

# THE neweurasian

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**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**



EA President Alexius A. Pereira (4th from left) with 2020 Joseph Schooling Sports Grant awardee Sarah Bernard (centre) on 6 March. With them are Award presenters Colin and May Schooling (6th and 7th from left) as well as (from left) Chief of Singapore Sport Institute at Sport Singapore Mr Toh Boon Yi, RGS principal Ms Haslinda Zamani, EA Trustee Edward D'Silva, RGS teacher Ms Tan Hai Nee and Sarah's mother Mrs Shirley Bernard.

Dear fellow members of the EA

Another quarter gone in a blink of an eye, another quarter of highs and lows.

The high was Sarah Bernard being the second recipient of the Joseph Schooling Sports Grant. The grant, which was launched in 2018 by the Schooling family and the EA, aims to assist Eurasian Youth in developing and launching their sporting career, and achieving their dreams.

The low was the passing of Phyllis Clara Perreau on 4 February 2020 at age 100. Phyllis was born in Sarawak and was the first Matron at St John's Home for Elderly Persons (formerly St John's Home for the Aged). We were honoured to have Phyllis present at our Eurasian Festival last year; she was turning 100 during EA's Centennial year. Our heartfelt condolences go to her family.

We also had to say goodbye to our dear friend, Mr Luis Luis Lorrão, as his term as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Portugal had come to an end. We truly treasure his friendship and dedication to EA.

I would also like to take this time to address the current COVID-19 pandemic affecting everyone across the globe. I would like to reassure our community that EA is here for you. Please feel free to contact our General Manager Lester Low at lester@eurasians.org or 6447-1578 Ext 201 if you need any assistance.

We are closely monitoring the situation and will continue to issue appropriate guidelines in a timely manner. Let's play our part in safeguarding one another's wellbeing. Stronger together!

Dr Alexius Pereira



**PHYLLIS CLARA PERREAU, 1919 - 2020**

The EA is saddened by the passing of a dear friend. We consider it a privilege to have had her participate in our centennial celebrations during the Eurasian Festival 2019 and have her share a few words in our Corporate Video. The EA will be forever grateful to Mrs Perreau for her numerous contributions to the community and to Singapore. She lives on in our hearts and minds.

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Magazine of the Eurasian Association, Singapore

The New Eurasian is published quarterly and read by more than 17,000 Eurasians in Singapore. It is circulated to senior government offices, various ministries, statutory boards, community organisations and self-help groups.

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\* Dates may change



NEWS

# Farewell to Ambassador Luis Lorrvão

The Eurasian Association would like to extend our gratitude to Luis Lorrvão for warmly receiving EA during his term as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Portugal. The EA is grateful for his support, in particular his visits to the Eurasian Community House and attendance at our major events especially during our centennial anniversary last year. We wish him all the best in his future endeavours!



EA President Alexius Pereira presenting a token of appreciation to Ambassador Luis Lorrvão at his Farewell Lunch on 27 December 2019.

# CHINGAY PARADE 2020



The EA community dance troupe collaborated with People's Association Talents Dance Ensemble to make up the multi-ethnic contingent of 200 dancers showcasing the different races in a segment titled 'Harmony in Motion'.

Dancers from the four different races came together to perform a combination of Indian, Malay, Chinese and Eurasian traditional dance steps which made up one unique fusion item. A total of 14 dancers from the EA participated in the contingent.

Michael Gerard Lewis represented the Eurasian community as one of the performers on the Merdeka Generation float; EA President Alexius A. Pereira also represented the EA in the finale performance.



PHOTO: PEOPLE'S ASSOCIATION

The EA not only participated in the various performances for the actual two-day parade, many of our members, young and old, also had a chance to contribute their artistic talents by taking part in decorating 300 colourful tiles conveying their wishes for Singapore while at the same time showcasing their creativity. These tiles were used to build the 'Bridge of Harmony' float for the parade.

EA MEN'S FOOTBALL

# FOOTBALL FRIENDLIES

## Matches played from January to March



From left: The EA Men's Football team After the friendly game against Renegades (SIA Cabin Crew) at SIA Sports Club on 8 January 2020, and against Agents United FC at Our Tampines Hub on 15 January 2020.



From left: Before the friendly game against Essex at Catholic Junior College on 2 February 2020, and during the third Futsal Kickabout practice on 1 March 2020.



From left: Before the friendly game against St Michael's FC at SUTD Sports & Recreation Centre on 8 March 2020, and before the fourth Futsal Kickabout practice on 15 March 2020.



# MEET OUR EA FOOTBALL PLAYERS



**Gerard Pereira, 62**



**Sean De Zilva, 45**



**Jerhedyah Stead, 23**

## Why and when did you join EA Men's Football Team?

**Sean De Zilva:** I got a call from Lloyd Branson and Lyle Cordeiro in 2016. They invited me to play for EA against SRC for the Crystal Cup. I agreed to join in since I've known them for countless years and wanted to help EA win the tournament. Even though we lost the tournament, that was the day my days in EA Football began. It's amazing how we have grown in number since 2016.

**Jerhedyah Stead:** I first joined the EA Men's Football team about two or three years ago. I heard about the team through my father who read about it in the magazine. I joined the team to meet fellow Eurasians and have a laugh together. Also, it reminded me of the past. I used to go to the Eurasian Association football school back in the years from 2006 to 2009 starting when I was nine years old. Being able to put on the jersey with the EA logo brings a certain kind of expectation and rush that I won't get playing for other teams.

**Gerard Pereira (right):** I read an article in the EA magazine about two months ago that EA wanted to rejuvenate the senior football squad. Coincidentally my football buddy Julian O'Hara also invited me to play for EA on 7 October 2018 at Victoria Secondary School because the squad did not have sufficient players. The rest is history!

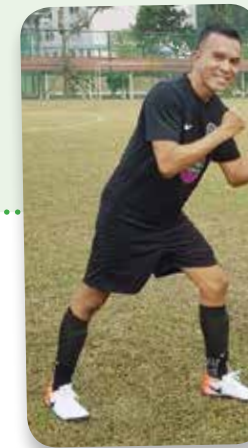


## What does football mean to you and who is your favourite player?

**Gerard Pereira:** Football is a game to enjoy and have fun with your buddies, make new friends and last of all to keep fit. My favourite player is Ole Gunnar Solskjaer, the reason being is that whenever he played for Manchester United, he would always give his best on the field whether or not he was included in the starting line-up.

**Jerhedyah Stead:** Football means the world to me and it's my one and only true passion. Whenever I step onto the field, everything else doesn't matter anymore. Not my troubles for the day, not my work, nothing – it's football time. It's going to sound really cheesy and clichéd but my favourite football player is my father. Ever since I can remember, I've watched my father play football and seen how much he enjoys himself every time he puts his gloves on (he plays goalie). He inspires me to be better, to do better and he leads by example. It's also good for father-son bonding sessions. He used to take me all the way to Bedok (we stay in Jurong West) to train with the football school back in the day. It's a two-hour MRT journey one way, haha. At 56 years old this year, he still plays three to four matches a week. He is my inspiration and my idol. I hope one day to be at least half the man he is.

**Sean De Zilva (right):** I have been playing football since primary school. Through football we can build camaraderie in a team just like our EA Team. My favourite player is definitely Cristiano Ronaldo. He is an all-round player who can dribble exceptionally well and head the ball, and is absolutely brilliant with his free kicks.



## Tell us about your most memorable experience or tournament.

**Jerhedyah Stead:** Unfortunately for me, my most memorable tournament was a bad tournament for me personally and my team. The EA Men's Football team had gone up to KL to play in the SAFTEA tournament last year. EA Singapore sent two teams, EA Selangor one team and EA Penang one team. I was in Singapore Team 1. We played our game against EA Selangor and drew the game 1-1 after the final whistle. Then the coach came and asked us who'd like to take the first penalty in the penalty shootout. Without hesitation, I raised my hand. I didn't think about it too much, I was pretty confident. So when it was time, I stepped up to the first penalty in the penalty shootout against EA Selangor.

I walked up, placed the ball on the penalty spot, looked cheekily at the keeper and flashed him a grin. I readied myself for the shot, the referee blew his whistle, I waited about two seconds and I approached the ball slowly. From the moment my foot connected with the ball, I knew, I knew I had just messed up. I looked up and the ball hit the outside of the left post and bounced out. I didn't know how to react, I didn't know what to do anymore. I just turned around, walked back to my teammates with my head in my hands. I felt tears rushing to my eyes.

