**Topic**

Jeri Chua ( Jeradine Collett )-The ”Devil’ Wears Prada & Salomon

**Special Features**

1 Attractive appearance both in and off trails.

2 A ferocious veteran in trail running and road running races, probably the most famous Chinese-related female runner in the world: UTMB, TDG, HK4UTC. (The first Chinese-related female runner in Full-course UTMB and TDG)

3 An elegant figure in fashion and life-style media in the Southeast Asia: Robb Report, Citizen K, who always works under great pressure and limited deadline.

*Profession:*

*-Group Fashion Director for Robb Report and the Luxury Guide (Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia & Vietnam)*

*-Editor in Chief of Citizen K Vietnam*

4 Kind, Calm and brave. Trying to save Yuan YANG in 2013 TDG, despite of putting herself in dangerous and extreme situation.

5 Running with the most competitive Chinese female trail runner Junyan LIU in 2011 TNF100 SINGAPORE.

**Questions:**

**1 From the traditional opinion, ultramarathon and fashion seem to be 2 irrelevant and totally isolated areas. People who do not know your story tend to be unable to image your amazing story, and it just like there are 2 different Jeradines out there respectively. Why do you love running, especially ultra-trail running, even with competitive style? How and when did you begin running, since childhood, or after working as an editor for a long time?**

I grew up in a creative environment, my mother was a fashion designer and as children we were always encouraged to think outside the box, to be creative and spontaneous. My father was a sportsman, he  coached a local football team, excelled at sprint distance races and used to take me out fishing in his small rowboat. I suppose I had quite an active childhood with dad's influence, we were always cycling, swimming or just playing outdoors in general.

I didn't start trail running till 2009, before I'd been a triathlete and it was only road events, nothing off road. I ran a little when I was in school, but I wasn't particularly fast or interested in running itself. After doing triathlons for a few years (started in 1994), I progressed to ironman distance in 1998 and continued racing triathlons till about 2001. I moved to the UK to study at the same time and stayed to work there, and I didn't like swimming or cycling in the cold. I took a break from sport (2003-2009) and joined my local running club (St Austell Running Club in Cornwall) in 2009. With them I had a great introduction to the beautiful trails and coastal paths in South-West England, and did my first ultra there - the 2009 44mile Classic Quarter by Endurancelife.

I loved this new version of running, for me the multi-sensory requirements of being on the trail, thinking about where you place your feet, nature all around and the challenges of the terrain were so different to the monotony of road running that I'd been used to. Also the camaraderie from the trail community was so welcoming, just like in triathlon when I started, people are friendly and generous with time and advice, and it makes for a great day out. Since I've always preferred the longer distances, trail ultra marathons really appealed to me.

**2 Would you like to share some impressive and interesting stories in your early years in sports and outdoor activities? What is the most important benefit of running for you, in physical or mental aspect? Do you think you are “lucky enough” to be free from the influence of traditional and conservative role of female in eastern culture?**

I've been very fortunate to have met some inspiring people all along the way since I started in sport. They've motivated me and helped me achieve my sporting goals. I wanted to do ironman Hawaii as it was the holy grail of triathlon at the time, I had a lot of help with training and sponsorship to achieve that dream. I did my first ironman in New Zealand in March 1998, and won my age group to qualify for Kona that year. It was also the first time I'd run a marathon! And so Kona was my second ironman, not my best result but certainly an amazing experience. I remember looking at someone in the bike in front of me, thinking 'how can he cycle leaning to the side like that?' The crosswinds were so strong that we were all biking at an angle.

When I started trail ultras, UTMB was my goal. I didn't know much about it, just had the idea that it was the ultramarathon equivalent of doing Ironman Hawaii. So I did my first 100k and my first 100 miler in 2010 to get the points and did UTMB the following year. I learnt so much from those races, it's so funny to look back and see all the rookie mistakes, but I had such great fun racing and making friends all along the way.

For TDG, it was a funny introduction. We were out kitesurfing and an Italian kitesurfer who lived in Courmayeur told me about the race. And I remember he said "You cannot do this!" He didn't mean that I wasn't capable, it was just a language nuance. At the time I thought it was crazy, but then it got under my skin and before I knew it, I'd signed up and was crossing my fingers for the lottery.

To date, that's the hardest event I've done, and it's just reinforced how important the mental aspect of ultrarunning is. The mental strategies that have evolved from all the races I've done and TDG in particular are invaluable. Physical fitness is important, but without the mental strength, giving up is a tempting option at every turn.

