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# Tourists slam Patong stink

By Gazette Staff

**PATONG:** The dirty beach, grubby streets and the stinking sewage system of Phuket's most popular resort town have been singled out by tourists as the issues that require the most urgent action, according to an authoritative survey.

The poll, the 3rd Patong Beach Survey, was conducted by eight major hotels in the town and questioned 1,009 tourists.

The survey shows that the grubbiness of the town is of increasing concern, with only 38% of respondents rating the cleanliness of Patong as excellent or very good, and 21% saying it was poor or very poor.

Walking areas came in for severe criticism, being rated as poor or very poor by 31% of respondents, while the number of people satisfied with the quality of water at the beach dropped from 85% in the 2003 survey to 82% this year.

Coming in for growing criticism were tuk-tuk and taxi drivers. Last year, 71% of respondents rated the drivers' friendliness as very good or excellent. This year, the figure plummeted to 55%.

There was also bad news for the entertainment industry, currently fighting an extended battle for later closing times. Just 3% of those polled were dissatisfied with the closing hours of discos and bars, while 61% ticked the excellent or very good boxes, an increase of four percentage points over the 2003 poll.

Although the vast majority of tourists said they felt safe at night in Patong, the level of satisfaction at the visibility of



**DEPRESSING:** Garbage and seaweed – the result of a rise in the amount of sewage in the sea – litter Patong Beach.

the Tourist Police fell to 87%, from 90% last year and 91% in 2002.

Less popular were the town's vendors, with only half of the visitors describing the friendliness of vendors as excellent or very good. Scores for prices and quality of goods, however, both rose compared with previous years.

From comments added to survey forms by respondents, the poll's compilers were able to single out three aspects of Patong that made people happy – the friendly people; the fun, easy-going atmosphere and the variety of restaurants, bars and shops; and value for money.

Despite negative observations, 90% said they would return to Patong, while 95% said they would recommend it to friends.

On the negative side, apart from the cleanliness problem, pushy vendors and the growing rudeness of tuk-tuk and taxi drivers, respondents felt that transport costs were too high and Patong needed to fix prices or introduce taxi meters.

The hotels involved in the survey have already presented a copy of the survey results to the Governor of Phuket and other officials. In it, they make recommendations for improvements. These include:

- Fix transport prices or introduce meters;
- Introduce bus routes between beaches;
- Open the wastewater treatment plant extension and ensure that the plant is working at 100% efficiency;
- Clean up the canal flow-

Continued on page 2

## Boatmen blockade Amanpuri launch

By Gategeo Phetsawang

**KATA:** A dispute over business territory led to a seaborne blockade at Kata Beach on April 16 during which a motor launch from the exclusive Amanpuri resort was forced to sail without eight passengers.

The 38-foot motor yacht *MariTess*, operated by Amancruises, had been booked to pick up four adults and four children from Kata Beach and take them to Phi Phi.

But when local boatmen saw the *MariTess* at Kata and realized it was picking up passengers, they sprang into action and prevented it from leaving for about an hour.

Mongkol Maneesri, captain of the Amancruises yacht, told the *Gazette* that he had an appointment to pick up the guests at 8:30 am on April 16.

"I beached the boat and the guests got aboard," he said. "At least six boat operators then told me that the boat couldn't take guests from the beach and that the guests had to get out again."

The boatmen included longtail and speedboat operators, he said.

He added that, normally, the boat picked up guests at Bang Tao Beach or at the Boat Lagoon. This was the first time an appointment had been made for a pick-up at Kata.

"The passengers were not pleased," he said. "I think they [the boatmen] should be flexible in cases like this. Sometimes, guests from Kata arrange a pick-up at Bang Tao Beach – there are no bans on boats going to Bang Tao to pick up passengers."

He said that, as a compromise, he suggested the boat-

Continued on page 2

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## A practical lesson in physics

**OOPS:** Passers-by at the Thepkrasattri Rd-Komarapaj Rd intersection in Phuket City on the evening of April 17 were astonished to come across this humpbacked pickup truck.

Witnesses said that the truck, heavily laden with fruit, was not involved in an accident, but had jack-knifed – vertically – after its driver slammed on the brakes at the traffic lights.



## Tourist poll highlights problems of Patong

From page 1

ing into the south end of the beach;

- Ban tailors' representatives and timeshare salespeople from soliciting business on sidewalks; and

- Consider creating a large parking area for all private cars and rental cars, then ban traffic from the beach road.

The hotels, in their remarks introducing the survey, say that they worry about the lack of significant improvement in the figures since the first survey was conducted in 2002.

"Regrettably the survey ... shows that the problems and dislikes of our guests [have remained] the same for the past three years, an indication that not much has changed."

They warn, "In today's competitive environment, consumers have choices and will spend their money and time in destinations [that] are willing to meet their demands and desires for a problem-free vacation."

The survey was conducted by the Novotel Coralia Resort, the Horizon Beach Resort Hotel, the Patong Merlin Hotel, the Merlin Beach Resort, the Holiday Inn Resort, the Burasari Resort, the Phuket Grand Tropicana Hotel and the Impiana Phuket Cabana.

## Kata boatmen blockade Amancruises launch

From page 1

men ferry the guests out to the *MariTess*, but they refused to do so. In the end the guests had to take a car to Chalong to be picked up at the pier.

"I don't know why [the local boatman] did that," he said, "Maybe it's because we were picking up guests in 'their area'. In future we may collect passengers from Chalong Pier because we don't want any more problems with local operators."

Samrit Taweesaman, President of *Rak Kata Karon* (Love Kata Karon) Club told the *Gazette* that he owns two speedboats and has operated them for more than 10 years.

"I get about 10,000 baht [a month] from this business. It's [a source of] income for people who live in the area. If we don't keep it for local people, what will they do for a living?"

Met Chulak, President of



File photo of the *MariTess* and a sister launch – its intended passengers were forced to stay on the beach.

the Longtail Boat Club of Kata, Kata Noi and Karon, said that if other boats come to do business at Kata or Karon beaches, the captains should first ask for permission from the boat club first, by contacting the Kata-Karon Municipality.

If more boats came to these beaches from elsewhere, he said, this would affect local operators because tourists would go with those boats instead.

"We have divided up the area for picking up guests," he said. For example, he said, boat operators from Kata would not pick up customers at Karon Beach and vice versa.

The Chief Administrative Officer of Karon Municipality, Thawatchai Tongmung, said, "We need to have a well-organized plan for good tourism. Otherwise people will just come from everywhere and set up businesses at will."

He explained that local people – taxi drivers, beach chair owners, longtail boatmen, jet-ski

operators and masseuses – all earned their income from tourism. Each group has specific membership regulations.

"These groups are members of the *Rak Kata Karon* Club," he said. "The club has agreements with the municipality and also liaises with other local committees."

"Although the law doesn't specifically say that we can or cannot do this, social rules make it a suitable arrangement," he said.

"For example, with such things as motorbike taxis in Karon, the issues need to be discussed first. Although there are no legal bans, if [local] people were to agree that motorcycle taxis were not suitable, we would usually ask for cooperation to end their use."

K. Thawatchai added that there are 38 longtail boats and nine speedboats operating off the three beaches. Because of the agreement between the municipality and the club, no more boats are allowed to operate in the area.

He explained, "If one new boat [is allowed to come] here to transport tourists, then more will come, and it will no longer be well organized."

Local monopolies such as this are common on Phuket. Fifteen months ago, demonstrations and threats of violence by tuk-tuk drivers stopped safari companies from picking up their own customers from hotels in the Kata-Karon area. Instead, the customers were forced to use local tuk-tuks or taxis.

## Turtles freed on Bang Tao Beach

CHERNG TALAY: The 11th Sea Turtle Conservation Ceremony was held on Friday, April 16, on Bang Tao Beach.

Participants enjoyed the "sale" of 200 juvenile sea turtles to the public as well as other activities involving the special guests, Phuket Governor, Udomsak Usawarakura, and Miss Thailand Universe 2004, Morakot "Amy" Kittisara.

The event was organized by Laguna Resort & Hotels Plc and the five Laguna resorts, the Phuket Provincial Government, the Royal Thai Navy Third Naval Area Command and the Phuket Marine Biological Center.

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# Four wildlife touts arrested in Patong

By Sangkhae Leelanaporn

PATONG: Four photo-taking touts have been arrested by police and charged with having young gibbons in their possession without the required wildlife licences. One has already been fined 20,000 baht.

The men were taken into custody over Songkran in Patong after a steady stream of complaints from tourists.

Further charges will be laid against the four if allegations that the baby gibbons were drugged can be proven. The animals are now in the care of the island's Gibbon Rehabilitation Project.

One man, Tawee Kingjampa – the first to be arrested, on April 11 – was fined

20,000 baht by the court. The other three, named as Dej Khunpol, 25, Jaron Lukwai, 27, and Suchart Kongyot, were arrested on subsequent nights. They were released on bail to appear in court later. The maximum penalty for illegal possession of wildlife is four years in jail or a fine of 40,000 baht.

With effect from November 2003, the law has required people to declare wildlife in their possession, to register their ownership, and to treat the animals with proper care.

Before the new law came into force, police and wildlife officials were powerless to act, even though many people complained about the treatment of gib-

bons, sea eagles and other animals in Patong, where touts paraded the creatures, urging tourists to hold the animals while having their photographs taken for a fee.

Awat Nitikul, Chief of the Khao Prathaew Non-Hunting Area, was delegated to lead a team of officers in the case. He said instructions to act came from the Forestry Department in Bangkok, which had received many complaints about photo-taking touts.

Catching the men required undercover work with the help of Kathu police, K. Awat said. "The men tried to hide the baby gibbons under big jackets and show them as tourists walked past.

"I believe these people were working as a team and I understand that some of them come from Ranong," he said. "Our investigations are continuing."

He added, "I heard the cost of one photo is 500 baht to 1,200 baht. That's expensive."

He noted that the men appeared to think that they could continue to operate without fear of legal action.

K. Awat added that 44 gibbons are legally registered as being in private ownership in Phuket.

People who see wildlife being mistreated or abused may call K. Awat or colleagues on Tel: 06-6897040, 01-8943120 or 07-2684148 around the clock.

## Widening of bypass road begins in May

By Athairat Muangkong

PHUKET CITY: Work to widen the bypass road (Chalermprakiat Ror IX Rd) to four lanes and, along one section, to six lanes, is due to begin on May 7.

The 111-million-baht project, which will be paid for by the central government, will run from just south of the Dara Samut School intersection (known to most people as the Thainaan intersection) to the Baan Bang Ku intersection, close to the Boat Lagoon marina.

It is scheduled for completion on September 28, 2005, less

than 17 months from the start date.

Wanchai Wattanasiri, Chief of the Phuket Provincial Highways Office, told the *Gazette* that the stretch between the Baan Bang Ku and Baan Samkong (Tesco) intersections will be widened to four lanes while the southern section will have six lanes.

Compulsory purchases have already been made of a number of parcels of land fronting the bypass road, and the main contractor, Chiang Rai Harn Charoen Enterprise Ltd (CRHC), has been appointed.

Little indication has been

given as to what will happen when traffic reaches the southern end of the expansion. K. Wanchai told the *Gazette* that the three southbound lanes will filter into one lane within 100 meters of the Dara Samut School intersection.

The last major road-building project, the road from Phuket City to the Sarasin Bridge, ran a long way over budget and completion date. Addressing concern about the possibility of similar problems with the bypass road, K. Wanchai said that if CRHC fails on either count, the company will be blacklisted, barring it from future state projects.

## Visa-holders reminded about 90-day reporting

PHUKET CITY: Phuket Immigration Office has renewed its warning that foreigners holding any type of one-year extension-of-stay must visit an Immigration office every 90 days to confirm their identity and address, or face a 2,000 baht fine.

More stringent application of the rules – along with random visits by officers to check passports in areas where foreigners gather – will begin in May.

However, foreigners who report late, but before the end of April, may escape penalty, officials told the *Gazette*.

The checks are part of intensified security to prevent terrorism. While the initial warning in November to foreigners about

90-day reporting followed the capture in Ayudhya of alleged Jamaah Islamiyah terrorist Hambali, concern has been mounting more recently about trouble in Thailand's deep south.

In Phuket, Pol Capt Krissarat Nuesen of the Immigration Office told the *Gazette* that the initial announcement in November about 90-day reporting had dramatically improved Immigration officers' knowledge of the number of foreigners in Phuket and their whereabouts.

He reminded foreigners that they need to report not just once, but every 90 days.

He noted that the response had been good from Americans, Britons and Australians, but not as good from continental Europeans and people from the Indian sub-continent.

In addition to the 2,000 baht fine, failure to report could affect long-term visa holders in other ways, Capt Krissarat warned.

"If stamps in a passport show that the holder has not contacted Immigration as the rules prescribe, this may affect his or her next application for an extension-of-stay," he explained.

– **Dhirarat Boonkongsan**

## 3 killed on roads during Songkran

PHUKET: Three people died in accidents on Phuket roads during the official Songkran period, which began on April 9 and ended at midnight on Sunday, April 18.

Metha Mekarat, Chief of the Phuket Office of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation, announced on April 19 that the latest two victims were Visanu Chulap and Kajornkiat Sae-iew, both 20 and from Mai Khao, who died in a motorbike smash near the Sarasin Bridge on April 18.

K. Metha added that the number of people injured during the 10 days was 424, marginally less than the 426 recorded in the same period last year. The number of accidents fell from 397 last year to 363.

Over the 10 days, 2,181 people were charged with driving without a license, 1,176 with not wearing helmets, 258 with not wearing seatbelts, 155 with drunk driving, 65 with driving illegally modified vehicles, and two with speeding.

– **Sangkhae Leelanaporn**

## New water pipelines completed

PHUKET CITY: Two new mains water projects by the Phuket Provincial Waterworks Department (PPWD) are now in operation, and the authority is nearing completion of three additional supply lines as part of its fiscal 2004 budget.

Speaking at the Governor's monthly press conference at the Phuket Provincial Health Office on April 19, PPWD chief Sayun Vareearoonrod said residents could now apply for hook-up and meters in the two areas where construction has been completed:

- From Chid Chiow village north to Sapam Municipal School: This pipeline supplies water to areas north of Yaowarat Rd, between Thepkasattri Rd and the bypass road.

- The main line starts near Big C, runs along the bypass road, past Tesco-Lotus and Soi Paniang and intersects Thepkasattri Rd near the Provincial Electricity Authority substation. From there it runs north past Supercheap, ending near Sapam Municipal School.

- From the Vanich Estate (near the Workor Intersection) south to Leam Tokkae: This pipe-

line supplies water to areas in Tambon Rassada, including those close to Rassadanusorn Rd, Kuku Village School, Rassada Tambon Administration Organization offices, Soi Ta Chin, Soi Kingkaew, Honsaitong Community Center, Srisuthat Rd, Koh Sireh Circle, and the road to Pleumsook Beach.

Three additional main lines are still under construction:

- Along Thepkasattri Rd From the Phuket Highway sub-district office near Laem Hin Pier to the Vanich Estate. The project is about 60% complete and is expected to come into service in about a month.

- From Phuket Villa 2 south to the Rawai Tambon Administration Organization offices: The pipeline will serve areas along Chao Fa West Rd south of the Thep-Anusorn Rd intersection, south to Chalong Circle and Chalong Pier, and extending further south along Wiset Rd to the OrBorTor Rawai offices. Work is 80% complete.

- Along Sakdidet Rd from ThaiSarco to Cape Panwa Viewpoint. This pipeline will cover areas near Baan Panwa School, Soi Khaokad and South Sea

Farm. Work is 80% complete.

The PPWD is responsible for supplying water to areas in Kathu, Patong and Karon Municipalities as well as areas along Chao Fa East Rd, Chao Fa West Rd and Sakdidet Rd in Muang District. It is not responsible for water within Phuket City, which has its own waterworks department.

PPWD projects for 2005 include 6.94 million baht for installation of 6,400 meters of 160mm pipe to provide service in the following areas: Honsaitong Village, Tambon Rassada; ThaiSarco, Tambon Wichit; Soi Dara, Soi Thida and Soi Suy-Larn-Uthit, Tambon Kathu; Soi Lay Rim Chang Restaurant, Tambon Rassada; and Soi Baan Klaang, Tambon Chalong.

During the press conference, Phuket Governor Udomsak Usawarangkura said that in order for Phuket to reach its goal of becoming a world-class city, it would eventually need to raise its public water supplies to drinking water quality. In the meantime, however, he urged residents to collect rainwater as a way of making supplies last.

– **Dhirarat Boonkongsan**

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## Queer News

## Glowing example of the value of tattoos

ROI-ET: A group of volunteer workers who were digging up bodies in a temple graveyard in Muang district discovered the corpse of a man whose tattoo reportedly mummified the skin on his back, protecting it from decay and giving it the appearance of normal, living flesh.

The volunteers of the Roi-Et branch of the Eik Luk Chiang Teung Foundation were exhuming the bodies of anonymous souls buried in a paupers' graveyard at Tambon Robmuang Temple in Muang district. This is hardly what most people would choose to do on their day off, but the volunteers believe exhuming and cremating such bodies with proper religious rites is a good way of keeping disquieted souls from wandering the city, wreaking havoc on the living.

All was going as well as could be expected for such a morbid activity, until stunned workers came across the remains of a male corpse that had a large patch of skin that looked as healthy as that of any living person – even though the rest of the corpse was little more than a skeleton.

The skin was described as

about 50 centimeters long, 20cm wide, and bore a black tattoo in the shape of a dragon. The report noted that the skin was perfectly preserved and had no foul odor whatsoever.

Based on the state of decay of the rest of the body, Foundation Chairman Satian Chatban-cha estimated it had been buried about eight years ago. He said he tried to cut into the skin with a sharp knife but was unable to penetrate it, and that the bones appeared to bear strange alphabetical markings.

The chill factor deepened when Phra Tha Thitsirilo, 79, of Paudompraisorn Temple, said, "Often in the early morning darkness, I have seen strange light emanating from the area where the body was buried and streaming up into the sky.

"This most often happened on Buddhist holidays. I tried to find the exact source of the light, but was unable to. I haven't seen the light for about a month.

"Now, with the discovery of this corpse, many people think that the light I saw must have come from the corpse – and they think it's a miracle," he said.

Source: *Daily News*

## A little extra in the kitty

SONGKHLA: While the myth that Marilyn Monroe had a sixth toe surgically removed may be one of the greatest urban legends of all time, a kitten in Chana District is the real deal: it has six claws on each paw instead of the normal complement of just five.

But while this may be bad luck for the rats, cockroaches, house lizards and other vermin that infest Village 4 of Tambon Banna, local residents are sure that the cat, named

Boonlua, is a harbinger of good luck.

In fact, many neighbors have appeared at the doorstep of owner Prakong Trakulkij, 58, asking if they could rub the little pussy. They believe doing so will somehow transmit to them the winning digits in the lottery draw.

But the beleaguered owner is not so enthusiastic about all the attention his kitten has attracted. "I really have to plead with these people to stop bothering my cat," he said.

Source: *Daily News*

A storm is brewing in the Andaman Sea, but it is not part of the annual monsoon. As record numbers of tourists enter the Similans Marine National Park, a group of well-established dive tour operators are calling for limits, arguing that the park is dangerously overcrowded and suffering from environmental damage.

The islands are still listed in many guidebooks as being among the world's Top 10 diving destinations, the kind of attraction that has caused divers and other tourists to flock there.

The result? Overcrowding that has created dangerous stresses to the islands' delicate marine and terrestrial ecosystems.

Located about 100 kilometers northwest of Phuket, the Similans' greatest protection has always been remoteness. But dive operators feel that the park is heading in the same direction as Phi Phi Marine National Park, which has been described by many as an "environmental catastrophe", one brought on by exactly the same forces now at work in the Similans.

The Similans do enjoy protection as a Marine National Park, but illegal fishing, overcrowding of dive sites and too many overnight campers are pushing the islands to breaking point.

Tour operators and park officials agree that overcrowding is a serious problem, but there is less agreement about what, if anything, can be done to preserve the islands' pristine ecosystems.

The man in the middle of this maelstrom is Similan Marine National Park Chief Vithaya Hongvengchan. He admits that the number of tourists entering the park is increasing annually, but says he is now re-evaluating just how many tourists should be allowed into the park during its six-month open season, from November 15 to May 15.

Figures tallied from entry fee receipts show that just over 50,000 visitors entered the park in 2003. By the end of the 2004 season, however, K. Vithaya expects 54,000 visitors will have entered the park, about 9,000 a month during high season, or 300 a day.

In an effort to cap the arrivals, the park designated 2004 as the last year boats could register to ferry passengers into the park.

The moratorium might help

# THE SIMILANS

## Is Paradise at risk of going all to hell?

A special investigation by the *Gazette's* Stephen Fein and Sangkhae Leelanaporn

in the long run, but in the short term it seems to have backfired. The number of registered vessels skyrocketed from 40 boats last year to 126 in 2004, with tour operators from as far away as Pattaya registering vessels with the park in a desperate attempt to get a foot in the door before it is slammed shut.

K. Vithaya has also taken action against unscrupulous tour operators, the kind who engage in false advertising by telling customers that the islands have facilities that don't exist and who bring in more tourists than the park's limited overnight facilities can accommodate.

The park contains basic, reasonably-priced rooms and tents that can be booked in advance. Four of the islands offers such accommodation, for about 200 tourists each.

