the magazine, the photo was

posted at the end of last month.

has been keeping a low profile,

which adds to the challenge

interests of truth.

of verifying the rumors, in the

Yu could exact revenge by

hooking up with Chang Cheng-yue

(張震嶽), who is back in play after

splitting up from Miranda Lu (路嘉

super group comprising venerable

Chou (周華健) and Jonathan Lee (李

宗盛), which has proved a shrewd

怡). Chang has been busy with a

rockers Lo Ta-yu (羅大佑), Emil

move financially. He's already

unnamed woman who has been

boyfriend" Paul soon after the

to have hitched up with **David**

Wu (吳大維), a man whose list of

former relationships reads like a

who's who of Taiwan's celebrity

firmament. Yang may face com-

petition in the form of glamour

model Hsiang Ying (湘瑩), who

recently sighted

Lee Wei denies

that he and Elva

Hsiao are dating.

with Wu.

Next Magazine reports has been

release of her English album Self-

Selected, Faith Yang (楊乃文) seems

nicknamed "big-eyed chick" (大眼

After breaking up with "foreign

made headlines by dating an

妹) by Next Magazine.

Next Magazine laments that

following these revelations, Weng

\rceil hinese-language media report that singer and racing driver Jimmy Lin (林志穎) has become a father. Girlfriend Chen Ruo-yi (陳若儀) gave birth to a son earlier this week in California, and a story in the *United Daily News* suggests that although the parents are, er, keeping mum about the illegitimate child, Lin will acknowledge paternity following the end of his current concert tour.

It is perhaps no coincidence that his soon-to-be-released album's title translates as "lowprofile love" (低調愛).

The vernacular media have been uncharacteristically backward in coming forward: the news that one of the Chinesespeaking world's most eligible bachelors has a girlfriend and child hardly created a stir.

The fact that Andy Lau (劉德 華) managed to retain his fan base despite being "outed" as a family man has likely paved the way for a younger generation of male celebrities to be more up front about their private lives.

Does this mean the rabid media scrum is exercising a modicum of self-restraint?

Not likely ..

The ubiquity of digital photography proved fertile ground for celebrity gossip this past week. While none of the following beat Edison Chen's (陳 冠希) magnum opus, a number of celebrities have been caught with their proverbial pants down.

Elva Hsiao (蕭亞軒), based on a photo "provided by a reader" oublished in the *United Daily* News, is dating TV actor Lee Wei (李威). The damning and irrefutable evidence is a shot of Lee draping his arm round Hsiao's shoulder. Both parties vehemently deny being an item.

In a different league, photos posted on the Internet may cause graver problems for Jamie Weng (翁家明).

Reports in March had Weng's marriage to actress **Grace Yu**

RESTAURANTS





PHOTOS COURTESY OF MAKOTO TSUCHIMOCHI

Grooving on Guangfu

pened by Nobuki Kuwahara four years ago off an alley in Taipei's Da-an District (大安區), Jazz Spot Swing is a tiny bar with just five tables and six bar stools that has become an after-work haven for Japanese expats and Taiwanese jazz-lovers in the know.

"Jazz is very popular in Japan because of the American military presence after World War II," explains regular Sugimoto Masakazu, who plays the trombone. "Then, the recent movie Swing Girls created a new craze for jazz."

Kuwahara often invites customers who are musicians to go up to the venue's performance space and play, a practice that eventually prompted a group of regulars, including Masakazu, to form a band.

Because all of the musicians have daytime jobs, they call themselves the Champagne Zoo Band because the word "champagne" is almost a homophone for the Chinese word shangbanzu (上班族), or "working professional."

"In Japan, you could never find a bar

like this where you can just go up and play," gushes the wife of band member Satoshi Takagi. "It's fantastic!"

The Champagne Zoo Band takes on a free-wheeling form as a group. Each night from Monday to Sunday, whichever band member who happens to have time can stop by the bar and play. If no band member arrives on any given night, Kuwahara, the proprietor, plays piano alone.