I messed up. I cost us the chance of going into the finals. Unfortunately, we lost the penalty shootout in the end because of my miss, because of me. I'm not afraid to say this but I cried, I cried buckets. However, the thing that really stuck with me after all this while is how my teammates reacted. They didn't care that I cost them the game. They encouraged me, they cheered me on. They helped me move forward. They told me I did well and that it doesn't matter if we win or lose. It's about having fun.

**Gerard Pereira:** Going up with EA Football Team to KL for the SAFTEA Centennial Football Tournament is one of my most memorable experiences. I saw the support families gave by following the team up to KL, bonding among the players, and comradeship during breakfast, lunch and dinner before and after the tournament. I was touched by the care and concern shown by all the team members for the safe arrival of each player and their family, and checking whether we returned safely home. This is what I call team spirit.

**Sean De Zilva:** My most memorable tournament has got to be the SAFTEA Centennial Football Tournament in KL on 23 November 2019. EA Singapore sent two teams. There were altogether four teams that took part in the tournament. The EA Singapore team, which I was in, played against EA Selangor. We lost to them in a penalty shootout. It was also memorable because there was a dinner night for all players and their families. We all got to mingle with players from the other Eurasian Associations, which is not something you get to do very often.

EDUCATION

# SARAH BERNARD scores the Schooling Sports Grant 2020

Eurasian-Chinese Sarah Jun Xin Bernard is the second recipient of the Joseph Schooling Sports Grant. Launched in 2018 by the Eurasian Association in partnership with Singapore's first Olympic Gold medallist Joseph Schooling, the grant aims to assist Eurasian youth in developing and launching their sporting career and achieving their dreams.

Sarah started swimming competitively at just six years of age, and won her first medal (Gold Medal for 100m breaststroke) two years later at the 2013 Singapore National Age Group Championship.

Now 15 years old, this promising sportswoman, who studies at Raffles Girls' Secondary School, trains two and a half hours a day, seven times a week. Sarah's hard work and dedication won her three Silver Medals in the 2019 ASEAN School Games, and seven Gold Medals in various Inter-School and National Competitions from 2018 to 2019.

Besides swimming, Sarah focuses her time on her academic studies. In 2018, she was one of the recipients of the Eurasian Community Fund Academic Excellence Award for PSLE from the EA. She believes that swimmers can successfully combine studying and training here in Singapore or overseas, and hopes to eventually train at an American university. Sarah believes that her school and her swim club are key learning places and would like to give a shout-out to Swimfast Aquatic Club and her coach Eugene Chia who have helped her along her journey!



PHOTO: DAVID NG

**How do you feel about receiving the Grant?**

*It is an absolute honour to be awarded this prestigious award. I am grateful to the Eurasian Association and especially the Education Committee for selecting me. To receive this grant jointly given by Joseph Schooling and the Eurasian Association is an endorsement of my efforts to date and a huge encouragement to me to keep up my training.*

**Was Joseph Schooling one of your idols growing up?**

*Joseph Schooling has been an inspiration to me and to so many other athletes in Singapore. He has done so much for Singapore swimming. He showed us that as long as you put in your all to achieve your goal, anything is possible.*

*The ultimate dream of most competitive swimmers is to be able to swim in the Olympics, and mine is no different. But dreams are different from goals. My goal is to focus on one competition at a time and strive to keep improving my times.*

**What motivates you to train hard every day?**

*I have the most amazing teammates and their dedication and commitment to training is definitely a big force pushing me along. I am particularly grateful to my coaches at Swimfast who work tirelessly to help me focus on what I need to do to improve. Overall, I feel very supported by my teammates, my coaches and my family. If any one of these were lacking, it would be a lot harder to stay focused.*

**Tell us how you balance school, training and social life.**

*There is very little downtime for me during school term. I try to use all the time I have as efficiently as I can. For example, I do my homework during any free block I have at school. Not procrastinating is key. If I have a big project, I try to get as much done early and not wait until the due date.*

*All my friends at RGS are as busy as I am with their co-curricular commitments, so we tend to get together only during school holidays. My family usually takes holidays during school breaks so that I can rest and reset before starting the next term.*

**Besides swimming, what other sports or hobbies interest you?**

*I bake whenever I have time. I love baking for my family and friends. My brothers keep to a gluten and dairy free diet, so baking for them is particularly rewarding as it allows them to have treats not easily available from shops.*



Sarah at the Singapore National Schools Games 2019 where she was awarded two Gold Medals.

PHOTO: DAVID NG

YOUTH

# Takeaways from the Youth Dialogue

1 Feb, Singapore Recreation Club

Member of Parliament Christopher de Souza graced a networking session and dialogue with Eurasian youth at the Singapore Recreation Club on 1 February. The session saw a total of 25 youth attendees, the majority of whom were participating in an EA dialogue for the first time. The youth asked Mr de Souza a wide range of questions ranging from Mr de Souza's career and his journey into politics to the key challenges facing Singapore and how our Eurasian youth could play their part in shaping Singapore's future.

Mr de Souza spoke on Singapore's place in the world and what our nation needs to do to remain relevant so that we continue to be a place of opportunity for all Singaporeans. He encouraged our youth to pursue their passion, noting that young Eurasians were becoming pioneers and creating waves in non-traditional fields such as technology and entrepreneurship. He added that with Singapore becoming more cosmopolitan and with inter-racial marriages on the rise, Eurasian youth could be a shining beacon for multi-racialism in Singapore.



Well done, EA Youth, for working hard to build on the Singaporean Eurasian identity, and for continuing to embody multi-racialism – an evergreen ingredient in Singapore's fabric. That you are organising dialogues to include new Eurasians and opening your doors to Singaporeans of other ethnic groups will allow you to steadily build a team of dedicated volunteers for the work you want to do – action on climate change, career guidance, and the promotion of Eurasian culture. I wish you the very best in those endeavours and look forward to meeting again, soon. – Christopher de Souza

# What does it mean to be Eurasian?

In September 2019, around 40 young people aged 18 to 35 attended the *Boba & Cakes: Eurasian-ish Conversations* dialogue organised by Team Eurasian-ish together with the Eurasian Association, Singapore and in support of the Singapore Bicentennial, powered by Young ChangeMakers. Both Eurasians and non-Eurasians engaged in a thoughtful

discussion on the -ish's making up a 21st century understanding of the term Eurasian. The focus was on young people's desire to create a space and future where individuals can live their identities without pressure to live up to cultural expectations. Here's what participants Julia D'Cruz and Bryan Scott Keasberry had to say!

**Julia D'Cruz**

*“The word ‘Eurasian’ is a lot broader to me now. I used to assume Eurasian meant multi-generation descendants of the European settlers. But there have to be new generations of Eurasians for our community to live on, and I love how diverse we all are.”*



*“In previous generations, marrying someone from a different background was not as common as it is today. I'm proud that Eurasians helped build a more inclusive society by tearing down existing cultural walls.”*



**Scott Keasberry**



# A Different World



No one left behind.

For the majority of approximately 60 families currently supported by the Family Support Services of the EA, more than half reside in government rental one-room or two-room flats. Many of those living in the one-room rental flats are, by law, consigned to living with another occupant who is not of their choosing. The relationship between the two tenants is often tenuous and tense, and in some extreme cases, even hostile. Those fortunate enough to occupy the flat with family members soon learn that there is a premium on living space and that day-to-day living is not so much motivated by a personal pursuit of happiness or a drive to realise an ambition but by a basic need to survive just another day.

Many of the families supported by the FSS have either no regular source of income or have incomes that are inadequate and below the survival line. John (not his real name) is a retiree in his 80s who lives with his wife in a one-room flat and is drawing on his CPF savings which is expected to be exhausted very soon. A self-respecting and proud person, John insists on working even though he is frail and unsteady of gait. He is occasionally employed as a part-time security guard, eager and available to step in when the regular guard is on medical leave. John is usually employed between three to six days a month, earning about \$70 per day. He receives about \$200 from CPF every month.

