



COMPILED BY HO YI

Japanese pop princess **Noriko Sakai**'s ongoing drug scandal took a turn for the worse when the disgraced actress' vacation home in Katsuura, Chiba Prefecture, was gutted by a fire early on Sunday. According to the *Liberty Times* (the *Taipei Times*' sister newspaper) the police suspect arson, and speculation immediately arose that the fire was set to destroy evidence because the house was reportedly one of the spots where Sakai and her husband **Yuichi Takaso** kept their stash.

Sakai made a tearful apology for using drugs at a press conference that lasted 10 minutes but drew massive media interest after she was released on bail on Thursday of last week. The 38-year-old actress was admitted to a Tokyo hospital shortly afterwards. A troupe of black-clad bodyguards is said to be keeping Sakai safe after threatening messages circulated on the Internet.

Meanwhile, a Taiwanese entertainment company has reportedly invited Sakai to revive her career in Taiwan. The news prompted sarcastic reports in the Japanese media, which commented that Taiwan's entertainment industry has seen so many scandals that it has been inured to them.

Unless, of course, there's an "ABC" involved. Former Channel V presenter **Henry Lu** (呂良基) was arrested this week for marijuana possession along with six other suspects, most of whom grew up in either Canada, Australia or the U.S.

Given the way it has been used in coverage of the arrests, ABC, which means American-born Chinese in English, has a different meaning in Chinese, as in the TTV headline *Police Close in From Three Directions, Tianmu, Neihu and Taichung, Arrested Six People, All ABCs From Foreign Countries* (警方兵分三路·從天母、內湖以及台中·逮捕六人·他們清一色都是從國外回來的ABC)。

Intrepid journalists have been quick to point out the correlation between drug use and having been born or studied abroad.

**Elva Hsiao** (蕭亞軒) and **Fan Fan** (范瑋琪) were both interviewed for what ended up being a front-page anti-drug report in the *Liberty Times*.

And going one better than former US president Bill Clinton (who claims he pretended to smoke a joint but "didn't inhale"), perhaps in an effort to protect themselves in the event that the fuzz decides to play another round of *Celebrity Drug Bust*, singer and wannabee



Chang Fei is ready to roll. PHOTO: TAIPEI TIMES

director **David Tao** (陶喆) and pop idol **Mark Chao** (趙又廷) both volunteered information that they had involuntarily inhaled "secondhand marijuana" smoke (二手麻)。

In other news, variety show host **Chang Fei** (張菲), who as far as Pop Stop knows isn't a stoner but certainly looks like one, has wasted no time in putting the moves on **Monique Lin** (林慧萍), a popular singer in the 1980s who was divorced a couple of weeks ago.

The sunglasses-wearing, Bee Gees-bouffanted Chang, who dated Lin for five years, threw his hat into the ring by telling gossip journoes he was happy to hear the news.

"I am ready. Now it is up to her to make the decision," Chang said when asked on Tuesday if he wanted to have another go at Lin.

Another entertainer with a unique appearance, veteran show hostess **Chen Chin-pei** (陳今佩), better known as the Great White Shark (大白鯊) for her formerly generous physique, has returned to showbiz after slimming down from 120kg to 69kg in 11 months.

The 57-year-old was spotted by local paparazzi chatting with friends and her boyfriend at a coffee shop in Taipei's East District (東區) last week.

Always vigilant when it comes to older women dating younger men, *Apple Daily* reports that Chen's boyfriend, known as "Alex" to the media, is 29 years her junior, and is one of the reasons why the entertainer lost so much weight. Apparently there are two other reasons: a pair of younger paramours in China.

The press has even given Chen a new nickname, "shar-pei," or dog face (沙皮臉). This is because one of the side effects of losing so much weight so quickly is saggy skin. The Not-So-Big Shark said she would get that problem sorted out before making a comeback.

BY TAYLOR BRIERE



## Picnic power

White Label is gonna fight ... for your right ... to picnic.

With City Life Art Festival tomorrow and Sunday at Huashan 1914 Creative Park (華山創意園區) (formerly known as Huashan Culture Park, 華山文化園區), the group is putting a new spin on the CAMPO-style outdoor market/music festival. Drawing inspiration from the Tokyo Picnic Club (www.picnicclub.org), White Label is urging Taipei residents to reclaim their urban spaces through the power of the picnic. Admission is free and attendees are encouraged to bring their own food and drinks.

"It will be an urban picnic event from now on," said White Label founder Chen Yu-hsin (陳昱昇), better known as A-Li. "We would like people to not just come to see the bands and to buy things at the market. They should ask their friends to come picnic with them."

