

# POP STOP

COMPILED BY HO YI

Jolin Tsai, below, is moving on from pretty-faced idol Eddie Peng to model Godfrey Kao, right.

PHOTOS: TAIPEI TIMES



**Chen** (陳泰銘) held last Saturday? Never happened? And anyway, Chen was still married last time local paparazzi checked. As for Hong Kong's former diva **Cherie Chung** (鍾楚紅), the 49-year-old widow personally denied the speculation about her upcoming wedding with a certain wealthy businessman from Singapore.

While Hou has found her Mr Right, **Jolin Tsai** (蔡依林) is getting cozy with fast-rising model **Godfrey Kao** (高以翔), whose previous claim to fame was his pair of delectable pinkish nipples, which he flagrantly exposed in his photo book. It's only a matter of time before intimate comparisons will be made between Kao and Tsai's old flame **Jay Chou** (周杰倫).

So what is the Mando-pop king, self-made film director and occasional actor doing with his love life? Not much. Unless you count the banter and teasing exchanges between him and supermodel-turned-actress **Lin Chi-ling** (林志玲) during the promotions for the fantasy adventure *The Treasure Hunter* (刺陵).

The way Pop Stop sees it, the real-life flirting between the two is more convincing than the on-screen romance that they share in the movie, which was killed by the embarrassingly coy lines and dumb jokes that filled the clunky script.

Finally, model-turned-housewife **Hung Hsiao-lei** (洪曉蕾) and her CEO-husband **Wang Shih-chun** (王世均) offer an example of a dreamy celebrity marriage gone sour. An outburst of violence erupted on Christmas Eve when a young man accidentally bumped into an inebriated Wang at a Cash Box KTV (錢櫃) outlet.

According to a witness, Wang then beat the man to the ground with a beer can and kicked one of the man's female friends in the head while shouting "don't you know who I am." Wang apologized afterwards and no charges were brought against him.

One month earlier, a widely circulated rumor claimed that there had been incidents of spousal abuse between the model couple, though both parties have denied the accusation.

Patty Hou has reportedly found her true love.

PHOTO: TAIPEI TIMES



As dull as it may sound, marriage is the keyword in this week's gossip rags, as a bevy of female stars are rumored to be either getting engaged or are ready to enter a state of matrimony. The one that sounds most genuine involves celebrity sweetheart **Patty Hou** (侯佩岑), who has not been coy about gossip journals' inquiries about her engagement party last Friday.

The paparazzi from *Liberty Times* (the *Taipei Times*' sister paper) and *Apple Daily* quickly published reports profiling Hou's fiancé; on Wednesday. His name is **Ken Huang** (黃伯俊). He is 35 years old, resembles **Nicholas Tse** (謝霆鋒) slightly and makes an annual income of more than NT\$12 million at Citigroup Global Markets Inc. However, the two rival newspapers have yet to agree on whether or not the man in question is an heir to family assets worth tens of billions of NT dollars. A positive answer will definitely make the modern-day fairy tale more dreamy: A beautiful woman lives happily ever after with her prince charming and his moneybags.

Gossip hounds should already know about the three-carat engagement ring that Huang gave to Hou after they had been seeing each other for just four months, as well as Huang's rumored romance with actress **Ruby Lin** (林心如).

Apart from the report of the Huang-Hou pairing, other nuptial news flashes have been rigorously denied by the parties involved. Did **Maggie Cheung** (張曼玉) become engaged to her German architect boyfriend **Ole Scheeren** on Christmas Eve? The 45-year-old actress's agent says no. But gossip insiders assert the couple will get hitched soon.

How about the engagement party celebrating the union of veteran belle **Rosamund Kwan** (關之琳) of Hong Kong and Taiwan's IT tycoon **Pierre**

WARNING: Excessive consumption of alcohol can damage your health.

BY ANDREW C.C. HUANG

MUSIC



Undisputedly talented and absolutely fabulous, Sodagreen (蘇打綠) is that rare indie band which has achieved mainstream success without losing its edge. With vocalist Wu Ching-feng (吳青峰) as its frontman, the band serves out equal measures of baroquely beautiful music and insolent rock attitude.

