

Beauty and the brawn

Woman bodybuilder Tan finds home is where the heart is

By **ANDREA FILMER**
andrea@thestar.com.my

GEORGE TOWN: Local girl Lilian Tan, who made headlines in the women's bodybuilding arena in the United States, will for the second time represent Malaysia in the 4th World Bodybuilding and Physique Sports Championship on Dec 4.

Tan, who turns 40 in September, spent 19 years in the United States after finishing secondary school at St George's Girls' School in Penang, and returned home in mid-2009.

"I was a competitive swimmer in school and continued swimming when I furthered my studies in California.

"One day, I decided to use a free pass to the gym as the pool was being renovated. I lifted my first dumbbell and my body just responded so well. You could say I stumbled into bodybuilding," she said.

Tan went on to compete in her first competition – Miss San Diego Natural Bodybuilding Open Category – in 2001 where she clinched second place and won it the following year.

From there, she grew from strength to strength, earning her the International Natural Bodybuilding Association (INBA) pro card and representing the United States in the INBA Natural Olympia in 2004 where she earned third place.

However, home beckoned in the most unusual way. Tan, who was eager to represent Malaysia in bodybuilding, had gotten in touch



iSnap me
for more photos
and a video

<http://thestar.com.my/isnap>

with local bodybuilder Terry Gallyot.

E-mail messages led to conversations and chats on Facebook and eventually Gallyot asked Tan to come home.

"He told me to come back and marry him! I came back to Penang in July 2009 to get readjusted and spend some time with my family and moved to Kuala Lumpur three months ago," she said.

Wedding bells are expected between Tan and Gallyot next year.

"He's there to give me tips when I compete. He travels along with me so there is a lot of support there," she said.

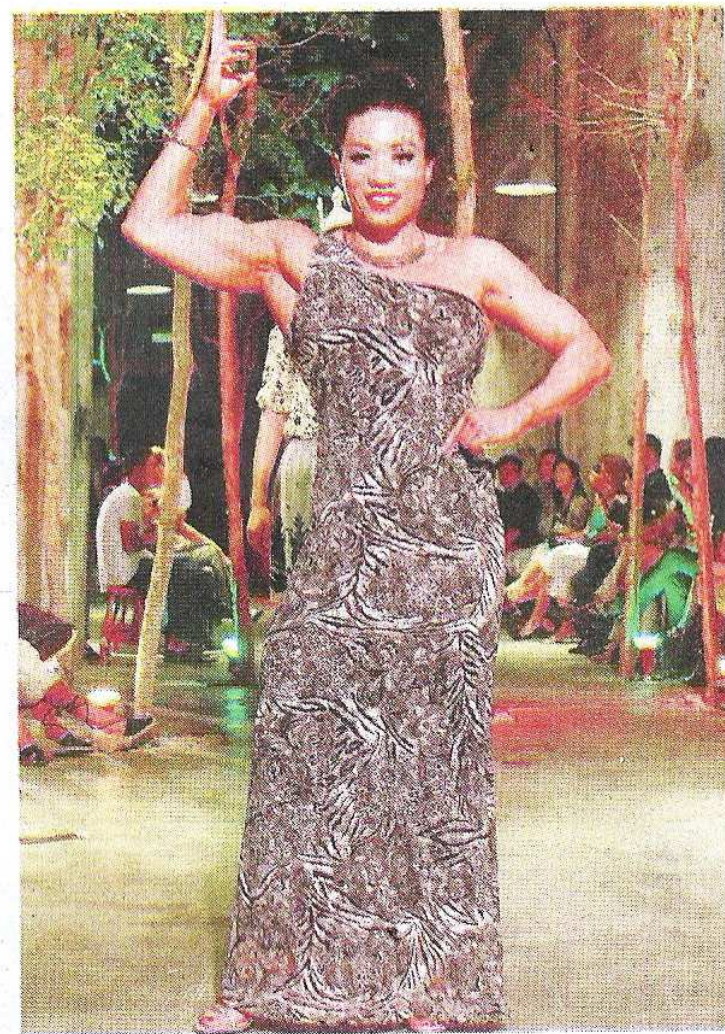
Despite past injuries in both her elbows, Tan said she was happy with her training so far.

"For bodybuilders, it takes a while for the muscles to mature. At present, I'm feeling great and am expected to peak in the next few years."

Tan, who works as a freelance trainer, can be contacted by e-mail at tgrwmn1@hotmail.com.



For story and photos:
See StarMetro



No weakening: Tan modelling an outfit in a fashion show in Penang.