A very S’porean drinking game

Brainchild of four local undergrads, it involves cheeky, saucy questions, DANIEL BUENAS reports

"If your significant other was invited to be featured in Playboy or Playgirl, would you say yes or no?"

This may not be something you’d ask a friend over drinks — yet. However, Singapore Management University (SMU) Business undergraduate Lester Chee and National University of Singapore (NUS) dentistry student Tan Jun Da hope to change that.

Lester and Jun Da (otherwise known as JD) are directors of Game Theory Pte Ltd, a company they started to market and sell a drinking game they have created.

Called Kinda Naughty ... but Nice (KNN), the game is touted as a drinking game made for Singaporeans, by Singaporeans.

Each game comes with a set of over 200 cards with “complex questions” printed on them, that is to say, questions that have only two possible answers.

Some of these questions are thought-provoking, some cheeky and some are downright saucy.

It was the brainchild of JD and Lester, along with two other good friends — SMU accounting undergraduate Benjamin Koh and SM University student Loh Chung Jiat.

Before the game starts, a forfeit is decided — for example, a shot of an alcoholic beverage, and players are given an answer card which is basically a black-white card.

The game will begin with a player drawing a question card and reading the question and its two possible answers aloud to all the different players. Each answer is colour coded as white or black.

At the count of three, everyone will reveal their answer cards, which should be what the player thinks is the most honest answer the person reading the question can give, by folding their answer cards together.

The person asking the question will then explain his choice, and if players are unconvinced by the explanation, they can challenge the answer.

If the majority agrees that the answer provided by the person asking the question is true, anyone who had a different answer from him will have to take the agreed-upon forfeit. Or, if the majority agrees that the answer provided is false, the person who read the question, together with all who chose his answer, will then have to drink the forfeit shot.

"The idea of coming up with a drinking game came about during a Christmas party where four of us were playing drinking games that some of our friends brought back from the United States," says JD. "They were so much fun, and we tried to find some similar games around, but they were mostly sub-par.

"That’s why we decided to come up with something that was easy to carry around, that someone could whip up, and everyone could play and have fun with."

While it was — to use a pun — mostly fun and games for the four creators of the game, the game also had commercial value.

"We always had this belief that whoever we do, it should be unique, different," Lester said. "We didn’t want to follow the crowd, and that’s why we came up with this game, which is actually very Singaporean."

In 2005, the four entered an SMU Business Innovation Generator competition and came in joint-winners to claim a prize of $10,000 in seed money. It was with this money that JD and Lester started Game Theory in order to mass-market the game.

Currently, the game is being sold online at www.knn.com.sg through retail store Ig’s Heaven. However, JD says that although everyone who’s played the game has enjoyed it, sales have been slower than expected.

"The problem is that for a game like this, you do need to raise awareness, and we’ve been doing it mainly through word of mouth," he says. "We tried marketing the game to some pubs and bars, and they liked the game a lot, but in the end they were more focused on moving traffic."

To date, the company has sold about 100 copies of the game, which comes in a normal, travel, deluxe and a “play for forfeit” version, where the questions are less cheeky and there doesn’t have to be drinking involved. The price of the sets range from $12.90 to $39.90.

Moving forward, JD says the company hopes to publicise the game further, and hopefully get more shops to carry the product. He adds that the company is also thinking of tying up with third parties to help promote the game, as well as translating the game for overseas markets.

But in the end, he says it really isn’t about the money. "Dentistry is my career of choice really, and he’d be honest — a drinking game like this is not going to make you big bucks," he says. "When you’re doing a side business like this, the most important thing is not to lose track that you’re having fun."