

POP STOP

COMPILED BY IAN BARTHOLOMEW

Last week, the results of the 2009 Miss Asia Pageant were announced and the dust is yet to settle over the upset that saw favorite **Erica Liu** (劉伊心) relegated to fourth place. To add insult to injury, she was pipped to the post for a top-three place by rival **Hsu Chia-huei** (許嘉慧), who took third. Hsu, 21 years old and still a student, had been defeated by Liu in the Taiwan district qualifiers.

Liu, a professional model and winner of the 2007 International Bikini Queen competition, wept when the results were read out. *Apple Daily* quoted her as saying, "I have always won first or second in the past."

First place was taken by Chinese contestant **Xu Ying** (許瑩), with second place taken by 26-year-old Hong Kong/Macao contestant **Wang Xiyao** (王希瑤). Allegations of breast enhancement surgery have been made against Wang, in response to which Liu said her own 34Ds were the real deal.

Both the first and third place winners were less well endowed than Liu, a fact that seems to have utterly bowled over Taiwanese media. Could it be that cup size isn't the ultimate arbiter of beauty?

Last week, Taipei councilman **Hou Kuan-chun** (侯冠群) made accusations of sexual harassment against a police officer who had conducted a Breathalyzer test on a then unnamed celebrity.

On Tuesday, **Kelly Kuo** (郭靜純) identified herself as the person whom the policeman had asked, presumably salaciously, to "get down and give it a blow" (妳先下來吹一下).

Kuo said that as a married woman she had been unwilling to be identified, but had subsequently felt that she was not the only woman to face this kind of harassment, and by getting the incident noticed in the media, she could help prevent this happening to others.

The shock waves from **Mark Chao's** (趙又廷) unexpected victory at the Golden Bell Awards (金鐘獎) continue to reverberate this week with the accusation that his tearful acceptance of the award, which had been expected to go to **Vic Chou** (周渝民), the

more experienced member of the *Black & White* (痞子英雄) cop shop duo, had all been an act. If so, it is tempting to suggest that it was a much better one than anything seen on set.

Rumors that Chao's friendship with Chou had suffered following the awards ceremony and that the planned feature film version of *Black & White* is in jeopardy starring the two original leads only fed speculation. Midweek reports in the *United Daily News* and other media suggested that the two were in contact via MSN, but their relationship is under close scrutiny for any signs of further tension.

Moving from work to play, it seems that while starlet **Pei Lin** (裴琳), now out of rehab, might have kicked the magic dragon, *Next Magazine* confirms with a slew of grainy late-night photos that she's still a girl who wants to have fun. These days, though, the high jinks are fueled by alcohol. The magazine says that she has already lost two jobs, one as a co-host for *Go Go Japan* and the other on the TTV drama *Niang Jia* (娘家人), because of alcohol-related issues. Scenes of simulated sex on the roadside and a vicious physical attack against a suspected romantic rival for the attentions of *Go Go Japan* host **Toku** (李育德) have done nothing for her reputation, but certainly have ensured plenty of column inches.

Another celebrity who can't seem to keep on the straight and narrow is **Suzanne Hsiao** (蕭淑慎), who is back in the news for all the wrong reasons.

While many of the stars caught up in the spate of celebrity drug busts in late 2007 have bounced back to achieve even greater success in the entertainment industry, Hsiao has kept a low profile, but is now suspected of drug use once again. *Next* reports that the former beauty, now 11kg heavier than in her glory days, tested positive for Class 2 drugs after visiting a clinic for tests following an abortion last month. She claims the positive drug tests are the result of using anti-depressants, but if this claim proves as hollow as previous excuses, she'll be looking at some real jail time for what would be her third drug offense.

Erica Liu isn't used to losing. PHOTO: TAIPEI TIMES

BY THOMAS WALK



This year's Taiwan Peace Festival is toning down the DJs and turning up the ambience. PHOTOS COURTESY OF RYANHARRINGTONPHOTOGRAPHY.COM

Give peace a dance

The Taiwan Peace Festival (和平音樂祭), also known as Hoping for Hoping, a play on the Chinese word for peace (*heping*, 和平), is this year changing its venue, season and music.

In the past, Peace Fest took place at Kunlun Herb Gardens (崑崙藥用植物園) in Taoyuan County, but this year it will move to a location on the scenic east coast near Taroko Gorge in Hualien County. It is being held in the autumn to avoid a repeat of last year's "mud fest," the result of holding it in June after a week of torrential rain. And in another departure, the all-night lineup of techno DJs that one attendee referred to as "music for angry robots" has been axed.

Why the changes? Peace Fest got too big and lost much of its original ambience, said Sean Wratt, who is in charge of public relations for the event. Organizers hope to recapture the original vibe by taking things down a notch, locating the festival in the middle of an Aboriginal community, and slashing start-up costs to make it easier to recoup expenses and have money left over for charity.

