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FEBRUARY 2009

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Meet the
Yellow Magazine
Valentine
Pin-Up Girls

*With
Love*

Soulful Sounds
of Justin Nozuka
Sweet Valentines
Natural Panama
Love the
New Benjy's
New: The Hottest
Makeup Tips

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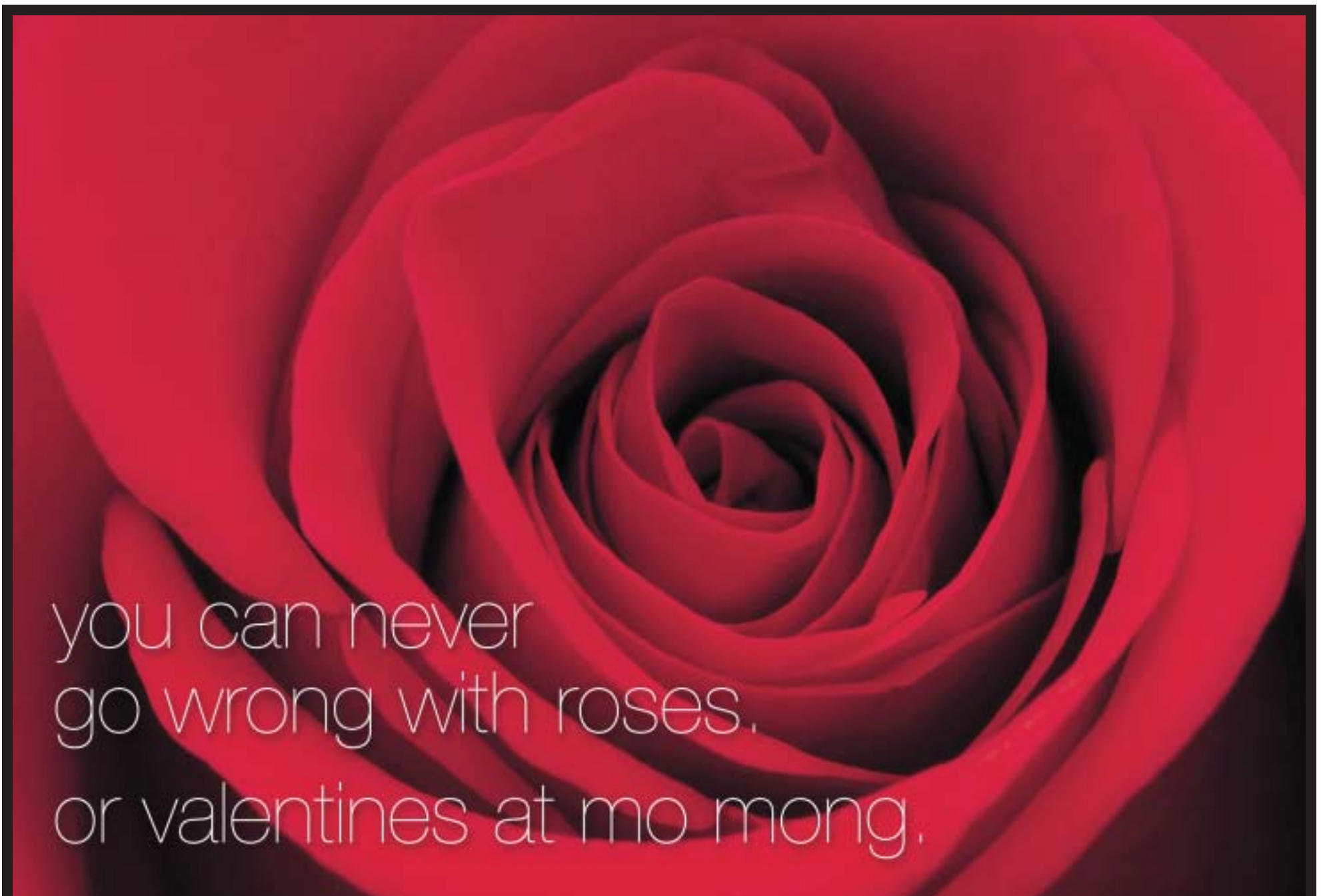
Photo by Collin Kelly

No one will deny that all the celebrating associated with Christmas, New Years and the Lunar New Year is satisfying and pleasurable. Similarly, many will add that it is a relief to get back to a normal routine. It is similar to when relatives or friends come for a visit and stay at your home; you are glad to see them and welcome them with heartfelt hospitality; and you hug them farewell with almost equal enthusiasm when they depart. These feelings do not reflect poorly on your love of the holidays, family or friends. It just means everything has its time and now is the time to recharge for the rest of the year. To help you along the way we offer this issue of *Yellow Magazine* with much love, just in time for Valentine's Day!

We begin with our fashion models, who are resurrecting the theme of the Pin-Up Girls who provided a sense of home, comfort and security to the men fighting overseas during World War II. Our models include Miss Vietnam, Miss Chinese New Year, and other successful career women who serve as community leaders in Houston. They are smart, they are beautiful and they have been transformed by our stylist, hair stylists and make-up team into *Yellow Magazine Pin-Up Girls*. It is our hope that our lighthearted and fun re-interpretation will serve to uplift your spirits during these trying times of distress that you, your friends or families may be experiencing. And, if you have been blessed to not have been touched by these circumstances, these pinup girls are for you, as well.

In the wine article, Phillip tells us that there is a bit of history that links wine to romance. Vuthy and Trish play with the idea that fate may play a part in choosing a mate. While Chau's article about the new Benjy's does not reference love or romance or Valentine's Day, per se, it is clear that it would be wonderful place to go for any of those purposes. And, finally, we are pleased to introduce you to Justin Nozuka, who is making quite a name for himself in the world of music. His acoustic soul reaches deep and his voice will captivate you as it transitions in and out of falsettos with a passion that is undeniable. And passion is always a good thing on Valentine's Day.

V. Van Hoang



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The color yellow has played a recurrent symbolic role throughout the history of Asian culture. It symbolizes the earth that sustains all life, yet has been embraced by Buddhist monks as an expression of unchallenged power. Such is the role of yellow: always revered but in different ways under different circumstances.

The mission of *Yellow Magazine* is to introduce our readers to the artistic, fashion, lifestyle and entertainment contributions made by Asian Americans. It is our hope that the depth and breadth of the topics and events we cover do justice to the pride that the color yellow has represented throughout the millennia. As the editor in chief of *Yellow Magazine*, my last name is Hoang, which also means yellow. Just as I am proud of my name, I am proud of my heritage, and proud of *Yellow Magazine*.

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Héléne Grimaud's Beethoven 4
February 20, 21, 22, 2009
Xian Zhang, conductor
Héléne Grimaud, piano
Ravel: La Valse
Beethoven: Piano Concerto No. 4
Borodin: Three Dance Episodes from On the Tundra
Falla: Suite No. 2 from The Three-Cornered Hat
Tickets: from \$27

Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 18
February 26, 28, and March 1, 2009
Christian Zacharias, conductor and piano
Ravel: Valses nobles et sentimentales
Mozart: Piano Concerto No. 18
Schubert: Symphony No. 6
Tickets: from \$27

Bronfman's Brahms Second
March 12, 14, 15, 2009
Hans Graf, conductor
Yefim Bronfman, piano
Houston Symphony Chorus
Bruckner: Mass in E minor
Brahms: Piano Concerto No. 2
Tickets: from \$27

Yo-Yo Ma
May 5, 2009, 8 pm
Hans Graf, conductor
Yo-Yo Ma, cello
Wagner: Siegfried Idyll
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You're in the
Jungle, Baby!

by MATT SIMS

Natural Panama

As I stepped gingerly over another fallen log in the rainforest, my eyes scanned the ground looking for any sign of snakes. My guide had just finished regaling me with a story about how a year earlier he had been bitten on the hand by a Fer-de-Lance, one of the world's deadliest snakes, while walking on the same path we were now on. He spent five days in the hospital, and his hand swelled to the size of a melon.

Needless to say, I was especially watchful with each step I took. In a place like that, being alert is a necessity. Failure to pay attention might put you within kissing distance of a deadly snake or, more likely, you could fall on your face in an ant hill or on your back over a thorny plant. (He had plenty of those stories, too!) We were just a few hours into our trek along an old trail used by the Spanish to carry gold they had stolen from the Incas. Sometimes the trail disappeared. It is amazing how quickly the jungle reclaims itself.

