

Classic curves reign supreme

Eric Choong of Eric Choong Kuala Lumpur

Audrey Hepburn goes to China was probably what Eric Choong had in mind when he produced his Chinese New Year collection.

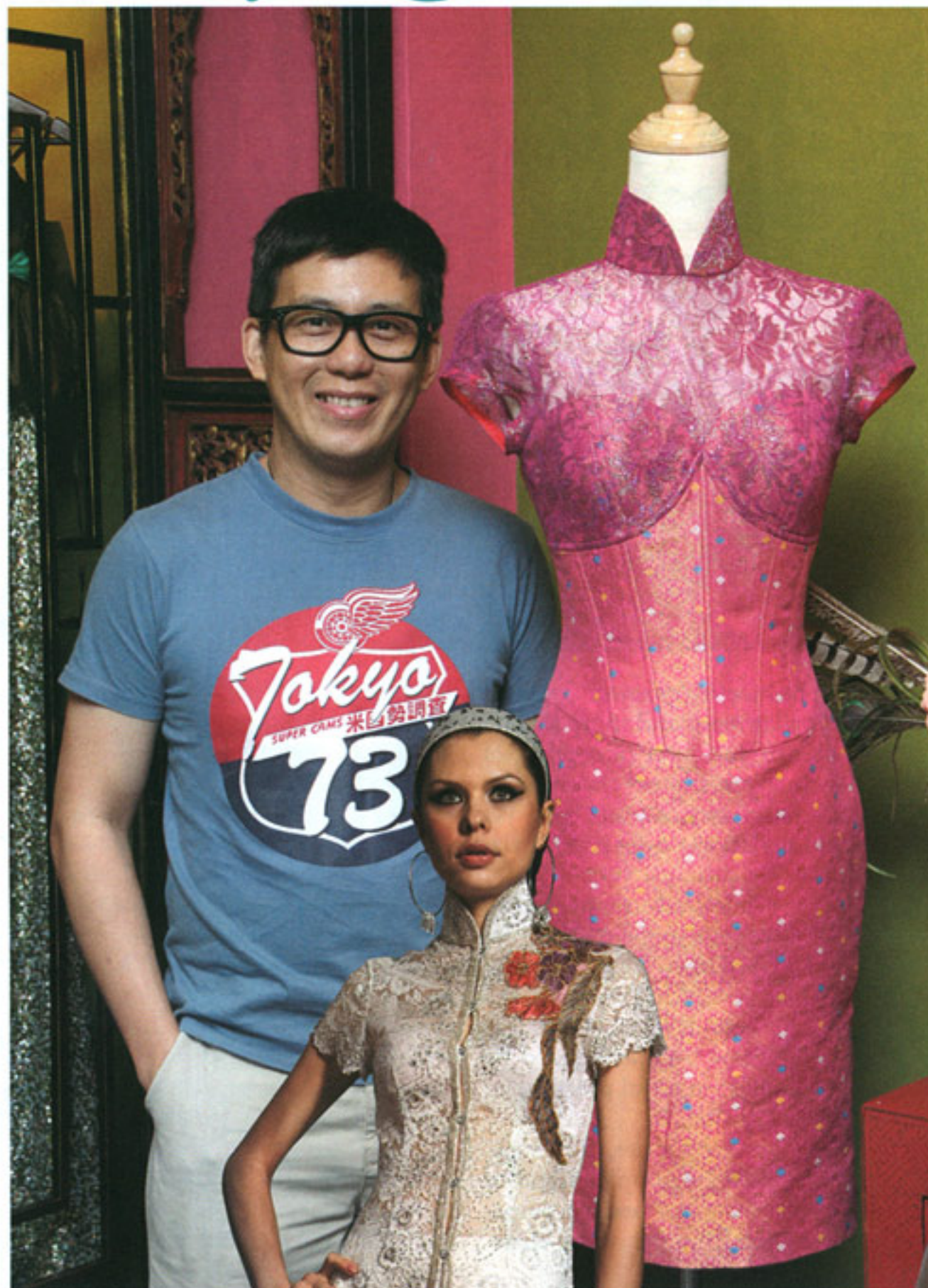
"As Chinese New Year is a traditional cultural celebration, cheongsams remain as a big trend." However, in Audrey Hepburn's case, the cheongsam moved with the times and followed international fashion trends.

Lace is a constant throughout his designs. Playing it upon a solid coloured inner structure, lace is then stitched on, giving it a peek-a-boo effect on the dress. The same treatment was also applied to cheongsams; giving it a demure, classic twist.

Choong said he uses different types of lace such as French and Italian lace, which are softer and less complicated. "I love doing layering in my designs as it creates a 3D effect. The key to using lace is to make sure the colours contrast each other," he explained.

While red remains an auspicious colour, some women keep away from wearing red for fear of looking like a fire cracker. "Asian women's skin tone are generally suitable to wear red compared to the western woman," said Choong, quashing once and for all the red dilemma.

As some might consider his choice of colours to be monotonous, he prefers to work with either one or two solid col-



ours before adding motives and embroidery to give his creation the pizzazz to shine.

For Choong, form follows function as his interpretation of a modern cheongsam has to be functional. "Nowadays, women are lazy to wear something that is difficult to put on. Traditional Shanghainese cheongsams feature a side button which starts from the neck down and usually have between 30 and 36 buttons."

Choong's cheongsams feature a zippered back which makes it easier for women to slip into something traditional, minus the hassle. While the

dominant features of a cheongsam include a mandarin collar, cap sleeve, and a body hugging silhouette, there are ways to keeping it fresh.

"There are various areas of a cheongsam we could modernise to keep it current. We can play with the buttons, adjust the sleeve, give it a flare skirt, try different fabric and even give it a bare back treatment," he said.

Alternatively, women looking for something more comfortable should consider wearing pants this coming lunar New Year.

"A

woman can pair their pants to a semi-fitted cheongsam top that is made from lace, or even pair black pants with a red cheongsam top."

For Choong, he stressed many times that women should feel comfortable in their dressing. "You need to carry the dress, and not the dress carry you!"