John's expenses for the house arising from rent, conservancy and utilities charges amount to nearly \$150; food, food supplements and transport costs amount to another \$350 every month. The couple's favourite outing is on Sundays attending church services and meeting up with old friends for coffee or sometimes splurging on hawker fare. John and his wife know that they both need each other just to have meaning in their lives. Both are acutely aware that the demise of one partner will be catastrophic for the other.

Such is life for the majority of the families supported by the FSS. Many feel that life has little to offer and that things can only get worse. What then is the role of the FSS? With

limited resources and unlimited requests, there is a limit to what the FSS can achieve. This is not just an FSS problem nor is it an exclusively EA problem. It is a community, if not a national, problem. With an ageing clientele, the problem can only exacerbate exponentially. Inconvenient medical aches soon become chronic medical issues imposing new stresses on the caregivers. Financial resources soon prove inadequate to meet the new challenges. Stress soon turns to despair. What then becomes the new role of the FSS?

The FSS has the primary role of engaging the whole of the community in a supreme effort to uplift those anchored to the bottom of society. This is a responsibility that cannot just rest on the shoulders of a few good people who see the urgency and the need to give. While the generosity of "regular supporters" has been magnificent over the past few years, there are certainly many, many more who live in very comfortable surroundings and who have yet to step up to the plate. If we are to consider ourselves brothers and sisters of a greater family, then the people in need have to be acknowledged and helped.

It is to these people of means that this appeal goes out. My appeal to them is, "Please help us to help these less fortunate members of our community. Please help the community realise the promise we made to those who suffer in quiet solitude that 'No one is left behind'."

The FSS on behalf of the EA has made some progress in improving the quality of life of the less fortunate. We have implemented the 'Enhancement of the Quality of Life' Scheme by ensuring that every household is equipped with a fridge, a washing machine and a TV set. These three items are deemed necessary if the quality of life were to be deemed acceptable. We've tried to make the festive season something to look forward to and for families to forget just for the moment the hard challenges in life. What we have achieved are just baby steps. We need to change their world and for this we need your help. – Edmund Rodrigues



## the unnoticed angels

Angela (not her real name) is a "Befriender". Her basic task is to deliver food rations or food vouchers every month to households supported by Eurasian Association's Family Support Services. There are approximately 60 households and slightly less than 20 "Befrienders" helping out in the project. On the surface, the job of being a Befriender looks easy enough, hardly any different from that of a delivery man. The reality, however, is very different.

Angela visits three homes a month after her office hours. She normally times her visits at around 7.30pm to ensure that if she is "caught" or "detained" by a member of the household, she will have enough time to spend with them. These clients of the FSS are usually resident in one-room or two-room government rental flats. Inevitably there is some issue that needs to be addressed and the Befriender is required to lend a patient ear. Financial distress and interpersonal relationships feature high on the list discussed and Angela has to provide either good counsel as best she can or report the matter to FSS caseworker Mr Ram for intervention. Often, it is nothing more than a plea for some lighthearted conversation, or for someone to listen to their old stories for the umpteenth time. Loneliness needs to be shared.

Angela recognises that when she removes her shoes on entering the house, she is humbly subjecting herself to the host of the house. A drink is put before her. Angela does not want a drink but graciously accepts it when she sees the joy it brings the host to be able to offer her a drink. The room is crowded with odd sized

furniture and boxes. The host shares that the house has bugs. Angela realises that there is every possibility of bringing home the bugs but she refrains from showing her concern. When she sips the drink from the ceramic cup that has been offered to her, she notices a stain and carefully manoeuvres the cup to avoid the stain. Her elderly host probably failed to see the stain. Angela starts to leave as she has other homes to visit. She thanks her host for the drink and departs humbled by the experience. Angela makes a note to report back – "Urgent treatment for bug infestation" and "Support for medical/eye check-up".

What did Angela achieve from her 30-minute visit? On the surface it might appear that Angela achieved very little. In reality, the "unseen" achievement is far greater than the actions that were visible. What Angela achieved was to provide the reassurance to her host that he or she was not forgotten and that help was on the way. It was a declaration and a promise that there was a "friend" ready to ignore the depressing environment and extend a helping hand when called upon. The poor, the old, the lonely and the infirm need more than just financial assistance. They need to be treated with more love and caring simply because these two items have been in short supply for a very long time. With more love, the ability to bear greater burdens is greatly strengthened. A good friend would be great. A good friend with the ability and a genuine desire to help would be an answer to a prayer. This is what a Befriender does. The Befriender not only provides the balm for the hurting wound but also the gentle touch to heal.

**We need more Angels. Come join us, be a Befriender.**

Contact [ram@eurasians.org](mailto:ram@eurasians.org) for more information.



# EA's Empathy Package We're Here To Help!

For Eurasians who have lost their job  
or at least 30% of their income.

## Financial Assistance Scheme

A monthly cash grant of up to S\$500 (capped at three months)  
to allow you time to find alternative work.

## Special Emergency Fund

One-time grant (capped at S\$500) if you have urgent  
and immediate needs.

To apply for the Empathy Package, or if you have any questions,  
please email [ram@eurasians.org](mailto:ram@eurasians.org)

# Empathy Package for Youth We're Here To Help Our Eurasian Youth!

## School Pocket Money Fund

An increase of S\$100 a month (capped at nine months)  
for students currently receiving assistance  
from the School Pocket Money Fund.

## EA Bursaries Top-up

An additional S\$75-\$100 a month (until September 2020)  
for students receiving an EA Bursary.

If you would like to apply for an EA Bursary,  
or if you have questions about the Empathy Package for Youth,  
please email [vinitha@eurasians.org](mailto:vinitha@eurasians.org)





COVER STORY

# WE DID IT OUR WAY

Five Eurasians on taking the road less travelled.

## Melanie-Tracy Felicia Hendricks Owner of MHX, fashionable sustainable sandals

**Tell us about MHX.**  
It took a lot of strength, perseverance and hunger to start MHX. MHX stands for Melanie Hendricks (with the "X" standing for "hugs"). Being an active beach lover, I got sick and tired of throwing away my plastic flip flops when they fell apart and having to buy a plain pair on the spot. I wanted colourful ones!

I own countless colourful accessories and beachwear, and getting a pair of pretty sandals to match is not always easy. Beautiful sandals complete a person's overall look, so I told myself why not create something that is stylish yet comfortable for both women and men?

MHX's three core values are Sustainability, Empowerment and Wanderlust. Through sustainable fashion, we hope to empower our customers to feel confident and beautiful while wearing our products all over the world.

**You were a former air stewardess, what made you switch career paths?**  
Being a flight attendant with Singapore Airlines made me grow up quickly. I learned to work with people from all walks of life and the experience made me a more open-minded person.

I also got to see how people from all over the world lived their lives. Before then, I could do it only by watching television

or reading books. It made me hungry to accomplish things I strongly believe in, like sustainability and motivating people. So hungry to the point that I wanted to start something of my own. Only thing was, I wasn't too sure where to begin.

**What's different about your sandals compared to the thousands of different brands out there?**

MHX was born after my trip to Bangkok and New Delhi in 2019 where I decided to source for sustainable products. This is what makes a pair of MHX sandals so special. The sandals are made from water hyacinths. These plants are pretty but harm the environment because they grow rapidly in humid climate and clog water bodies, such as rivers and canals, causing massive flooding.

Farmers dispose these overgrown crops irresponsibly by burning them. But eco-conscious suppliers now collect and use them to make handcrafted bags, hats, shoes and sandals.

For example, this reusable drawstring bag I'm carrying is made from handsewn synthetic jute. It's the perfect accessory to store your beach essentials like your tanning lotion, water bottle and portable phone chargers. MHX does not provide any plastic packaging. We're always pushing our boundaries when it comes to sustainable fashion.



**You founded the company a year ago. What are the challenges you've faced so far?**

My biggest setbacks have been fear of the unknown – not knowing if or how successful MHX is going to be, the struggle to juggle a full-time job and managing MHX, and fear of failure. It is through starting something on your own that you will see who your true supporters are in life. Let me tell you something... in life, you have to be your own cheerleader.

Be unafraid. If you believe in something, go for it even if it scares you. This is the only way you can grow as an individual, whether you are an entrepreneur, still studying, or even at a crossroads with your career path. But use your head too. Which means, be confident about your decision and follow up with a serious plan. Don't make any excuses, be hungry for success! It is important to create self-awareness and to continuously be on the lookout for things to do that can help you.