We neared a small river where I heard the call of the howler monkey for the first time and realized how it got its name. The sound it made was quite unlike any I had ever heard before. As other monkeys answered the call of the first, a cacophony of howls and grunts filled the air. We rushed through the trees and around fallen logs, but never got a glimpse of them. Looking around, I wondered how long I would last if I were alone. How would I find my way? What would I eat? Would I stoop to the level of one of those people you see on TV who eat worms and ants? At my feet, a long line of army ants marched in single file as they carried leaves and bits of rotting plants. There would have to be one heck of a delicious sauce to enable me to eat those things. High above me, the tallest parts of the tree canopy blocked out most of the sunlight. Then I thought, "Wow, you wanted adventure, and now you're in it. This isn't some cushy eco-lodge catering to honeymooning tourists. You're in the jungle baby!"

In Panama, if you get tired of one ocean, you can drive to the other in less than a day.

To be more specific, I was in Panama, that seemingly tiny strip of land that joins South America to the rest of us northern continentals. The only thing I knew about the country a few weeks before my trip was its canal that let ships take a shortcut between the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans instead of having to sail 14,000 miles around South America. In fact, some tourists come to Panama just to see this marvel of engineering. Others happen to find themselves on cruise ships that utilize the canal to complete their trips. My guide was a friend of mine who made Panama his home after being stationed there during the brief U.S. invasion in 1989. He took me to see the Mira Flores canal locks on the first day of my visit, and although it was interesting to see how it is done, watching ships creep by at a snail's pace is not my idea of a vacation.

I wanted to see the culture, the people, and, of course, the jungles. I got to experience all three during a visit to a native village. On the way there, we passed several eco-lodges where people enjoy air-conditioning and soft beds at night and take motorboats to Embera Indian villages. The villagers provide tourists with a glimpse into traditional village life and then try to sell them necklaces and carvings. Most of these places are actually mock villages built by the Indians for this purpose, but no one actually lives there. They help the Indians earn a living without damaging the environment, and provide tourists photo opportunities that seem to satisfy their needs.

I was happy when my friend arranged for me to visit a slightly more remote group of Wounaan Indians who didn't receive quite so many visitors and who still made their living from the jungle and the large lake nearby. My friend's father-in-law, a long-time resident of Panama, accompanied me. He sort of adopted this tribe and did what he could to help them with health and sanitation issues, as well as with anything else they might need. In return, they loved him like one of their own.



"Are there piranhas in these waters," I asked as we waited on the shore of a beautiful blue green lake and examined several leaky canoes.

"No, we have tilapia."

"Oh, that's good," I said. "I can make a meal out of them instead of vice versa."

"But we have lots of crocodiles. People get taken fairly often."

"Marvelous," I said. "At the bottom of the food chain again!"

After a time, a couple of native boys came for us in a boat, and we glided out along the shore. The water was calm and only the jumping of fish in the distance broke the glassy surface.

"This lake is everything to them," my guide said. "They fish in it, drink it, bathe in it... everything. If it gets polluted, that's the end."

When we arrived at the village, most of the residents came to see their benefactor and the strange foreigner with the big camera (me). After exchanging pleasantries and the latest news with the village headman who spoke excellent Spanish, we went for a short hike in the nearby jungle. Two of the locals came along to point out different plants that were used for food and medicinal purposes. It was amazing to see how well humans could adapt to an environment which seemed so hostile to me.

When we returned to the village, I relaxed beneath the shade of a thatch roof hut and took some candid photos of people going about their lives. I let a woman paint a tattoo ink dye pattern on my arm. After she had already begun, I asked how long it would last and was surprised when the answer was "a few months." Unfortunately, between the insect repellent I had used and my perspiration, the ink ran and my beautiful native tattoo looked like a large bruise on my arm. Most of the men and women wore only a cloth wrap below the waist and nothing above. However, I noticed that some of the women put on a top when they knew photos would be taken. I was never sure if this was done for my benefit or theirs. All of the villagers looked really healthy, especially the oldest man who although 70, looked like he could win an iron man race. Note to self: eat more fish and wear as little as possible.

Back in Panama City, the capital, I found a place free of tourists that interested me because of its sights, food, and history. Some of the standout meals I had were at a place called Parrillada Jimmy's (Jimmy's Barbeque) where I enjoyed lots of tasty grilled meat dishes and some delicious fire-grilled octopus. But of course, how can a place that straddles the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans not do fish right! Ask a local resident where he or she goes to find the best seafood, and be sure to dip everything in D'Elidas Hot Sauce, the most popular spicy sauce in the country. I liked it so much I brought a few bottles home to use along with my Sriracha chile sauce. Also, be sure and try Panama's favorite drink, a chicha de arroz con pina, which is a blend of rice, pineapple juice, evaporated milk, and sugar. Add some rum if you like.

In Panama, if you get tired of one ocean, you can drive to the other in less than a day. I spent most of my time on the Pacific side, but made several trips over to the Atlantic side to visit old forts. In addition, the Archipiélago de las Perlas is famous around the world for being one of the most beautiful and pristine places to snorkel, swim, fish, and live the beach life. If hiking is your thing, Parque Nacional Volcán Barú is home to Panama's only volcano and offers great trekking opportunities, while the interior is filled with colonial towns, old churches, and unique handicrafts.

When I wanted some beach time, I flew to Contadora, one of the Pearl Islands located in the Pacific Ocean about 50 miles from Panama City. The 20 minute flight is on a tiny plane that seats about 8 people. Although I was fortunate enough to stay at a private house with its own beach, there are a couple of hotels on the island. You can also take excursions to nearby islands,

most of which are uninhabited, including one used in a season of the TV show *Survivor*. As I snorkeled in the clear waters around that island, I wondered what it must have looked like with all those cast members running around trying to stab each other in the back while being filmed. I think I prefer it this way, empty and quiet with only the sounds of the surf. As I worked on my tan far away from the army ants, howler monkeys, and deadly snakes I thought, "This ain't the jungle baby!"

Photos by Matt Sims



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Justin Nozuka

by HENRI MERCERON

I have to admit, I did not know much about Justin Nozuka before I came across him for the purposes of an interview. As I listened to his music and read past interviews, I was intrigued and impressed. What makes an impression on many is that Justin is Kyra Sedgwick's nephew (and therefore, Kevin Bacon's, as well). While that is a nice piece of trivia, what impressed me about Justin is his music. This is as it should be because he deserves recognition for his considerable talent and accomplishments that have absolutely nothing to do with famous relatives. It has everything to do with talent powered by determination and passion. And it is for these reasons that I have very quickly become a big fan.

Justin and his six siblings were raised in Canada. Almost every member of his family exhibits artistic talents, including dancing, singing, songwriting and acting. Justin began writing songs when he was twelve. His first CD, *Holly*, named after his mother, is comprised of eleven songs that he wrote between the ages of fifteen and eighteen and was released in 2007. He will release his second CD later this year.

Last year, Justin appeared on the *Jimmy Kimmel Show* and *Good Morning America NOW*; his breakout *After Tonight* video was rotated on MTV U, Music Choice and VH1; he was nominated for a Juno, the Canadian equivalent of a Grammy, for New Artist of the Year. Currently, twenty years old, Justin has time for awards. While honored to have been nominated, it is the rewards he receives from his craft that drive him, not winning awards that are outside his control. His rewards come from within and are delicately intertwined with his passion, his essence. Justin sings his acoustic soul songs with a depth that belies his youth and captivates you by virtue of the raw beauty of his inflection and the progression he skillfully employs as he transitions from his regular voice to falsetto and back again.

I want to explore the creative process. You have stated that you are particularly focused on your lyrics and that the acoustic element is secondary. How does a song come about? Do you write a story, in essence, and then overlay the melody?

It really depends on the song. Sometimes I get the lyrics first and concentrate on the melody afterwards. I am writing and recording for my second album. Right now, I am first trying to find a melody that inspires me. A couple of days ago, I came up with a guitar part that I was really excited about and knew I was going to write something over it. I ran back to my room and it just locked right into place with the core progression I had. Over a period of a couple of days, I work the melody in my mind and when something clicks I add it. I add the lyrics afterwards.

Since your first album, how have your songs evolved? There is such a huge difference between the lyrics a 15 year old writes and those of a 20 year old.

Going into the album, I had 70 or 80 songs ready to go. But when it came to recording, I looked deeper into the lyrics and realized that many of the songs were actually not finished. I needed a few more songs to complete the album and make it stronger. So, right now, I am searching for one last song with a particular vibe. The album is pretty much done and should be released later this year.

I wrote the songs between two years ago and two days ago. My melodies and my vision of my music have matured. Being around other musicians such as my band members, who got together after the first album, has influenced me. Two of the members went to jazz school and what they learned has influenced me. In terms of lyrics, I've matured as well. I've seen what other artists do when I've been on tour and I have a better idea of what I want to do. Back in the day when I recorded my first album I was just writing aimlessly, singing open mics and recording. It was an innocent thing, whereas now, I think more about what I expect from myself and my songs.

