

A**REPORT**
People who deserve a bigger stage**11****The cuppa papa****Taha Bouqdir***Tea merchant, Singapore*

After 15 years at Mariage Frères, where he was head chargé de mission overseeing everything from blending to branding, Taha Bouqdir moved to Singapore to start TWG Tea with his wife and a friend. Thanks to Bouqdir's contacts at plantations in every tea-growing country, the TWG collection includes more than 600 single estate harvests and a number of exclusive blends. They opened their first tea salon and boutique in Singapore this year featuring more than 250 varieties of tea and a tea-infused patisserie menu. A dapper Frenchman of Moroccan origin, his family has been in the service of the Moroccan royal family for generations. This is a brand that will be brewing up a storm in 2009.

What are your plans for the next year?

TWG Tea will be expanding internationally. We've been engaged with creating tea collections for some of the world's finest hotels, starting in Bali, Kuala Lumpur and Jakarta. TWG Tea is opening a concept store and tea salon in Dubai and we're also launching a retail collection in the US.

What would you like to achieve with TWG Tea?

I'd like to share my passion with the world, starting with Asia before going to Europe or the US, and to prove that even a luxury tea brand founded and based in Asia can be sold in the trendiest shops in New York and Europe.

Are there any journeys you are excited about in 2009?

The journey I am impatiently anticipating is when my teas take flight with Singapore Airlines in its business and first class. Even when I'm not travelling my teas take me on a world voyage. — FW

**12****Screen star****Kim Ghattas***TV correspondent, US*

"I was the right person in the right place at the right time" is how Kim Ghattas describes getting hired by the BBC in Lebanon in 2000. Though timing might have played a part, it's her international credentials – Ghattas grew up in Beirut with her Dutch-Lebanese parents, attended a French school, graduated from the American University and speaks four languages – and the fact that she could travel to places her British colleagues couldn't get to that made her the ideal candidate for the post. During her seven-year tenure, as well as setting up the Beirut bureau, she covered some of the region's most important milestones and in 2006 she and her

team won an Emmy for their coverage of the war between Israel and Hezbollah.

Now entering her second year as a BBC correspondent in Washington DC, Ghattas has brought her in-depth knowledge of the Middle East to her job at the State Department as well as a firsthand understanding of her new beat. "I've been on the receiving end of American policy my whole life so I understand the other side of the story," she says.

A broadcast star to watch in 2009. — AQ

13**Rebel with a cause****Barbara Hogan***Health minister, South Africa*

At last South Africa has someone who can do battle with the Aids epidemic. Few ministers in the country's new government will be watched as closely as Barbara Hogan. The new health minister, appointed by Kgalema Motlanthe, after the ousting of Thabo Mbeki in September, will hope to turn the tide on the country's Aids epidemic – 5.4 million out of a population of 49 million are HIV positive. It will be difficult for Hogan to do a worse job than her predecessor.

Dr Manto Tshabalala-Msimang became known as "Dr Beetroot" after advising Aids sufferers to eat garlic, lemon and beetroot. She also questioned the efficacy of anti-retroviral (ARVs) drugs. But the difference between Dr Beetroot and Ms Hogan, who spent most of the 1980s in jail for her anti-apartheid activities, could not be more stark. Hogan has been an Aids activist for years, sitting on the board of the Amandla Aids Fund, an organisation chaired by Archbishop Desmond Tutu. Her appointment has been cheered by activists across the country – and the world. — SB