White Label began in 2008 when A-Li, cofounder of CAMPO (Cinema Art Music People Original), decided

to branch out. Like CAMPO, the new venture was to be a monthly gathering of artists and musicians sharing and selling their work in an environment free from commercial influences. But although he loved the grass-roots, independent feel of the CAMPO experience, he wanted White Label to be more urban and edgy.

White Label hosted six events in the first half of 2008, but organizers grew frustrated with the city government's noise, decor and flyer restrictions for the use of Red House Theater (西門紅樓) in Xinmending. For A-Li, there were just "too many rules." As a result, the White Label went on hiatus for more than a year.

"I'm an office man now," A-Li said. "I can't hold as many events as CAMPO used to, but I still want to do something."

Bands and DJs are performing all weekend at City Life Art Festival, but tomorrow is the big day and will include the fuzzy shoegazer sounds of Boyz and Girl and the

## DANCE

One of the fun things about going to see university student dance performances is getting the chance to see young choreographers and dancers before they make a name for themselves. Taipei National University of the Arts has a record of turning out accomplished performers, and the school's 12-year-old Focus Dance Company (焦點舞團) has played a large role in polishing that raw talent.

The company presents *Seven* (柒) at the university's Dance Hall in four shows starting tonight, offering audiences a mixed bill of dances by two of the school's teachers, one of its graduate students and two other young choreographers, all of whom are well-known in Taipei dance circles.

The title of the show comes from the seven performers. On their production blog, they say that seven is more than just a number, it is "also a story ... seven characteristics of different individuals, forming an ever-changing face of the organism."

I'm not sure what that means, but judging by the photographs, one standout work

### PERFORMANCE NOTES:

**WHAT:** Seven (柒), Focus Dance Company (焦點舞團)

**WHEN:** Tonight and tomorrow at 7:30pm, tomorrow and Sunday at 2:30pm

**WHERE:** Taipei National University of the Arts Showcase Arts Center Dance Hall (國立臺北藝術大學展演藝術中心音樂廳), 1 Xueyuan Rd, Beitou Dist, Taipei City (台北市北投區學園路1號)

**ADMISSION:** Tickets are NT\$400, available through www.artstickets.com.tw, or at the door

**GETTING THERE:** Take the Danshui MRT line to Guandu Station (關渡捷運站), then catch a taxi or the TNAU shuttle that comes by the bus stop outside the station. The shuttle will be at the station 30 minutes and 15 minutes before each performance

will be Huang Yi's (黃瑀) *The Slanting Man* (傾斜的人). Huang, whose *Body*, *Sound* (身



音) was such a knock-out for Cloud Gate 2 (雲門2) last year, won rave reviews for his two new works for that company last month. He has also contributed an updated version of his seminal work, *Sound Body* 2, for this weekend.

Cheng Tsung-lung (鄭宗龍), Cloud Gate 2's resident choreographer, has contributed the title piece, *Seven*, while Yang Yu-ming (楊育鳴), a friend of Huang and Cheng's from the Horse Dance

Company (驪舞劇場), created *Pan* (泛)。

Two members of the Taipei Crossover Dance Theater (台北跨界舞團) who also teach at the school, Crossover director Ho Hsiao-mei (何曉玫) and dancer-turned-choreographer Zhang Xiao-xiong (張曉雄), created the final two works on the program. Zhang's piece is entitled *Autumn Song of the Yulin Ling* (秋歌之雨霖鈴), while Ho's piece translates as *Hug Day* (擁抱日子)。

## RESTAURANTS

BY HO YI

### Chao Pin Chi 潮品集 at San Want Hotel 神旺大飯店

**Address:** 2F, 172, Zhongxiao E Rd Sec 4, Taipei City (台北市忠孝東路四段172號2樓)  
**Telephone:** (02) 2772-2687 X9 **Open:** Weekdays from 11:30am to 2:30pm and 5:30pm to 9pm; weekends from 11am to 2:30pm and 5:30pm to 9pm  
**Average meal:** NT\$1,000 to NT\$3,980 plus 10 percent service charge  
**Details:** Menu in Chinese, English and Japanese; credit cards accepted

With its extensive menu offering Chaozhou-style cuisine and Cantonese dim sum, Chao Pin Chi (潮品集) at San Want Hotel is a place for serious foodies to enjoy Chinese banquet meals in a sophisticated setting.

Originating in China's Guangdong Province, Chaozhou cuisine is renowned for its seafood dishes, meticulous preparation and emphasis on flavors that are light and fresh. Under the adept hand of Hong Kong native and head chef He Ping-mu (何炳木), Chao Pin Chi is well known for its line of traditional Chaozhou specialties.