The band plays American jazz standards and bossa nova. Sometimes they also adapt Taiwanese or Japanese folk songs such as Moon's Desert (月之沙漠).

Inoue Yamami, the only woman in the group, was elected to be the band leader. "They chose me so that there wouldn't be any fighting," quips Yamami, a vivacious performer who giggles, snaps her fingers, sways and jumps around while the other musicians play.

Yamami also arranges the set lists. For Mid-Autumn Festival they played songs with the word "moon" in their titles, such

as Blue Moon, Moon River and Fly Me to the Moon.

"Right now we have about 15 band members but it's always evolving," says Yamami. "We are always accepting new members.'

Even though they rarely have time to rehearse, the band members have developed chemistry.

"We just show up and improvise," says Masakazu. "Sometimes we fail. Most of the time we get it right.'

During a recent performance, the saxophone player sat on the back of a wicker chair to ad lib for a few minutes, then glanced at the cellist, who took the cue and did his own ad lib segment.



VENUE NOTES:

WHAT: Jazz Spot Swing WHEN: 7pm to 1am, Monday to Saturday WHERE: 417-6 Guangfu S Rd, Taipei

City (台北市光復南路417號之6). Tel: (02) 8789-0320 **ADMISSION:** Minimum order of

NT\$350 plus 10 percent service

eye contact." Jazz Spot Swing has made a name for itself among Japanese expats, and many of the Japanese iazz bands that come

"Interaction is

very important," says

Masakazu. "Small

venues are ideal

because it's more

intimate. There are

conversations and

BY DAVID CHEN

to Taipei drop by the bar to perform for free. In March this year, backup band members for famed bossa nova singer Lisa Ono showed up and played until 1am.

"The owner could make a lot of money if he chose to open a karaoke bar in the Linsen North Road (林森北路) area," said Akina Ishizuka, who joined the Champagne Zoo Band five months ago. "Instead he chose to open a jazz bar."

Chinese music and jazz fusion band Sizhukong performs tonight

and tomorrow at the Red House Theater.

Flight of the 'Paper Eagle

🚹 izhukong (絲竹空), which fuses modern jazz and traditional Chinese music, celebrates the release of its new CD, Paper Eagle (紙鳶), tonight and tomorrow with three shows at the Red House Theater (西門紅樓).

The six-piece ensemble is led by pianist and composer Peng Yu-wen (彭 郁雯), one of the founding members of Metamorphosis, a pioneering group known for recasting Taiwanese folk songs in modern jazz styles, including Latin jazz, be-bop and post-bop

Many of Peng's compositions with Sizhukong have Latin-based jazz rhythms, but the voices are distinctively Chinese, thanks to instruments such as the liuqin (柳琴), a four-stringed lute, and dizi (${f ii}$), a kind of Chinese flute.

Paper Eagle, the group's second album, also brings in African sounds thanks to guest musician Mogauwane Mahloelo of South Africa. He plays mbira (thumb piano) and djembe, a hand drum, on the song Marketplace (市集) and

BY DAVID CHEN

PERFORMANCE NOTES:

WHAT: Sizhukong (絲竹空) WHEN: Tonight at 7:30pm and tomorrow at 2:30pm and 7:30pm WHERE: Red House Theater (西門紅樓), 10 Chengdu Rd, Taipei City (台北市成都路10號) TICKETS: NT\$600, available at the door, through NTCH ticketing or online at www.artsticket.com.tw

also adds percussion and vocals to the group's rendition of a traditional Hakka mountain song.

The album features several compositions from the band's international members. Belgian bassist Martijn Vanbuel co-wrote several tracks with Taiwanese jazz musicians, including *Deer Harbor*, a song about the town of Lugang (鹿港), an historical

trading port and point of entry for Chinese settlers.

Sizhukong's band lineup for this weekend's shows includes prominent musicians from Taiwan's jazz and Chinese music scenes: Toshi Fujii (藤井 俊充) on drums and percussion, Huang Chih-ping (黃治評) on dizi and dongxiao (洞簫, bamboo flute), Alex Wu (吳政君) on erhu (二胡) and percussion, Chen Chihling (陳芷翎) on liuqin and zhongruan (中阮) and Martijn Vanbuel on bass.

