

BY DAVID CHEN

MUSIC



COMPILED BY HO YI

Happily married celebrities seem to be something of a rarity these days. And those who are can rest assured that, sooner or later, the paparazzi will seek to prove otherwise. The latest case in point is **Dee Hsu** (徐熙媛), better known as Little S (小S). The 31-year-old star made the front page of the *Apple Daily* and other publications this week as the alleged victim of domestic violence in her five-year marriage with **Mike Hsu** (許雅鈞).

Citing “a source,” *Apple* said that Hsu’s household had been classified as “high-risk” by the Taipei City Center for Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault after a social worker investigated the star’s claims of abuse earlier this month.

Apple went on to speculate as to why Hsu’s marriage may be in trouble. One rather sexist theory the paper came up with is that her husband and in-laws are unhappy that she has failed to give birth to a male child. Another was that they’re embarrassed by Little S’ frequent teasing of male guests on the popular talk show *Here Comes Kang and Xi* (康熙來了) she co-hosts with **Kevin Tsai** (蔡康永).

The star and her husband emphatically condemned the report as a pure fabrication and said on Sunday they would file a lawsuit against the newspaper, though as of press time they have yet to do so. The Center for Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault issued a statement saying it had not conducted the abovementioned investigation.

Rumor has it that **Jay Chou** (周杰倫) and **Jolin Tsai** (蔡依林) are getting back together — only this time they’ll be doing it for money. The king and queen of Mando-pop met in January for an “ice-breaking” round of bowling, and according to media speculation Chou’s record company JVR Music (杰威爾音樂) is angling to sign Tsai after her contract with Warner Music (華納音樂) expires in July.

To prevent its cash cow from defecting to JVR, Warner is said to have offered Tsai NT\$100 million to renew her contract.

Local entertainer **Jiu Kong** (九孔), real name Lu Kung-wei (呂孔維), has been the subject of an online kerfuffle between Chinese bloggers and Taiwanese bloggers for what people in China are calling his lackluster impersonation of Brother



Little S’ marriage has been the subject of intense media speculation this week.

PHOTO: TAIPEI TIMES

Sharp (犀利哥) on the popular television show *The Largest Political Party* (全民最大黨).

Brother Sharp is a homeless man in the city of Ningbo whose photo was posted on a Web site (bbs.fengniao.com/forum/1527056.html). Comments on the man’s good looks, modelsque bearing and stylish bohemian attire posted on the Tianya Web site last month quickly made him a hot item in China. Netizens have been calling him the “Beggar Prince” (乞丐王子), “Supreme Vagabond” (極品乞丐) and, most frequently, Brother Sharp.

Different versions of the man’s life story have circulated on the Internet. According to some he is a former soldier who has fallen on hard times. Others say he lost his mind after seeing his wife killed in a car accident. Those interested in Brother Sharp can check out his profile on Baidu (baike.baidu.com/view/1465055.htm), a Chinese online encyclopedia.

Stick it to the boss. It’s hard to say goodbye. Remember the friend that died in a scooter crash. These are a few of the messages behind the songs on *Earthquakes*, the latest release from The DoLittles, an expat rock band based in Taichung.

The group, whose members list their music as “progressive alternative rock” on their Facebook page, is doing a run of shows across the country over the next few weeks in support of the album, starting tonight in Taichung at the Light Lounge.

The DoLittles enjoy a small but loyal following of around 30 expat fans who rarely miss a show, according to Sean Allingham, a 28-year-old Canadian living in Changhua who has been watching the band perform since it formed in 2006. One fan, he said, even has the some of the band’s lyrics tattooed on his arm.

When attending the band’s shows, one should be prepared for an “emotional” night where the audience dances and sings along, says Allingham. What fans like about the DoLittles, he adds, is that the band’s music speaks to their own experience of living in Taiwan.

He lists some fan favorites that the band often performs live: *Stooge*, which is about an offensive English language cram school boss, has a lyric that goes, “You’ve been working for the man so long/ she has sucked you dry/you’re such a stooge.”

“Everybody knows what they’re talking about,” said Allingham.

Songs like *Time to Say Goodbye* reminds him that Taiwan is a “transient type of place.” *Fall Asleep* was written by DoLittles guitarist Chris Robison as a tribute to his friend and fellow Canadian expat Matt Stever, who died in a motorcycle accident in Chiayi in 2008.



The DoLittles want to shake things up with their new CD, *Earthquakes*.

PHOTOS BY KYLE MERRIMAN (AKA BRANDNEWME), COURTESY OF THE DOLLITLES

Shake, rattle and roll

PERFORMANCE NOTES:

WHAT: The DoLittles CD Release party with Three Day Bender and Dirty Skies tonight and New Hong Kong Hair City tomorrow

WHEN AND WHERE: Tonight at 10:30pm at the Light Lounge, 85 Huamei W St Sec 1, Taichung City (台中市華美西街一段85號). Tomorrow at 10:30pm at B1, 507, Zhongshan 2nd Rd, Cianjin Dist, Kaohsiung City (高雄市前金區中山二路507號B1)

ADMISSION: NT\$300 for each show

ON THE NET: www.myspace.com/thedollittles or search for “The DoLittles” on Facebook

How

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

“It is shocking to watch the clip titled *Rape Is Cheaper Than Bullets* [2009, produced by K. Porteous and K. Geraghty] and to learn that the men there were militarily trained to rape,” said Lee. “It gives a quiver of fear for women there.”