But in the recent past, as many as 6,000 tourists were brought to the islands over long holidays, each thinking they had a place to stay, only to find out that the facilities were fully booked.

After paying a tidy sum and being promised comfortable rooms, many had to sleep on the beach. K. Vithaya said he has solved this problem, however, by refusing to license cheating tour companies to operate in the park.

The park is also re-evaluating how many tourists should be allowed to stay overnight on the

islands, he said, because all of the trash they generate needs to be ferried out.

He estimates that tourists generate 500 kilograms to one tonne of garbage a week. Of this, 70% is carried away by dive boats. The remaining 30% is taken out by park officers on weekends, he said.

But trash isn't the only problem. This year, supplies of fresh water were only just enough to meet demand, he added – and that was only thanks to some unexpected heavy rain.

"I am worried that the Similans will become another Phi Phi Island if we do not control the situation now," K. Vithaya said, voicing everyone's greatest fear.

One person who has witnessed the Similans' growing popularity with distress is Dutchman Jeroen Deknatel, owner of both Fantasea Divers and Ocean Rover Cruises.

Having operated live-aboard diving trips to the islands since the late 1970s, Mr Deknatel is also worried that the Similans may be doomed to the same fate as Phi Phi.

"This issue is very dear to my heart," he told the *Gazette*. "In the late '70s and early '80s, I was one of the first operators to bring divers to both Phi Phi and the Similans. I know what both island groups were like then, and I dare not contemplate what the Similans will be like 10 years from now.

"There are simply too many people there at any given time. Just too many boats, too many bodies, too many divers, too much of everything. It's more than the islands can sustain," he said.

He is also pessimistic about the will of the Thai authorities to limit the number of visitors.

"Thai tourism authorities have a love affair with big numbers. They preach low-impact, niche tourism, but practice something entirely different: 'Bring on the busloads or boatloads of mass

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tourists, we need statistics showing bigger numbers than last year," he said sarcastically.

"Now, there is a huge influx of day-boats. A lot of live-aboard operators believe that the day-boats are really bad news for the Similans, because they tend to bring in less-experienced divers who do more coral damage and other things that can harm the environment.

"Most of the live-aboard divers are more experienced and tend to have better diving skills," he said.

"Many years ago, I was the first person to bring divers to the Similan Islands regularly. For many years I was sort of alone at the islands. If I go now, it's just heart-breaking - very sad," he said.

Among divemasters, words like "circus" and "zoo" are routinely used to describe conditions at popular dive sites. Even park chief Vithaya describes the situation as resembling an "open-air market under the water".

Alistair Beveridge, President of the Dive Operators' Club of Thailand (DOCT), Phuket Chapter, agrees that there are too many dive companies operating in the park.

"The problem started about three years ago when day-trip boats, catamarans and speed boats from Phuket and Tab Lamu

**"The Similans will be saved if there is strong leadership from the National Park and well-trained, enthusiastic park staff.**

**Most importantly, they will be saved if the dive operators work as one body."**  
- Alistair Beveridge, President of DOCT.

in Phang Nga started arriving," he said.

"The number of visitors began to rise dramatically. Until then, there was a relatively stable number of live-aboard boats. It is the day-trip operators who have increased the number of visitors.

"The islands' beauty and environment can be maintained. They should not be allowed to deteriorate into a Phi Phi-style environmental disaster.

"They will be saved if there is strong leadership from the National Park and well-trained, enthusiastic park staff.

"Most importantly, they will be saved if the dive operators work as one body and self-



regulate their operations," Mr Beveridge added.

"The National Park officials are doing a good job administering the park.

"They have limited manpower and resources, but try to use them as effectively as possible.

"It is also the responsibility of each dive operator to help 'police' the park by assisting park staff where necessary. The park staff should improve communication with the dive companies

and inform them when some new policy is about to be implemented," he said.

But Fantasea Divers' Mr Deknatel thinks that too many people, both government officials and tour operators, view the park as a "cash cow" rather than as a fragile marine ecosystem. He also thinks that the reported 9,000 visitors a month is far lower than the actual figure.

Though he says he respects park chief Vithaya as a man of honesty and integrity, he is less

complimentary about the way the park is administered.

He thinks the system used to collect park entrance fees from divers leads to corruption by some park staff who collect park fees, then under-report the actual number of divers and pocket the difference.

"Everyone can see how many boats there are now," Mr Deknatel said. "If you do the math, it is clear that the amount of money the park officially declares as income from fees is much lower than the amount there should be," he told the *Gazette*.

Park chief Vithaya agrees that some people are taking advantage of the situation, but in his opinion it is the divemasters who are cashing in.

Thais pay 40 baht to enter the park and foreigners pay 200 baht. But all those who enter to scuba dive are charged an additional 200-baht-a-day "user" fee, regardless of nationality.

Park chief Vithaya told the *Gazette* that some divemasters can rake in as much as 30,000 baht on a single tour by charging their customers the fees, then under-reporting the number of divers they are bringing in and pocketing the difference.

He also cites the failure of divemasters to provide him with their diving plans as another major problem, turning fee collection into a game of cat-and-mouse.

And with the increasing number of vessels - many of them speedboats - it's almost impossible for the park officials in their longtail boats to keep track of everyone who enters the park.

When told that park chief Vithaya suspected divemasters of malfeasance, Mr Deknatel replied, "K. Vithaya is a good person and I believe he is sincere. His natural reaction is to point the finger at cheating divemasters. The dive operators' natural reaction is to accuse the park staff.

"But the fact is that the ticket-and-receipt system used in the park is not watertight. There is probably some cheating going on, on both sides. All this could

**Continued on page 6**

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# Paradise in peril

Continued from page 5

be avoided if my plan [for a bidding and pre-payment system] were adopted," he said.

But bad environmental practices by divers and flimsy accounting are far from the worst threat to the islands, Mr Deknatel said.

"One of the most glaring shortcomings of the park staff is their inability to ban commercial fishing boats from park waters.

"I can hardly blame them. Going head-to-head with the fishermen is dangerous. The park officials' superiors in Bangkok should back them up and get the Navy or Marine Police to protect the park rangers.

"Chief Vithaya once told me there have been several occasions where he or his colleagues have been threatened and even shot at," he said.

"Currently, islands No. 1 and No. 2 are off-limits to divers and I do not know of any dive operator who has violated this ban. What I do know is that there are local people who have good contacts with certain naval authorities.

"They boast of going to these off-limit islands to enjoy diving, spear-fishing and camping on the beach. I wonder what happens to the turtle eggs there?"

"It is an open secret among sport fishing operators that they can fish at these islands at night without fear of being caught by the park authorities.

"Again, this proves that there is nothing to gain by declaring certain parts of the islands off-limits to divers. It only in-

creases pressure on the other areas and denies [the off-limits islands] the protection that the presence of dive boats gives," he said.

"For this same reason, the Similans should not be closed for six months a year. As soon as the dive boats leave, the commercial fishing trawlers move in.

"Dive boats can be the eyes and ears of the authorities. This is what helped to stop dynamite fishing in Thai waters a long time ago," he concluded.

Sea Rover divemaster Hans Tibboel agrees that the trawlers are the biggest threat to the health of the islands.

"The biggest danger is the enormous pressure of fishing trawlers and boats that drop anchors and garbage on the reefs and put their nets, traps and lines right on top of the fragile coral," he said.

Like most divers, he would like to see commercial fishermen banned from the park, except for shelter during bad weather.

He also thinks the number of boats of any kind poses dangers and that many divemasters need better training.

"It's not uncommon at all nowadays in the Similans or at Richelieu Rock to see dive boats passing too close or speeding over surfacing or descending divers. What surprises me is that no real accidents have happened so far this year.

"It's a zoo out here, and sooner or later something really bad will probably happen because there are so many clowns out here," he said.



**BEACH INVASION:** As another landing craft hoves into view, this lucky tourist might not be getting away from it all.

While the number of day-trip dive operators has increased, they aren't the only ones making day-trips into the park. An increasing number of day-tourists are now being transported to the Similans for hiking, beach exploring and snorkeling.

The most notable tourist carrier is the *Seatran Express 2*, a high-tech vessel that cruises at 30 knots, fast enough and large enough to carry 160 passengers to the islands in just over two hours from its berth in Patong Bay.

Seatran Managing Director Tanan Tanphaibul told the *Gazette* that the ferry is now averaging 50-60 passengers a day, though the numbers are far higher on weekends and on long holidays.

*Express 2* has successfully done what would have been unthinkable a few years ago; it has put the Similans within reach of weekend tourists from Bangkok.

But while the arrival of *Express 2* every day may cause some commotion and noise pol-

lution [its tour guides herd the day trippers about using megaphones], its physical toll on the islands is limited.

All of the equipment the day-trippers need, including masks and snorkels, is kept on the island and reused. Most Seatrans tourists go ashore empty-handed for a few hours, after eating a buffet lunch aboard the vessel. Its holding tanks allow wastes to be discharged in deep waters, far from the park, during the return trip.

Like everyone the *Gazette* spoke to, K. Tanan expressed great concern over the Similans' future. He thinks the six-month closure is good for the park because it gives the environment time to recuperate.

Park chief Vithaya does not think day trippers create the same kind of environmental stress as those who stay overnight or those on dive trips who stay long enough to need provisions – and generate waste.

He also noted that *Express*

2 has its own buoy, unlike many dive vessels that scramble for mooring spots. There are no piers on any of the islands.

K. Vithaya noted that speedboats operating day trips tend to race from site-to-site, grabbing moorings ahead of the larger live-aboard boats, and sometimes not waiting in line.

This creates the kind of friction that could be avoided if everybody would abide by park rules and submit their dive plans, he said, though he noted that the arrival of inspectors from the Crime Suppression Division has helped to bring about better compliance.

K. Vithaya wants to set up three zones in the park, so that inexperienced divers would not be permitted into areas with abundant coral, in order to prevent damage to the best reefs.

Noted underwater photographer Mark Strickland branded the scheme unworkable, if only because it raised questions about who could judge who is an "experienced" diver and who is not.

K. Vithaya, however, did not see things that way. "These companies seem interested only in profit," he said. "I think if they were sincere about conserving our natural resources, they would support my plan for strict zoning measures," he said.

With divers, illegal fishermen, commercial tour operators and other vested interests all competing for the Similans' limited resources, it's clear that finding an equitable solution to the problem could be a long way off.

But if one isn't found soon, there may not be much left to fight over. Some dive operators are already turning their attention to more remote sites – in Burma.

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**SINGHA NEW LOOK**



# Smart cards to track student loans

The government is considering using new chip-embedded ID cards to track the employment records of graduates and to remit their student loan repayments, Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra has announced.

Under the system, borrowers would pay tuition and education expenses with their smart card, and the transactions would be automatically debited from their student-loan accounts.

After a grace period, each graduate's ID card will be used to compute repayment installments based on the graduate's earnings and automatically suspend repayments if his or her income drops below a certain level.

PM Thaksin said the scheme would make higher education more accessible and less dependent on state support.

Another expected result is the reduction of the default interest rate on student loans because the repayments will be tied to salaries.

**Caving in:** Villagers on Koh Mook in Trang ended a two-day blockade of the popular Morakot (Emerald) Cave after authorities agreed to transfer the island's national park chief. About 500 villagers used their longtail boats to block the sea entrance to the cave, a popular tourist site in the Sikao District.

Villagers called for Prayoon Srisuwan, chief of the Hat Chao Mai National Park, to be removed, claiming he had ordered park officials to fell 100 coconut trees on the island, thus harming its environment.

Kampol Wongteerarat, the director of the Parks Department office for southern Thailand, met with the representatives of the angry villagers for three hours. Villagers agreed to end the blockade after he pledged to remove K. Prayoon.

**Thai Janet Jackson?** Police are searching for a dancer who abruptly peeled off her top during a Songkran dance at The Market shopping mall in Pattaya.

The young woman, identified only as "Nong Bo", was one

of five dancers hired to spice up Songkran festivities at the mall with a mermaid performance. Before a throng of shoppers, Nong Bo suddenly ripped off her top, leaving only a chain of shells hanging over her breasts. Witnesses said they saw stickers covering her nipples.

A spokesman for the Royal Thai Police condemned Nong Bo's act as obscene and pledged to take action against her and those behind the performance. Organizers of the show denied they had paid her to remove her top. Committing an obscene act in public in Thailand is punishable by a 500-baht fine.

**Teens in Thailand:** Literary descriptions of life as a young person in Thailand have won Chompunoot Tangtavorn and Esther Joy McCarty tickets to Ireland to attend the IMPAC Dublin Literary Awards.

The two girls wrote winning essays for the Junior IMPAC Dublin Literary Awards for Thailand. Entrants were asked to describe in writing their feelings on what it is like being a teenager in Thailand today.

K. Chompunoot, winner of the Thai category, is a graduate of Triam Udom Suksa and has won many awards, including a government scholarship to study law in France. Although writing poetry is her passion, she said she would eventually like to work as a government official.

Winner of the non-Thai category was a 17-year-old American, Esther Joy McCarty, who said her experience living among foreign cultures has made her anything but a typical teen.

She said that teenagers around the world share characteristics, particularly the desire for independence.



**HE'S THE ONE!** Miss Tiffany Universe 2004, Saknarind Malyaporn, 19, is congratulated by, from left, runner-up Kittirat Sukpoon, 21, and second runner-up Prakorb Charonkul, 20, after winning the coveted title in Pattaya. In October, transgender contestants from more than 40 countries will come to Pattaya to compete in the Miss International Queen contest, to be held in Thailand for the first time.

Like K. Chompunoot, Miss McCarty said that she believes her parents have played a major role in shaping her outlook. She came with her parents from the US to Thailand three years ago, and the family settled in Chiang Mai.

**Floral crisis:** Wildfires scorched 1,250 rai in Doi Inthanon National Park in Chiang Mai, ravaging thousands of 50-year-old ericaceae shrubs and threatening the park's ecosystem.

It will take more than 10 years for the flowering ericaceae shrub, the park's symbol, to recover to normal levels, said

Veerachai na Nakhon, director of Mae Rim Botanical Garden. Other important species, such as orchids and ferns, could also disappear from area, he said.

A forest official blamed the fires on hot, dry conditions and careless hunters who light fires to create smoke to drive their prey into the open.

**Patent pending:** Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra voiced his support for a plan to manufacture bomb- and drug-detection machines for use at Immigration checkpoints after he inspected a Thai-designed device at a university in Chiang Mai.

PM Thaksin recently visited the Fast Neutron Research Facility at Chiang Mai University's Department of Physics, where Prof Thiraphat Vilaithong said he and his colleagues had been researching the subject for more than 20 years.

The researchers have already applied for a patent for a detection device they designed. They plan to upgrade the machine if it receives government support.

*Around the Nation news roundup is sourced from the pages of The Nation and Kom Chad Luek newspapers.*

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# Early closing bars the doors

As bar owners adjust to a more strictly enforced closing time, their clientèle has changed behavior as well. Previously, the bars at Centre Point were the focal point for punters looking for late-night activity and after-hours entertainment.

However, with 2 am closing being enforced – at least on an intermittent basis – many local bars have lost their allure. Some are up for sale, and others have closed for good.

Late-night revelers have moved on to bars on the periphery of Ao Nang, outside the tourist areas, where the closing time is not enforced and they can party all night long.

The KR Bar seems to be the only bar at Centre Point with customers. Owner Sayan Yootkoon says that business has softened since the crackdown on 2 am closing began, but that his bar has been able to survive since it does not cater to the bar girl scene.



## ACROSS THE BAY

By Gus Reynolds

already appears to have started – it seems timely to give an update on the popular entertainment venues in the area.

As noted, most of the bars at Centre Point will be closed, and some for good. KR Bar will keep its doors open, along with the Full Moon House, the oldest, best-known bar in Ao Nang. Most of the beachfront restaurants will be open. Silvano Silvagni, the cordial owner of La Luna Italian Restaurant, has already returned to Italy for three months, so his shop will probably close after the Songkran holidays.

English John, owner of the English Rose restaurant, has also returned home, so no more Sunday roasts there for a while. Instead, head up to the Irish Rover, where Kevin and staff serve roasts and a good selection of draft beers.

Encore Café will keep playing tunes, with four nights of live music weekly. Monday and Fridays will see Déjà Vu playing jazz and pop, while on Tuesdays and Thursdays the house will rock with classic rock hits from The Beaters. JJ's will continue to show all major sports events live and the two premier steak houses, Café 154 and Carnivore, will continue serving dinner.

**Rent roundup:** There are some signs that the rents at Centre Point may fall. While most of the owners of the beer bars at the complex are locked in for three years, there are still vacant lots there. One space, which previously rented for 200,000 baht a year, has been reported as rented for about 30,000 baht a year after it sat vacant for 18 months.

Rental prices on the beachfront remain strong, with reports of record high prices being paid for next season. Let's just hope for more customers next year.

**Getting set for the wet:** As we approach the beginning of the official low season – for many it

**Clean start:** People say that long-term expats are cynical and jaded. And for sure, there are a



**RIDING OUT THE ROUGH:** Early closing time has resulted in less late-night revelry at Centre Point, where the rent for one site reportedly plummeted after the lot was vacant for 18 months.

number of them that fall into that category. On the other hand, it is always amazing to see the gullibility of the average newcomer to Thailand. Holiday visitors and tourists are attracted by the easy-going nature of Thai people, the excellent food, scenery and weather.

However, taking a holiday and doing business are different matters. As newcomers look around and comment on the business opportunities begging, they don't even consider the complexities of a different language, culture and legal system.

As a result, many an aspir-

ing business person has experienced disastrous results trying to establish a business here. Several consulting firms have been started in Krabi over the years to help newcomers find their way through the maze of immigration, tax and legal issues.

But it is always amazing to see newbies who think they are different and can do it alone, engaging in totally illogical and self-destructive behavior.

For example, would you pay a deposit to buy a home – without seeing a title deed or doing a title search, much less without a contract – to a person you met just a few days earlier?

"But they are such nice people," comes the usual reply.

"In fact, they even drove me to the bank to make the withdrawal." Well, we now have a bitter expat who is 100,000 baht poorer and is still shaking his head in amazement at his own stupidity. True story.

There are enough of these stories to fill a book, one which I intend to write one day. Some stories are funny, most are not. Con artists play on the gullibility of newcomers, separating them from a good deal of their money.

The next time you find an old-time expat making a cynical comment, remember that they have probably seen it all over the years. If you buy them a beer, you might get some good advice.

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# This week



**A ROSE-TINTED SPECTACLE:** Phuket Vice-Governor Pongpow Ketthong (right) and actress Sikharintarn Plaipluet joined Hiran Moosopon at the opening of his new entertainment venue, The Crocodile, in Patong.



**WHITE NIGHTS:** The opening party of South Sea Pakarang Resort and Spa in Khao Lak was attended by, from left: Bogdan Goralczyk, Polish Ambassador to Thailand; Nantana Sujiratan, Director and Group General Manager of the resort; Danish Ambassador to Thailand Ulrik Helweg-Larsen and his wife; and Rear Adm Amornchote Sujiratan, Chief of Staff, Third Naval Area Command.



**MEDALLION MEN ... AND WOMAN:** Enjoying themselves at the Chaîne des Rôtisseurs Phuket dining club's recent black-tie event at the Otowa Japanese Restaurant in Patong are (from left): Steven Roberto, Wine and Beverage Director of the Baan Rim Pa Group; Kiichi Nakamura, Otowa's Manager; Tom McNamara, MD of Baan Rim Pa; Junji Katakura, Executive Chef of Otowa; Sue Armstrong-Ulmann, Director of Marketing at Baan Rim Pa; and Martin Carpenter of Pleasure Worldwide Group.



**A LOAD OF ... LARGE, SPHERICAL OBJECTS:** Showing that they have plenty, the sales team of JW Marriott Phuket Resort and Spa celebrate a recent successful sales promotion.



**FAST FOOD:** Giorgio Pantano (center), driver with the Jordan-Ford Formula One team, took a quick pit stop at the Amari Coral Beach Resort before the recent Malaysian Grand Prix. He is flanked by the resort's Executive Assistant Manager, Daniel Zygmunt (left) and Executive Chef Alexander Mack.



**AND YOU TWO MAKE THREE:** Panomporn Lernlun (center), Managing Director of U2 Computer Company, with a couple of aluminum foil dishes at the launch of his bypass road venture.



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Dancing Norah requires an agile body and an equally agile mind, says Ajarn Yod Audsin.

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# SPIRIT

The spirit of the *kinaree* – a mythical being, half woman and half bird – has been with Yod Audsin since he was seven years old. Now aged 65, Ajarn Yod is the living embodiment of the southern folk dance, known as Norah, which captures and portrays the bird's spirit.

Colorful handmade costumes, elaborate headdresses and extraordinary body and hand movements create the enchantment that is the hallmark of Norah dancing.

But the dance, and the music that goes with it, is in constant need of preservation, as new generations seek different forms of entertainment.

Ajarn Yod's interest in Norah dancing was a legacy that came down the generations. It was passed to him when he was growing up in Trang, by his father.

The Norah Yod Chai Phuket Group is an attempt to make sure that the skills and traditions of the dance are enjoyed, and preserved.

For Ajarn Yod, the learning continues with the passing years. Only through constant practice

can he maintain his knowledge and the suppleness of body required to perform the movements perfectly.

