirror Has Two Faces**).

Director, Jay Roach, who gave us the **Austin Powers** series, has ensured more slapstick humour in this movie, if that were even possible.

Photo courtesy of UIP

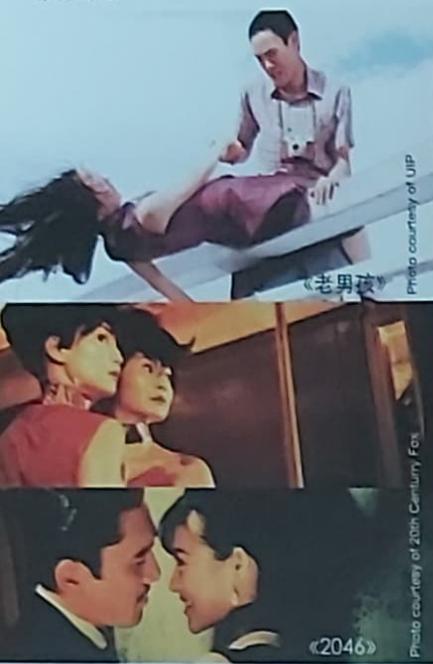


Photo courtesy of UIP

Photo courtesy of 20th Century Fox

《老男孩》

导演:朴正哲

领衔主演:崔岷植,刘智泰

改编自日本漫画,《老男孩》叙述一名商人,吴大修(崔岷植饰演)一天在回家的路上突然莫名其妙地遭人绑架。当吴大修醒来的时候,发现自己已经被软禁在一间只有播放着电视机的囚房里。

有一天,吴大修在看新闻的时候发现他的妻子原来已被人杀害了,女儿也不知所踪。案发当天发现了吴大修的血迹,他顿时成为了警方要捉拿的逃犯,伤心欲绝的吴大修想要自寻短见,但是却不成功,吴大修凭着一心一意想要报仇的心态,在囚房不停地锻炼身体和不停地用勺子在地上挖洞。就这样,吴大修在囚房里挖了15年才成功的越狱。

逃出囚房后,吴大修就展开了精心策划的复仇计划。在复仇的过程中,他邂逅了一名年轻女孩,Mido,并与其共谱恋曲。吴大修终于找到了仇人李有真(刘智泰饰演)。李有真就挑战他,只要5天之内能够找出他被绑架并软禁了15年的原因,李有真便会结束自己的生命。

想据李有真所给的线索,吴大修终于查出原因,原来,1979年吴大修在高中时,无意间目睹了他当时的高中校友李有真与他姐姐的乱伦事件,并将此事告诉他人,最终导致了李有真的姐姐受不了社会的指责而跳楼轻生,吴大修知道了真相之后,立刻命令李有真结束自己的生命,李有真这时却把一个包裹递给吴大修,吴大修战战兢兢地打开包裹,就发现到与自己Mido不可告人的秘密!

《2046》

导演:王家卫

领衔主演:梁朝伟,张曼玉,木村拓哉,章子怡,王菲,巩俐,刘嘉玲,张震

继《花样年华》之后,《2046》是另一部观众期待已久的王家卫作品,《2046》其实是《花样年华》里周慕云与苏丽珍见面的酒店



《功夫》

房间的号码,故事也和《花样年华》一样,发生在香港六十年代期间,在弥漫胭脂与烟味的环境中,影片中的人物不时穿越窄小的走廊间,音乐从六十年代美国音乐为主,《2046》可称得上是《花样年华》的续集。

在《2046》里,由梁朝伟所饰演的周慕云曾经在报馆当过记者,他正积极的写一本叫《2046》的科幻小说,小说描述一名乘客搭乘奔向公元2046年的地铁,地铁车内的女主人是个机械人,在小说里寂寞的周慕云也与张曼玉所饰演的苏丽珍重逢了,周慕云越想要完成这本小说,就越会被带回到自己的回忆里...

周慕云本身与2046号房的房客们有非常奇妙的关系,章子怡所饰演的2046号房客就与周慕云发展了一段恋情,恋情最终告吹,章子怡也就带着破碎的心,离开了2046号房。

王菲和木村拓哉饰演一对机械情侣,影片的概念是想警告世人,没有什么东西是永恒的,就连承诺都会随着时间而改变,很多人都想追回自己的过去,但每当他们回到过去后,又怎么也不能给过去画上一个最美丽的休止符。

《功夫》

导演:周星驰

领衔主演:周星驰,元华,黄圣依

故事周旋于中国,一九四零年广州的期间,周星驰在戏里的角色,阿星,是一个好吃懒做的流氓,游手好闲的他非常牙尖嘴利,很擅长歪曲事实。

阿星最大的缺点就是意志不够坚定,整天不务正业,可说是社会的“寄生虫”,他一心想要加心狠手辣和令人闻风丧胆的“斧头帮”,而且还要在“斧头帮”里成为一名有头有脸的人物。

这时,“斧头帮”已经把很多乡村都占为己有了,唯一还没被霸占的就是阿星所住的乡村,在这乡村里有几个卧虎藏龙的人物,其中就包括了身材超“丰满”的女房东和她瘦小的丈夫,他们夫妇带领一帮人,想要对“斧头帮”的手下还击,这些人深藏不露的特异功能,现在就是要把各自的特异功能拿出来对付“斧头帮”的手下,保护他们的乡村。

iWant

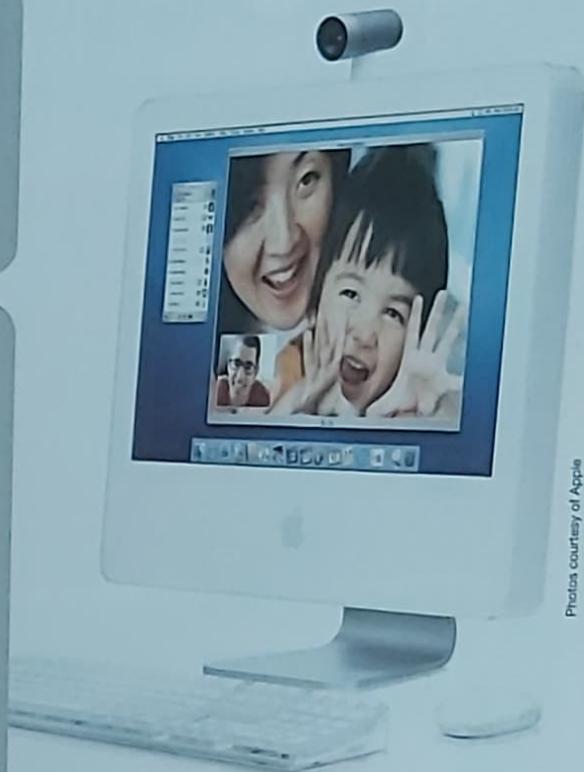
HEDIRMAN SUPIAN finds it hard to be objective with the new iMac G5 - a marvel of beauty and simplicity.

The rebel is getting more revolutionary. The fruity-coloured first-generation iMacs only broke cosmetic ground, coming out of the typical beige or black computers, and actually daring to look beautiful. The second-generation iMac shrunk the bulky CPU towers into a half-sphere to anchor the weight of an LCD display. Less-is-more fanatics just can't stop drooling over the iMac G5, it's zen done right.

So say goodbye to the slight bulge that contained the brains of the computer - everything's tucked away nicely behind the screen. So much so you're incredulous that's all there is to it. The all-in-one aesthetics mean that you won't be able to upgrade the internal components apart from the memory. But that doesn't mean it's a slouch at crunching videos, music and games though.

After all, the iMac is also the third line of computers (after the Power Macs and Xserve) from Apple to sport the G5 processors. These 64-bit processors promise to enhance the way you work and play with your computer. But the real deal is how these processors are particularly adept at handling huge files and multitasking applications on the fly. This overdue change in processors also makes the new iMac particularly proficient at video editing and explains why there are vents that run along the top and bottom of the screen to cool the processor.

It seems the iMac G5's small footprint was built for portability too - well, to a certain extent anyway. If you're already equipped with a wireless network at home and included built-in Bluetooth with your purchase (prices start at \$2,488), all you need to do to use it next to the living room sofa is plug it into the nearest power socket. Apple's wireless keyboard and mouse nicely complement this machine's portability. Just get used to people asking you, "Where's the rest of it?"



Photos courtesy of Apple



From the makers of the iPod, the iMac G5 - in all its two-inch glory

What's Hot & Not

The gadget makers are always trying to part us from our money, and the frenzy will only get worse as Christmas approaches. But the latest gizmo may not be the saviour you're expecting, so says HEDIRMA SUPIAN.



HOT

You'll never miss an episode of *Singapore Idol* or *Charmed* and you can catch it while commuting to school. With its seven hours' of video playback, you'll be able to show off holiday home movies to your fellow passengers once you're done editing them.

NOT

Think you'll have space to even take out that cool new player when you're packed like sardines during rush hour? Motion sickness from staring at a screen while being jerked about in traffic ain't that cool either. The long transcoding time [one hour for an hours' worth of video] required for converting movie files and the use of the proprietary Windows Media Format mean you're pushed to buy only original material.

Apart from playing music, the Creative Zen Portable Media Centre (PMC) [S999] is touted by Microsoft and Creative to provide the next innovation in your digital lifestyle, with highly portable video playback.



Instant messaging, email, web browsing and a mobile phone to boot. Seems like the new Hiptop [S498] from Starhub can do everything but your homework.

HOT

Long distance relationships won't be so far fetched when you can message your loved ones anywhere you are and browse the internet on a GPRS connection. Oh, and don't forget spam on the go.

NOT

One major flaw: It doesn't look that hip. Instant messaging is done through Yahoo Messenger and isn't compatible with other popular services like MSN or ICQ. With that clunky size, the 32 MB of memory is pathetic.



Everyone's churning out MP3 players to dethrone the iPod - a wish list favourite come Christmas. Prepare for a barrage of new models from iRiver, Creative and Rio that'll attempt to usurp the iPod's top spot.

HOT

A fit' competition means consumers (that's you and me) will get more choices and lower prices. iRiver and Rio still make better flash-memory based players for those who prefer the convenience of smaller devices and music libraries on the go.

NOT

The only problem with trying to be the iPod is that there's already an iPod. Come up with something as sleek, functional and stylish so we'll want one. Think different, people!

Illustrations by Mark Ngan

Ever notice how many foreign restaurants don't like it when you alter the dishes on their menu to suit your tastes. There's a certain protectiveness over the recipe that says that dishes are meant to be eaten "as is", so chefs frown when you add chilli sauce or ketchup to your meal and waiters grumble behind your back when you make special requests. Gosh, if there was ever a term for such an experience, it'd be fascist dining.

But you'll never find Pasta Fresca taking that kind of arrogant attitude with its concept of "creative eating".

"We want to give our customer's flexibility. Our kitchens are open for everyone to see and customers can order any combination of pasta and sauce they like," says Jan Faizal, Sales and Marketing Executive of Pasta Fresca Da Salvatore. Looks like the 16-year-old Italian food chain is proud to show off what magic that its chefs perform to deliver those heavenly pastas and pizzas. And discerning diners can customise food to their every whim without feeling either guilty or apologetic.

If you can't tell your *linguine* from *fettuccine*, there's always the option of Pasta Fresca's monthly promotions - a range of five to six dishes specially picked for diners clueless about Italian cuisine or for those looking for affordable gourmet food (ranging from \$10 to \$25).

Sufficient descriptions in English are provided in the menu so there won't be any nasty or embarrassing surprises. For Italian food lovers, Pasta Fresca's mouth-watering menu offers a smorgasbord of authentically Italian appetisers such as *risotto* and *alfredo fettuccine*.

The attentive service complements the excellent food, while the cosy and romantic ambience make the restaurants apt for celebrating festive seasons or special occasions. Whatever the reason, visit the nearest outlet today for a taste of freedom!

Dining Uninhibited

Photo by Leonard Egan

Branches:

Bukit Timah Branch
Blk 833 #01-02/03
Royalville Bukit Timah Road
Tel: 6469 4920

Shaw House Branch
350 Orchard Road
Shaw House Isetan
Scotts, Level 4
Tel: 6735 0373

Boat Quay Branch
30 Boat Quay
Tel: 6532 6283

Pasir Panjang Branch
426 Pasir Panjang Road
Tel: 6873 9513

Siglap Branch
77 Upper East Coast Road #01-01/02
Tel: 6241 5560

Suntec City Branch
3 Temasek Boulevard #B1-011
Suntec City Mall
Tel: 6336 6206

East Coast (Seasports Centre) Branch
1210 East Coast Parkway
Tel: 6441 8140

Email questions to enquires@pastafresca.com

NEW

BURGERS

In the wake of *Supersize Me*, PAMELA SIA takes a look at the range of healthy burger alternatives that have surfaced on local shores.

Morgan Spurlock's docu-movie *Supersize Me*, which tracked his strict diet of McDonald's food for 30 days, has raised awareness regarding the possible dire effects of overindulging in fast food.

And with year-end spelling endless feasting, especially of rich food, there has never been a better time to watch

Wraps:

For the uninitiated, wraps are made of your choice of stuffing rolled up in a tortilla skin, and packaged in a plastic or paper wrapper. It's the American version of popiah. Opened since April, WrappaMania has been selling them fast food style but with a healthy twist. "It's a new alternative; tasty and not at the expense of health. It is healthy fast food," said Kenneth Yeo, 30, WrappaMania's Business Development Manager, of their wraps.

To prove it, they got nutrient analyses of their wraps done by the Dietics Department of the National University Hospital. His confidence that Singapore will follow the footsteps of America, where wraps have become "the third phase of fast food after burgers and pizza" seems to be justified. In fact, business has been so encouraging, according to Kenneth, they "plan to open one to two more outlets by year end."

what we eat. This is increasingly popular to do with an increase of healthy alternatives to the burger. While keeping to the same idea of ingredients encased in some carb shell, healthier options including wraps, crepes, and a re-invention of the *kong ba pao* are likely to become increasingly popular in Singapore.