MHX sandals adopts this attitude, and each style is named after a woman with an empowering characteristic. For example, LINDA is named after my mother. Her vibrant personality

resonates with the colours and the tassel design of this pair. While wearing a pair of LINDAs, I would like you to feel happy, positive and beautiful, just like my mother.

**What would you like to share with our Eurasian readers who aspire to open their own businesses but are scared to take the plunge?**

For those of you looking to open your own businesses but are afraid of taking the first step, word of advice... don't wait until you're ready to start. Do it now! Study your product in the market. Information is everywhere! You can find free information on how to start up your business on YouTube, by listening to podcasts and following inspiring people online. I follow Neil Patel and Gary Vaynerchuk... you're welcome :)

Use your time wisely and be aware of the people you hang out with. You need to be surrounded by people who are as driven as you, otherwise you lose your motivation. Be prepared to make some sacrifices – like not buying that \$7 cup of coffee, limiting the amount of Grab rides, saying "No" to outings and being disciplined enough to wake up at 8am each morning to work on your business. Change your habits and even start eating healthily, exercise, practise meditation and have faith. This improved my focus and drive for success. How can I forget? Carrying my father's rosary helped me through difficult times too. Most importantly, remember to enjoy the process and not focus so much on the destination! Contact me if you would like to connect and we could even collaborate in the future!

Website: [www.shopmhx.com](http://www.shopmhx.com)  
Email: [shopmhx.info@gmail.com](mailto:shopmhx.info@gmail.com)  
Instagram: [@shopmhx](https://www.instagram.com/shopmhx)  
Facebook: [facebook.com/ShopMHX](https://www.facebook.com/ShopMHX)



Emma and her Family

## Emma Chiau Owner of Vespertine, an online boutique for Exquisite Batik Fashion

**Why and when did you open Vespertine?**

Vespertine is a dream that I've had since I was young and which came into fruition after years of planning and brainstorming. We launched the label in June 2017.

**Did you have an office job before Vespertine?**

I worked for two fashion retail giants in Paris for 11 years, then became a photographer in Singapore for five years before taking the leap as an entrepreneur.

**Have you always had an interest in Fashion?**

Yes, absolutely. I was a fresh-out-of-school web designer but very quickly pursued a career in fashion retail in which I thrived all the way till I moved back to Singapore 11 years later.

Becoming a professional photographer was a refreshing change but I found myself increasingly involved in fashion photography. Unsurprisingly, I was more drawn towards creative editorials, which then led to a maturing process of having a label of my own.



COVER STORY

**What educational path did you take?**

I was trained in France in the visual arts, specialising in visual communications and typography. My parents sought to enrol me into the prestigious Paris fashion school ESMOD but the fees were too expensive, so I did graphic design instead. I developed fashion design skills during my career.

**What challenges did you face when deciding to venture into your own Business?**

Making contacts and setting up my professional network was challenging. I started out from virtually ground zero with little knowledge of the industry in Singapore. I sought help from other professionals, but this proved challenging because competition in this industry is stiff. Certainly there should be more cross-sharing in the fashion industry in Singapore for it to truly grow. Fortunately, local brands are starting to change the situation by collaborating and sharing more.

**Did anyone tell you to just stick to a corporate job for security?**

Ironically no, because I've always made it clear through my personality and my past career that I would always stick to a creative career path.



**Why is batik such a huge influence in your fashion line? Does this stem from your mixed heritage?**

Interestingly, my French mother passed down her love for batik to me. She was always the biggest advocate of mixing heritages through her decisions and life choices (moving to Singapore, adopting the Asian culture and so on.) There was batik decor all around our house. These aspects of my childhood have impacted me in a really big way.



The Irina button up dress



The Lilith pinafore dress

Website: [www.vespertine.com.sg](http://www.vespertine.com.sg)  
Instagram: [vespertine\\_sg](https://www.instagram.com/vespertine_sg)



**Trevor Fernandez**  
Owner Of Corgi & Bite

**How did you come up with the name Corgi & Bite and what was the inspiration behind opening up your own cafe?**

The name Corgi & Bite came from my love for corgis and in a metaphorical way, most dogs bite and most people visit my cafe to have a bite. I think most chefs would ultimately want to start up their own restaurant and I was very inspired that I had the opportunity to do so at the start of my career. I have received multiple queries on whether we are a dog cafe! I even had one student call my cafe and ask if she could intern for free because she thought that we were a dog cafe filled with Corgis!



**Do you cook Eurasian dishes at home?**

Yes! Every year for Christmas, my mum and I prepare dishes like Feng Curry, Christmas Pie, Devil Curry and Teem with pig's trotters. With Eurasian food, I feel that you've got to have the feeling, time and patience, so my family cooks up a feast for our celebrations and festivals.

**Do you have plans on serving Eurasian dishes at Corgi & Bite?**

A few of my customers have actually asked me to serve Devil Curry at Corgi & Bite. At the moment I do not have any Eurasian dishes on my menu. I do however serve Nonya Chicken Curry, which is one of my bestsellers.

**Tell us about your culinary experience.**

I graduated from At-Sunrice GlobalChef Academy with a diploma in culinary arts. At the age of 23, I decided that I would like to start up my own cafe. It was a nerve wracking decision to make at the start of my career but I'm glad I had the courage to do it. I have been running Corgi & Bite for more than four years and I'm very thankful to have had this experience.

**Has being Eurasian helped you in your culinary journey?**

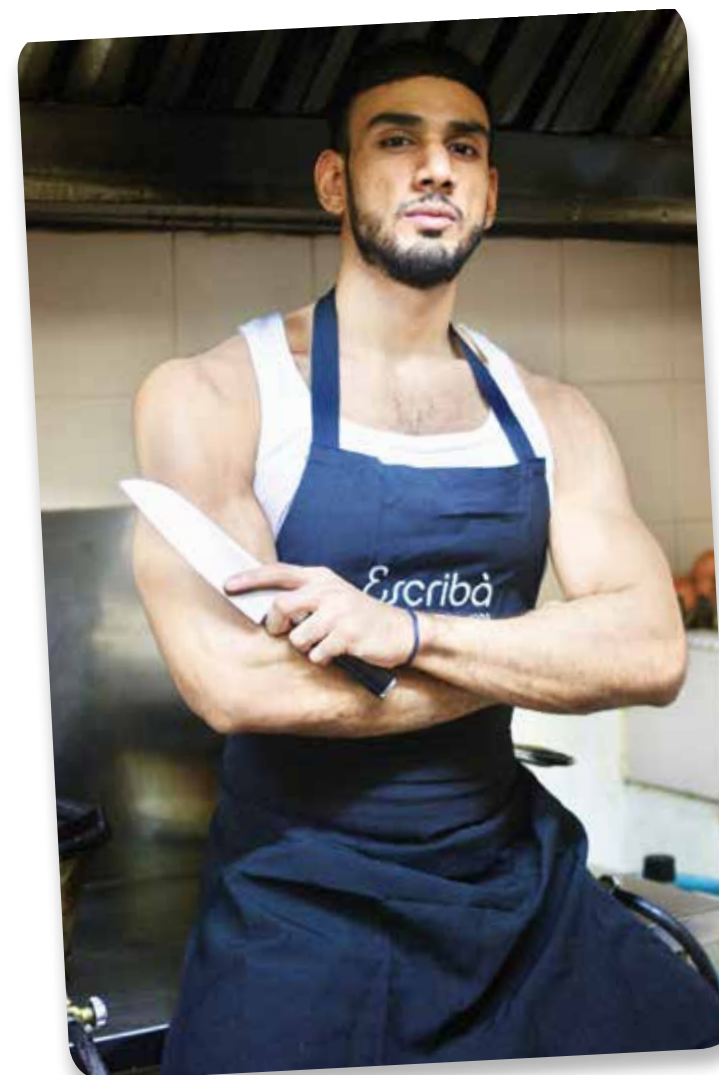
Being a Eurasian has opened me to the idea of fusion cooking as most Eurasian dishes are a combination of Asian and European ingredients. While certain food traditions should remain the same, I feel that fusion food definitely has a place in our multi-cultural society.

