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This month the Bali Pink News chats with Marie Hewson owner of Grocer and Grind.

Bump & Grind

you find making it hard doing business here.

For those of you who have not had the pleasure of dining or shopping there, it's a funky restaurant with an uncomplicated yet scrumptious menu that reminds you of good healthy home cooking with those extra tasty toppings and sauces that mum makes. Combine that with a gourmet grocery store it has the makings of a great lunch out or a yummy trip on the way home from work.



Marie has had years of experience in the hospitality industry in Western Australia, where she ran a very successful chain of gourmet sandwich and coffee bars. After having an offer to good to refuse to buy her out she then ventured into a hugely successful lounge bar in Perth called Luxe which she still owns to this day.

Previous to her career in hospitality she was a fashion designer and had created many ranges for her own boutiques and for others. Its this career that eventually brought her to move to Bali in September 2002.

Although the break initially was good reality set in and she needed to get her teeth into something, her first project in Bali was, and still is "Lush Life" a Men's swimwear range now hugely popular, which is marketed to the Gay community through DNA magazine and also through her on line store.

Marie is no newcomer to supporting the Gay and Lesbian community, and in Australia she as sat on the board of many AIDS charities and organized many fund raising events.

Q: People come to Bali and they all have something that catches their attention what caught yours, and what made you make the big move?

A: I think firstly it was the smiling faces and the loving people here, The chance for some more personal self discovery. Having worked in a busy environment for many years I thought it was time for some me time for that sea change and to do something that was going to help me. Starting a business here that was not going to consume me like in the past, something that I can get my teeth into and set up so that it will work smoothly so I can have some time with my husband and daughter.

Q: What changes have you seen in the last 6 years since you have been here.

A: Doing business in Bali has become more sophisticated people are getting smarter and things are far more easily obtainable, I remember a local westerner who said he remembered back in the 70s when they got their first bakery here everyone was so excited to be able to buy bread. Nowadays you can source just about anything you need to run your business right here. The locals are more open to change and want to work with westerners as its making them better business people and at the same time quite wealthy.

Q: What are the negative points that

A: Well firstly doing business here or Australia or anywhere in the world has its good and bad points. But I think the Indonesian Government needs to Tighten up on what's acceptable and what's not. There are still to many Grey areas and 2 sets of rules one for locals and one for foreigners. Once they have a firm policy on foreign ownership it will attract more foreign investment to the country.

Q:How do you find the differences in dealing with staff here.

A: Dealing with your anger when a staff member does something wrong is very important. Indonesians don't respond well when a westerner is going off he's nut you need to calmly explain what they have done wrong and the repercussions of their actions so they understand. Bali is a place that time is slower than a lot of places so you have to learn patience and accept that things just take a while longer to get done her.

Q: If you had any words of wisdom for other people in business here or about to open a business here what would you say

A: You can bring all the experience in the world with you but if you don't adapt to the local culture you will find that sometimes things work against you. You have to be optimistic especially in business. If god forbid we had another terrorist attack I doubt it would hurt our economy here as much as it did the first time. Now there is far to much investment here from Locals and foreigners. And their desire to keep the Island economically wealthy is now stronger than ever. Unfortunately the world is learning to live with terrorism and its has shown in other countries that the economy bounces back quite rapidly after.

Andrew De Jong

Relations register clears first hurdle

Gay and unmarried couples in Victoria are a step closer to winning the right to register their relationships following a historic vote in parliament.

Under a bill that passed through the lower house by 54 votes to 24, unmarried or homosexual couples in Victoria would be able to register their relationship for easier access to entitlements.

However, the bill would not facilitate gay marriage or civil unions.

Under existing laws, couples may be required to provide evidence to prove their relationship, for example, in medical emergencies or to access property and life insurance entitlements.

The bill must also pass through the upper house to be enacted.

Government MPs were expected to support the legislation, which would give registered couples new rights, while the coalition has been given a conscience vote.

During the debate, Victorian Nationals Leader Peter Ryan told parliament the bill would inevitably lead to legislating gay marriage.

"What this bill does is to establish a structure which is a step toward equalizing the notion of a same sex relationship, in particular, with that of marriage," he said.

"I must say I think that anybody who does not see this legislation in that context is being naive and is kidding themselves."

Mr Ryan said he was an unapologetic and a strong advocate of the institution of marriage and there was no equivalent.

Introducing the bill last December, Attorney-General Rob Hulls said it would overcome discrimination and promote human rights.

"What this bill does is to enable couples who want the dignity of formal recognition of their loving relationship to register it, to receive a certificate,

and to have the security of knowing that their decision to commit to a shared life with each other is respected in Victoria," Mr Hulls told parliament on December 6.

Government MP for Oakleigh Ann Barker said the bill should go further and recognise carer relationships, similar to laws in Tasmania.

"This is a good bill, it continues our commitment as a government to promote human rights, to provide equality and respect for persons in committed, unmarried relationships and, importantly, it provides them with equality and legal standing in medical, legal and property matters," she told parliament.