Wrappamania's Terrific Teri Tori

Crêpes:

A stop of mostly the French community, Crêperie AR-MEN is Singapore's first authentic French crêperie, opened since last April. Robert Raffelli, 31, director of the restaurant, says that crêpes are a great French tradition with a 500-year-old history.

Their authentic crêpes are made from buckwheat, to make gluten-free flour, perfect for those allergic to gluten or sugar. Geraldine Pinto, 40, the other director, says they are also "for those who are on the detox programme".

Raffelli adds that though butter is used freely in their crêpes, they do cater to "customers' needs for those who request for lesser butter or fat".



Crêperie AR-MEN's Croix Alpine



Bunz's Chilli Crab (on right)

kong ba pao:

Familiar with pork laden with layers of fat and skin encased in a steamed Chinese *pao* or bun? The all-new *kong ba pao* will not alienate those seeking nostalgia as it looks the same as its traditional predecessor, but has just become healthier. Bunz has substituted tender chicken for the traditional fatty pork.

"Our buns are steamed and our chicken fillet is low in fat, skinless and super tender," said Doreen Kee, 31, their Advertising and Promotion Manager in an email interview. "The traditional *kong ba pao* may be too fatty for the more health-conscious generation of today."

She thinks their buns are a good alternative to the burger as they largely use "the method of steaming instead of deep frying" for their ingredients. According to her, business has been "good" and they are "currently working out [their] franchise program".

So forget the familiar fast food joints you frequent and give these healthy alternatives a try!

Info at your fingertips

WrappaMania

Wrap price range: \$3.95 - \$4.95
 Bestseller: Terrific Teri Tori (teriyaki marinated chicken sautéed with sliced onions)
 Address: #B2-08A, Plaza Singapura
 Tel: 6884 4430
 Opening hours: 11am- 10.30pm daily

Crêperie AR-MEN

Crêpe price range: \$9.90- \$16.90
 Bestseller: Croix Alpine (potatoes, bacon cooked in white wine with *reblochon* cheese sauce)
 Address: 37 Duxton Rd
 Tel: 6227 3389
 Opening hours: Mon to Thur, noon- 2.30pm, 6.30- 10.30pm.
 Closed on Sun

Bunz

Bunz price range: \$1.90
 Bestseller: Chilli Crab (chicken fillet coated with chilli crab flavoured sauce)
 Address(es): 8 Liang Seah St and 4 Short St
 Tel: 6333 5386 (Liang Seah St)
 Opening hours: Liang Seah St, Mon to Thur 9am-10pm, Fri 9am-midnight, Sat 11am-midnight, Sun 11am- 10pm Short Street, Mon to Thur, Sun noon- midnight, Fri to Sat noon- 1am

North America's premier smoothie and juice chain is finally here!



Now swirling at Orchard Cineleisure #B1-06

Custom Candy Canes



Making your own candy canes may not save you much over buying them, but JEANETTE WON guarantees satisfaction to your loved ones over other personalised, pre-packaged sweets.



Whether as a walking aid or an implement to punish children, the cane is not something we associate with happy thoughts. Unless these are candied ones brandished at Christmas parties. Even after we've outgrown sucking on them, we still get a little thrill whenever we receive one. Imagine then the delight of someone who gets one that is customised to their own preferences.

Poh Qiyen, 21, a Nanyang Technological University (NTU) Communication Studies undergraduate who produces homemade treats after experimenting with recipes from cookbooks, knows this first-hand.

Her good friend, Trini Koh, 22, also from her faculty adores the candy canes she made. "It's actually quite a keepsake because one look and you know that it took time and effort, especially when it is so pretty, specially with my name on it!"

Having tried her hand at candy cane making, Qiyen confidently claims that "anyone who has patience and the heart to make it will succeed".

And after you've mastered the art of making candy canes (see recipe), why not let your creativity flow and try other colours, such as a chic black and silver to fit the theme of your party, and unusual flavours, like dark brown bitter chocolate or chocolate chip? Or you might want to add a dash of rum or decorate it with rainbow stripes. You can even experiment on the form, shape and size of the sweet treat itself. Your trademark candy canes can now be flat to easily inscribe your own messages, all still in the famous cane shape.

DIY candy canes

The following recipe, whose ingredients can be easily purchased at all supermarkets is taken from <http://www.santas.net/santasvictoriancandycane.s.htm>, and has been tried and tested by Qiyen to good results. Set aside 90 minutes to make your first batch of six candy canes.

Ingredients:

- 1 cup white sugar
- 1 cup cold water
- Half a cup light corn syrup or honey
- 1/8 teaspoon cream of tartar
- Drops of flavouring oils like peppermint or coffee (depending on the taste you're aiming for)
- Food colourings



Step 2: All ingredients and sugar melted. Step 7: Add colouring/flavouring.

Step 11: Pulling the mixture.



Step 11: Mix is creamy after pulling.

Step 14: Strips of base colour candy.

Step 17: Leave them to cool overnight...

Method:

- 1 Pour the sugar, cold water, corn syrup into a huge flat pan/ saucepan and allow the mixture to simmer under a medium heat.
- 2 Stir until all sugar crystals have dissolved.
- 3 Cover pan and get a strong fire going under it, heating the mixture until it's boiling. Do not stir.
- 4 Add cream of tartar, stir evenly and continue boiling the mixture.
- 5 Grease a flat and wide baking pan.
- 6 Using oven mittens, pour two-thirds of the mixture onto the greased baking pan.
- 7 Add a few drops of food colouring for the candy canes' base colour and stir evenly.
- 8 Separate the leftover mixtures into more saucepans or flat pans if more than one colour is required. Add food colouring accordingly.
- 9 Add the right flavouring oils to the saucepan(s) where you want flavouring and stir again.
- 10 Allow the mixture to cool for five minutes.
- 11 Using an oiled spatula, deftly fold the two sides of the mixture into the centre, pulling the mixture upwards, and stretching it until the colour turns a lighter shade and looks creamy.
- 12 Leave the candy cane to cool for five minutes.
- 13 Decide on the diameter and length of the candy canes desired and cut accordingly with a pair oiled scissors. Remember that this is the body of your candy cane. Return to your small pans of mixture, which should still be soft under the heat.
- 14 Repeat the steps used to make your base colour candy and form the other colour candy stripes of your preferred colours.
- 15 Now you will have the base colour candy strip and other strips of candy in assorted colours.
- 16 Twist the coloured strips on to the body of your base candy. If there is more than one colour, swirl loosely and leave a bigger margin for the other colours.
- 17 Form your candy cane shape and lay out the canes and let them cool overnight.

Directional Dining

hype's scoured our sun-kissed island for the best eats, bringing you hidden treasures from all four corners to cater to the most discerning foodies.



NORTH

The Sheep

CHRISTINE NG

If you thought Chinese are obsessed with healthy herbal soups and steamboats, brace yourself for The Sheep steamboat restaurant, Singapore's first Mongolian steamboat eatery.

Your mother is sure to approve this choice given its trumpeted health benefits. After all, their soup base, whether spicy or clear, contains a staggering 46 herbs!

Pick from 41 choices of meat, seafood, vegetables and 12 side dishes, then brace your tastebuds for a revolting-sounding but heavenly-tasting special fermented rice brew for dessert and herbal tea to round it off. You'll marvel at how satisfying healthy food can actually be.

The Sheep's specialities include a garlic and cucumber mix that whets your appetite with strong spices.

Thinly sliced and tender mutton rolls and the flourless Gan Zhou fish cake, which absorbs all the soup's nutrients are other stand-outs.

Though the food is rather good and reasonably priced at about \$20 per person, the poor service might be a turn off, thanks to understaffing and inattentive waiters with poor knowledge of the delicacies.

The chefs who appear when waiters can't answer your questions, however, more than make up for it with their sincerity in meeting your requests.

87 Serangoon Garden Way, Tel: 6285 3896, Opens: 11.30am- 3pm, 5.30pm- 10pm

SOUTH Viethai

PAMELA SIA

As the name rightly suggests, Viethai sells Vietnamese and Thai dishes, which include soupy pho (\$4 to \$5) and paper rice rolls (2 for \$3).

The two-year-old business is a frills-free eatery with a narrow side table. Despite being tucked away in a mall basement, it attracts office executives and young adults, especially on weekends. "Expats come frequently for our paper rice rolls," said co-owner Serene Ang.

Serene, 27, revealed, "Our secret is that our food is very healthy. All our food is freshly prepared... there are queues sometimes because our customers have to wait for their food."

Another secret observed was their polite and friendly service despite the long queues. The former accountant

Plaza Singapura #B2-39B, Tel. 6336 3101, Opens: 11.30am- 9pm

affirms, "We take pride in serving our food. We actually smile a lot to our customers!"

A must try would be the Egg Pancake (\$3). This snack is an original fusion creation to suit local tastes. It's a blend of raw local lettuce leaf, bean sprouts, beaten egg, cheese and your choice of grilled chicken, pork, shrimp or veggies, held together in a round "French crêpe" folded in half.

The pancake is fluffy and crisp on the outside, and the meat marinated Vietnamese style, that is sweetish yet savoury, is juicy.

An interesting point to note, the "French crêpe" tastes uncannily like *roti prata*. But whatever you call it, the winning combination tastes just as good.

EAST

Fryer's English Fish N Chips

JASMINE OEI

If you missed the taste of traditional British fish and chips since Harry Ramsden's closed, you don't know its former Singapore franchisee has been at Upper East Coast Road as Fryer's English Fish N Chips for nearly two years.

Similar ingredients like imported North Sea fish such as cod (\$6.80) and haddock (\$6.80) are fried in a batter that maintains the taste and freshness of the fish.

Bigger eaters can opt for its complete set meal (\$10), fish and chips served with the soup of the day and a drink, or even the Fryer's Special (\$12.50), which serves two pieces of fish and includes a whole potato's worth of chunky wedges.

For that extra zing to bring out the traditional Brit feel,

you can dress it in tartar sauce, malt vinegar and salt.

Fryer's also offers English dishes that are an acquired taste like Yorkshire puddings (\$6), gherkins (\$2), pickled cucumbers and mushy peas (\$2) that remind you of soggy chickpeas.

The shiny steel tables and chairs outside is the only hint at the self-service fast-food like ambience, which is already a step up from fish n chip stands in the UK. Due to hygiene concerns, they don't wrap take-out in the traditional newspapers but use grease paper.

If you're not tempted to linger, then head down to Fryer's to order takeaways and chomp on your fish just the way they do in England.

17 Upper East Coast Road, Tel: 6447 3333, Opens: 11.45am- 10.30pm

WEST

Essential Brew

LAURA CHONG

Tea culture buoyed and then burst by bubble tea mania has a new shot of caffeine with Singapore's first full dining tea-themed café-restaurant.

Essential Brew, a Holland Village entrant in July, brings tea benefits into food, creating dishes infused with it like Oolong Chicken (\$6.50), Jasmine Rice Balls (\$1.50) and Jasmine Tiramisu (\$4.95). With the most expensive Jasmine Cod Fillet costing only \$18.95, it draws mostly a youthful crowd of students and young professionals.

In fact, Essential Brew Director Evan Chung, 23, said MediaCorp star Jamie Teo often returned for the Green Tea Crème Brûlée (\$4.50) after recommending it on Channel

8's magazine programme, **New City Beat**.

Their most famous dish is the Grilled Tofu Steak (\$3.95) with mushrooms marinated in Jasmine tea. The obvious taste of Jasmine tea complements the dish perfectly. Evan said, "We experimented... and found that Jasmine tea went very well with the slight saltiness of the *tofu*."

You won't find their one-of-a-kind tea-infused drinks, Samui Sunset, Scarlet Frost and T-Jaz, elsewhere either.

Competing with Holland V cafés like Coffee Bean and Starbucks, Essential Brew's upper floor has a cozy Zen setting, so you take off your shoes and sit on floor cushions while leaning against huge velvety pillows. Ahh!

269 Holland Avenue, Holland Village, Tel. 6467 6717, Opens: Sunday to Thursday, 11am- 11pm, Friday and Saturday, 11am- 2am.

