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Power of pink

Local designers will
join forces with a
cosmetic company
to raise awareness
of, and funds for,
the fight against
breast cancer. >2-3



Think pink: Figure-hugging strapless gown
with fish-tail organza skirt, by Carven Ong.

Design with purpose

Estee Lauder's breast cancer awareness campaign will be a red-carpet event this year.

By RUBIN KHOO
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FASHION isn't necessarily frivolous. The fact that it cuts across boundaries makes it an effective tool for generating attention for issues.

This year, cosmetic company Estee Lauder has joined forces with local designers again to raise funds for the fight against breast cancer.

The month-long Estee Lauder Companies' Breast Cancer Awareness Campaign, which began on Oct 1, will culminate in a Breast Cancer Awareness Charity Gala Dinner 2007 on Nov 7. The evening's highlight will be the presentation of specially designed creations by some of Malaysia's top designers. These, together with memorabilia from Evelyn H. Lauder, Donna Karan and Sean John (Diddy), will be auctioned off during the night. Also up for grabs is a pair of couture shoes by Datuk Jimmy Choo, made exclusively for the occasion.

The event goes red carpet this time. "We normally have a high-tea but this year we are taking things to another level with the theme-inspired evening gowns," says Sharyn Wong, local chairperson of Estee Lauder Companies' Breast Cancer Awareness Committee 2007.

The designers - Ridzwan Bohari, Carven Ong, Datuk Tom Abang Saufi, Eric Choong, and Khoon Hooi - are long-time allies of Estee Lauder in their battle against the disease. They are free to



Coming up roses: Made of silk chiffon, this flowy gown by Eric Choong features lots of ribbons and hand-made roses.

interpret the theme in any way they wish as long as their designs are in pink.

Designers' choice

Ong, with his figure-hugging strapless gown that opens into a fish tail skirt, tips the femininity scale in his creation. His "couture style" evening gown is inspired by Victorian elements, with the design tailored to come across as "majestic".

"The bottom is organza and I used about 10 to 12 layers for the skirt," he says.

For the top, cut into an hour-glass silhouette, Ong used Thai silk embellished with heavy beading.

He didn't confine himself to pink but added ocean blue as well, to give his gown more colour.

"This is one of the ways in which I can contribute to the cause," explains Ong, who has been involved in the event over the past four years.

Eric Choong, also a regular, says he was inspired to do his bit for the fourth year by some of his customers who have been afflicted by the illness.

"Some of my friends and customers have cancer, and I have been through it with them," he says.

Among them was the late Datin Seri Endon Mahmood, whom he regards as an icon. "I want-

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ed to participate because of her," adds Choong, who designed an elegant garment from silk chiffon.

For his design, Choong looked to the virtues of the gentler sex for inspiration. "I believe women are soft and elegant," he says.

"The idea is that God created woman as a gift, so I used a lot of ribbons and hand-made roses on the outfit."

His concept goes beyond aesthetics and includes a symbolic message as well. The idea of opening gifts and discovering something within extends to his garment.

"I think you shouldn't lose confidence but be open and face it when you have the illness," he says.

The A-line gown, which is layered with lots of volume, is easy to wear and gives the wearer a sense of "freedom".

Ridzwan Bohari takes his cue from the colour



Elegant: Khoon Hooi's minimalist and streamlined gown for the auction.

pink, designing a gown "like the icing on a wedding cake".

The gown, from Ridzwan's spring/summer collection, is made of chiffon and embellished with pearls and crystals for the "icing" effect. Garlands of hand-painted roses give the creation a more interesting look.

Last year, Ridzwan's kaftan received the highest bid, contributing RM9,900 to the RM55,000 raised from The Pink Ribbon Charity High-Tea. Ridzwan hopes to do his bit for charity while driving home the point that breast cancer survivors can still look glamorous.

Khoon Hooi sticks to his minimalist style with a light pink gown speckled with details confined to the bust. The gown is enhanced with pleats around the



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waist which extends into a flowing skirt.

Datuk Tom Abang Saufi, on the other hand, uses contrasting shades of pink to make a bold statement with her design.

The committee is confident that the amount raised this year will surpass last year's. Bidding for the gowns and shoes

will start at RM2,500. Bidding for an autographed cookbook by Evelyn H. Lauder starts at RM150 while bidding for the memorabilia from Donna Karan and Sean John will begin at RM300.

Proceeds from the evening will go to the Breast Cancer Welfare Association (BCWA) to be used for free or subsidised mammogram screenings through the College of Radiology Malaysia and The National Cancer Society of Malaysia (NCSM).

The Estee Lauder companies began their campaign to raise awareness about breast cancer 15 years ago. This marks the 11th year of joint efforts in Malaysia.

Fragrant gift: Rapper Diddy's autographed fragrance (above).

Strut in style: A pair of shoes (left) designed by Datuk Jimmy Choo exclusively for the Breast Cancer Awareness Charity Gala Dinner 2007.



Bold: Datuk Tom Abang Saufi uses hues of pink in her design.



Icing on the cake: Ridzwan Bohari's chiffon creation is embellished with pearls and crystals for the "icing" effect.