**Why did you venture into the culinary industry?**

Since young, I've always helped my mum in the kitchen and that developed my interest in cooking. I also believe cooking is a lifelong skill that will always serve its purpose whether I work in a restaurant or daily in my personal life. Besides that, cooking is my passion and I absolutely love what I do!

**Could you share some advice with Eurasian youth who may want to venture into the culinary industry?**

My best advice would be to work in a kitchen for at least a few months to get a feel of kitchen life before deciding to go to a culinary school. Cooking at home and cooking as a career are two very different things. However, if you have the passion for it, you will enjoy it wholeheartedly.

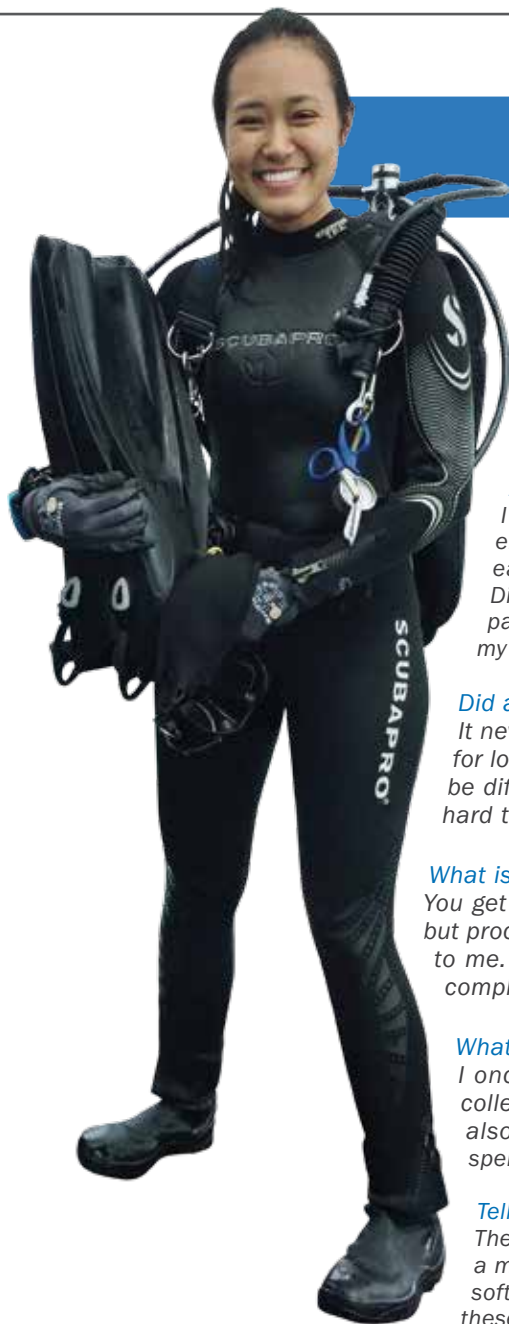


Facebook: [Corgi & Bite](https://www.facebook.com/corgi.bite)  
Instagram: [corgi.bite](https://www.instagram.com/corgi.bite)  
Website: <https://trevorfernandez92.wixsit>  
Address: 10 Braddell Hill Clubhouse, #01-84, Singapore 579719





COVER STORY



**Crystle Wee**  
Marine Biologist at DHI Water & Environment Singapore

After conducting coral surveys on board DHI's vessel. Crystle, a Eurasian-Chinese would work for the Danish Hydraulic Institute (DHI Water and Environment Singapore) which conducts environmental impact assessments around Singapore. These surveys try to assess, mitigate and offset damages to the marine environment caused by construction or other human activities in coastal and marine areas around our country.

**At what age or moment did you realise you wanted to work in the marine industry?**  
I've wanted to work with sea creatures for as long as I can remember. I liked reading encyclopaedias as a child, loved going to the beach and became obsessed with dolphins early on. The first time I came across the term "marine biologist" was in the Dolphin Diaries series by Ben M. Baglio, which follows the story of a girl with two marine biologist parents that travel the world rescuing and studying dolphins. One of my inspirations was my godmother who took up scuba diving; she'd show me seashells and corals she found.

**Did anyone ever tell you to 'stick' to a corporate job for security?**  
It never crossed my mind to join the corporate world because I hate being stuck in offices for long. I do think that it's important to find a way to be financially independent, which can be difficult in this industry when people are expected to do voluntary work. It's also quite hard to find such jobs in Singapore, so opportunities can be scarce.

**What is the biggest misconception about your job?**  
You get to dive all the time for fun. Collecting data in the sea is my favourite part of work, but processing the data, writing reports and making sense of all the results are much harder to me. There's also a lot of time spent studying to identify organisms and learning to use complex instruments.

**What is the most exciting thing you have seen underwater in Singapore?**  
I once came across an abandoned fishing trap with a bamboo shark stuck inside. My colleague and I managed to open it and free the shark, which felt really rewarding. I've also witnessed the mass coral spawning event (when corals release all their eggs and sperm at full moon) last year which is a rare event that only takes place annually.

**Tell us your dream country to dive in.**  
There are too many! If there was just one country I could choose, I'd choose Indonesia. It's a massive country with so many different diving sites, from shipwrecks to underwater caves, soft coral walls to volcanic craters, jellyfish lakes and sea snake islands. Best of all, most of these sites have affordable diving, good food and friendly people. People are always looking to travel far away but they don't realise the beauty that exists right within Southeast Asia.

**Are there many Eurasians in this industry and can you give words of encouragement for those who may want to join it?**  
As far as I know, I might be the only Kristang Eurasian in Singapore in this field. If anyone knows any, I'd be happy to get to know them! For aspiring marine biologists, keep reading, volunteering and making new friends in this field, and you'll get there!

Crystle's first attempt at technical diving with a sidemount configuration where two tanks are used instead of one. "Even outside of work, I still enjoy recreational diving in my spare time and am constantly planning my next dive trip. Technical diving allows divers to go deeper and into more undiscovered places underwater."

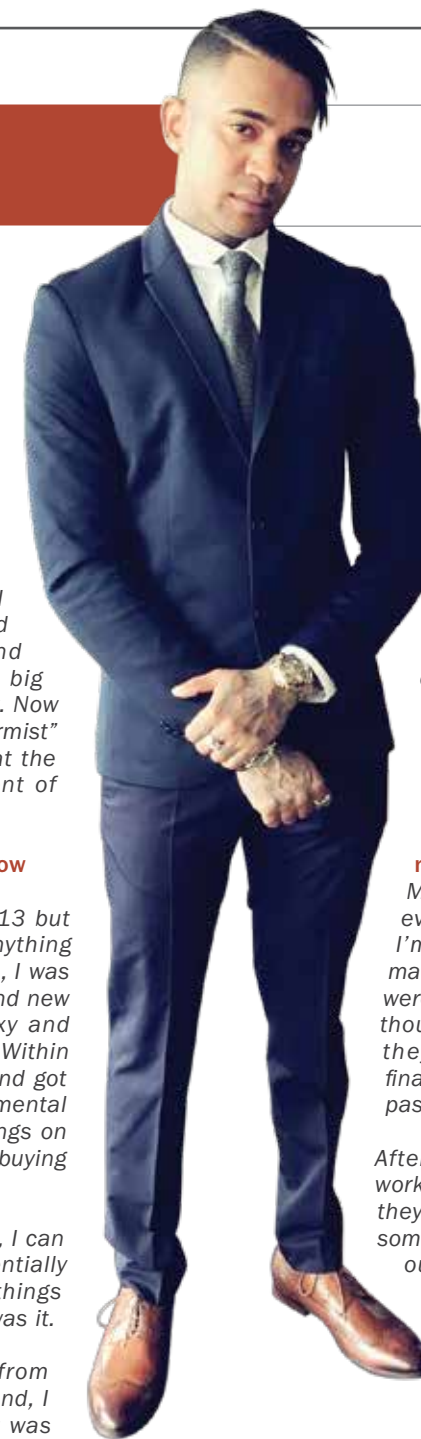


Photos taken by Crystle at Pulau Hantu during the 2019 coral spawning event. She says: "Lots of people don't realise that we have marine life in Singapore, but we have more than a quarter of the world's hard coral species, and around one seventh of the world's seagrass species and sea turtles such as the endangered green and hawksbill turtles. These coral reefs can mostly be found in our Southern islands such as Sisters Islands Marine Park, Pulau Hantu, Pulau Satumu and others. Each time I dive in Singapore's waters, I'm always amazed how much life lies hidden beneath the surface."