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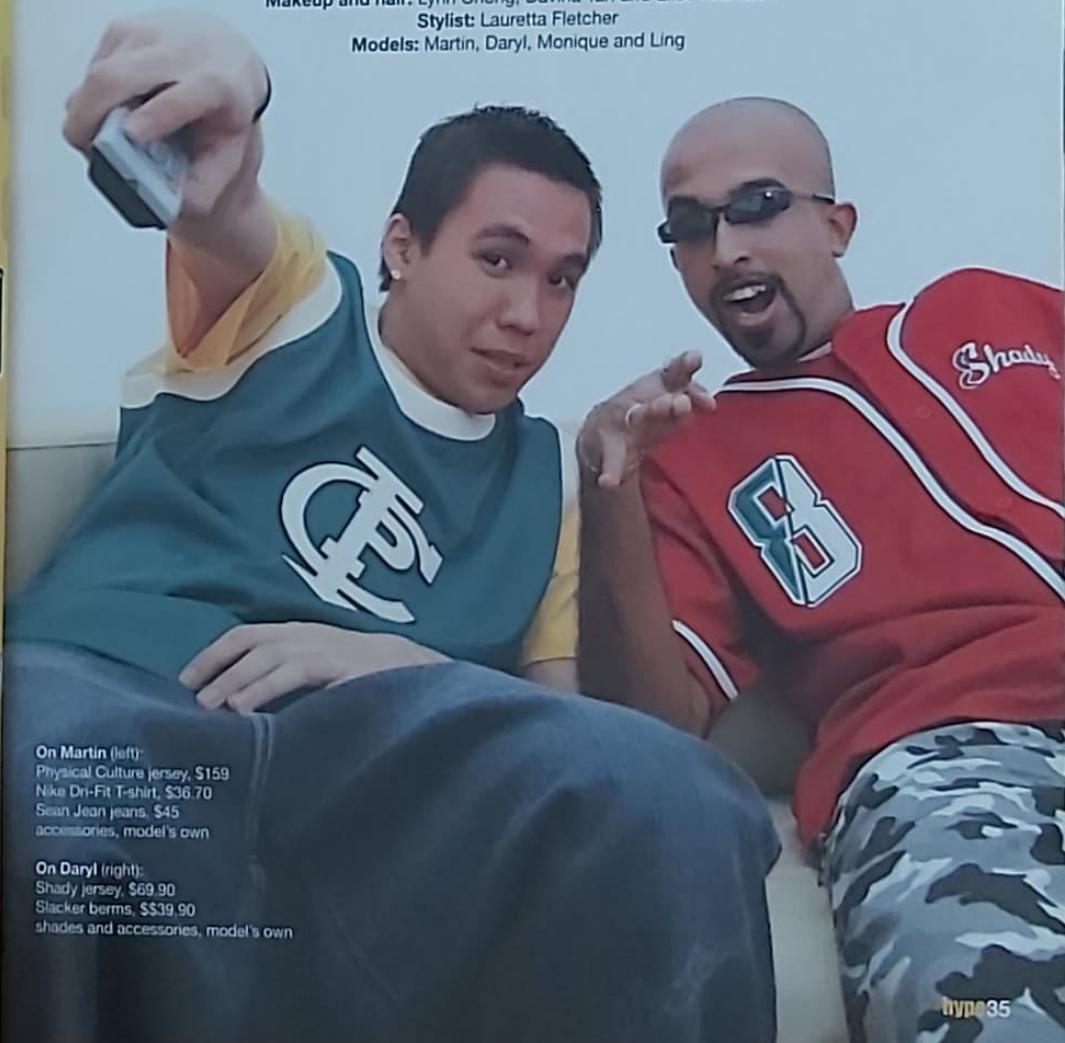
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Drop off this section in the Lucky Draw Box located at the **77th Street outlet in Heeren**, or at the **Student Services Centre in Ngee Ann Polytechnic**. Winners will be notified by email or mobile.

Terms & Conditions: This contest is closed to all employees from 77th Street and **hypo** Magazine. Multiple entries are not permitted.

books aside

Photography: Leonard Goh and Mark Ngan
Makeup and hair: Lynn Chong, Davina Tan and Elise Aitchison
Stylist: Laretta Fletcher
Models: Martin, Daryl, Monique and Ling



On Martin (left):
Physical Culture jersey, \$159
Nike Dri-Fit T-shirt, \$36.70
Sean Jean jeans, \$45
accessories, model's own

On Daryl (right):
Shady jersey, \$69.90
Slacker berm, \$39.90
shades and accessories, model's own

On Monique:
77th Street top, \$19.90
X-Tomic skirt, \$36.90
studded belt, \$10.90
beret, \$16.90
studded bracelet, \$16.90



On Daryl:
Mandhu Polo tee, \$24.90
Sean Jean jeans, \$45
accessories, model's own

On Ling:
X-Tomic halter, \$18.90
77th Street FEMME pants, \$51.00
silver star bracelet, \$4.90, chain, \$9.90

On Martin:
Nice Polo tee, \$29.90
Slacker pants, \$55
accessories, model's own
On table, X-Tomic yellow pouch, \$16.90



Jungle Storm blazer, \$139
 77th Street '30 Hour Famine'
 T-shirt, \$19.90
 Slacker jeans, \$45
 shades, \$15
 pendant and chain, \$19.90



On Monique:
 X-Tomic toga, \$26.90
 X-Tomic skirt, \$36.90
 plastic bangle (on arm), \$1.90
 eyelet belt, \$9.90
 scarf (on lap), \$15
 earrings, model's own

On Ling:
 X-Tomic top, \$19.90
 X-Tomic skirt, \$36.90
 silver bracelet, \$4.90
 rubber bangle, \$4.90
 earrings, model's own



On Daryl:
Slacker shirt, \$39.90
Billabong T-shirt, \$28.90
Slacker pants, \$39.90
accessories, model's own

On Martin:
Manchu T-shirt, \$29.90
accessories, model's own

On Monique:
X-Tomic top, \$18
X-Tomic skirt, \$36.90
headband, \$9.90
shades, \$15
pink dogtag, \$8.90
retro bag, \$36.90
pink cuff, \$15
purple cuff, \$12.90

On Ling:
X-Tomic skirt, \$36.90
Sixteen racerback, \$15
Sixteen halter, \$18
PVC bag, \$49.90
silver bracelet, \$4.90
rubber bangle, \$4.90
wrist chain, \$9.90

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Hoodlums go High-Tech

No longer do gangsters just frequent void decks, coffee shops, parks and playgrounds. LIYANA OTHMAN finds out they are lurking along the information highway with impunity.

The youth crime rate has dipped in 2004, but there's no reason to be relieved just yet.

Gangsters are leaving the alleyways for chatrooms, proving that the stereotype of the poorly educated, unsophisticated and old-fashioned ruffian is in serious need of an update.

Now, gangsters make their presence felt through more high-tech means like websites, file-sharing programs and internet relay chat (IRC). These tech-savvy hoodlums are able to recruit their members, intimidate others and promote their way of life without shedding blood - all from the comfort of their own homes.

According to a case found on Lawnet, a local online law resource centre, gangsterism incited by online activities began nearly three years ago. In December 2001, five boys wounded and bruised two other boys at a multi-storey carpark. The victims were fisted, kicked and hit by umbrellas. According to one of the accused, the cause for such violence was that one of the victims "cursed his family and insulted him with vulgarities through the IRC".

Karen Chen, a media relations officer, at the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) told *hype* that cases of online gangsterism will be reviewed individually and according to the case's severity, but usually it is the responsibility of bodies like the Infocomm Development Authority of Singapore (IDA) and the Media Development Authority (MDA), rather than the police, to regulate.

However, Karen assured that the CID looks into such matters when they "receive complaints". So far, no one has complained.

The MDA also can impose fines or sanctions on people

friendster

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Send AnGsOoNtOnG a Message
Add AnGsOoNtOnG as Your Friend
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Member Since Apr 2004 Last Log In 09/02/2004

AnGsOoNtOnG

Gender: Male
Status: Single
Occupation: 38Ast21
Location: Singapore
Hometown: YisHun-761-
Hobbies and Interests: riotin, flightin n many more la...
Companies: AST-761
Schools: 761-ast
Favorite Music: Ast
Favorite Books: riotin wif dangerous weapon
Favorite TV Shows: AST
Favorite Movies: ast 21

About Me:
we are veri helpful, kind, carin n friendly.... we'll like to help anyone tat need our help 1... n we fuckin hate malay ppl.... all malay dog!!! smelly dog, they all everytime wan to find pro wif we all.... so we ask them to try lor..... den they all scare ready wan 2 cal police.... all like dog.... even dog better than they all.... malay sux.... all malay not happy can try, anytime anywhere... AST no.1....

Who I Want to Meet: anyone... but not malay dog!!!

Friends Of AnGsOoNtOnG
[See all 382 Friends]

An example of a well-known local gang on friendster

who violate the Internet code of practice. According to its website, online gangsterism violates the code as it is "objectionable on the grounds of public order, public security, national harmony". Such activities also "depict detailed or relished acts of extreme violence or cruelty" and "glorifies, incites or endorses ethnic, racial or religious hatred, strife or intolerance".

According to Felicia Toh of the MDA's Public Affairs Department, the public can complain about offensive online material to the MDA. After the MDA reviews the material and agrees that the material does violate the Internet code of practice, the MDA will advise the content provider to remove the material from public view.

Gang Profiles on Friendster

Friendster, a popular online service was intended for individuals to have an online network of their friends. However, secrets societies have started to misuse this online community to spread their messages, garner supporters and threaten rival gangs.

The *BehSuaBu* gang has a friendster profile and it declares its interests are fighting, *chiangying* (clubbing) and organising "illegal gatherings". The members even included a Hokkien gang chant on its page.

Another much-feared Chinese gang, *Ang Soon Tong*, boldly displays its fiendish racism on its profile page for the secret society. The "About Me" section of the gang's profile states: "we ****in hate malay ppl.... all malay dog!!! smelly dog, they all everytime wan to find pro wif we all....

so we ask them to try lor..... den they all scare ready wan 2 cal police.... all like dog.... even dog better than they all.... malay sux". [sic]

Supporters of the gang further display the power of the gang through writing testimonials and further supporting the gang's racist stance.

In response to *hype*'s inquiries about gang profiles on Friendster, Brian from the Friendster Support Team replied that Friendster "does not support or condone gang pages in any way. In fact, we urge our users to report such activity so that our moderators can review unwanted profiles and remove them without further incident".

Despite Friendster's stance, the offensive profiles have not been removed since.

Gang Poll on the Internet

There is even an online poll on <http://rush.friendclub.org/modules.php?name=Forums&file=viewtopic&t=51&highlight=gang> where members of the Rush Friend Club - a techno club at Mohammed Sultan Road can vote for the secret society they think is the most powerful.

The 18 *Sio Yi Ho* gang of the ParkLane area swept 30% of the votes, making it the most powerful gang perceived by the 26 members of the "Beer Chat" forum.

In response to the results, one outraged member of the Rush Friend Club said, "The most powerful gang is SPF - Singapore Polic Force, [sic] I strongly discourage putting such a poll here [on the Rush Friend Club website]. Hopefully the moderators will do something."

Gang Chants on Kazaa

Kazaa is known for its person-to-person network (P2P Network) where people can download files from each other. Applications, videos and music tracks are all shared on Kazaa.

A quick search turned out dozens of gang rhymes there, usually those chanted in Hokkien to the tune of familiar techno songs. One gang even took their chant a step further, consider that a 369 gang chant was remixed by a "DJ Cool D".

But with pro-gang sentiment on Kazaa, there's also anti-gang sentiment. Songs like "*Heran Tak Heran*" (which means Curious? I'm not curious), is a catchy, funny Malay rap local bloggers have been raving about, that slams all gangs in Singapore.

In fact, parts of the song lyrics have become common phrases with some bloggers: "*Heran Tak Heran, Goyang Tak Goyang*" (meaning Curious? Not Curious. Move? Don't Move).

In "*Heran Tak Heran*", the rapper declares that he is not threatened by gangs. He even rapped, "*Busuk, busuk gua tendang*". It's translated as "I'd like to kick anyone from the *Busuk* gang" (*Busuk*, which is Malay for "smelly", is a gang best known for teardrop tattoos on the sides of their eyes).

Secondary five student, Bo-Endra Mokhtar, of Yusok Ishak Secondary School heard about the song from his friends and was very amused by the lyrics.

After hearing his friends rave about it, he downloaded the song from Kazaa, and it's been on his playlist since.

"It's so catchy," he said. "And it's very refreshing that someone dares to stand up to these gangster bullies," he added.

Not only do secondary school students know about gang chants and anti-gang songs – they're even causing quite a stir in primary schools.

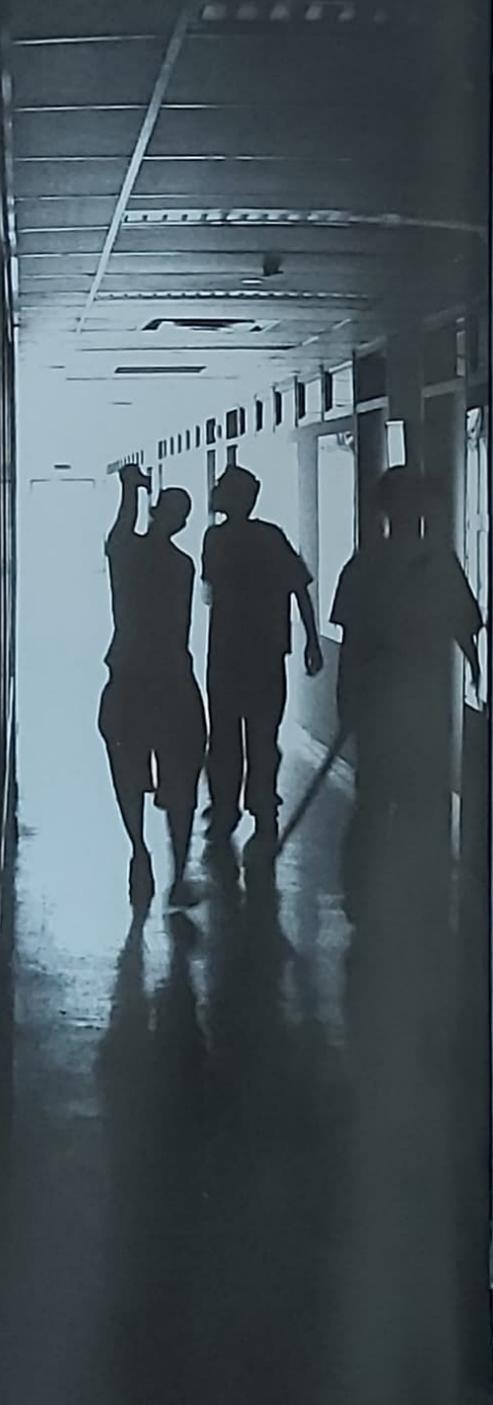
Juliana Amiruddin, a primary six student of Xinghua Primary School said, excitedly: "The boys usually discuss it in school. Chanting gang chants is the coolest thing to do right now ... but we only dare to do this in school because there are no gangsters."

"No one dares to do this outside school because there might be real gangsters around."

