



LOOK EAST, YOUNG MAN

The man who built Richmond's Aberdeen Centre and who owns a local Chinese TV network and radio station, among other things, is moving in a new direction. Thomas Fung, the 42-year-old president of the Fairchild Group, plans to start a merchant bank-style operation. His aim is to help small- and medium-sized Canadian companies negotiate the minefield that is the mainland China market. "We will not be a merchant bank, as such," says Fung, "but rather a go-between. We'll put the two sides together, help them negotiate."

Knowing the art of negotiation in China is key, says Fung. "If you go in with lawyers on hand and long documents, it can take a very long time to make a deal in China." Many Canadian companies, he says, are eager to do business in China, particularly in booming Guangdong Province. "But often they don't know the right people. We'll help them identify the right project, the right joint-venture partner, the right government channel, the right management."

Having the right connections is everything in Asia. And knowing the local protocol is equally important. There are tales of Canadian executives losing deals because they don't understand the niceties of doing business Chinese-style. Toby Chu, CEO of Vancouver-based Ano Office Automation, says Canadian businessmen often blow it because they don't know the political hierarchy. "They sit down with a vice-director and ask to speak to the director," says Chu, 32. "In China the vice-director is usually the one with the real power. The director is usually just a puppet."

Fung is ideally placed to smooth the path for Canadian firms eager to do business on the mainland. His late father, Fung King Hey, co-founded the Sun Hung Kai group, one of Hong Kong's foremost securities and fund management operations. Fung's brother, Tony, now runs the concern. Sun Hung Kai has offices in every big city in China and a long-established relationship with senior officials.

"I'm in a good position," says Fung. "Corporations have already come to see me and expect that something can be done on their behalf. From their perspective I'm a

good corporate citizen in Canada. They would rather deal with a local organization that thinks along their lines, rather than some giant firm in Asia. A local would make a better advisor." Fung says he is currently negotiating with Canadian firms, but would not say which ones.

— By Robin Ajello

**Thomas Fung: Go to
China with lawyers
and long documents,
and your deal
may be long in coming**



THEY SHOOT HORSES HERE

Think of it as *City Slickers IX*, in which Jack Palance is finally dead and buried, and Billy Crystal has just enough strength left in him to press the button of a camera. That's right, a camera.

For \$475, not only will Leona Isaak arrange to put you up for two nights, meals included, at Douglas Lake Ranch, the largest working ranch in Canada — in B.C.'s high country — she'll also set you up for the photo-op of a lifetime: cowboys and gals on horseback. For two dusks and two dawns — "that's when the light is best" — these tru-blue working ranch-hands will ride their mounts in a corral, doing stunts and whatever else it is ranch-hands do on horses. All you need to do is snap off the shots. Want some poses in front of rustic buildings and fences? No problem. Heck, when the day's done these hands will even chauffeur you around. Best of all, particularly for professional photographers, these performers come complete with model releases, meaning that a couple of shots in focus could earn you back the cost of your weekend if you're able to sell them.

As for the source of the idea, Isaak, a Clearbrook businesswoman — who's decided to organize a second tour this fall after the success of her May debut — does admit getting inspiration from an outfit in Oregon that's been operating there for years. "But that one's just a guest ranch," she says. "Ours is a working ranch." Yeah? So where are the cattle? Says Isaak: "The cattle would lose pounds if they ran around. And to a ranch, pounds on cattle mean money."

