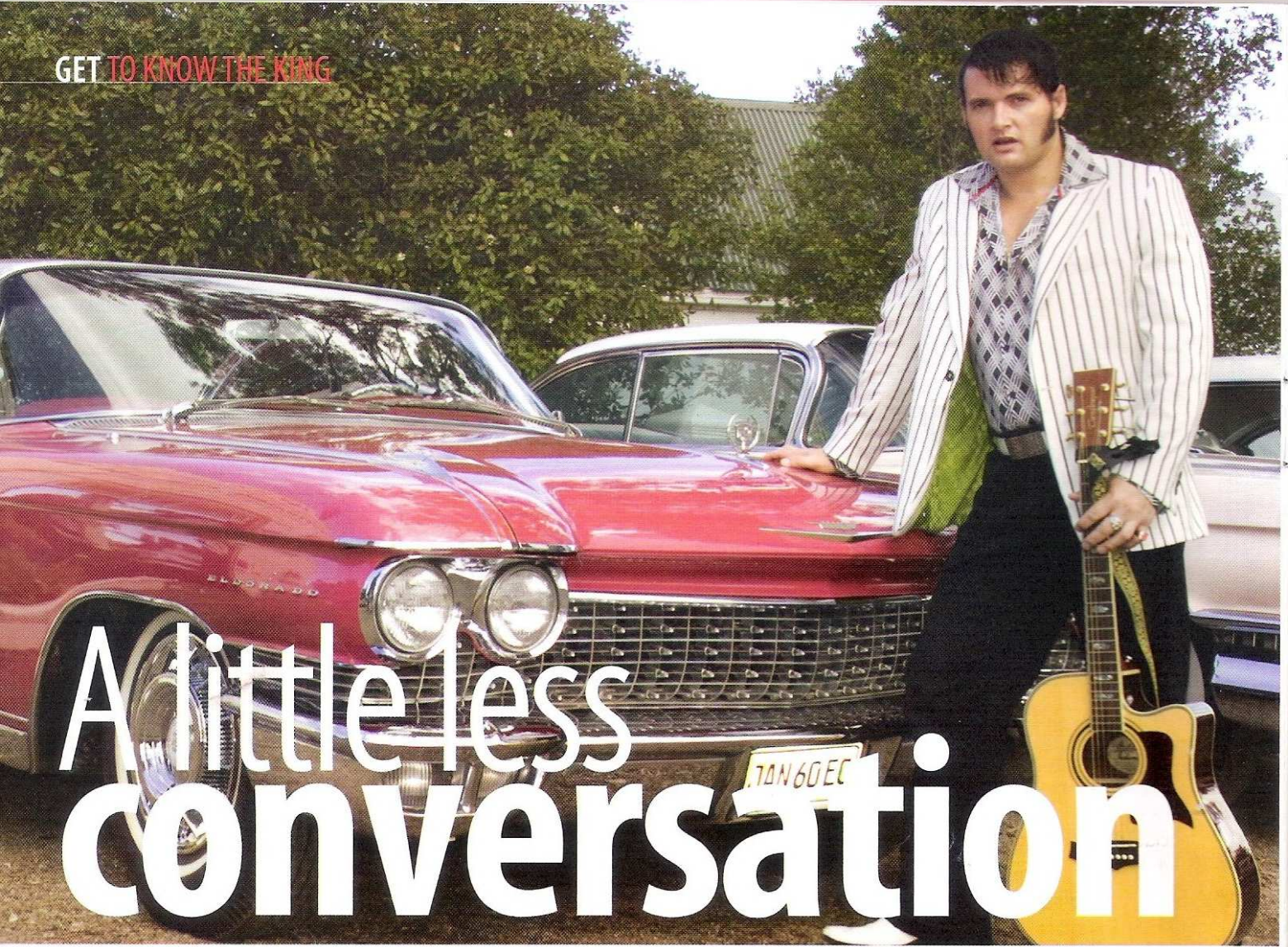


GET TO KNOW THE KING



A little less conversation

Elvis Presley tribute artist, James Marais of Windsor Park has recently returned from an international competition in Wales, celebrating the King of Rock. Swigging Red Bull backstage, he shed light on his career, his passion and his support base.

In a few moments, James Marais is going to shake, rattle and roll his way through all three eras spanning Elvis' career, from the 50s to the 70s, but right now, the producer of his own brand-new show is quite relaxed before taking to the stage at Grand West Casino's Roxy Revue Bar.

"When I was a kid my father had a record of Elvis' 40 greatest hits," he recalls, in explanation of his deep respect for and great affinity with the music. "It was all I would listen to, for hours on end. Ever since then I wanted to get into live entertainment after school."

At age 21 and living in Durban at the time, he first joined an exotic male dance group called the Wild Boys. "It was an opportunity for me to put my dance skills and singing abilities to good use, in a

group show, and to get some exposure in the entertainment field."

The group subsequently broke up; he moved to Cape Town and started building up towards his dream of representing Elvis live on stage. The journey, however, did not happen overnight. James, who also

part of modern culture. "Parents 'give' Elvis Presley to their kids as they are growing up. He was a larger-than-life man, with such strong charisma. Back in the day, the youngsters didn't know what hit them," is his take on the Elvis effect on the world.

Not surprisingly then, James is also a

'We listen to his music, discuss aspects of his life, such as the effect it had on him being a twinless twin'

does stunt work in his free time, says that he has "been an entertainer for 17 years, dancing and singing all over South Africa."

One wonders what kept him going, and what about Elvis is so special to James and many others who share his passion for the King. According to James, Elvis is

member of the Elvis Presley Fan Club of Africa (EPFCA). "I have been a member for the last seven or eight years and they come to my shows and generally just show a lot of support."

Another member of the fan club, Nicolette Meades of Bellville says: "Elvis