BY CATHERINE SHU

looked promising, but were the

probably because the beef was

was frozen and we had trouble

As a counterpoint to our cold

dishes, we ordered the garlic clam

paper hot pot (蒜頭蚋紙, NT\$260).

served so cold that part of it

separating the slices from

one another.

least memorable part of the meal,

PaPa Gio′ 喬爸爸義大利美食餐 Address: 22, Alley 6, Ln 170, Zhongxiao E Rd, Sec 4, Taipei City (台北市忠孝東路四段 170巷6弄22號) **Telephone:** (02) 2711-8720 Open: 11:30am to 2pm and 6pm to 10pm Average meal: NT\$500 per person **Details:** Credit cards accepted On the Net: www.papagio.com.tw

hen the owner of Papa Giovanni, a familystyle Italian eatery on Zhongxiao East Road (忠孝東路), put his business up for sale in March, Giorgio Trevisan jumped at the chance.

"For me, it was like to be reborn," said Trevisan, an Italian chef from Verona who has been in Taipei for 10 years. The same could be said about

the restaurant, which now goes by the name PaPa Gio'. The decor hasn't changed

much — it's still classy but relaxed with lots of dark, natural hues and warm lighting — but the menu has been revamped and showcases Trevisan's excellent pizzas and fellow chef and co-owner Matteo Boschiavo's pastas made from scratch.

If you've had good Italian food in Taipei, chances are Trevisan and Boschiavo were the chefs. Trevisan started working at Osteria Rialto when he arrived in Taiwan in 1999, ran his own restaurant, Giorgio, for five years and most recently served as the head chef at Capone's. Boschiavo, also a Verona native, followed a similar track. He met Trevisan while working at Osteria Rialto, moved on as a freelancer for the major hotels and then joined him again at Capone's.

PaPa Gio' is a "dream come true," says Trevisan, as he and Boschiavo feel like they have the freedom to go for a more traditional trattoria-style atmosphere, where "you don't have customers, you just have friends" coming to eat. After trying the pizza,

you'll feel like Trevisan's best friend. The Fresca (NT\$450) is a delectable balance of heavy and light: a rich harmony of mozzarella and ricotta and cherry tomatoes and fresh arugula. The crust is simply done right — thin and crispy but not cracker-like, and slightly doughy on the edge. On a second visit, my dining companion didn't want to share his "Pizza della Casa PaPa Gio" (NT\$450), a house specialty with a supreme combination of tomato, mozzarella, mushroom, ham, artichoke, salami, anchovy and olives.

The 12-inch pies come in 20 varieties and are baked in a stone-base oven imported from Italy. With prices ranging between NT\$300 and NT\$450, PaPa Gio' is

a must-try for pizza lovers. For pastas, Boschiavo makes fresh fettuccine, tortelloni and gnocchi, ranging from NT\$280 to NT\$400. A delicious, creamy choice is the gnocchi verdi al Gorgonzola e noci (NT\$350),

Papa Giovanni is now PaPa Gio'. PHOTO: DAVID CHEN, TAIPEI TIMES

a pasta made of potato and spinach topped with Gorgonzola,

Parmesan and walnut. Boschiavo recommends the grilled rib-eye steak (NT\$650) for meat lovers, and says the steaks are USDA prime. Other main courses include grilled tiger prawns (NT\$700) and grilled salmon with garlic cream

sauce (NT\$550). Many traditional trattorias don't offer menus, say the two chefs. While this wouldn't work in Taipei, they try to oblige any special requests and keep a constant rotation of off-menu specials, using whatever fresh ingredients are available. Recently, Boschiavo came up with a frog legs risotto, which he insists is worth a try. The not-so-adventurous can stick with the risotto with porcini mushrooms (NT\$450), made with

imported carnaroli rice. For dessert, we had a blueberry-topped panna cotta (NT\$180), which was commendable, but a sinfully good tiramisu (NT\$180) stole the show.

