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NOVEMBER 2007
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**Yellow Magazine
Cover Model Contest**

**Tasting Bourbon
and Cognac**

**Malay Bistro
Gets All Zen**

**A New Horizon
in Palm Springs**

yellowmags.com



Photo by Debbie Porter

Admit it. Every now and then haven't you gotten the urge to get dirty, be sexy and spend lots of money? In this issue of *Yellow Magazine*, we aim to satisfy these desires, although perhaps in a different way than you might expect. This month's cover offers some clues (hint, hint). Our featured model is the delightfully talented and classically beautiful Michelle Krusiec, seen regularly on ABC's popular new series *Dirty Sexy Money*. We were so very pleased to offer Michelle her latest starring role as fashion model. Read what she has to say about the experience and a host of other matters. Please rest assured that if you missed seeing her in the first round of episodes of the show by the time we go to press, she'll be back later in the season. In addition, look for Michelle on the big screen as she will be in not one but two feature films in 2008. We are very grateful that she committed time in her very active schedule to fly to New York for this month's very special photo shoot.

Speaking of models, included in this issue are photographs of 10 beautiful young ladies who are competing in the Yellow Magazine 2007 Cover Model Contest. Not only will the winner grace the cover of an upcoming issue of Yellow Magazine (we pulled some strings), she will also receive a scholarship to Page Parkes Center of Modeling & Acting and the opportunity to win a \$100,000 contract from the Page Parkes Agency Network! The winner will be decided with input from our loyal readers, so go immediately to yellowmags.com to cast your vote, view additional photographs, and even see a "behind the scenes" video of the photo shoot.

Viet Hoang
Publisher



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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 publisher of the *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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On the cover:

Sequin Silk Chiffon with Bow

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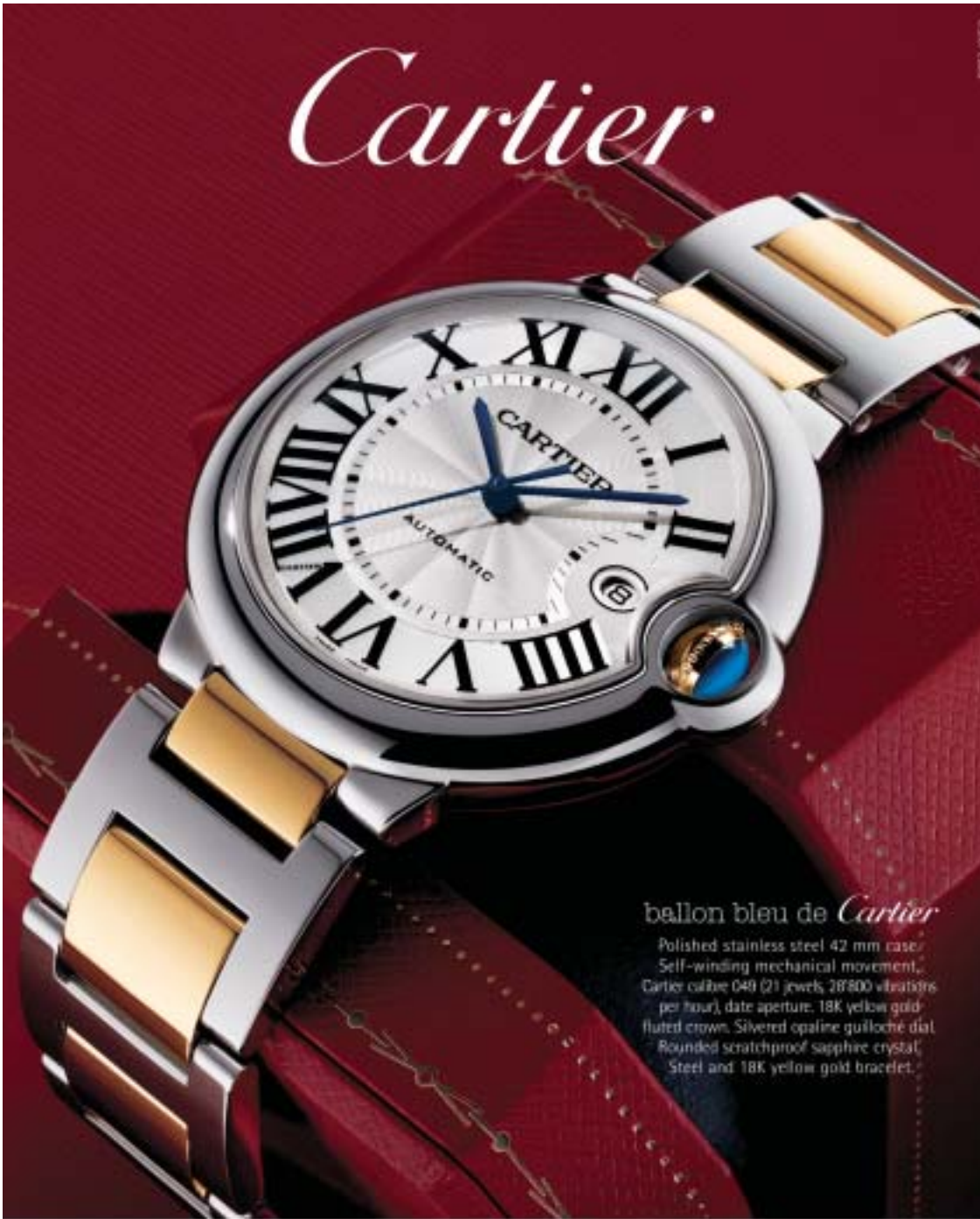
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Asian American Bar Association Gala

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More than 450 guests attended the gala, which raised over \$135,000 for AABA and its charitable and educational arm, Asian American Bar Foundation (AABF). This year, AABA presented its Impact Award to the Honorable Hannah Chow. Judge Chow is the first woman of Chinese origin to be licensed by the State Bar of Texas, the first Asian American judge elected in the state of Texas, and the first Asian American elected to any public office in Harris County.



Hon. Ted Wu, Judge Larry Joe Doherty, Hon. Hannah Chow



Steve Wu, Emily Kuo, Catherine Than, Joyce Kao Soliman



Judge Jay Karahan, Chau Nguyen



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Yvonne Ho, Tri Nguyen, Amy Branch



Henry Garrana, Andrea Tran



Hoang Quan Vu



Mai Huynh, Elaine Pascual, Gene Wu, Pascal Artega, Sandy Huynh, Angela Ban



Joseph Yao, Lu Pham, Wilson Chu, Tri Nguyen, Duy Le



Helene Dang

Asia House Fundraiser

Held at the Home of Consul General Jung Keun Kim of Korea

Asia House will open its doors in 2010 in the Museum District, serving as the permanent home for Asia Society's many programs and activities. The building was designed by Yoshio Taniguchi, known for his design of the Museum of Modern Art (MoMa) in New York City.