"Personally, I have many friends in committed relationships. Some of my friends have been in those supportive, caring and loving relationships for more than 20 years ... it is absolutely fair that these couples should have the ability to register their relationships to both recognise their commitment to one another and to have legal and medical equality."

The ACT government is pushing for a system of civil unions that would allow gay couples to hold a ceremony.

However, the commonwealth is pressing the territory to accept a registration model, similar to Tasmania's.

Source
<http://au.news.yahoo.com/080312/2/164mx.html>

Pregnant trans man intrigues bloggerati

Thomas Beatie, a transgendered man from the US state of Oregon who revealed he is pregnant in the latest issue of *The Advocate*, is five months along according to various reports.

Now the story, which spread like wildfire on the Web yesterday following its appearance in the latest issue of the LGBT news magazine, is prompting mass discussion among bloggers.

Beatie, who transitioned from female to male, decided not to remove his

reproductive organs and stopped taking testosterone injections.

Upon learning his wife, Nancy, couldn't carry a child, he tried. Now, Beatie and his wife are expecting a baby girl in July.

Beatie claims he's faced discrimination from doctors and hospitals, and now blogs are weighing in on the topic.

GaySocialites.com writes: "I was even more shocked at how upset people were to find out that Beatie was born a woman.

"In a strange-sort-of-way, everyone seemed to want Beatie to defy the laws of anatomy by getting pregnant as a man."

DListed.com got a bit more personal: "This is pretty awesome and I wish them well!

"They want a family and they are doing whatever it takes to get one. You can't blame them for that. Whatever works! He also makes a pretty hot pregnant dude."

Over on a more traditional pregnancy site, Mom Logic compares the story to a soap opera, saying:

"Considering the stereotypical man has a hard time dealing with the common cold, we wonder how this dude's handling the joys of pregnancy."

In the most recent issue of *The Advocate*, Beatie details his decision to transition from male to female eight years ago, including undergoing chest reconstruction surgery and going on testosterone therapy.

During the transition, however, he decided not to have his female reproductive organs removed.

After transitioning, Beatie was able to be registered legally as a male and legally marry his wife, Nancy.

In his column for *The Advocate*, Beatie wrote that it feels "incredible" to be a "pregnant man".

He says that although he is engaging in a traditionally female biological process, he is "stable and confident being the man that I am" and in one sense sees himself "as my own surrogate".

Source www.pinknews.co.uk
Ross von Metzke and Ann Turner

Islam 'recognizes homosexuality'

Homosexuals and homosexuality are natural and created by God, thus permissible within Islam, a discussion concluded here on Thursday.

Moderate Muslim scholars said there were no reasons to reject homosexuals under Islam, and that the condemnation of homosexuals and homosexuality by mainstream ulama and many other Muslims was based on narrow-minded interpretations of Islamic teachings.

Siti Musdah Mulia of the Indonesia Conference of Religions and Peace cited the Koran's al-Hujurat (49:3) that one of the blessings for human beings was that all men and women are equal, regardless of ethnicity, wealth, social positions or even sexual orientation.

"There is no difference between lesbians and non lesbians. In the eyes of God, people are valued based on their piety," she told the discussion organized by non-governmental organization Arus Pelangi.

"And talking about piety is God's prerogative to judge," she added.

"The essence of the religion (Islam) is to humanize humans, respect and dignify them."

Musdah said homosexuality was from God and should be considered natural, adding it was not pushed only by passion.

Mata Air magazine managing editor Soffa Ihsan said Islam's acknowledgement of heterogeneity should also include homosexuality.

He said Muslims needed to continue to embrace ijtihad (the process of making a legal decision by independent interpretation

of the Koran and the Sunnah) to avoid being stuck in the old paradigm without developing open-minded interpretations.

Another speaker at the discussion, Nurofiah of the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), said the dominant notion of heterogeneity was a social construction, leading to the banning of homosexuality by the majority.

"Like gender bias or patriarchy, heterogeneity bias is socially constructed. It would be totally different if the ruling group was homosexuals," she said.

Other speakers said the magnificence of Islam was that it could be blended and integrated into local culture.

"In fact, Indonesia's culture has accepted homosexuality. The homosexual group in Bugis-Makassar tradition called Bissu is respected and given a high position in the kingdom.

"Also, we know that in Ponorogo (East Java) there has been acknowledgement of homosexuality," Arus Pelangi head Rido Triawan said.

Condemnation of homosexuality was voiced by two conservative Muslim groups, the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) and Hizbut Thahir Indonesia (HTI).

"It's a sin. We will not consider homosexuals an enemy, but we will make them aware that what they are doing is wrong," MUI deputy chairman Amir Syarifuddin said.

Rokhmat, of the hardline HTI, several times asked homosexual participants in attendance to repent and force themselves to gradually return to the right path.

