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Living her truth

► Hanli Hoefer speaks about her latest podcast, *Just So We're Clear*

BY JOHN TAN

HANLI HOEFER has done it all. From hosting some of the biggest music events in Asia to gracing the covers of prominent fashion magazines, Hanli has successfully made a mark for herself in the entertainment scene. And she has done it the old fashion way – by always speaking her truth.

Born and raised in Singapore, this Eurasian beauty first launched her professional career after landing her first major gig with MTV Asia. Working as a TV presenter, Hanli hosted many of the channel's iconic shows, including the highly popular *The MTV Show*.

The fan favourite segment saw her interviewing celebrities and covering numerous music events. With that amount of accomplishment, one can only wonder if she was ever paralysed by fear during her pursuit of realising her goals.

"The nerves were good. It did not deter me from pursuing my career and taking on challenges. If anything, the nerves were a motivator that pushed me to expand."

From the looks of it, she has been doing an excellent job capitalising on her fears. In fact, she shows no signs of slowing down despite the current circumstances. Now, she returns with her latest podcast, *Just So We're Clear* where she and her close friend, Marissa Trew discusses issues and topics that affect the modern woman in this contemporary time.

What is your take on the quest to be perfect?
I reject any notion of perfection because it does not exist and I am not even trying to do that. I think the biggest compliment that anyone could give me is that I am the same in person as I am online. That is because I value authenticity and to me, it means being open, vulnerable and brave. To show sides of you that are not

necessarily the perfect contour side. It is being honest about being human and I think people relate to that.

How have things been for you with the current circumstances?

I think it has been tough for all of us. Last year was a good time for us to work on our mental health. For me, I have been journaling, working with my therapist and looking for communities where I can express my honesty. I want to surround myself with people whom I feel safe to express my truth around.

I think this is so important, especially since we were not taught to do that. Hence, I think it is our responsibility to start changing that culture for ourselves. And it starts with our friends. As for me, I am now way more interested to find out what my friends are really going through, instead of indulging in small talk.

Was this the inspiration for *Just So We're Clear*?

I think it was a combination of things. Well, we do touch on mental health and we are also very vulnerable and open in it. But we started it because of our (my co-founder and I) love for podcasts.

So, we thought of creating one since we have a lot to offer in terms of sharing our opinions, journeys and the lessons we learnt from our careers. Our numbers have been growing and our followers have been loyal. So it is great!

Do you have anyone in mind whom you would like to interview?

There are so many people we would like to interview. For now, we are focusing on individuals from Singapore. But we are looking to branch out and start



Hanli started her podcast, *Just So We're Clear*, with her good friend, Marissa Trew. — PHOTO COURTESY OF MARTIN YEOH

interviewing people from our neighbouring countries like Malaysia. We do feel like we are an Asian voice and we would like to connect with our fellow Asians.

Do you have a favourite episode?

I think one of my favourite episodes would be the one with Alan Wong. He is one of my closest friends and was my co-host on MTV. That episode with him was so great because it was so natural and informative. We basically asked him what it was about

being a woman that he as a man thinks is great.

How do you think youths can use social platforms to improve mental health?

Set boundaries. I think you can curate your feed to be one that motivates you. One of my favourite quotes is: "Comparison is the thief of joy", by Theodore Roosevelt. I think it best describes what social media does. No one is exempted, even me, because I think it is only human to start comparing your life with others.

Hence, I think that we need to practise setting boundaries, so that we do not compare ourselves on social media. And we need to surround ourselves even online with content that is authentic and real.



Hanli (left) during her modelling days. — PHOTO COURTESY OF KELVIN KOH