What instruments are in the band? How do you decide which ones are used for each song?

We have a bass, drum, keys and guitar. I write a song as though there will only be acoustic and vocal. Once I finish, my producer develops his vision and arranges it. It is then passed to the band, at which time a demo is made and it is reworked until everyone feels that it is right. Every song undergoes a different process. We're still trying to find our groove as to what the best process is.

Why did you decide to create a band?

A couple of years ago, my manager told me that I was booked to play for an hour on a BBC radio show that would be taped and broadcast all over London. He thought it would be a good idea to put together a band for this recording and moving forward. I had a friend who was a drummer and we found a bass player. We did one tour as a trio and it worked very well. Having the band added a lot of depth to our performances on tour.



How do you measure success?

For me, it is recording music of which I can be completely proud and excited. If I passed away tomorrow and would be happy with the music I left behind, I would consider that success. My dream is to make such music and bring it to the mainstream around the world. It is not about money, although that would be good because I would then be able to relax and make more music and chill. I want to be part of a movement, an art revolution. At the moment I feel that art has vanished from the mainstream and it needs to come back.

I know that you had a cameo appearance in a TV show and performed the leading role in a small budget short film. Do you think this form of artistic expression is something you may want to pursue?

That was way back when I was with an agent. It wasn't something that I was passionate about. So, no, I have no desire to pursue any of that. Just music.

What is your schedule like? How many performances do you do now?

I'm doing my third U.S. tour. For the past two years, I've just been touring to promote my first album. We've been on the road, on the road, on the road. I have gotten a week break here and there but not too many.

You have performed in the U.S., United Kingdom and Canada. Have you been received differently by audiences?

I've also performed in Japan and Western Europe. Basically, we have been reaching the same kind of people all over the world. There are a lot of college kids, mostly girls, I think, but everyone has been into the music and not the...whatever...like the Jonas Brothers thing. (Laughs).

I think at this point a lot of people compare me to artists like Jason Mraz and John Mayer.

Hmmm. I've read a number of your fan blogs and there may be a Justin Nozuka "thing" going on.

Really? (Laughs)

Where is the one place where you would really like to perform?

I have a dream to play this theater in Montreal called Massey Hall. The sound is so crisp and clear. It is fairly large, like a big living room.

What is the smallest and largest audience for whom you have performed?

I played for zero people once. Two of my friends showed up, which was embarrassing because I had invited them to this show and I came in half way. The most people I played for was about 1,700.

What do you like to do in the little free time that you do enjoy?

I play video games and watch Disney shows. Hanging out with my brothers and girlfriend is also high on the list. I love all types of movies especially fantasy ones. I thought *Benjamin Button* was amazing. I really love the fairy tale stuff.



Holly, 2007

Justin will be playing at the new House of Blues in downtown Houston on February 19th.

For more information, visit myspace.com/justinnozuka

I know that your parents have been divorced since you were six. Has your Japanese heritage had any influence upon the person you are or your music?

My father is an amazing man. He has a huge mission. He is all about spreading peace in New York City. He is very inspiring to me. I look up to him so much. Every time I speak to him I am uplifted and I become 10 times stronger. He is a great mentor to me.

What does your Dad actually do?

My Dad has a limo service in New York. His mission is to change the world. It's his reason for getting up in the morning. He's part of a big movement, a Buddhist organization.

Is acoustic soul your favorite genre? That might be a stupid question but do other genres interest you? What performers do you like?

Nah. That's not a stupid question, at all. I like all kinds of genres. I think something really special has been done with rock. Radiohead has done something so special. I love D'Angelo, especially Voodoo; Bjork is special; Stevie Wonder; Jeff Buckley. When I listen to these artists, I feel so enlightened. It is like an epiphany when I hear them. These musicians and songwriters bring it to such a high level of creativity that they make it their own and they don't even fit into a genre.

How funny, I read one European review of your music in which they said the very same thing about you. You've created your own genre.

Really? That's cool.

It would seem that you have achieved that which you admire in your favorite artists. Is there any one with whom you would like to collaborate and how would that work?

I am collaborating with my brothers who are songwriters, as well. On my next album, my brother, Christian, is doing a song with me. I'm collaborating with a guy named Shad, a Canadian hip-hop artist who is amazing. I'm showing him my ideas and he'll probably write a couple of verses. He's not going to be on my album but maybe we'll release a song as a bonus track or something like that.

Is there anyone with whom I could fill the blank: "If you like _____, then you will love Justin Nozuka's music"?

Hmmm. I don't know. I think at this point a lot of people compare me to artists like Jason Mraz and John Mayer. Most of the people who listen to these guys are kind of open minded. You know what I mean? They know what they like and they're real clear about it. They are almost snobbish about their art and their music. At this point, with my last album at least, the music is easier to grasp like Jason Mraz's.

You said that Michael Jackson and Lauryn Hill provided you with much early inspiration and that Stevie Wonder is your hero? How and why?

Well, the first cassette I ever bought was a Lauryn Hill album and it provided me my first experience of passing on music that I liked to other people. I passed it on to my entire family and everyone started singing the words. I thought it was so much fun turning people on to music that I thought was really good. I felt like I did something really positive. Now, Michael Jackson was always in our house. My oldest brother, George, was really into Michael Jackson and started singing and dancing because of him. Michael Jackson is the s**t anyway. And, I got into Stevie Wonder when I got older and he turned my world around. I thought, "Oh my gosh", this guy is creating the most incredible music on a genius level. If you think of a musical genius of our time, it would have to be him. He's got a musical sense that is untouchable.

How would you describe your general mood or personality?

I am usually driven. I think I'm a pretty passionate person. I'm constantly thinking about achieving my mission to reach as many people as possible and being part of something really special – being part of that art movement I talked about earlier. My brothers and I are constantly thinking about our mission. I think we get that from our father.

Are you an introvert or extrovert?

I think I'm an extrovert. I speak before I think when I get excited.

Do you have a lot of friends?

I have a few friends. I have a big family so I feel like I've got all I need.

What is your style in terms of clothing and the way you dress?

Casual. I wear Levi jeans...simple stuff. I've had three pairs of jeans in the last two years and I just sort of rotate them. I don't own any designer clothes.

Is there anything about you that would surprise your family or fans?

I think my family knows me very well. I'm pretty much who I am in front of them and have no secrets. But as far as my fans go (laughs), that is a different story (laughs). I like to keep it that way!

Is there a question that you are always asked and wish you were not?

Yeah. A lot of times when I'm in the States...and this is not to hate on my uncle or anything like that...but I get asked about him a lot, sometimes in the first sentence. "This is Kevin Bacon's nephew, Justin Nozuka..." You know what I mean. And they'll just talk about my uncle for a long time. Whereas, I am trying to do this on my own without bringing that attention to the table, I do understand what it's all about.

I think I'm a pretty passionate person.

Your distributor, Outcaste Records of the UK, discovered you on MySpace. What do you think about the internet avenues such as MySpace and YouTube available to new and aspiring artists?

Because of the internet you see many artists that can now get a chance. They can tour and play in different cities because they have gathered a following. Even without record companies or management, they can achieve success by themselves.

In one of your photographs, I noticed a portion of a tattoo on your chest that appears to be a Mexican symbol of some kind.

Yeah, it's a circle that represents the earth, sort of a Haida native design.

You have a pretty strong Mexican connection don't you?

Yes. Some really good friends of mine are from Mexico. I met them in school and they taught me guitar.

Do you know how to read music?

No, I don't.

Then, when you compose your melodies, how do you remember what you have created since you cannot write down the notes?

I have recorders. I really should learn how to read music. My New Year's resolution is to learn piano and guitar at such a level as to help me out with my songs.

A lot of your music is about love and heartache. Have you been hurt by love?

Yeah, but I haven't been hurt too hard. In a lot of my songs I put myself in situations that I haven't personally experienced. I'm just trying to tell the stories from that perspective.

