

## POP STOP

COMPILED BY NOAH BUCHAN



One wife isn't enough for Lei Hong, or two, or three, or four ... PHOTO: TAIPEI TIMES

Pop Stop begins this week with the curious case of **Lei Hong** (雷洪). The star of the popular FTV soap opera *Mom's House* (娘家) and winner of last year's Golden Bell Award (金鐘獎) for best male actor has a complaint of four "wives" that wouldn't look out of place in *Big Love* or *The Last Emperor*.

Four wives, you say? That's right, and they all live together under the same roof in Taipei. To maintain harmony, Lei says, he refuses to spend an entire night with just one wife.

However, not all is happiness at the Lei homestead. The 61-year-old announced last week that he had decided to take a fifth "wife" — a revelation that immediately drew criticism from his mother, the media and his other four wives.

Oddly enough, Lei's taking on a new roommate wasn't the issue that angered the other four wives, because they have already accepted the new wife into the family, according to reports in the *China Times*, *Apple Daily*, *Liberty Times* (the *Taipei Times*' sister paper) and other media outlets.

It was Lei's decision to make the wedding ceremony a public affair that caused strife at home. It turns out that holding a public wedding ceremony in Taiwan comes dangerously close to making the nuptials legally binding, unlike the arrangements with his other four consorts, which are presumably unregistered. Lei has since canceled the ceremony.

It should be noted that Lei has sired seven sons and one daughter. His eldest son is 40, as is his youngest wife.

The surreal family affair hit a fever pitch over the weekend when Lei called a press conference to apologize for his inappropriate behavior. The mea culpa saw him bowing several times and slapping his own face in penance for being a bad influence on society. He said he hadn't slept or eaten in two days, his blood pressure had reached 180 and he was on several

different kinds of medication.

Pop Stop thinks that lack of sleep, high blood pressure and pill popping would be par for the course for anyone with five partners.

And now news of a sixth wife: Yesterday's tabloids reported that Lei was once legally married to yet another woman — the mother of his 40-year-old son. They divorced four decades ago.

The character Lei plays on TV only has two wives — proving once again that the truth is stranger than fiction.

In other wedding gossip, **Yu Kehsin** (喻可欣) is getting significant mileage out of her fling with **Andy Lau** (劉德華).

Ever since Lau publicly acknowledged his relationship with Hong Kong star **Carol Choo** (朱麗倩) a few weeks ago, Yu has been in the news reliving memories of her own three-year relationship with the Canto-pop star, which ended way back in the mid-1980s.

This includes flogging a 2004 expose she wrote about the affair, a work that intimately describes their first meeting, Lau's wild pursuit of the (at the time) young Taiwanese actress and how she was deflowered five days later.

Yu is also trying to auction off stuffed animals and a yellow heart-shaped pillow Lau gave her. As of press time there were no takers.

The *Apple Daily* wanted to know if Lau pursued Choo like he did Yu. "It's different," she said. "Andy Lau was chasing me while Choo was sticking with him."

Finally, **Big S** (大S) — aka **Barbie Hsu** (徐熙媛) — showed off her snarky side this past week at a screening for the movie *On His Majesty's Secret Service* (大內密探靈靈狗), which was attended by its director **Wang Jing** (王晶).

When asked by reporters why she hasn't gone to Hollywood to develop her career, the starlet, who is known for her eye-raising comments, said that Tinseltown only employs Chinese actors for movies because they are cheaper, an obvious slight directed towards singer **Jay Chou** (周杰倫).

The Chairman was recently picked to portray the Green Hornet's sidekick in an upcoming Hollywood remake of the 1960s television program.

According to the *Liberty Times*, Big S went on to comment that, like **Bruce Lee** (李小龍), who played the original sidekick, Chinese actors always come back to Asia.

At the same screening, younger sister **Little S** (小S) — real name Dee Hsu (徐熙娣) — giggled that she would bare her breasts for Wang, a less-than-subtle hint that she wants to star in one of the director's movies.

BY DAVID CHEN



Japanese fusion band T-Square performs tonight at the National Concert Hall in Taipei.

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL CONCERT HALL



This year's Summer Jazz Party at Taipei's National Concert Hall got off to a rootsy start several weeks ago, with performances from New Orleans' Preservation Hall Jazz Band and American guitarist John Scofield and the Piety Street Band, whose sound draws from blues and gospel.

But tonight the annual jazz festival, now in its sixth year, shifts gears with Japanese fusion band T-Square, whose style some will recognize as a combination of jazz, rock and pop. The four-piece formed as The Square in 1976 and changed its name to T-Square when it started touring the US in the late 1980s. Earlier this year they released

their 35th studio album, *Discoveries*.

