

# Dressing up Barbie for charity

**Q:** You will be designing a fashion piece to be worn by a Barbie doll and a model in conjunction with Barbie's 50th Anniversary Fashion Auction show. When were you first introduced to Barbie?

**A:** I first set my eyes on Barbie dolls in my cousins' house when I was a young boy. In the past, Barbie was more of a luxury toy and only the rich could afford them. Yet, I was interested in fashion design even as a child and each time I visited my cousins, I would take the opportunity to draw dresses for their Barbie dolls. The doll was my model and I loved Barbie so much that I wanted to have one of my own. But my mother told me that boys don't play with Barbie dolls so I never owned a Barbie.

**Q:** You must be honoured to be selected by Mattel to design a dress for Barbie. Is this your first time designing for them as a professional fashion designer?

**A:** About 10 years ago, 15 Malaysian fashion designers including me were selected to design dress-



**With ERIC CHOONG,  
One of five designers chosen  
for Barbie's 50th Anniversary  
Fashion Auction show**

es for Barbie. The dresses were later auctioned for a charitable cause and my dress was auctioned for RM5,000.

This year, five Malaysian fashion designers, Datuk Tom Abang Saufi, Melinda Looi, Datuk Lewre Lew, Khoon Hui and I were selected to design dresses for Barbie in conjunction with Barbie's 50th anniversary. I feel very honoured to be selected for the second time and I thank Mattel for the recognition.

In addition, the designers are also required to design two more life-sized dresses, which will be displayed at the House of Barbie in Shanghai, China,

together with dresses by world-renowned designer, Vera Wang.

**Q:** What is your design concept for Barbie's 50th anniversary?

**A:** I love vintage designs. Especially fashion pieces like those worn by Audrey Hepburn in *Breakfast at Tiffany's*. Hence, I will incorporate the vintage look into my Barbie design. The dress I'm designing will be red and will be embedded with black and silver Swarovski crystals on satin cloth. It will probably take me more than two months to complete the dress for the doll and the model.

**Q:** Which is your favourite Barbie look?

**A:** I was stunned when I visited Barbie's official website because there were hundreds of different styles. Each of the designs was beautiful but my favourites would be those with the vintage look.

**Q:** Where will Barbie's 50th Anniversary Fashion Auction show be

held and who will be the beneficiary of the auction?

**A:** The auction is an exclusive event and will be held at Pavilion tomorrow.

The Malaysian designers will channel the proceeds to their favourite charitable body. Proceeds from the sale of my dress will go to Kechara Soup Kitchen.

**Q:** What is the Kechara Soup Kitchen?

**A:** Kechara Soup Kitchen (KSK) is a non-governmental organisation which was formed in 2006. KSK volunteers provide food, drinks and basic medical assistance to the homeless and the poor in Kuala Lumpur regardless of race and religion.

KSK also provides skills training to them so that someday they will be able to contribute to the community.

I'm a member of the association and our objective is to build a shelter for the homeless.

For those who are interested to know more about the association, go to <http://www.kechara.com/ksk/>

— Interview by Sheila Sri Priya

Eric Choong showing a sketch of the dress he designed for Barbie's 50th anniversary.