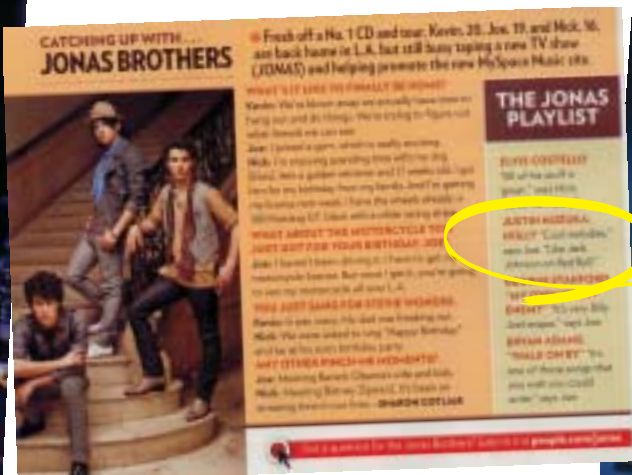
Are you a romantic?

I think I am a romantic....yeah, I am.

Are you in a relationship presently?

I have a girlfriend. She lives in Montreal and we see each other when we can. I prefer to be in a relationship when I'm on the road than to not be in one because it keeps me inspired.

It seems to be a very effective strategy.



Justin has received tremendous press attention recently, including a mention in *Entertainment Weekly* as one of the most promising singer-songwriters, a feature story in *Pollstar Magazine*, highlighted as a singer favored by the Jonas brothers in *People Magazine*, and the opportunity to perform on *Good Morning America Now*.

Love Is Celebrated
Around The World

Asian Valentines

Perhaps the best measure of the Asian adoption of Valentine's Day is the location of Hallmark printing facilities in Japan, Hong Kong, Singapore and Shanghai. And while cards are printed in numerous Asian languages, the biggest sellers are those that are written in English. It would appear that the best way to impress your sweetheart with how "hip" you are is to send him or her a Valentine's card in English. Even if the words are not understood by the giver and recipient, it would appear not to matter as love IS the universal language, understood by all.. As with so many things in today's world, globalization has influenced the celebration of St. Valentine's Day. Here is how the day is celebrated in various Asian countries.

Japan

The Mary Chocolate Company introduced Valentine's Day to Japan in 1958 as part of its marketing initiative. It succeeded. Half of all chocolate sold in Japan occurs around February 14th. At great expense, women give chocolate to all the men they know – family, friends, co-workers and lovers. To all except the last, they give "giri-choco" (obligation chocolate); lovers receive "honmei choco" (prospective winner chocolate).

Not to be outdone, marshmallow manufacturers introduced "White Day" to be celebrated on March 14th on which day men were to give candy and marshmallows to women. Since men only reciprocate to women with whom they have a romantic connection, the volume of giving is much lower than for Valentine's Day.

China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore

Chinese culture had already provided for a day of love. On the seventh day of the seventh lunar month they celebrate the love between a cowherd (represented by the star Altair) and the seventh sister (represented by the star Vega) who are separated by obligation and the Milky Way. Once a year they are permitted to meet when all the magpies in the world join to form a temporary bridge that crosses the Milky Way so that they may have a day together.

Celebration of Valentine's Day on February 14th has gained in popularity over time along with the Western tradition of exchanging gifts, cards, flowers and candy. Traditionalists are a little concerned about the growth of this holiday that is rooted in Western culture and the potential impact upon their own culture.



Korea

Koreans have adopted the Japanese manner of celebrating Valentine's Day and White Day. In a very considerate manner, they have added Black Day that is celebrated on April 14th and is reserved for young people who are single. On this day, they wear black clothes, eat jia jiang (black noodles) and drink black coffee together.

India

Similar to China, the Western manner of celebrating February 14th is gaining a foothold with the younger generation. Hindu nationalist parties are also concerned about the impact upon their culture and have sought to disrupt the increasing recognition of Valentine's Day by aggressive means.

Thailand

Rather than viewing the trend towards recognizing Valentine's Day as an affront to its traditional values and culture, Thailand capitalizes upon the holiday to promote them. They sponsor such events as the world's largest mass wedding, the world's largest underwater wedding and even staged the spectacle of a wedding between the world's largest groom and bride who happened to be – elephants! Hosting Valentine's Day events has proven to be an effective approach to highlighting traditional Thai wedding ceremonies, cuisine and entertainment, while also increasing tourism revenue.

Jason Wu Wows!

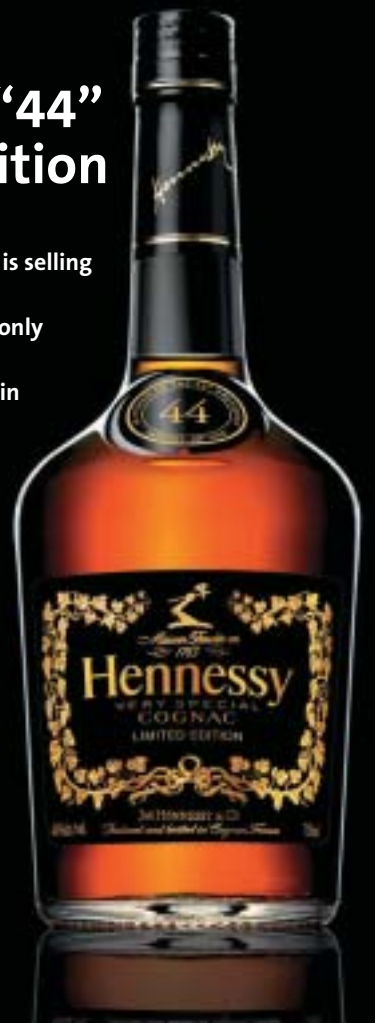


When we featured young fashion designer Jason Wu back in 2006, we knew he was going to be a big star. When First Lady Michelle Obama walked out into the first Inaugural Ball, we learned just how famous the 26-year-old had become! Wu's romantic one-shouldered design featuring tiny flowers and Swarovski crystals is now part of fashion history, and will be stored in the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History collection, along with other First Lady inaugural gowns.



Hennessy "44" Limited Edition

Cognac-maker Hennessy is selling a limited-edition bottle (only 180,000 were produced) in honor of the 44th president. Each bottle is individually numbered, and a portion of the proceeds will be donated to the Thurgood Marshall College Fund. The best part is it only costs \$30!



For the Love
of It

Romancing with Wine

by PHILIP CUISIMANO

As the lyrics to the John Paul Young ditty denote "Love is in the Air" as we observe Valentine's Day on February 14th. Book your reservations early as this is typically the busiest night of the year for area restaurants, unless you do not mind cooking a romantic dinner in the comfort of your own home. Now, let's turn our attention back to that of love for when there is love and romance "In the Air", wine cannot be far away.

Wine's cultural position as an integral component of *amour* has been established from the start of civilization. We can begin to trace wine's nexus with romance by noting that the Greek god, Dionysus, considered to be one of the most passionate of the mythological deities, introduced wine to man. Dionysus, also known as Bacchus, is described as a beautiful male with striking feminine features that give him a somewhat androgynous appearance. The mythos of his life is characterized by his impetuous love of women and especially for the love of his life, Ariadne.

Sharing a bottle of wine suggests intimacy; two people drinking from the same bottle symbolizes oneness and unity.

We move forward to readings in the New Testament, the most prominent being the description of the activities that occurred during the wedding at Cana when water was transformed into wine at a marriage ceremony. Examples of the positive correlation between wine and romance can be

found throughout our cultural and literary history.

That wine is a facilitator of romantic love should surprise no one. I, for one, have long posited that the fruit of the vine produces the most social beverage of all. No one hoards a great bottle of wine to consume by him or herself. On the contrary, it is best enjoyed when shared with the company of others. Sharing a bottle of wine suggests intimacy; two people drinking from the same bottle symbolizes oneness and unity. The toasting of one another by touching glasses is a more personal action when the salutations are made with wine. Beer or spirits can be enjoyed in the company of others but do not induce the degree of familiarity inherent in the sharing of wine.

Consuming a bottle of wine with others, as is the sharing of a meal with others, serves to bond people to one another. Those who eat and drink together become closer and the sensory pleasures we derive are enhanced by the presence of those whom we hold dear. This is why behaviorists urge families to share meals together as a component of establishing strong familial ties.

Finally, we must note the psychotropic effects of wine. Alcohol is classified as a depressant which, notwithstanding the negative connotation associated with that, can reduce stress and increase relaxation. Relaxed people can enjoy their food more because their digestive systems function more efficiently. They are also less inhibited and genuine, which fosters conditions suitable to romance.

So dear reader, as you plan your romantic activities remember to include wine as a component of your wooing regimen.

We offer a few wine suggestions for your consideration whether or not you share Valentine's Day with "the one you love or with the one you're with".