Abdul Khalik, The Jakarta Post, Jakarta

Tourist Arrivals Up 13.2% in January

SEMINYAK ~ The number of foreign tourists visiting Indonesia in January rose 13.2 percent to 437,617 from a year earlier, a report by the Central Bureau of Statistics shows.

It said arrivals via the country's 11 main entry points rose 14.4 percent to 360,179, with Bali's Ngurah Rai International Airport receiving the most passengers.

It said 147,319 tourists arrived via Ngurah Rai in January against 115,557 a year earlier.

The report said visitor arrivals are expected to increase in the coming months as the government steps up efforts to promote 2008 as "Visit Indonesia Year." Last year, 5.51 million foreign tourists visited Indonesia, up from 4.87 million in 2006.

Source : Bali Times.

4th July

Keep it Free for

This years event of events

Details Soon....

Female circumcision and male envy

By..Julia Suryakusuma

My mother told me that she had me circumcised when I was two years old. I had known this for a long time, but it was only when I was a young adult and read about female genital mutilation and infibulation in Africa, that I became alarmed.

What had actually been done to me, and why, I asked? "Just a small incision or pin-prick, to draw blood," my mother said. She didn't really know why. "Was it done to you as well, Mamih (mom)?" I asked. "Yes," she said, "it was."

Well, whatever it was they did to me, it couldn't have been anything like the African practice of cutting out the clitoris (and sometimes the labia) and sewing up the vaginal aperture. I certainly have more than my fair share of sensation in my clitoris, that unique female organ that exists solely for pleasure.

Yes, solely for pleasure! No wonder there's penis envy -- no, sorry Freud, that's not women being envious of the male sexual organ but precisely the opposite: men being envious of the women's clitoris and its amazing ability to generate repeated waves of long-lasting sets of multi-orgasmic pleasure. Only the Rajneesh Movement -- mainstream in India and Nepal, but now spreading throughout the world -- seems to have figured this out. They believe that women's capacity for multiple orgasms makes them spiritually superior. Way to go!

In fact, I reckon patriarchy and all the various misogynic practices that it has produced might boil down to just one fact: clitoris envy! Control what you fear and want, but can't have. Maybe

that's why female circumcision and female genital mutilation came about: as a tacit admission of women's sexual power. In any case, it certainly seems as old as sex. While many Muslims claim it as a religious practice, female circumcision doesn't appear anywhere in the Koran and actually predates Islam. Some claim it goes back as far back as second century BC, originating in Egypt, before spreading south and west.

One explanation has it that circumcision was rooted in the Pharaonic belief in the bisexuality of the gods. The feminine soul of a man was located in the prepuce, while the masculine soul of a woman was in the clitoris.

"In order for boys to become men, and girls to become women, the feminine soul had to be excised from the boy, and the masculine from the girl. With a knife."

The current practice of female circumcision and female genital mutilation still prevalent in many countries in the world, however, is blatantly sexist and seen as a way to curb and control women's sexual pleasure, to prevent pre- and extramarital activities. Because wives, of course, are the property of their husbands, right?

Feminists obviously see these practices as expressions of patriarchal oppression and violence, and it's troubling that in 2008 the practice still thrives, including in Indonesia.

Thank God there are women's NGOs like Yayasan Kesehatan Perempuan (YKP, Women's Health Foundation), which focuses on women's sexual and reproductive rights, questioning many practices that are harmful to women, including female circumcision. They conduct extensive research with the aim of changing both values and practice.

The findings of research on female circumcision indicate that -- incredibly -- 92 percent of Muslims in Indonesia support it, seeing it as all a social tradition, a religious duty and an act of faith. When questioned, they admitted that the practice varies between different mazhab (schools of belief), from wajib (obligatory) to sunnah (recommended but optional), but that doesn't stop them endorsing it for their daughters and granddaughters.

What really bothers me here is, first, that so many people are totally confused about what is religion and what is tradition, and, second, that they question neither and just keep on cutting girls, with no idea why.

Now there's an additional reason for concern, with female circumcision commonly being offered as part of a "birth delivery package", along with ear-piercing -- as if lacerating the clitoris was a cosmetic procedure. What makes this particularly scary is that nurses tend to use scissors, which make real cutting of the clitoris (incision and excision) more likely. Traditional providers prefer to use penknives for more symbolic acts of scraping, rubbing, pricking or piercing the outer part of the clitoris just to draw blood, as was the case for my mom and me.

It's of concern that this medicalization of female circumcision persists, despite the World Health Organization banning the practice in 1980 and Indonesia's Health Ministry doing the same in 2006. The circular went to medical professional organizations, but any doctor, nurse or midwife should already have known that female circumcision is a violation of their professional ethics and their oath to use their skill and knowledge solely for the protection and maintenance of their patients' mental and physical health.