Instagram: [celerystew](#)  
Personal Blog: [theceruleansea.wordpress.com](http://theceruleansea.wordpress.com)

**Aaron King**  
Music Producer

Instagram: [aaronking.t](#)  
Spotify: [Ebonj](#) at <https://spoti.fi/2Xh6zU2>



**What was your education and career path like?**  
After I graduated with a law degree at 26, I decided to pursue an alternative career path, one much less orthodox, particularly relating to music. I always believed that your education should never pigeonhole you nor should it limit your ambition and your dreams.

**You sport tattoos. Do you feel that the stigma of having tattoos still exists?**  
I finished all my tattoos before I was 21. I know first-hand what it is like to be ostracised and shunned because of my tattoos and whenever I used to tell people that I had big plans for myself or that I was studying Law. Now people can look at me and other "non-conformist" heavily tattooed individuals and realise that the status quo is nothing more than a figment of society's imaginary thought bubble

**Tell us more about your music career and how you got into the industry!**  
I've been rapping in my head since I was 13 but it was just fleeting and I never thought anything would come of it. I was in Australia in 2018, I was really bored and went on the App Store to find new games. I came across this app called Auxe and was hooked on the app for hours on end! Within a week, I went to an Apple Store in Perth and got myself a MacBook Pro. It was a very monumental moment for me because I threw all my savings on that, literally. I barely had anything left after buying my MacBook and FL Studio.

I told myself that if I spent all this cash now, I can make it back later because this could potentially change my life. Like you know how some things you do in life, you just have a feeling? This was it.

I learned everything regarding my music from scratch. I have no musical theory background, I don't know how to play any instruments. It was

seriously absolute daunting at first, it was crazy. Although I still have a lot to learn, making beats and music in general is a much less laborious process than when I first started 18 months ago.

To have full creative control and autonomy over my music, I knew I had to learn mixing and mastering for both beats and vocals, so that's exactly what I did.

When I dropped my first proper track, Mai Tai, on Spotify back in 2019, it made it to Spotify's New Music Friday Singapore playlist (which is a very big deal to me) and ever since then, I've dropped I think a total of like 15 tracks and, including Mai Tai, four of them have already made it to the New Music Friday Singapore Playlist.

**What was your family's reaction when you told them you were pursuing a career in music?**  
My family has always been supportive of everything I've ever pursued. They are my rock. I'm blessed with parents that back me up no matter how the world perceives me. They obviously were worried when I first started out because they thought it was just a phase. And like all parents, they wondered when their kid was going to finally find his "calling" or find something he was passionate about.

After a while they started seeing the amount of work and time I was putting into music, and I think they finally realised that at least I'm home doing something which is good and pure, instead of being out and about getting into trouble like I used to. I'm just blessed with supportive parents really, they've never pulled me away from anything I've ever been passionate about. They've always been very nurturing and lovely with the way they've handled my goals and ambitions.



I'm very fortunate that Jesus has blessed me with all that I have and when it comes to making music, I believe he has guided me a ton because if it wasn't for Him, I would not be making the beats I make now at the rate of ease I do, so full glory and gratitude goes to Him for my music and everything else I have accomplished thus far.



GETTING TO KNOW US



And now these three remain  
**FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE**  
But the greatest of these is love

1 Corinthians 13:13

~ Margaret Nonis ~

It all began with a dream in 1995. Margaret Nonis, who was 28 at the time, had recurring dreams of teaching kids. Within a short span of time, she sent her helper home to save costs and pursued her part-time studies at Trinity Guildhall School of Music and Drama and other relevant courses for teaching.

Margaret was a personal secretary for many years before making the career switch. She had begun her career in teaching, working with preschools and primary schools, yet always felt a fire within her to achieve more. She was impelled to try a more creative approach to teaching.

Even though she knew what she wanted, she was still figuring how to go about accomplishing her dreams. As a Catholic, Margaret turned to prayer for guidance and felt the desire to start something on her own. While reflecting on the name of her school in her study room, she came across the bible verse from 1 Corinthians 13:13 – ‘And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love’. The verse resonated with her and she decided to name her centre, LoveKids, which was born on 7 April 2004.

Growing up in Serangoon Gardens, Margaret would often visit Happy Daze, a restaurant cum bar popular with residents. In 2009, during one of her visits there with her husband, he noticed that a vacant shop space across was available for rent. After deliberation and prayer, they took it as a sign. Within five days, she signed the lease agreement and started LoveKids Centre in Serangoon Gardens.

She believes that loving kids and catering to each of their needs is as important as their academics. LoveKids started as a speech and drama centre in 2009 with three students. Today they have evolved into an English Enrichment Centre with programmes such as Confidence for English (P1-P4), Confidence for PSLE (P5-P6), P1 Prep Course for K2, and Speech and Drama with Public Speaking for Nursery and K1s. Many of them grow with LoveKids from preschool until they graduate at P6.

Margaret’s daughters, Rachael and Kimberly as well as her son-in-law Thalvin are part of the LoveKids Team. Rachael, who is the curriculum writer, plans lessons which enhances the English curriculum set in schools. The lessons help kids to excel in English exams in school while not forgetting the importance of EQ skills integrated into the programme. Building **confidence** in every child through Public Speaking, Presentations and Oral Practices are major components of the programme. The highlight of the programme is at the end of the academic year where every student has an opportunity to showcase their confidence on stage!

LoveKids is also an avenue for kids with learning difficulties, “We are here for both the strong and the weak,” says Margaret. The core team of teachers use their child psychology background to help children with learning difficulties as well.

LoveKids emphasises the importance of EQ skills such as accountability, social skills and empathy, with the main focus being **stress tolerance and time management**. Margaret said that one of the greatest drawbacks is when students push themselves too hard. This is where the stress tolerance comes in and when Margaret and the team of LoveKids teachers step in to work alongside the children’s parents.



Margaret goes by the theory that parents need to also build a relationship with their children and not solely focus on their academics. Speaking from her own experience, Margaret’s youngest son, who is currently studying in NUS, still wants to hang out with his Dad, and her daughters organise family lunches and dinners with Margaret and her husband. She shared that the importance of having a close bond with her kids will reap its benefits in later years, even when they are consumed with tertiary education and friends; this is her testimony in creating a relationship with her children.

“Every child is different. So, for every child who walks through LoveKids doors, our mission is to discover their learning style and improvise our teaching methods for each child.”

Margaret believes that teachers cannot simply stand by the board and teach. They need to immerse themselves and engage kids who need more attention. The LoveKids team meets weekly to talk about each child they encounter and share experiences, lessons and work together. At the heart of her mission, she sees the need for every child to shine with Confidence and EQ skills. What better way to do this than to instil it in them through their every experience of learning.

Margaret believes that every child can and will learn when inspired. Her mission is to watch children grow in confidence and be proud of who they are and what they can achieve.



Tell us more about your Eurasian Heritage.

My mum is of Portuguese-Eurasian descent and my Dad is Anglo-Indian. However, we were very Eurasian in our upbringing. Growing up, we lived in Serangoon Gardens and had a lot of close neighbours coming over as my mum is an amazing cook! We followed the usual traditions of Christmas and Easter. About a week before Christmas, my sisters and I would help our mum bake hundreds of pineapple tarts. On Christmas Eve, my sisters and I would help our mum with the cooking, prep for Christmas dinner and attend midnight mass at Church of St Francis Xavier.

The childcare and teaching industry has seen an influx of business over recent years. What is your advice for our Eurasian youth to succeed in this industry?

It’s one of the toughest jobs in the world, it is not a one-size-fits-all lesson plan and just clocking in and out. You must have a connection with every student and inspire them to have the desire to excel in school and in life! A connection is not built through a lesson plan but built through time and effort of the teacher. When you plant the seed of inspiration and instil the love for learning, the student will never forget it. You have to be committed to go the extra mile. If you can do that and have a heart for every student, you can succeed in this industry.