Photos by Sopheavy Than



Violinist Henry Lee



Consul General Jung Keun Kim, Kristopher Ahn



Christine and Yong An, Martha Blackwelder



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Cindy and Kwang Jin Jung, Helen Chang



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The Proof Is
In the Spirit

Bourbon and Cognac

by HENRI MERCERON



Just in time for the holidays, *Yellow Magazine* had the distinct pleasure of discussing the finer points of cognac and bourbon with Courvoisier’s Quality Manager and the family representative and master distiller of Jim Bean Bourbon. It is appropriate that cognac and bourbon be covered together as each is defined by strict guidelines that dictate the manner by which they are produced. Beyond the countless rules, these two spirits encompass national pride and exclusivity more than any other.

While cognac can only be produced in Cognac, France, bourbon can only be produced in the United States. Everything else is just brandy and whiskey, respectively. In fact, France’s Jacque Chirac awarded Courvoisier the Prestige de la France, an honor bestowed upon it exclusively that establishes that the spirit is held in such high esteem as to represent the pride of the country to the world at large. It continues Courvoisier’s aura of excellence that began with the legend that it was the preferred cognac of Napoleon I and later named “Official Supplier of the Imperial Court” by Napoleon III in 1869.

Pierre Szersnovicz is the Quality Manager at Courvoisier, and is the fourth generation of his family in the cognac business. His talent has been honed for more than thirty years. Today, he is one of a team of six who tastes innumerable eaux de vie on a daily basis and presents their blending recommendations to the Master Blender, who is responsible for determining the final blends of cognac that the company offers. This is a process that has developed over the course of two centuries, culminating in a vocation that is itself a blend of science and art.

Although all cognac is derived from Ugni Blanc grapes, the unique flavors between those produced by the different cognac houses is attributable to such factors as the number of eaux de vie blended and in what proportions, their ages, the areas from which the grapes were harvested, and the humidity in the cellars where the cognac is aged and rotated. The combination of variables is daunting, which

may explain why Courvoisier’s Master Blender, Jean-Marc Olivier, is only the fourth person to occupy this critical position at the company in the last one hundred years. Consistency and experience have allowed Courvoisier to deliver the same excellent uncompromising cognac that has been savored throughout the centuries.

Unlike other producers, Courvoisier selects grapes that are harvested from only four of the viticultural areas (Crus) around Cognac, France. They consider the grapes from Grande Champagne, Petite-Champagne, Borderies and Fins Bois to be the only ones suitable for their product. Another point of differentiation from other brands, Courvoisier distills its cognac in smaller stills because they believe it enhances quality control.

One of the most critical components of the production process is the selection of the wood used to construct the barrels in which the cognac is aged. Pierre explained, “We are very concerned about the wood. Jean-Marc Olivier is interested in selecting the wood in the forest himself. It is as important as the grapes because it is the only other ingredient that influences the flavor of the cognac. The trees may be 200-300 years old and you can see their entire history. We have found bullets from WWI embedded deep in the flesh of some. Jean-Marc looks at the trees’ history and makes his selection based on that and other characteristics.” Once the wood is selected and cut into slats, it is aged outdoors for three years before being formed into barrels.

Pierre Szersnovicz
Quality Manager at Courvoisier



Consistency and experience have allowed Courvoisier to deliver the same excellent uncompromising cognac that has been savored throughout the centuries.

Apparently, global warming has not yet damaged the process of producing cognac, as Pierre pointed out that in 30 years he has only witnessed one year in which a crop of grapes was almost unavailable. In 1980, there was a severe 2-day frost, a rare event. However, he noted that when he was a child, the harvest took place in the middle of October and finished in November. Today, the harvests begin in late September or early October. He stated that the tasters and Master Blender know how to blend poor vintages with superior ones, along with everything in between, to create a product that meets Courvoisier’s rigorous standards. So, he does not anticipate that global warming will have a significant impact. Always

the optimist, he added, “It is better for the growers because it is much more pleasant to harvest grapes in the beginning of October rather than later. And, there is more daylight, too!”

Fred Booker Noe is the sixth generation descendent of Jacob Beam, the patriarch of the family who started what would become the Jim Beam Distillery. Fred’s great grandfather did not have any sons, so his daughter’s husband, F. Booker Noe, assumed the helm of the company. Today, Beam Global Spirits and Wine is the world’s fourth largest spirits company, with the company’s brands including Jim Beam, Courvoisier, Canadian Club, Maker’s Mark and Clos du Bois.

The origin of bourbon is both colorful and historic. Like so many of his countrymen in the northeast, George Washington produced a rye whiskey. Then, the government sought to impose a tax on the product, which is exactly what the settlers despised when they were under British rule. At the same time, the government encouraged people to move to Kentucky by offering land upon which to grow corn to feed an expanding population. Many of the northeastern distillers welcomed the invitation. They harvested more corn than could be consumed and began to distill it into whiskey because it was easier to store, lasted longer and could be used as currency. In 1795, Jacob Beam sold his first batch of spirits.

There are only a few variables that influence the taste of bourbon. First, the blend of grain used may be changed. By law, at least 51% must be corn; the other grains mostly used by Jim Beam are rye and barley. Second, the proof that is distilled may be varied but cannot exceed 160. When the bourbon has finished aging, de-mineralized water may be added to reduce the proof. And, finally, the degree to which the barrel is charred will affect the flavor. When I asked Fred about that, before I could get my words out he said, “Oh, it’s burnt. You get a little smoke. We use white oak, which has high sugar content. When it is heavily charred, the wood tries to heal itself by bringing the sugars to the burnt areas forming a caramelized layer. When we distill the bourbon it goes in crystal clear. We call it ‘White Dog’. My dad told me that it looks white but it bites you like a dog when you drink it. And it will. I’ve drunk a little bit over the years...but we won’t go there! So, you put the White Dog into the barrel and let nature take its course.

Hot summers, the fluid expands and penetrates the wood; cold winters, it contracts and the fluid comes out of the wood. As it passes through the caramelized layer of sugar it picks up all its color and a lot of flavors. It is the only way these can be added because nothing else is allowed.”

Bourbon sales, which were flat or declining in the 1970’s and 1980’s, have made a strong comeback. Fred’s dad began releasing high-end ultra premium lines, which he said, “put the romance back into bourbon.” While people used to be loyal to the type of alcohol they drank (and even to particular brands), the trend has been towards a diversification of tastes. Today, people will drink wine, beer, cognac and bourbon on different occasions at different times. They are more adventuresome.

The company has an eye on China and Taiwan, where it introduced a Jim Beam “small batch” that is not available in the U.S. It is a bourbon finish with port wine and is for “high end consumption”. The company’s Booker bourbon is high end and has done very well in Asian markets. As it considers the emerging Chinese market, Beam’s strategy in Japan may provide a clue as to how it will market its product there. “Niko was our distributor for years. Now, Asahi is. They are the beer people and they do very well with it. If they can do for us what they’ve done for their beer, we’re going to have great market share in Japan. The thing is to partner up with existing products and draw upon the strengths of the marketing people who understand the people and know how to sell to them.” Seems simple enough. So, how do we get the Jim Beam small batch with port wine onto our tables here? That is another story!