My parents always encouraged us (I have 3 younger sisters) to venture out, explore, to follow our hearts, with the assurance that family would always be there to support and back us up. That and to have faith. I'm not the best at going to church regularly (races are almost always on Sundays!), but I've learnt that God really does send his angels to guide and protect, even in the most unlikely forms. The traditional and conservative ideal of an eastern woman is far less entrenched in Singapore where I grew up, than I imagine it is in China. So I grew up thinking I could do anything I put my mind to, being female wasn't a hindrance.

**3 Can you speak, or even write Chinese? Have you ever been to mainland China for business trip with a little run or racing? Which race(s) do you like the most in China? Why?**

Yes, I can speak and write simplified Chinese, I did have to learn the language in school. But years of no practice have left my language skills a little rusty and while I can get by with the basics, I'll need a lot more practice before I'm speaking it comfortably.

I've been to Bei Dai He for an Asian Cup triathlon before, but haven't raced in China yet for trail ultras yet. Perhaps TNF China one day, I need to find out more about races in China, I'm sure there are some beautiful locations to run.

**4 Please tell us about your most unforgettable, most delight and most painful memories in ultramarathon, and the details about saving YANG in 2013 TDG. In China, the whole running community held memorials to moan his death and raised money for his old parents.**

I didn't save Yang Yuan, and I'm really sorry I could not do more. I was insistent that the New Paper report should not sensationalise the incident but unfortunately it's those headlines that sell better.

It was rough weather that night and I'd just made it to the top of Col du Crosatie. Giving up was definitely a strong temptation having to negotiate the slippery wet rock, cold rain and howling winds in the dark. Once over the top, the wind wasn't as harsh and I started to run down the mountain. I caught up to Yang in front and he was about ten feet away when he took a step to the left off the trail and slid down the cliff. We were the only one around at the time and I was shouting and ran to the edge to check, hoping he was ok. It was a steep grassy bank, and my head torch showed nothing but a pair of poles and a hat in the grass. Still shouting for him, I carefully go down to where his poles are. I can't go any further, it's a sharp drop down to the rocks. With my headlamp I can see he's lying on the rocks and not moving. I'm shouting at him, shouting for help, and I picked up his poles thinking he would need them.

I run down the trail as fast as I can to get closer to where he is. I pass four or five runners who are moving in a train with their hands in the shoulders of the person in front. Probably because of the rain, dark and slippery terrain, a safer way of descending.

I shout to them and ask for help. Language is a problem but Ben BA is the last person in the train and he comes with me. I think an Italian runner also comes. By now I can see that one runner who was further down has managed to get to Yang. He's off the trail by about 60m so not easy to spot.

When we get to him, the first guy there says he will go for help. So then there are 3 of us with Yang. We cover him in survival blankets and try to call the emergency number. Only my phone has a signal and the Italian guy makes the call. We cannot move him and he's still alive so I talk to him and try to comfort him. It's so cold and wet and dark, I was really worried about his condition. Blood was everywhere, from a head wound, and he was lying in an awkward position. The other two men left soon after as they were really freezing. I tell them to get help. I'm fortunate that I wasn't cold yet so I wait with Yang for help to come. I realised he was Chinese and tried my best to keep him awake, asking questions and trying to be reassuring. He was moaning in Chinese, saying it was very painful and he needed help. It felt like I waited for a long time (maybe 30 mins?) so I started blowing my whistle and waving my poles. No one on the trail really noticed because I was so far away, and the wind was blowing my whistle sounds in the wrong direction. Finally two people came and one, an Italian named Andrea, stayed with me. Together we both waited for help to come and tried to keep him awake.

We must have waited another 40-50 minutes, finally two men came and we put yang in an insulated bag to keep him warm and carried him to a small tent they set up. When we moved him, he could move his neck and that gave me hope that his injuries weren't too bad. I didn't know what to think about continuing the race. I was just really praying hard that he would be ok. We were told we could leave so Andrea and I made out way down the mountain to the next timecheck point. In the way down, we met the doctor and a couple of paramedics hiking up. I guess the weather was so bad and in the night it wasn't possible for a helicopter rescue. It would have been about 2h from when I saw him fall.

I didn't know how to deal with this so I just kept going. The next day I was told he'd passed away and it was a real blow. But it's a risk we all take in these events and at least he was doing something he loved. It was an unfortunate accident, the fatigue, weather and dark all worked against him, and I'm truly sad about how it all turned out.