"We plan to get back the original feeling we created. It became a big spectacle, lights, big stage... it didn't really work," said Wratt. "Everybody gets dazzled by big lights and sound. If we draw back a little bit, people can get closer [to each other]."

One of the reasons for making the festival bigger was the desire to make more money for charity, said Dave Nichols, the liaison for the new venue at the Sanjhan-Pratan Community (三棧部落) halfway between Taroko Gorge and Hualien City.

But holding a bigger festival costs more money, making it harder to cover costs and donate to worthy causes if the weather turns bad and attendance suffers, as happened last year.

Previously, advertised recipients of Peace Fest philanthropy included Taiwan International Workers Association (台灣國際勞工協會), Compassion International Taiwan, Basic Human Needs and Transasia Sisters, but this year the list has been whittled down to a single group, Adopt-A-Minefield, and possibly to a charity connected to the Taimali Village (大麻里) in Taitung County, which was hit hard by Typhoon Morakot in August.

This year, some of the main beneficiaries of the event will be the residents of the town in which it will be held, down in a little-known grotto at the mouth of a "Mini Taroko."

"Part of the charity is to benefit the Aboriginal community," said Christian Kohli, the designer of the festival's Web site and organizer of the media tent. "People can go buy beer from the five or six stores around town."

"We have a much smaller budget, so it's easier to break even and give to charity," Kohli said. "And even if we just break even, we benefit the community. They're trying to open themselves up [to tourism], and we help put them on the map."

"I found Sanjhan over 20 years ago. Since then, it has always been my favorite place [in Taiwan]," Nichols said. "I've never seen bluer waters to swim in."

Begun in 2003 as an anti-Iraq War protest in front of the American Institute in Taiwan, the protesters turned to partying for peace after undercover police officers distributed fliers telling them foreigners were not allowed to protest and threatened Wratt, an English teacher at the time, with deportation.

According to organizer Lynn Miles, who secured the location at the Kunlun Herb Gardens, the "iconic moment [of the first festival] was the peace circle" when activists and partygoers held hands around a fire pit to the sound of African. The circle became a Peace Fest tradition.

The festival was not held in 2004, mainly because of pessimism brought about by the war in Iraq, but organizers decided to revive it in 2005, and it grew to include a lineup of bands that spanned an entire day and DJs who rocked all night.

Not everybody liked the DJs, however, including Justin Yoie, this year's craft vending organizer. "It's supposed to be a yin [and] yang kind of night. The DJs fucked that up. They broke the peace."

Nichols, who will this year be one of only two DJs to work the show, says he will only play songs of peace and speeches by noted democracy activists such as Martin Luther King and Mahatma Gandhi. Will the Peace Fest recapture its original feeling? That remains to be seen. But one thing is certain: It will be a cozier affair.

MUSIC

FESTIVAL NOTES:

Music lineup:
Tonight
 8pm San Jhan Dance Group (三棧舞團)
 9pm open jam
 10pm Banai Nakaw (巴奈拿吉)
 11pm Kou Chou Ching (拷秋勤)

Tomorrow
 11am DJ Red Ray
 12pm Blues Vibration
 1pm Kabayashi and Furai (小林隆二朗&風來)
 2pm Godswounds
 3pm Tyler Dakin and the Long Naked Bottles
 4pm The Admissionaries
 5pm Dakanow (達卡鬧)
 6pm Peace Circle, with special guests Banai Nakaw, Bainang (蔣進興) and Balach (巴拉智)

6:30pm Didjiboom jam
 7pm Kimbo (胡德夫)
 8pm New Hong Kong Hair City
 9pm THC (HCP在台北)
 10pm Skaraoke
 11pm High Tide
 12am Fao

Sunday
 9am DJ Lasy Days
 11am MikeMudd
 12pm Vana
 1pm Miser Green and Highway 9
 2pm Tanya
 2:30pm Echo
 3pm Collider
 4pm Malasun

What: Taiwan Peace Festival (和平音樂祭)
When: 8pm tonight to 5pm Sunday
Where: Sanjhan-Pratan Community (三棧部落), off Highway 9 (台9線) between Taroko Gorge and Hualien City
Admission: NT\$500 or NT\$300 for students and seniors. Children get in free
Camping: NT\$200 for one night or NT\$300 for two nights
On the Net: www.hopingforhoping.com



PHOTO: TAIPEI TIMES

RESTAURANTS

Diary

Address: 53 Dongfeng St, Taipei City (台北市東豐街53號) **Telephone:** (02) 2706-3553
Open: 3:30pm to 1am **Average meal:** NT\$1,000
Details: Chinese and English menu, credit cards accepted

The capital's bistro and tapas-style dining denier cri reaches a new apogee in the form of Diary, a stylish four-month-old bar-cum-restaurant whose fusion menu focuses on bold combinations and striking presentation.

Burnished aluminum Emeco chairs and exposed cement walls and roof beams lend the place an industrial feel, but what could easily have been a cold sterile environment is ingeniously augmented by the warmth of antique wooden tables from Java, pleasant lounge music and subdued lighting.