Fred Booker Noe from Jim Beam



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Vote for Your Favorite in
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2007 Cover Model Contest

We have searched and found 10 highly qualified contestants to be the next Yellow Magazine Model and be awarded a scholarship to Page Parkes Center of Modeling & Acting and the opportunity to win a \$100,000 contract from the Page Parkes Agency. Page Parkes Corporation is known for the models and talents it has represented. Amongst their alumni are Alexis Bledel, Angelina Jolie, Haley and Hilary Duff, Rebecca Romijn, and Shannon Elizabeth, to name a few. The winner will also be featured in a Minh Tri Jewelry advertisement, receive jewelry by Luluna, clothing by Gia & Co., cosmetics by the Perfect Face, beauty facial treatment by Quantum Medical Spa, a total make over by Inspire Salon and a day of pampering sponsored by Titan Management.

Visit yellowmags.com to cast your vote and to view more pictures of the contestants plus a “behind the scenes” video of the photo shoot!



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Michelle Krusiec

by HENRI MERCERON

Michelle Krusiec is an actor whose resume includes countless appearances in theater, film and television productions that have spanned every genre. She has a supporting role in the new ABC series *Dirty Sexy Money* and can be seen in the 2008 films *Henry Poole is Here* and *What Happens in Vegas...* If you get the impression that Michelle is a busy actor, consider that she has been in thirteen films (including *Nixon*, *Sweet Home Alabama* and *Daddy Daycare*), more than thirty television productions (including *NCIS*, *Grey's Anatomy*, *Cold Case*, *Monk* and *ER*), hosted the show, *Travelers*, on the Discovery Channel, starred in the Saturday morning sitcom, *One World*, for three seasons, and was nominated for the Chinese equivalent of an Academy Award for her starring performance in the indie film, *Saving Face*, produced by Will Smith's Overbrook Entertainment company. We are pleased to have had the opportunity to interview this prolific and rising actor; we are also very proud to have given her a new role – as this month's fashion model.

My Golden Horse Award experience was a very warm fuzzy period with the Asian press and with the Asian fans who continue to be so devoted in their support.

I have read your resume and know that you have never been a fashion model. How did it feel posing instead of acting in front of a camera?

If you’ve seen any photos that have been taken of me in the past, it’s pretty obvious that I love to play dress up and model. I prefer even more extreme looks because any time I can step outside my everyday persona, I think it’s just a cool change of pace. Finding poses can be technical though and that’s where I feel my acting kicks into gear. I know it’s important to fill a moment with some feeling or real connection with the camera. Since I have a background in dance, I love being able to incorporate my body but sometimes, there were poses that I thought look too technical and that’s when I have a real appreciation for models who can organically find movements the camera will love.

You were born in Taiwan and raised in Virginia by your adoptive parents – your Taiwanese aunt and her husband. You were one of very few Asian Americans in your school. In the critically acclaimed film, Saving Face, in which you had your first starring role in a film, you played a lesbian who is clashing with the insular mores of traditional Asian culture. Where did you draw your inspiration?

I was raised very Chinese growing up, but growing up in America means you grow up bi-culturally. At home, I felt I was Chinese but as soon as I walked out the door, I suddenly became American. Having an American father also had a huge influence on me. The clash between these two different experiences, who I am, who the world perceives me to be or who others want to perceive me as are themes dealt with in *Saving Face*. So, I felt I really identified with the world presented in *Saving Face* because it was about a young woman grappling with her own identity and how to claim it. As for the lesbian aspect, I approached the role as a woman who was falling in love for the first time. The sexuality part of the character of Wil, I felt, stemmed from her personality and not necessarily something identifiable as “lesbian.” A lot of my inspiration for Wil came from my observations of the film’s director, Alice Wu, who reminded me of the character.

You received rave reviews from Variety, Hollywood Reporter, Washington Post and others for your portrayal, and were nominated for best actress at the 2005 Golden Horse Awards (the Asian equivalent of the Academy Awards). Was this movie a turning point for you?

I believe the nomination was a turning point for me, emotionally. I wish I could tell you that it opened tons of doors for me in Hollywood, but the truth is that people will usually congratulate me and then ask to see my audition! The nomination meant more to me personally in terms of my artistic process than an industry accolade, because it was like receiving a giant bear hug from Asia and specifically Taiwan. I respect immensely the artistic work that is produced in Asia and I felt honored and moved when they acknowledged me and welcomed me

as warmly as they did. The press also seemed to understand the challenges of trying to make it in the business, especially in Hollywood and they all kept cheering me on in my interviews. It was like we made friends and I felt intense pride for being Taiwanese. It’s a feeling difficult to describe because I had never felt that kind of support growing up in America. My Golden Horse experience was a very warm fuzzy period with the Asian press and with the Asian fans who continue to be so devoted in their support.

I saw the first two episodes of Dirty Sexy Money and was disappointed that your appearance in the pilot was so brief and that you were not in the second episode. (I know that you will be in another four episodes and will look for you!). Aren’t you married to the clergyman who is so easy to dislike? If so, they need to develop your character because with a husband like that, you are bound to have a lot to say! Do you think they will?

You have to keep watching, because things definitely heat up. It’s a large ensemble cast so the writers are just getting to know me. I’m married to the mean clergyman who is played by a really wonderful actor named Glen Fitzgerald. Glen and I get along really well so it’s fun to play off of him, but what happens to us as a couple is in high suspense. We are facing a pending writer’s strike so, literally, we are waiting to see where the storyline takes us! I think *DSM* is finding its strength as a show and being a part of this cast is nice company to be keeping, so I’m not too worried with how they choose to continue developing my story line. I had to leave in the middle of the show to shoot *What Happens in Vegas...*, and so I’ll be rejoining the cast later in the season. Where they decide to take the character is definitely a curiosity of mine, as well. Mei-ling is an emotionally repressed woman who needs a shopping spree and maybe a filthy immoral love affair with a New York fireman. Maybe we should suggest that to the writers? That’s dirty, sexy and money!

What has been your favorite role?

I just played a Siberian Inuit in *Far North*, a British feature, starring opposite Michelle Yeoh (*Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon*). It was an indie drama with thriller-ish aspects to it. We shot inside the Arctic Circle on all of these incredible glaciers. I have never been in such awe of my surroundings. Shooting this film and working with my director, Asif Kapadia, who strived to keep the experience as authentic as possible was a reminder of why I feel so lucky to be an actor. Asif really put us in an environment that couldn’t have been created anywhere else except in the 20 below freezing arctic and I absolutely loved it. The element I’m most drawn to is the indie director who is working solely off of his or her passion and belief in their own visions. It’s the connection with these directors that gives me the most gratifying experiences as an artist. I’m truly inspired by them and I count it a blessing when they want to work with me, as well. Working with Alice Wu in *Saving Face* was like that, as well as with Bill Guttentag in *Nanking*.