Alicia Chua, 18, who frequents techno clubs thinks that gang chants have gone online because it is dangerous to chant in clubs, as it indicates to plain-clothes policemen in clubs that you're a gang member.

The polytechnic student, who has found herself surrounded by gangs chanting on several occasions, said: "The trend of gangs chanting in clubs is fast fading out."

She added: "When one gang starts chanting, another gang will get angry, especially if they've already marked that club as their territory. It's almost like an intrusion if another gang chants at the club they've marked ... Then, they'll exchange words, and a fight will break out. They get into too much trouble... maybe that's why they distribute their chants online now."



Gang channels on mIRC

Gangs also make their presence felt on Internet chat programmes. Channels with gang names like Omega, 369 and *angsoontong* exist, but chatters in these channels only message each other in private chat rooms and are reluctant to discuss anything with new chatters, as a quick check by **hype** found.

While some chatters have claimed it is the channel of the infamous gang, others have avoided the topic – one chatter simply said, "I cannot discuss that with you."

However, veteran chatter and operator of Channel #Omega "Boi_Spade", denies that either the channel, the Omega Online website or the script for the internet relay chat is affiliated to the gang.

Boi Spade said: "Newcomers think we are named after the gang, but we're not. We are named after Omega, the end of a Greek letter [sic]."

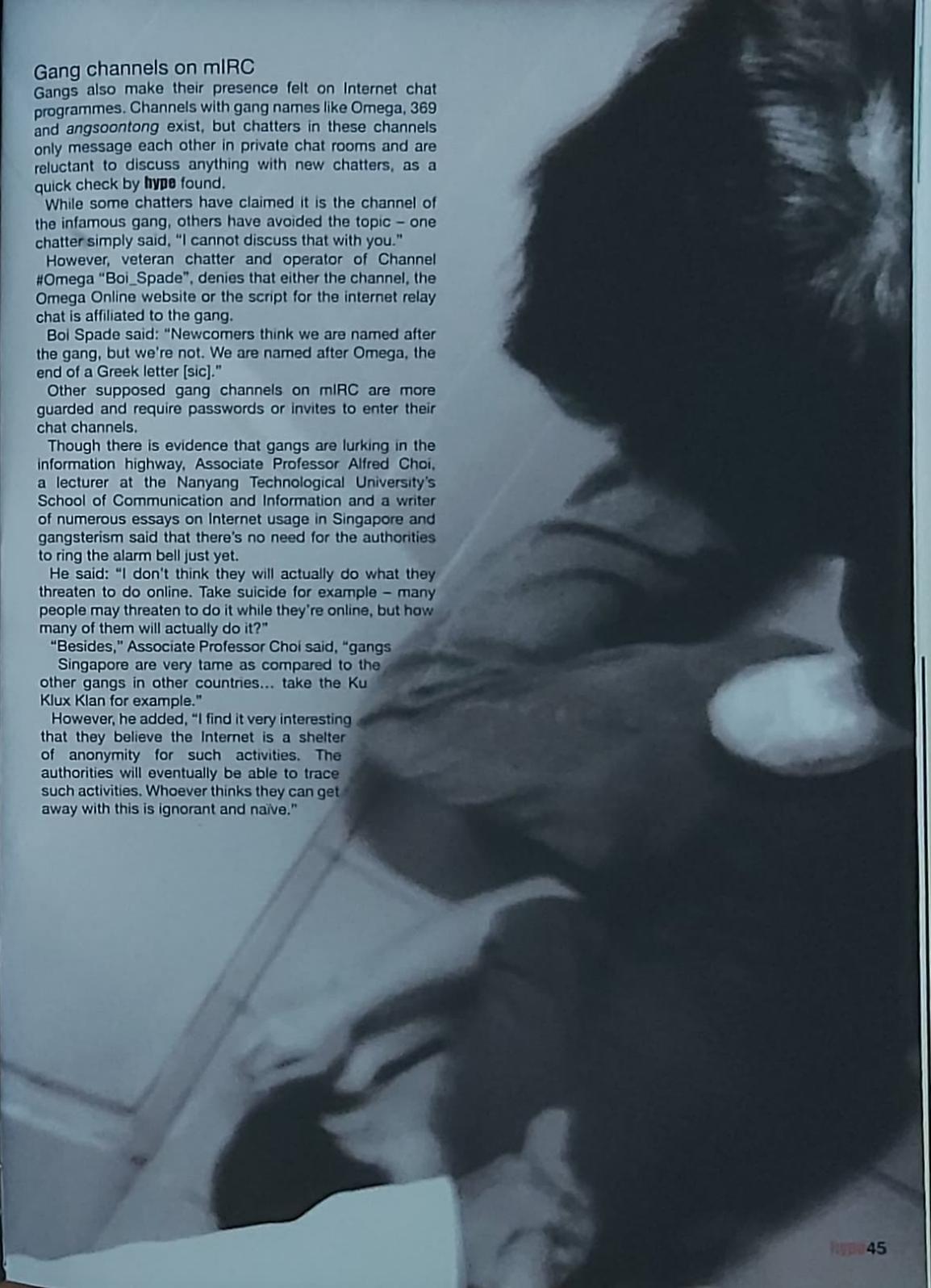
Other supposed gang channels on mIRC are more guarded and require passwords or invites to enter their chat channels.

Though there is evidence that gangs are lurking in the information highway, Associate Professor Alfred Choi, a lecturer at the Nanyang Technological University's School of Communication and Information and a writer of numerous essays on Internet usage in Singapore and gangsterism said that there's no need for the authorities to ring the alarm bell just yet.

He said: "I don't think they will actually do what they threaten to do online. Take suicide for example – many people may threaten to do it while they're online, but how many of them will actually do it?"

"Besides," Associate Professor Choi said, "gangs Singapore are very tame as compared to the other gangs in other countries... take the Ku Klux Klan for example."

However, he added, "I find it very interesting that they believe the Internet is a shelter of anonymity for such activities. The authorities will eventually be able to trace such activities. Whoever thinks they can get away with this is ignorant and naïve."





Photos by Hedirman Supian

Recurring Bangkok

With budget airline fares as low as 49 cents one-way, there's really no excuse not to go to Bangkok over and over again. But for those who've made yearly pilgrimages there to stock up on cheap threads and faux goods, what else is there? HEDIRMAN SUPIAN says all it takes is a little effort to gain entry into its deep underbelly.

Any member of the jetset will tell you that a good conversation can take you places. Sometimes, even to treasure troves in a city swamped by tourist jaunts and touts waiting to get a bite at your juicy wallet. So don't just traverse the well-worn malls, nightlife strips and food lanes, reach out to an English-speaking local. That's the surest way to discover the best off-the-beaten-track places to dine, party, stay, shop and still have time for a taste of culture.

If you're not too keen on getting sociable, or just can't find someone who speaks more than 10 words of English,

a good place to start is to pick up English Thai newspapers like *The Nation* and *Bangkok Post*. *I-S Magazine* even has a Thai sibling called *BK Magazine*. These offer a wide selection of events and places that come with comprehensive listings. Here are some others to start you off.

ARTS & CULTURE (*Silapa Watanatham*)

Events associated with the arts and cultural scene are worth noting, especially given its unfamiliar and politically-inclined arts scene. Art galleries and theatres are dotted across the entire city and artists stage performances to advocate issues and decry any miscarriage of justice almost as soon as it happens. These are usually held near the Democracy Monument and the King Rama V Statue and offer visitors an insight into the freedom and expressiveness of a country that was never colonised (but sometimes still heavily influenced) by the West and with a past that has seen more than its fair share of political turbulence. There are also works by new and younger artists who aren't as conservative or politically-inclined as their predecessors and take on more modern styles or abstract works. Filipina Johanna Son, who has been stationed in Bangkok for five years as the Regional

Director for Inter Press Service Asia-Pacific, has had her fair share of the scene. She says, "[There's] quite a variety here - you have east and west, and everything in between and there's a lot about local culture. But sometimes you have to be careful, in the sense that sometimes, it [the art] is catered for tourism."

EATING (*Kin Khao*)

Sure, gourmet food here in BKK (short for Bangkok) is cheap and globalisation's made every fast food outlet known to man available in a 50-metre radius from wherever you're standing. Still, nothing can stand up to the allure of authentic Thai food you can only find by the roadsides and at the night markets. Your stomach could churn at the sight of pig innards or fried insects but remember that it's the daily staple for a people best known for their smiles. You have to wonder what's their recipe for happiness- fried crickets, green curry, lemon chicken or the ubiquitous *tom yam*?

Try out local favourites at Cabbages and Condoms, a restaurant that raises temperatures with its name and of course, the food at Soi 12, Sukhumvit Road. You can barely miss it with its fairy lights forming a path to a garden embellished with home-grown mushrooms. The restaurant has an extensive menu and each dish is worth trying. A three-course meal with drinks costs a staggering THB 680 [S\$28.60]. Small touches like complimentary cholesterol-free crackers and condoms add a nice touch to this local favourite.

If less isn't more to you, you'll enjoy the *siew mai* at Chinatown, along Yaowarat Road. Not only are they much bigger, it's much cheaper too. Other dishes like chicken rice have been infused with Thai flavours and feature the distinct mix of spices and a fragrance characteristic of cuisines in this region. This is exotic dining.

Halal fare is readily available near Soi Nana, an area where Arab and Indian communities congregate. You can even find Egyptian and other specialised Middle-Eastern

cuisine here. If you thought smoking sheesha in Singapore was brassy and cool, wait till you see their special air-conditioned rooms made just for puffing away with plush cushions by your side and the now-defunct Al-Jazeera news channel projected onto wide-screen LCD sets. It really feels like being in the Middle East.

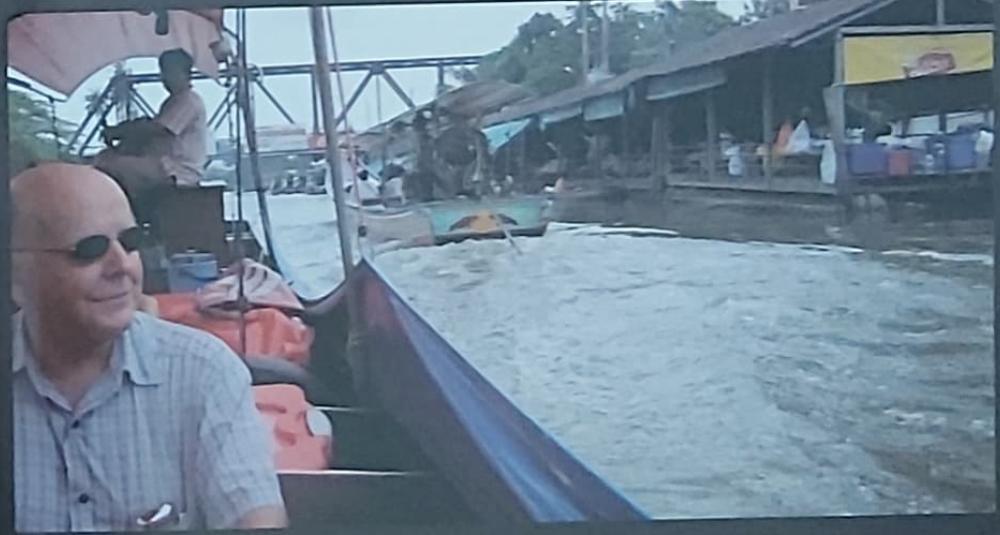
If you can't shell out THB 8,300 a night for the best room money can buy at The Oriental Bangkok, you can try another high, the Baiyoke Sky Tower. For THB 500, you'll get a sumptuous and diverse (hey, they even have *murta-bak*) international buffet with an aerial view that can't be beat. After you're done dining, you can go a level higher to The Bangkok Observation, the rotating roof deck above the restaurant on the 84th floor.

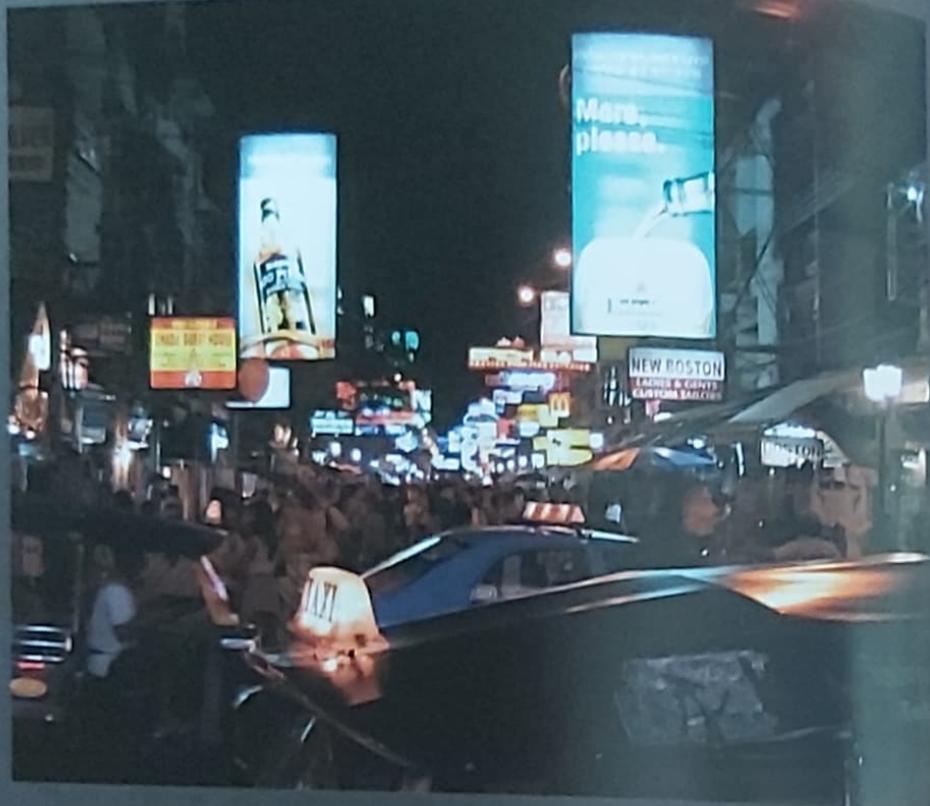
SHOPPING (*Shopin* - with a Thai accent ;))

Jasmine Tuan, 25, a multimedia designer from *Zouk* who visits the city annually says that "you'll always see new ideas, the latest imitations, and find interesting buys from young designers" and "find good grabs at friendly prices".