But it's not all gloom and doom. Increasingly, some progressive Muslim scholars in Indonesia are speaking out against the practice. As I said, female circumcision is mentioned nowhere in the Koran, but it does clearly say that the right to sexual pleasure belongs to women as well as men, and women have a right to divorce their husband if they don't get it. Surely this can only mean that cutting off the clitoris, the source of sexual pleasure for women, far from being a religious duty, is actually contrary to Islam. Go figure.

And even if the act carried out is more symbolic than surgical and leaves the genitals intact, what exactly is it symbolizing? As Ninuk Widyantoro from the YKP says, why do it at all if it symbolizes something negative and is a put-down to women and their sexuality?

It's heartening that women activists, the government and Muslim scholars are working together to eradicate this barbaric and useless practice. But old traditions die hard, and patriarchal ones even more so.

Just ask my mom.

Julia Suryakusuma is the author of Sex, Power and Nation. She can be contacted at jsuryakusuma@gmail.com
The Jakarta Post

Renting a House in Bali

Moving to Bali and renting a house is quite easy and often affordable. Here are some of the things you might want to think about if you are planning on renting a house / villa in Bali.

Price

Everybody wants a beach-front place, or at least one with close access to the beach. You'll pay more for this than one slightly away from the beach. You'll find that rents are cheaper as soon as you get across a main road (eg. Jl. Seminyak) from the beach, with most of the tourist villas and hotels on the beach side. Also driving a couple of kms out of town will also bring the prices down.

Finding a house:

Houses for rent come on the market at a moment's notice. Expats and local owners will often post handwritten notes on bulletin boards in cafes and shops. These rentals can be for 1 month, 3 months, 1 year and so on. Exploring the small lanes on motorbike is the best way to find place for rent.

Pricing

Don't be afraid to knock on your neighbour's door and ask how much they pay for rent, it will give you an idea.

Duration

The longer you rent a place for the lower the overall price will be. Problem is how so you know you'll still want the house after 6 months. Here in Bali

many things can happen after you've rented a house including leaking roofs, dysfunctional drainage, bad staff, etc. The way to handle this is to rent the place for a week, if you like it try it for a year. After that year you'll know what the place is like, then you can go for a 5 year lease if that appeals.

Security

Houses in Bali are open-plan, with parts of the living area adjacent to the garden. This obviously presents security issues. It is important to get a feel of how trustworthy the gardener, *pembantu* are and also know that your doors have some degree of security, as many doors have flimsy locking structures.

Noise

Don't like roosters at 4am, or party scene overflow all night long? You need to sleep in a place for a while to see how that works.

Curve-balls

Flooded driveways in the wet season, bird-sized mosquitoes, Balinese cock-fighting over your back wall, aggressive local dogs, these are all extra things you need to think about before committing long term.

Contract

Do not move into a place before it meets your standards. If the owner says you can move in and he will fix the roof, walls, pool, driveway, don't believe it. Get a signed contract and put it in a safe place

Info courtesy Bali Blog Website www.baliblog.com

Dealing With Angry Employees

Anger is a force that can move an organization forward to improve, or, it can be a force that destroys the organization's ability to fulfill its purpose on an everyday level. Managers play a critical role in determining which of these results will come about.

The way the manager deals with conflict and anger will set the climate for employees.

There are a number of different anger/conflict situations that managers will face at one time or another. Each of these situations is slightly different, and may require different sets of skills.

- one employee angry or in conflict with another
- employee angry or in conflict with manager (you)
- one employee angry at someone in another organization
- two factions that habitually square off

We are going to look at employee angry that is directed towards you as a manager.

The Anger Iceberg

You should be aware that the anger you see is much easier to deal with than the anger that goes unexpressed by employees. You should also know that the large proportion of employee anger is not expressed directly to the "boss". It is this anger that is destructive to your organization since it will surface covertly through activities such as back-stabbing, uncooperativeness, rumor spreading, and poor performance.

One important management/leadership task is to be alert to cues that indicate that there is anger sitting below the surface, unexpressed. While it may be frustrating to bear the responsibility of identifying and dealing with the "iceberg under the surface", it is an important part of building a positive climate where conflict can be resolved. If you wait for an employee to broach the subject, when it is clear there is a problem, you may be sacrificing a great deal.

We are going to focus on how employee anger that is out in the open can be dealt with so that there is a potential for increas-

ing the level of respect and harmony, and by extension, productivity.

Basic Principles

1. Conflict/Angry situations become negative and destructive when they are not dealt with promptly and effectively. When the situations are dealt with properly, there is a tendency for a team to get stronger and better.

2. While angry employees may appear to want a specific issue addressed, they are looking for something else that they see as equally or more important. They want to be heard. If you don't provide a means for them to be heard, they will find other more subversive ways to be heard (and you won't like it much).

3. Staff will watch very closely to see how you handle anger directed at you. Even if you have a private discussion with an angry employee, staff will know about it. Your ability to lead will depend on your behavior, and the interpretation of your behavior.