Diary's menu exhibits the same level of thoughtfulness: The chicken meat balls (炸雞肉球, NT\$180) are served disguised as a plate of Ferrero Rocher chocolates, while the fried rocks (炸岩石, NT\$300) are wow-inducing chunks of seafood coated in batter colored by cuttlefish ink and deep-fried to look like — yes, you've guessed it — small stones.

Made from a recipe given to the proprietor by one of his friends, the Nicolas duck tortilla (網路鴨餅, NT\$250) is a gourmet adventure of spring onion, succulent duck and unleavened bread, while the tenderloin with Parmesan's (鮮馬森牛肉, NT\$380) robust notes of sharp cheese and sauteed beef



form a synergy of savoriness. Popular creations include the baked chicken leg stuffed with risotto (炸小雞, NT\$320), a titillating dish that owes much of its lively flavor to the addition of black truffle, and the open face sandwich (鮭魚塔, NT\$180), which consists of layers of shrimp, poached egg, ham, smoked salmon and mayonnaise. Populated by tattooed young wait staff, including experienced trendsetters from popular nightspots Mono Mono and Binchotan (備長炭), Diary offers a drink list that's as exciting as its food menu. The cellar includes reasonably priced white wine

from Italy, Chile and France (NT\$200 to NT\$250 per glass and NT\$1,200 to NT\$1,600 per bottle) and the bar serves a selection of cocktails priced between NT\$200 and NT\$300. The mustached manager doubles as a sommelier. During a recent weekend visit, he took extra care explaining where the wine we ordered came from, how it tasted and with which food our cocktails would go well with. Each cocktail is served on a paper coaster with the drink's recipe handwritten on it for patrons to take home and experiment with.



Dear Diary. PHOTOS: HO YI, TAIPEI TIMES

Service is a mix of professionalism and neighborliness, which left me feeling pampered. Diary's menu changes with the seasons and according to the creations of guest chefs. The restaurant's blog (www.wretch.cc/blog/diary53) says upcoming offerings will be Taiwanese-inspired.

1885

Burger Store was taking a big risk locating its recently opened premises a stone's throw away from Evans Burger (reviewed here on Feb. 27). Evans packs in the crowds not only because of its prices and snappy service, but also with its relaxing colonial-style space. Burger Store clearly did its homework before opening. Its interior of soft lighting, brick walls, wood finishes and comfortable booths matches Evans' laid-back vibe. Also like Evans, this joint offers cola refills for free and there is no service charge. Unlike Evans, Burger Store is mainly interested in one thing: burgers. And when it comes to its daily burger specials (served during the week from 11am to 6pm), Burger Store is

good value. Monday's offering is the cheddar and Swiss cheese burger (NT\$190); Tuesday's is the cheese and mushroom burger (NT\$180); Wednesday's is a grilled steak burger (NT\$220); Thursday's is the BBQ bacon and cheese burger (NT\$220); and the week rounds out with a BBQ pineapple and cheese burger (NT\$220). All burger specials are served with French fries and a drink. As it was Tuesday, I went with the cheese and mushroom burger. Generous slices of fresh mushrooms, lightly fried, rested on a piece of melted processed cheese and thick beef patty on an open bun. The sliced tomatoes, red onions and lettuce along with three slices of pickle come on the side for patrons to add them if they so choose.

To set itself apart from similar restaurants, Burger Store has added some novel flourishes such as substituting plates with wooden cutting boards and placing the fries in cute metal pails. For the price, it was an impressive display. The fries were crispy while the burger was juicy and tasty. Less impressive, however, was the grilled steak breakfast (NT\$290). It came served with two thin slabs of beef, two eggs (any style), a choice of cheese potatoes or hash browns and salad, juice and bread. We were surprised to find a whole-wheat hamburger bun accompanied the dish. Is Burger Store too specialized in making burgers to offer sliced bread? The vegetables in the salad consisted of those that accompanied the burger. Hiding them underneath a mound of canned corn merely added insult to injury. Even the cheese sauce that came with the very oily and flavorless potatoes tasted suspiciously like the same variety used on the burger. All that was missing from this burger-disguised-as-a-breakfast was the pickles and mushrooms. The dish began to make sense only when my dining companion piled the egg and slightly gristly steak on top of the bun — burger style. Some baked beans here or fried onion there would have done much for this "breakfast." Burger Store won't win accolades for originality or superior taste. But what it does do — whip up a solid burger — it does well.



PHOTO: NOAH BUCHAN, TAIPEI TIMES

1885 Burger Store

Address: 24-1 Pucheng St, Taipei City (台北浦城街24-1號) **Telephone:** (02) 2367-8258
Open: Mondays to Thursdays 11am to 9:30pm, closes at 10:30pm Fridays and Saturday, opens at 10am Saturdays and Sundays, closes at 9:30pm Sundays
Average meal: NT\$200
Details: English and Chinese menu; credit cards not accepted

1885 Burger Store does up a decent burger. Just beware of its breakfasts.