The future of Norah dancing relies on a marriage of tradition and technology. When Ajarn Yod needs to organize a dance

night, he picks up a mobile phone and does some modern networking. He calls brothers and sisters, cousins and friends who can dance and play musical instruments.

If he's in his traditional head-dress and costume, that's quite a sight – especially if his fingers still have their curly metal stalls on them, his "Norah nails".

When he arrived at Thalang in 1999, Ajarn

Yod taught Norah at Baan Lipon. There was no shortage of students; many young people wanted to learn the timeless dance and to have the spirit of the bird running through their veins.

Ajarn Yod conducted popular classes at the Baan Kanaan Council of Cultural Affairs in Thalang.

These days, he no longer teaches but he is kept busy practicing and performing. His wife

## A life in progress

By Siripansa Somboon



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# OF THE KINAREE



works at a market while he potters in his garden. But Ajarn Yod still maintains the spirit of the bird

by doing the Norah dance with a troupe about once a fortnight. He also continues to train

10 former students, continuing the legacy.

The discipline in Norah is

strict, with successive generations of students being required to pay respect to their teacher.

Failure to uphold the principles can mean bad luck befalling wrong-doers, causing them to lose their appetite or become more seriously ill.

The dance involves 12 lessons, and 12 postures. In addition to being beautiful, dancers need to be gentle, and pliable – right-angle finger bends are required.

An agile mind is required, too – the dancers often have to recite poetry to explain the story of the dance.

Backing for the dancers is usually supplied by a troupe of musicians playing drums, pipes, gongs, cymbals and castanet-like clappers.

Norah dancing has a special place at celebrations and cremations, and religious ceremonies.

A performance in Phuket or the surrounding provinces can vary in cost depending on the number of performers required, the cost of equipment, food and travel, and the length of time of the show, which may vary from 30 minutes to five or six hours.

About 5,000 baht will cover a two-hour performance, while a group involving about 50 dancers and musicians over several hours could cost as much as 30,000 baht.

Ajarn Yod and his group have performed at about 80 venues around Phuket in the past few years. As he continues to spur interest in Norah dancing, and the spirit of the bird seems safe with him.

Anyone wishing to arrange a Norah dance performance should contact Ajarn Yod at Tel: 076-313402 or 07-2712397, or call the Tourism Authority of Thailand at Tel: 076-212213.

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# Thailand TRAVELER

By Bill Owen

Having recently spent time in Thailand's Deep South, it was a refreshing change to spend a few days in the peace and calm of Hua Hin.

Despite an increasing number of hotels and resorts, Hua Hin still manages to maintain its sleepy backwater appeal, and because it is not far from Bangkok, the place has been a favorite weekend destination for residents of the capital over the years.

Being the Thai Royal Family's favorite beach retreat has also helped Hua Hin's success as a local tourist destination. Here, when staying at their Royal Palace, HM King Bhumibol Adulyadej and his children were often seen sailing in the calm waters of the Gulf.

The palace is still used frequently today and the royal entourage are often seen driving through the city.

The beaches are spacious and clean, although not of the quality or charm offered by Phuket or Samui. Like many traditional resorts, Hua Hin offers such popular old-time attractions

as horse riding along the beach.

We were fortunate to be offered a few free nights' stay with my friend John Gill, Resident Manager at the Dusit Resort and Polo Club, a few kilometers north of the town, near Cha-Am. This is a lovely resort that showcases all that's best of the Dusit hotels. If you are passing en route to Bangkok or the

North, it is certainly worth a few days to stop, relax and pamper yourself there.

Well-known for its innovative style, the hotel is home to several quirky and fun activities, such as its famed Elephant Polo Games, and host to the excellent Hua Hin Cricket Sixes – both events well worth attending.

On the first evening, we

popped in for a sundowner at the elegant Sofitel Hua-Hin Resort, formerly the old Railway Hotel. This resort still retains its classic style, with its well-manicured beachside gardens and its British colonial-style buildings.

We spent time wandering through the small streets of the town and visited the sprawling night market, which is definitely worthwhile. Although similar

handicrafts and gifts are found at Phuket markets, items at this market are far cheaper and shopping there involves the proper tradition of *friendly* bargaining.

Later, a quick sortie into Soi Bintaht, which is full of the usual bars and referred to by many locals as the town's Soi Disappointment. I wonder why? It's definitely worth a short visit just to see the slightly wilder side of town.

For those in need of a quieter hangout, head to Naresdamri Rd, with its many local restaurants and bars.

Off Naresdamri Rd, in the Hua Hin Bazaar, is one of the local expats' favorite hangouts, which is run by a Scot known simply as Billy. Billy's Bar offers the usual bar services of pool, live Premier League football and ice-cold beers. They serve a pretty mean cocktail too, thanks to the friendly K. Yai.

Another fun hangout with good food and drink can be found in front of the new Hilton Hua Hin Resort & Spa, also on Naresdamri Rd. Hua Hin's own brewery, with its good food and excellent German-style beers, is a little touristy but offers good service and booze.

*Bill Owen has lived in Phuket and worked in Phuket's travel industry for more than 15 years. He can be contacted by email at: owen\_b@hotmail.com.*



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### How to Get There

By plane: fly to Bangkok, then take a limousine or taxi from the airport, from about 2,500 baht. It is possible to fly direct from Bangkok to Hua Hin, but the time spent transferring from one flight to another is about the same as it takes to drive there.

By bus: overnight buses to Bangkok depart Phuket daily at 6 pm, and pass through Hua Hin about 5 am. Tickets from 650 baht a person.

By train from Surat Thani: Train tickets from Surat Thani from 550 baht, subject to class and availability.

### Where to Stay

Five-star pampering at the Dusit Resort and Polo Club, from 4,800 baht a night. Tel: 032-540009.

Three-star Pavilion Village – good downtown location with excellent value rooms and beautiful Thai-style décor and designs, from 2,000 baht a night. Tel: 032-533433.

For the budget-conscious, try one of the many small guest-houses found on Soi Bintaht.

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# Spiritual renewal for the Na Goo

At what point do cultural traditions become so over-hyped and commercialized that they become sad mockeries of themselves?

In the West, Christmas has largely degraded into an orgy of consumerism, while Thailand's once delightful Songkran festival has descended into an exercise in immodest self-indulgence.

Perhaps when it comes to cultural traditions, smaller really is better. Those hoping to see for themselves may want to get up early on May 1 and check out the annual Boat Floating Festival celebrated by Phuket's indigenous inhabitants, the Na Goo, or *Chao Lay* or Sea Gypsies as they are known to Thais and others.

The estimated 2,000 Na Goo living at Laem Nga on Koh Sireh traditionally hold the festival on the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> days of the sixth and 11<sup>th</sup> lunar months. This year, the first of these pairs of dates falls on May 1 and 2.

Similar in many respects to the Loy Kratong festival, the Boat Floating Festival is intended to drive out evil and call on ancestral spirits to bring good luck.

Phuket's three Na Goo villages all celebrate the festival, though not necessarily on the same days. Traditions also vary slightly in terms of the construction methods used to make the small, ceremonial boats that are at the center of the celebration, but the intent is essentially the same.

The hand-carved vessels, about 1.5 meters long, can also perhaps be thought of as the equivalent of "floating spirit houses" for a people whose traditional home is on the sea, rather than on land.

One fount of knowledge about the Boat Floating Festival



A link with the seafaring past: the ceremonial model boat takes a one-way voyage carrying the Na Goo villagers' hopes and prayers. Inset: Mae Jiew.

is 70-year-old Mae Jiew, probably the most well-known of Phuket's Na Goo. As leader of the Porn Sawan Group, a Na Goo dance troupe, she holds an award from HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn for her work in traditional dance.

She outlined the festival activities. "About four or five days beforehand, the men carve the boats from a certain kind of palm tree that is indigenous to the area," she explained.

"The small boat is decorated with orchids. All the Na Goo join together at the community's central *sala* to help and the women also prepare a large meal," she explained.

"The village headman collects 100 baht from each family, which is used to pay for decorations, sweets and food," she said.

Not only food, but also special garments are required for the big day, Mae Jiew explained.

"The important thing is that everything worn must be new and colorful, because the festival is

one of renewal. Showing off one's new clothes to friends is an important part of the tradition, especially among the children, who spend a lot of time running from house to house showing off their garments," she said.

"After this, everyone gathers at the central *sala*. The headman makes announcements via a public address system. Some of the older people give their children money, so in this sense it is almost like Chinese New Year," she said.

Well before dawn the following day, sweets and other food are brought to the community's hillside shrine, where they are offered to the ancestral spirits. At dawn, the boat is blessed by the headman, who calls on the ancestors by saying, "We, the Na Goo, have carved this boat as a representation of all Na Goo vessels, and we invite our ancestors with us on all our voyages."

Aboard the ceremonial boat are wooden dolls, made from the leftover wood scraps. Each Na

Goo must make his or her own doll, which can be personalized with nail clippings and strands of hair. The vessel is also laden with rice, sweets, banknotes and other offerings to please the spirits.

The Na Goo are happy to share this tradition, which is thought to be at least 200 years old. "Both Thai and foreign tourists come to see the festival. Some make merit by donating money, which the Na Goo add to the boat's precious cargo.

"Other visitors pray for wealth and good health. They also can put their own fingernail clip-

pings and strands of hair into the boat," she explained.

"But if they want to take part in the feast, they have to bring their own food," she added.

After this, the Na Goo perform their own

version of the Southern Thai dance called the *Ram Rong Ngeng*, led of course by Mae Jiew. All of the villagers join in with unrestrained passion, circling the small craft in heartfelt song and dance.

After all the preliminaries have been performed, the small boat is finally pushed out to sea on its one-way voyage.

"The boat can never be brought back to shore. If anyone does this, they will have committed a great sin," explained Mae Jiew. "This is never a problem because nobody would ever dare to do such a thing."

After the boat is put to sea, the Na Goo have a two-day party, feasting and having fun.

"This festival may seem small compared with other Thai traditional festivals, it is unique to the Phuket Na Goo, the first settlers of Phuket," Mae Jiew added proudly.



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Above: After opening Bike Week, Interior Minister Bhokin Bhalakula took time to meet some of the bikers. Below: Ready to rumble.



# Wheeler Dealers

## BIKE WEEK IN PHUKET



Members of Heaven's Devils gather with their bikes.



A winning smile from Miss Phuket Bike Week 2004, Elena Volkova of Russia.

## HEARD & scene

The *Gazette's* **Rittiwat Suwannarattaphum** and **Athairat Muangkong** went out and about and asked, "What is the one thing about yourself that you never want to see in print?" Amazingly, some people told them.



**Tassawan Julaium**  
Age: 22  
From: Phuket  
Occupation: Student

I never want to see my nose in print. It is laughably flat and usually bothers me in public because I am self-conscious. People who see my flat nose in print might giggle, possibly assuming that I come from Isarn or Laos. This could be a topic of ridiculous gossip among my friends.



**Paul Tee**  
Age: 27  
From: Malaysia  
Occupation: Teacher

I don't want to see my thoughts in print. They are really private and letting others know what I am thinking might get me into trouble. Who knows? I am probably thinking right now of Madonna kissing me at our wedding ceremony. I just don't want people to see what's on my mind.



**Najnapak Kittitornkul**  
Age: 23  
From: Krabi  
Occupation: Student

One thing I never want to see in print is the calves of my legs. They are really huge, as big as the ones you see on professional soccer players. Some people might think I'm David Beckham's twin. My calves look terrible. But they are just the right size for taking free kicks.



**Romlee Sulongseu**  
Age: 33  
From: Nakhon Ratchassima  
Occupation: Manager

I wouldn't like to see in print pictures of myself when I am crazy drunk, crawling and vomiting, with a beer bottle jammed in my mouth. This might make other people see me in a negative light. I just don't want them to think of me as a drunk, though I do like to take a drink now and then.



**Maki Kaneko**  
Age: 32  
From: Japan  
Occupation: Teacher

One thing about myself I never want to see in print is my eyebrows. I've got little eyebrows, which really makes me shy. My friends often laugh at me because of this as well. If my eyebrows were put in print, I might have to paint in fake ones, just so other people couldn't recognize me.

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KIDS

THE FUN PAGE  
FOR ALL  
THE FAMILY

Hidden Words

Hidden in the grid below are the names of at least 20 novelists. The words may read vertically, horizontally or diagonally. They may also read right-to-left or down-to-up. See if you can find more than your family or friends. Score: More than 10, good; more than 15, very good; 20 or more, excellent.

P	E	M	W	P	C	J	I	C	C	A	P	X	F	J
Y	I	O	A	J	D	Z	O	G	U	H	R	C	T	U
E	T	R	D	H	Y	Q	I	B	Q	E	T	T	D	J
L	S	H	P	D	G	K	Q	X	G	B	Q	W	R	K
X	I	H	A	J	X	U	Y	K	E	I	D	O	N	I
U	R	P	E	M	W	I	A	R	N	Q	I	N	H	K
H	H	K	C	M	M	V	J	M	W	Q	C	M	P	U
L	C	Y	E	T	I	E	R	P	N	G	K	W	V	A
J	Z	M	W	O	S	N	T	E	R	J	E	S	A	Y
T	C	A	K	L	H	L	G	T	N	T	N	R	C	J
Y	I	O	I	B	E	J	H	W	O	K	S	S	T	Q
N	C	X	Q	V	R	I	A	L	A	Y	L	T	V	P
D	Q	K	E	T	W	O	S	O	K	Y	R	U	D	J
C	E	T	M	B	O	T	N	S	S	E	L	W	A	Z
O	L	N	W	L	O	K	V	T	B	A	T	A	I	F
R	X	L	N	Y	D	E	E	U	E	C	U	P	B	S
L	G	M	K	P	Y	I	A	L	L	E	V	A	L	C
I	X	L	S	O	N	L	L	G	T	L	U	Q	F	F
H	K	Q	T	B	F	M	E	L	V	I	L	L	E	A
R	W	S	E	F	I	T	Z	G	E	R	A	L	D	C
N	O	C	R	E	L	D	N	A	H	C	V	I	A	J
D	K	A	U	S	T	E	N	U	E	T	B	Z	T	O
M	R	Y	Y	G	J	B	H	K	K	R	L	P	D	Y
P	J	C	G	R	X	F	A	R	P	A	B	V	G	C
K	N	F	D	T	O	F	B	N	B	B	N	Z	K	E

Brain Buster!!

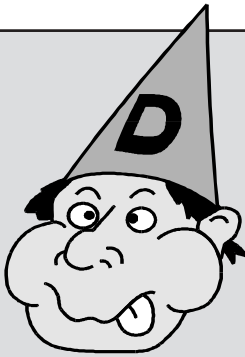
Q. One day, two mothers and two daughters went shopping for shoes. Their shopping spree was successful — each bought a pair of shoes, and all together, they had three pairs. How was this possible?

A. They were daughter, mother and grandmother.

Solution to last week's Crossword

B	U	T	T	E	R	I	N	G	U	P
	N		R		E		O		N	
A	C	N	E		S	W	O	R	D	S
	L		K		T		D		E	
S	E	T		S	A	I	L	O	R	S
U			O		U		E			E
M	A	S	C	A	R	A		E	T	C
	S		T		A		I		R	
S	P	R	A	I	N		C	H	I	C
	E		V		T		O		A	
I	N	C	E	S	S	A	N	T	L	Y

Get your brain  
in gear with  
The Monster Quiz



1. What is the correct word for the metal or plastic end of a shoelace?

2. From which language does the word “bizarre” derive?

3. What does the original word mean?

4. By what name was Rose Louise Hovick better known?

5. What would you use a cuspidor for?

6. Who was king of Denmark from 1905 to 1957?

7. Where would you
- find an inferior vena cava?

8. What is the Rann of Kutch?

9. What word can be used to refer to a spy, an animal, a stone barrier and a quantity of chemical?

10. By what name is Prince Siddharta better known?

11. What does *Sieg Heil* mean?

12. If you entered a gurning competition, what would you be required to do?

13. What is a *habanera*?

14. In what profession
- would you find laticinio used?

15. Which country is to the southwest of Lithuania?

16. Which part of the body is affected by coxalgia?

17. Who was King Arthur’s evil half-sister?

18. What weapons did a *retarius* use?

19. Which artist was nicknamed Le Douanier?

20. What is the main function of a farrier?
- Answers next week.

Never  
a Cross  
Word!

Across

6. Teacher’s headgear (6, 5).
7. Timbuktu country.
8. Rectangular.
10. Good at.
11. Tropical fruit.
14. Opposite of alkaline.
16. Deserve.
17. Eat and drink too much.

Down

1. Mr Duck.

	1		2		3		4		5
6									
7					8		9		
10						11			12
					13				
14		15					16		
17									

2. Disrobed.

3. Refrigerator or air
- conditioner gas.

4. Lower part of a wall.

5. Leisurely passage in music.

9. Omit (5, 3).

10. Brazil’s great river.

12. Vehicle shelter.

13. Perfume.

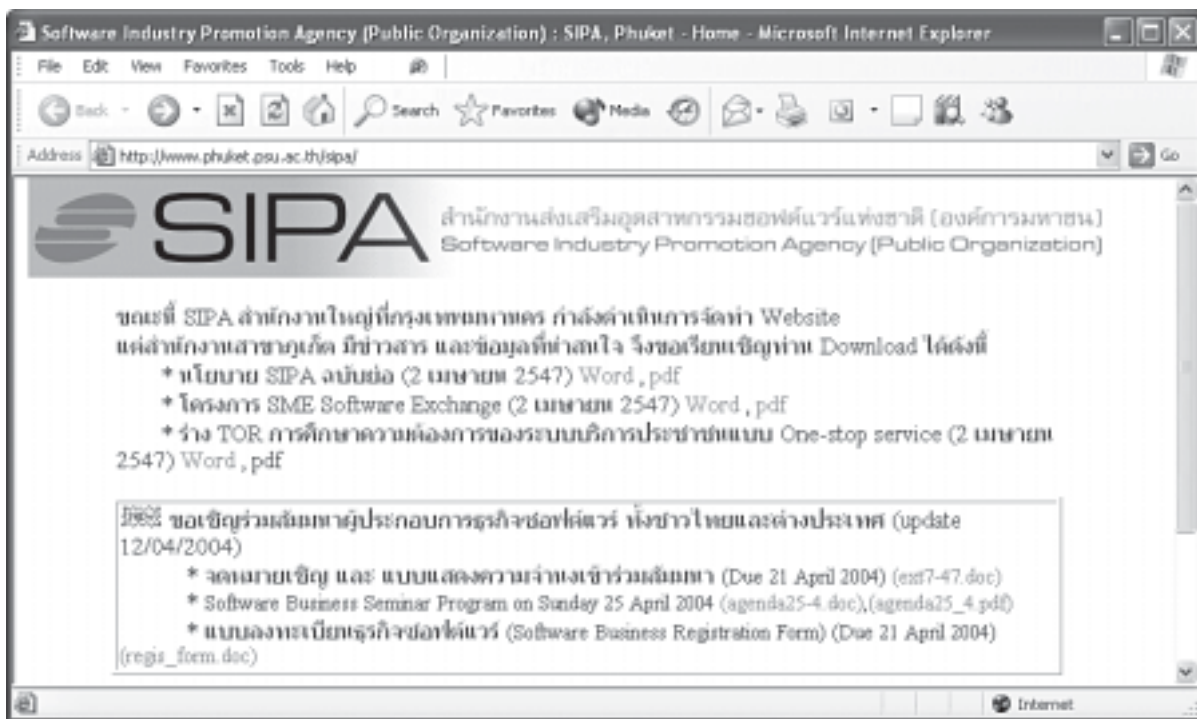
15. Thought.

ANSWERS TO LAST WEEK’S MONSTER QUIZ

1. Amherst; 2. Superman; 3. Cannibalism; 4. Catherine of Valois; 5. Victor Hugo; 6. \$650,000; 7. 1971; 8. Turkish; 9. British Crown Jewels; 10. -38.87°C; 11. Kirk Douglas; 12. Taking a bath; 13. Silk; 14. Oliver Cromwell; 15. Anne Boleyn; 16. Laudanum; 17. When in doubt, mumble; 18. John Wayne; 19. John Alcock and Arthur Whitten Brown; 20. Canada.

Solution next week.





Phuket's Software Industry Promotion Agency holds its first meeting on Sunday, April 25. If you're involved in software, this is one meeting you don't want to miss.

## Sipa takes its first steps

One hundred and sixty billion baht – roughly 4 billion euros or US dollars. That's the target market value for Phuket's software industry in 2009. Impossible, you say? Come meet the people who are determined to make it happen.

Phuket's information and communication technology systems will rival those in Singapore by 2006. Preposterous? These folks say it's definitely on the cards.

On Sunday, April 25, Phuket's Software Industry Promotion Agency (Sipa) holds its first Software Business Seminar. Sipa is hoping to draw representatives from every software company on the island.

If you're involved in software, there are powerful reasons to attend: sessions on Board of Investment requirements, "one stop" visa and work-permit processing, current problems with software production, and much more.

Dr Manoo Ordeedolchest, President of Sipa in Bangkok, will host the seminar, with the local Sipa team – Dr Pongsak Kerdvongbundit, President of Sipa Phuket, and Dr Rattana Wetprasit, Acting Manager – pulling it all together.

Full details, including an agenda and application form, are

at [www.phuket.psu.ac.th/sipa](http://www.phuket.psu.ac.th/sipa). If you're not too late, download the application, fill it out, and bring it with you to the seminar at Thavorn Grand Plaza Hotel in Phuket City, starting at 9 am on April 25. All of the morning sessions are in English. In the afternoon, they'll be a mix of Thai and English.