4. Most people react to anger directed at them with a fight or flight reaction. That is there is a gut reaction which, unchecked, results in "firing back" with an aggressive manner, defending oneself, OR, avoidance. Only in rare occasions will these gut reactions result in dealing with anger effectively.

Tips & Techniques For Dealing With Overt Angry Behaviour

1. When an employee expresses anger, deal with it as soon as possible. That doesn't mean in two weeks! By showing a desire to make time to discuss the situation, you are showing that you are concerned, and value the employee and his or her perceptions and feelings. Many performance problems reach crisis proportions as a result of delay in dealing with anger.

2. Certain situations require privacy for discussion since some people will be unwilling to air their feelings at a public staff meeting. However, if anger is expressed in a staff meeting, you can develop a positive climate in the organization by dealing effectively with it in public. One technique is to ask the angry employee whether they would like to discuss it now, or prefer to talk about it privately. Let them call the shot.

3. Always allow the employee to talk. Don't interrupt. If they are hesitant to talk, encourage them by using a concerned, non-defensive tone and manner, and gently use questions. For example:

"You seem a bit upset. I would like to help even if you are angry at me. What's up?"

4. If an employee refuses to talk about what's bothering them, consider adjourning by saying:

"I can understand that you are hesitant to talk about this, but we would probably both be better off if we got it out in the open. Let's leave it for a few days and come back to it" Then follow up on the conversation.

5. Respond to the employee's feelings first, not the issue underlying the feelings. Use empathy first by saying something like:

"It sounds like you are pretty annoyed with me. I would like to hear your opinion".

6. Before stating "your side" or your perception of the situation, make sure you have heard what the person said. Use active listening.

"George, if I understand you correctly, you are angry because you feel that I have not given you very challenging assignments, and you feel that I don't have any confidence in your abilities. Is that right?"

7. If the employee's perceptions do not match your perceptions express your perceptions in a way that tries to put you and the employee on the same side. Your job is not to prove the employee wrong (even if they are). Trying to prove the employee is incorrect is likely to increase the anger level even if you are right.

"George, I am sorry you feel that way. Let me explain what I think has happened so you can understand my thinking. Then we can work this out together."

8. A technique used by expert negotiators is to establish agreement about something. Before getting into the issues themselves, lay the groundwork by finding something the two of you agree on. Again, the point here is to convey the message that you are on the same side.

For example:

"George, I think we agree that we don't want this issue to continue to interfere with our enjoyment of our work. Is that accurate?"

9. At the end of a discussion of this sort, check with the employee to see how they are feeling. The general pattern is:

- a) Deal with feelings first
- b) Move to issues and problem-solving
- c) Go back to feelings (check it out)

Ask the employee if they are satisfied with the situation, or simply ask "Do you feel a bit better?" You may not always get a completely honest response, so be alert to tone of voice and non-verbal cues.

If it appears that the employee is still upset or angry, you may want to let it pass for the moment. Allow the person to think about the situation away from you, THEN follow-up in a day or two. This is important because someone who is angry initially may "lose face" by letting the anger go immediately. Or, the employee might just need time to think about your discussion.

Good luck!

(Source: <http://www.work911.com/articles/angrye.htm>)

LETS HEAR IT FOR THE BOYS !!!!

There's no doubt that our community has leanings towards the arts and the entertainment industry. Besides being funny and bitchy, we've also got a very intimate sense of what it means to be hospitable and social.

These are all the elements required to pull off crass camp and witty humor, while being a good talk-show host at the same time. With comedians like Kumar, it's no wonder that shows like Camp Comedy have been keeping their audiences clutching their stomachs in laughter.

On the theatre side – well, let's not go there. I believe it's pretty self-explanatory. A large number of actors are gay, a large number of directors are gay, a large number of backstage crew are gay, the list just goes on.

But perhaps the best example one can give is our very own drag scene. People like SammiZhen and MiStevius have practically become household names. With superb comic timing, these iconic performers have been instrumental in the rapid advancement of this scene.

The number of queer entertainers is grossly disproportionate to society's demographic. It's obvious that there are many gay talents in this field, but what explains this leaning?

It's easy to say that this has much to do with one's childhood. One generalization would be to say that a fair proportion of gay men are less inclined towards sports. In a education system that places high emphasis on co-curricular activities, this could result in a fair bit of gay teens being channeled into activities like theatre, which builds the foundation for them to excel in the above fields.

But surely it is not just gay men that shun sports in their childhood. Furthermore, shunning sports alone is no guarantee of success in these other fields. The roots of this trend lie a little deeper.

It might be the pressure of being different that drives us to mould ourselves after a more sociable fashion. Due to our innate differences, we're required to take an extra step to gain the acceptance that others would normally be able to achieve through incidental conformity. We take efforts to entertain, in a hospitable way, to gloss over the fact that we differ in terms of sexuality.

Yet despite all these efforts to be a social extrovert, there is also a sort of seclusion that results because of that unbridgeable difference in sexuality. It might be this unique tension between the social butterfly and lonely outcast that brings out the artist in some gay men.

