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BROUGHT TO YOU BY LEVI'S **JEAN-POOL THEORY**
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JEANS ARE THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF FASHION EXPRESSION — WHAT DOES YOUR PAIR SAY ABOUT YOU?

Clothes say more about you than you think. What you wear is a declaration of your taste, your personality, and your attitude. Some outfits are exclamation points with buttons, others are more like ellipses with elastic waistbands. Clothes can shout, whisper, take a stand or even tell a joke. Your favourite pair of jeans, however, is the sartorial equivalent of speaking volumes without saying a word.

These are the jeans you wear all the time. The ones your friends are begging you to wash. You know, the ones that "go with everything". And, like the old book on your shelf with the most creases in its spine, they often reveal what you're trying to hide with lapper pocket squares or ironic bowties. Or Proust.

Think of jeans as your fashion DNA — your basic building blocks upon which all expression of self through clothing is based on. The jean-pool theory.

When I was in my teens, I wore jeans so distressed and, shall we say, accessible, my mother thought I looked like a hooker. (I became an

actor, so she really wasn't that far off the mark.) Someone I know believed any guy who wore flared jeans to be insufferably pretentious. Once again, the assumption was accurate — but we still dated anyway.

Of course, there are many facets to our personalities, different layers of expression when you're saying it with fashion. That's why we need the pocket squares, the ironic bowties and the Proust. You and I might both be a straight-cut denim person, but it's how we interpret it that makes us the precious little snowflakes that we are.

To further demonstrate this point, we gathered 12 diverse individuals across a spectrum of arts, entertainment, sports, F&B and fashion to conduct a little experiment. Take the classic Levi's 501 jeans — which celebrates an incredible 140 years of style this year with the introduction of non-denim options in a range of colours — and simply be themselves.

Would the same style of jeans take on a style of their own? What would their interpretation of the 501 say? Flip the pages and read their button-flies loud and clear. **PHIN WONG**

BOBBY TONELLI

Do you remember what you wore when you were four years old? Bobby Tonelli certainly does: He remembers putting on his first pair of jeans and cowboy boots. "It's the American dream," said the Las Vegas native about his love of Levi's. "I think everybody starts off with their first pair of Levi's and they go from there."

The Fly Entertainment artist and MediaCorp Radio DJ will take his first stab at comedy alongside Jennis Chew and other guest stars, such as Patricia Mok and Dawn Yang,

in a new sitcom, King Of The Keng, set to premiere on Toggle this July.

Bobby Tonelli is the co-host of The Rude Awakening with Rosalyn Lee. Weekdays, 6am to 10am on MediaCorp Radio 987FM.

Describe your personal style.

Bobby Tonelli: It's a mix of retro with edge, and jeans are definitely a staple of the collection. As a matter of fact, I don't own chinos and I don't like to wear shorts — so it's either jeans or dress slacks.

Who were some of your style icons growing up?

James Dean, Elvis — not in the white jumpsuits, though — Steve McQueen, Tom Cruise in Top Gun ... I guess when you're young, you want to emulate the stars you see on the big screen and probably try to mimic their styles. But as you grow older, you realise that it's what inside them that makes them cool, not the clothes.



Levi's 501 Original Fit Jeans in Classic One, S\$139.90; Levi's white long-sleeve shirt, S\$99.

ZACH ONG

When Zach Ong isn't working the maths for his accounting modules, he's busy counting the seconds he's shaved off while breaking records in the pool. The national swimmer and Singapore Management University undergraduate juggles a hectic schedule of studying and training — he even had to turn up for examinations one day after the SEA Games.

Singapore's top backstroke swimmer, who won the 200m backstroke event at the 2009 SEA Games, will be back in Japan later this year to train for this year's games.

We hear your elder brother has had a big influence on your style.

Zach Ong: Yes, when you have a brother who's five years older, you just usually follow what he wears and what he finds cool. I remember when I was about 13, he took me to get my first pair of jeans, which was a Levi's 501. It might still be somewhere in my wardrobe.

What makes up the bulk of your wardrobe?

Right now, I'm more into neutral colours. I also buy raw denim ... but I don't really wear jeans all that often because I'm in the pool most of the time.