Ever popular shopping haunts like *Khao San* and *Chatuchak* weekend market, while adequate for those looking for knick knacks and a plethora of wardrobe mistakes, have become too tourist-oriented and bland for the world-weary traveller. If you're in for some niche retro buys, such as 1970s fabrics or movie posters to redecorate your bedroom, check out *Klung Thom* near Chinatown. It's Thai for Thieves' Market, so you can probably guess at the questionable origins of the items there. But that comes as no surprise in nitty-gritty BKK. Remember to check the condition of the goods so that you're not wasting your money and lugging home some shabby item.

Electronic goods cost marginally more there and there may not be international warranties for every item, so only those inflicted with technolust should drop by Panthip Plaza. Be warned though, their version of Sim Lim Square is three times bigger than ours!





Apparently the more kitsch and valuable buys are the places in and around Siam Centre and MBK, two of the biggest shopping malls in Bangkok. But you might not know that the small shops and cafes behind the alleys of Siam Centre have become the hangouts of youths after school. It's the kind of crowd you'd see in Japan's *Shibuya* and *Harajuku* or Taiwan's *Shih Men Ting*. They come out dressed to the nines in every colour possible and sport the latest trends, just before they head out to bump and grind at the clubs there.

NIGHTLIFE (Thong Ratre)

The city's many monuments look more majestic when night falls and when spotlights make them glitter like gold. The hustle and bustle of the city also dies down early at around 9 pm, lending these historic jewels an air of serenity. Notable sights include the Victory Monument, Lumpini Park, Wat Benchamabophit Marble Temple and the many Buddha statues across the city. Lovers looking for a scenic backdrop and those feeling trigger-happy with their cameras won't be disappointed.

If you're in for some clean clubbing (fun, rather than the seedier flesh trade, see the sights around Sukhumvit road, where clubs like the Bad Supper Club, Q Bar and the H1 Urban Complex are home to the trendiest décor, music

and people around. These clubs will be familiar ground for those who frequent any Singapore ones. Covers and house pours start from THB 200 each. It's a long stretch of alleys so make sure you know where you're going. Surely you don't want to wear out your heels before you even get to the dance floor.

GETTING AROUND

Arm yourself with *Nancy Chandler's Map of Bangkok*. With tips scribbled on the map to highlight points, it reads like something a friend has left for you and is well worth the THB 160 price. Some smatterings of Thai that you can learn from the many tourist-oriented Thai phrasebooks will go a long way to help you to navigate. Transport isn't as haphazard as say, Japan or Jakarta, and the traffic jams there are hugely overrated. So getting around isn't that hard. A cab ride across the city would cost a paltry THB 115 at most. Just make sure the meter's running when you take a cab and that you negotiate the fare when you're taking a *tuk-tuk*. A reasonable fare, after lots of haggling and bargaining, would be about THB 60 for a trip across town. After the novelty of the first ride, you can give The Sky Train and Subway a miss (except when going to Chatuchak) since fares are similar to cab fares despite your having to contend with rush hour crowds.



ACCOMODATION:

The Suan Dusit Place
295 Ratchasima Rd., Dusit, Bangkok 10300, Thailand
Tel: +66 (2) 241-7571-80
Fax: +66 (2) 243-6898-9
<http://www.dusitplace.com/>
This spacious hotel is student-run, packed to the brim with facilities and prides itself on quality.
Cost: SGD\$23 a night (includes a buffet breakfast)
Two people can bunk in for \$30.

If it's not a question of money:

The Oriental Bangkok
48 Oriental Avenue, Bangkok 10500, Thailand
Tel: +66 (2) 659-9000
<http://www.mandarinoriental.com/>

CURRENCY: Baht. S\$1 is approximately THB 23
RELIGION: Buddhism

TIME: One hour behind Singapore (GMT +7)
TEL CODE: +66

HOW TO GET THERE:

Flight: An hour and a half long
Tickets from budget airlines cost S\$100 and below
While flights on major airlines can cost up to S\$250 and above

CHECK OUT... WEBSITES:

01 www.tourismthailand.org
02 www.khaosanroad.com
03 www.nationmultimedia.com

BOOKS & MAGAZINES

01 *Lonely Planet Guide - Thailand*
02 *Wondering Into Thai Culture* by Mont Redmond
03 *FARANG Magazine*

旅游行程 D.I.Y.

李慧芳著

考试刚刚结束,目前你应该正在打算如何度过眼前这漫长的假期。是正在打算和死党们一块儿出国旅游?可是却因为口袋里的钱不够用而烦恼吗?如果你是首次安排自己的旅游行程的话,相信对于一些程序上的筹备应该不会很清楚。可别慌下去了,现在就让hype为你推荐一下吧!

10月份到11月份是新加坡旅游业的旺季。每年到了这个时候,每家旅行社都会忙得不亦乐乎。由于这段时间正是全国学校的年终假期,家长们都特别喜欢在这期间带子女们出国游玩,而年轻一代的朋友们也都喜欢在学校放假的时候与朋友结伴到异国或是更远的国家去自由行,也是人们常说的背包旅行。很多年轻男女都会想要到世界的各个角落探索当地的风土民情,去体验以下平时在新加坡无法体会到的异国风光。

提到自由行,它的价格肯定就比旅行社所主办的团队旅游配套来更便宜。不仅如此,自由行也能够让你安排你想要去的旅游景点,哪怕是人数不齐也无须担心。

“我想在还没有出国旅游之前,首先必须清楚知道自己要出国的目的是什么,是度假?是结交新朋友?又或者是厌倦了都市生活?” STA Travel 行销部门的主管黄俊杰先生,说:“再来就是开始一系列的资料搜集,当然并不是说要准确的安排好整个行程表,因为途中也应该有那么一点的惊喜和探险过程。”

STA Travel 在全球各地拥有450所分社,它的宗旨是为学生和年轻朋友们提供最佳的旅游服务以及价廉物美的旅游配套。STA Travel 将在十月庆祝其成立25周年纪念,详细的庆祝活动还在安排的行程当中。

黄先生建议:“如果你从来没有单独旅行或是结伴背包旅游的,你可以上网浏览关于一些国家的风土民情,或是翻阅一些刊物,比如 Lonely Planet 之类的参考书。”

STA Travel 与其他旅行社的不同之处在于它所提供给顾客的 value (价值) 和 service (服务)。我们的职员本身就是旅游爱好者,他们个个都对旅游有着极大的热忱,而且他们还拥有着很丰富的旅行



经验。”黄先生说道。

他接着以英语说道:“我们相信旅游能够让让人生变得更好。很多的年轻朋友们都希望可以环游世界,STA Travel 可以让他们的梦想成真。”

他说:“在欧洲和澳洲等国家,大多数的学生都是做兼职工来支付他们的旅游开销。如果说你身上就只有三百块的预算,而且也从未单独出国旅游的话,也许你应该先从近一点的国家比如泰国,开始你的背包探险生涯。”

另外一位旅游专家潘文成先生向本刊透露:“这年底的旅游热潮重点分为澳洲、欧洲等国家。这是因为在前半年通过廉价航空的因素,很多新加坡人都有更多的机会飞到邻近的国家去游玩。”潘先生是新加坡旅行社营业部的副总经理,在这行已拥有超过20年的工作经验。

当然除此之外,年底的假期肯定少不了到泰国和香港的旅游配套了。潘先生也提到无论是走进哪家旅行社,都会有热心的专业旅游经纪在旁提供意见。他也说道:“其实不管是什么样的旅游问题,每家旅行社都会提供传单或海报之类的刊物给顾客,让他们了解更多的旅游资料。很多时候并不需要旅游经纪给予太多的意见,因为那些旅游刊物所提供的资讯已经充足了。”

由于这期是希望提供年轻朋友们一些出国旅游的小常识,潘先生很乐意为本刊的读者解释预订飞机票的过程。他说:“目前很多航空公司都已经在采用E-Tickets, E-Ticketing 的手续过程比起原来订购飞机票的程序来得简单得多了。它比较省时,如果说顾客在未出国期间或途中遗失了飞机票,到了机场同样可以乘搭原订班机。”那是因为在机场的电脑资料里头已经输入了乘客的资料,而且乘客也不需要赔偿所遗失的E Ticket。

首次出国旅游的你,或是从未尝试自己安排旅游行程的你,可知道该从何开始这段难忘的旅程吗?就请你参考一下为你列出的10大出国前非做好的准备工作。

1. 预算

-留意那些意想不到的旅游开支,像是离境税、交通预算和消费税等,有些欧美国家的消费税可高达25%,如果没有预计到的话,将会花费更多

2. 气候/季节

-在寒冷国家,必须随身携带润肤霜,因为肌肤可能会太过干燥,同时也必须考量到地震和台风地带

3. 签证

-就算不需要入境签证,逗留在那个国家的日子还是有限的,如果拿的是旅游签证,你就不能在那儿工作

-应该复印几份你的旅游证件,那么如果不幸遗失了或是被抢劫的话,你也不会感到彷徨

4. 语言

-必须学会基本的相关语言,像是“谢谢你”、“对不起”、“我迷失方向了,你可以帮我吗?”;哪怕是讲的不流利,当地的人也会尽全力帮助你;记得把居住的酒店名字和路名写下来,迷失时可以向路

5. 航空公司

-不同航空公司的航班和机票的价格肯定不相同,所以应该注意细节,例如:旅游附加费

-你也可以上网查询旅游资料和在不用旅游配套价格上的对比

-记得留意旅游旺季期间的航班与出发日子有哪些

6. 货币

-千万不要在机场柜台兑换货币,因为对汇率会比较低

-使用旅行支票虽然比较安全,但不是每个国家都通用,除非是发达国家像美国和欧洲等地区

7. 联络

-网络咖啡厅已经非常普遍,身在国外的你要与亲友保持联系变得方便

-有些图书馆也设有免费的网际网络服务

-如果你会在外国逗留长一点的时间,你可以购买预付电话卡因为这比起用手机来得便宜;在使用公共电话时也应该留意有没有附加费

8. 饮食起居

-不是每个国家都有自来水,有的话也应该煮过才喝

-除非你很挑食,不然快餐店是非常普遍的;那么有些国家的新鲜水果和海鲜非常昂贵,所以你必须随机应变

9. 文化

-你必须留意一些异国文化的忌讳

-比方说在泰国,伸手触摸小孩子的头是不允许的,又或者在回教国家出外行驶时,穿着应该保守一点

10. 旅游安排

-两个人一同旅游是最好不过的,不但比较便宜而且也可以在途中有个伴儿;如果你有携带电器之类的物品,记得要带对的插头



Colour the Sky, Fly a Kite

You can twirl, make a 90-degree turn, do a vertical dive and even brake in mid-air. But apart from just doing aerial stunts, your control over kites can be your passport to extreme sports. Tail along as GERALDINE GOH discovers a whole new world of kite-flying.

If you're a hyper animal constantly seeking an adrenaline rush, kiting—believe it or not, can satisfy your hunger for thrill. Should your idea of kite-flying be a cheap kampung low-skill activity, you haven't heard of kite-surfing, parakiting or kite-skating. These are examples of extreme sports done with kites. They'll leave you gasping for breath but yearning for more if you're the sort to sign up for Action Asia Challenge in October.

Be warned, these are not only exorbitant (at least a few hundred dollars to begin) but highly dangerous activities. You have to receive training and go overseas to try any of these. If you happen to be in Kuantan, Port Dickson or Hua Hin (Thailand) over the holidays, you might want to pick one of these up or at least see people at it.

Kite-boarding (Kite-surfing):

It's windsurfing without a sail in front of your face. Instead, a huge inflatable kite drags you across the waters as your feet are strapped to a board 1.2m and 1.8m long and 30cm to 40cm wide. After you learn to balance, you'll find it easier to do jumps and you glide faster than when windsurfing. Given the size of the board and the deflatable kite, it's also portable for holidays.

Nazir Alsagoff, 44, a local certified IKO (International Kiteboarding Organisation) instructor, conducts lessons in Jayson Bay, Malaysia, about a "two-hour drive from Singapore along [the] East Coast", he said.

He turned instructor as "there has been a lot of interest here in Singapore and the numbers are growing. But there was no one who can teach." His students range from 16 to 50 years old and half of them are windsurfers, with a few being wakeboarders as well. He has 50 students on the waiting list.

Nazir said he loves this sport because he is always "discovering new destinations/terrains, meeting interesting people with similar interests from different countries". Sadly, "Singapore does not have an ideal location for it."

Price for a one-day training course (6 to 8 hours, including rental of equipment): \$500

Interested parties can call Nazir at 96620354 or visit his website at www.kiteschool.com.sg.

Local kite-boarders Lawrence Ng, 39, and his partner Jason Chang, 52, also offer basic kite-boarding lessons at \$90 to \$100 per two-hour session. Although they are focussing more on distributing kite equipment instead, if you'd like to sign up for lessons, please visit their website at www.kite.com.sg.

Parakiting:

Also known as kite-buggying, this sport uses a three-wheeled buggy and a large four-lined kite. Seated in the buggy and with the lines in your hands, you maneuver the kite. Danny Tan, 42, an avid kite-flyer for 10 years has tried kite-buggying several times. He explained, "The average speed your buggy can go is about 40 to 60km/hr. In the presence of strong wind, it can even go up to 100km/hr!"