Other monologues discuss everything from feminine hygiene sprays, men

who help women love their vaginas, homosexual experiences, positive experiences with sex workers and reclaiming ownership of the word “cunt” in a healthy way.

So far reactions have been mixed. Lee found that teachers and friends were excited to hear there was a V-Day in Taichung. She enjoyed practicing in the park and saying the word “vagina” over and over, while people “averted their eyes and acted visibly uncomfortable.”

Cox got a kick out of asking her

Chinese teacher how to pronounce one of her Chinese lines correctly. “It’s where I’m describing what young girls call their vaginas,” she said. “He was a bit embarrassed but I think he will come see the play now out of curiosity.”

Fellow volunteer Jennifer Goldfuss was appreciative of the support they’ve received and feels it is “important to spread [the message], to empower women, and let them know they are not alone in their struggles, and they can be overcome.” Melissa Holmes, who

also performs at the event, said that she has seen a range of reactions from men, including curiosity, amusement, defensiveness and indifference, with women overall enjoying the show and expressing an eagerness to be part of it. Older viewers exhibit “general discomfort,” she said.

“Half of the people I talk to took an awkward pause when hearing the title of the show [*The Vagina Monologues*],” said Lee. “They then asked, ‘So ... how exactly do you make a vagina talk?’”

BY DAVID CHEN

RESTAURANTS

Da Shan Wu Jia 大山無價

Address: 62, Beiji Rd Sec 3, Sindian City, Taipei County (台北縣新店市北宜路三段62號)
Telephone: (02) 2217-8891 **Open:** Tuesday to Sunday noon to 3pm and 6pm to 9pm
Average meal: NT\$1,000 per person, NT\$850 per person for vegetarian meal, plus 10 percent service charge

Details: Reservations recommended a week in advance on weekdays and two weeks on weekends. Credit cards accepted

From its Zen-inspired decor to the beautifully presented 10-course meal, Da Shan Wu Jia (大山無價) shares a striking resemblance to another mountainside dining retreat, Shi-Yang Culture Restaurant (食養山房) (reviewed in the Oct. 30, 2009 edition of the *Taipei Times*).

The two restaurants are indeed connected. Da Shan Wu Jia was started by a former Shi-Yang chef, Yu Yuan-kun (游源昆). When Shi-Yang prepared to move from its original location in Sindian (新店) to Yangmingshan, Yu decided he wanted to stay in the area and open his own restaurant. The 39-year-old Yilan native found a property with a garden on Beiyi Road (北宜路) and renovated the two-story house to accommodate up to 80 diners.

The restaurant is quiet and tranquil, with a view of the mountains, minimalist interior and a comfy, spacious dining area, where diners sit on tatami mats at low tables.

There is no menu, as each of the 10 courses is decided by Yu and his team of six chefs. The meal, priced at NT\$1,000 per person and NT\$850 for vegetarians, draws inspiration from Japanese and Taiwanese cuisines.

Yu shares the same approach to food preparation as his former employer. He only uses locally sourced, fresh ingredients — the vegetables are from Sindian farms and the

seafood is transported daily from Yilan.

Our meal started with a slice of homemade peanut tofu, which left a lasting impression for its taste and presentation. It had a creamy texture, punctuated by a tiny dab of wasabi hidden under a goji berry — a very pleasing surprise. The block of bean curd was also garnished with pine nuts and a spot of soy sauce. Served on red ceramic trays and a large stone-colored slab, the dish looked like a Chinese ink painting.

Unfortunately none of the other dishes could match this one, though there were plenty of brilliant moments: sashimi slices served on a bed of salad and calamari cut in the shape of thick noodles; chicken stewed in red yeast rice (a mild-tasting ingredient used in Chinese medicine) served on a crispy wonton skin; homemade mulberry vinegar; a chicken soup with several different types of fresh bamboo.

I found it hard not to make comparisons with Shi-Yang, where the meal only got better and each course felt like a discovery. It was hit or miss at Da Shan Wu Jia. The later courses, a fried rice morsel with mullet roe and a bamboo and chicken soup, were good, but anticlimactic.

For reason, Shi-Yang also holds an edge over Da Shan Wu Jia. The wait staff members were highly attentive, but



Da Shan Wu Jia’s 10-course meal is hit or miss, but the restaurant is still worth a try.

PHOTO: DAVID CHEN, TAIPEI TIMES

their timing awkward. Several of them (20-something male students) were too eager to take our plates away, as if their eyes were on the plates only and not observing us.

But Da Shan Wu Jia is still worth a try, especially for those in southern Taipei looking for a novel dining experience, not to mention a peaceful getaway. The restaurant still makes for an acceptable alternative for those who can’t get a table at Shi-Yang, which usually has a six-week wait for weekends.

