

# Homecoming queen Gong Li takes charge

BY CHRISTINA NG

**I**F THERE'S someone who could hold court with effortless charm, Gong Li would be the empress.

And so she reigned yesterday at the launch of Chinese lingerie brand Aimer's flagship store at Marina Bay Sands. She played the part of a homecoming queen to the hilt.

After emcee Diana Ser introduced her as the brand **ambassador**, the first thing the 44-year-old beauty said, with a radiant smile, was: "Every time I come to Singapore, I feel like I'm coming home."

She reiterated: "I really like Singapore. I feel like I know her culture so well."

As if she didn't get her point across to the 55-strong media contingent - comprising 40 journalists from China and 15 from Singapore - at the launch, not to mention **starstruck** shoppers who stopped to gawk, she emphasised at the press conference half an hour later. "I've come home again. I'm very happy," she said, positively glowing.

Her constant declaration of love for Singapore worked. It deflected any query on her marital situation. No one asked her about it (or dared to).

Just last month, Gong's manager, Christophe Tseng, confirmed rumours that she had split from her Singaporean businessman husband Ooi Hoe Seong after 14 years of marriage.

And so, it was high spirits for the film doyenne. Despite flying in from Paris a couple of nights ago, she was a picture of grace in a white flowy chiffon dress, designed for her by Aimer Group's chief designer, Zhang Hongyu.

So, she was not **perturbed** a bit by zealous photographers clicking away as she strutted into the Aimer Store.

No dark clouds loomed as she chirped about how delighted she was to be the brand ambassador. "I want to bring beauty to everyone through the brand," she gushed.

For the press conference, she was flawless in a turquoise chiffon dress.

Everyone was hushed, hanging on to her every word.

When a reporter asked whether she would consider starring in a Singapore film, she did not miss a beat, readily offering that she looked forward to working with home-grown directors.



*AT HOME:* Gong Li said every time she comes to Singapore, it feels like she is coming home.

"I've always wanted to make a Singaporean movie. I'm just waiting for good **scripts**," she said, her eyes sparkling.

"Singapore movies have a very strong local flavour. I'm hoping to get a script with more international appeal. But I really like to be in a Singapore movie."

As for her upcoming projects, the star said that she is filming a US\$5 million (S\$6.9 million) Chinese remake of Nancy Meyers' romantic comedy *What Women Want*, opposite Andy Lau in Beijing.

Gong's most recent offering is the World War II movie *Shanghai*, in which she co-starred with John Cusack, whom she praised as "a wizard full of charms".

The American actor, 44, also avowed his admiration for Gong in return.

In fact, there were unconfirmed rumours of an affair between them.

But, surprise, no one squeaked a word about it.

The day belonged to the Singapore homecoming queen, and everyone was there to make sure it was perfect.

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## HELPDESK 我的字典

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**Ambassador:** 大使 dà shǐ

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**Starstruck:** 着迷 zháo mí

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**Perturbed:** 不安 bù ān

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**Scripts:** 剧本 jù běn

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