



*Hi!*  
**Society**  
SAN FRANCISCO  
By MONET LU

# La Greta: Irresistibly complicated

When it comes to glamor, sophistication and class, one Philippine showbiz personality distinctly glitters. Gretchen Barretto sparkles in an unparalleled way. She's intriguing, beautiful, volatile and as her latest album would profess, complicated.

I met Gretchen many moons ago during her first few trips to the US. She was young, fresh and so very delightfully *kikay*. She is super *makuwento* and just interesting to be around. I remember it was around that time when she was trying to get over a break-up with a showbiz boyfriend. It was also a time when she was just getting to know her current partner, billionaire Tonyboy Cojuangco.

With our common friend Mary Ann Pimenta, I've produced shows involving Gretchen here in the US, including *Reflections 4*, where she flew to LA unexpectedly at the last minute to model a bridal masterpiece by Louie Mamengo while being escorted by Richard Gomez.

It was in one particular project that we had a disagreement—very typical of a star-producer relationship. I guess it was serious enough to create a falling out and we never saw or spoke to each other for a long time after that incident.

From then on, I would just see her on TFC giving interviews about her controversial life. We weren't on friendly terms but I was still enthralled by the very candid and public Gretchen Barretto we all have come to know and love.

About two years ago, while vacationing in Manila, our friend Mary Ann invited me to lunch. Mary Ann said Gretchen was going to be there and that she wanted to see me.

Upon arriving at the restaurant, Gretchen was so welcoming and sweet to me. She even said *hindi nya matandaan na nag-away kami*. I still had the fragments of the argument stored in my

head but to Gretchen, that chapter was bygone.

That's when I realized, Gretchen is the type of person *na hindi nagtatanim ng sama ng loob*.

She knows how to forgive and forget.

Instantly, I felt very relieved. In no time, we were catching up just like old times. As usual, she was still as *makuwento* and *kikay* as ever.

The Gretchen that you see on TV being hunted by controversies isn't necessarily the same Gretchen that you will see in a private setting, when she knows she's just surrounded by close friends.

We have to admit, whenever Gretchen talks, everybody drops what they're doing to take a listen.

With all her risqué quotable quotes, she entertains, she sparks reactions and emotions from her public.

Hailed as one of the most beautiful faces in Philippine movies, Gretchen draws admiring stares wherever she goes.

She is an effortless fashionista. You can see it in her understated fashion and natural but elegant simplicity.

She started out as a movie actress, having starred in blockbuster movies with her contemporaries in late 80s and 90s.

Gretchen has since ventured into recording albums. Her first record titled *Unexpected* was certified Platinum.

Her latest album is aptly named *Complicated*. In her albums, she shares songs that tickle her heart and soul.

In them, she bears her passion, sentimentality and essence as a woman and an artist.

This is the Gretchen I know—passionate and expressive. I also know her to be resilient in the face of challenges.

To me, Gretchen possesses the stuff legends are made of.

To La Greta—enjoy life, enjoy love!



\*\*\*

LA-based celebrity stylist Monet Lu was born in Marikina, Philippines. In the 80s, Monet left a thriving salon chain business in his hometown to migrate to the US. He had the vision to recreate his success in the US by building a beauty business that served the needs of Filipino Americans. Currently, Monet is the proud owner of four salons with branches in Van Nuys CA, Panorama City CA, Los Angeles CA and Las Vega NV. He has since branched out to event productions through his events and marketing company, Events Specialists International, producer of the longest-running [20 years!] and most prestigious Filipino-American awards/fashion show in SoCal. In 2006, Monet kicked off another passion to develop his own line of all-natural, beauty care products, Skin By Monet.

Monet is also a humanitarian and has supported many charitable organizations such as the Marikina Revitalization Project, AIDS Center in Pasadena, Alab Ng Puso, Every Nation Ministries, Gawad Kalinga, Bantay Bata 163, and many more. To contact Monet, please visit his site: [www.monetsalon.com](http://www.monetsalon.com).