For fans who missed out on their highly lauded concerts, there's no need to fret. Sodagreen will present a themed evening tomorrow night entitled *Fantasy Rhapsody Night* (夢幻逸曲夜) as their New Year's celebration with fans at Legacy Taipei in Huashan 1914 Creative Park (華山1914).

Shifting through folk rock, pop balladry, fevered punk and fusion jazz, this six-member rock outfit explores different music styles with equal aplomb. Whether rhapsodizing about the bliss of romance or moaning about love besieged, vocalist Wu puts his unique voice to effective use by evoking all the different shades of youthful rapture.

With five studio albums under their belt, Sodagreen has set many records in Taiwan's music industry. In 2007, they became the first indie band to mount the stage of Taipei Arena and they performed extravagantly for five hours.

That same year, they started the ambitious Vivaldi project (華瓦第計畫), a plan to release four concept albums with the theme of the four seasons recorded in four different cities (two have already been released). They also won the Best Band Award at the Golden Melody Awards for two consecutive years in 2007 and 2008.

With his waifish body, androgynous facial features and the high-pitched vocals, the charismatic frontman Wu commands as much controversy as respect. The title track of Sodagreen's third album, *Incomparable Beauty* (無與倫比的美麗), a tribute to Wu's friendship with singer Deserts Chang (張懸), provoked rumors of a romance between the two. When once questioned about his high-pitched voice, Wu retorted proudly "but do you sing better than me?"



**PERFORMANCE NOTES:**

**WHAT:** Sodagreen (蘇打綠) — Fantasy Rhapsody Night (夢幻逸曲夜)

**WHEN:** Tomorrow at 8 pm

**WHERE:** Legacy Taipei (傳音樂展演空間), located at Huashan 1914 Creative Park (華山1914), Center Five Hall (中五館), 1, Bade Rd Sec 1, Taipei City (台北市八德路一段1號)

**ADMISSION:** NT\$800 at the door

**ON THE NET:** www.sodagreen.com.tw; www.legacy.com.tw

Sodagreen has managed to step into the mainstream without damaging its indie cred.

PHOTOS: TAIPEI TIMES

## RESTAURANTS

BY DIANE BAKER

BY DAVID CHEN

### Kooks 異嗶堂

**Address:** 12, Ln 18, Renai St, Tamsui, Taipei County (台北縣淡水鎮仁愛街18巷12號)  
**Telephone:** (02) 2625-6161 **Average meal:** NT\$300 to NT\$400 per person  
**Open:** Tuesdays through Sundays from noon to midnight  
**Details:** English and Chinese menus; credit cards not accepted

Tucked away in a side alley about a two blocks from the front of the Tamsui MRT station is a little restaurant that friends who live in the area had raved about for almost a year. Having finally made it to Kooks twice in the past six weeks, I am now a believer.

Kooks was opened 14 months ago by husband and wife Liam McDonagh and Emma Chen (陳佩君), who took a long, narrow space next door to an eel restaurant and across from a NT\$99 special store, and opted for simple black chairs and tables that can be arranged to seat about 30 people, a pair of sofas out in front of the smoking area and a sampling of Liam's original artwork on the walls.

They have kept the menu simple too, with a selection of wraps, sandwiches, burgers, salads and pastas, snacks, milkshakes and smoothies and a variety of black and herbal teas, plus a small selection of beers and cocktails.

Liam does the bulk of the cooking, which can mean a wait if Kooks is crowded, and the orders arrive piecemeal, but they are worth it. The best thing to do is order a collection of sandwiches, wraps or whatever and then share them as they come out of the kitchen.

All of the sauces — the marinades, salad dressings and dips — are made from scratch and they are delicious, which is another reason you don't want to confine yourself to just one item per person. I found myself

wondering if Paul Newman began his salad dressing empire this way.

The second time I went to Kooks I let a Tamsui regular order for our group and he insisted we sample each of the different flavors on offer: a "Lord of cheese" sandwich for the pesto, the Ultimate Veggie Burger for the tahini dip, a falafel wrap that came with two dips and then a tikka for the Indian spices. Although my friend loves the chicken tikka he asked for it to be made vegetarian so I could eat it and Liam was willing to oblige.

The pesto alone is enough to warrant a visit. The pesto and cheese sandwich, on a great ciabatta, just melts in the mouth. The veggie burger, which is made of minced mushroom meat, was flavorful enough on its own without the accompanying dips. The wraps are packed with your choice of beef, chicken, tuna or falafel, along with saffron rice, lettuce and tomato, and come cut in half with one end wrapped in foil to make it easier to pick up and eat.