One final thing to remember, as a teacher you have to build **confidence** in every student. I teach this quote to all my students, “If there is one touchstone to success, it is confidence.” ~ Mr Lee Kuan Yew

I think the most important thing we should do as parents, is start building confidence in kids at a young age. Finally, love is the foundation of it all. Teaching the kids with Love, correcting the kids with Love and loving what I do!

And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. Truly, the greatest of these is LOVE.

LoveKids Speech and Drama

24A Maju Avenue, Serangoon Gardens

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<https://www.lovekids.com.sg>



GETTING TO KNOW US

# My Chingay experience led me to my cultural awareness

## Q&A WITH NATALIE TROG

**You performed in Chingay 2020 this year. What was your experience like and are you planning on taking part in 2021?**

Performing for Chingay was one of the best experiences ever! I have always enjoyed performing arts and was very active back in my schooldays. We even went to Adelaide way back in 1999 to perform there. I also performed in Chingay in 2001 together with the Singapore American School so this time round was definitely nostalgic and I'm happy that I got to re-live the experience! I will definitely participate in 2021 if the opportunity arises!

**Chingay's 2020 Theme was 'Colours in Harmony'. Have you seen or experienced a positive change in the relationships and harmony between Eurasians and non-Eurasians?**

Definitely! Being in Singapore, we were taught in school that there are four main races. Imagine my surprise when I found out that the majority of Singaporeans at the parade didn't know much about the Eurasian community!

In school, Chingay rehearsals were a bit of a history lesson, sharing about our culture, heritage, our language, and all the yummy food we have! I'm from the Hendricks clan of Dutch ancestry, so I get to 'educate' the team members as well as those from the other associations and groups. I think by sharing our culture and heritage, I get to create awareness that 'Hey, we are Singaporeans too and together we exist in this microcosm of multi-cultural nation'.

That's the one positive change that I can take from this experience by creating awareness. Also, this year, the Eurasian Association participated together with other People's Association Talents. To me, it was reminiscent of how in my childhood, kids and neighbours from different backgrounds and different schools played 'catching' under the void deck and five minutes later we were all best friends.

This year's Chingay reminded me of my childhood in the sense that I've made many new friends from various backgrounds, races, and ages.



PHOTO: SIX5 PRODUCTIONS

**You conduct home cooking classes, what made you venture into this?**

I am not means a chef but this started out like a trial, 'for fun' and it somehow got popular and attracted regular students by word of mouth. Cooking is my hobby, apart from performing! How it started initially was when I was living in the US and Australia and I used to call my mom and my aunt (they didn't have WhatsApp back in those days) and ask them the recipes and would try to recreate the dish whenever I felt homesick.

I guess Singapore has it good or, rather, Singaporeans take it for granted that whenever we feel like eating, say, a curry puff, we can just go down to Old Chang Kee and get it for a dollar. Over in the US and Australia, there is no Old Chang Kee and I literally had to make the curry puff from scratch. So I compiled all these recipes in a now-defunct blog called 'A Touch of Tradition' solely because these are my family's traditional recipes.

Of course I got lazy and blogging was just too time consuming, so now the blog is defunct. Then I started making the dishes that my mom and aunt gave and people complimented me on them and either asked for the recipe or asked me to make it again the next time they came over. I enjoy hosting dinner parties from time to time, but since then I've ramped it up a bit.

I reached out to Touch Services, a not-for-profit charity organisation in Singapore that also helps the Deaf. I did a baking class for them and I guess what I was doing for them spread by word of mouth. Now I have people from all backgrounds, including the Deaf. My neighbours of different races all come and learn how to make Eurasian and Peranakan dishes. Where necessary I conduct classes in sign language, so I guess the Deaf community felt at ease that there are classes that they could attend to fully understand and appreciate our culture and cuisine.

I typically do a theme every month. For example, in the month of March, I had a Kuzina Kristang theme featuring dishes like Corned Beef Cutlets, Kari Ambilla (spicy bean curry), Caldu Pescador (seafood stew) and, of course, Kari Debal (curry devil).

Another one was in July last year. I typically associate July with summer, which is hot, so the first thing that came to mind was hot and spicy food. And again, the classes taught during that particular month were something to do with spicy food like Ayam Lemak, Kari Debal, Assam Fish and sambal belacan.

I named my cooking instagram NyaNya Heritage Kitchen because in Peranakan patois, nyanya means 'mother' so NyaNya Heritage Kitchen is all about bringing my mother's heritage cooking from my kitchen to yours. I hope to create awareness on the dishes that we Eurasians eat on a daily basis.

You know, contrary to popular belief, we don't subsist on curry devil and sugee cake every day! So, through dishes ranging from Singgang Serani to obscure ones almost unheard of, like Caldu Pescador, I hope to create awareness and share with everyone the food I grew up on. The classes are every Saturday from 12 to 3pm so do click 'Like' and follow me on Facebook and Instagram!

**You were featured in Eurasian Master Chef by The Singapore Eurasians last year. In your opinion, which Eurasian dishes are the easiest and most difficult to cook and why?**

Eurasians are so diverse there's no one single recipe that is identical or even similar in every family! Ingredients that may be sacralised in one family may be blasphemous in the eyes of another!

I think Eurasians are stereotyped when it comes to Eurasian cooking and that needs to be changed. For instance, ask anyone on the street what Eurasian food is and they will immediately say Curry Devil or sugee cake. But we are so much more diverse than that!

Also, because of intermarriage or even cultural overlapping, there are certain dishes identified as Malay, Indian or Peranakan but are actually pretty much the same – we cook and eat the same dishes. One of the dishes would be pang susie. I know the Babas made them too, or our kueh kueh like Putugal is named Putu Tegair in baba patois.

I would say the easiest dish for me is Kari Debal because we have it every year during Christmas as well as any time of the year whenever we feel like it. The hardest for me would be the obscure, hard to find dishes that you tend to make only once in a blue moon, a dish you tend to either forget what goes in it (because you don't cook it often enough) or the agak-agak quantity. And there are so many variations that you don't know which is which, so making it will either be a hit or miss.

The other day I was going to make Fish Moolie and I found so many variations online. The Goan influence uses mustard seeds, curry leaves and green chillies; others use a totally different recipe altogether. Besides that, choices like Feng or Pineapple Tarts are hard for me – only because it's so time consuming!

**How do you think our community can preserve our heritage?**

Firstly, it's through food because food is an identity of one's culture. I was raised by my late grandmother - she lived at Margaret Drive and then moved to Bedok South, and I used to watch her make Feng and Smore, and one thing I remember from my childhood was her fondness for soda biscuits. I hated those. When you're five or six years old, those plain, rock hard biscuits don't get to be your top five favourite things to eat. But she used those soda biscuits like they were manna from heaven. From dunking the biscuits in coffee to putting them on stews.

My only regret is that I didn't learn how to make the foods she made, and when she passed on, the food didn't quite taste like Grandma's. I don't want that to happen to our community – where family recipes are closely guarded secrets and taken to the grave. Especially now that intermarriages are happening so often that our identity and culture get lost and diluted.

Secondly, I also feel we are being stereotyped. Not all of us grew up speaking Kristang, dancing folk dances or singing Jinkli Nona. If you look at the Malay diaspora, they called the region Nusantara – they are all the same, but different. Perhaps we should start looking at ourselves in a similar way. We are all different: Portuguese-Macau, Portuguese-Goan, Dutch-Javanese, British-Malayans, French-Vietnamese and so on, and we all bring something to the table with different cultures, backgrounds and heritage. I feel that's something to be celebrated! Same same but different.



PHOTO: SIX5 PRODUCTIONS



# View from the Docents

EA Docents Melanie Rodrigues Smith and Trevor Nerva tell us about their experiences at the Eurasian Heritage Gallery and the general misconceptions non-Eurasians have about our community.

## Trevor Nerva

Generally people are intrigued when they realise that the Eurasian is as much Singaporean as any other Singaporean. The tours have been educational, not only for visitors to the Eurasian Heritage Gallery but for me as well. I continue to discover our Eurasian heritage, and the impact and difference Eurasians have made and contributed to what Singapore has become today, and will continue to do so.

One of the biggest misconceptions non-Eurasians have is that Eurasians, especially those among us who look 'not so Oriental', are either foreigners, *angmoh* or immigrants. One thing that annoys me is when someone asks: "Where are you from?" There was once I retorted with "Where are YOU from?" and I immediately felt that it was just as dumb a thing to say. Now, with the perspective of the fact that people are interested, I can share my Eurasian story.