You have worked with some of the biggest names in Hollywood, including Ben Stiller, Joan Chen, Drew Barrymore, Eddie Murphy, Reese Witherspoon, Anthony Hopkins, Cameron Diaz and Ashton Kutcher. Did anyone particularly impress you?

I was most impressed with Joan and Cameron. These are two leading ladies who are talented and also superb people. I’m a sucker for a nice person and I’m a firm believer that you can make it in this business without having to become demonic or diva-like. Both Joan and Cameron were really giving actresses on set and they are just truly gracious about their own presence. It’s easy to meet a star and see that they are not under the influence of their own celebrity, and I think it just makes going to work so much more enjoyable. I’m there to act and focus on the work at hand, not the drama on the set.

In preparation for Saving Face, you quickly elevated your proficiency in Mandarin from elementary school level to high school. In the pilot of Dirty Sexy Money, are you speaking Mandarin to your husband? If so, that is kind of a different tact for a primetime show. Is that limiting or does your character also speak English? And why did your brother-in-law in the show call you “No Fun”?

“No fun” is just a nickname, because Mei-ling Hua isn’t the most fun character on the show. She’s pretty solemn in the first several episodes. The costume designer and I talked about dressing her as a kind of 50’s inspired housewife. It’s funny though, I have the shortest introduction on the show and almost everyone comments on the Mandarin and the nickname! I speak Mandarin to my husband who presumably can speak or at least understand me and I think that’s the network trying to create nuance around their relationship. I don’t think I do that bit again in another episode, but it’s cool that they did it and didn’t explain it. I think we’re at an age where we don’t have to explain every cultural reference, now. There are a lot of Asian bi-lingual Mandarin speakers and they don’t have accents and believe it or not, Mandarin is the number one language to study in all universities. So, I think it’s cool my husband speaks Mandarin. In the backstory of the show, my husband did missionary work in China.

Hosting Travelers for a couple of years introduced you to more than 50 countries. Isn’t that kind of like being paid to go on vacation? What were your favorite countries and what did you get out of the experience?

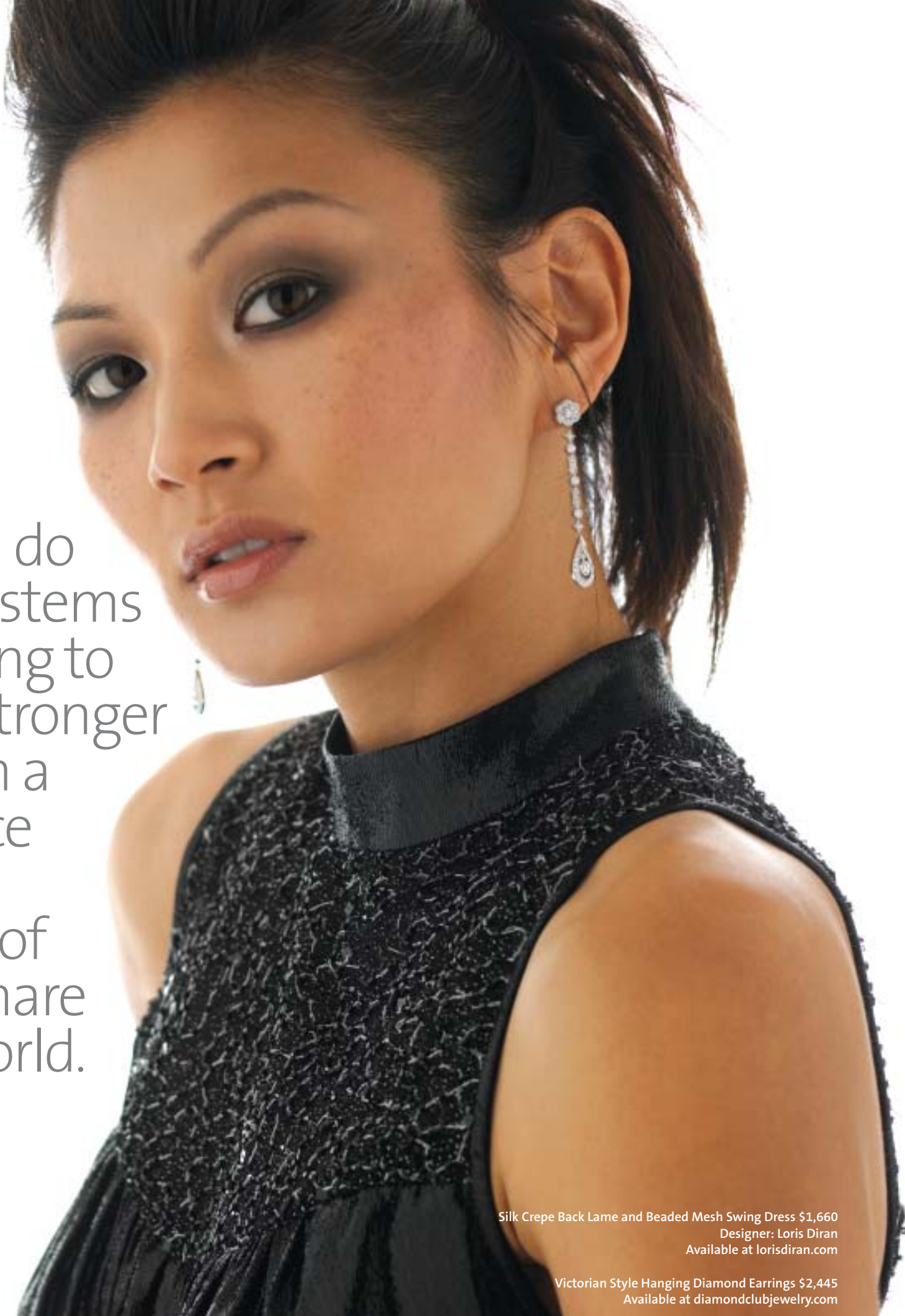
Since I wasn’t paid very much money at all, it was like vacationing! I was so young when I did it – I don’t think I was even of legal drinking age. I could have died after that show and felt like I lived a great life. I was so lucky to be exposed to so much culture at an early age that it was similar to receiving a postgraduate degree. It presented some of the hardest working conditions because we sometimes shot up to 15-plus hours a day in the heat, dust and grime of some impoverished countries trying to capture them at their best. But I was always more drawn to the exotic locales. In Ghana, I was attacked by almost fifty kids each trying to give me their address because they wanted to be sponsored to America. In

India, I got off of a thirty hour travel day and drove straight to the river banks in Kerala to watch dragon boat racing and was greeted by thousands of people dressed in every color



Silk Charmuese & Crinkle Chiffon Corset Dress with Sequin Neck \$650
Designer: Tamara Pogolian
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Multi-Color Precious Stones White Gold Bracelet \$2,995
Wide Micro Pave Bracelet \$7,695
Art Deco Bracelet \$2,995
Round Invisible Tennis Bracelet \$5,869
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Everything I do
as an artist stems
from wanting to
become a stronger
person with a
specific voice
and having
something of
myself to share
with the world.