**5 Do you think that you are a little special among your colleagues and family members just because you are so dedicate to running? When you talk about your running to your clients, how do their respond? Have you ever persuade any of your close friends, relatives or clients starting running and keeping it as a routine of fitness improvement?**

Not special, maybe just a bit crazier than the rest of my friends and family, but we all tend to go the extra mile for our passions. :)

My friends and colleagues in the fashion industry think I'm a little mad ... I know some who exercise regularly, but most of them don't. Some have started running and a few do longer distances, but most can't really imagine what I do. But it's all relative. If they don't run, then their first 5km will seem like a marathon. More people I know have started running, which is great to see.

I've met people at races who tell me that my blog ([Fatbirdgoesultra.blogspot.com](http://Fatbirdgoesultra.blogspot.com)) has inspired them to try their first ultra, and it really makes me happy that I can motivate people to challenge themselves.

**6 It seems that you often go to Hong Kong for trail running and you are familiar with local runners such as Janet NG and Nura SENN. You go there just for running or have to run in your spare time on a business trip? What is the atmosphere of trail running community in HK in your mind?**

I know Janet and Nora well, they're good friends. I used to go to HK to train as the terrain there was much better for the events I had planned than in Singapore where it's flat. I've now moved to HK as of November 2014, and super excited about having the trails in my backyard!

There are some excellent trail runners in Hk, and a really lovely community of great people. I'm looking forward to learning from them how to conquer the mountains!

7 How do you cope with the difficult in ultramarathon like extreme fatigue and long-time sleep deprivation? And how do you balance family commitment, job, running and recovery?

Fatigue and sleep deprivation are friends of mine! With my job in the last couple of years, I average 4h sleep a night and it's not the best for recovery but it does help a little when battling sleep deprivation. I don't normally take caffeine or coffee, so coca cola does help wake me up. If I can, a quick power nap of 30-60 mins can help refresh your mind. I also have dried salted plums which are so sour that they wake me up .. also good for nausea. I guess you just keep going. And learn to recognise when it might be too dangerous to continue, and when you need a quick rest in order to carry on. I don't like stopping, but I've learnt that a short stop can save a lot of time later on.

The balance has been off the last year or two for me. I've now resigned from my full time job and will go freelance this year. I had to cancel many of my races last year and that's not the way I want to live my life. My boyfriend and family are very understanding, and I'm learning to make more time for them as well. Recovery is something that I have to work harder on. Training for ultras and having a full-time job in media doesn't allow much time for sleep!

8 Chinese runners Daqing WANG, Shuwen CHEN and Huafeng ZENG also finished the 2013 TDG, do you know them and some Chinese races? And which race in mainland China do you want to take part in the most, TNF100BEIJING, DALIAN100km or others?

I met Wang Daqing and Chen Shuwen in 2013 at TDG. I don't know much about races in China but now I'm in HK, I will start exploring races close by.

**9 As we know, female runners take a growing part of all races, what is your opinion on the increasing female ultramarathoners? Is it a fashionable life style with attraction for modern women with good educational background and economic conditions, as well as ambition in their job career?**

I think it's great that more women are doing ultras. We're physically predisposed to endurance events, more tolerant and larger fat stores, etc. I would like to see women being more supportive of each other though. Male racers are less covertly competitive, it's all out in the open and everyone is good friends till the gun goes off. Even then it's all very good natured banter.

The women are equally competitive, but less open about it, and I think that is holding us back from being better and faster than we are now. Everyone keeps to themselves and eyes up the competition behind their sunglasses. It's definite intimidating. If we worked together like the men, ran together rather than trying to run alone, we'd probably be stronger for it. And there might be much better race times. Women need to learn to support each other. It's such a competitive society out there for successful women that no one really wants to share their secrets. But if we do, we empower each other. If you have the better skill or talent, you're going to win anyway, why not share what you know so others can improve? I'm not saying this is what all women do, but far too many of us, myself included, are guilty of it. There are some great women in sport who are putting a lot into helping other women succeed, so I hope there will be more in future!

**10 Can you talk about the fashion of running shoes and gears and some future modification from aesthetics consideration?**

I like the fact that running shoes and apparel are becoming more attractive. Before, fashion and function in sport didn't really mix, you were considered as 'not taking the sport seriously' if you had something that looked a bit fancy. But with more women in the sport, it's great that we have kit that makes us look good .. the self-esteem factor plays a part in making us feel good too. And that's a definite bonus when you're struggling with your demons in an ultra.

