

MICAIP094/11/2009

URBAN



me & my muse

HOW ACTRESS
JESSECA LIU
INSPIRES DESIGNER
GOH LAI CHAN.
PLUS THE MUSES
BEHIND OTHER
LOCAL DESIGNERS

WIN!

BENEFIT HAMPERS
WORTH \$1,092

LAICHAN

STYLE
MUSE



Jesseca Liu wears a fuchsia gown by Laichan; Goh Lai Chan wears a sash from his own label; other garments and accessories are their own.

Photographer CHEW SENG KIM;
Stylist IAN LEE;
Hair ANTHONY TAM,
Kimrobinson Studio Singapore;
Make-up TERENCE NG,
Cle De Peau Beaute

Goh Lai Chan, 47

This veteran designer has been in the business since the 1980s but admits he has kept "a relatively low profile". His label, Laichan, is known for its figure-flattering cheongsam decorated with intricate trimmings and beading.

The designer also custom-makes evening and wedding gowns with fine fabrics like Italian silk and crepe. His off-the-rack cheongsam are available at the brand's Raffles Hotel boutique from \$700, while made-to-order pieces start from \$5,000.

Blueprint swings the designer into the spotlight with a collection inspired by "tradition in Asia and relaxed style".

While this is not his first foray into expanding overseas – he has sold to Japanese buyers before – the "concerted efforts by various industry players" convinced him Blueprint was a good showcase for his work.

He promises that his eight-piece Blueprint collection will feature "elements foreign buyers have not seen", including a juxtaposition of East-West influences and delicate handwork with precious materials like snakeskin and semi-precious stones.

What do you hope to achieve at Blueprint?

Introducing local designers to overseas buyers is essential for Singapore's fashion industry if designers here are to be known and respected beyond our shores.

What can buyers and the public expect from your Blueprint collection?

The clothes for my Blueprint collection have been fine-tuned for foreign buyers. They have access to all the famous labels, so they will be expecting something different here. I have used a lot of detailed handwork and embroidery, as well as delicate materials like snakeskin and French lace.

Why is Jesseca Liu your muse?

She is young and fun to work with and inspires me with her outlook.

She has gone through quite a bit in her career and has a melancholy which I find beautiful and inspiring. At the same time, she still manages to have a positive outlook and zest.

Jesseca Liu, 31

The actress, who has announced she will leave MediaCorp next month, was introduced to Goh by a former magazine editor and has since been hooked on his dresses. She will don one for the Star Awards ceremony this Sunday.

"I remember the first time I tried one of Lai Chan's designs – it was a cheongsam that made me feel not only beautiful on the outside but also confident on the inside," she tells Urban.

However, his talent as a designer is hardly the only thing she appreciates.

"We are friends and we can talk about anything from family to career issues."