Indeed, it has been observed that gay men are more artistic. Scientific studies have shown that gay men are more likely to be left-handed, or right-brained, which in turn has been linked to creativity. Wit and humour require this artistic creativity that we seem to have a genetic predisposition towards.

On a more personal level, Freud once said that homosexuality is the result of extended narcissism. If that is true, then it comes as no surprise that gay men love the limelight. The entertainment industry fulfills that sense of narcissism and attention-seeking tendency that Freud advocates as a root of homosexuality.

However, it is a little simplistic to assume that all these reasons lie within ourselves. There're plenty of pull factors that explain why gay men are drawn to these fields as well.

It's a fact that the arts groups in Singapore have a tendency to be slightly anti-establishment. Many plays have a political edge to them, think Alfian Sa'at's Asian Boys Vol. 3 and of course, The Campaign to Confer the Public Star on JBJ by Eleanor Wong. Gay men, who have a tendency to feel disenfranchised

by the state, are invariably attracted to the idea of such shows, which explains their prominence in the arts scene.

Also, one mustn't forget that like calls to like. Because a large proportion of the people in theatre and entertainment are gay, it's quite likely that the social circles they mix in are also gay. Therefore, it's hardly surprising that talents tend to be scouted within our community itself.



This isn't a bad thing, since it presents more opportunities for those of us who have artistic inclinations. However, we should be wary of locking out straight people. I recall an episode of Ugly Betty, where there was a straight guy who pretended to be gay just so he could fit into the fashion industry. An interesting twist of fate, if you ask me, but not the most desirable situation for the arts and entertainment industry.

After all, the last thing that we want to happen is for some failed conservative actor to tell a minister that the gay agenda is advancing, and that we're taking over the entertainment industry.

But it just might seem so. Because if you notice, in a strange twist of fate, a fair bit of Singapore artists whose names go on to claim international renown are, ironically - gay.

Source
www.trevvy.com - Tim

AN EXPAT IN BALI

Continued from March Issue.....

Only dickheads drive the usual yuppie 4wd toorak tractors in this neck of the woods. Its either Honda Vario (fully auto), Mio (girly bikes) or Nouvo (me) are de rigueur on Bali streets. The real big bikes are owned by expats with small brain/penises and much bigger egos!

And while I'm on a roll here talking about 'trrrransport' in Bali. Many times I have asked a local for directions (street numbers are a mythical thing) only to find their version of 200 metres up the road is really 200 light years in an adjacent solar system! I have spent many dizzying circuits of the capital Denpasar' manic roundabouts that I have spun off into a neighboring rice field due to centrifugal force or sheer dizziness! Only to narrowly miss a bakso (meatball) cart!

Having said all this , the 3 million or so Balinese motorbike riders are certainly the guiding light for our so called sophisticated western road system .Car pooling...is.. so last century. They clearly have bike and truck pooling here down to a fine art. Its common place for a tiny decrepit smoke spewing Suzuki scooter to carry Mum, Dad, 3 kids, 20kg rice bag and whatever else can be thrown on board! I have witnessed what looks like a household removalist lot teetering around on a 2 wheeled jalopy! The indo answer to the Aussie ute !

The next subject is virtually worthy of an entire treatise on its own. Many tourists say to me, 'Oh you are so lucky to be living here!'. I just roll my eyes and reply " you don't know the half of it, living in a foreign culture is very different to the occasional or even regular holidays here". I usually recite the rather cynical "Bali Survival Hand-

book" which goes something like :
1) Expect the unexpected 2) Remember you are a walking ATM machine 3) Never fall in love 4) Never apply western logic 5) Never believe anything you are told ..and so on..Most westerners I know (including yours truly) have broken some if not all of these rules.

I have been living here 3 years, and I still don't profess to understand the way Indonesians think or why they behave (or more relatively)... don't behave in a certain way. I can hear my friends who are regular visitors here draw breath and emit a collective moan! In fact I have yet to meet a westerner who has a handle on this. We expats regularly get together for a forum of frustrated bitching , laughing, informal counseling at the totally illogical , manic (or incredibly laid back) way Indos behave. We use terms like today's latest 'head-f**k' or generally shriek in despair! Have another Bintang!

It should be noted this is a culture where public displays of anger, frustration (public or private) is a cultural no-no. And there is no apparent means to express or talk about personal problems. No culture of friendship or formal counseling. It is no surprise there is a relatively high suicide rate for Balinese. I imagine this extends to the rest of the country.

In terms of lifestyle, the majority of men smoke cigarettes from a very early age (a packet is around \$1.30) and there is only mediocre govt warnings about the perils of smoking. Of course, the richest men in Indo are the tobacco company owners . Again life expectancy is far lower than in the west. If lung cancer doesn't get you, then an occupation with virtually no OH&S (occupational health and safety) , or many of the regular natural (?) disasters which plague

this country will see you meet your maker.