Silk Crepe Back Lace and Beaded Mesh Swing Dress \$1,660
Designer: Loris Diran
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Victorian Style Hanging Diamond Earrings \$2,445
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of the rainbow. It was spectacular. In Turkey, I ate so many incredible lamb kebabs for like two dollars and learned that I couldn't haggle for s---! The show taught me how the rest of the world lives, to appreciate what I had in America and to see the world as a huge place with a myriad of ways to live one's life. But our connection to each other in this world is not so wide of a divide. People, despite our differences, are more alike than different and it gives me my basis for understanding character when I work as an actor. I really grew up on that show and sometimes, when I think about that period, I feel like I won the lottery with that job. Also, I wasn't the best host! Articulating my thoughts on camera was really nerve wracking at such a young age, but it taught me how to articulate better for interviews.

What inspired you to participate in the recent documentary film Nanking about the aftermath of the fall of that city to the Japanese in 1937? The film received quite a buzz at the Sundance Film Festival this year.

I had worked with the director, Bill Guttentag, on another film called *Live!*, which starred Eva Mendes. During the shooting of that film, Bill and I really clicked and discovered that we were both interested in the subject matter of *Nanking*. Bill's also an exceptionally accomplished writer and Oscar winning documentarian, so when he

asked me to play a small role in *Nanking*, I was really honored. It's another example where I am pleased to be working with such a talented artist like Bill and that he reciprocates this belief.

You recently returned from the Venice International Film Festival in which your film Far North was shown. Nanking was shown at Sundance and Saving Face was shown at multiple festivals. Isn't it considered to be an honor to be shown at these festivals?

Film festivals are sometimes funny things. Some films will get into a prestigious festival and you never hear about them again and then others really thrive at festivals. I can't honestly say that I've "hand selected" films that I thought would be good festival films. I think the truth is that I'm figuring out who I am as an actor and I approach every role with the question of whether or not it will make me a stronger actor and if I can give the role something of myself. Luckily, I do have a good instinct for well-written films and I've been fortunate enough to be included in some very fine casts. The most telling moment though comes when I meet a director or a writer and I can sense the potential of the project. Generally, like-minded people are drawn together and the kind of people I'm drawn to are passionate and hard working.

It seems that your movie career is gaining momentum. Are you focusing more on film as opposed to television? Do you have a preference?

No one who is taken seriously in this business is an overnight success. Whatever momentum perceived is simply perception. I'm working diligently to become a stronger and more accomplished actor. That's my goal. Everything I do as an artist stems from wanting to become a stronger person with a specific voice and having something of myself to share with the world. I'm in search of that in everything I do, so whatever projects allow me to do that are the ones I go after.

Do you always have a project in the works? If you get a break, how do you spend free time and vacation time?

I try to always keep my hand in something work related so that the lazy voice of entitlement doesn't take over. It's an easy pit trap to fall into living in Los Angeles. I go to New York pretty often to break up the scenery a little, ride the subway and remind myself of the real world. I travel home to see my parents when I can to make sure they are doing all right. If I can get time to actually plan a vacation, that's a real treat. But since I travel a lot for work, sometimes, the most pleasurable thing to do is to stay at home and watch movies or go out with my boyfriend and eat really great food. Eating

We should all look for people who can mentor us or inspire us.

is definitely on my favorite “to do” list and I especially love going to new restaurants.

What are your thoughts about fashion? What do you like to wear when you’re being casual and when you are going somewhere formal?

I heard someone tell me that Librans (I’m a Libra) are wannabe fashionistas. I love fashion but it’s true, when I’m home I’m pretty much a Virginia Beach girl in my sweats and tank top. When I go out though, I love to drum up the sensation factor. When I’m in LA, I like supporting local designers and trying new looks that border the sexy punky look with a flair of Hollywood starlet. When I’m in New York, I definitely like high fashion looks, sleek silhouettes, great boots and heels and in every shade of black and grey. I love autumn in New York and I have to say that I own some great fall coats, vintage and modern. I love the Victorian era so it works really nicely with the crisp autumn weather.

Favorite jeans? Clothing designer? Jewelry designer?

I have no butt, so I’m not a jean girl. In fact, if you can find me a great pair of jeans, I’ll buy ten of them because they’re just nowhere to be found for my little ass. Favorite designers, I just wore an incredible couture dress at the Venice film festival by Georges Chakra. His stuff just fits me so well and it’s wonderfully dramatic without being overbearing. I also wore a dress by Rami Kashou (currently featured on the new season of Project Runway) who is really hot right now and his stuff is just very sexy, feminine but strong. Gemma Lulu in NY is really great. She has beautiful jewelry pieces that can stand alone or worn with ensembles.

People have commented that you are in such good shape. You have stated that you have a great appetite. Can you really pack it in – like that Japanese world champion hot dog eater who doesn’t look like he can consume more than a little sushi?


I think the recent champion was a skinny Asian girl! It’s true I have a big appetite. And thanks for saying I’m in good shape. I wish I could lie and say it’s just genetic, but I think with my appetite, I have to work out or I’ll balloon into the Goodyear blimp. I eat every kind of food. I’m always in search of the best steak and hamburger. I usually eat healthy though when I’m about to do a job, I’ll try and train with my trainer, Tanja Djelevic, who is Los Angeles’ best kept secret. She has me working with these straps – I know it sounds a little S&M, but it’s an incredible workout because you’re only working with your own weight and you are exercising with movements that could save your life if you’re ever in like...a ravine. You never know, it could happen! My favorite menu would be Vietnamese pho for breakfast, a great hamburger with sweet potato fries for lunch, cappuccino and biscotti for a late afternoon pick me up and for dinner, sushi in downtown LA with chocolate cake at Roy’s for dessert. God, I’m getting hungry!

I know you have an oft-quoted statement about “girl power” and achieving one’s potential. Do you see yourself as a role model?

I don’t see myself as a role model. I could never make the acting decisions I have made if I did. I’m flattered if anyone would see me as such, but I think it’s a bit daunting to be any kind of role model to anyone. We should all look for people who can mentor us or inspire us. Knowledge from people who are experienced is a gift that should be shared whenever the opportunity arises. I don’t know how much I have to share as I still feel pretty new at this. I do try and speak at colleges when I can and I’m always moved when I speak to Asian American kids who ask about why there aren’t more Asian Americans in the entertainment industry. I try and encourage them to be the person who makes a difference. One of my mentors will often ask, “if not you, then who?” I am a firm believer that society will progress when each one of us takes a committed step towards achieving one’s own dreams. If I am a role model at anything, I hope this will be the thing.

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Multi-Color Precious Stones White Gold Bracelet \$2,995
Hanging Diamond Clover Earrings \$3,159
Available at diamondclubjewelry.com



Theater really taught me how to express myself at a vital stage of my childhood.