And if you are curious how Singapore is tackling many of the same challenges, check out [www.ida.gov.sg](http://www.ida.gov.sg).

**Lowdown from Low Yat:** My trip to Hong Kong's computer markets and open bazaars (bizarres?) left me a bit jaded, at least when it comes to pirated software. As I explained in my column a few weeks ago, bootleg software is widely available in almost any market in Hong Kong.

In Malaysia, with its less freewheeling government, I had expected much less in the way of counterfeit goods, but I was in for a surprise. I couldn't believe the masses of pirate software on offer in KL earlier this month. Shop after shop in the immaculate Low Yat Plaza, in the aging Imbi Plaza, even in the scruffy tourist shopping districts, offer pirate software by the bucket.

But by contrast, hardware

in Kuala Lumpur isn't cheap. I'd put it on a par with Panthip Plaza in Bangkok (although I'll re-confirm that observation soon when I hit Bangkok again).

That Linksys 802.11g Wi-Fi router that I've been using as a benchmark for comparing prices in Singapore, Hong Kong, the US and Bangkok couldn't be found in KL.

While cases of 802.11g hardware fly off the shelves in Hong Kong and Singapore, the Malaysian government has yet to determine if 802.11g is so much better than 802.11b that it represents a major threat to national security, or some such drivel.

Whatever the motivation, the net result is the same as in Bangkok: you can't buy the superior 802.11g technology in Kuala Lumpur, and nobody has any idea how long it will take before the powers-that-be will permit it to appear on shelves.

Meanwhile, the people of Kuala Lumpur put up with overpriced, second-rate technology, and watch as the folk in Singapore and Hong Kong rocket ahead.

While 802.11g technology languishes, the older 802.11b Wi-Fi technology is everywhere in KL. The major Internet Service Providers now sell "roaming" Wi-Fi hotspot packages.

For about 100 baht a month, you can get full access to any of the ISP's hotspots: walk into Starbucks, say, and if you subscribe to the correct ISP, your wireless Internet access is free. Same with hundreds of hotspots throughout the city. Most impressive.

– Woody Leonhard  
[woody@khunwoody.com](mailto:woody@khunwoody.com)

Woody Leonhard has written a number of books in the "...for Dummies" series on computing. Readers can contact him at: [woody@khunwoody.com](mailto:woody@khunwoody.com)

## WAR AS AN EXERCISE IN BOREDOM

War is a guy thing. When I go home to New York, I spend a lot of time on the couch with my brother-in-law

watching black-and-white footage of World War II on the History Channel. My sister can't understand this. As she points out, "It's not as if you don't know how it ends."

So I was overjoyed to receive as a present from my eldest daughter a freshly-minted hardbound book, *Intelligence in War: Knowledge of the Enemy from Napoleon to Al-Qaeda* (Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 2003, 384pp).

This is the 16<sup>th</sup> book by the English war historian, John Keegan, often called the best military historian of modern times.

In *Intelligence in War*, Keegan covers the role of intelligence in such events as Admiral Horatio Nelson's pursuit of the French fleet in Egypt in 1798, Stonewall Jackson's 1862 campaign in the Shenandoah Valley, the sinking of the German cruiser *Emden* in 1915, the German parachute invasion of Crete in 1942, the Battle of Midway and the Battle of the Atlantic.

I'm interested in all of this, especially events I know little about, such as the *Emden* sinking and the Crete campaign, but I regret to report that much of this book is a hard slog. Keegan is boring, repetitive, pompous and dry. He restates his theme a dozen times throughout the book, so this one in the middle will do for all:

"Results in war, in the last resort, are an affair of the body, not mind; of physical force, not plans or intelligence. Over the longer run, of course, a power of superior intellectual resource will, if its superiority translates in possession of superior industrial, technical and demographic means, ineluctably overcome a power inferior in those qualities. There are no examples in military

history of a state weaker in force than its enemy achieving victory in a protracted conflict. Force tells. Mind, however, is usually also its concomitant."

See what I mean? A total of 384 pages of this is a bit much. The view is almost always of the general or the admiral with few individual combat stories to add color and immediacy.

That said, there are any number of interesting nuggets. For instance, the war in the Pacific was decided in the space

of five minutes on June 4, 1942, at the Battle of Midway. After Lt Cdr Clarence McClusky spotted the wake of a destroyer that led to the Japanese fleet of four aircraft carriers, he led a dive bomb attack that sank three carriers in five minutes. The Pacific was American again.

The Americans had the crucial advantage of having broken the Japanese naval code. They knew the mighty Japanese fleet was headed for Midway.

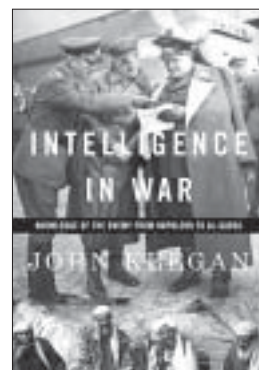
Keegan sums up the situation in a rare burst of eloquence: "The commanders of America's Pacific Fleet,

after the disaster of Pearl Harbor, the devastation of the air force in the Philippines, the defeat of the Java Sea and the drawn battle of the Coral Sea, had no margin of strength to dabble in diversions. Like a gambler with one last throw up his sleeve [Admiral Chester] Nimitz had to stake all on the appearance of the enemy at Midway. It was not a blind gamble. The American intelligence organization had counted the cards. By the end of May, the chips were stacked. The outcome depended on how the hands would be played."

But such writing is rare. There must be reasons Tom Clancy calls Keegan "the best military historian of our generation", but this book isn't one.

### Off the SHELF

By James Eckardt



'The American intelligence organization had counted the cards. By the end of May, the chips were stacked. The outcome depended on how the hands would be played.'

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# Clap hands, here comes chakra

Type in "energy body" on Google and endless descriptions will appear of how energy body affects our lives and how we are able to heal the physical body by bringing our focus to the energy body.

The anatomy of the energy body consists mainly of *meridians* (energy pathways) and *chakras* (energy centers). Acupuncture uses the meridians to open the pathways in the body just as energy healers use their hands to open blocked chakras.

You doubt? A headache, a sore knee and what do we do? Instinctively, we touch it, we bring our hands to where we feel pain. Perhaps proof that we all possess healing hands. Each hand has approximately 7,200 nerve endings (just imagine how much energy comes through them) and acts as a conductor to generate an efficient flow of energy through the body.

The hands can also assist in healing emotional wounds that block our chakras. Each *chakra* (*chakra* is a Sanskrit word meaning disc, wheel or vortex) has its own personality and carries an imprint of every important or emotional event you have experienced in this or past lives. Each major *chakra* is a maelstrom of energy.

There are seven main *chakras* in the energy body, positioned at seven points from the base of the spine to the top of the head. They are associated with the seven

Not everyone believes that Western medicine or conventional exercise regimens have all the answers.

Many alternative forms of therapy are advocated by a variety of people in Phuket. Here is one such view.



**ALTERNATIVE  
HEALTH**  
Rhonda Ann Clark

layers of a person's aura. If you look at the colors of the energy body (check out an image on the Internet) you will see that they correspond with the colors of the rainbow. They are:

**Red:** our base *chakra*, our physical connection to the earth and physical sensation, like a safety line or umbilical cord.

**Orange:** generally associated with our emotional life and feelings, and creativity and sexuality. This *chakra* is in the sacral area, at the lower end of the spine.

**Yellow:** this *chakra* is tucked away in the the solar plexus. It manifests knowledge and our mental life, and is the force that maintains one's individual identity.

**Green:** located in the heart, this *chakra* deals with giving and receiving, and with balance; this is where we metabolize the energy of love.

**Light blue:** in the thyroid gland area of the throat, this one is associated with expression and the power of the word.

**Indigo:** the sixth *chakra* is our third eye and is found in the pituitary gland at the base of the brain. It relates to intuition and and is the command center of the whole being.

**Purple:** the final *chakra* is found on the crown of the head. It is both our higher mind and our spiritual connection to the universal energy.

When we understand the *chakras* and their corresponding physical areas in the body, we are able to connect the emotions, sensations, thoughts and memories of our energy body to our physical body. We can then understand the nature of both health and disease, and, having awoken ourselves to the subtle energies in our bodies, we are able to heal ourselves.

When our physical body and our energy body are in balance, we live and experience life with less trauma and more harmony.

For more information on the energy body contact Rhonda Ann Clarke at the Movement Center at Tel: 01-7975065. Website: [www.phuketmoves.com](http://www.phuketmoves.com).

TAURUS (April 21-May 21): An opportunity that you believed to be out of reach moves tantalizingly closer. Those born under Taurus should soon be able to take their rightful places on the career ladder. Other areas of your life will also benefit from benevolent astrological influences and single bulls will be impressed by unexpected romantic attention. Wear emerald green to improve your financial situation.



GEMINI (May 22-June 21): Your good judgment in business matters proves to be useful this week. It should be impossible for others to pull the silk over your eyes, but at least one person is going to try. Keep a careful watch for snakes in the undergrowth and there should be no problem. A close relationship is subject to misunderstandings. Be clear about your intentions. Virgo has something interesting to say on Wednesday.



CANCER (June 22-July 23): The heat is on, but those born under Cancer will not be running on full power this week. Your batteries need charging and this could necessitate taking a couple of days off work to indulge in some quality rest and relaxation. There's nothing that can't wait until you are feeling energetic enough to deal with life again. Wear ice-blue to cool your fevered spirit.



LEO (July 24-August 22): Life will throw a couple of challenges in your path this week, but Leos should have no problem negotiating a path towards reasonable solutions. If a family matter is involved, tactful handling of a sticky situation will be required. To improve career prospects, you need to make



In The Stars

by Isla Star

## Heavenly advice from the stars

direct contact with key players and stop trying to deal with people who have no real influence. Your lucky number is two.

VIRGO (August 23-September 23): The planets are smiling on you during the last week of April and you should sow seeds for a sunny future. Money-making opportunities are definitely coming your way and those Virgoans who don't act will kick themselves for missing the boat. You may need to make a spur of the moment decision mid-week, but rest assured that your instincts will point you in the right direction.



LIBRA (September 24-October 23): Crossed wires could have a negative effect on a budding relationship. If you can't reach a mutual understanding now, the chances of building something worthwhile are low. Librans are strongly advised to remove the blinkers and dare to examine reality this week. Business investments are looking promising - this is an auspicious time to consider moving into a previously unexplored area. On Monday, you are likely to bump into a long-lost friend.



SCORPIO (October 24-November 22): Single Scorpions could be strongly tempted to set sail from their solitary island this weekend when strong romantic

conditions prevail. Your desire for independence is likely to be challenged, but compromises can be made. Creativity is highlighted, with Monday and Tuesday being especially promising days. People will listen to your ideas and you stand a good chance of reeling in a fortuitous catch. The number eight will have special meaning.



SAGITTARIUS (November 23-December 21): Sagittarians will have to accept that a certain personal matter cannot be changed. A disappointment is in the air, but you should not waste precious time wishing that things could be different. Instead, put your energy into a deserving new project and leave the past behind. Teamwork is the key to success, as long as you maintain ultimate control. Wear the color coral pink to promote cool, clear thinking.



CAPRICORN (December 22-January 20): Capricornians are set to enjoy a fun-filled week, with the emphasis on socializing. You can play the butterfly role very well when you let your hair down, and others will be envious of your carefree outlook. The atmosphere grows more serious after Tuesday when business matters are subject to last-minute debate. If you don't think that your opinion is being lis-

tened to, try putting something down in writing.

AQUARIUS (January 21-February 19): The winds of fortune are set to change direction and most Aquarians will benefit before the month ends.



However, this is not an auspicious time to take chances with unknown quantities. Only deal with those who have earned your trust and resist any temptations to dive into unknown waters, where jellyfish are certainly lurking. Overseas family are due to make contact, and travel plans are brew-

ing. The color amber will bring you luck.

PISCES (February 20-March 20): A dream is due to come true for Pisceans and long-term plans could take immediate shape. You will need to move with the times this week, but others close to you could find it difficult to embrace sudden change. A chance encounter on Tuesday bodes well for the future. Make sure that you stay in contact with this person. The number four has some importance.



ARIES (March 21-April 20): Arians should not give in to the temptation of ignoring obligations this week. Something that you think can be dismissed as a trivial matter is of more importance to another person than you can imagine. If business matters are moving at a snail's pace, progress should speed up soon. You have the chance to make an impact on a new social scene this weekend.



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## Saving the Similans

The Similans Marine National Park (see *Inside Story*, pp 4-6) comprises just 14 square kilometers of land, but also includes 128 square kilometers of ocean that are home to some of Thailand's premier dive sites.

The number of vessels entering the park continues to rise each year, causing dive sites to become dangerously overcrowded and giving rise to fear that it is only a matter of time before a fatal accident occurs. Poorly-trained divemasters who refuse to observe safety regulations or the dictates of common sense add to the risk.

Bringing the situation under control won't be easy. Park rangers in longtail boats stand little chance of catching speedboats capable of doing 30 knots. A moratorium on new vessels is a good idea, but with 126 vessels already registered to bring people into the park, other measures need to be adopted – and soon.

A system of pre-payment for the right to use the dive sites in the park is required, along with divemasters being required to submit dive plans in advance, because this is the only way park officials will be able to know who should be at which sites at which times.

Perhaps an open, public auction for a limited number of visitor passes for the entire year would be the best solution, with higher bids driving out the cowboys. Such a system would have the added advantage of minimizing embezzlement, whether by park officials or by dive tour staff lying about the diving fees collected and paid.

Once such a system is implemented, park officials should be given the proper tools to enforce regulations, including faster, better-equipped boats and modern telecommunications equipment. This would improve the ability to respond to emergencies and to patrol park waters for vessels that enter the park illegally.

Park Chief Vithaya Hongvengchan is correct to re-evaluate the number of people who should be allowed to stay on the islands overnight. Currently, park staff are forced to divide their efforts between managing all the waste created by overnight tourists and enforcing park rules.

K. Vithaya will, one hopes, have the foresight to limit overnight tourists to those who can be lodged in existing solid-frame structures, doing away with eyesore tent colonies.

Finding a balance between conservation and tourism is never easy, especially under a government that views the chief role of its national parks in terms of revenue creation rather than environmental protection. But with a few necessary adjustments and cooperation on all sides, there is still time to save the Similans.

– The Editor

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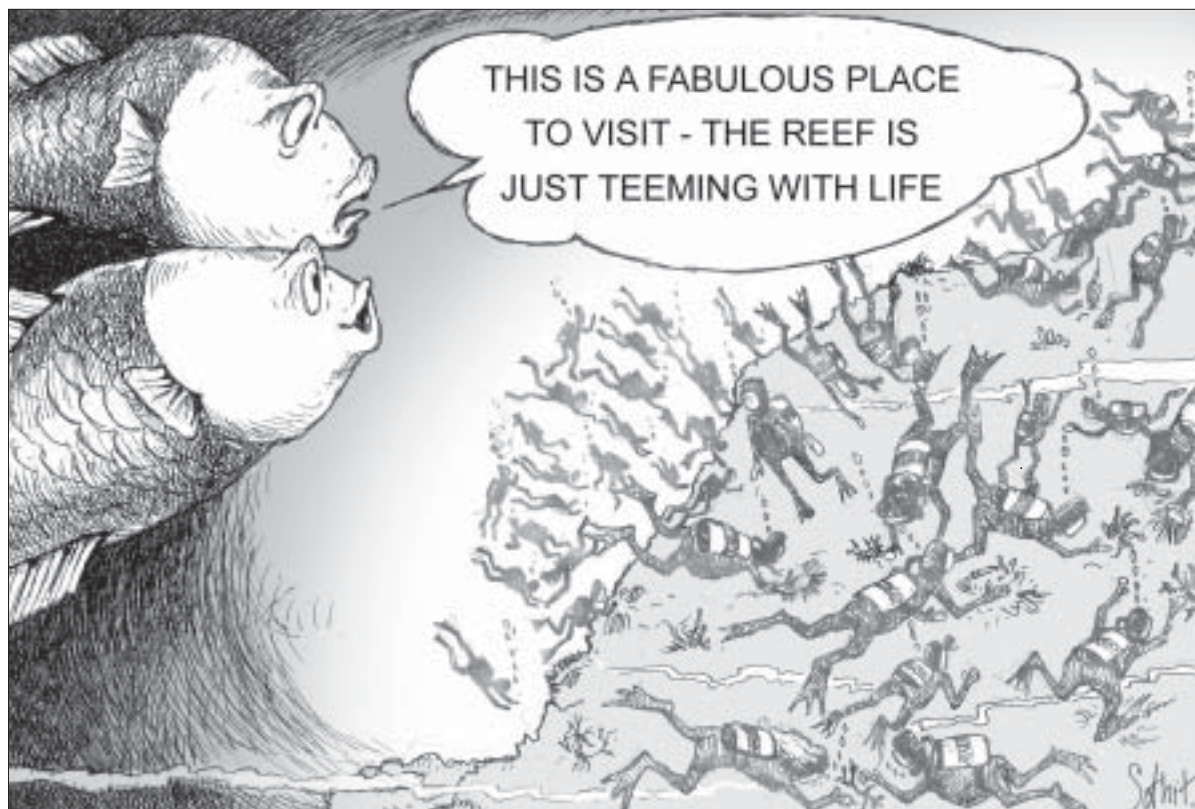
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## Letters

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with your views for publication in our next issue. We reserve the right to edit all letters. Pseudonyms are acceptable only if your full name and address are supplied.

### Walk the beach walk, don't talk the talk

Apart from talk, little has happened about cleaning up the algae on Patong Beach.

Every day, employees from the Holiday Inn Resort Phuket and others resorts collect the seaweed and put it in black plastic bags, yet often the municipality does not collect the garbage until some time later.

A few days ago, a vessel in the bay must have discharged fuel because the whole bay stinks of diesel or gasoline.

The perfect vacation: go to a beach that is full of slimy green algae, topped with a film of fuel.

It is time we all woke up. As a top priority, the beach needs to be cleaned every day.

The people in charge should walk along it every morning to get the real picture.

Wolfgang Meusburger  
General Manager  
Holiday Inn Resort Phuket

### Tasteless tale was what bugged Keith

Your Page 9 picture [Issue of April 10-16] showing two would-be journalists learning the ropes was good news indeed.

But let us hope that they do not choose to follow in your gutless footsteps when it comes to writing about the troubled young woman (Page 2) you so cutely featured under the headline, Now What's Bugging Her?

After almost 50 years as a journalist in Britain, the US, Australia and Canada, my reaction to your gross violation of that

person's rights is that you must have received your journalistic training on the Page 3 desk of a London tabloid (you know, the tits and arses section).

I hope the young woman gets a good barrister and sues your pants off.

Keith Davidson  
Patong.

### Lights but not much action in Kamala

Whose brilliant idea it was to put two traffic lights right in the middle of Kamala town? They just create traffic jams and add extra travel time for cars and motorbikes traveling through Kamala.

I pass through Kamala three times a week on my way to Laguna and have never had a green light going or returning through either traffic light.

Instead, I sit and wait behind a minimum of 10 vehicles, mostly cars and buses waiting for a green light, while there is very little – if any – cross traffic.

Perhaps Kamala does warrant one traffic light but certainly not two – and why are they placed so close together?

The authorities need to rethink their strategy on where to put traffic lights so they could actually save lives and prevent accidents as well as perhaps improving the flow of traffic.

For instance, what about the bottom of Patong Hill, coming into Patong near the temple, where there seems to be a constant free-for-all as to who gets to go and who gets to wait?

Bewildered  
Kathu

### Smell the roses, Nostrildamus

If Alex B [*Letters*, April 17-23] wants a holiday that reminds him of Australia, then he should take one in Australia – the smells are part of Asia's allure.

If he thinks Phuket smells, then he is really in for a treat in Vietnam.

I spent a year there – and there were some very different odors that did not exactly tantalize the sensory organs.

If you travel overseas, then you have to expect that the comforts of home may not be there. Accept it, and make the most of your time. Who knows? You might even enjoy yourself.

John Dedman  
Perth

### Beer belly finds plenty of support

The attack on Konrad Stalin by John Lock from Rawai (*Gazette*, April 10-16) can only be construed as jealousy of Konrad Stalin's excellent beer belly.

Konrad keeps us all amused with his Northern English sense of humor.

I know the real Konrad Stalin and a person with a more generous heart you could never meet.

His column is an enlightening look at the world from a humorous point of view, something that you seem to be lacking.

May I suggest that you find a friend who can travel to whatever country you come from and buy you a sense of humor.

Konrad Stalin's Father.

Letters conveying views and suggestions are published here. Those seeking comment from government officials and/or business owners are published in *Issues & Answers* on the facing page.



# Leading the village isn't so easy

## FIRST PERSON

Two of the main problems that Rawai faces – and in my role as *kamnan* I must deal with them – are the beachfront food stalls and the Sea Gypsies.

I have tried many times to have the food vendors removed, and it looks as if I will be successful this time.

It isn't that I want to prevent villagers from earning a living – quite the opposite. I want them to succeed with their ventures. But Rawai is not for them exclusively. It's a public area and very popular with the many tourists who come to visit it. These tourists want to see nature, the beach and the sea, not shabby buildings and stalls.