Braida "Il Fiore" 2005

Braida is one of the most historic wineries in the world, located in the Piedmont region of Italy. "Il Fiore" is "the flower", and what a lovely Valentine bouquet does this charming white cuvee make. A unique blend of Chardonnay and Riesling produces this crisp, dry white wine. A floral nose beckons one into a rich mouth-filling flavor experience of ripe berries and minerals that cascade into layers of complexity. It is a truly elegant and sophisticated wine that is sure to impress any sweetheart. Serve with seafood and delicate white meats. \$23.00

Terrasola by Jean Leon

This Spanish offering is produced in Catalonia from the winery originated by Jean Leon. Mr. Leon was a world famous restaurateur and founder of the famed La Scala eatery in Los Angeles. Terrasola is a blend of Syrah and Granacha, and the cuvee is soft and warm, exhibiting an earthiness typical of South American wines. The fruit is that of plums and blackberries and the body is light to medium with an elusive note of chocolate. The finish is soft, pleasant and comfortable especially considering this bottle's attractive price. Serve with medium-bodied meat courses. \$11.50

Manilow Pinot Grigio 2007

How would you like Barry Manilow to join you and your paramour for dinner on Valentine's Day? Not likely; however you can have his wine. That's right; this Pinot Grigio is a wine selected by Mr. Manilow and carries his name. The grapes are sourced from the Abruzzo region of Italy and 50% of the fruit undergoes barrel fermentation. The result is a soft and pleasant wine offering flavors of peaches, a taste of honey and a whisper of cream. The body is light and the finish short but all in all a fun quaff, especially at the "Copacabana". Serve with seafood. \$18.00

Wines available at Spec's Wines, Spirits, & Finer Foods, various locations. Visit specsonline.com for the store nearest you.



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Pin Ups



Queen of Hearts

Joyce Wang
*Roguescene Executive Host
NAAAP Houston Social Director*

Lashes: "Whisper To Me" xtendedbeauty.com
Shoes by Kate Spade \$298, Neiman Marcus



Fashion Photographer **Collin Kelly** Photographer Assistant **Andrew Danna** Fashion Stylist **Leslie Rivas** Stylist Assistant **Jennifer Joe**
Make-Up **Tree Vaello** Make-Up Assistants **Alicia Perez-Guevara and Bianca Linette** Hair **Leah Caldwell and Andrea Walker**

Liang Nancy Shi
Miss Chinese New Year 2007-2008

Lashes: "Dangerous" xtendedbeauty.com
Sweater by Just Cavalli by: Roberto Cavalli \$595, Neiman Marcus
Vintage corset top, Vintage Oasis
Vintage skirt, Vintage Oasis
Shoes by Fendi \$705, Neiman Marcus

A Beautiful View

Uncontrollable

Jenny Phan

*Past Asian American Bar Association of Houston
Vice President of Networking
In-house Legal Counsel, Shell Oil Co.*

Lashes: "Not So Sweet" xtendedbeauty.com
Dress by Prada \$2345, Neiman Marcus
Belt by Prada \$395, Neiman Marcus
Shoes by Sergio Rossi \$650, Neiman Marcus
Tights and garter belt, Erotic Cabaret
Vintage brooch, Retropolis
Vintage gloves, Vintage Oasis



Kicking It Up A Notch



Lily Hsu
Just Lily

Lashes: "Unforgettable" www.Xtendedbeauty.com
Dress by Dolce & Gabbana \$2350, Neiman Marcus
Shoes by Christian Louboutin \$995, Neiman Marcus
Hot shorts, Stylist's own
Tights and garter belt, Erotic Cabaret

A Taste of Romance



Tiffani Thuy Dang
2004 Miss Vietnam Houston
Runner-up Miss Vietnam Global 2008

Lashes: "Triple Trouble" lashaddiction.com
Top by D&G by: Dolce & Gabbana \$355, Neiman Marcus
Shoes by Christian Louboutin \$995, Neiman Marcus
Vintage earrings, Retropolis
Bloomers, Erotic Cabaret
Bow Belt Stylists Own

Going for Love



Teresa Mai

Hope Initiative President 2006-2008

Hope Initiative Board of Directors Member 2009

Lashes: "Tootz" lashaddiction.com
Dress by Dolce & Gabbana \$2495, Neiman Marcus
Shoes by YSL \$795, Neiman Marcus
Tights and garter belt, Erotic Cabaret
Vintage earrings, Vintage Oasis

Romantic Essentials
for Every Occasion

The Price of Love



Jellybeanz Cards

These special cards are designed by Joyce Wan, who had her first card mass-produced while still in grade school. In addition to the line of greeting cards, Wanart offers a variety of items from notepads to infant apparel, plus custom greeting cards, invitations and announcements. **Wanart Jellybeanz Cards, \$2.95 each** wanart.com



For That VERY Special Someone

Red – color of passion and true love – brilliantly highlighted in renowned Tiffany designer Jean Schlumberger’s magnificent enamel bracelets. Known as the Jackie O bracelets because Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis wore them everywhere, with her jeans or with her designer gowns –you can become an icon too. Wear individually, or as a collection. **Diamonds \$40,000, 18k Gold \$27,000, 18k Gold \$22,000** Tiffany & Company and tiffany.com



Lucky in Love

Here is a unique gift that will remind that special someone year-round that you are thinking of them. The heart-shaped bamboo comes in a red ceramic pot, and will continue to grow...with love, of course! **\$29.99** proflowers.com



Chocolate Fortune

Can your love life be taking a turn for the better? Check your fortune and find out! Each of these crispy chocolate-covered cookies comes with a romantic version of the traditional fortunes. **\$29.95** redenvelope.com



The Scent of Love

Embrace love with this extravagant floral oriental fragrance blended of warm golden amber, creamy sandalwood, orris root butter and its signature: the Bulgarian rose, the iconic symbol of love. **Ralph Lauren Love Crystal Parfum, \$600**
Ralph Lauren Love Eau de Parfum, \$90 and \$135
Neiman Marcus Galleria, neimanmarcus.com



Carry My Heart

Hearts abound in this silvertone leather Love Clutch from Marc Jacobs. Why wear your heart on your sleeve when you can carry it around much more fashionably? **\$795**
Neiman Marcus stores and neimanmarcus.com



La Vie En Rose

Sparkle and shine in the rosy pink metallic dress from Versace. **\$20,720**
Versace,
Houston Galleria
and versace.com



Hearts Abound

Frank Gehry, Tiffany designer and internationally renowned architect is in rare form with a dramatic reshaping of the heart in his new Gehry Hearts Collection in sterling silver. The famed architect approaches the universal symbol of love with a new angle, creating contoured reflective surfaces that seem to billow like sails. Make someone special’s heart go pitty-pat. In sterling silver. **\$750**
Tiffany & Company and tiffany.com

Asia Society Gala Kick-Off Party

Held at the Chinese Consulate

If Asia Society's Gala Kick off Party held at the Chinese Consulate recently was an indication of things to come in their Tiger Ball 2009: Splendors of China, then be sure to save Thursday Feb 26th now. The China theme was chosen to mark the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the U.S. and China. Making this a 'double celebration' is the fact that this year also marks the 30th anniversary of Asia Society in Texas. Gala hosts, Y. Ping Sun and David Leebron, and Chinese Consul General Qiao Hong welcomed over 150 guests to the elegant event, which showcased the exquisite color, beauty and sophistication of Chinese music, art and cuisine.



Karen Hofmeister, David Leebron, Hua Chang-Xue



Nancy Allen, Viet Hoang



Wayne and Barbara Harms



Marty and Kathy Goosen



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Y Ping Sun, Consul General Qiao Hong, Martha Blackwelder



Gordon Quan, Channy Soeur



Consul General Paul Lynch, Joanne King Herring



Charles and Lori Vettors

The Latest in Looks for a Sexier You

by TREE VAELO

★ Brows! Lashes! Lips!



Product images courtesy of Sephora

“The Classic Timelessness of Old Hollywood” is the TOP request backstage at shows, red carpet appearances, benefits, galas, and almost every single house call and hotel call. Do you love the look on the runways but need to modify it to fit your everyday life? This month we’ll learn how from our makeup expert Tree Vaello.

Rule #1: It is all about the brow line, the lash line, and the lips.

Rule #2: In today’s updated version, the skin should glow through. Steer clear of thickly applied foundation and oil sapping matte powders, especially when they are combined! Violating this rule will result in your outdated your overall appearance, making you look aged, and more drag than glam. Remember, the goal is to look healthy, vibrant, and hydrated, not corpse-like. Here, I have toned down the look to a more natural day-to-day version. Plus, fewer products are used, benefitting your pocket book.