## Cherie Gil: Versatile Actress



Actress Cherie Gil again proved her talent and versatility when she played the role of Amanda, in the Carlo Caparas' *komiks* series turned *teleserye*, *Pieta* which was shown over The Filipino Channel (TFC). Cherie as the colorful character of a mother to Ryan Agoncillo's role as Rigor, ended the series with a hold-your-breath and non-formulaic climatic scene as she witnessed her son being murdered by his father.

Although people thought that Cherie was too sophisticated to portray the role of the impoverished mother of Rigor, her passion to perfect the character defied expectations and has further risen her level as an actress.

## TAKE FIVE

By MARINEL CRUZ  
*Inquirer.net*

### Behind the 'Miracle Boy'

These days, it's not unusual for child actor Zaijian Jaranilla to meet people who ask him to cure their illnesses with one touch.

The 7-year-old plays Santino, who has the ability to heal the sick and the disabled in the Kapamilya drama series, *May Bukas Pa*.

Santino is an orphan raised by a priest in a monastery in the fictional town Bagong Pag-asa. He finds a friend in the person of "Bro" (Jesus Christ), who helps him change the townsfolk's lives.

Zaijian finished first grade at the General Roxas Elementary School in Quezon City. He first appeared in commercials for McDonald's, Lactum and Tide. ABS-CBN bosses spotted him in an acting workshop and asked him to join the kiddie gag show *Goin' Bulilit*.

Following are excerpts of a recent chat with Zaijian.

Are you aware that you're famous?

Hindi naman po masyado.

How can you tell that you're already popular?

Sasabihin po ni Papa sa akin.

How did *May Bukas Pa* change your life?

Hindi na po ako nakakapunta sa malls. Hindi na rin po ako nakakapaglaro.

At school, do people get excited to see you?

Minsan po. Minsan lang po kasi ako pumasok.



What's your favorite subject?

English.

When people get excited and try to kiss you or pinch you, do you get angry?

Hindi naman po. Nagsasabi lang po ako ng aray.

You're turning 8 on Aug. 23. What's your birthday wish?

Toys po.

You were just 5 years old when your parents separated. How often do you see your mom?

Minsan lang po. Kapag Linggo, sa taping pumupunta po si Mama.

Do you have siblings?

Panganay po ako. Ang mga kapatid ko po sina Zindjan (6) and Zynez (5)

Don't you feel bad that you don't have time for play anymore?

Minsan nakakapasyal din naman po ako. Dun sa SM North Edsa kapag may taping po. ■

**IT'S MUSIC HISTORY...  
BE THERE WHEN IT HAPPENS!!!**

MEET THE DIVAS AT  
**SEAFOOD CITY  
MARKETPLACE IN  
SACRAMENTO  
FRIDAY, MAY 22  
5:30 - 6:30PM**

**Caselin Productions & Filipinas Productions**  
presents  
**DIVAS 4 DIVAS**

**KUH ZSA ZSA POPS & REGINE**

**Bob Hope Theatre**  
**Sunday, May 24, 2009 7:00 PM**  
Stockton, Filipinas 209-832-0027

Vallejo - Cecille Azarcon, 707-645-1098 • Daly City - Bernie Miranda, 650-278-2326  
Union City - Pia Pena, 510-499-5340 • Bob Hope Theatre Ticket Office (209) 337-4673  
Ticket prices: VIP, \$108, \$78, \$68, \$58, \$48

ABSCBN TFC, GMA, CYP, HACIENDA SABELLA, GURFINKEL LAW OFFICES, ASIAN JOURNAL, TANGINCO LAW OFFICES

TELL ALL YOUR FRIENDS ABOUT THIS AMAZING EVENT!  
VISIT US ONLINE AT [www.divas4divas.com](http://www.divas4divas.com)