Some vendors have started to dismantle and demolish their stalls for moving to a designated zone behind the *OrBorTor* [Tambon Administration Organization] office. The moves should start at the beginning of May.

The other problems in Rawai relate to the Sea Gypsies. Some of the problems, such as where they live, aren't really of their doing. Because they live on someone else's land, they must move on if the landowner wants, and thus become homeless.

Because they move around a lot, it is very difficult to structure any type of managed program for the Sea Gypsies. I want to help them to achieve as much as other [Thai] villagers.

But the homes of the Sea Gypsies are a problem. The buildings are very dirty, and [the Sea

Senior village headmen, or *kamnan*, have an important role in Thai society. Taking on the responsibility of sometime-policeman, sometime-adviser and sometime-advocate, a *kamnan* can be sniped at from all sides. **Sin Polrop** gives an insight into the ordinary – and extraordinary – problems he faces in the villages of Rawai.



Gypsies] don't bother disposing of their waste correctly.

Garbage disposal is a problem that affects everyone in Rawai, not just Sea Gypsies, and people don't take the initiative and come up with solutions themselves or consider the effect of their actions on their neighbors. Others make the situation worse through laziness.

There are some people in the area – people with large houses – who are too lazy or too mean to buy their own trashcans. They sneak out at night to put their refuse in someone else's bin, or just leave it lying around in plastic bags.

Someone dumping rubbish in another's bin is the lesser of two evils when compared with just leaving it lying around in a bag where animals can get to it.

I am intimately involved with the day-to-day life of people

in my villages. I help in any way that I can.

Building or renovating temples, helping with public health, ordination ceremonies, cremations, you name it. I am on call 24 hours a day for people who are sick or need other assistance.

I take people to the doctor or the hospital; I'll even pay their medical expenses should they not have enough money.

If something needs to be done for the village – and it's sometimes too long a process to go through official channels – I'll approach my friends for help. This determination is what led to me being chosen as *kamnan*.

My stipend for this role is just 3,500 baht a month. I did receive an award the year before last – the only person who did on Phuket – as the best *kamnan* [each province, except Bangkok, selects one headman each year

for this title] from a committee set up by Deputy Prime Minister Purachai Piemsomboon. In addition to the certificate I received a special *kamnan-phu yai baan* award revolver.

The award recognized my many good works, such as projects for farmers and fishermen, anti-drug action, and poverty reduction measures.

I have tried to encourage Sea Gypsies to apply for ID cards and to have themselves included in the census, although many of them don't see the necessity. They haven't realized the benefits of registering, such as being able to apply for poverty aid and other state or local aid programs.

Every Saturday, I take a few Sea Gypsies who are interested in getting ID cards to register. It's crowded, it's busy [in the registration office], but I help these people as much as I can.

Despite all this, there was a petition raised against me, alleging that I had neglected my duty to include Sea Gypsies in the census, and had not encouraged them to apply for ID cards.

Around 100 Sea Gypsies – out of 2,500 in the Rawai area – signed the petition, so it's not reflective of the general feeling.

But it saddened my heart; it suggested that I don't care. It has spoiled my reputation and I felt like giving up my job.

I have lost my private life [serving the people]. There are government policies, such as the action against influential people, that make me anxious because I must compile lists of these people and provide information on them. If I do not, then other officials will complain about me. If I do, then the influential people may cause trouble for me.

But as *kamnan*, I must be ready for anything and be willing to sacrifice myself for the public good.

I must be like a temple, where people come to ease their worries, like a police station where they can report their problems, and like a hospital, which they can visit to ease their pain.

My tenure as *kamnan* ends on August 27 this year and I don't want the position again. However, if the villagers want me to shoulder the responsibility, then I shall accept the post.

– *Compiled by Sangkhae Leelanapaporn and Athairat Muangkong*

## I pay my taxes, so where are the goods?

I would like to know how the local authorities manage the money that I and many other people work hard to earn, only to see it pour conspicuously into the taxman's coffers.

Despite being a farang – a “B-class citizen” in this country – I'm considered a first-class taxpayer. So, can someone from the Kathu Municipality explain why most of the palm trees planted along the median strip near the Caltex gas station on Phra Phuket Kaew Rd are dead?

It seems that the trees have not been watered since they were planted last October or so. Why spend so much money on something that you cannot maintain? Doing so is like buying a Ferrari but not being able to afford to put petrol in it.

I also would like to know whether the police checkpoint at the same location will be removed. Police officers watching

TV, eating, chatting, sleeping and reading newspapers day and night, and only performing ridiculous inspections at unusual times is an irritating and offensive spectacle for all the hard-working people who are compelled to see how their money is being mispent.

It is a shame to see such lack of motivation by those who are supposed to enforce the law and protect citizens from crime.

Dr Antonio Barra Da Silva Karon

**Pol Lt Col Witoon Kongsudjai, of Tungtong Police Station, replies:**

The checkpoint on Phra Phuket Kaew Rd was set up to boost security for the Apec meetings held on Phuket last year. After the Apec meetings the checkpoint was used mainly to check for drunk driving and other traffic offences, with officers

checking motorists from 6:30 pm to 8 pm and from midnight to 2 am.

On April 1 this year it became a permanent checkpoint to assist in the government's road safety project, and officers were posted there to carry out checks 24 hours a day.

Now, after Songkran, officers are stationed at the checkpoint 24 hours a day to respond to emergencies, such as road accidents.

**Jaroon Lohakutara, Engineer,**

## Issues & ANSWERS

**Want to know how to get something done? Can't understand some of the dafter things that seem to go on in Phuket? Want to pitch an idea to Phuket's authorities or institutions? Then this is the forum for you. Submit your queries or suggestions to us and we'll ask the appropriate people to respond to them.**

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## Thai dual citizenship

If a Thai woman marries a man from the US and she later becomes a US citizen, does she lose her Thai citizenship?

Enrique Ramirez

**Satchaphand Atthakor, Deputy Director-General, Consular Affairs Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, replies:**

Section 13 of the Citizenship Act 1965 stipulates that a female Thai national who marries a foreigner and is later granted citizenship by her foreign husband's home country shall maintain her Thai nationality.

There is no Thai law that stipulates that she must lose her Thai citizenship, though she may choose to revoke it.

For Thai children with dual nationality, the Citizenship Act (3<sup>rd</sup> issue) 1992 states that a Thai national with a foreign father may declare his or her intention to revoke Thai nationality within the year following the child's 20<sup>th</sup> birthday.

If the child does not declare his or her intention to revoke Thai citizenship, that child will still hold Thai nationality.

**Public Works Division, Kathu Municipality, replies:**

The palm trees were planted in January, but the contractor planted old three-meter-tall palm trees, so they didn't take well and eventually died, even though we usually watered them twice a day.

As the contract between the Kathu Municipality and the contractor covers two years, the contractor has been ordered to replace all the dead or dying palms with younger 1.5m palm trees, which will be planted sometime after Songkran.



# Rediscovering roots bound in beauty

The nicest thing happened to me one cold afternoon in Brighton about 10 years ago. I was working in my room on something unimaginably boring when the doorbell rang downstairs.

"Who could this be?" I wondered, glad of an excuse for a break. Winter afternoons in England can be very depressing.

I opened the door and there, framed by the doorway, with a dull gray street scene as a

background, was the most colorful and exotic specimen of Asian femininity I had seen in a long while (my wife excluded, of course).

"You must be Derek," said this vision, in the way that Thais sometimes pronounce my name: Deeek. (John just happens to be another name by which I am known.)

"I... I ... indeed I am," I stutered.

"I am Sauwanee," the vision continued. "I met your friend, Tom, on an aeroplane. He

gave me your address. I thought it would be nice to visit you in person, rather than telephone."

"Uh ... er ... indeed."

In this way I met Sauwanee, who at that time was practising her art as a sculptor in a small village not far from Brighton.

Ten years later, I was driving with my wife from Ayudhaya to Suphan Buri on a long, straight road through the wide, flat, rice-growing heartland of central Thailand. We had spent a day

looking at the great ruins of Ayudhaya and now we were on our way to look at another sort of building work: the construction of a traditional Thai teak house on the banks of the Tha Chin River, where our friend Sauwanee had grown up.

The imposing wooden house was raised on stilts on a piece of land almost entirely surrounded by water, a kind of moat. The river was on one side, a klong that ran into the river was on another side, and a pond completed the triangle. The



An exercise in preservation of the past: Sauwanee's mother's traditional house under reconstruction.

house, made mostly of old teak, had been brought down from Chiang Mai and was nearly complete.

Sauwanee, no less elegant for the years that had passed, was in her element, carrying buckets of earth or tools here and there and directing, or discussing with her English partner, Andy, the position of electricity posts or electric fittings.

So much was going on and so fast and with so many people, that my wife and I were somewhat redundant. We found an old

wooden canoe and paddled it up the river, past Sauwanee's mother's house, and the rice mill owned by her sister. For a moment, I felt we had transported ourselves into Old Thailand.

When work was finished for the day, we drove to a restaurant in town, owned by another of Sauwanee's relatives. Her brother and his wife came with us, as well as a Thai hairdresser, Virat, whom we had also known in Brighton when we had lived there.

Virat was about to embark

on a major career change by entering the monkhood.

That night, we slept in a small concrete house near Sauwanee's new traditional Thai-style mansion, which was not yet habitable. As we got in the car to leave the next day, the workers were fixing ceramic tiles on the roof.

It was very pleasing to see Sauwanee returning to her roots in Thailand and building herself a place – a palace, almost – in which to enjoy the next phase of her life.

## Use it or lose it: a warning for wonga plonkers

Having just had an extended stay in Singapore, I thought it may be useful to pass on a few observations. For two years before I pitched up in Phuket, I had been in Calcutta, one of the worst (and greatest) cities in the world.

The first year was spent working in a children's clinic and a mobile leprosy clinic. The second year I worked for a record company.

Everything in Phuket, by comparison, was fantastic. Pizza, decent roads, clean streets, imported beer and, of course, Toon Town.



By Konrad Stalin

In short, all that was lacking in Calcutta was here in abundance. I have not been back to Cal since. Actually, I have not traveled much.

On my second night back from immaculate Singapore, I took a stroll around Toon Town and was appalled at the state of the place.

Here, in the playground of Asia, we are attracting wealthy foreigners by the truckload to parts of the island and encouraging them to part with lots of wonga for fabulous houses.

My trip to Singapore left me wondering why. I asked several expats in Singapore, some of whom are making the move here, why they were doing it. Overwhelmingly, the first response was cost. Singapore is expensive.

It could be argued that people are more than willing to put up with a staggering difference in the quality of infrastructure, dodgy rule of law, dangerous roads and limited entertainment opportunities for cheaper beer, maids, and lower costs of living, health care and property.

The other factors were the beaches and the scenery, international colleges, the culture and the food. Toon Town wasn't given as a reason to move here.

I did not just talk to married folks, either. A few of the chaps I met were in Orchard Towers, also known as "The Four Floors of Whores".

Nightlife did not figure in any conversation, except to the detriment of Phuket. "If I want nightlife, it's in Singapore or Hong Kong and it's easy to head there for a weekend", was a view expressed many times.

Take note, Toonies, either start to develop products that appeal to these folk or prepare to lose your wonga.

We also have the likes of Hong Kong's Mr Entertainment, Canadian Allan Zeman, moving here.

Rumor has it that he is developing a small project near his Laem Singh headland home. Those in the know have suggested it would be uncharacteristic of him to not drop in a restaurant or two and a decent bar. I hope so.

The Zeman name is synonymous with quality and may keep those Singapore and Hong Kong dollars here during the low season.

**Got mail! Got mail!** After five years writing this column, I have yet to receive enough emails to hit double figures. Every year I berate bar owners for not sending me details of their events, while they criticize me for never mentioning their bars.

So it was a delight to receive an email from John Lock in Rawai, which was also printed in the *Gazette* of April 10.

It seems that John has become the unelected leader of the expats on Phuket and he says

"...we [expats] don't really want to be preached to by beer-guzzling barflies."

Beer is not illegal, and I know a few people who actually enjoy it. But I did take exception at his line "...the sycophantic drivell that is a source of free breakfasts and T-shirts for your Konrad Stalin".

Alright John, you have thrown down the gauntlet and I accept the challenge. Here is what we'll do. I have already set up another email address at: i\_bribed\_konrad@hotmail.com.

I will donate 1,000 baht to a charity of your choice for every instance where you can prove that I have taken a bribe to mention a product or service.

You have made the accusation, now prove it. How's that, sunshine?

John also pointed out that I have a large belly – well spotted – and goes on to suggest that "[writing about] local news would be a better option". Local news is found at the front of the paper. Features, the kind that I write, are on the inside.

By the way, I have re-established a regular source of the other comestibles you mention.

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# New rules aim to curb credit card chaos

By Dhirarat Boonkongsan

PHUKET: New rules governing credit cards, designed to prevent excessive debt both for individuals and Thailand as a whole, came into force on April 1.

The new rules devised by the Bank of Thailand are aimed at taming the spend-now-pay-later tiger that has caused problems for other countries in Asia, but which is still in its infancy in Thailand. Thailand has about four million credit card holders.

The rules also set a limit, for the first time, on how much interest banks and other credit card lenders may charge. The limit is 18% a year.

The economic turmoil of 1997 taught the banking industry to be wary of non-performing loans, so the boundaries have been remade to save individuals from exceeding their capacity to repay credit card debts.

For expatriates looking for credit, the rules are the same as for Thais, though the proportion of foreigners seeking credit cards from Thai banks is small.

The new rules also apply to non-bank credit cards, such as the customer loyalty cards issued by some department stores. (Usually, these can be used to pay for goods only in the issuing store and its affiliates.)

Most Thais will probably still find

it difficult to comply with the minimum income requirements: to qualify as a cardholder, an applicant needs an income of not less than 15,000 baht a month or 180,000 baht a year.

Alternatively, the applicant may make a deposit at the card-issuing bank as collateral to cover the full amount of the credit line, or maintain for at least six months enough funds in a deposit account to demonstrate a capacity to cover repayments.

Supplementary cards may be issued but the credit line must be incorporated into that of the basic card so the holder is responsible for all debts incurred by supplementary cardholders.

Existing cardholders who do not meet the new requirements may renew cards as long as there have been no more than two late payments in the past year.

The new rules also raise minimum monthly repayments from 5% to 10%, though existing cardholders will not have to pay the new rate until April 1, 2007.

A credit card will be canceled if the cardholder fails to pay for three months.

The maximum credit is fairly conservative – five times the average monthly income or cash flow, with enforcement to begin from January next year for existing cardholders.

Confidentiality rules concerning cardholders' data that previously applied only to banks now apply to other card-issuers as well.

Transparency is the intention of the new confidentiality rules, with commercial bankers in Phuket telling the *Gazette* that all card-issuers are now linked to the Thai Credit Bureau (TCB) Co Ltd, bringing controls to an increasingly competitive arena.

TCB, the first credit bureau in Thailand, has provided credit-reporting services to members since 1999, following a Ministry of Finance initiative.

The bureau is a private firm, shareholders being the Processing Center Co – which provides the TCB's database system – and the Government Housing Bank.

Banking sources in Phuket told the *Gazette* that people would probably not be able to obtain more than one credit card because banks were unlikely to issue cards to people who were not their clients.

In addition to evidence of their financial status, Thai credit card applicants must produce an ID card and house registration document. Foreigners must present a passport and a work permit. Would-be applicants are advised to contact their bank to ascertain what additional documents may be required.

A Bangkok Bank manager told the *Gazette* that banks will be able to obtain individual credit histories from the TCB. Credit card holders will receive regular updates of what information has been passed to the TCB.

## On the Move

**Pornpimol Umrapan**, 37, from Yala, is the new General Manager of the Queen Air Booking Center in Patong. She graduated from Ramkhamhaeng University in Bangkok with a degree in humanities. She has been General Manager of Chaba Tour in Pattaya for six years.



**Wanchai Chongchaikitjarn**, 40, from Bangkok, has taken up the position of Manager, Marketing Development, of travel facilitator Abacus Distribution Systems (Thailand), in Phuket. He is an engineering graduate of Rajamangala Institute of Technology, Bangkok, and also has a Mini-MBA from Rangsit University, Bangkok.



**Christian Noret**, 36, from Dax, France, has been appointed Chef de Village (General Manager) at Club Med, Phuket. He was previously the Chef de Village at the Club Med in Cargese, France. He studied economics and physical education at Bordeaux University, France.



*Been promoted? Made a career change? Know someone who has? Let us know by email to [onthemove@phuketgazette.net](mailto:onthemove@phuketgazette.net).*

## No downside to full land ownership by foreigners

In its issue of March 27, the *Gazette* carried a story about land ownership, with Phuket Senator Paiboon Upatising saying that he believed foreigners should be allowed to own land freehold. He pointed out that foreigners could not take the land away with them.

However, Governor Udomsak Usawangkura – who, to be fair, has only recently arrived in Phuket and has probably not been correctly briefed – stated: “If we allow foreigners to own land, we would have to watch the intentions of every foreigner who wants to do so. (We need to watch) what they want to do in Thailand.”

“If we are not careful about this, these foreigners will snatch Thai jobs.”

The Governor went on to say that he was against foreign ownership of land. He pointed out that foreigners may already own condominiums and can take out 30-year leases on land, with the option of extending these leases.

Land and property ownership are at the heart of financial planning, hence my interest in this area. To cover the Governor's points: yes, foreigners may own condominiums, but not everyone wishes to live in one. Outside the tourist areas, there are not many available.

With respect to his comments on the 30-year-lease option and the ability to extend those



## MONEY TALKS

By Richard Watson

leases, the question immediately arises: what are those leases worth?

When anyone enters into an investment, one of the first questions should be: if I need to, how can I sell this investment later?

I realize that many people have bought into these schemes. Often, they involve 30-year leases, with options to extend for two more 30-year periods.

Thai law allows for a 30-year lease. It does not mention extensions of this period. Therefore, extensions are open to attack in the Thai courts – or the land owner can simply refuse to extend the lease.

This is not my opinion, but that of an experienced Thai lawyer.

To return to my point about selling an investment, take for example a 30-year lease that has 20 years to go. What is its market value?

A buyer could well be Thai (or a Thai operating on behalf of a foreign spouse). Why should such a buyer wish to purchase any outstanding part of a lease, when they can legally have full ownership?

The original owner of the land may not be the current owner – for example, death could have intervened, or the land may have been repossessed by a bank or been the subject of a divorce settlement.

Therefore, there may be no cooperation from the land owner. Owners of 30-year leases may say that they have no intention of selling this asset. However, life has a habit of “throwing curve balls” and it may transpire that the holder, whatever his or her original intention, has no choice but to sell.

Some who wish to buy property simply place it in a Thai girlfriend's name but anyone who has lived on this island for any length of time will know of a number of cases where this has resulted in a 100% loss.

There are books that cover these tales, and they are a frequent topic of discussion at any gathering of foreigners on the island. Often, the financially humbled party has to leave the island. They make for some very sad stories.

To return to the Governor's comments on the need to “watch the intentions of every foreigner” and foreigners who “will snatch Thai jobs”, the questions are: Why? And how?

The British, the French, the Spanish, Americans, Australians, and so on do not feel the same concerns when property is sold to foreigners in their countries.

Why should they worry? A foreigner who has bought land or a house with land does not get right of abode or the right of employment.

Thailand has strict immigration rules, combined with tough employment laws, and whole areas of the economy are off-limits to foreigners.

Why should a foreigner pose more of a threat by owning land, as opposed to a 30-year lease or condo ownership?

The fact is, the purchase of Thai land by foreigners would be of benefit to the Thai economy by bringing in foreign investors who are currently hesitating.

Ownership of condos, 30-year leases, land ownership by proxy through Thai girlfriends, boyfriends and so on have not led to the demise of Thailand. Why should full land ownership?

*Richard Watson runs Global Portfolios Co Ltd, a Phuket-based personal financial planning service. He can be reached at Tel and Fax: 076-381997, Mobile: 01-0814611. Email: [imm@loxinfo.co.th](mailto:imm@loxinfo.co.th).*

### VITAL STATISTICS: COMPANY REGISTRATIONS JUMP 56%

	Feb '04	Feb '03	% change
Limited companies registered	98	63	55.56%
Limited companies increasing capital	8	14	-42.86%
Companies deregistered	9	17	-47.06%
Limited partnerships registered	21	30	-30.00%
Limited partnerships increasing capital	2	4	-50.00%
Partnerships deregistered	10	12	-16.67%

Source: Phuket Business Development Office



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# A passion that's alive and kicking

By Rittiwat Suwannarattaphum

**W**hen Italian Alberto Mancuso moved to Phuket, the former professional soccer player found it impossible to leave the game behind. Now he's a one-man promoter of the Thai game, with four teams to call his own.

A native of Rome, the 54-year-old told the *Gazette* that his early days were a struggle but, through dogged hard work, he graduated with a degree in education.

A career as a teacher beckoned. But he turned his back on this and instead headed to his local football club, AS Roma, and started his dream career. "I was poor, but lucky enough to be accepted by a world-renowned team," is how he sums up his start.

Mr Mancuso played for both Roma and Fiorentina but the strain of nearly two decades of professional play took its toll. The need for medical and surgical treatment caused him to quit the professional game.