- 1. Start with smashbox.com Photo Finish Foundation Primer.** I only reference products that I use, and I only use what has proven to work best on set. Use less foundation by simply priming the skin. Yes, you read that correctly. And yes, it really works that well.
- 2. Apply foundation with a brush!** I used the lauramercier.com Stick Foundation in Tawny on Vy’s skin applied with the japoneseque.com Foundation Brush. Do you think that you cannot get a beautiful finish without the use of concealer? In fact, you can and it will be even better. Plus, you get to save that concealer for a costume face!
- 3. Draw the top lash line with a chocolate brown liner** which is softer than black and brings out the honey tones in brown eyes, making their color appear like tiger eye gemstones. Be sure it is waterproof to assure that the line lasts and retains a clean look. I used theperfectface.com waterproof gel liner with the lauramercier.com Fine Liner brush for this shot. I also kept the line skinny, and kicked up the outer corners for even more kitty-cat effect. This promotes the overall classic look and serves as an Angelina Jolie red carpet appearance common denominator. She can’t be wrong looking that amazing.
- 4. LASHES!!!** “Foxy” lashes by lashaddiction.com give the look of fox fur color and texture which is much softer than traditional black lash strips. MEOW!
- 5. I switched out the red lipstick for DuWop.com “Tulip” lip gloss which is a sheer clear red.** The cinnamon-base also stimulates the lip pigment to make it the most natural looking red on the market.
- 6. Step Out.** This is a great way to keep your look updated, as well as toned down. Even the most natural looking make-up wearer does not feel overdone.

🌟 See you next month when I present my lash food menu and be sure to get in on our ever fabulous Makeover Giveaway.



Model: Vy Tran
Photo: Collin Kelly
Hair & Make-Up: Tree Vaello

About Tree:
Tree Vaello is a licensed and registered artist represented by the prestigious Page Parkes Management. She is their head hair and make-up artist, hair and make-up trainer, and directs their artistic team. She is also the director of the Houston Film Group Artistic Team and the US RED Artistic Team. To view her art work, visit treevaello.com

★ Industry Interview: Louis Ivan Molnar by TREE VAELO



Louis Ivan Molnar is the Fashion Director at Artopia

Photographed exclusively for Yellow Magazine by Collin Kelly. Grooming by Tree Vaello

Tree: I am so excited to hear your Hair and Make-Up Predictions for 2009!!!
Louis: LOTS of black liner and red lips will be HUGE all year. But there is also the nude face to consider, which is a pink-brown neutral lip when you want to do the returning cat-eye. Girls are also applying lots of mascara to their favorite false lashes. You’re going to see false lashes everywhere. They are great because they can hold their own if you need to skip shadow and mascara. Brows are much thicker this year, and sometimes they will even be darkened. Thin and plucked brows will be out of style.
For hair, expect long hair with lots of texture for both men and women. Hair is still sexy and moveable. It will be long and layered correctly, flattering many more faces than last year’s severe A-line bob and pixie ever could. Girls will be growing their hair out.

How about some examples of what we will see this year that we can connect to the forward face and hair?

Shoulder pads are coming back but they are not as exaggerated as the 80’s version nor will they be in T-Shirts. We will see suits, but not the “power suit”. We will see suspenders return more for the women, and they will be used as an accessory, not a tool. We will see lots of layering used on shoes along with more straps. There is the hybrid stiletto which combines the platform with a stacked heel stiletto. Walking on a stacked heel is more stable. More girls will be wearing the early introduction of these so they can ride the fashion wave before the classic stiletto heel makes its return. In essence, we’ll be seeing a return of the 80’s but with refinement.

Now, I want to hear your predictions on “The Grand Finale Level”.

The surprise color of the year will be ginger (skin) which is earthy but bright. It will do well because the bright factor is connected to joy. Plum will appear but it will not go where ginger can go. Consumers will play it safe with ginger in this economy as plum is a color of luxury. Houston is smart and diversified and this protects us. Purchases will be well thought out but extreme shoe purchases can still be classified as a fashion faux pas during economic struggles. As far as connecting all of this to the red lip, Cranberry will be the best selling lipstick in the red category for the year. It will also be the surprise lip color of the year.

Can you share some of your personal beauty secrets?

I take in loads of anti-oxidants every single day, without fail, and my favorite food for my skin has always been the avocado. Avocado oil is very powerful. In the mornings I drink water while in the shower for my skin. Luckily, I learned at a young age not to drink coffee and water together. It is one or the other, but not together.

Why not together?

Coffee speeds up your circulation and is transported to the skin by the water. Once there, it dehydrates, cracks and causes lines in the skin. I drink the water first and the coffee later. This way the water goes straight to my skin.

Louis, thank you so much for taking time out of your schedule for our readers. I can’t wait to interview you again really soon!!

Benjy's on Washington
Wows Customers

The New Benjy's by CHAU NGUYEN

Times are tough. We are in an economic recession. But you wouldn't know it by stepping into Benjy's new second location on Washington Avenue. The restaurant opened its doors just a few days before the end of the year. With little advertising, this location may already be the new "it" place to eat, drink and be seen. "Open and they shall come" is what owners Benjy and Erica Levit had hoped for when construction began more than two years ago. It appears that they were right.

On the night that I visited the restaurant, the general manager, Keith Thompson, told me it was their busiest night to date. It was a Friday night, less than two weeks after opening, and the restaurant and upstairs bar were packed with patrons. I wondered what was causing all the buzz.

Maybe, in part, it is a result of name recognition. After all, Benjy's in Rice Village has been a culinary fixture since 1995. Or perhaps it has to do with location. Washington Avenue is arguably Houston's newest out-and-about hotspot. Urbanites are always looking for new fun places in which to cavort.

This Benjy's has the feel of the original restaurant, only it is twice as large. With an open air kitchen and large panoramic dining area, the wood and stainless steel motif screams modern and trendy. Not to mention the sound of the cacophonous yuppies and sight of the to-be-seen crowd.

Then, there's the upstairs bar. Ladies: be prepared to fight off the men as you walk alongside the bar to the outdoor patio. Guys: a buddy of a male friend of mine recently texted him one evening to proclaim, "Muchas Chicas." That's not to say Benjy's bar is exclusively for singles, but it is an inviting atmosphere for them. I very much enjoyed my espresso martini nightcap with my significant other on our date night.

Still, if there is good reason to check out Benjy's, my vote would be for the food.

Anyone who has eaten at the original Benjy's will recognize plenty of familiar items on the menu, such as the chopped Asian salad, pan seared pork dumplings and crunchy chicken. But Chef Mike Potowski has added his own Asian flare to some of Benjy's modern American cuisine items.

Formerly with Rickshaw and Mantra, and most recently the Omni Hotel's fabulous Noe Restaurant, Potowski impressed us with his house



smoked salmon sashimi with Fuji apples and yuzu cream. I was torn between the idea of slurping it down or savoring it. Chopped into tiny square pieces and scooped neatly onto a plate surrounded by an artful scribble of wasabi, I couldn't help but dip the sashimi into the "presentation". It was like butter in my mouth. And in no time, it was gone.

I have always been a big fan of Benjy's chopped Asian salad, but on this night, our salad choice was another popular item, the butter lettuce salad lightly soaked in apple cider vinaigrette. We shared this plate, which I highly recommend. There is no need to risk filling up before the main entrée.

For dinner, we chose what have apparently become the most popular entrées, the buffalo hangar steak and the seared scallops. We had to try them. Medium rare and sliced into brisket like pieces instead of being served whole, the steak is accompanied by a side of bone marrow risotto and roasted vegetables. They complimented the lean cut of beef perfectly. As for the seared scallops, Chef Potowski's ginger vinaigrette elevated their flavor to delicious heights which paired well with the sides of Jerusalem artichokes and broccolini.

Mary Ellen, our esteemed and friendly waitress, urged us to save room for dessert, and I'm glad we did. I tried the banana bread topped with vanilla ice cream, while my partner ordered the tres leches. I must admit, I am not a dessert person, but I had more than my share of both, notwithstanding the very filling dinner. My vote would be the tres leches, although you won't be disappointed by the banana bread.

Benjy's is open for dinner only but will add lunch in early February. Sunday brunch will follow soon, thereafter. I can't wait.

Benjy's

5922 Washington Ave.
Houston, TX 77007
713.868.1131
benjys.com

Anyone who has eaten at the original Benjy's will recognize plenty of familiar items on the menu.



Photos by Timothy Frederick

Is Falling In Love Inevitable?

A Matter of Fate

Trish Volore and her husband, Vuthy “Woody” Kuon, have been blissfully married for two years. As is the case with many newlyweds, the first couple of years present an array of challenges, discussions and compromises. Coming from different cultural backgrounds, they found that there are some challenges that are unique to their special circumstances. This month, Trish and Vuthy discuss their belief – or lack thereof – in fate.

