

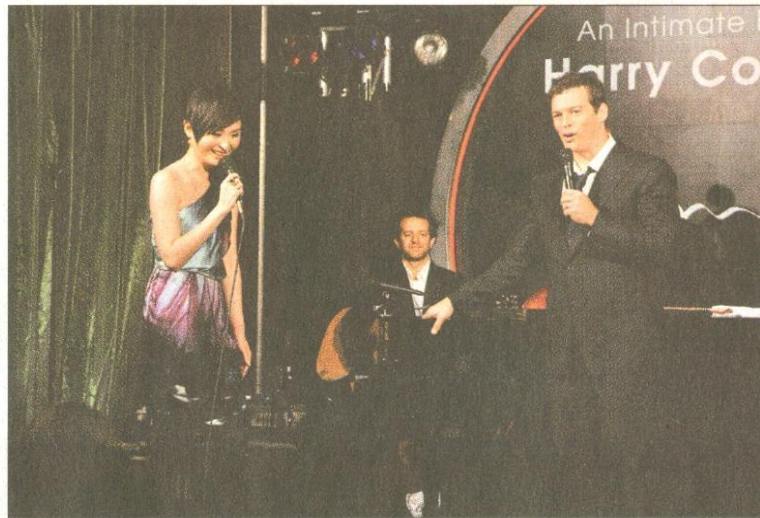


### Peta's faux pas on the faux fur

Animal rights militants in Peta (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) have had to backtrack from their finger-pointing. The group has been singling out stars and celebrities accused of wearing or using fur in public. Just last month, fashion designer William Tang Tat-chi was sent a note from Peta supporter Kim Basinger urging him not to use animal pelts in future collections. Mainland designer Luo Zheng received similar treatment.

Recently, Peta also accused singer Kelly Chen Wai-lam (pictured) of wearing fur onstage. "We had written to her about complaints we received from the public," a Peta representative said. Well, Chen responded right away that she only wore the fake stuff. "We heard back immediately from her office and learned that [Chen] only wears fake fur."

Acknowledging its mistake in chastising an innocent star, Peta then rushed off some flowers and a faux fur blanket to Chen and her baby boy Chace. The offering was accepted. However, Chen is not likely to give up her leather boots or steamed chicken.



### Too many questions for Harry Connick Jr

Old habits die hard. Janice Chan Pui-yee (left) might not be a Cable TV entertainment-news reporter anymore, but she certainly grilled Harry Connick Jr (right) like she still was one. As emcee of his CD showcase at MO Bar on Tuesday, Chan peppered the "N'awlins" singer with question after question, preventing him actually starting his set. After about 10 minutes, impatient fans were heard muttering, "Enough already, let him sing!" Even the laid-back performer got a little antsy. "I feel like I'm on one of those dating shows," he said after Chan finally realised she had "talked too much".

Chan did, however, get a reaction from a number of French guests who

tittered excitedly when she asked Connick about working with the French first lady, Carla Bruni-Sarkozy. "I was blown away by how talented she was," he replied. "And I got the added bonus of meeting the president. In the US, presidents don't just wander into recording studios. President Sarkozy escorted her and I was really impressed with his accessibility. He couldn't have been more accommodating."

Eventually, he got down to the music from his new album *Your Songs*, reworking numerous classics such as *All The Way*, *And I Love Her*, *Close To You* and *Mona Lisa* into jazzy ballads for a half-hour set.

### Oh, the dilemmas confronting the rich

"What is luxury?" Sonu Shivdasani (pictured below), the founder of Six Senses Resorts and Spas, asked on Tuesday night. Considering that he was standing in The Peninsula's garden suite, with three expensive 19th-century Impressionist paintings hanging on the wall, and about to make a sales pitch for some pricey private resorts in Thailand to an affluent crowd sipping champagne, that question is downright existential.

The Bangkok-based developer was in town to promote his (and his Swedish designer wife Eva's) private residences on a pristine island accessible only by a private plane 50 minutes from Bangkok called Soneva Kiri - about half of the 20 villas are apparently snapped up already by mega-rich buyers. However, as the environmentally and socially conscious resort builder suggests, living it up doesn't necessarily mean living large. "It's about intelligent luxury," Shivdasani preached. "It can come from different contexts. Even something as basic as fresh air is a luxury if you live in a big city."

We're not sure how many of the cocktail regulars were as interested in eco-organic-sustainable living as the idea of grabbing their own island paradise. As for the Edgar Degas, Camille Pissarro and Claude Monet paintings on display, they were on loan from Christie's ahead of its auction next month in New York. Oh, the dilemma: does one spend one's millions on a Six Senses villa or try to land the Monet under the hammer?



### Thursday Think Tank

Five things we're all wondering about

- 1 **Ugly mascots Dony and Ami fail to inspire East Asian Games spirit ...** organisers are now considering hiring some sexy "pseudo-mascots".
- 2 **Village chief lays soil and turf over dumped construction waste ...** it's the most blatant example of a cover-up we've ever seen.
- 3 **A 40-storey Conduit Road building offers a flat on 66th floor ...** they need something to justify the sky-high prices.
- 4 **A 16-year-old is arrested for captaining a sampan full of illegal immigrants ...** vulnerable young people should stick to normal jobs like selling pirated DVDs.
- 5 **New marathon route to ease strain on runners ...** hello, it's a marathon. It's supposed to be difficult.