At one of my tours, there was a young Malay lady who told me, at the end of the tour, that she actually thought she had never met any Eurasian in all her life. However, she realised that all the time she was in school she had the presence of a Eurasian figure who impacted her positively. That was her principal. I forgot to ask her who she was referring to.

To sum it all, it is with honour and privilege that I am able to share our collective story/stories. I'm indeed proud to be an indelible thread of this fascinating tapestry of being Eurasian.



EHG docent Trevor Nerva explaining the European ancestry of the Eurasian community to a group of Japanese docents from Friends of the Museum on 16 January 2020.



EHG docent Melanie Rodrigues Smith regaling visitors with stories on Bahau during a tour on 17 January 2020.

## Melanie Rodrigues Smith

I have always admired docents – their wealth of knowledge, their poise and the way they stimulate and engage their visitors.

I was thrilled at the opportunity to be a docent for our community a few years ago. With the opening of the Eurasian Heritage Gallery, we've had a lot of interest from a variety of groups and individuals. It was heartening to see that a lot of the visitors knew with fondness a school friend, an army buddy, a teacher or a friend from church who was Eurasian. There are other visitors who, knowing very little, appreciated the introduction to our rich Eurasian heritage.

I am always happy to explain the 500-year history of trading routes from Europe to Asia and see the "ah-ha" moment when the visitor develops an understanding of the term Eurasian. Every time I walk with groups from pre-school to seniors, I share a different perspective of our gallery. I find the interactive elements in our gallery a wonderful tool to engage our visitors. Many have never heard of Bahau and were enthralled when I regaled them with stories told by my parents during family dinner.

Some connections are made when we introduce them to dance or music or our wonderful cuisine. There is a growing number of visitors interested to know we are the caretakers of a creole language, Kristang, and that we are taking great pains to keep it alive.

I continue to learn with each guided group. I enjoy being the story teller who makes our Eurasian history and culture come alive for each visitor.



Dr Marc Rercerretnam receiving a token of appreciation from Heritage chairperson Julia D'Silva.

## Learning about Early Roman Catholic Communities in 19th Century Singapore

Dr Marc Sebastian Rercerretnam has a doctorate in Economic History and is a freelance academic, author and historian. Born and bred in Singapore, he currently lives in Sydney. He specialises in the colonial history of Singapore as well as the origins of Christianity in the Malay Archipelago. He has also written extensively on the history of Australian sport and the development of multicultural communities in Australia.

On a recent visit to Singapore, Dr Rercerretnam gave a fascinating talk at the Eurasian Community House. He explained that early Roman Catholic communities were multiracial, and not simply 'Portuguese Mission' and 'French Mission'! They date back to the early 1830s. Inter marriages were also common.

He also challenged the view that communities in Singapore lived separately due to the British colonial 'divide and rule' practice, and did not interact in any meaningful way. He shared his research findings and revealed an interesting discovery – the creation of a native Peranakan bloodline starting from 1833, specific to Singapore. After the riveting talk, participants got a complimentary guided tour of the Eurasian Heritage Gallery.



Close to 70 people registered for the talk on 18 January, eager to learn more about the early communities in Singapore.



EHG Docent Petrina Edema sharing her knowledge of Eurasians who contributed to Singapore. See the exhibition in Gallery II.

## Share Your Photos!

The National Museum of Singapore is working on an upcoming exhibition titled *Home, Truly: Growing Up with Singapore, 1950s to the Present* slated to run from August 2020 to February 2021. It will explore moments and experiences in Singapore's history that express the identity and collective memory of Singaporeans through photographs, artefacts, audio-visuals and oral histories.

Part of the exhibition will explore the many multicultural festivals that Singaporeans celebrate, and highlight the similar ways in which they are celebrated across cultures. One key similarity that

they hope to show is the act of preparing and making food together with family. As such, they are currently looking for one or two photographs of Eurasian families cooking meals for celebrations and festivals like Christmas and Easter.

Sun Yat Sen Nanyang Memorial Hall is planning a travelling exhibition, titled *Celebrating Commonalities*, slated to start from 1 July 2020 at National Library Board Bugis before going on to shopping malls, schools and so on. The focus is "Preparing for Festivals" (eg setting up the Christmas tree) and "Feasting" (Curry Debal being representative of Eurasians).

If you would like to contribute your photos on these themes, scan them in high resolution (at least 1MB) and email [jacqueline@eurasians.org](mailto:jacqueline@eurasians.org) or call her at 6447 1578 ext 202.



HERITAGE

# QUENTIN'S Precious Putugal



The recipe for steamed grated tapioca with grated coconut and banana was given to me by Mrs Lena Fox. According to her, this dessert used to be a favourite among the Eurasians. It was typically served during funeral wakes, so those who came to pay their respects would have something to eat and as a result, stay on longer to keep the family company.

- Grated skinned coconut – 400g (14<sup>1</sup>/<sub>3</sub> oz)
- Sugar – 1Tbsp + 100g (3<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> oz)
- Water – 250ml (8 fl oz / 1 cup)
- Grated tapioca – 300g (11oz)
- Blue food colouring – ½ tsp
- Green food colouring – ½ tsp
- Banana Leaf – 1 piece
- Ripe bananas (pisang rajah) – 5

\* Makes one 25cm (10in) square cake



30% off takeaway orders\* from either location at

**QUENTIN'S THE EURASIAN RESTAURANT**  
139 Ceylon Road, Eurasian Community House,  
Singapore 429744

**QUENTIN'S BAR & RESTAURANT**  
2 Gunner Lane, Blk 14 #01-08 Mess Hall Sentosa,  
Singapore 099567

\* Applicable for ala carte menu items and valid for self-collection with a minimum spend of \$30 only.

MEMORIES

# “The day I jumped onto a moving taxi!”



PHOTO: REDWIRE

Lionel de Souza is Owner and Managing Director of LJ Investigation & Consultancy Services Pte Ltd and Crime Prevention Ambassador. Inspired by his second cousin, the late DSP Alfred Boudwyen, whose photograph is in EA's Heritage

Centre, Lionel joined the Singapore Police Force on 3 October 1961. His first proud moment in the Force was when he topped his Squad (1966) in the final Law Examination and was awarded a prize. He tells us about his most dangerous encounter.

“In my 28 years of service in the Singapore Police Force, I have encountered and dealt with numerous dangerous and life-threatening cases. One of this was when I was caught in a shoot-out with a high profile kidnapper who was involved in the kidnapping of Harold Shaw at the Shangri-La Hotel Singapore carpark. I have a MediaCorp video of me jumping onto a moving taxi.

equipment and vehicles that were remnants from the colonial era. Today, however, members of the public have a different view/opinion of today's police officers, which I would rather not elaborate on.

Apart from this, I have mostly pleasant memories of the Police Force. This is what I feel has changed. During the time I served the Singapore Police Force (1961 to 1988) and up to the time I retired, members of the public then had high regard for police officers, especially those serving as detectives in plainclothes. They (the public) looked up to us as brave and decisive people who could make on-the-spot decisions. Mobile phones and pagers were not heard of then and we had to act fast as time was of the essence in making arrests and solving cases. The Police Force then was equipped with “antique” arms,

To be a good police officer in Singapore it is important to speak other languages other than English. My standard of spoken Malay and Chinese dialects is good. This is important if a police officer, especially a detective, wants to be an ace detective. The ability to speak other languages helps you cultivate and handle sources, interrogate suspects, speak to complainants and witnesses, eavesdrop on coffeeshop talk and so on.

One must also be humble and respectful of another person's race, religion and customs. I was much liked by law-abiding people, especially the Chinese, as I speak the Hokkien dialect quite fluently. This had even been tested in Court on several occasions during trials by the Defence Counsels.

STAY CONNECTED



The Eurasian Association, Singapore



the\_eurasian\_association





**EURASIAN  
HERITAGE  
GALLERY**

# **TO DEFEND AND PROTECT**



**Due to the recent Nationwide Advisory  
on Covid-19, Eurasian Heritage  
Gallery will be temporarily closed  
until further notice.**

**Stay safe, everyone!**

**Contact [jacqueline@eurasians.org](mailto:jacqueline@eurasians.org) for more information**