One of Chao Pin Chi's signature dishes is its marinated goose slices (滷水鵝肉片, NT\$420). Unlike Taiwanese marinated dishes, which tend to be strongly flavored, the goose has only a hint of seasoning and comes with a small plate of vinegar to ameliorate the gamey tang.

Seasoned gastronomes come for Chao Pin Chi's marinated goose feet, wings, liver, gizzard, intestine and congealed blood, which can be selected to make a combination platter.

Preserved Chinese kale, or "cabbage" as it's called on the restaurant's menu, is another signature element used to add aroma to various Chaozhou dishes, as in the stir-fried green beans with preserved cabbage

and minced pork (醬菜四季豆, NT\$420), which on a recent visit were too oily.

Though offensive to marine conservationists and animal rights activists, shark's fin soup is the restaurant's most popular specialty and shows just how deep diners' pockets are. Braised, boiled or stir-fried with shark's belly, chicken or crab meat, the politically incorrect delicacy can fetch up to NT\$2,980 per bowl. Other burn-a-hole-in-your-pocket options include braised abalone and shark's belly with oyster sauce (花膠鮮禾鮑, NT\$1,980 per person) and double-boiled bird's nest soup with crab meat (蟹肉燉官燕, NT\$1,800 per person).

A wide selection of dim sum tidbits can be found on the more wallet-friendly side of the menu. Chaozhou style steamed dumpling (潮州蒸粉粿, NT\$98) contains peanuts, minced pork, chives and dried shrimp wrapped in glutinous rice and served with a small plate of chili oil.

Must-tries include the steamed shrimp rice roll (蝦仁蒸粉腸, NT\$108) and steamed prawn and spinach dumpling (鮮蝦菠菜餃, NT\$108).

Other non-shrimp morsels are equally above par. Among the dozen dim sum dishes my dining partners and I have tried, the only disappointment was the



Chao Pin Chi's Chaozhou-style marinated goose slices are less overwhelming than the Taiwanese version. PHOTO: HO YI, TAIPEI TIMES

sauteed rice roll with XO chili sauce (XO醬煎腸粉, NT\$138), which was filling but boring.

Chao Pin Chi can comfortably accommodate 200 or so diners. Food is served at a surprisingly swift pace, and every few minutes, staff members return to take away empty plates and refill teacups. The only problem with the efficient service is that diners who take longer than five minutes to peruse the menu may feel pressured to order.

The restaurant has lunch sets that cost NT\$980 to NT\$1,280 per person, while dinner set menus are NT\$1,780 to NT\$3,980. Premium meals feature fancy dishes such as shark's fin soup and bird's nest soup. Chao Pin Chi is also currently offering an all-you-can-eat dim-sum menu with some 40 dishes to choose from (NT\$599 for lunch on weekdays, NT\$699 for dinner and on weekends). Reservations are required this promotion, which runs through Oct. 31.

In Taipei, friends of Lilian G. Molina must consider themselves lucky. The 27-year-old Belize native has spent the past five years sharing her passion for cooking at parties held in her own apartment and at holiday gatherings.

Now she's looking beyond her own kitchen, having created a Caribbean-themed, late-night menu for Roxy Roots, which launched last weekend.

The *Taipei Times* sampled her selection of spicy soul-food appetizers and citrus-based salads and dips, which offer a novel complement to beer and cocktails and add an authentic touch to this reggae-themed bar and restaurant in Taipei's East District (東區)。

This modest restaurant venture is a first for Molina, a self-avowed foodie who grew up cooking everything from Italian to Latino dishes, and counts Taiwanese food among her favorite cuisines, particularly stinky tofu and tripe.

Molina's Jamaican codfish fritters (NT\$250) are a must-try. The filling is made from codfish flakes and scallion, while chopped chili peppers and other herbal seasonings add heat and zest.

She confesses that the Jamaican jerk pit chicken (NT\$230) isn't quite authentic, as the chicken is fried instead of barbecued. But the dish is well worth trying for the

fiery jerk sauce made from scratch: a rich, plump blend of green and red chilies, thyme, allspice and cinnamon and nutmeg.

Molina prides herself on her adaptability and knack for experimentation. While some might complain about the lack of Scotch bonnet peppers, a hotter chill common in Jamaican cooking, Molina says that her jerk sauce does more than fine without it.

"You just have to know how to play with the flavors," she said. "And when you love the kitchen you'll find a way."