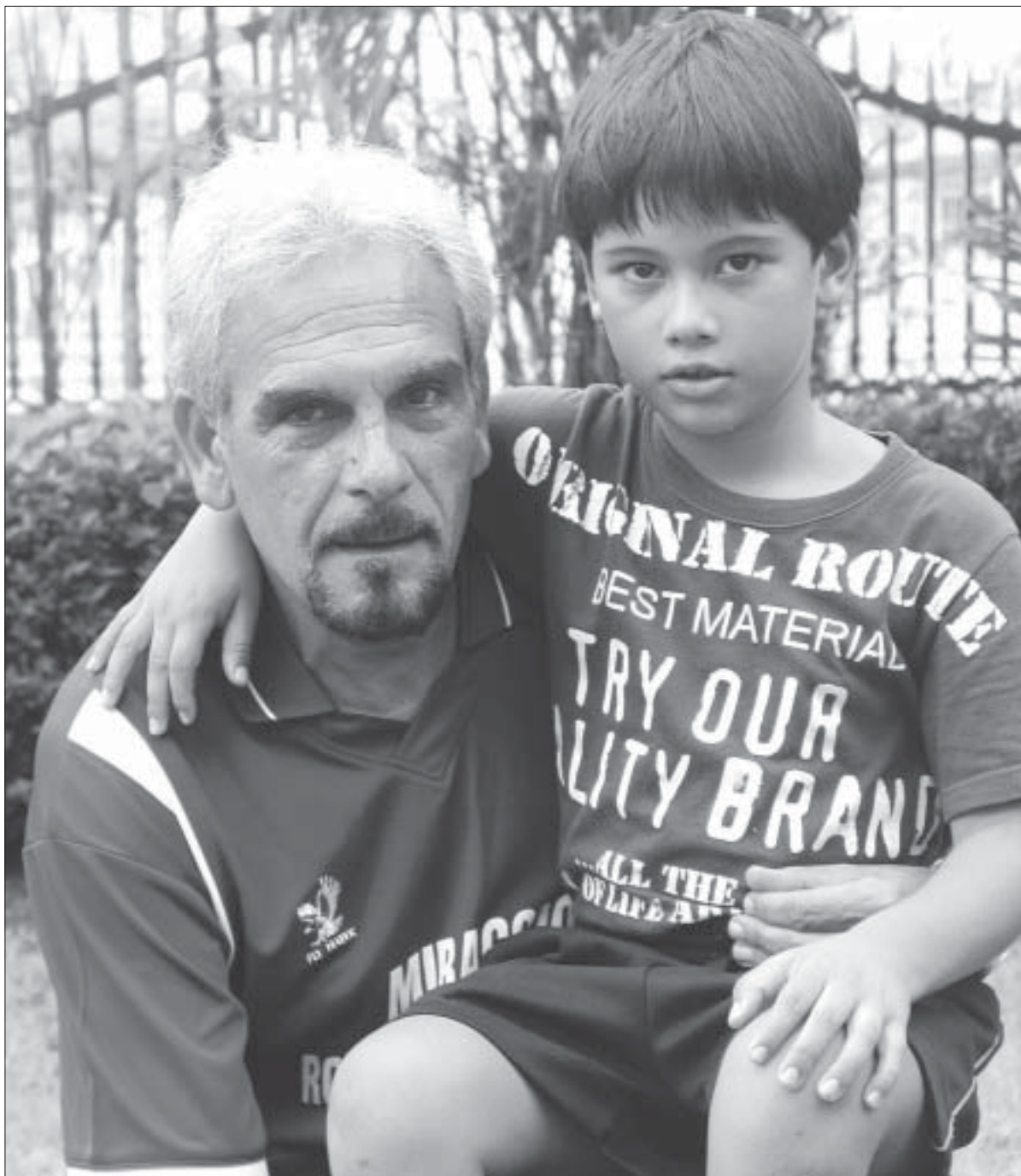
"It really was crunch time in my life," he says. "Thyroid problems particularly were torturing me and I just had to quit."

He moved to Bangkok and began a jewelry business, with others. Miss Sawasdee is still going strong today, with branches in Thailand and a flourishing export business to Italy.

"I eventually came down to Phuket for a holiday, and began to find the island more and more interesting," he says.

He moved to Phuket and Bao Rae village in 1996, and within three years, the football bug bit again. He formed a team, Aladdin, who went straight into the 1999 Bao Rae Cup.

Mr Mancuso explains the choice of team name: "My six-year-old son is called Aladdin. When he was a year old, he was very ill. I believed that if his name was said often enough, it would help him get better."



Alberto Mancuso with son Aladdin, after whom Mr Mancuso named the teams he manages.

ting." Where Thai players fall down, he believes, is in trying to play in a traditionally British style of confrontational play.

"Thai people have smaller, lighter and more agile bodies than players from many other nations. They should use their stature to their advantage and adopt a more continental, typically Italian, approach to the game," he observes.

With 48 players in four teams, Mr Mancuso is hardly short of players, the majority of whom come from the village where he lives. However, because many other villages have just one team, the surfeit of would-be players gravitate toward the Aladdin sides because, as he puts it, "Many teenagers have nowhere else to go and little else to do."

"But the teams are not just for Thai people," he hastens to point out. "I won't deny anyone the chance of playing and I'd welcome more foreigners joining in. All you need to play with us is a positive attitude to football."

Five years from now, Mr Mancuso says, the Thai national squad will be vastly improved if players combine their own styles with the *élan* of their Mediterranean and Latin counterparts.

He also suggests that training should be given as much prominence as the *sanook* of soccer. "People here love to play but they don't love to train and exercise enough. This retards their development and makes injuries more likely."

On a local level, his dream is to see equal numbers of Thais and foreigners playing together and developing soccer schools. "This will go some way to make up for what I see as a dearth of good facilities," he says.

Football is undoubtedly Mr Mancuso's abiding passion. "Look at me," he says. "I've been injured through playing but I have now recovered enough to do what I love for a new generation."

"I'll take advantage of this through playing and coaching for as long as I can."

"The name 'Aladdin' was on everyone's lips, and look at him now," he beams.

Although winning is welcome, Mr Mancuso passionately believes that it is how one plays that counts. "I want to see children really enjoying themselves as they play because you only get what you give," he explains.

"I also want to help raise the standard of football played here because there is a certain Thai style of playing that the world should see."

Although he praises the determination of the players, he feels that facilities here – sandy pitches being just one example – let them down. He hopes to remedy this by launching a football training school – aided by former and current professional Italian players – to turn out professional-quality players.

Mr Mancuso now runs four teams – all called Aladdin – ranging in prowess from strictly for fun to serious competitors. The teams comprise 48 players, giving Mr Mancuso flexibility to move weaker and stronger players as needs dictate.

When asked how the teams are faring, Mr Mancuso is keen to point out that they have played in several football competitions – generally local derbies – and recently won the 2<sup>nd</sup> Metropole Cup.

When asked how the teams are faring, Mr Mancuso is keen to point out that they have played in several football competitions – generally local derbies – and recently won the 2<sup>nd</sup> Metropole Cup.

"It was our first victory for a couple of years and our biggest win to date," he beams. "We're also fortunate to have around 90% of our budget met by good sponsors, especially Club Rome Miraggio – a chain of resorts," he explains. "They provide strips and equipment that in turn help me to get the best out of my players and win more games."

On Thai footballing skills, and Mr Mancuso suggests that although standards are acceptable, tactics require improvement.

"Thai players' techniques are often very good because they adapt a lot of the ball-control skills from *sepak takraw* to football."

"It's a great way of prac-

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Do you know them?

If you pick up your weekly Gazette at the Panwa Beach Resort, at Cape Panwa, chances are you've met Sport & Recreation Manager Khun Panusorn "Arm" Pengpong (left) and staff member Khun Umaporn "Kung" Chuaybarnung. They are an important part of the Gazette Distribution Team - always eager to serve you, and always on time. In fact, they can usually hand you Saturday's Gazette on Friday afternoon.

The Gazette Distribution Team - always eager to serve you!



# Phuket Masters golf open for entries

PHUKET: The island's top golfers are gearing up for the Phuket Masters, and the chance to be recognized as the best golfer on Phuket over four of the leading courses.

The four-week tournament begins on May 16 at Laguna Phuket Golf Club, then is followed at weekly intervals by rounds at the Blue Canyon Lakes Course and Loch Palm Golf Course before concluding

with the final round on June 13 at Phuket Country Club.

There are four categories, or "flights": flight A for golfers with handicaps of 0-12; flight B for handicaps of 13-18; flight C for handicaps of 19-24 and flight D for handicaps of 25-36.

Golfers with handicaps from more than one club will play off their lowest handicap. If two players finish on the same

score, the player having the higher handicap will be the winner of the gross score competition while in the net competition, the player with the lower handicap will be the winner.

If players have the same handicaps, a countback will be made from Hole 18 to Hole 1 to decide the winner.

Prizes will be awarded in each flight every week, with the overall low gross

winner and low net winner each taking away a trophy, a golf bag and a TV set.

A motorcycle is up for grabs for the first person to score a hole in one.

Application forms can be picked up at Phuket Country Club. The deadline for entries is April 30. For details, contact Phuket Country Club at Tel: 076-321038-40 or Prachuab Subcharoen at Tel: 01-6072672. — **Rittiwat Suwannarataphum**

# 50 boats sign up for 3rd Samui regatta

KOH SAMUI: Competitive sailing will be the main focus for many on Koh Samui from May 23 to 29, when the 3rd Koh Samui Regatta takes place.

Race headquarters will again be at the Central Samui Beach Resort on Chaweng Beach, with racing organized under the auspices of the Yacht Racing Association of Thailand, with support and assistance from the Royal Thai Navy.

Competition will take place over five days and include a mixture of coastal passage races and round-the-cans sprints.

Most of the action will take place within sight of the eastern and northern coasts of Samui, and so can be viewed from the look-out points to the south of Chaweng Bay, from Bophut and Mae Nam beaches, as well as in front of the Central Samui Beach Resort, from which the racing crews and beach cats will launch each morning.

There will be five classes: racing, cruising, sport boats, multihulls and beach cats. So far about 50 boats have registered, with an even mixture of keelboats and beach catamarans.

Prizes will be awarded to boats finishing first through fourth for the regatta series, and first to



Ray Roberts on *Hollywood Boulevard* will return to defend his title in this year's Samui regatta in May.

third for each main Sponsors Race Day. Overall winners in each class will receive a small

replica of the winner's Waterford Crystal Perpetual Trophy. About 230 people from Thailand, Ma-

laysia, Singapore, Hong Kong, the Philippines, Indonesia, Australia, New Zealand, Europe and the US

are expected on the island for this popular and increasingly high-profile event.

Capital TV will again film the regatta as part of a sports and lifestyle television show, which will be broadcast on the Star TV and UBC satellite networks.

The main sponsors are Central Samui Beach Resort, Coco Group of Companies, Coconut Land & House, QBE Insurance, Santiburi Dusit Resort, Singha Beer, Strategic Catering and Bangkok Airways.

The event is also supported by local co-sponsors and participating outlets from around the island and the region.

Every evening there will be a special function, with six cocktail parties at various locations culminating in a prize-giving gala dinner at the Central Samui Beach Resort on the final day of the regatta.

The Koh Samui Regatta is a non-profit event and almost all the organizational work is done by volunteers and part-time helpers.

The aim is to achieve a small cash surplus to be donated to deserving local charities, health and welfare, or education projects. Some cash will go toward the running of next year's event.

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# Porsche takes to the hills



**CAYENNE PEPPER:** Driving is packed with spice galore when a star roadster is repackaged as an off-roader.

Tennis superstar Martina Hingis uses her Porsche Cayenne rather like a basic mud-plugger and hauls a horsebox with it. That's perhaps not what the Stuttgart company envisioned with their first foray into areas other than sports cars, but it does demonstrate that the Cayenne, the world's fastest off-roader, can do the business.

The Cayenne – an open secret in the industry before its official debut – was launched in Paris in September 2002 to mixed reviews. Trade executives and journalists criticized its looks and its bulk. What they failed to appreciate was that this is not a 4x4 based on the 911, but a stand-alone product with all the virtues that have made Porsche one of the most successful niche manufacturers in the world.

There were initially two



By Jeff Heselwood

Cayenne models: the Cayenne S and the Cayenne Turbo. The Turbo, with a 4.5-liter, twin-turbo V8 is awesome in its specifications and produces a staggering 450bhp (331kW) and 620Nm of torque. That this torque figure is obtained between 2250 and 4750rpm demonstrates the superlative engineering of the lightweight engine by Porsche. Top speed is 266kmh, while the 0-100kmh dash takes just 5.6 seconds. The Cayenne S is margin-

ally slower with a quoted maximum of 242 kmh and a sprint time of 7.2 seconds.

Both models use a six-speed Tiptronic automatic transmission and there is, of course, permanent four-wheel drive.

Porsche's traction management system (PTM) apportions 62% of the drive to the rear wheels and 38% to the front in normal on-road use. A multiple-plate clutch, operated by an electric motor and controlled electronically, is able to vary the distribution of power according to conditions. When off-road, it can feed up to 100 % of the available torque to either the front or rear wheels.

The Turbo benefits, particularly over difficult terrain, by using self-leveling and fully-adjustable air suspension. This system automatically lowers the Cayenne as speed rises. At speeds over 210kmh, it automatically drops the vehicle to an extra-low ride height of 11mm below standard, while the highest off-road level, giving ground clearance of a full

273mm, is only available up to 30 kmh.

Working with the PTM is the stability system, standard on both Cayenne models. If the vehicle reaches the physical limits of adhesion, the system informs the PTM to release the differential locks and applies the brakes to individual wheels to stabilize the car.

The brakes sport massive ventilated discs all round, with six-pot aluminum calipers at the front, four pot at the rear. Night

justable front seats feature a memory, while a Bose sound system is standard on all models. A total of 250 watts is pushed through the 14 speakers, including a sub-woofer.

The Cayenne, manufactured at the new Leipzig plant – where the exciting V10 Carrera will be made – was actually developed by Volkswagen and shares some components with the VW Tuareg off-roader.

Porsche invested a total of 128 million euros in the Leipzig plant, which incorporates a 3.75-kilometer test track with corners modeled on those of the famous Monaco and Nürburgring race tracks. There is also an off-road track of six kilometers for driver training.

Most of the 25,000 Cayenne models produced at Leipzig annually are destined for the United States, Porsche's major market, where the Cayenne is exceeding all expectations.

Pessimists predicted the downfall of Porsche by its diversification from traditional high-performance sports models, but sales in North America last year of more than 13,600 Cayennes have proved the doom-merchants wrong.

The introduction late last year of a more user-friendly 3.2 V6 Volkswagen engine in some markets can only strengthen the appeal of the model.

Jeff Heselwood may be contacted by email at [jhc@netvigator.com](mailto:jhc@netvigator.com).



**PURE PORSCHE:** The interior shines.

visibility is increased by the use of active bi-xenon headlamps that react to steering wheel angle, effectively enabling the driver to see round corners.

Inside, the Cayenne is pure Porsche, with acres of supple leather and discreet aluminum paneling.

Front airbags are supplemented by side "thorax" bags built into the seats, and there is a full-length air curtain to protect occupants from side impacts and flying glass. The electrically-ad-

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## Making the most of marvelous merlot



By Steven Roberto

**M**erlot wines are a gentle breath of fresh air compared with the powerful, tannic cabernet wines that dominated the marketplace in the early 1990s, and they rose to stardom as consumers became better acquainted with them.

Although merlot is similar in flavor to, and is genetically related to the more robust cabernet sauvignon, merlot wine has a more agreeable, softer, more supple texture. Merlot wines also improve faster in the bottle than cabernet sauvignon.

Predictably, as merlot's reputation soared, so did the amount of land devoted to growing the grape. Merlot is the main red grape in much of Bordeaux. In Italy, it's everywhere, especially in the north-east. In America, one can find merlot wine grown in California and Washington. Chile is overrun with the variety, and upstart New Zealand is turning heads with its merlot plantings.

Generally, merlot ranges from good to very good. However, a lot of unremarkable plonk has been rushed to market in a bid to capitalize on drinkers' fondness for smooth and enjoyable merlot, especially from France's south, and has left many wondering what the fuss is all about.

There are two styles of merlot. One is the single varietal model, 100% merlot; and the other is a blended model, typically seeing merlot married to as much as 30% cabernet sauvignon, sometimes more. Like cabernet, merlot seems to respond well to blending but as the percentage of other grape varieties increases it begins to lose its distinctiveness.

In addition to the silky tannins already mentioned, expect lots of zingy black cherry

and cocoa flavors with an overlay of herbaceousness reminiscent of green tea. Typically, merlot wines offer a medium body and fairly crisp acidity.

Despite the focus on merlot by winemakers worldwide, few estates stand apart and fewer still have achieved acclaim with the variety.

In Bordeaux, where merlot wines are blended with other varieties, Le Pin and Petrus are the most expensive but L'Evangile, Cos D'Estournel, and Leoville Poyferre offer excellence and value despite their high price tags. From California, Caine Five stands apart.

Many of the better New Zealand merlot blends, like those of Villa Maria, Trinity Hill and Lincoln, are taking their place on the world's wine stage.

Elsewhere, single varietal merlot is in the limelight. Chile's Señal and Montes Alpha are well respected. Italy's Sieti and Lageder are at the top of their class. And Washington state is packed full of famous names like Woodward Canyon, Leonetti, and L'Ecole No 41.

Increasing discernment on the part of consumers is causing a shakeout among wine producers that should lead to quality gains among merlot wines.

For those new to the varietal, I recommend exploring the Chilean wines then moving on to those of Italy and New Zealand.

Once you have a firm basis in the varietal, exploring the matchless merlots of Bordeaux and America will prove much more rewarding.

*Steven Roberto is a winemaker and restaurant consultant from California. He is the Wine and Beverage Director for the award-winning Baan Rim Pa restaurant in Patong. Email: stevenroberto@lycos.com*

**A**nyone in search of a haven from the touts, tarts and tourists of Patong should look no further than Roma Pizzeria and Ristorante, halfway along Soi Post Office.

Turn off Thaweewong Rd, go past a bunch of Thairish bars and the ubiquitous seafood restaurants and you'll reach Roma.

On a night when most of his staff are away *sanook*-ing themselves silly with buckets of Songkran water, Chef Mauro has become cashier and coffee-maker. He also takes a turn on the restaurant floor from time to time and makes sure that he visits every diner during his or her meal.

Those staff who are still on duty smile genuine smiles. The patrons talk animatedly and obviously enjoy their food. The ambience is lively.

Roma wasn't built in a day – it's actually taken 18 years so far. The first restaurant was along Soi Bangla and the move to the present location took place in 1989.

Italian food conjures up many images. While you know that you are not in Rome, in Roma you still half-expect to see Anita Ekberg and Marcello Mastroianni scoot past on a Vespa or to hear Dean Martin singing *That's Amore* just outside.

Eel does not feature on the menu, nor *pasta fazool*, but this is more than made up for by a delightful *zuppa di mare* using the mussels, prawns and firm white fish we island-dwellers should never tire of.

My companion and I choose *insalata Caprese* (at 150 baht) made in true Capri style with ripe tomatoes, fresh *fior di latte mozzarella* (Thailand has an abundance of buffaloes; when will an entrepreneur produce *mozzarella di bufala*?), fragrant basil and extra virgin olive oil.

No vinegar, balsamic or otherwise, is needed or authentic for this classically simple dish that so many establishments get wrong by trying to add their signature to it, or which they spoil by leaving the oil to soak into the cheese.

As further *antipasti*, we also plump for *bruschetta pomodoro*

## When in Roma, feast like an emperor



Simple food: *Insalata Caprese* does not need (and in Roma does not get) any disastrous 'signature' treatment.

*doro* (95 baht) with a light and sweet *salsa* served separately to the thick slices of grilled bread, allowing the diner to decide how much or how little to put on.

Again, a few simple ingredients – tomatoes, olive oil, garlic, basil, a little *zucchero* – for what is traditionally a *merenda* or

afternoon snack prove to be all that is needed. Why reinvent the wheel?

The huge pizzas distributed to other diners are tempting but we decide instead on pasta. My companion chooses *gnocchi al pesto* (180 baht) while I go straight for the *ravioli con cognac e funghi* (200 baht).

The fragrance from the cognac is captivating though not overpowering. With the cream sauce, it is a truly heady combination.

The *gnocchi* has the preferred amount of "bite" to it, and we agree that the fresh pesto sauce knocks into a cocked hat those we have tasted elsewhere on the island.

Sadly, a couple of glasses of

## On the menu

with

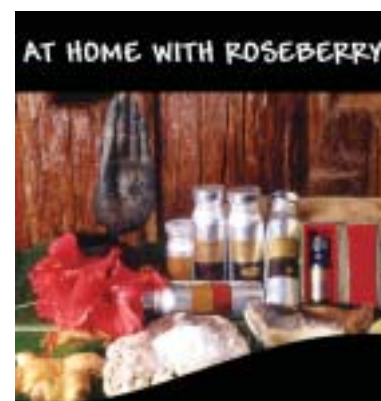
Andy Johnstone

### Roma Pizzeria & Restaurant

dry house white, espresso and *grappa* take up the space I have been reserving for a little tiramisu. Once again I have forgotten my grandmother's sage advice: "Life is short; eat dessert first."

I must remember that the next time I feel like indulging in *la dolce vita* at Roma.