Butter Silk/Cotton Duchess Satin Pleated 'DIVINA' \$2,400
Designer: Loris Diran
Available at lorisdiran.com

Multi-Color Precious Stones White Gold Bracelet \$2,995
Hanging Diamond Clover Earrings \$3,159
Available at diamondclubjewelry.com

I know that you enjoy the full spectrum of dancing – from ballet to hip-hop. Have you been able to incorporate this talent into any of your roles? Would you enjoy that? Hmmm. Has Dancing with the Stars approached you yet? We interviewed Apolo Ohno and he won. Of course, we take credit for that!

I'd like to do a dance film, no doubt. It's always been in the back of mind to remake one of my favorite dance films. Whenever I perform my solo show, *Made in Taiwan*, which features my experience as an African dancer, I have a total blast because I just get to throw down all over the stage. I studied it in college and I must admit, I'd love to do a crazy dance sequence like in "Coming to America" in a film. Basically though, if I could dance in any project, I'd jump at the opportunity.

Do you have any causes that are close to your heart?

I'd like to start some sort of foundation for underprivileged kids and expose them to the arts. Theater really taught me how to express myself at a vital stage of my childhood, but I think there is a lack of good education and focus given to kids from impoverished backgrounds. I think if there is a way for me to put any financial resource or future celebrity I may acquire into some kind of concentration – kids, education and the arts would be my cause.

What are your goals professionally? What drives you?

I think most actors in this business are interested in being in a position where their name and work has an esteemed artistic value bearing some relative commercial success. I don't know if people become actors wanting

to remain small, relatively unknown actors. We all want to have the pick and draw of the best roles, projects and people to work with within the industry. That's the very top of the top. Of course, I'm going to shoot for that. Now, if I decide to do more writing or directing in the future then I'd want to be at the top of my game in that. Basically, I want to be at what I consider the top of my field artistically and commercially. Oh, and I'd also like to have a wonderful family and lead a life that I'm proud of and still be a down to earth, good human being. I don't think that's too difficult to ask, right? What drives me? I don't know, I certainly get it from somewhere and I'm still trying to find out where the hell all this ambition comes from. When I find out, you can ask me to model for you again and I'll tell you the answer in that interview.

Toan Hoang 70th Birthday Celebration

Held at Mo Mong

Mo Mong hosted a very special private party on October 6, 2007, in celebration of Toan Hoang's 70th birthday. It was a full house, as friends and family from near and far joined in the festivities.

Photos by Sopheavy Than



Ninh Ngo, Toan Hoang



Viet Hoang, Chau Ngo



Alex Vu



Birthday cake



Tuan Hoang, Phi Hoang, Tri Ngo



Father Thu Nguyen



Marley Huynh, Pheonix Ng



Vicky Chieng, Ashley Vu



Matt Sims, Thu Ngo



Asia Hoang, Lucky Hoang, Vi Nguyen



Hai Hoang, Thanh Ngo



Annie Khong, Vuong Cao



Dat Hoang, Mary Nguyen



Dagar Sengvengpeng, Kanin Tran, Andrew Vu



Stephanie Hoang, Bac Vu



Huyen, Tuyen, Tuyen Hoang, Sinh Nguyen



Toui Hoang, Hanh Tran



Phi Hoang, Hao Tran



Toan Hoang with his daughters Kelly, Lauren, Laycken, Stephanie and Lisa

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Rental Bling!

by JIA HU and LEO SIPRAS



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Ring a Ding Bling

Why not rent your own resort getaway instead of having to share a pool with the lowly masses? Recently refurbished mid-century modern masterpiece Horizon Hotel has just the thing for you: The Residence. This private resort-within-a-resort features 3 bedrooms, kitchen and its own private pool, available for a mere \$500 a night (\$300 during the off-season). That's truly a bargain to live the glamorous life!

In the fifties and sixties, Palm Springs was the hideaway playground for celebrities wanting a weekend retreat. Everyone from Lucy and Desi to Frank Sinatra migrated to this oasis to enjoy the sunny desert lifestyle. Palm Springs was either a place to be seen or to escape to, depending on your intentions. It was also an enclave for architects to flex their creative muscles and build exciting and iconic mid-century modern architecture. With its clean lines, walls of glass, and emphasis on indoor-outdoor living, The Horizon Hotel is a shining example of Palm Springs' glamorous heyday, today.

Formally known as L'Horizon, the hotel was built and designed by famed modern architect, William F. Cody, in 1952 for a Hollywood mogul and hotelier. The Hollywood couple used the property as a private retreat for their friends and families. After years of neglect and abuse from the desert's brutal climate, the hotel was rescued and restored to its former glory in 2006. Today, the hotel features a spacious 2.5 acres with 22 rooms, plus the luxurious private residence. The Horizon Hotel is truly a testament to mid-century modern design and it captures the spirit of a bygone era while offering modern amenities that makes it the perfect rental getaway. Visit thehorizonhotel.com to make your reservation.

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Travel Among the Glory
of the Ancients

Roman Holiday by MATT SIMS

Slowly, I approached the ancient stone face that I had struggled for so long to find. On its pedestal, the enormous historic relic was easily two feet taller than I and weighed more than ten tons. I knew the legend. If I placed my hand in the mouth of the 2,000-year old figure’s mouth and uttered an untruth, my hand would unceremoniously be severed. Fortunately, I was careful with what I said, and I got to keep my hand. The Bocca della Verita was kind to me that day. Of course, I had to attempt this old trial, as have so many others who saw the classic Audrey Hepburn/Gregory Peck movie, *Roman Holiday*, in which a beautiful and naïve princess was shown the incredible sights of Rome.

I could not help but think of that film when I stopped at each of Rome’s unrivaled attractions. So many people expect to find the idealized Rome that they have seen in movies, or the Rome of their dreams in which they can discover the magic of this city without being elbowed by crowds of tourists trying to see and do the same thing. However, that is getting harder to do as 25 million people visit the city every year. The solution is to make the trip now, or at least not during the busy summer season. Thanks to the mild Mediterranean climate, Rome’s weather at the end of the year is generally quite pleasant, with highs in the 60’s and occasional rain showers—not so different from Texas. The sights are less crowded, providing you the opportunity to experience Rome as it was meant to be experienced. In addition, airfare and hotels are much more reasonable.

As I prepared to enter the ruins of Rome’s Coliseum, I wondered what it must have felt like to step out in front of the blood-thirsty crowds to engage in battle a la Russell Crowe’s character in *Gladiator*. A muscular Italian in a gladiator suit stood near the entrance and waved a plastic sword, asked me if I want to take a photo. Somehow, that was not the authentic experience I was seeking. Instead, I hurried inside with my camera at the ready. The sheer size of the architectural masterpiece with its round arches and Greek inspired columns is impressive, but I couldn’t help but think of the people who met such violent ends there as well as those who enjoyed watching the “entertainment”. What were their everyday lives like?

Even though this is one of Rome’s most visited sites, it is easy to slip off alone down one of the many corridors or along the upper platforms and absorb the history. But so much of Rome is like that – filled with history but not bogged down by it. No matter where I went, I felt the age of the city and the centuries of great and grisly accomplishments. But somehow, Rome never felt like a ruin, and I never felt as if I was in the middle of a history lecture. It is a city full of life and people who know how to enjoy it.