Her spicy Caribbean salsa (NT\$180) is unusual and delightful. Chopped cucumber adds a refreshing crunch to the standard chopped tomatoes, onions and cilantro. But the nicest surprise comes in the fresh chunks of pineapple, which round out this rich harmony of pungent, sweet and savory flavors.

There's more to the Caribbean than just African influences, says Molina, who was born to Honduran and Costa Rican parents. Ceviche, a chilled seafood salad common in Latin American countries, is usually made with raw fish marinated in citrus juices. Her version (NT\$220) has chilled shrimp soaked in a lemon-based marinade with cherry tomatoes, chili peppers and chopped

### Roxy Roots

**Address:** 90 Songren Rd, Taipei City (台北市松仁路90號) **Telephone:** (02) 2725-3932  
**Open:** 11am to 4am; Caribbean menu available from 9:30pm to 4am; Chinese dishes available during the day **Average meal:** NT\$200 to NT\$500  
**Details:** No service charge for Caribbean dishes; 10 percent service charge for Chinese dishes

cilantro, and is served with a side of tortilla chips.

The deep-fried coconut shrimp with salsa (NT\$280) is breaded with bits of coconut flakes that add a nice texture and rich flavor. However the quality of the shrimp missed the mark — it was chewy and flavorless.

But don't hesitate to try the wonderful Cuban-style refried beans and tortilla chips (NT\$200), which Molina says was inspired by a Cuban family friend's recipe. She uses locally grown red beans, which are stewed, mashed and then refried, giving them a creamy, melt-in-your-mouth texture.

The Caribbean appetizers menu is available only in the evenings, from 9:30pm to 4am. The restaurant serves Chinese dishes during the day.

Molina and a friend from St Vincent are planning to launch a Sunday brunch menu at Roxy Roots starting Oct. 18. She promises more classic home-cooked Caribbean and Latino dishes for "the person who goes out, gets drunk, has a hangover and still wants to come out and eat the next day — to recover."



Roxy Roots' Caribbean-themed menu launched last weekend. PHOTO: DAVID CHEN, TAIPEI TIMES

## FESTIVAL

Electronica group Unfamiliar Friends Party plays tomorrow at White Label's City Life Art Festival.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF WHITE LABEL

### FESTIVAL NOTES:

**WHAT:** White Label City Life Art Festival

**WHERE:** Huashan 1914 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). Huashan 1914 is the new name for the venue formerly known as Huashan Creative Park (華山創意園區)

**WHEN:** Tomorrow from 3pm to 10:30pm and Sunday from 3pm to 8pm

**ON THE NET:** whitelabelfesta.blogspot.com; www.huashan1914.com.



video game-inspired electronica of Unfamiliar Friends Party (不熟的朋友派對). Also tomorrow, the First Film Festival (firstfilm.pixnet.net), which is showing the debut films of 30 Taiwanese directors in 10 days at different locations across Taipei, will screen its first film, *Sunday Morning* (星期天早晨), by director and curator Alfie Chen (陳建軒). An outdoor installation art exhibit and a flea market selling products made by independent artists and designers are planned for both days.

BY DIANE BAKER

## Fresh blood on the dance floor

### TIDBITS

BY DAVID CHEN

News has reached Tidbits that L'Idiot, which garnered a favorable review last year (Nov. 14, 2008, Page 15) for its hospitable touches and good-value nosh, has dropped the meatball.

Expletive laden reports, one phoned in from a diner while at the restaurant, blast L'Idiot for its liberal use of processed cheese, dull and unappetizing fare, pricey wine list and distracted service.

Tianmu has a new edition to the culinary fold in the form of Papa Poulet, a small (one table with four seats and bar with four stools) rotisserie restaurant/take-away, which opened in July.

Proprietor Chris Bryant took inspiration from the ravenous queue that regularly accosts the rotisserie counter at Costco, and thought he could do better than the chicken served there.

Open Tuesday through Sunday, Papa Poulet is primarily a takeout joint. Orders can be placed from 9:30am and collected between 11:30am and 8pm.

The menu includes, among other choices, roast chicken (whole NT\$350, half NT\$180), which is stuffed with garlic, rosemary and lemon and has a dry rub of five spices on the outside, roast pork with crackling/apple sauce/English mustard (NT\$80 per 100g, served at weekends only) and a selection of beers such as Kronenbourg Blanc NT\$130 and Grolsch NT\$150.

Papa Poulet is located across the street from Dayeh Takashimaya (大葉高島屋) at 16-2, Ln 76, Zhongzheng Rd Sec 2, Taipei City (台北市忠誠路二段76巷16-2號). Tel: (02) 2831-1357.