Bali is fortunate in being the least affected area in Indonesia by way of natural and man made disasters such as floods, volcano eruptions, smoke haze, pollution, subterranean mud flows/slides and of course tsunamis. Bali is closer to Darwin than Banda Aceh in Northern Sumatra which was which devastated in 2004.

To be honest , in the past 3 years I have experienced more highs and lows than the past 30 years of living in Melbourne. Definitely more highs, including flying over the eastern Island of Java as the mist recedes from a string of sometimes active Volcanoes. Or rising before dawn in central Java to experience the sunrise at Borobudur ..the 9th century largest Buddhist temple in the world (a UNESCO world heritage site) perched on a hillside with the recently erupted majestic Mt. Merapi volcano smoking in the distance. I have only scratched the surface of this diverse and stunning country.

But probably the most memorable and humbling experience was on my 3rd visit to neighboring muslim island of Lombok. A sleepy poor cousin of Bali which is sometimes described as "Bali before it was overrun with tourists some 30 years ago". I visited a young Indonesian friend and stayed in his village and recently completed brick house. Dirt roads, a local well supplied the daily water needs and of course a mosque wailing the calls to prayer 4 times a day (it gets a bit much at 3am every morning!) I was probably the only real live westerner the entire small village had met and was treated with many smiles, curiosity and the warmth of a being royalty. I was paraded around to visit all the relatives.. Each day a crowd of young boys and girls would gather

to sit and stare at me or yell 'Hello Mister' as I whizzed' past on my friends motor bike. I agreed to be a guest English language teacher a local junior high school and spent 2-3 hours barraged by questions from a student class of about 60. They had no English books and I promised to send some over by mail. To this day it is one of my fondest memories here, and my friend in Lombok is always asking me to visit again. In addition, the stunning scenery of mountains, lush rainforests, deserted white beaches and coral fringed islands is a very much an incentive.

I am fortunate to live in a modern large poolside house only 200 metres from the beach and 2 mins by motor bike to work. But don't let idyllic images fool you. While water here is plentiful (up to 120 inches rainfall/year) with our source from underground springs. It's not uncommon for the state owned power company to pull the plug from 8 mins to 8 hours on a regular basis with no warning. If you have the monopoly as the only power company in the whole country then accountability to customers is not a high priority!

Bali is a very fertile volcanic island just below the equator and in my opinion has a more agreeable climate than other tropical SE Asian countries. The daytime temp ranges from 28-32 deg Celsius to low 20's overnight. The humidity is around 70-85 % depending on wet or dry season. I love the onset of the wet season where an overnight unrelenting monsoonal downpour of 2-4 hours can relieve the humidity and dust! The electrical storms are simply spectacular! And being a Melbournian I love the break from endless sunny days!

Bali has a large Western European expat community as well as aussies. They tend to range from clapped out hippies to running export businesses here. Labour is very cheap with furniture, jewelry, home wares, textiles amongst the major export industries.

The Balinese are master silver-

smiths and the range of gifts using natural products is simply amazing. Furniture is made from teak (Jati), bamboo, palm, shells and water plants. Anything can be made to order and is generally produced in Java.

The range of hotels, villas, cafes and restaurants is truly unbelievable. You can stay at a Balinese village style Ioseman right up to the 6 star Bulgari Hotel on the southern peninsula. In trendy Seminyak the eateries range from Greek, Korean, Japanese, Moroccan, Italian etc to a simple style Indo Warung (café). Spa resorts abound.

Even though Balinese have a violent past, due to many wars with Javanese and their Dutch Colonial masters, they are very tolerant people. Alternative lifestyles are welcomed and being gay is never a problem.

I have had 2 relationships with Indonesians which has led to me to be very wary of the problems caused by cross-cultural relationships. In the commercial areas of South Bali, the general idea is to part the tourist with their money in the least painful and quickest way (hopefully on an ongoing basis). The sad stories range from ... "the mothers 3rd hip operation to the various family members with cancer or the need to procure another 3 cows for the family village in Java/Sumatra/Sulawesi/Lombok" . I've heard 'em all !

Tourists arrive with plenty of money to splash on holiday 'romances', and locals of both gender accumulate many needy and naïve western boyfriends/girlfriends dotted around the globe. This creates an unsavory climate of deceit, greed, jealousy and laziness. No different to any other 3rd world destination where the possibility of a life in the prosperous west is seen as the holy grail and wins huge kudos from peers.

At this stage I have exhausted my supply of stories but hopefully not the readers, and I'm sure even today an experience will happen to

make me wish I had waited to include in this tale. This is an organic memoir.

I have no regrets in moving here, and encourage others to take risks, as you will surely benefit from the experience.

To conclude in Indonesian, Balinese AND Aussie :

'Tidak Apa Apa' / 'Sing Ken Ken' / 'No worries mate !'

Written by AN EXPAT IN BALI

An expat in Bali was provided by one of the BGLBA members this writing is simply their view and not that of the BGLBA..