The center of much of that life can be experienced at the many piazzas, or town squares. As you stroll into one, you will find yourself drawn to the fountain, most likely a stunning ancient sculpture of powerful gods posing in the water. Then you will become aware of the people and feel the pulse of the city. Some are out for a stroll and to enjoy the open spaces, while others have come to people watch and perhaps enjoy a cup of coffee or a meal at the cafes. One of my favorite piazzas is the Piazza Navona. It is always alive with interesting people admiring the unusual elongated oval shape, the Baroque buildings, and the Egyptian obelisk in the center. The fountain, designed by Bernini, is one of the city’s best. The four giants sculpted around the fountain base represent four rivers: the Ganges, Danube, Nile, and Rio della Plata. I could spend hours in the small square outside the Pantheon listening to the water as people came and went. One of the most popular public squares is the Piazza di Spagna, or the “Spanish Steps.” Easily the most charming square in the city, you can always find a diverse mix of people lounging on the steps that climb in curves, straight lines, and terraces. I sat down to soak up the afternoon sun between a group of poetry students and a couple who looked like they came off a joint cover of *Vogue* and *GQ*. No one was in a hurry, and they all seemed to understand that the key to enjoying life is to slow down and savor it.

From here, you can walk to Trevi Fountain, where you will want to see the incredible sculptures of Neptune, other sea gods, and their winged horses



as they tower over the many small waterfalls that empty into the semicircular pool. This is probably the most beautiful and well-known fountain in all of Europe. Of course, you have to test the legend and toss a coin into the fountain, securing that you will one day return to Rome. It also means that the city will continue to collect the \$3,000 Euro it takes in every day for its charity projects.

No trip to Rome is complete without a visit to the Vatican Museum and St. Peter’s Basilica, the richest and most impressive church on earth. Make sure you are not dressed too sexy, as you will not be permitted to enter in mini-skirts, shorts, or sleeveless shirts. The atrium itself is larger than most churches, and the genius of Michelangelo’s design makes a great setting for Bernini’s giant 70 foot-tall bronze canopy that covers St. Peter’s tomb. I’m amazed at the number of people inside who gaze up at its numerous oversized statues and elaborately decorated high ceilings. Yet, I did not feel crowded by them. That is a testament to the sheer size of the place. Finally, I had to stop looking up to prevent getting a crick in my neck. If it is open and you have an extra hour, try to take the elevator to the roof and the stairway to the dome for one of the best views of Rome, as well as to have a more intimate experience with Michelangelo’s dome, the largest in the world.

If you are hoping to see the Pope, your best bet is on Sunday or Wednesday at one of his scheduled blessings. Next door at the Vatican Museum, everyone waits for a glimpse of Michelangelo’s Sistine Chapel and rushes through the other halls and chapels containing a huge array of Roman and Greek art treasures. Take your time and enjoy this part of the museum as well. Finally, the tour ended at the Sistine Chapel, and besides wishing that I was 20 feet taller to get a better look, I was struck by the complexity of the figures and the incredible talent it took to paint it. I can’t imagine the torture of having to paint a work of art like that on the ceiling. Talk about getting a crick in your neck!


When you exit, you may be tempted to visit the Castel St. Angelo, nearby. If you have a lot of time in Rome, it is fine. But if you are trying to see all the best of the city in a limited time, I would suggest you skip it and spend more time getting to know the real Rome outside of museums. Hit the fashionable shops on the Via Del Corso to make sure you take home some Italian styles, and never pass up a chance to sit at a café in a piazza and order an espresso or a glass of wine as you watch the interesting mix of locals and tourists go about their lives. If you aren’t devouring an exotic flavor of gelato every evening as you explore the streets and piazzas, you haven’t gotten the hang of enjoying Rome. Locals recommend trying the ice cream at Il Gelato di San Crispino, which they claim is the best in all of Italy.

When in Rome, I prefer to stay in small boutique hotels in quiet neighborhoods where you can feel the history and uniqueness of the city. Almost any nice small hotel on the Via Firenze is a good option such as the Residenza Cellini or Hotel Oceania. You will find a reasonable room in a building that feels like it exists in a forgotten wing of an old palace. If you really want to be spoiled, treat yourself to the Capo de Afrika Hotel, Splendide Royal, or the Sofitel Roma. These fine hotels will bend over backwards to give you superb service as well as a fine room in which to retreat after a hard day in the piazzas.


If you visit Rome and follow my advice, you are guaranteed to fall in love – not necessarily with a person, but most certainly with a city. After a day of experiencing the sights, sounds, and tastes of Rome, you will forgive her for the traffic, the other tourists, and even for the gypsy children who might try to distract you long enough to steal your bag. You will love Rome even though she is old and parts of her need repair. You will love her for what she is and how she makes you feel.



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Thai Loy Krathong




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Balancing the Spices
on Bellaire Blvd.

Malay Bistro

by HUAN LE

Hidden within a Bellaire strip mall is a pearl of a restaurant called Malay Bistro. The family-owned and operated Malaysian restaurant was the first of its kind in Houston when it began serving patrons many years ago. They have picked up a few tricks along the way that have culminated in a beautiful space with tasty food.

Chocolate brown walls tastefully accented by modern graphics create an ambience that seems to have jumped out of a West Elm catalog. Rectangular lanterns add to the elegance that sets the bistro apart from its counterparts. To the right of the entrance are sheer copper-toned floor-to-ceiling curtains that discretely provide privacy to large private dining rooms. The space lends itself well to accommodating private parties.

While admiring birdcage candleholders and enjoying the company of the lovely Lulu (a member of the family enterprise) the Pull Tea arrived. A food stall staple in Malaysia, this blending of hot black tea with condensed milk produces an addictive beverage. Originally from India, pull tea has become quite popular in Malaysia, which is a melting pot of ethnic Indian, Chinese, and Malay influences. The name, Teh Tarik ("Pull Tea"), comes from the outstretched hands of the tea processor as he pours the tea back and forth from one container to another to make a light froth.

Roti Canai, a light and fluffy flatbread, was the first food item to arrive at the table. Clearly influenced by Indian porata, Malay Bistro's version seems a bit more buttery and fluffy than similar flatbread at Indian restaurants. Dipped in curry sauce, it does a good job of making a hungry diner even hungrier. The next item was a Chicken Sate that had been marinated in a soy base for three days, skewered and grilled. The meat was moist and flavorful.

Chinese influenced Fook-Kiem Noodles followed the sate. Much like Chinese pan-fried flat noodles with broccoli and beef, these noodles exhibited



a dense, earthy flavor. The dish played unusually well with the other entree, Beef Rendang. Usually served to honor guests on special occasions, this reddish brown mesh of meat is slowly cooked in spices for hours until it falls apart and the spice has penetrated every morsel. Rice is a necessary accompaniment with this dish.