Now you know what to do if you want to save on petrol. But hold on, don't go grabbing a buggy yet. As Danny added, it is not easy to control it. You have to look out for many things: your kite, any obstacles in the sky (whether other kites or a curious bird) and obstacles in front of you, on the ground. A word of advice: Start slow.

Average price for a stainless steel buggy and a powerful kite: \$2,000 to \$3,000 (plus shipping costs).

Training courses for this sport in Singapore are practically unheard of. However, Danny advised that as long as you have the skills to control the kite, and are very careful, you can try this yourself on an open field with your buggy.

Kite-skating:

This uses strong and sturdy kites to mobilise skaters on either their off-road or in-line skates. Danny warned that speeds can easily go up to about 20km/hr. Though seldom seen in Singapore, kite skaters are skating across the globe with the various wind-powered vehicles. Also considered an extreme sport, this can be highly dangerous and you have to know the safety precautions well before you do it even for leisure.

Danny recalled one of his friends trying kite-skating at Marina South some years back with a pair of off-road

skates (skates designed specially for off-road purposes like on the grass and etc). It was an unsuccessful attempt as it is not easy to master this sport and "you really need the guts", said Danny.

Average price for equipment: \$2,000 (both off-road skates and the kite).

This sport is not popular with Singaporeans yet, hence, no training is available here. But, as with parakiting, you can try it if you know you can both skate and control the kite well, and are aware of the safety measures.

Besides these few examples of common extreme sports played with kites, you can also do kite aerial photography (attaching a camera to a kite and taking pictures from above), kite-fishing and the list goes on.

Lawrence, however, doesn't see these extreme sports taking away from traditional kite-flying. He said, "traditional kite-flying appeals to a different group of enthusiasts. Each has completely different desires and appeals."

The first step

Before you dash out to empty your bank account for these exhilarating twists to kite-flying, you need to start with creating tricks in the sky using stunt kites and mastering the art of controlling these kites.

"Kite-flying is just driving the kite around the sky. You handle the line(s) like a steering wheel and you can create all sorts of tricks in the sky," explains Lee Wing Hong, President of the 22-year-old Singapore Kite Association.

The man in his late 40s, explained that kites are differentiated by their characteristics in flight. They can also be classified under broad categories: one-lined, two-lined or four-lined kites, based on lines attached to the kites. Single-lined, no frills kites are the most basic and cannot perform the fancy aerial tricks the others can.

Mr Lee explained that with lines fixed at around 80 to 150 feet (about 5 to 6 storeys high), they can only fly so far. But they are a challenge to handle, even if they're not as large as the world's biggest kite, which covers as much as four tennis courts.

PlusMinus Concepts, an online kite shop set up by Danny Tan, also offers free lessons on stunt kites on weekends for beginners at West Coast Park.

You can arrange an appointment with Danny through info@plusminus-concepts.biz. Danny advised greenhorns to start with the recently invented crash-proof kites that cost just under \$200.



It seems a hefty sum to pay, but Shereen Lee is a new convert. The 19-year-old Nanyang Technological University (NTU) Chemical Engineering undergraduate said, "Last year, my friend bought me a beginner's stunt kite for my birthday, after I complained how boring life can be. I thought he was being so silly as I (have) never liked kite-flying. I put (it) aside for a few months. But one day, I... went to pick the kite up. Since then, I am here (West Coast Park) flying every weekend."

She also added, "I don't think I will stop for a very long time. It's really addictive you know?"

Where to get it?

"There's basically only one comprehensive kite shop in Singapore that offers most equipment needed for kite-flying, especially professional kite-flying," said Eugene Tan, 30, an avid stunt kite-flyer, and Danny's 'flying' partner.

That is D Kite Shop at Marina South, opposite the open field where most people used to fly their kites. Sadly, this space was converted into soccer courts last year.

Acknowledging the lack of shops, Danny came up with an online one (<http://plusminus-concepts.biz/kiteshome.htm>), around the middle of last year. It carries mainly Prism kites, a common brand for stunt kites. His main customers are "working adults aged around 20 to 40, with occasional 18-year-olds", added Danny.

Another online local kite shop (www.kite.com.sg), managed by Jason and Lawrence since 2001, carries mainly the brands Airush and Takoon and also "a range of second-hand equipment ideal for kite-boarding learners", explained Lawrence.

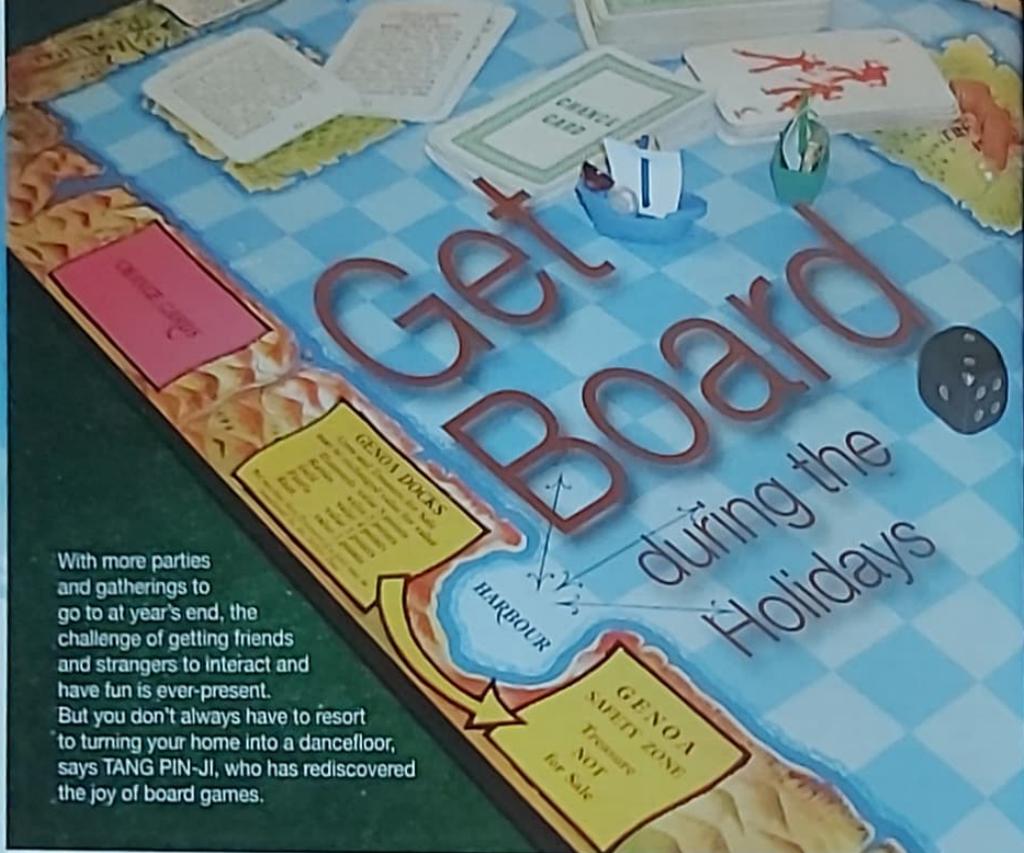
Jason added that their new kite prices "range from \$1,000 to \$1,800, depending on the sizes, and the boards' prices range from \$950 to \$1,600 depending on the model and make".

Contact them for quotations for used equipment.

Where to fly?

According to The National Parks Board website, this is a list of recommended locations for kite-lovers:

- Bishan Park
- West Coast Park
- Punggol Town Park
- East Coast Park in areas A, B, C, D, E and F1
- Sembawang Park



With more parties and gatherings to go to at year's end, the challenge of getting friends and strangers to interact and have fun is ever-present. But you don't always have to resort to turning your home into a dancefloor, says TANG PIN-JI, who has rediscovered the joy of board games.

Go nostalgic this holiday with an old school activity that looks set to warm up the market in this "cold" digital age. While the playing of board games appeals to a niche market of undergraduates and young, urban professionals, signs are it is also worming its way into our lifestyle.

Which is a good sign because board games can benefit us socially, says Mr Jacques Deul, creative director of Van Der Veer Games, a game manufacturing company based in Singapore.

"Singaporeans of all ages don't have the habit of getting together to play games but since board games are very portable, people can bring along a game to play at someone's house one week and then another person's the next or even to a place where they always meet. What this creates is a great way for them to meet new people, bring families closer together and strengthen people's social abilities," said Mr Deul.

Mr Deul is also the creator of **Blackmail**, a board game that involves "a lot of verbal interaction and no brain-busting calculations".

Agreeing with Mr Deul, Mr Damien Chua, general manager of two-year-old gaming store, Planet Inifinitum, explained, "The best thing about board games is that they provide social interaction and are a good way of meeting people. [They] are still the traditional way of interaction, as opposed to online games."

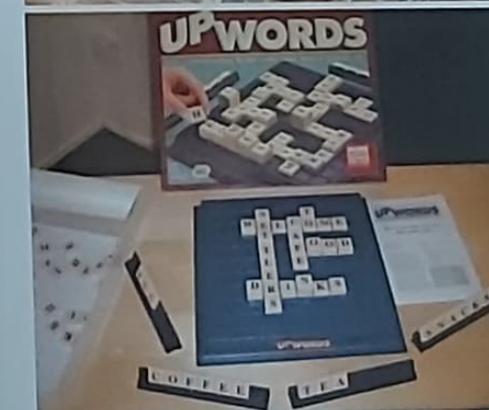
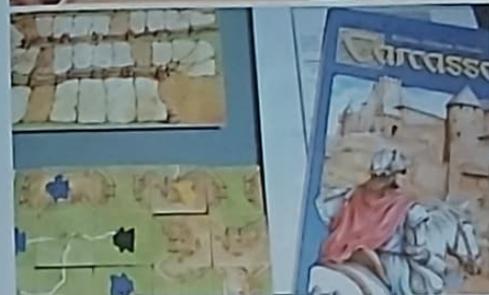
When you think of board games, don't just narrow your options to typical names like **Monopoly**, **Risk** or **Cluedo**. In fact, there is a wide range of board game titles like **Settlers of Catan**, **Carcassonne** and **Zombies**, from all over the world.

"These games have no ability to penetrate mass market as a lot of them are strategy games. They are fast catching up though. Due to the fact that the young people coming up are at an educated level, they have caught up with the Western world. Therefore they would be better able to understand the concept behind these games that require thinking skills, and appreciate them," said Mr Chua.

Mr Colin Lim, one of the six directors of a board game café **Settlers' Café**, also feels that the "media has over hyped board games like **Monopoly** when there are actually "more and more companies producing board games... especially in Germany and USA. The number of board games [we have] are growing every week as well".

Mr Lim's game buying decisions are based on "reviews, sources, [and] word of mouth" and he imports games directly from a distributor in America once a month. However, he only releases "one to two games a week" so as to allow his staff time to learn the games on staff games night every Wednesday and be able to teach their customers in turn.

Before you plunk between \$12 to \$100 to purchase a typical game, a better idea might be going to places like



From top: **Settlers of Catan**, **Carcassonne** and **Zombies** and **UpWords**

3 Bestselling Traditional Board Games in Singapore

1. Monopoly
(the new **Lord Of The Rings** edition is especially popular)
2. Gestures
3. Game Of Life/Twister

Source: Toys "R" Us in Jurong Point Shopping Centre

Paradigm Inifinitum and Settlers' Café to see if these will appeal to you.

Paradigm Inifinitum stocks board games as well as rents out their 100 board game titles for play at \$1 per set, regardless of the amount of time spent playing the game. Settlers' Café, host to 100 titles of board games as well, charges \$12 per hour and offers a \$30 package, which includes food and drinks. The café is estimated to accommodate about 45 people at any one time.

Real estate agent Joshua Leong, 29, a frequent customer at Paradigm Inifinitum, said, "The best thing about this place is making friends. I've known most of the other gamers here for seven years, and we've seen this outlet change hands to become what it is today.

"I spend most of my time here as I'm free except for when I have to meet clients. Thus, I usually get them to meet me in Orchard around this area!"

Joshua makes up the typical clientele demographic of both Paradigm Inifinitum and Settlers' Café, both of which usually get undergraduates and young, urban professionals streaming in.

Settlers' Café, which opened last October, is co-owned by Ngee Ann Polytechnic engineering graduates, who set it up because of the sextet's interest in board games since their school days.

Its ambience is cozier than most regular cafes, resembling the interior of a home. The café offers board game meetups on the first Tuesday each month, as part of the online-based International Boardgame Meetups Day community.

Javen Tee, 22, a game enthusiast who also works at Settlers', said that the turnout for each session averages 10, though the September one ballooned to 27, and hopes to see more participants since these sessions are open to anyone interested in board gaming.

Participants pay only \$5 to enjoy an entire night of free gaming and free flow of soft drinks, as well as get themselves an opportunity to challenge and befriend fellow board game enthusiasts.



Joanne Peh's babelicious in a cutesy kinda way. She's been likened to Fann Wong in the looks department but this Miss Personality/Elegant from the 2002 Miss Singapore Universe, can certainly hold her own. First impressions of arrogance only drive away those ignorant enough to trust them. The Communication Studies undergraduate at NTU apologises sincerely to CHRISTINE NG for looking worn out from a hectic day at school. Even when her studies wind down, the pace won't let up, come year end, she'll be involved in more productions. But Joanne sportingly doodles with colour and candour, even about a nightlife that might bore a nun. This is perhaps what people fail to see- that celebrities aren't that much different. Especially when they doodle.

Joanne's Jaunts

When the clock strikes 12...

I take off my , puts on my , switch on my and try to study without

When my parents aren't around...

I TRY TO COOK!



The naughtiest thing I've done...

DRESS MY YOUNGER BROTHER (4 YEARS OLD THEN) AS A GIRL!