There are 10 choices of wraps, pitas or rice dishes, running between NT\$170 to NT\$200. The 11 varieties of sandwiches average about the same, while the hamburgers range from NT\$180 to NT\$349 for a double-decker. All come with French fries. There are eight kinds of salads from NT\$180 to NT\$220 and a choice of two pastas, pesto chicken or meat sauce. For an additional NT\$20 or NT\$35 you can add a soda, tea or juice to your meal.



Kooky possibilities in Tamsui.

PHOTO: DIANE BAKER, TAIPEI TIMES

There are no desserts on offer — not yet, said Emma; not for a while said Liam — but both times I've visited, we've been too full for dessert anyway.

### Posh Homemade Burgers and Breakfast

**Address:** 38, Ln 161, Dunhua S Rd, Sec 1, Taipei City (台北市敦化南路一段161巷38號)  
**Telephone:** (02) 8773-3830 **Average meal:** NT\$200  
**Open:** 11am to 10pm; closes at 10:30pm on weekends and holidays  
**Details:** Credit cards not accepted; free wireless Internet; NT\$30 to plug in your computer; 10% service charge

Posh's interior doesn't quite live up to the name. Even though you're likely to spot young hipsters and shopping warriors sitting on the covered street-side patio, this East District restaurant feels more like a homey cafe than a fancy restaurant or lounge with its slightly dirty white walls and vintage furniture.

The food is also decidedly un-posh. The restaurant announces a passion for burgers on the cover of its menu, which reads "One of the best meals in the world is burgers and fries. Our burgers are fantastic." Words to inspire confidence, to be sure, but unfortunately Posh fell short on this greasy spoon staple when the *Taipei Times* visited earlier this week.

The cheeseburger with mushrooms and onions (NT\$190) should have been

a winner. It came with two freshly made 4-inch beef patties. The cheese was melted onto the patty. The bun was good; it wasn't sweet at all; it had heft but wasn't too doughy. The burger even arrived well presented with the top bun lying open, very lightly toasted and buttered with a tomato slice, two big pickle slices and onion on top.

Yet all of this attention to detail was spoiled by the tasteless canned mushrooms, which merely served as a faint, slimy texture in the burger. Perhaps Posh is taking the irony of its name too seriously. And even though the beef patties are "homemade," their recipe tasted like it had too much pepper.

In fact, be prepared for a spicier-than-normal meal. The French fries tasted like they were coated in chili powder. I suspected that the vinaigrette

on the side of salad also had a large dose of either chili pepper or pepper, but it could have been the aftertaste from the fries that lingered throughout the rest of the meal. It didn't help that the wait staff were slow in refilling my water glass.

Other burgers include the Jumbo (NT\$240), which comes with cheese, egg, bacon and onions and the Hawaiian (NT\$190), which is topped with pineapple and bacon.

There's an extensive drink selection of milkshakes, juices and coffee and tea drinks, which are NT\$30 cheaper when you order a burger. The banana milk (NT\$120) was labeled a house specialty and helped alleviate the spiciness of those fries. For beers, you can pay NT\$150 to have a Corona or Heineken while perusing a fashion magazine from Posh's wall-sized magazine shelf, but a fruity Belgian brew might be a better match and value at NT\$200 per bottle.

The restaurant serves breakfast all day. The "deluxe" (NT\$230) comes with eggs made-to-order, hash browns (the frozen packet variety), wheat or white toast and a choice of bacon, sausage or ham. For those with a sweet tooth, pancakes and French toast are available for NT\$230.

Posh seems like a fashion victim when it comes to the food, but it has apparently done well enough to open two other branches in the neighborhood. Posh II is located south of Zhongxiao East Road (忠孝東路) at 42, Ln 190, Dunhua South Rd (台北市敦化南路一段190巷42號) and Posh III is at 11, Ln 233, Dunhua South Rd (台北市敦化南路一段233巷11號).

The relatively cheap prices for the area and the free Wi-Fi are two reasons one might visit. But those hankering for a good burger or an authentic American diner meal are better off elsewhere.



Not so posh.

PHOTO: DAVID CHEN, TAIPEI TIMES