Do you believe in fate? Fate is defined by dictionary.com as “that which is inevitably predetermined.” I hadn’t thought much about fate as it relates to love until this past weekend when I saw two really great movies that both had themes involving it. In the first movie, *Slumdog Millionaire*, the young man had loved the main female character his whole life. Even when they were separated by time and miles, he thought of her, always planning to find her and be with her. He parted from her several times, usually not of his choosing, but he kept coming back as if he couldn’t stay away. She was magnetic to him. In the second movie, *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*, the main character, Benjamin, began his life as an old man who was the size of a baby and as he “grew up” he became younger. When he was about 8 years old (but looked 70), he became friends with a beautiful young girl who was about 8 years old, too. Basically, at that point in the

My courtship with Woody was pretty much a repetitious cycle of me setting him free and him coming back.

film, Benjamin had the body of a 70 year old, but he had the mind of a child. As the years passed they began to fall in love. He loved her but felt like they were still too far apart in age to have a serious relationship, so they went their separate ways. In the years that followed, Benjamin travelled to many places around the world but was always drawn back to see the girl. Even though he had relationships with other women, he was always drawn back to the girl he loved, pulled by the invisible hand of fate.

These stories remind me of the old saying that “If you love someone, set them free. If they return, it was meant to be.” My courtship with Woody was pretty much a repetitious cycle of me setting him free and him coming back. You see, Woody was a very naughty boy. When we were dating he would drive four hours to see me and we would spend every minute of the weekend together. When he was in Houston and I was in Fort Worth, he would call me many times a day. He would act completely devoted to me and talk about how he was falling in love with me but then he would say that he wasn’t ready for a serious relationship; he just wanted to have fun. Of course, I would break up with him because I wasn’t looking for a casual boyfriend who couldn’t even commit to a serious dating relationship.

He would call on the phone and be so sweet and say that we could at least be friends. Then he would come to visit again and the whole cycle would repeat itself. Finally, one summer day he was on his way to see me and I told him that I really was done and I did not want to see him anymore if he couldn’t at least agree to date me exclusively until we decided whether the relationship could ever be more than it was. He was so sad when he said, “You mean you want me to turn around and go back home?” I was really done with him if he couldn’t offer more so I said, “That’s right. I’ll miss you but I deserve better than this and I won’t settle for less than what I want.” It was about three o’clock in the afternoon and I was at work. At three o’clock in the morning, Woody showed up at my house and asked me to marry him. He was so cute and sweet that I couldn’t possibly resist. So, I said yes and we were married two months later.

– TRICIA VOLORE



What a fascinating question! I honestly can’t say whether or not I believe in fate. I love the concept in the movies. It really does make for a good love story... especially in the movie *Slumdog Millionaire*. To be honest, I had no intention of seeing that movie when I first heard the title. I thought it would be about gangs killing each other in the slums of New York, while becoming millionaires via the drug trade. Violent “shoot-em-up” movies usually aren’t really my cup of tea.

Being the artistic type, I do enjoy independent and foreign films. So, when my wife told me this movie was set in India, I was intrigued. And off we went! We drove to the nearby AMC theater for the 4:15 pm showing (which is NOT considered a matinee anymore), paid our nineteen bucks and found our seats where we like to sit most: right behind the rails where we can put our feet up and have no one in front of us to complain. We were there early, so I handed Tricia my new Blackberry Curve to let her play a video game called “Bricks.” I took out my Palm Treo to continue my game of “Bookworm.” Just as the first preview was being shown, before we had a chance to finish turning off our electronic devices, a man sitting behind us tapped my wife on the shoulder and rudely ordered us to turn them off.

I was so offended by his tone of voice, since our phones were on “silent” and we were just minding our own business killing time before the movie started. He told us, “Turn off your #@%\$! game! No one wants to see your #@%\$! screen!” I quickly responded with a curt, “Well, don’t look!” We continued with some angry banter back and forth for a short period of time, ending by me telling him he was rude and essentially a jerk. Even though I had never been in an actual fight in my life, I had visions at that moment of pummeling the guy! I planned in my head how I would go about doing that, since he was quite a bit bigger than me. I figured that I was younger and could rely on quick karate moves!

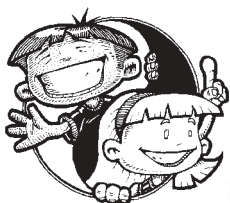
Eventually the movie began, but I was still pretty peeved. It took a scene in the movie when the main character recalls a childhood memory that involves getting trapped in a confined wooden toilet on stilts to soften my mood. When the film ended, I leaned over to my wife and muttered, “That was probably one of the best movies I’ve ever seen in my life.”

The movie reminded me of a Cantonese film I saw many years back starring Maggie Cheung called *Comrades: Almost a Love Story*, which was also about the fated love between a boy and a girl from the same small town, starting out in poverty and seeking out a better life in the big city. I won’t reveal too much so you can enjoy these movies yourselves, but watching them does make me question whether fate exists.

Was I destined to have that rude man sit behind me and almost ruin my date? Was it my destiny to yell at him to protect my wife’s honor? How can it be? I chose to say what I said. I thought about my words and planned my attack. How could that be fate? I could have chosen to stay silent. I could have chosen to attend NYU for college instead of RISD. I could have chosen to work as an illustrator near the California coast, instead of teaching in Fort Worth. I could have asked any of my previous girlfriends to marry me and may never have had the chance to meet Tricia... then my 20 month old baby boy T.J. may never have existed!

My answer is no. It can’t be fate. There is absolutely no way someone like me could deserve such happiness. It must be luck.

– VUTHY KUON



WOODY & TRISH



By Vuthy Kuon

It's A Party!

New Year's Eve Party at Club Koi



Tony Lau, Lily Hsu, Sue Nguyen, Jin Lee, & guest



Michael Dang, Salman Khan, Ambreen Aslam



Jennifer Nguyen, Cyndi Ha, Monica Tran, Karen Tran



Jonny Tran, Alice Wang, Liz Tran, Jeff Gee



Gia Phan, Loc Nguyen, Hai Khanh Tran

Roguescene's Chronology New Year's Eve Party presented by Teahouse



Sandra Chacim, Thanh Nguyen, Justeen Smith, Melody Quan, Jaclyn Vu



Jennifer Ma, Yen Ngo, Vinnie Nguyen, Christine Nguyen, Nga, Hieu



Sarah Van Dong, Jillian, Christine Nguyen



Ly Tran, Anh Huynh, Kat Tran, Tina Nguyen



Danny Nguyen, John Dao, Anthony Marquino



Clubworks New Year's Eve Party, "Black Tie Affair" at Kim Son



Eric Wu, Thomas Nguyen, Mike Medina, Kimberly So, Stevie Vu, Millie Wong, Jeff Chen, Willis Chen



Emily & Tao La



John Nguyen, Vincent M., Chris Tran, Tommy Tran

New Year's Eve Party at Zushi



Diane Nguyen, Phi Doan, Michelle Luu Nguyen, Hong Le



Diem Huynh, Thi Bui, Catherine Tran



Kristie Huynh, Chris Nguyen



Lizzi Tran, Teresa Mai



Tony Tran, Tu Lan Nguyen



Paul Nguyen, Trang Phan

New Year Networking Reception: Sweet Asia

Held at Museum of Fine Arts, Houston

In celebration of the New Year, Asia Houston Network held their event, Sweet Asia at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. This year theme is sweets from all different parts of Asia. Hundreds of people in attendance, Gordon Quan, Charles and Lily Foster, Rogene Calvert, Elsie Huang, John Kim, Jerome Vielman and many others. Asia Houston Network is a non-profit organization established to build cultural bridges between Asian-Americans and other groups in Houston.



Randy Sim, Gigi Lee



Julianne Youn



Victorina Piccio, Steve Mertz, Ashima Duggal



Takako Allsford, Jean Wilson



Jonathan Dizon, Julie Vo



Christine Omari, Mari Omari



Mindy Le



Yuki Rogers, Judge Ed Emmett

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Dining Guide

Yellow Magazine's featured restaurants

JAPANESE

Sake Lounge

Nouveau Japanese
550 Texas St., 713.228.7253

Sake Lounge offers traditional sushi, with a personalized touch from head sushi chef Yama. Signature items include the Sake Ceviche marinated in a sake cocktail sauce and Sake Lounge Roll which has fresh fruit slices infused into the roll.

Shabu House

Japanese soup
8719- Bellaire Blvd., 713.995.5428

Only beef or seafood items are served and will be cooked with the classic shabu shabu style. Boiling broth is situated at the bar. When the food arrives, place everything in the broth and begin the unique experience.