Those unfamiliar with the fusion jazz genre might think T-Square's music sounds like sound tracks for television programs or video games, which isn't far off the mark. Their jams are tightly orchestrated and full of rock verve and melodrama.

The band has left a few footprints in popular Japanese culture: saxophonist Takeshi Ito appeared in a Suntory whisky commercial in 1984, and more recently the group's composition *Islet Beauty* was featured in a McDonald's commercial for iced coffee. Guitarist and bandleader Masahiro Andoh composed songs for Sony PlayStation games *Arc the Lad* and *Gran Turismo*.

T-Square creates its sound with a palette full of pianos, electronic keyboards, electric guitars, saxophones and bass guitar.

But one particular instrument to watch for live is Takeshi Ito's EWI, or electronic wind instrument. Designed and played like a soprano saxophone, the EWI is basically an electronic synthesizer for horn players. The keys do not move but have sensors that respond to finger movement, which allows for lightning-fast playing.

The Summer Jazz Party concludes on Sept. 25 with the UK-based American singer and Grammy nominee Stacey Kent.

## PERFORMANCE NOTES:

**WHAT:** Summer Jazz Party with Japanese fusion band T-Square  
**WHERE:** National Concert Hall, (國家音樂廳), 21-1 Zhongshan S Rd, Taipei City (台北市中山南路21-1號)  
**WHEN:** Tonight at 7:30pm  
**ADMISSION:** NT\$500 to NT\$2,500, available through NTCH ticketing or online at [www.artsticket.com.tw](http://www.artsticket.com.tw)  
**ON THE NET:** [event.ntch.edu.tw/2009/jazz](http://event.ntch.edu.tw/2009/jazz)

## COMMUNITY

## More than just a flea market

Street markets are a dime a dozen in Taipei. That said, Huashan Creative Park (華山創意園區) seems to have made a solid stab at distinguishing itself from the pack with Huashan 1914 (華山1914). Established in June, the weekend market resembles a Western flea market, as evidenced by the absence of stalls selling Penghu squid balls or preserved fruit from Ilan, and the ambiance is youthful and trendy.

Stalls currently sport a mixture of original designs by young artists, though this innovative styling is often hidden amid more traditional flea market or garage sale items. Huashan has not shed all remnants of market tradition, however: in proper flea fashion, customers are obligated to spend time digging through the dross, within which there are some charmingly retro items for sale.

The flea market serves as a base around which other activities cluster, such as Open Stage (街頭放聲), a space that offers bands of all genres the opportunity to strut their stuff every Saturday and Sunday at the grassy front courtyard of Huashan Creative Park. Out back behind the factory buildings, the 2009 Baodao Song Festival (2009寶島聲歌祭) takes place tomorrow and on Sept. 19, presenting viewers with a wide selection of traditional song, along with

lectures and a cultural market.

For even more excitement, the 2009 Love Mileage (愛情里程) performance by the First Place Dance School also takes place this weekend and features guest celebrity Vivian Hsu (徐若瑄).

Mobile cafes have been set up, and the grassy forecourt of Huashan is an ideal place to enjoy a snack or coffee. Very reasonable stall rental rates are available from this month through November, as the market hopes to attract young designers as well as people who simply want to clean out their lofts. Rates range from NT\$1,080 for any two weekends, to a super discount of NT\$2,100 for the five weekends of November. Even celebrities have made cameos behind the Huashan stall counters, Little S (小S) — real name Dee Hsu (徐熙娣) — being a prime example. The singer provided the flea market with a major boost when she turned up at Huashan to sell off some unwanted items back in July.

The mixture of shopping, music and grass offers visitors a combination that is rare for central Taipei. As such, the casual atmosphere, stretching from a lazy afternoon to chilled-out evening, has, four months after Huashan 1914's launch, clearly found a receptive audience among the city's youth and young at heart.



Grass-roots entertainment.

PHOTOS: IAN BARTHOLOMEW, TAIPEI TIMES



## IF YOU GO:

## HUASHAN 1914 FLEA MARKET

**WHERE:** Huashan Creative Park (華山創意園區), 1, Bade Rd Sec 1, Taipei City (台北市八德路一段1號)  
**WHEN:** Saturdays from 4pm to 10pm and Sundays from 3pm to 9pm  
**ON THE NET:** [blog.roodo.com/hs1914/archives/9884617.html](http://blog.roodo.com/hs1914/archives/9884617.html)