11 Does running bring you inspiration in working? Can you tell us an example? Or others may feel hard to connect your running in mud and dirt with your magazines like Robb Report/Citizen K targeting traditional middle-class and high net worth individuals.

Running balances me. Dealing with luxury and HNIs can give you a skewed perspective, and running takes Hingis back to basics to ground me again. A lot of HNIs do ultras, partly because they relish the challenge, and they seek something outside of the material life they have. For me running clears my mind so I can be inspired to provide a fresh perspective in my job. Luxury and ultrarunning don't need to be exclusive. It's an appreciation for another kind of luxury - the luxury of personal space and time. Time to do something for yourself that money can't really buy.

**12 In mainland China, the leading media in fashion and life style area, the TREND, which is also the publisher of Robb Report (China) also pay more attention on fitness and sports like running and body building, and even organized/sponsored some events like Niba Race(Chnese version of Spartan race or Tough Mudder) and COOLGUY from coverage of the lifestyle of the so-called wealthy elites, What is your opinion on this shift?**

As with my earlier answer, HNIs have achieved material success and look for greater challenges in life. For example, the 4 Deserts races. These are multi-day challenges that are quite costly, but attract an audience of affluent, established individuals because it offers a challenge on a personal, physical and perhaps spiritual level.

**13 Besides the Jeradine “Wild and Tough” in trails the Jeradine “elegant and fashion” in job, what does the Jeridine in ordinary life look like? Can you tell us your hobbies other than running?**

I'm quite a boring person, really. I don't party much and I love baking. I react badly to gluten, eggs and dairy, so baking has become quite an exciting challenge, to make my favourite cakes and cookies without wheat flour, eggs or butter is a work in progress. And reading! I love reading, escaping into a story. Although I haven't had much time for either in the last few years. Kitesurfing, rollerblading and skiing are some favourite activities when I'm not running, but again, they've been neglected in the last few years.

**14 What is your plan for race in 2015, and how will you ran these races, recreationally, or still competitively?**

This year I'm hoping to get back into running more. I have some race planned,Translantau 100km, the Anzac Ultra and Trans Rockies Run6 which I missed last year. There will probably be a few others in between. I'm competitive by nature, but it will be a personal challenge rather than a race for podium given my speed is certainly not on par with the pointy end of the field!

I had hoped to complete HK4TUC this year, but a fall that required 4 stitches a few weeks prior to the event out paid to that. I have a patellar contusion (bruised knee bone) and it will heal but may take some time. Apparently climbing and descending is not advised ...

**15 Can you share some experiences about protecting skin from sunburn and wound, particularly in face, neck and forearm in trail running, many female runners are about to stand on the starting line but still worrying about these risks.**

I use Physical Fusion from Skinceuticals as its light and they have sample sized tubes that I can carry in my pack for long races. This is better for races in a hot climate. For cold races, I like Kiehl's Cross-Terrain UV Skin Protector. These are both SPF50 and seem to do the job well. I don't always remember to reapply and sometimes get burnt, but if you wear a light layer of clothing for protection that should help prevent sunburn.

**16 What do you like to share with Chinese readers like Mr. ZHAUNG and Ms. LIU, such as some mottos, race info in south-east Asia area are and Hong Kong like HK4UTC,etc.**

I remember running with Junyan Liu. That was my first 100km at TNF100 Singapore,but she was very strong and I couldn't keep up the pace!

Mottos - relentless forward motion. Each step forward is a step closer, so I'd rather be moving forwards than back.

Also, it really is all about the journey. I've have several DNFs now for various reasons, but each time I learn so much that I can apply to my next event to finish successfully.

There are so many races in South East Asia now, it's great to see. I help to organize the Vietnam Mountain Marathon so naturally I'd give that a shameless plug! :)

The HK4TUC is definitely on my bucket list ... 2016!

**17 What is your routine training plan in a week on average to keep fitness and endurance? For instance, total mileage, frequency and content of strength/flexibility training?**

My training schedule varies a lot due to my work - I travel a great deal and I don't get as much training in as I would prefer. On average i will train 4-5 times a week, with one or two longer runs where I can manage. The other sessions are usually hill repeats or a tempo run. Andy Dubois from Mile27 does my training program as I find it saves me time trying to work out what I should do each week to fit my ever-changing schedule. I try to get some strength and flexibility sessions in during the week, but mostly I run out of time after a run and don't end up doing any stretching. Not advisable and unfortunately i don't always practise what I preach!