*Roma Pizzeria and Ristorante, Soi Post Office, Patong. Open 11:30 am to 11:30 pm daily. Tel: 076-292731 for reservations.*



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## Home of the Week

Nai Harn

Imagine a place surrounded by hills, mature coconut and rubber trees, and a man-made lagoon. Buffaloes roam the fields nearby and exotic birds sing.

This is the Nai Harn Baan Bua development in Nai Harn, one of the most desirable residential areas in the south of the island.

The home is designed to combine the convenience of modern living with a relaxed, natural tropical setting.

The first phase covering 23 rai has already sold out. The second phase will cover 60 rai.

Houses are available in a variety of designs and sizes, ranging from 440 square meters with three bedrooms and three bathrooms, to 559sqm with three bedrooms and four bathrooms. Designs echo traditional Thai living with a cluster of buildings set around a pool.

The landscaping of the development is exceptional, with tropical trees and colors everywhere.

The show house is entered via a carport, with a large storage room and laundry to the left.

The path leads to the front door of the middle pavilion – the house consists of three pavil-

# Where the buffalo roam



ions. The one on the left contains two bedrooms, both with en-suite bathrooms with Grohe fittings. The floor is white marble with black edgings, while the walls and ceiling are part-teak.

The bedrooms have aluminum sliding doors and look out

over the lake and the infinity-edge swimming pool.

The main pavilion in the middle comprises an open-plan living and dining area and a Western kitchen, with high-quality European appliances and breakfast bar.

This large room overlooks the terrace and swimming pool, with the lake beyond. It has a teak floor and a high teak ceiling, and is tastefully decorated.

The third pavilion, on the right, houses the master bedroom, which is larger than the other two bedrooms and has an

open-air bathroom with shower, bath and toilet, as well as built-in closets and a double wash basin in marble.

Beyond the master bedroom is a sala, overlooking the lake and surrounded by tropical plants and lily ponds with fish.

The show house is actually the smallest design and the developer has two larger models which can be tailored to buyers' requirements.

Nai Harn Baan Bua is two minutes from Nai Harn Beach and the facilities in the area include good restaurants, bars and bakeries.

Prices range from 13 million to 16 million baht. In addition, there is a one-time sinking fund of 150,000 baht and a monthly maintenance charge of 3,000 baht. These houses are expected to command rents of 70,000 to 90,000 baht a month.

For more information contact Richard Lusted at Siam Real Estate, Tel: 076-280805; website: [www.siamrealestate.com](http://www.siamrealestate.com); Email: [info@siamrealestate.com](mailto:info@siamrealestate.com)





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'You get a feeling that these houses are built for people who know how to live the good life.'

## Phuket's stars of stage, screen and housing

It's interesting to look at what sort of people build houses on Phuket and what sort of people buy them. If you're a pop singer and you want to buy a house on a tropical island, how do you go about it?

Surprising as it may seem, in Phuket one simple way is to get your concert promoter to build one for you.

Why not? Former musician and TNT boss Paul Moorhouse is now building houses for other people. Chefs, restaurateurs, hoteliers and bankers are all building homes for other people. Hardly anybody hires architects or builders to build houses for them these days.

Actually, there is no reason why musicians shouldn't build houses, as long as they stay on the stage, keep playing gigs and supplying the money to people who do know what they're doing.

Michael Hosking, developer of Sai Taan in Cherng Talay,

is a concert promoter who has also sold houses to associates and friends from all walks of life, including Boyzone singer Ronan Keating, the head of American Express Thailand, the MD of Coca-Cola Middle East, a pilot from Hong Kong and many others.

Why did he start building Sai Taan? "Sars and Iraq hurt the concert industry," Mr Hosking explained. "A lot of friends decided to come and see us because we were living in Phuket."

"Once they saw our house in Lakeshore Villas, they wanted one. But not everybody can afford a million dollars."

"We set out to build houses that we could sell for 15 million baht. In the event, we found we couldn't quite keep the price that low. We finally managed to get them out at 17 million baht."

That's not a bad price for a villa with a private swimming pool, three bedrooms, games

room, sala, modern kitchen and bathrooms, wooden floors and international-quality finishes.

The built-up area of each is more than 450 square meters, including air-conditioned areas, sexy outdoor bathrooms, air-con pool room, swimming pool and decking. You get a feeling that these houses are built for people who know how to live the good life.

"The essential thing is to have the right people in charge of the project – key people who understand the requirements of the international market," Mr Hosking said.

"Although the design has an Asian flavor, the architect came from Hong Kong and the project manager is an experienced Australian."

"If you want to supply an international market, you need somebody in charge who comes from the same cultural background and knows what they want."

It seems to be an effective formula. Of the original 20 homes at Sai Taan, six are left.

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By Graham Doven

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Gardening with

Bloomin' Bert

# Local bloomer worth waxing lyrical about

I thought long and hard about how to start an article about the allamanda. Should I wax lyrical about its beauty? No, not really. It isn't exciting. Should I harp on about its medicinal qualities? A bit difficult because it's poisonous.

A good way to begin would be to say that it's yellow. Very yellow. It's about the most yellow plant you'll see in Thailand.

If you're driving down the road and see thousands of plants with thousands of yellow flowers, it is probably the allamanda.

The plant was named in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, after the Swiss scientist J. N. S. Allamand. It was a time when roadside gardeners were having the first discussions about what plants to use to brighten up the first roads. Somebody came up with the idea of the allamanda, or *ban buree*, as it's known in Thai.

This plant is everywhere now. There are a number of variations of this flower, with its small, yellow trumpet-shaped petals, but the most common is the one that's found at roadsides all over Thailand.

It requires little attention, except for merciless pruning, and it performs an important task – binding the soil together on the verges at the sides of the roads, helping to prevent the earth being washed away in deluges.

The allamanda, or golden trumpet, grows best in full sun or bright light. It originated in the jungles of Brazil, but is now cultivated worldwide.

It's a prolific bloomer, and the yellow flowers appear at all times of the year. Unlike most plants, it doesn't seem to get bored producing flowers, so they appear non-stop. It doesn't get bored with growing, either. I've got an allamanda in my garden that sits at the back of a few other plants, making it difficult to prune.

A few days ago, I found a new set of allamanda flowers on the end of a stalk 12 feet away. This was one I'd missed in the pruning process, and it had quietly sneaked round the back of everything else.

Leave these alone completely, and there's no stopping them. There's an allamanda in the *Gazette* garden that I'm sure



Allamanda produces its golden, trumpet-like flowers regardless of the time of year.

nobody has touched for years. It has managed to extend into the upper reaches of a tree so that it's difficult to tell which branches are the tree and which belong to the allamanda. It must be 25 feet tall now. Not bad for something that's supposed to be a bush.

Allamanda is perfectly suited to life in Phuket, because it loves sun and sandy soil. Many of us would prefer to be at the beach rather than tending to a garden, so again the allamanda is ideal. It's happy to be neglected and ignored. It actually seems to take great delight in just growing.

If you do decide to wield the clippers, first wear gloves. The rubbery sap it produces is

quite poisonous and can cause itching and blisters. Second, don't be shy – cut it back until there's virtually nothing left. This treatment may seem a little harsh and ruthless, but it will pay later.

Some years ago, I worked at a place with dozens of allamandas planted in pots in the street. One day, a team of gardeners appeared out of the back of a big truck, and descended on the hapless plants with callous efficiency, until all that was left were a few pathetic woody stumps. I wondered what these plants had done to deserve such treatment – they had to be dead.

My pessimism was proved wrong a few weeks later, when

new shoots appeared, quickly followed by much healthier looking bushes than before.

Nowadays, I have no mercy when cutting these things back. You can't overprune an allamanda – they could well be the masochists of the plant world.

There are probably enough allamandas on the street without you feeling the need to go out and buy one for your garden, but if you're looking for something that's designed for a gardener that likes to spend time not gardening, it's perfect.

You can't overprune an allamanda – they could well be the masochists of the plant world

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Located on Chao Fa East Rd. 204sqm, 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, kitchen, living room. Price: 1.99 million baht. Contact Khun Ya at Tel: 01-5973398.

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West Coast. 2.25 rai with 38 meters of ocean frontage at Natai Beach. Fully serviced and levelled. New boundary wall and building permits. Enjoy your sala 20 meters above high tide. 15 minutes from the airport. 25 million baht. Email: nick@indigore.com. Tel: 09-873-2042. Indigo Real Estate Limited. Sound advice, premium properties.

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# Property Gazette

## HOUSE NEAR LAGUNA

4 bedrooms, big living room, study, kitchen, garage for 3 cars, maid's room, swimming pool, 2 telephone lines, 4 aircons, hot water, semi-furnished, good neighborhood. For long-term rent at 60,000 baht a month. Tel: 01-893-0692. Email: toto@phuket.ksc.co.th

## PATONG BEACH

condo for rent. Fully furnished, bathroom, kitchen, aircon. From 400 baht a day. For more information, please call Tel: 01-5366713 or see our website at: www.phuketaccommodation.net

## HOUSE FOR RENT

in Kathu. 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, kitchen, living room, 2 aircons, furnished. 10,000 baht/month for long-term contract. Tel: 09-2909567. For more info, see our website at: www.brommathaihouse.com

## LUXURY VILLA

Patong ocean view villa for rent. 2 bedrooms, private pool, beautifully furnished and fitted out. 6 months min rental at 45,000 baht a month. Tel: 01-9241447.

## HOUSE FOR RENT

Fully furnished 2-bedroom house, just 2 minutes from Chalong Circle, on the way to Rawai Beach. Rent: 15,000 baht/month. Please call Tel: 04-0566989.

## PATONG BEACH

condo for rent. Furnished bathroom, kitchen, aircon. From 500 baht a day. Contact for more information. Tel: 01-5366713. Please see our website: www.phuketaccommodation.net

## PATONG CONDOS

Fully furnished 1- or 2-room Patong apartments with pool. 7,000 baht/month or 400 baht/day. Just 300 meters from the beach. Tel: 01-364-5419. Email: thesonbusiness@hotmail.com

## TOWNHOUSES

for rent. Situated in quiet area of Soi Sansabai, Patong, 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, furnished, UBC, aircon, telephone, short- and long-term available. 20,000 baht a month. Tel: 076-341871, 01-5697616.

## RAWAI CONDO

Fully-furnished 2-bedroom condo in Rawai with 2 bathrooms, pool, telephone, aircon and TV. Please call Tel: 01-6067410.

## LAND & HOUSES PARK

Fully-furnished, single-story Land & Houses Park house with 2 bedrooms, aircon and UBC TV. Rent 20,000 baht. Tel: 01-9797535.

## OFFICE/SHOWROOM

Office and showroom space available at The Courtyard. Please call or email for more information. Tel: 076-263-992, 01-8934200. Fax: 076-263993. Email: info@thecourtyard-phuket.com

## KATA PENTHOUSE

and rooms. Furnished, and with UBC TV, aircon, fridge, telephone, balcony and view. 11,000 baht a month and 5,900 baht a month. Tel: 076-333589, 06-2766597. Email: richardandooy@tesco.net

## OCEAN VIEW PATONG



Awesome view from this furnished 2-bed, 2-bath property with pool, UBC TV, phone and aircon. Long-term rent at 45,000 baht a month. Tel: 07-882-1963. Email: benlee53@hotmail.com

## Properties Wanted

## NEW SHOPHOUSE

near Robinson. We are looking to buy or rent one unit in one of the new shophouse buildings near Robinson department store (behind night market). The shophouses are yellow. Please contact us urgently. Tel: 076-264-445-6. Email: jamie@asiadebit.com

## WANTED: RESORTS

in Phuket or Khao Lak. We're an experienced international firm, and we are looking for properties in Phuket or Khao Lak to manage. Must be at least 4-star properties with a minimum/maximum of 75-300 rooms. Please respond with details, conditions. Email: phuketproject@ehotelier.com

## LOOKING FOR LAND

in Patong. I'm looking to buy 1 rai in Phuket/Patong. Please contact me by email if you have something under 2 million baht. Please email: sgellepes@sbcglobal.net

## SEAVIEW LAND

1-2 rai of seaview land (not beachfront) wanted for private house site. Ideally north Phuket. NorSor 3 Gor or Chanote title. Tel: 06-3205874. Email: simon@link77.com

## Accommodation Available

## PATONG AIRCON ROOM

Patong Beach air-conditioned room for 5,500 baht a month (180 baht night). For further details, please see our website at: www.paradizo.com or email: paradizo@paradizo.com

## FREE DEALS

available. Andaman Hill Hotel, Nanai Rd. Beautiful rooms, aircon, shower, bath, sunshine balcony, restaurant, bar, cable TV, large screen sports TV, swimming pool, sauna, free snooker, free motorbike rental, 750 baht a night, deals for long-term stays. Tel: 076-340743, 09-8722752. Fax: 076-344-057. Email: ukthai@procom.in.th

## ROOMS TO LET

Rooms for rent in new complex. Fully furnished with aircon, free satellite TV, fridge, hot water, plus car parking, for 166 baht/day. Yes, it's true. 166 baht/day at Lake View Apartments. Tel: 076-202-585, 09-1968449. Email: ketmaneeclayton61@hotmail.com



## PHUKET BEVERLY HILL

We offer Exclusive Residences at Beverly Hills in Patong. Beautiful Town House with Superb Ocean Views.

For more details call 076-341871, 01-9241447, 01-5697616, 09-7762591

E-mail: sales@phuketislandrealestate.com  
Website: www.phuketislandrealestate.com

## PATONG LUXURY APT

Central Patong 1- & 2-bedroom apts. Email for info & photos. Email: suites247@yahoo.com

## Accommodation Wanted

## HOUSE OR APT

for family. Our family of 4 (2 kids: 3yrs, 5yrs) is looking for a nice house/apartment to rent during our visit to Phuket from May 27 to June 20. Must have aircon, parking and preferably a pool. Only quiet locations, distant from traffic noise or nightlife. We are also interested in car rental and daytime sailing/fishing trips and excursions to beautiful beaches and other islands. Email: noreng@directbox.com

## HOUSE WANTED

in Kamala. 2 bedrooms, 1 bathroom, 1 large living room, kitchenette and private garden/swimming pool. Rental 20,000-30,000 baht/month. Tel: 076-325000. Fax: 076-325886. Or email to: jk@surinbeachresort.com

## LOOKING 4 A HOUSE

I'm looking for a nice detached house in Rawai. 2 bedrooms, bathroom, phone line, furnished or not. I'll return to Phuket in September and I am looking to lease a place long term. Please email details to: richardtekram@hotmail.com

## Building Services

## phuket home services

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Mobile: 07 282 0200

## Household Products

## HOME FURNISHINGS

All your home furnishing needs – curtains and blinds, furniture and carpets – supplied with prompt service. Tel: 01-9035622.

## 90CM BUILT-IN OVEN

Stainless steel, universal oven, electronic clock, easy clean system, all-glass door, liner, removable accessory rack, 2 side-mounted halogen lighting tubes, cooling fan, stainless steel front. Tel: 01-8157440.

## Property Services

## SPAS R US

Steam room/sauna and accessories, and portable hot tubs from USA. Quality equipment, designed and installed for your needs. Business and residential. Tel: 09-7939268.

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List **YOUR** event now - **It's free of charge.**

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# Island Job Mart



## TELEMARKETERS REQUIRED

We are looking for dedicated, dynamic sales consultants to promote our highly successful membership programme.

- Must have a confident personality & excellent communication skills
- Sales experience preferred but not essential
- Full training provided
- Immediate start
- Work 4 hours a day between 9 am -1 pm or 2 -6 pm Monday-Friday
- Hourly rate plus excellent commissions
- Thai nationals only

Walk-in interviews from 10 am - 5 pm daily at the Sheraton Grande Laguna Phuket, Bang Tao Bay, Phuket 83110. Tel: 0-7632-4101 ext. 8984.

New all villa boutique resort in north Phuket seeks applicants for the following positions:

- |                             |                                 |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Financial Controller     | 2. Human Resources Director     |
| 3. Executive Chef           | 4. Executive Housekeeper        |
| 5. Front Office Manager     | 6. Reservations Manager         |
| 7. EDP/IT Manager           | 8. Executive Personal Assistant |
| 9. Operations Secretary     | 10. Housekeeping Supervisor     |
| 11. Engineer                | 12. Reservations Officer        |
| 13. Villa Relations Officer | 14. Bellman                     |
| 15. Captain                 | 16. Bartender                   |
| 17. Waiter/Waitress         |                                 |

All applicants must be fluent in English and have a minimum of 3 years' work experience in an established resort in the field applied for. Enthusiastic, service oriented, talented, energetic, calm and happy applicants are most welcome.

Only Thai nationals need apply. Successful applicants will be richly rewarded in a warm and happy environment and privileges to maintaining a healthy body, mind & spirit.

Please send your resumé to: Bundarika Villa Co Ltd  
8 Hajana Nivej 1, Anupas Phuketkam Road, Phuket 83000  
Tel/Fax: 076-313424 or email: info@thebundarika.com

## URGENTLY REQUIRED

Fagor's European kitchen appliances distributor requires a Sales Executive and a Technician to join our team. Male or female, age over 23 years, holding vocational certificate or higher. Good command of English and computer skills. Experience in position applied will be an advantage. Tel: 076-234 695, 01-8091386. Fax: 076-234240. Email: fagorpk@phuket.ksc.co.th

## ESTIMATOR AND CAD/CAM

Wanted: construction estimator and CAD/CAM operator for plumbing and water infrastructure construction projects at our Phuket office. Email CV or call for details. Tel: 076-354870, 01-6334279. Fax: 076-354871. Email: espk@phuket.ksc.co.th

## ASSISTANT MANAGER

A newly set up company operating mainly in the real estate market is looking for an enthusiastic, Thai national, male or female, 30-35 years old, fluent in English with good experience in marketing, a good all-round personality and preferably with own car. Very good salary and profit sharing scheme. If interested, send your CV by fax or email to apply. Fax: 076-352066. Email: info@consaltho.it

**HEAD HOUSEKEEPER**  
wanted for the Yorkshire Inn Hotel, Patong. Must have experience, be able to manage and motivate staff, and speak some English. Good salary and conditions. Please contact for more information and application. Tel: 076-340904 or 076-345258.

**HOLIDAY RESORT**  
Staff wanted for the following positions: Assistant to the General Manager, and Sales staff to work for local chain resorts on Koh Yao Noi in Phang Nga; Chiang Mai; Chaman; and Ayudhaya. Please contact to apply or for further information. Tel: 02-7115997-8 (ext 21, 34).

## Employment Wanted

**JOB IN TOURISM**  
French woman available immediately for work in tourism sector. Has degree in tourism and experience in leisure sector, is motivated, and ready to consider any proposition. Please email with offers. Email: sozzideborah@hotmail.com



## Thavorn Hotels & Resorts Phuket

Owners of Thavorn Hotel in Phuket Town, Thavorn Grand Plaza in Phuket Town, Thavorn Palm Beach Resort on Karon Beach, Thavorn Beach Village & Spa on Nakalay Bay, near Patong Beach and The Nakalay Junk, is currently looking for:

- General Managers
- Resident Managers / Hotel Managers / Executive Assistant Managers (Rooms / F&B)
- Food & Beverage Directors / Managers / Restaurant Managers / Asst. Managers
- Executive Chefs (expat) / Executive Sous Chefs (expat or Thai) / Chefs
- Rooms Division Manager / Front Office Managers / Asst. Managers
- Director of Marketing / Director of Sales / Sales Managers (Bangkok & Phuket offices)
- Programmers - (php, html, MySQL, JavaScript)
- Web Designers - (Dreamweaver, Flash, Photoshop, Illustrator)
- Text Editors for E-Commerce Department
- Chief Accountants / Accountants
- Spa Manager / Asst. Spa Managers
- Training Manager / English Language Instructor
- Admin. Manager / Executive Secretary / Secretaries (for Marketing Communications and Research & Development Department)
- Receptionists / Guest Relations Officers / Managers
- Thavorn Beach Village & Spa - salary starts Baht 12,000 excluding service charge
- Thavorn Palm Beach Resort - salary starts Baht 10,000 excluding service charge
- Thavorn Grand Plaza Hotel - salary starts Baht 8,000 excluding service charge

- Many Junior and Middle Management Admin. & Service Staff / Managers
- The ideal candidates for professional positions MUST possess several years experience in a similar capacity with 4-5 stars hotels and resorts.
- First time candidates for the hotel industry are most welcome. Ideally, new candidates for management positions MUST possess a degree, preferably master degree, from recognized universities.
- We offer a good salary and excellent benefits to the right candidates.

Thavorn Group is looking for young, energetic, committed, result-oriented and self-motivated Thais and expatriates to join our team. Interested candidates should send their applications with CVs and two recent photos to:

Group Human Resources Director  
Thavorn Hotels & Resorts Phuket  
c/o Thavorn Grand Plaza Hotel  
40/5 Chana-Chaoen Road, Muang, Phuket 83000  
Email: recruitment@thavorngroup.com

\*\*\* All applications will be treated with strictest confidence. Only shortlisted candidates will be notified for an interview. \*\*\*

## HR MANAGER REQUIRED

The Mangosteen Resort & Spa is seeking a Human Resources Manager. Thai nationals only, with at least 5 years' experience and excellent command of English language. Knowledge of Thai labor law is required. Please contact for more details and to apply. Tel: 076-289399. Fax: 076-289389. Email: hajo@mangosteen-phuket.com

## ADVERTISING SALES

Expanding young media company seeks Thai nationals aged 22 and over with a good command of written and spoken English for advertising sales positions. Experience in sales is an advantage and must have own transport. Good commission offered. To apply please contact us. Fax: 076-282240. Email: info@footprints-asia.com

## SPA THERAPIST

Chandara, a new exclusive residence situated at Laem Singh Beach, is now looking for energetic person to fill the position of Spa Therapist. Requirements: min 5 years' experience, pleasant personality, service minded, good communication and interpersonal skills, good command of English language is essential. Tel: 076-279550-1. Fax: 076-279092. Email: nsapple@loxinfo.co.th

## The Phuket Gazette

the island's English-language newspaper

The *Phuket Gazette* seeks to fill the following positions:

**Desk Editor.** The successful candidate will be a computer-savvy, native English-speaker with high-quality writing skills and a passion for clear, accurate English. The job entails editing, laying out and proof-reading editorial, classifieds and display advertisements.