The restaurant is hard to reach on public transportation, but taxi drivers in the area know the place. A cab ride from Xindian MRT Station (新店捷運站) takes between 10 to 15 minutes and should cost around NT\$160.

Du Hsiaw Uyea Taiwan Seafood Cuisine 渡小月蘭陽時尚料理

Address: 58 Fusing Rd Sec 3, Yilan City (宜蘭市復興路三段58號)
Open: Noon to 2pm and 5pm to 9pm
Details: No menu. Credit cards accepted

Telephone: (03) 9314-688
Average meal: NT\$500
On the Net: www.yilando.com



Ignore the ostentation at Du Hsiaw Uyea Taiwan Seafood Cuisine.

PHOTO: IAN BARTHOLOMEW, TAIPEI TIMES

The first thing that needs to be said about Du Hsiaw Uyea Taiwan Seafood Cuisine (渡小月蘭陽時尚料理) located in Yilan City is that it is not the same restaurant as Jerry’s Chinese Kitchen (祥瑞渡小月), located in Luodong Township (羅東鎮), Yilan County, which shares the same Chinese name. Nor is it Tu Hsiao Yueh Noodle Shop (渡小月擔仔麵), which originated in Tainan and has branches around Taipei.

All three have established reputations for excellent food, but the first two specialize in what can be termed creative Yilan cuisine.

Du Hsiaw Uyea, in English at least is notable for the bizarre spelling of its name, even by Taiwan’s notoriously flexible orthographic standards. It is also remarkable for the undefined nature of its menu. It is famous for a number of Yilan specialties, but when I arrived on a busy Saturday lunchtime and asked to look at the menu, I was told brusquely that there wasn’t one.

Despite the ostentatiously

expensive artwork prominently displayed at the entrance and ye olde noodle stand real wood frontage, both indications that Du Hsiaw Uyea does not have any false modesty about its traditions and excellence, it was delightful to see the fresh seafood displayed at the back of the restaurant in exactly the same kind of refrigerated display case that graces virtually every night market seafood establishment from Taipei to Kaohsiung. I had no idea where to begin.

As a sop to the uninitiated, I was handed a leaflet with what turned out to be some of the restaurant’s pieces de resistance on it, but no prices. A helpful waitress cut to the chase. “You’re a table of 10. We can give you a menu starting at NT\$3,500, NT\$4,000, and up.” I named a price, and that was the last I had to do with the selection of food. (A set for two starts at NT\$600.) This turned out to be an excellent decision, for the wait staff members, while run off their feet on the busy, noisy

restaurant floor, knew what they were about. There was only one dud in a meal of 10 courses.

This was Mambo fish, otherwise known as ocean sunfish, a deep-sea creature with a very gelatinous consistency that has become something of a gimmick in high-end seafood restaurants.

This false note apart, everything else, from an unusual take on steamed shrimp, which seemed to have at least a whole head of garlic in it, along with copious quantities of rice wine, and was so hearty that the crustaceans themselves were almost, but not quite, an afterthought, to the shockingly black chicken in xian cao (仙草), or grass jelly, were of outstanding quality.

This last, which looked a little like a chicken stuck in an oil slick, caused some hesitation at first, but the subtle herbal flavors converted even the most wary of our group. The restaurant’s take on pig trotter, which had been cooked in such a way as to remove almost any hint of greasiness, had me craving more of a dish that normally I find cloying after one or two mouthfuls.

A plate of thick cut sashimi, despite the totally inappropriate placement of plastic newly weds at the center, was of superior freshness, and the cold collation, with its stuffed squid, fish roe and marinated water chestnuts provided culinary surprises that had nothing to do with the glass “ice sculpture” of a jumping fish at the center of the plate.

The attempts at hotel-style ornamentation might not have worked, but the food itself showed a mixture of innovation and a firm grasp of the many, often labor-intensive, processes of Yilan cuisine.

Reservations are highly recommended.

TIDBITS



PHOTO COURTESY OF JUSTIN QUEK

Just off Taipei’s Anhe Road (安和路), Justin’s Signatures, Singapore-born celebrity chef Justin Quek’s (郭文秀) third restaurant in the capital, has released new set menus.

The gourmet menu is NT\$2,280, and includes prawns and crab meat with fresh herbs in tomato jelly and pan-roasted aged grain-fed lamb with rosemary jus; the gastronomic menu, which sounds even more delectable, comprises crispy poached organic egg, smoked foie gras and morel mushroom, and pan-grilled aged Tajima wagyu beef sirloin, spring vegetables with Yuzu pepper sauce, and clocks in at NT\$3,800; and for the suits, the business lunch includes ox-tongue carpaccio with truffle vinaigrette, mesclun leaves, roasted chicken breast with pomme puree and thyme jus, which will set you back NT\$1,280.

ADDRESS: 17, Ln 265, Dunhua S Rd Sec 2, Taipei City (台北市敦化南路二段265巷17號)
TELEPHONE: (02) 2736-8000
OPEN: Noon to 3pm and 6pm and 10pm (last setting). Reservations recommended
ON THE NET: www.justinquek.com