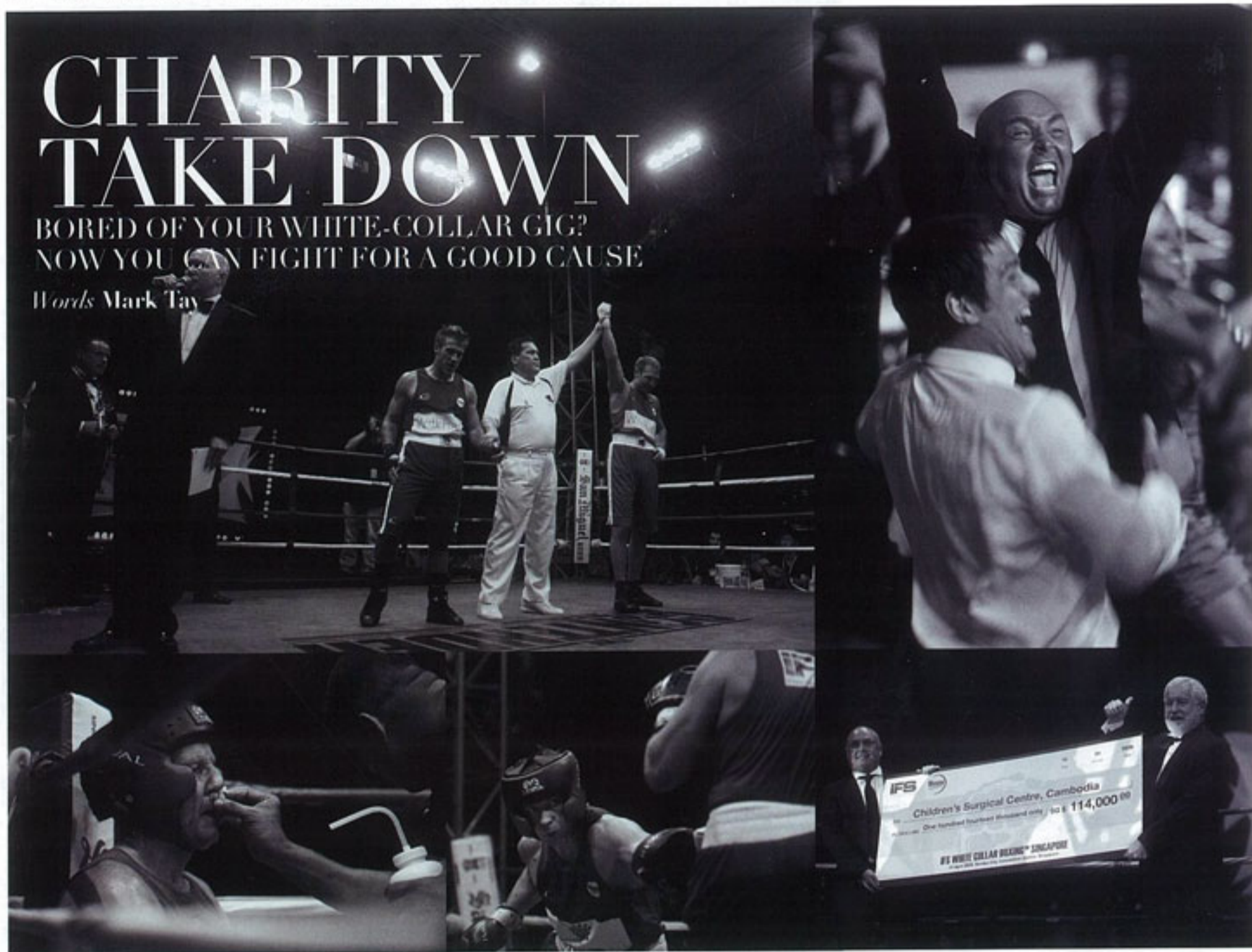


# CHARITY TAKE DOWN

BORED OF YOUR WHITE-COLLAR GIG? NOW YOU CAN FIGHT FOR A GOOD CAUSE

Words Mark Tay



**B**lack tie charity galas are always a grand affair. But you know there's something special when individuals attending then begin loosening their bowties and cummerbunds, and bellowing, "Kill the f\*\*ker! Take his head off!" in between courses. Welcome to White Collar Boxing.

Such was the scene at this year's event held at Suntec City Convention Centre. The fifth challenge organised by International Financial Services (IFS), it was the biggest one to date, drawing a sell-out audience of 1,000 spectators to an arena to witness the culmination of 12 weeks of blood, sweat and tears from the 14 contenders.

"It's a very big commitment from our participants to get whipped into shape. They're not professional boxers but have careers in fields like finance and F&B. It's been a long journey for them but the knowledge that everything we do here is for a good cause makes it all worth while," said Ian Mullane of Vanda Promotions just before rushing off to prep the boxers before their fight.

The night began with Wicked Aura Batacuda who set the pace for more great fights throughout the dinner, cheered on by a gala crowd of tuxedos and ball gowns. Pyrotechnics, lasers, full body-painted mascots and women dressed as raunchy schoolgirls made every entry to the ring a memorable one, proving that even if you are not a professional

boxer, at least having the fanfare of one makes it all feel real.

Julian "The Teacher" Andriesz, 43, (no prizes for guessing he was the one with the schoolgirls) spoke of the intense lead up to the big fight: "We had 6.30am runs and more training in the evenings after work about 10 times a week and that builds a great camaraderie among all the competitors. We've become friends for life. Not only is it for charity, but it's also for our own personal achievement. Some people climb mountains, but I'm afraid of heights so I'll stick to this. My wife has been extremely supportive of my journey, though I believe a part of her still thinks this is just a manifestation of a mid-life crisis."

Over \$100,000 was raised from the Singapore leg, with more to come from fights scheduled in Hong Kong, Japan, Thailand and Australia this year. All proceeds will go to the Children's Surgical Centre in Cambodia, which has been dedicated to providing free rehabilitative surgery for poor rural Cambodians since 1998.

Which is all great, but what I like best is the chance to watch grown men take swings at each other and not have to feel bad for cheering.

For more information about IFS White Collar Boxing visit [www.vandapromotions.com](http://www.vandapromotions.com)