Light Humor

A guy goes to the Post Office to apply for a job.

The interviewer asks him, "Have you been in the service?"

Yes," he says. "I was in the armed forces for three years"

The interviewer says, "That will give you extra points toward employment" and then asks, "Are you disabled in any way?"

The guy says, "Yes, 100%. A mortar round exploded near me and blew my testicles off."

The interviewer tells the guy, "O.K. I can hire you right now. The hours are from 8:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. You can start tomorrow. Come in at 10:00 A.M."

The guy is puzzled and says, "If the hours are from 8:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M., then why do you want me to come in at 10:00 A.M. ?"

"This is a government job", the interviewer says. "For the first two hours we stand around scratching our balls. No point in you coming in for that."

Alcoholics Anonymous Bali

AA Bali holds regular meetings around the island if you think you need help or know someone who is in need, below is a list of locations and times of free meetings

Seminyak / "The Ruko"

JL. Dhyana Pura 103 (upstairs at Warung Kita) Monday - Sunday 09:00 Monday / Wednesday / Friday / Saturday 19:00 Bahasa Indonesia / Friday 17:30

Sanur

JL. Kesari, Villa Sari 2A Monday 18:00

Ubud

Casa Luna
JL. Raya Ubud (lower terrace)
Sunday & Thursday 19:00

Nusa Dua

Nusa Dua Beach Grill, Geger Beach
(park at Geger Temple)
Sunday 10:00

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Police	110
Fire	113
Ambulance	118
PLN	123
HIV/AIDS CENTER	163
OPERATOR	108
BALI TAXI	701 111
SANGLAH HOSPITAL	227 911
NGURAH RAI AIRPORT	751 011

OUT & ABOUT WHATS ON IN BALI IN

MIXWELL BAR AND LOUNGE
OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK
8PM TILL LATE

Q Bar & Kudos Bar & Lounge events for April

1st DIVA IN CONCERT (BEYONCE) @ Q Bar
2nd MOULIN ROUGE @ KUDOS
3rd CHICAGO @ KUDOS (with full cabaret show and go go dancers)
4th SHOWTIME @ KUDOS
5th SaturGAY NIGHT FEVER @ Q BAR
FASHIONISTA @ KUDOS (fashion show by best balis designer)
8th Q DIVA IDOL 4th Preliminary @ Q BAR
9th BOLYWOOD SHOW @ KUDOS
10th 2QT2BSTR8 @ KUDOS (with full cabaret show and go go boys)
11th SHOWTIME @ KUDOS
12th SATURDAY SESSION with Guest DJ GEORGIA
SaturGAY NIGHT **FEVER @ Q BAR**
13th SUNDAY CHILLOUT WITH 50% OFF for all cocktails @ KUDOS
15th 1st preliminary MISS Q BAR 2008
16th MOULIN ROUGE @ KUDOS
17th CHICAGO @ KUDOS (with full cabaret show and go go dancers)
18th SHOWTIME @ KUDOS
19th SaturGAY NIGHT FEVER @ Q BAR
FASHIONISTA @ KUDOS (fashion show by best balis designer)
22nd GONG SHOW (TALENT COMPETITION @ Q BAR)
23rd BOLYWOOD SHOW @ KUDOS
24th **SHOWTIME@KUDOS**
25th KUDOS MEMBERS PARTY # 3
26th KUDOS GRAND SLAM with guest dj ANASTASIA
SaturGAY NIGHT FEVER @ Q BAR
29th SUGAR BABE CONTEST @ Q BAR



OUR VERY OWN MEMBER PROGRAMME

HULU CAFÉ Drag Cabaret

1st Show 10pm
2nd Show 11:15pm
7 Days a Week

FOR SALE

3 storey house in Berawah! Stunning ocean views and mountain view from the rear of the house. Modern layout and finishing's, courtyard with a pool. Seminyak ten minutes away USD260,000 Phone Naja 0818 567 348.

Over purchased, various reclaimed old teak furniture & antiques ; dining tables, cupboards, coffee tables, daybeds, and benches. In perfect condition, newly-varnished and repaired. Price range between Rp. 750,000 to Rp. 4,500,000. Contact Sinta by phone at +628123947142

FOR RENT Amazing 2 bedroom villa, 200m to beach in Seminyak, close to Kudeta. Perfect for couples. Pool, maid, cook, big garden, satellite tv, greatest beds and all you need. Rates low season: US\$ 325.-High season: US\$ 395.- Peak season: US\$ 495.- Call Naja 0818 561 348.

Apartments for Sale in Managed complex Well located on the second & third floor with views over the swimming pool and gardens from the balcony beautifully decorated two large bedrooms with built in robes king size beds and big en-suite marble bathroom... large living area with marble floor, All furniture and accessories included attractive white kitchen Fully Airconditioned

Starting price US\$ 165,000 & US\$ 200,000
Please visit http://www.balifriendly.com/apartment_202 for more information.