## OPEN STAGE (街頭放聲)

**WHERE:** Huashan forecourt  
**WHEN:** Saturdays and Sundays from 3pm to 8pm  
**ADMISSION:** Free  
**ON THE NET:** [tw.streetvoice.com/article/user-article.asp?dn=269497](http://tw.streetvoice.com/article/user-article.asp?dn=269497)  
**DETAILS:** A list of upcoming bands can be found at [musicanywhere.pixnet.net/blog](http://musicanywhere.pixnet.net/blog). Open Stage offers musicians a second

venue every Saturday from 3pm to 5pm at the Movie Theme Park (電影主題公園), 19 Kangding Rd, Taipei City (台北市康定路19號)

## 2009 BAODAO SONG FESTIVAL

(2009 寶島聲歌祭)  
**WHERE:** Grassy area behind Huashan's factory buildings  
**WHEN:** Tomorrow and Sept. 19 from 4pm  
**ADMISSION:** Free

## 2009 LOVE MILEAGE (愛情里程)

**WHERE:** Center Five Hall (中五館), Huashan Creative Park  
**WHEN:** Today, tomorrow and Sunday from 7:30pm, tomorrow and Sunday from 1:30pm  
**ADMISSION:** NT\$600 to NT\$1,000, available through NTCH ticketing or online at [www.artsticket.com.tw](http://www.artsticket.com.tw)  
**ON THE NET:** [www.fpdance.com/lm.html](http://www.fpdance.com/lm.html)

## RESTAURANTS

BY CATHERINE SHU

## Arashi 花月嵐

**Address:** B1, 245, Dunhua S Rd Sec 1, Taipei City (台北市敦化南路一段245號B1)  
**Telephone:** (02) 2778-5777  
**Open:** 11am to 9:30pm **Average meal:** NT\$200  
**Details:** Chinese and Japanese picture menu; credit cards accepted

Arashi (花月嵐) is a Japanese ramen chain that made its Taipei debut last year and now has three locations across the city, including a new restaurant in the Eslite (誠品) building on Dunhua South Road (敦化南路). Its signature garlic pork broth ramen noodles — the name literally translates as "fist of garlic ramen" (大蒜拳骨拉麵, NT\$160) — was once voted "strongest-flavored ramen in history" by Yahoo Japan readers. The strong flavor of the soup, which is made by boiling pig bones, garlic cloves and other ingredients together for several hours, is part of Arashi's "we dare you to try it" marketing strategy. When the restaurant's wait staff takes your order and brings you your noodles, they make sure to let you know that their chefs will be happy to add some clear broth if the soup is too much to handle.

Something must have gotten lost in translation, however, on Arashi's way to Taipei. The broth is flavorful, but not particularly strong or very garlicky. Even the "white broth" variation (大蒜拳骨白濃拉麵, NT\$160) flavored with Japanese salt and the miso broth version (大蒜拳骨味噌拉麵, NT\$160) (both are tastier than the

original garlic pork noodles) are relatively gentle on the palate.

In fact, the flavor of the broth pales in comparison to the marinated and seasoned bamboo shoots and slices of fatty pork (to be fair, I noticed on separate visits that the soup's garlic aroma is the strongest during peak lunch and dinner hours). The noodles, on the other hand, are the saving grace of the dish. Cooked appealingly al dente, they have a robust and chewy texture. Arashi's garlic pork broth noodles also come in a chili-flavored version (大蒜拳骨微辣拉麵, NT\$190).

To add some extra zip to your ramen, consider one or more of the add-ins that Arashi sells for NT\$30 each. Dried seaweed, ground sesame seeds and corn are all available, while a poached egg is an agreeable alternative to the hard-boiled slice served with each bowl. Each table also sports a large tray of spices, oils and very hot seasoned green onions to mix into the dish. Arashi's set meals are good value; for an extra NT\$55 to NT\$65, you can select a drink and a serving of salad, pork rice or fried chicken.

The restaurant's pork rice (蒜香豬肉飯), which is



Arashi's bite isn't worse than its bark.

PHOTO: RON BROWLOW, TAIPEI TIMES

sold separately for NT\$45, is especially good and much punchier than any of the noodle dishes. The diced pork is stir-fried in a garlic-flavored sauce and served on top of white rice with seaweed and chopped green onions. The only non-noodle main course at Arashi is its fried rice (鐵板炒飯), which comes in an iron skillet and is topped with a ridiculously large pat of butter. Flavors include soy sauce (醬油奶香), garlic (蒜香奶油油) and curry (咖哩奶油), all NT\$160 each.



It's the Idea that counts.