One of the more visually appealing menu items is the Banana-Grilled Fish. As the name implies, a beautiful piece of flounder is placed in a banana leaf and grilled with an abundance of spices. The banana leaf facilitates steaming the fish and infusing the spices into the thin moist meat. The result is an unusual combination of delicate fish flavored with strong balanced spices.

Originally from India, pull tea has become quite popular in Malaysia.

Another dish that demonstrates Malay Bistro's mastery of balancing a wide array of spices is the Bah Kut Te. The matriarch of the family restaurant mixes and blends the spices and herbs used in this traditional dish at home and delivers it to the chefs. In this manner, the family preserves the secrecy of their recipe. Believed to balance health, Bah Kut Te is slowly cooked with pork ribs to produce an unusual and enticing deep herbal smell and flavor.

The meal ended with Pearl Wheat, warm coconut milk with barley seeds. Like the cherry on top of an ice cream Sundae, the Pearl Wheat seems both superfluous, yet absolutely perfect.

Providing a Zen-like interior that is complemented by exotic and flavorful food, Malay Bistro is the kind of restaurant that you yearn for when you're in the mood for that one surprisingly memorable meal.

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Noise activates the body's stress response and increases our risk of developing illnesses. We can counteract these uninvited consequences by the techniques mentioned above. Shhhh... Keep it down to stay healthy!

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Susan J. Komen Luncheon

Held at Hotel Derek

Hotel Derek and Macy's launched New Lady Pink Rooms, which were decked out in an assortment of pink merchandise and products from Macy's. Hotel Derek will donate 10% of the monthly revenue from these rooms to the Susan G. Komen Foundation.



Kamal Bosamia, Molly Glentzer



Linda Kuykendall, Tracy Fentem, Ed Smith, April Schmidt



Tania Cruz, Lisa Watts



Marlene Fiske, Sylvia Forsythe, Pam Blanton



New Lady Pink Rooms outfitted by Macy's

Photos by Sopheavy Than

AFAOM Gala

Held at the Marriott Houston Westchase

Guests at the American Foundation of Acupuncture & Oriental Medicine Gala were treated to a fashion show of clothing influenced by Chinese dynasties and and also fashions by Lizzi London. A Chinese Ribbon Dance was performed and the music of Grammy nominee Tamar Davis rounded out the evening. Proceeds from the gala benefit research projects, scholarship programs at the American College of Acupuncture & Oriental Medicine, and community service and awareness promotion.

Photos by Sopheavy Than



John Paul Liang



Gia Phan, Brandon Nguyen, Angelia Guinara



Jacob Thomas, Na Li



Jim and Jenny Lai



Lorraine Chang, Patrick Pai, C.C. Huang, Elsie Huang, Pat McClain



Helen Chang, Jacob Deagan, Dawn Lin



Tamar Davis and Parents



Joyce Wang



Michelle Fong, Sauna Penn, Jonathan Penn



Bouquets of Dry Roses
for the Holidays

Giving Thanks

by PHILIP CUISIMANO

On the fourth Thursday in November of every year, Americans slow down and collectively offer thanks; thanks for our great nation, thanks for our families and loved ones and thanks for what we hope to be a prosperous and healthy future. Since time immemorial, such shared feasts have represented celebrations of love and hope during which bonds are established and strengthened.

Food without wine
is a bit like a flower
without fragrance.

This is also one of the busiest weeks of the year for grocery sales as families prepare for their Thanksgiving gatherings. Of course, the sale of wine elevates proportionately because we all know that food without wine is a bit like a flower without fragrance. Finding the right wine to serve with the Thanksgiving meal can be somewhat challenging in that the holiday's traditional fare tends to be spicy, gamey and a tad sweet, a difficult combination to match with wine. With this in mind we offer some suggestions that may serve to help in finding that perfect bottle.

Sparkling wine is always appropriate for special occasions and goes well with holiday fare. There are a variety of good options from which to select including Champagne, California sparkling, Italian Spumante (of which prosecco is the best) and Spanish Cava. These are available at a variety of prices to match any budget.

My favorite type of Thanksgiving wine is dry rose. Like sparkling wines, they complement almost everything. Good roses offer a medium body with soft fruit tones buttressed with a crisp dryness and underlying spiciness that matches well with the signature flavor profiles found in the Thanksgiving feast. As with sparkling wines you can find a good selection of dry roses within a wide range of price points.

If you prefer red wine, seek those that feature bright fruit, a lot of spice and soft tannins. Candidates include Syrah, Pinot Noir (especially from Oregon and California's central coast), Dolcetto, Beaujolais and Rioja.

For white wines, try Rieslings and Gewürztraminers but seek out a "drier" style of these offerings (a good selection can be found from the Alsace region of France). Avoid white wine that is buttery and creamy.

As to how many bottles of wine should have on hand, I suggest that you allow four glasses of wine per 750ml. bottle and conservatively estimate that each guest will consume two glasses each. Hence, for a party of four, you will need two bottles of wine.



Here are some wines you can give thanks with and for:

Chinon, Domaine du Grand Bouqueteau 2006
As stated, I really like dry rose on the Thanksgiving table. This French offering is produced from Cabernet Franc grapes (most associated with the wine of Bordeaux) and is quiet and unassuming but workman-like. That is, it gets the job done while it grows on you. The color is salmon, the bouquet is earthy and the taste is of raspberry fruit wonderfully balanced with notes of pepper undercoated with a whisper of sweetness. Crisp and dry with a short but satisfying finish. It should be served chilled but not cold. \$10.99

H.Lun Gewürztraminer Reserve Albertus 2005
A terrific wine from Italy's Alto Adige region produced by H. Lun, the oldest privately owned winery in that historical area. Gewurtz means spice and nearby is the town of Traminer. This crisp, dry white is only produced in the best years with the finest grapes. The wine is fermented in small wooden French barrels resulting in a grand cuvee that will age with nobility. A distinctive floral bouquet of roses warmly welcomes one into a full, complex, smoky body of fruit and spice and everything nice. The finish is long and regal. This wine is an experience to drink and one that will certainly enhance a holiday meal. \$39.00

Mommessin Beaujolais Villages old - vines 2004.
Mommessin is a long established French wine-making firm and delivers this very cool Beaujolais. The grapes are 100% gamay and come from vines that range in age from 40 to 80 years. They say that "the older the vine, the richer the wine". The fruit is sourced from vineyards located in the Beaujolais region north of Lyon. Earthy and floral notes of violet greet the nose while the palate is treated to bright, tart, red berry fruit encased in a soft package of spice and tobacco. The finish is short but very enjoyable and will brighten your Thanksgiving Day feast. Serve at room temperature or just slightly below. \$8.99

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

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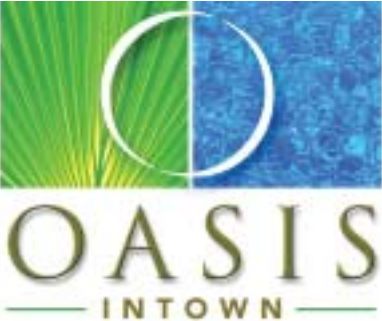
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