**18 Do you think involvement in adventure sports like ultra-running and skiing is a kind of new fashion and pro-active life-style for females with good economic conditions and solid background of education?**

Sports like ultra-running and skiing have come to the forefront due to better marketing and publicity, thus more women are getting into these sports. The type of woman who participates is more defined by personality rather than financial and educational status. Empowered, strong, confident women, ones who are looking for a personal challenge, to push their limits and who aren't bound by societal stereotypes. Of course this is a general observation, there is a who cross-section of women who do these sports, and I hope there will be more!

**19 Did your family members cheered for you at the spot during race? What did you feel on seeing them during the race?**

I very rarely do races where I have a support crew or family cheering me on. I've always preferred to go on my own steam. At TDG I was very fortunate to have a friend, Steve Organ, who decided to follow the race and crew for me. He'd just done the TDS in Chamonix and came to watch the start of TDG. He decided to meet me at the first checkpoint and elected to support for the rest of the race. It was totally unplanned and unexpected, but I could not have done it without his help. I have a new respect for pacers and support crew.

I know my family are cheering me on wherever I race in the world. Facebook has been a great help in letting my parents know what I'm up to when I'm racing if I can't message them. :)

***Appendix：***

***Triathlon & Ultramarathon Racing CV***

Results, records, achievements:

Sporting achievements:

1993 to 1998 : Singapore National Triathlon Team

Represented Singapore in Triathlon at Asian Cup and Asian Championship events as well as other regional events.

Previously endorsed by Adidas, Oakley and Timex.

1998: Winner of age-group at Ironman New Zealand, qualified for 1998 Ironman World Championships in Hawaii. First Singaporean to qualify (all previous competitors entered through a ballot system), first Singaporean woman to race at Hawaii.

1999: Ironman Austria (Personal best: 11:58:12, 7th age group placing)

2002: Ironman Malaysia

Relocated to England in 1998.

Competed in some races but mainly took a break from racing Ironman Distance triathlon to explore other sports.

Won and had podium finishes at local triathlons and road races.

2000 Fowey Triathlon - Ladies winner

2001 Mevagissey Triathlon - Ladies winner

2003 Charlestown Triathlon 2nd place

2000 Perranporth Triathlon - top 5 placing

2008 to March 2010: Raced with St Austell Running Club.

Mostly podium finishes for various road and trail races for individual and group placings.

2009: Classic Quarter Ultramarathon (44 miles, 75km)

Ladies 5th place

April 2010: Relocated to Singapore

Passion run (25k) - 3rd place

Sundown Half Marathon (21km) - 5th place

(also ran the full marathon at midnight)

Shape run (10km) - 9th place

The North Face 100 Singapore (100km solo) - 4th overall, 1st Singaporean

Great North Walk 100 mile (173km) – 23rd overall

Standard Chartered Singapore Marathon -  1st Female Veteran, 3rd Female Closed (3:24h)

2011:

Sabah Ultra Trail (60km) – Ladies 1st

TNF100 Blue Mountains – DNF

Ultra Trail do Mont Blanc (170km) – 21st place, 1st Singaporean female to complete

Salomon X-Trail – 2nd place

Standard Chartered Singapore Marathon - 12th Female Closed (3:51h)

2012:

Sabah Ultra Trail (60km) – 1st position, Ladies Open, 8th Overall

NTU X-Physique Adventure Race – 1st position, Mixed Pairs

The Most Beautiful Thing, Sabah (100km trail) – 2nd Position, Ladies Open; 18th Overall.

TNF100 Singapore (100km trail) – 1st Woman, 13th Overall

Salomon X-Trail – 2nd place

Endorsed by Salomon Singapore and Hammer Nutrition Singapore

2013:

SMU AdRace – Mixed pairs, 1st place

TNF100 Blue Mountains - DNF

Tor des Geants, Aosta Valley, Italy (332km trail) – First Singaporean to complete

Lantau 70km – DNF

Chiang Mai to Chiang Rai run – 300km in 7 days

2014

KOTH Lantau half marathon– Women’s 6th place

Lantau 70km – 2nd Age group

MSIG Lantau 50 – DNF

Sports played:

1. Ultra-running (trail)
2. Kite-surfing
3. Skiing
4. Adventure racing