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RISING STARS

For the uninitiated, those arriving for cocktails at the Swissotel The Stamford one recent evening would have felt like they were swept up in a sea of black. Over a thousand guests, mainly men in dark suits and bow ties and a sprinkling of women who also wore the dark hue of noir, gathered for the Entrepreneur of the Year Award 2003.

Organised by the Association of Small and Medium Enterprises (ASME) and the Rotary Club of Singapore, it is the 15th year in which an outstanding, successful and resilient business person has been recognised.

This year, there were 11 contenders for the honour, drawing from industries ranging from food management to air-conditioning manufacture to wall coverings. Two roses stood out among the thorns, so to speak. One was **Ponz Goo**, chief executive director of well-recognised brand and family-owned beauty and spa company, Haach. The other was **Jean Yip** of her eponymous hair and beauty salon with numerous outlets all over the island and Malaysia.

The rather intense and business-like atmosphere was broken by the bewitching and soulful vocals of international jazz star, **Laura Fygi** and an eight-course Chinese dinner menu that drew nods of approval, considering the feat of catering to a function of this size. The service, unfortunately, did not measure up according to some disgruntled guests but it was nothing a few more glasses of wine could not alleviate.

When the time of reckoning came, nominees for the award stood on stage before **Ricky Chew** of the popular Fish & Co restaurant chain was named Entrepreneur of the Year. The guest of honour was **Raymond Lim**, newly appointed Minister of State in charge of entrepreneurship, who is also Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and Trade and Industry.

Adding some colour to the evening with their gowned finery were Ponz's private cheer team and friends who included **Marvina Low**, **Tan Khar Nai**, **Frances Low** and **Jane Leong**. Spotted among the crowd were **Kurt Wee**, co-chairman of the Award's organising committee, **Kenny Yap** and **Freddy Soon**.



Left: Axton Salim, Elim Chew and Tommie Goh Right: Alson Teo and Evelyn Teo



Left: Dora Hoan and Jackson Liew Right: Ponz Goo

THE ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR 2003 – A ROTARY-ASME AWARD DINNER

VENUE: Raffles Ballroom, Swissotel The Stamford
MENU: Cold dish combination; hot and sour shark's fin soup served with deep-fried mini bun; pan-fried prawns with celery and cuttlefish; baked chicken with ginseng and Chinese herbs wrapped in lotus leaf; steamed malabar red snapper with crispy broad bean paste; baked pork ribs with sesame; braised ee-fu noodles with chives and mushrooms; chilled sea coconut with sago and melon
ENTERTAINMENT: International jazz vocalist Laura Fygi



Ong Joo Khoo