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Museum *ah beng*

Comedian Mark Lee's 'high-class' role: Museum Ambassador

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DON'T look now, but Mark Lee has gone from Mr Lao Ah Beng to Mr Museum Ambassador.

The comedian was recently tapped to be the face of the National Heritage Board's (NHB) *Explore Singapore! 2007* campaign, which runs from Nov 10 to Dec 13.

"Now I have a new title and it's high-class," the 39-year-old Lee quipped during Tuesday's media conference – before putting on a serious face befitting his serious mission of bringing heartlanders, not to mention taxi drivers, to the museums.

"When abroad, we're always asked what Singapore has to offer. We always say Sentosa or Jurong Bird Park, but nobody mentions the museums – and we have over 45 of them!" said the surprisingly well-informed funny man, who will hold a special tour of the National Museum on Dec 1. He will also host an open house for taxi drivers at the Singapore Philatelic Museum and Singapore Art Museum (SAM) on Dec 7.

"Mark has popular appeal and his participation will 'de-mystify' museums," said NHB chief executive Michael Koh, 46.

Explore Singapore! 2007 features 86 activities in 20 museums, the National Library, community centres and heartland



DON WONG

BLOWING THEIR HORN: The National Heritage Board's Michael Koh and actor Mark Lee at the launch of *Explore Singapore! 2007*.

malls. Last year's *Explore Singapore!* drew over 500,000 visitors. NHB museums have also seen an impressive total attendance of 1.3 million last year.

But Koh said they are aiming for even more visitors. "Many Singaporeans haven't visited museums in a long time and they might be surprised at the changes."

The punchline, of course, is that Lee himself had not visited the National Museum in 20 years.

When he re-visited it last Monday, he was amazed – particularly at the montage of director P Ramlee's movies at the museum's film section.

"Wah, got special effects!" he quipped.

Visit www.museums.com.sg/explore for more information.