**Reporter.** The successful candidate will be a Thai national with initiative, an outgoing personality and plenty of curiosity about the world and how it works. Also essential are the ability to communicate in English, both spoken and written, and a car driver's license.

Applications should be submitted by email to [alasdair@phuketgazette.net](mailto:alasdair@phuketgazette.net)

**Administration Assistant.** The successful candidate will be a Thai national with an outgoing personality. Also essential are experience in sales and/or administration, a good command of written and spoken English, good management and organizational skills, skills in PageMaker and Office software programs.

Applications should be submitted by email to [mem@phuketgazette.net](mailto:mem@phuketgazette.net)  
Tel: 076-236555. Fax: 076-213971.

## COOK WANTED

The Yorkshire Inn Hotel is looking to employ a good Cook with experience in Thai and European food. To apply, please call Tel: 076-340904 or 076-345258.

## TRAINEE HOUSEKEEPER

wanted to work in Kathu area. Must speak some English, be able to ride a motorbike, and willing to learn. Good wages and conditions. Tel: 076-323-214, 018540061.

Problems with an extra-marital affair? Need somebody to love?

ASK KHUN WANIDA "MOMMA DUCK"

Fax your questions to 076-213971  
or e-mail to [momma@phuketgazette.net](mailto:momma@phuketgazette.net)





# Tout, Trader & Trumpet

## Articles for Sale

### GARAGE SALE

on Sunday, April 25, from 9 am to midday. Gas cooker, single bed, children's things, bonsai trees, etc. Tel: 076-274819, 01-7196937.

### MOVING SALE

Farangs leaving country. All furniture and household items for sale. Good stuff, good prices. Please contact for details. Tel: 076-288743. Email: rkkramer5643@yahoo.com

### SURPLUS WOOD

I have a lot of teak wood left over from building a house. Call 07-8823940 or email: albertjames1940@hotmail.com

### SURFBOARD

Never ridden, 6'4" x 18" x 2 3/8" single-to-double concave Piranha surfboard. Rounded-square tail, FCS fins. Made for Phuket surf. Price: 11,999 baht. Tel: 076-270549. Email: saltwater\_dreaming@hotmail.com

### NIKONOS CAMERA

Nikonos IV underwater camera for sale. Price: 12,000 baht. Flooded but in excellent condition. Traffic accident forces immediate sale. Email: maxskii@thailand.com

### GIBSON GUITAR

PR 5E/B model. Semi-acoustic, cut-away, black-laquer finish with inlays. Genuine Epiphone pick-ups. 12,000 baht, incl case. Tel: 07-2781478. Email: rickgamble@hotmail.com

## Articles Wanted

### PLAYSTATION 2

Looking for somebody wanting to sell his or her Sony Playstation 2. Must be at a fair price and in good condition only. Email: gabrielle5712@hotmail.com

### SECONDHAND FLUTE

Looking for a secondhand flute in good condition (for intermediate musician). If you have one, or if you know where to buy in Phuket or Bangkok, please contact me. Email: elsbellon@hotmail.com

### BOOKS WANTED

I am looking for a good wholesale supplier of secondhand foreign-language books. Email: phucketinquiry@hotmail.com

### DIVE GEAR

I would like to buy two sets of dive gear. Must be in good working condition. 2 x complete regulators, 2 BCDs 1xXL, 1xS; fins x 2 (sizes 42-43 & 41-42). Please email me with your contact number. Email: ianlenton@hotmail.com

## Boats & Marine



**FOR A FREE OF CHARGE INSURANCE QUOTE FOR YOUR BOAT, COMMERCIAL OR PLEASURE**

Please contact:  
Tel: 076-239111, 076-273320  
Fax: 076-238974  
Email: insurance@thaimarine.com



### FOR SALE

Price 280,000 baht. Length 6.5 meters, engine: Yamaha 85hp, options: fishing sounder. Dinghy Yamaha 2hp. In Chalong Bay. Please contact for more information. Tel: 07-2663260.

### BOAT FOR SALE

29-foot fiberglass motor yacht with Thai registration. 2 x 280hp Mercruiser engines. Price: 3.5 million baht ono. Please contact for more details. Tel: 076-239864. Email: hktmkt@ksc.th.com

### TAMAPRAO YACHT

for sale at Tamaprao. Swedish design, 36-foot fiberglass, motor yacht, 2x200hp engines. Tel: 09-2002497.

### LONGTAIL BOAT

Beautiful, strong and new 12-meter longtail boat with fast 2-liter engine. Located in Rawai. Price: 90,000 baht. Tel: 07-2710609.

### 58FT MOTOR YACHT

Beautiful, perfect-condition, 4 cabins with aircon, salon with aircon, a large fully-equipped galley, 3 decks with top deck fitted out with luxury seating, dining and bar area, and large sun deck. Twin Cummins engines. Also includes a 5.8m tender with twin 85hp engines. This is a truly magnificent boat in perfect, spotless condition. All inquiries to Bill. Photos on request. Tel: 01-9390176. Email: bill@phuketisland.com

### SPORTFISHING BOAT

Thai 40-foot sport fishing boat with a 300hp Hino diesel, Thai registered for charter, CB Radio, color fish finder. For sale 400,000 baht ono. Tel: 09-8661009. Email: thaihino\_7@hotmail.com



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### WOODEN CRUISER

Comfortable, small, 12m wooden cruiser, with Thai registration, Isuzu 115hp engine and good onboard loo and shower. Price: 400,000 baht ono. Please contact for details. Tel: 07-2642978. Fax: 076-290441.

### SEADOO JETBOAT

Two-year-old SeaDoo jetboat in almost perfect condition. Includes a recently rebuilt 90hp engine. Price: 200,000 baht or best offer. Tel: 01-8931049. Email: z3114@msn.com

### 21FT SPEEDBOAT

Thai registered 09/2000 (all taxes paid). First owner, private use, only 230 hours. Superb condition, open-deck design, with right-hand console. Strong construction fiberglass hull (marine blue and white color), 225hp Yamaha V6. Fully equipped: life jackets, GPS, VHF, anchor, fenders, sunshade + rain protection covers, etc. Yearly anti-fouling done. Trailer included. Ready for taking the sea. Price: 700,000 baht. Tel: 09-9732278 or 09-9732316. Email: michelburon@hotmail.com

## Bulletins



### OPENING THE 1ST OF MAY - THE SEA ACADEMY OF DANCE!

Classes for all ages, including: tap dance, ballet, jazz, jazzercise, tumble tots, kindy gymnastics and much more!

To register for classes visit the SEA Academy, which is open for registration 26th - 30th of April between 9am and 5pm daily.

All students will have the opportunity to follow the British Dancing Association System, examinations of which will be hosted regularly at the Academy.

Classes are limited to 12 students per class to ensure high-quality tuition, organised to suit ability, and taught by a fully-certified, professional, Australian dance instructor. Private lessons are also available. Costumes and shoes available for purchase.

Whether you are a serious dancer or simply want to get fit and have fun - contact us!  
Address: 23/115-116 (Koh Kaew Plaza) Moo 2, Thepkasatri Rd, Muang, Phuket 83000 (Located near the Hotel in the Boat Lagoon).

Email enquiries: academy@phuketentertainment.com

Telephone enquiries: Ms. Karen Alexander-Maciver - 07 264 7397

## Business Opportunities

### PRIME LOCATION

shop for sale. Build your future with your own shop. For further information, please see our website at www.rangrong.com or Tel: 01-6893194. Email: 2810@mail.austria.com

### PATONG BUSINESS

Bars, shops, rooms or combination of all three for sale or lease. 300 meters to beach. 7,000 baht/month. Please contact for further information. Tel: 07-2738944. Email: thesonapt\_2536@hotmail.com

### RESTAURANT 4 SALE

35-seat, fully-equipped restaurant in Patong for sale, ready to work. 4 motorcycles for rent and 6 computers with Internet access. Tel: 07-048-6254, 01-9496092. Email: pillar@loxinfo.co.th

### FARANG

restaurant with full equipment and many regulars to take over. Please come and see. Tel: 06-2705064.

### PUB/RESTAURANT

in Soi Nanai for sale. Capacity: 40 seats with balcony, 3 apartments and a view of Patong. Price: 25,000 baht/month on a 5-year contract. Please contact for more details. Email: thomaspatong@gmx.de

### BUSINESS FOR SALE

Profitable dive business for sale. Located on a prestigious island resort on Great Barrier Reef in Queensland, Australia. Please email for further information. Email: jgkg24@hotmail.com

### HOTEL PROPERTY FOR SALE

Would you like to own a hotel, restaurant and rental shop on Karon Beach? Easy foreign ownership, rapid company transfer. Please contact us for further information or see our website at: www.geocities.com/hotelinparadise Tel: 01-6931136. Email: hotelinparadise@yahoo.com

### CAFE FOR SALE

Fully equipped and well-established (5 years) cafe in the center of Phuket City. Price: 900,000 baht negotiable. Please call or email for more information. Tel: 076-355-233. Email: circlecafe@hotmail.com

### OWN BUSINESS

Own a business with work permits in Thailand. Please contact for further information. Tel: 07-2719664. Email: lester\_lougan@yahoo.ca

### NICE BAR AND BIKE

Nice bar in a good location in Kata Center. Price: 900,000 baht. Honda CBR 400cc for sale: 75,000 baht. Please call for more details. Tel: 07-8814415.

### NAIL SALON

Fully furnished nail salon for lease on main road in Patong area. Two-year contract for 500,000 baht. Please call for details. Tel: 01-6383682 or 09-1164759.

### RESORT FOR SALE

Koh Samui beachfront resort for sale. Comprises 25 bungalows and swimming pool. For further details, please see our website at: www.phuketbooking.net/real\_estate



### GUESTHOUSE FOR SALE

12-room guesthouse for sale overlooking large lake and private swimming pool near Loch Palm Golf Course. Also, 9 rai for sale with water, pool. Tel: 06-9757268.

### PHANG NGA

3-story, 14-room guesthouse is for sale. Convenient for James Bond Island, banks, market, restaurant and bus station, and popular with both guests and guidebooks. Clean, aircon, fully furnished. A steal at 6 million baht. Please call for more information. Tel: 07-6411963.

### SPORTS BAR

and restaurant. Great location in central Bangla area. Max 1 pool table, darts area, stereo/DVD/satellite radio, 3 (UBC) TV sets, 3 aircons, modern kitchen, living area upstairs. Upmarket bar with long lease. Please contact for more information. Tel: 09-8677969. Email: bangla\_04@yahoo.com

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# Tout, Trader & Trumpet

## Business Services

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### VISA RUN TO RANONG

1,299 baht. Includes visa stamp fee, insurance, trip by boat and minibus (both in good condition), and lunch with soft drinks. Daily trip starts at 7 am at KFC at Tesco-Lotus supercenter. Please contact us for reservation. Tel: 076-289201 or 01-5352637. For further information, please visit our website: [www.phuket.dir.com/expressvisaextension](http://www.phuket.dir.com/expressvisaextension)

### LUXURY VISA RUN

to Ranong every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, starting at 8 am from The Yorkshire Inn Hotel, in Soi Sansabai, Patong. Air-conditioned minibus with surround music, TV, snacks and drinks. Price: 1,200 baht, including Burmese visa fee and boat crossing. Please book early. Tel: 076-340904 or 076-345258.

### NEW E-MARKETING SERVICES

Office Xpress has gathered a team of international-quality Web designers, programmers, graphic artists and IT specialists. Let us help you with your e-commerce and online business. Contact us today to learn how you can get more sales via the Internet and new IT products. Tel: 076-282403. Email: [mike@officexpress.org](mailto:mike@officexpress.org)

### CONSTRUCTION

Phuket Construction. Top-notch local builder, 10 years' experience. Call us for more details. Tel: 07-2698492.

### HEALTHY HERBALIFE

Weight control, healthy nutrition, use it and earn money. Tel: 07-8054344. Email: [aafitform@hotmail.com](mailto:aafitform@hotmail.com)

## Computers

### COMPUTER REPAIRS

Computer repairs, call-out services, upgrades, sales and tuition by UK technician. Please contact for more information. Tel: 09-4735080.

### ADSL MODEM

ADSL USB modem (Bipac-701 C2) and ADSL splitter for sale. 4,000 baht. Never been used, still in the box. Please contact Khun Goy. Tel: 076-342636, 09-6451050. Email: [hoiclang@hotmail.com](mailto:hoiclang@hotmail.com)

### IBM FOR SALE

If you are looking for a perfect computer then you are on the right track. For sale: imported IBM 205 8430 IBM Server 2.0 MHz. 1 Gigabyte RAM, DVD RDW, DVD, extra Rage XLPci video card 120MB RAM, NEC LCD 1850E. Logitech cordless keyboard. Tel: 076-383813, 07-882 2597. Email: [euro-art-gallery@planet.nl](mailto:euro-art-gallery@planet.nl)

## Personal Services

### PERMANENT TATTOO

Permanent tattoos for ladies. Professional tattoos for lips, eyes and eyebrows. Contact for more information. Tel: 076-385385, 06-2761506. Email: [nattakarn\\_aasa@yahoo.com](mailto:nattakarn_aasa@yahoo.com)

### LEARN THAI AT HOME

From easy conversation to far more advanced learning. Coursework, cassettes and home-study materials provided by Joy, a charming Thai lady and ready to help. Please contact for a chat. Tel: 01-7971497. Email: [churee77@hotmail.com](mailto:churee77@hotmail.com)

### ENGLISH TUTORIALS

tailored to your course of study, needs and interests. For all ages and levels, by an experienced, young and fun Thai tutor. Contact Gem for more info. Tel: 07-8875279. Email: [seafoons2002@yahoo.com](mailto:seafoons2002@yahoo.com)

### OPPORTUNITY

for success. A woman's professional skills are not enough to make the top jobs. The ambitious woman can now advance her career with good image management. "The Tools of HER Trade" by Dr Harold Dresner – the success guide for women that men read, too. For further details, please see our website at [www.carbeengruncle.com](http://www.carbeengruncle.com) Email: [carbeengruncle@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:carbeengruncle@yahoo.co.uk)

### LEARN CHINESE

Learn Chinese at your place or mine. Please contact for more information. Tel: 04-0068736 or 04-0560618. Email: [leondisley@yahoo.com](mailto:leondisley@yahoo.com)

### MAKEUP STYLIST

Makeup stylist available to show you the right way to use cosmetics for weddings, parties and other special occasions. Tel: 076-280363, 01-933 4121.

## Personal Services Wanted

### THAI LESSONS

I need to take Thai-language lessons from Monday through Friday, from 9 am to 12 noon. Please contact with details. Tel: 06-6853121, 06-743 7553. Fax: 076-240622. Email: [eric@phuketsmile.com](mailto:eric@phuketsmile.com)

### PIANO INSTRUCTOR

I am seeking an experienced piano teacher to instruct my 11-year-old son, who is in his second year of instruction. Email: [moonsun\\_hi@hotmail.com](mailto:moonsun_hi@hotmail.com)

## Personals

### BACKGAMMON

players wanted for some exciting games. Please call or fax for more details. Tel: 076-386113 or 01-577 8443. Fax: 076-386114.

### FRENCHMAN

Handsome man, 45 years old and a regular visitor to Thailand, would like to meet a very good-looking, educated lady between 30 and 35 years of age, for a serious relationship. Please contact me immediately. Tel: 01-0862673. Email: [grangeaulnaies@wanadoo.fr](mailto:grangeaulnaies@wanadoo.fr)

### AUSSIE GUY

I am going to be in Thailand for 4 months from August. I am looking for a Thai lady to spend time with as a friend for now, but hopefully it will lead to something more like marriage. I'm 26 years old, 6-feet tall, with blonde hair and an athletic build. I am looking for a female 20-30 years old. Please email me if you're interested in meeting me. Email: [peteintheqld@hotmail.com](mailto:peteintheqld@hotmail.com)

### WESTERN FEMALES

wanted. I am a 38-year-old guy, coming to Phuket for 6 months. I would like to meet non-Thai females for friendship. I just want friendly faces and to make a few friends there. Who knows where it will lead? Write me a few lines and introduce yourself, if possible send a recent photo. Email: [stevieboy07@hotmail.com](mailto:stevieboy07@hotmail.com)

### HONEST

and beautiful Thai. I am looking for an honest and beautiful Thai lady with very long hair. I am seeking a long-term relationship and marriage. Lady should be between 30 and 47 years of age. Please contact me by email and send your recent picture. No game players and no paperwork chasers please. Email: [Dstu2002@yahoo.com](mailto:Dstu2002@yahoo.com)

## Pets

### CACATUA PARTNER

We are looking to find a partner for our middle-sized yellow cheek Cacatua. The bird has to be younger than 2 years. Tel: 076-279088, 01-9439834. Email: [ruthe@tcm-asia.com](mailto:ruthe@tcm-asia.com)

## Public Notice

### ANZAC DAY BBQ

Sunday 25th April 2004.  
Diver's Bar at Surin Beach.

Aussies & Kiwis, partners and friends are invited to commemorate ANZAC Day.

Food served from 3 pm, BBQ & spit-roasted lamb (300 baht per adult)  
Beach Touch Footy starts at 5 pm.  
Live Entertainment at 7 pm.

Contact Diver at 07-2688703

## FOR THE ATTENTION OF : Mr. Segurotti Framca ( Pallanea )

Please note that **Mr Framca** has won a Honda Wave 100 motorbike in the Courts "Wheel of Fortune" lucky draw - which was held on **Jan 31, 2004**.

To date we have been unable to contact **Mr Framca**. This is an official notice that if **Mr Framca does not claim his prize before April 30**, then the motorbike will be used for other Courts promotions. Please contact Courts Mega Stores (Thailand) Limited **K.Chantana Tel : 076 - 261411 ext 220 by the Apr 30, 2004 latest**.

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# The Green Man

**Saturday 1st May**  
Our 3rd Birthday  
Maypole Dancing, Games  
May King & Queen  
Portraits for the Pub Wall  
Prizes, Stalls, Souvenirs

**Mayday at The Green Man**  
Wine tastings  
IN OUR PURPOSE BUILT WINE CELLAR  
ON 3RD 17TH, 31ST 7PM

**Phuket's 1st Dog Show**  
16th May  
Pedigree Classes & Fun Classes  
International Judge  
Entry Baht 50  
For reservations call Nui 01-8947736  
076 281445-51 Fax 076-281453  
email: info@the-green-man.net

**Quiz Night Thursdays 9pm**  
GREAT PRIZES, QUESTIONS & FUN  
Curry Night Fridays  
PHUKET'S BEST AUTHENTIC CURRY  
Family Sundays  
THE BEST ROAST ON THE ISLAND  
BOUNCY CASTLE AND FREE BUFFET FOR THE KIDZ  
BIG SCREEN LIVE F1, SOCCER

**Happy Hour 6-7**  
Bottled Beer B46  
Draught B88 a pint

**GUINNESS 139 BAHT ALL DAY**


**LIVE JAZZ WITH ERIKA MONDAYS**  
THE GIN IS COLD & THE PIANO'S HOT  
DOUBLE MARTINIS BAHT 110

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## NEW AMERICAN FOOD SHOWCASE

**Mark Your Calendar for**  
**26-28 April, 2004**  
**Bangkok & Phuket**

The Office of Agricultural Affairs, U.S. Embassy, Bangkok, invites you to participate in the Discover Thailand Trade Mission 2004. We are bringing many new-to-market U.S. food and beverage exporters to present their products to you.



Plenty of opportunities for Thai importers, retailers, food service professionals and interested food processors to interact and meet with these special U.S. suppliers at a luncheon reception and-table top exhibit.



**26 APRIL, 2004**  
11:30am-06:00pm  
**LUNCHEON RECEPTION/  
TABLE-TOP EXHIBITION**  
The Sukhothai Hotel  
The Celadon Restaurant  
**BANGKOK**

**28 APRIL, 2004**  
01:00pm-06:00pm  
**TABLE-TOP EXHIBITION**  
Dusit Laguna Resort  
Suriyan Room  
**PHUKET**



Don't miss this opportunity to meet and discuss business with these **NEW-TO-MARKET** U.S. companies. Table-top showcase will feature gourmet foods and beverages, almonds, walnuts, macadamias, energy drink, snack foods, etc.



For reservations or any additional information, please contact Khun Sukanya at 02-205-5106 or agbangkok@usda.gov



## Phuket & Samui PROPERTY EXPO

### Hong Kong - November 2004

**Don't miss it...**









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Property agents and their potential clients alike found the Phuket & Samui Property Expo in Singapore in March both fun and informative. Don't miss the next one in Hong Kong in November.