Tokyo One

7465 W. Greens Rd., 281.955.8898
2938 W. Sam Houston S., 713.785.8899

Tokyo One is a sushi buffet restaurant, situated in a fancy boat house with an outside deck. The food is fresh and is constantly replenished. Selections include: salads such as sea weed, beef, squid, salmon and watercress. Sushi includes a variety of rolls and sashimi. A "must have" is the escobar. There are also a variety of fresh crabs during dinner. Great price and great atmosphere.

Zushi Japanese Cuisine

5900 Memorial Dr., 713.861.5588

Zushi serves extremely fresh and high quality sushi. Stand out items are the sashimi appetizers served with perfectly paired sauces or any one of the many house specialty rolls.

Uptown Sushi

1131 Uptown Park Blvd. #14 713.871.1200

Uptown Sushi personifies an upscale sushi restaurant located near the Galleria in the swanky Uptown Park Plaza. The menu offers Japanese fusion dishes and a great selection of high-end sashimi and sushi. Side note: Uptown Sushi has "off-the-menu" specialty rolls served daily!

Rickshaw Bambu

713.942.7272

So many great dishes and variety to match, picking a favorite seems to be a daunting task. The East West Chicken Wraps, Mandarin Beef and Rickshaw's Pad Thai are favorite Pan Asian dishes. The sushi menu has seventeen specialty rolls and, of course, nigiri and sashimi.

CHINESE

Auntie Chang's

2621 South Shepherd #290, 713.524.8410

Auntie Chang's offers the most flavorful home-style Chinese cuisine around. Although known for their dumplings, any of your favorite classic Chinese dishes are done extremely well.

Hong Kong Food Street

9750 Bellaire Blvd., 713.981.9888

Peking duck and roasted pork hang from cleavers in a front window display giving a Hong Kong street market feel. In addition, the menu is divided into sections including Seafood, Hot Pot, Special Stir Fry, Sizzling and Chef Specials. The Peking duck, Beef Pot and Dry Scallops are recommended items.

San Dong Noodle House

9938-F Bellaire Blvd., 713.271.3945

Authentic hand pulled Chinese noodle dishes are served at a reasonable price. A few favorites include the Roast Beef Noodle soup served in a beef broth accented by ginger and soy, or the oh so addicting pan fried dumplings.

Sinh Sinh

9788 Bellaire Blvd., 713.541.0888

The seafood at Sinh Sinh is quite exciting because everything served comes from live tanks. Prawns, Australian king lobster, King crabs, Coral Leopard trout, Surf clams, Geoduck clams, Trunk clams, Elephant clams, etc...are all featured as live seafood.

Arco Seafood

9896 Bellaire Blvd., 713.774.2888

A refreshing take on Chinese seafood offering an upscale ambience. Subtle flavors allow the natural taste of the seafood to emerge. Dishes to try: Sea Cucumber, Crab Meat and Fish Maw Soup, Noodle's with Abalone Sauce, Sautéed Snow Pea Leaf or the Steamed Whole Tilapia.

KOREAN

Airang Korean Restaurant

9715 Bellaire Blvd., 713.988.2088

From the décor to the cuisine, everything about this place exemplifies tradition. The Moh Dum Bulgogi is a classic family style dinner which includes barbecued short ribs, squid, chicken and a vast assortment of side dishes such as the potato salad, kim chi and spicy cucumber salad.

ITALIAN

Da Marco Cucina E Vino

1520 Westheimer Rd. 713.807.8857

If you are looking for authentic Italian food, Da Marco is the place to find it. It has a charming atmosphere to go along with the excellent fare. All of the entrees are subtle and prepared nearly perfect. Must try Sweet Corn Ravioli and Lobster and the Sea Bass with Aceto Tradizionale.

THAI

Thai Spice

8282 Bellaire Blvd. 713.777.4888

Thai Spice on Bellaire is a foodies dream. It's a casual place that serves Thai dishes you won't find anywhere else in Houston, with a huge selection of interesting, rare, tasty dishes at excellent prices. A must have is the whole fried tilapia with hot and sour dipping sauce and papaya salad and Tom Yum soup.

Nit Noi

6700 Woodway Pkwy., Suite 580
281.597.8200

Nit Noi means "a little bit" and Thai food lovers pack Nit Noi restaurants and cafes all around Houston. Nit Noi will always be known for their Pad Thai, but other must try dishes include PadThai Korat (flat noodles stir-fried with chicken, pork or shrimp with vegetables) and Tom Yum Goong (spicy and sour shrimp soup).

Red Basil

11322-C Westheimer Rd., 281.293.0426

A gourmet take on traditional Thai cuisine, Red Basil offers fabulous food at a reasonable price. If you are a fan of Thai soup try the Tom Yam with shrimp. It will evoke all of your senses of taste with its sweet, sour and spice flavors. The papaya salad and the Massaman curry beef are a few others to try.

Tony Thai

10613 Bellaire Blvd., 281.495.1711

A sophisticated approach to traditional Thai cuisine, Tony's executes with perfect balance and pizzazz. Tony's Wings, wet or dry, and the Steamed Mussels are popular appetizers. For the main course try the Basil Lamb, Garlic Salmon or the Steamed Fish with Chili.

INDIAN

Kiran's Restaurant

4100 Westheimer Rd. #151, 713.960.8472

This northern Indian style restaurant embodies a fusion approach to its cuisine. With a focus on well balanced flavors rather than spice, the Flaky Halibut Swimming in Watermelon Curry sauce and the Tandoori Platter typify this perfectly.

VIETNAMESE

Kim Son Restaurants

2001 Jefferson (and other locations),
713.222.2461

The menu is the most imposing part of this casual, highly regarded landmark Vietnamese restaurant. There are no poor choices among the 100 or so options. Enjoy finely prepared delicacies as well as the expected fare, such as the pork vermicelli and fried eggroll. Must try is their black pepper softshell crab. Expansive banquet and special event facilities are also available.

Vietopia

5176 Buffalo Speedway, 713.664.7303

Trendy yet elegant, Vietopia delivers top notch Vietnamese cuisine at reasonable lunch prices and a stellar dinner menu. The lounge at Vietopia works perfectly for those who want a less formal dining experience but still want to enjoy quality food.

Van Loc Restaurant

3010 Milam St., 713.528.6441

A great lunch time eatery serving classic Vietnamese cuisine which, according to the establishment, has around "200 menu items that come straight from mama." Dishes to try are the Vietnamese egg rolls and the beef cubed steak with lettuce and tomato.

Mo Mong

1201 Westheimer Rd. #B, 713.524.5664

This Trendy Montrose establishment has a great lunch crowd as well as a packed martini night on Wednesdays. But the real draw is the food- traditional family recipes mixed in with some tasty modern dishes. Must try items include the Mango Spring Rolls, Shrimp and Avocado Spring Roll, Volcano Chicken, and the Bo Luc Lac.

WINE BARS

So Vino Bistro & Wine Bar

507 Westheimer Rd., 713.524.1000

So Vino highlights the unique tastes and styles of Southern Hemisphere wines. The pairing of stellar wines with the new interpretations of traditional world cuisine is the passion of co-founder Elizabeth Abraham. Must try include cooked mussels served with a soy potatoe patty and topped with a mushroom ragu, also the short ribs.

The Tasting Room

1101 Uptown Park Blvd. #18, 713.993.9800

Each of The Tasting Room's three Houston locations offers a unique food and wine experience. Uptown has a more sophisticated feel that attracts a hip, professional crowd. It is the newest "in" spot to sip and be seen. Check out the Sunday Brunch Buffet for \$24, or their delicious thin crust pizza anytime.

To have your restaurant featured in Yellow Magazine, or to recommend a restaurant that you enjoy, please email the information to dining@yellowmags.com.

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MAGAZINE



**PAOLA
LENTI**

FRAME
Design by Francesco Rota

Modular seating system including sofas, chaise longue, armchairs, chairs and side tables: each modular element of the collection is composed of several aluminum sections, which can be upholstered for indoor or outdoor environments either in Rope or Aquatech, Paola Lenti's signature materials which are resistant and easy-to-maintain, or in Paola Lenti's signature Felt or in Bliss fabrics. The wide and comfortable cushions that complete the collection are available in fabrics and colors coordinated with the structure upholstery. A series of cushions with fully removable covers complete the collection.

SPIN Rug

The Spin rug is entirely hand made with a mélange wool rope. The rope winds up, creating spirals and leaves to form modules which are joined together one by one, inspired by ancient decorations and bas relief. The decorative effect makes Spin suited not only as prestigious flooring, but also mounted on walls.

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