My nightly indulgence...

A Sholek & Lots of body buttek, PLUS MUST HAVE toner, SKIN SMOOTHENER & MOISTURISER. And!!! Meiji YOGURT yummy!!

The best place to have supper...



My ultimate nocturnal fantasy...

(or George Clooney)
BATMAN WILL COME IN HIS BAT MOBILE ~~FOR~~ & TAKE ME FOR A VISIT AT KOTHAM CITY. AND THEN HE'LL SAY HE HAS DREAMS OF ME AND NOT HALVE BERRY. 'Sheehee'!
(aka catwoman)

What I love about the dark...

You ? but YOU DO NOT . YOU TOUCH but YOU DO NOT KNOW

A good night out...

BEING ON A ^{supposed to be a YACHT} with my ♀ PALS PIGGING OUT ON CHEESE & SINGING TO THE ☆ IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE.

Don't Miss This Ride

With Halloween and Christmas being prime nights to expect horrendous queues at pubs, JEANETTE WON suggests you hop on to The Bus that guarantees you won't waste precious time standing in line.

It's not just that you'll be whisked into a club that's been handpicked for its action, if you get on The Bus, you'll also end up on the dance floor of a few of the newest night spots, all in one night.

The year-old twist to the usual night out was the brainchild of two entrepreneurs, Jason Chan, 29, a self-declared 24/7 'marketing man' and nightlife guy Roy Tan, 28, who has been in the food and beverage industry for more than 10 years.

The air-conditioned Singapore Explorer London Trolley that seats 30 brings its clubbers to four different night spots from 8pm till midnight, every alternate Saturday.

With an average of more than 40 people on two buses going out on each trip led by both Mr Tan and Mr Chan, business has been so encouraging you might even see them moving to double-decker buses with open tops, like those on the HIPPOtours, soon.

Some customers like the fact that the trips are designed according to their tastes and lifestyles. Engineer Mr Jackson Lim, 25, a regular Bus clubber since his first trip in March, said, "The Bus service is quite ingenious as I really am quite lazy to plan. Now I can just give a call to my clubbing kakis and we're set for a night out already."

Others have lamented that there was too little time allowed at the various nightspots. "I would prefer having more time to get settled at a place and enjoy instead of having to constantly check the time to leave," grumbled Ms Chia Jietling, 21, a student, who has been on two Bus trips.



Photo courtesy of The Bus

Taking note of this feedback, Mr Chan said that the number of stops might be reduced to three "for more quality party time at the clubs".

Besides that, The Bus is also making more plans to add value to the experience with themed nights such as Bollywood, Halloween and costume parties. "We want The Bus to gradually become an icon," explained Mr Chan.

The Culture

If you're afraid you might feel out of place if you sign up alone, Mr Chan and Mr Tan, who double up as crew members, organise ice breakers to help you mingle with the rest. Mr Tan says, "We want them to party not [only] with The Bus, but with this whole group of [new] friends that they are together on The Bus with."

And should someone take more alcohol than they can stomach, Mr Tan assures that someone will "take a cab and send the person home personally, even if it has to be me or Jason".

On The Bus

The usual romp on The Bus goes like this: You whizz ahead of queues and bartenders whip up a drink for you before other clubbers. Boogie on the dance floor and, while en route to the next club, touch up your makeup.

You can also help yourself to the bottle of Sambuca, an anise-flavoured Italian liquor, opened on the house after the second stop, on every Bus trip. Bus leaders are on hand to keep spirits up with games and wise cracks throughout the club hopping. Once midnight strikes, The Bus calls it a day.

Tickets at \$35, raised to more than \$40 on these two prime nights, can be purchased at all SISTIC outlets. Check out the upcoming Bus trip online at www.thebus.com.sg



Celebrity Reads

They seem to lead glamorous lives that move too fast to allow them to stop and read like nerdy bookworms, but it's all a myth as **hype** finds, when JASMINE OEI asks some celebrities about their favourite reads this year.

How to Read Literature Like a Professor by Thomas C. Foster

"[This book is] for people like me, who really love literature but sucked at scoring [in it]."

- Joanna Peh, MediaCorp TV Artist

Ishmael by Daniel Quinn

It is "wonderfully engaging... Ishmael is a book for anyone looking for a deeper understanding of the world we live in".

- Cheryl Fox, Channel NewsAsia Presenter and host of Singapore's Brainiest

My Life by Bill Clinton and Living History by Hillary Clinton

"I am a true blue liberal and reading about two of the greatest liberal politicians of the 20th century is very inspiring. It's always good to know how Mr Clinton managed to survive his impeachment and bring respect back to his presidency despite all the scandal that surrounded him for his eight years in office. He is, after all, the so-called Teflon President, throw him a scandal and he emerges victorious.

Living History tells the other side of the story: How much strength did Mrs Clinton have to muster to survive...? And reading between the lines to see if this woman really has her eyes set on the White House."

- Timothy Go, Channel NewsAsia Presenter

The Seven Spiritual Laws of Success: A Practical Guide To the Fulfillment Of Your Dreams by Deepak Chopra

"It's filled with timeless wisdom and is a spiritual yet practical guide in dealing with life."

- Desirée Ann Seahman, actress in latest MTV regional drama series Rouge as Ling (see pg 6)

Kitchen Confidential: Adventures in the Culinary Underbelly by Anthony Bourdain

"It's a good breeze into the kitchen world (not familiar ground for me). I love how chef and novelist Anthony Bourdain reveals all dirt in the kitchen - from being a dishwasher to sipping cold soup as an epiphany... it's a good laugh. I was watching Anthony on Discovery Channel one night - I have been hooked ever since."

- Denise Keller, MTV VJ



Photos of Timothy Go and Cheryl Fox courtesy of MediaCorp News. Joanna Peh by Leonard Goh, Desirée Ann Seahman by Finn. Photo of Denise Keller courtesy of MTV Asia

The Write Stuff



Photo courtesy of Penning

Is Fran Lebowitz a Neil Humphrey in expat commentary on Singapore? JASMINE OEI chats with the author of *Tales from A Broad* to find out.

A major inspiration for author Fran Lebowitz is her love for telling stories and jokes. This is reflected in her debut "unreliable memoir", *Tales From A Broad*.

"I observe and sum up my life and incidents around me in order to grasp the world or at least in order to laugh and move on," said Fran.

Tales From A Broad is a humorous yet insightful read about her family's escape from the Big Apple to our little red dot. Though Fran was to stay here for only three months, she continues to nearly seven years since her relocation.

It's "a nice place with good people who... come to feel like I'm sort of a Garfield... someone you love to hate," commented Fran. Indeed, its traits of irritability were visible while she was writing the book.

"My husband would walk onto the balcony where I worked at night and just sit down... Suddenly, every idea I had ran away like frightened cockroaches. I'd say 'What do you want?' and he'd say 'I'm not bothering you! I just came to give you support... jeez, you're so mean.' So a fight would ensue and he'd stomp off and I'd get the

balcony back for myself and go back to writing, the ideas scurrying back," explained Fran.

Although Fran appears cynical and frank about the Singapore life, she uses funny and quirky lines to make it less harsh and subtly animated. "[I want] to entertain, to make fun of myself so the reader feels good about themselves. We all ride the same emotional spectrum... I hope that others who face some of the personal crisis the characters face can laugh at themselves a bit too," explained Fran.

The entertaining writing style of *Tales From A Broad* is comparable with Neil Humphrey's books on Singapore, entitled *Tales from A Smaller Island* and *Tales from An Even Smaller Island*. However, Fran admits that she did not read Neil's book before completing her own book.

"I didn't want to find myself not going in a direction just because he (Neil) did and I didn't want to feel discouraged if I found him to be funnier and better... Now that I'm finished writing, it's on the top of my reading list."

JERMAINE ANG meets author Chen Xiaolu and tries to unravel fact from fiction in her book - *The Village of Stone*.

The Village of Stone is set in author Guo Xiaolu's hometown. Given the similarities between protagonist and author, the obvious question is if this is a biography or work of fiction.

Just like Xiaolu, Coral left her in South China village as a girl to live on her own and doesn't know "what it means to be a family". But

that's where similarities end. Where Coral's indecisive and afraid to face reality, Xiaolu is a survivor. "[her contradictory] character is a big tragedy of her whole life," she concluded.

The Village of Stone, named after Coral's hometown is a story about Coral's difficult life when she was a young child growing up, as told in flashbacks, vignettes in the present and hopes for the future - a story of hope that touches the heart, soul and mind.

Xiaolu confesses her need to be in love, sharing that, "He would be my everything, my family." Ironically, she also admits that she has

learnt to let go when she cannot keep her man.

This hesitation of holding onto love is seen in the way she addressed Coral and Red's relationship in the book. She writes: "Two people together never add up to anything more than one person added to another... [that] we continue to add ourselves up in this way is the reason human beings will always be lonely."

Xiaolu told *hype* that she "wouldn't mind at all that people think it's my real life because [she's] a very honest writer" and draws liberally from her own "emotional and physical experiences". Other characters are based on actual people whom she has enhanced to make more "believable".

This brief encounter with the charming and intelligent woman may never tell us the genre of *The Village of Stone*, but what's sure is the combination makes a good read.



Photo by Jane Brown

International bestselling author Xinran speaks to KANAGA DURGA about her second book, *Sky Burial*.

If you were moved, like readers in 50 countries, by the plight of women in China written by Xinran, 46, in *The Good Women of China: Hidden Voices*, you'll rush out to grab her latest book *Sky Burial*.

The Beijing-born author has chosen possibly the most moving true story among those she collected in her eight-year-long

confessional radio programme to render into reading material. We accompany Shu Wen, who goes on an arduous search for her husband lost in the Chinese occupation of Tibet.

Xinran, now a columnist for *The Guardian* in London, takes readers on an emotional journey and a ride into the plains of mystical Tibet. The author's incredible style of writing allows the reader to visualise rural Tibet in the 1950s and a woman whose love is so strong she spends 30 years in Tibet to look for her husband. The characters in the story are so well formed it feels as if the author was a part of this remarkable woman's life. As Shu Wen makes

her journey across the vast plains and abundant mountains of the rustic country, we long to follow her on her quest so as to ease her burden.

"I was controlled by her mind," Xinran told *hype* in a face-to-face interview, explaining that she had picked this story because of how Shu Wen had affected her and was a very "powerful" influence in her life.

She added that telling these painful stories was a form of therapy for her. If the extent of detail amazes you, it's because Xinran spent nine years researching Tibet and its people.

The title of the book, *Sky Burial*, describes one of Tibet's ancient rituals of feeding the corpse to the sacred bird, the vulture. Her opinion on the ritual of sky burial, was "I was so scared... I couldn't watch the videotapes for a long time... [but] I can see (from the) peoples' eyes (that they) believe(d) that the *Sky Burial* was their only way to reach heaven."

Xinran is working on her next book, *Miss Chopsticks*, which will be published "hopefully in 2006".



Photo courtesy of Penning

SITI AISHAH SULAIMAN chats with the creator of the Detective Nic Costa fiction series, David Hewson, for insights into *The Villa of Mysteries*.

At 15, David Hewson's first novel got rejected many times by publishers whom he proved wrong when he won the WH Smith Fresh Talent Award in 1996, with that same book, *Semana Santa*. It was made into a movie starring Mira Sorvino two years ago and led to eight other successful Italian detective books.

His inspiration, not surprisingly, comes from other books of similar genre because he enjoys reading them. Hewson tells *hype*, "I've always enjoyed reading them when I was young. [But], I don't want my books to be like many other crime stories out there, which are complicated. Mine is ordinary but with a different twist."

The Villa of Mysteries, the second book of the series is similar to his first novel, *Semana Santa*, with its dark and mysterious plot surrounding an ancient ritual of Rome, a perfect companion for Halloween vibes.

The dark plot begins when an American couple goes on holiday in Rome, Italy. They chance upon a dead girl's body in the wilderness.

This leads to a series of conflicts between the various characters involved in the investigations and even more deaths. Forensic fiction fans will relish the fact that the suspected victim of a Dionysus cult is described in vivid and gruesome detail under the artful skill of Hewson's pen.

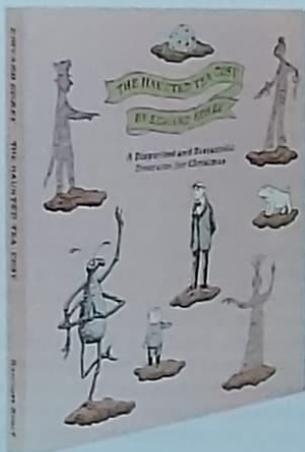
One of Hewson's trademarks in writing fiction is his ability to come up with realistic and believable characters through their idiosyncrasies. In *The Villa of Mysteries*, the mafia's son has an affair with his own father's young wife while Nic Costa's detective partner, Gianni Peroni, was severely demoted in ranks because he was caught sleeping with a prostitute.

"As a writer, I am the character's boss. I talk to my characters and see them as a person with common flaws and imperfections just like real people, like all of us," Hewson said.

Book Reviews

The Haunted Tea-Cosy by Edward Gorey

AMELIA YEO



Heartwarming and pleasant Christmas stories are a dime a dozen but **The Haunted Tea-Cosy's** one you can read on Halloween too.

In this 1998 book, antihero Edmund Gravel, is a recluse whose Christmas is interrupted by an oversized critter, 'the Bahhum Bug', that springs out from under his tea-cosy, an insulation padding for a teapot. They then meet three ghosts, who show Edmund different aspects of Christmas.

If that sounds familiar, this is Edward Gorey's present-day take on the Charles Dickens classic, **A Christmas Carol** (where lonely miser Scrooge is visited by three Christmas ghosts and becomes a changed man).