PaPa Gio' a short walk from Zhongxiao Dunhua MRT Station (忠孝敦化捷運站), exit No. 5.

ocated in a cavernous space that seems more suited to a nightclub than a restaurant, Sashimiya (三四味屋) across from Breeze Center (微風廣場) is an especially sleek izakaya (the Japanese version of a tapas bar). A large movie screen dominates the interior; on a recent visit, it was playing the John Travolta remake of Hair.

Sashimiya's menu is slightly more innovative than those found at many other izakaya restaurants in Taipei. It features the same sashimi platters, nigiri rolls, grilled meats and tempura dishes, but takes a step into more venturesome territory with items like its signature tuna and avocado sushi roll (鮪魚酪梨卷, NT\$160), which comes topped with slices of tuna drizzled in mayonnaise and sprinkled with green onion. The avocado makes up the middle of the roll, which is served on top of teriyaki sauce and sesame seeds. The large portions of avocado were soft and buttery, but the sauce, which soaked through the bottom layer of rice, overwhelmed its flavor.

Our other dishes were simpler — they included cod fish liver, uni sashimi and Japanese-style beef sashimi. The uni sashimi (海膽, NT\$320) was served on a bed of ice and each piece of sea urchin

roe was plump and firm. The dish was slightly marred, however, by the slices of green onion scattered as garnish on top of the uni. The green onion complemented the sprig of cypress leaves, perilla leaf and clam shell that also decorated the dish, but the taste and texture distracted from the very delicate, slightly melon-like flavor of the

urchin roe. For NT\$190, we got a notinsignificant heap of cod liver (鱈 魚肝) on top of sauteed onions and topped with grated daikon radish and yet more green onion (all of our dishes had slivers of the vegetable sprinkled on). The liver itself was smooth, rich and had a slightly nutty flavor that was enhanced by the vinegarseasoned radish. The beef sashimi (日式生牛肉, NT\$290) also came on a bed of onion and topped with grated radish and scallion. The deep crimson, paper-thin slices

The paper itself is thick, flameproof and nestled into a small mesh colander over an open flame. The Japanese cooking method makes the garlic so tender that it literally melts in the mouth. Much of the two main ingredients' flavor and aroma had already settled into the broth, which was soothing to drink on a rainy evening.

Sashimiya has an extensive list of alcoholic drinks. Bottles of sake range from NT\$250 to NT\$1,800 for a 2 liter bottle of White Crane sake (白鶴清酒).

Like any good izakaya,



Sashimiya 三四味屋

Address: 3F, 1, Ln 126, Fuxing S Rd, Sec 1, Taipei City (台北市復興南路一段126巷1號3樓) **Telephone:** (02) 8773-4888 Open: 11:30am to 2:30pm and 5:30pm to 11pm; closes at 11:30pm Fridays and Saturdays Average meal: NT\$800 Details: Chinese and English menu; credit cards accepted

Sashimiya's menu earns points for creativity.

TIDBITS



Naughty but nice.

his month, Grand Hyatt Taipei's new executive pastry chef, Reinhard Lackner, takes up his post.

The 29-year-old Austrian snowboarding archer had his heart set on being a scientist/pilot as a teenager, but an apprenticeship turned him on to pastry making, he said in a Sunday *Times* interview last year.

His opening salvo is a selection of coffee-themed desserts, including tiramisu, an elegant match of espresso and mascarpone laced with a rich zabaglione filling that is more often than not bastardized in the capital's myriad mediocre coffee houses, coffee mille-feuille and opera slices, and coffee and chocolate ganache sandwiched between layers of moist sponge cake.

The Afternoon Dessert Buffet is available at Cha Lounge for NT\$620 per person from 2pm to 6pm, Mondays through Fridays, or for NT\$680 per person from 1pm to 6pm on weekends and public holidays. For more information or to make a reservation, call (02) 2720-1200X3198 or X3199,

On the Net: www.reinhardlackner.com