PHOTO: DAVID CHEN, TAIPEI TIMES

## Franz and Friends 城市舞台藝文沙龍

**Address:** B1, 25, Bade Rd Sec 3, Taipei City (台北市八德路三段25號B1)  
**Telephone:** (02) 2579-0558 **Open:** 11:30am until 11pm  
**Average meal:** NT\$300 to NT\$400 for lunch, NT\$480 to NT\$900 for dinner  
**On the Net:** [www.franzandfriends.com.tw](http://www.franzandfriends.com.tw)

Franz and Friends, located on Bade Road (八德路) just behind Taipei Arena, woos diners with its ultra-modern decor, relaxed urban lounge atmosphere and live music in the evenings. This bistro's Western fare is neither daring nor overly adventurous, but will suffice in a pinch for a fancier-than-average lunch or a semi-casual dinner outing.

The lunch menu offers a selection of pastas as well as a few main courses starting from NT\$200, while the dinner choices include main courses of steak, fish and lamb, starting from NT\$450.

On a recent lunchtime visit I tried the breaded lamp chops with tempura vegetables (NT\$260),

which was a mixed bag. Fans

of tonkatsu, or Japanese fried pork cutlet, might appreciate this crispy version of a rack of lamb. But the flow of deep-fried goodness was rudely interrupted by the chewy texture of the meat, which was also slightly gamey. The dish, nonetheless, was artfully presented with circular lines drawn with a chocolate plum sauce.

Other lunch choices on the menu are predictable, run-of-the-mill selections for mid-priced pasta lunches in Taipei: fettuccine with smoked salmon in cream sauce (NT\$250), spaghetti with tomato sauce and seafood (NT\$280) and seafood au gratin with mushrooms and cheese (NT\$300).

Lunches come with a soup of the day and a drink, while a small salad and dessert can be added for an extra NT\$80. Surprisingly, the salad turned out to be the highlight of my meal: a potato salad concoction mixed with salmon and edamame and topped with raisins and sliced almonds — a flavorful combination of sweet and savory, soft and crunchy.

Franz and Friends would

likely be just another trendy

wannabe restaurant if not

for its unique history. It was

founded more than 30 years

ago as the Idea House (艾迪亞),

one of a number of Western

restaurants in the city that hosted

performances by then-aspiring

artists, including the late dancer

and choreographer Lo Man-fei (羅

曼菲), folk icon TC Yang (楊祖珺)

and pop star Tsai Chin (蔡琴).

The restaurant was purchased, revamped and moved to its current location four years ago by artist-turned-entrepreneur Francis Chen (陳立衡), a frequent patron of Idea House. He continues the Idea tradition by holding live shows every night (the music ranges from Latin jazz and cover band rock to classical and Italian opera) and also uses the space to display fine porcelain from his company, Franz Collection Inc (法藍瓷). The restaurant's "sweet-heart afternoon tea" set (NT\$399) includes coffee or tea and an assortment of desserts, all served on Franz porcelain tableware.

Despite the restaurant's clean, minimalist interior, replete with mirrors and glass, several details hint at its evening lounge alter ego. The tables appeared scuffed and a few of the leather chairs were worn down with holes. The paper Heineken coaster that came with the kiwi Italian soda (NT\$200) was stained.

The wait staff was polite and attentive, but often fumbled at the table. My multi-course set meal came in spurts. Soup was interrupted by the salad; the salad was interrupted by the main course; and I subsequently had to remind the waiters about dessert, which I did my best to dislike because of its late arrival, but enjoyed nonetheless — champagne-flavored ice cream with raisins.

Franz and Friends is located next to the entrance to Metropolitan Hall (城市舞台) on Bade Road. The Web site lists each evening's performers.

BY DAVID CHEN

## TIDBITS

The Mid-autumn Festival (中秋節), otherwise commonly referred to in English as the Moon Cake Festival, falls on Nov. 3. A combination of economic uncertainty and fear of fattening sweets has kept sales rather modest this year.

The exchange of boxes of moon cakes is customary at this time of year, and bakeries, hotels and charity organizations all want a piece of the pie.

Charities have been especially hard hit, with the *United Daily News* reporting that sales for some organizations are down by as much as 90 percent, possibly because of charity fatigue after Typhoon Morakot.

This downturn has not prevented some of Taiwan's leading bakeries from releasing top-dollar gift boxes of elaborately concocted moon cakes, such as Hsin Tung Yang's (新東陽) NT\$1,580 three-cake gift box that features Hokkaido scallops.

If you dislike the red bean, mung bean or date pate that constitute the basic filling of most traditional moon cakes, there are many Western-style bakeries that have come up with their own innovative takes on the moon cake genre. Haagen-Dazs offers up-market ice cream versions. Its Deluxe Collection (金尊) includes both mango-flavored yogurt and a range of different ice creams wrapped in chocolate casings. However, at NT\$2,980 for a box of eight cakes, the collection is not exactly a cheap option.