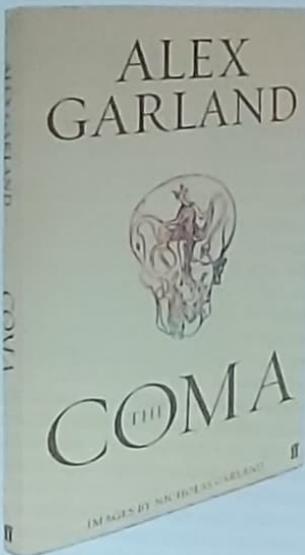
However, the storyline is where the similarity ends. The late Gorey's self-indulgent literal sense, morbid illustrations and fleeting characters are more reminiscent of a thriller than of a Christmas tale. A pioneer of this modern-style morbidity, his **The Curious Sofa** (1961) and **Amphigorey** (1972) set him in a league of his own.

In line with Gorey's love for beguilement, this "Dispirited and Distasteful Diversion for Christmas" is disguised as a children's book. It might not go down well with those looking for a book deep in meaning but it's highly recommended for those with a penchant for surreal and dark notions.

Available at Kinokuniya for \$30.

The Coma by Alex Garland

JONATHAN HO



Hailed by various publications such as the **The New Yorker** as a "huge literary talent", author Alex Garland has proved it again with his newest novel, **The Coma**.

Compared to his previous books, **The Beach** (1996), **The Tesseract** (1999) and **28 Days Later** (2002), **The Coma**, at a mere 90 pages excluding pictures, is his shortest work, as he has become more laconic. In fact, critics have rightly said that soon, his works will carry the entire message in their titles.

The Coma begins with Carl, the story's protagonist, being attacked in the London Underground, their version of our MRT, and going into a coma.

Since we're not told anything about him, not his age, educational level or occupation, we try to piece his identity together as flashbacks of his life punctuate his unconsciousness, setting the stage for the dark discovery Carl is to make. The dark woodcuts done by the author's political cartoonist father Nick Garland, add to the surreal feel of the story.

Despite Garland's standing, this book is far from perfect. The plot that Garland paints can become confusing and cause some readers to draw blanks at certain parts. This is because Garland involves the reader, who starts to wonder if he/she is the dream or doing the dreaming.

Just because it's choppy and unsettling, however, doesn't mean that **The Coma** won't be made into a film like two of his previous books, **The Beach** and **28 Days Later**. After all, the **Blair Witch Project** had more than its share of fans.

Available at Kinokuniya for \$29.90.

Photos by Pamela Sia

A.I.D.S.

Against Ignorance, Discrimination & Stigma

World AIDS Day on Dec 1 commemorates the 16-year global campaign against a disease that continues to take more lives than any war humanity has waged. DIYANA ALAN narrows the scope to youths and females on our local shores and reviews this pressing global issue.

Youth and AIDS

There are 1.84 million young people in the Asia Pacific living with HIV/AIDS according to UNICEF.

Youths are more at risk of being exposed to HIV because adolescent behaviour like curiosity and sexual inexperience make them more vulnerable to getting the virus. Experimentation in another area, drugs, is increasingly causing problems too.

The problem is not a big one in Singapore yet. Only 403 of the 2,034 people in Singapore who are HIV positive are youths, according to a yearly press release by the Ministry of Health (MOH). The most prevalent method of infection was through heterosexual transmission.

But for HIV/AIDS positive youth in Singapore, as elsewhere, admitting to having the disease is difficult. Due to the lack of societal acceptance, coming out and getting the moral support needed for them to move on with their lives is a battle every day.

Action for AIDS (AFA) counsellor Benedict Thambiah said, "[HIV/AIDS] positive kids don't want to talk to their

parents about it for fear of being disowned. We can't talk about HIV/AIDS without talking about education and prevention."

Thambiah emphasised that education and awareness are vital for young people considering the high-risk activities local youths are participating in.

A 2002 **Agence France-Presse** article on prevention tactics that the Singapore government hopes to employ to curb the spread of sexually transmitted disease, expressed the government's worries on the promiscuity of local youths. After all, survey findings from the article stated that nearly one in five teenagers between the ages of 13 and 18 have experienced sexual intercourse. A global sex survey has also shown that 30% of the 870 Singaporeans (aged 16 to 30) surveyed engage in unsafe sex. Almost half of them expressed willingness to "have sex with a new partner without a condom".

Naturally, higher risks of contracting the disease accompany prevalent pre-marital and casual sex and increased abortion rates among local youths.

Photo by Toyarivi (www.toyarivi.com)



Still, Thambiah thinks such concerns are difficult to control, "Interest in sexual contact is a natural phenomenon. It's instinctive. However, morals do not keep you safe from HIV/AIDS [but] avoidance of all sexual contact and exposures do."

A local nurse with the Communicable Disease Centre for the past two years, Tina (not her real name) once dealt with a 23-year-old patient who had a sexual history of nine years, prior to contracting the disease. Recalling her experience with him she said, "It's very sad. I told him, 'You're so young,' and he was really remorseful about the lifestyle he chose. Luckily though, his family was supportive of him."

Having counselled many People with AIDS (PWAs), Thambiah advised youths to understand the consequences faced by HIV/AIDS positive people, he believes the problem of stigma and discrimination should be reason enough for young people to take AIDS seriously.

Stigma and Discrimination

In a United Nations (UN) press release in July, stigma was cited as "biggest hurdle to AIDS prevention in South Asia". It's not uncommon for many to form negative attitudes toward those who have been infected. They're shunned by society and consequently feel socially detached.

Isolation is a daily struggle for many PWAs, and there is suspicion even in cases when other people try to reach out to them. This may explain why even interviewing an HIV/AIDS positive person proved so challenging. None of the five PWAs **hype** attempted to speak with were willing to talk about their situation.

Some of this fear may be justified after even family members turn their backs, as can become quickly apparent when PWAs seek help with their medical expenses.

Like many patients suffering from kidney failure and other diseases, which require intensive treatment, the main predicament for local PWAs is the costly medication. With Anti-Retroviral Therapy (ART) medication costing up to \$2,000 a month, treatment is barely affordable for most of them.

But unlike other financially draining diseases such as kidney failure, the reality is that AIDS is often viewed as a 'dirty' disease, one that is incurable and usually contracted through irresponsible sex or homosexual activities reflecting loose morals. For this reason, many families and friends of PWAs find it difficult to accept the disease and offer financial assistance to see them through their healthcare.

From the many encounters that Tina has had with PWAs, she feels that locally family support is still intact. However, there are also cases where family members completely

abandon their HIV/AIDS infected relatives mainly due to financial matters.

"AIDS is a long-term disease. To simply support a relative may not just be in terms of moral support. When a PWA can no longer afford their meds (medication) they can only turn to family. And there are people who feel that, 'Well, they're going to die so why bother?'" she said.

Benedict, himself, quit his previous job as an accountant to be a counsellor to HIV/AIDS patients seven years ago, after a close friend died from the disease.

"I wasn't happy with how he was regarded and treated by his family after his death and that was a big reason why I decided to do this," he said.

Women and AIDS

This year's AIDS campaign theme is Women, Girls, HIV and AIDS. Half of the 40 million people living with AIDS in the world are female.

In Singapore, HIV/AIDS positive women account for only about 12.5% of PWAs. The percentage may seem small but statistics have revealed that of this number, 63% of the women were married at the point of diagnosis.

It has also been found that women are 2.5 times more likely to be infected with AIDS and ironically many rely on their male counterparts for support and prevention.

There is no doubt sex discrimination exists against female HIV/AIDS positive people in countries that lack the awareness of the disease such as India and Africa. But while the stigma against HIV/AIDS positive women may stem from the poor standing those women have in under-developed nations, even in modern Singapore there are cases where women are held responsible for becoming victims.

Benedict said, "I knew this woman who had gotten HIV through her husband who was a drug addict and had been involved with prostitutes. I met with a religious leader to discuss her case and the first thing he asked her was, 'Were you a good wife? If you were, then your husband would have no reason to look for sex elsewhere.'"

Tina, who deals with PWAs every day, said that in some of her cases the opposite is true.

"I had a patient who used to be a commercial sex worker. She got married despite having AIDS and her husband still supports her and visits her every single night," she said.

Mary Stevens, a coordinator at the Patient Care Centre catered to PWAs, said in an email interview, "Stigma and discrimination comes with HIV/AIDS. But if you are comparing between man and woman, in my personal view is that woman tend to get more sympathy than man as they are generally seen as 'victims'."



What We Can Do

Increasing awareness on the disease is an important step. Ton Smits, Director of the Asian Harm Reduction network (AHRN) based in Chiangmai, Thailand, said in an email interview with **hype**, "In my view, moralistic approaches, such as abstinence, [are] not helpful and are likely to complicate matters... most of the existing detoxification centres in the region, whose goal is abstinence, do not have a clear public health understanding of drug dependence."

In response to the abortion rates in Singapore, Ton said, "These high rates may also reflect the lack of openness on failing abstinence policies. If premarital sex cannot be discussed openly, if [young] people do not have free access to various methods of birth control and if girls and women are not empowered and respected [in] making their own choices, unwanted pregnancies and high abortion rates are likely to continue."

He cited participation from AIDS-affected young people is necessary for better AIDS education. This means acceptance and the willingness to learn from HIV/AIDS positive people and fighting the disease as a united body.

AIDS- Human Problem, Global Issue

While the many steps taken to prevent the spread of AIDS have established greater awareness of the illness. Sadly, the number of AIDS patients is still increasing every year. As of December 2003, the estimated number of people who are infected by HIV/AIDS stands at 40 million. 19% of them are in Asia alone.

Tina said, "There's a lot of forum talks and information that can be retrieved on the internet. We should learn to educate our selves on the disease. We as a society should learn to accept (PWAs) for who they are and to embrace them despite their disease."

In commemoration of World AIDS Day, let us as the future generation ponder over the words of Senior Parliamentary Secretary & Minister of Information and the Arts, Mr Yatiman Yusof.

"Let us think about how we, as a community, can look back 10 years from now and say we did whatever was within our power to stop the spread of the virus... Unless we forge ahead, AIDS will continue to devastate lives that are already torn and burdened by stigma and ignorance," he said.

Photo By Jasmine Ooi

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party savers

AMELIA YEO

We'd like to think that all the seasonal parties we're invited to are hip and happening but c'mon, even **hype**'s been to a few duds. Here's how you can entertain yourself when boredom strikes*.

- 1 Come up with your own brand of fusion delights using party food. Fishball ice-cream, anyone?
- 2 Test all the pickup lines you know on all the people you don't know.
- 3 Weave imaginary tales about the people there and give each one a dark secret.
- 4 Fold origami with napkins or serviettes.
- 5 Round up other bored people and start a percussion band using whatever's available. (Note: Belches make an excellent accompaniment.)
- 6 Read **hype!**
- 7 Turn to the person next to you and tell him or her about the time you got abducted by aliens but managed to escape and return to earth with the help of your clever, talking chicken, Clucky. "wink"
- 8 Talk to Clucky, the clever, talking chicken.
- 9 Station yourself at the entrance and thank guests for attending your retirement party.
- 10 LEAVE.

*Disclaimer: **hype** will not take responsibility for any consequences (eg. your getting diarrhoea, slaps, admission to a mental asylum, dropped from invite lists) as a result of you adopting any of the aforementioned suggestions.

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DEGREE AND UNIVERSITY PREPARATION PROGRAMS



University of Canberra

CRICOS Provider Code: 00212K



Rank 5 Stars for **GETTING A JOB**
Rank 4 Stars for **GRADUATE STARTING SALARY**
Rank 4 Stars for **TOTAL GRADUATE OUTCOMES**

THE GOOD UNIVERSITIES GUIDE 2014

The University of Canberra is owned by the Australian Government in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) and it is a member of the United National System and of the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU).

MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

Admission Requirements

(Three intakes in January, May and September)

- Seven years relevant work experience or
- An undergraduate degree with less than 2 years relevant work experience.

BACHELOR OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

Minor: Human Resource Management

Professional Options: Banking and Finance or Marketing

Admission Requirements

(Four intakes in January, April, July, October)

- **Cat 1 (15-18mths)** - A Diploma in a business discipline from any of the polytechnics in Singapore.
- **Cat 1a (18mths)** - University Preparation Program: Diploma of Business Administration awarded by AsiaInstitut of Management, AM School of Business Studies.
- **Cat 2 (21mths)** - A Diploma in an engineering or computing discipline from any of the polytechnics in Singapore.
- **Cat 3 (30mths)** - A Diploma in a related business discipline from a recognised institution or 2 GCE 'A' level with at least grade C.

UNIVERSITY PREPARATION PROGRAM - DIPLOMA OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

1-year intensive program in Singapore. On successfully completing the University Preparation Program - Diploma of Business Administration and attaining good Grade Point Average (GPA), students will be able to gain entry and/or articulation into the following undergraduate programs in Australia.



Australian National University

CRICOS Provider Code: 00120C

- Bachelor of Commerce (3 yrs)



University of Canberra

CRICOS Provider Code: 00212K

- Bachelor of Business Administration (2 yrs)
- Bachelor of Commerce (2 yrs)
- Bachelor of Management (2 yrs)

- Bachelor of Sport Management (3 yrs)
- Bachelor of Sport Media (3 yrs)



University of Queensland

CRICOS Provider Code: 00025B

- Bachelor of Business Management (2 yrs)
- Bachelor of Business Communication (2 yrs)
- Bachelor of Commerce (2 yrs)

- Bachelor of Electronic Commerce (2 yrs)
- Bachelor of International Hotel & Tourism Management (2 yrs)

Admission Requirements

(Four intakes in January, April, July, October)

- GCE 'A' level or equivalent.
- Students without GCE 'A' level but with good results in the GCE 'O' level (English Language, Mathematics) or equivalent will also be considered on a case by case basis.

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