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DANE-GEROUS DRIVING: The stolen Isuzu D-Max outside Chalong Police Station after the rampage.

Dane on bail after road rage

By Sompratch Saowakhon

CHALONG: Lars Anders Olov Persson, 45, from Denmark, has been released on bail after being charged with auto theft, reckless driving and destruction of government and private property caused during a road rampage in a stolen a pickup truck on December 13.

Persson hit more than a dozen motorcycles, a number of pedestrians and caused extensive damage to other vehicles.

He was finally caught after ramming a fire truck being used as a roadblock.

Pol Lt Col Pheerapan Meemak of Chalong Police Station told the *Gazette* that police received a report that a silver Isuzu D-MAX had been stolen

from in front of Pae Leng restaurant at 11:20 am.

Col Pheerapan stationed police at key traffic locations in the area to catch the thief.

Persson was spotted by police as he sped past them as he turned from Wiset Rd onto Saiyuan Rd in Rawai.

On Soi Yanui, he hit six parked motorcycles and clipped 68-year-old Prasert Tamchu, then went on to hit two more motorbikes and an SMI Travel minivan parked by the side of the road.

Persson then proceeded to Kata Viewpoint, hitting four more parked motorcycles and five villagers along the way. None of the victims were seriously injured.

He then sped on to Kata Noi, racking up four more mo-

torbikes en route.

By that time police had commandeered a fire engine from Karon Municipality and used it to block the intersection at the bottom of the hill at the Orchidacea Resort.

Undeterred, Persson rammed the D-MAX into the truck at speed, bursting its right front tire in the process.

Despite having several bloody wounds, he then attempted to flee on foot, but was apprehended by police officers, Col Pheerapan said.

Col Pheerapan added that earlier in the week, Chalong Police had had to intercede in a fracas at a beer bar in Karon in which Mr Persson was involved.

A date has yet to be set for Persson's appearance in court.

Phuket strong in property awards

BANGKOK: Players in Phuket's property industry scooped three national prizes and shared top honors for the country's Best Villa Development at the inaugural Thailand Property Awards at the JW Marriott on Sukhumvit Rd, Bangkok, on December 13.

The awards ceremony was attended by more than 200 guests from the real estate industry, including developers, agents, architects, interior designers and members of real estate associations and organizations.

Prof Manop Bongsatad, chairman of the panel of independent judges, said that all decisions were based solely on the applications received, as it would not have been feasible to make site visits to all the businesses concerned.

However, he expressed confidence that all winners represented excellence and high achievement in their respective fields, and were worthy recipients of their awards.

At the ceremony the following award winners were announced:

- Best Villa Development – Phuket Prime Property Ltd for Baan Yamu and Dhevatarara Properties Co. Ltd for Dhevatarara Cove.

- Best Agent – Samui Villas and Homes (sponsored by Raimon Land).

- Best Architect – Original Vision Ltd for Samsara (sponsored by Gaggenau).

- Best Condo Development – TCC Capital Land for Athenee Residence.

- Best Developer – TCC Capital Land Limited (sponsored by Indigo Real Estate).

- Best Interior Designer –

Continued on page 2.

Phuket scoops property awards

From page 1

Laguna Resorts & Hotels PLC.
• Best Real Estate Website – Northpoint from Raimon Land PLC.

• Green Development Award – Laguna Resorts & Hotels PLC.

The South was well represented among the winners. One of the most popular award categories, Best Villa Development, saw a tie between Dhevataru Cove on Koh Samui and Baan Yamu in Phuket.

Laguna Resorts & Hotels PLC won the Green Development award and Best Interior Designer.

Rawai footballer beaten to death

RAWAI: Fisherman and promising amateur footballer Santi Naunyai, 21, was beaten to death by a gang of young men while he was on his way home from a party in Rawai early on December 13.

Pol Lt Col Sirisak Wasasiri, Deputy Superintendent of Chalong Police Station, said, "On the night of his death, the victim had been to a friend's birthday party in Rawai.

"On his way home he was attacked by five young men who dragged him onto Rawai Beach and beat him with an iron pipe."

Later that morning police arrested Jalan Rerngkij, Banrae Rerngsamooth, Somkiat Panthip and Theerapat Apdulraman, all from Baan Maphrao. All had blood stains on their clothing but denied the charges, Col Sirisak said.

A fifth suspect, whose name has not yet been released by police, later gave himself up at Chalong Police Station. He also denied any involvement in the attack.

Col Sirisak said that Santi and his friends had fought with the gang earlier in the week and that revenge was the assumed motive for the killing.

Police trace DNA in Friendship Beach murder

By Natcha Yuttaworawit

CHALONG: The case originally described by police as a daylight rape-murder at Friendship Beach is being re-examined, as police found no trace of a struggle near the body of motorbike taxi driver Tada Sa-nunsak.

Police now report that they are testing DNA found at the scene against potential suspects, but two suspects have already been cleared.

K. Tada, 45, was found dead on Friendship Beach in Rawai on June 28. Forensic tests show she had sex with a man not long before her throat was slit, but since there was no struggle police believe she knew her attacker.

Pol Col Chalit Kaewyarat, Superintendent of Chalong Police Station, told the *Gazette*, "We have sent DNA samples from many suspects to the forensic science lab in Bangkok. The first two suspects have been cleared, and we are now awaiting the results

from the sample of the last man she is known to have been with."

Previous police reports said that K. Tada had served time in Phuket Provincial Prison for drug offenses, then worked as a motorbike taxi driver upon her release.

"We didn't find any traces of a struggle at the scene, but the autopsy revealed that she had sex just before she died on the beach.

"We don't believe this is a rape-murder case, but we are still investigating", Col Chalit said.

Tsunami victim centers open in Phuket and Phang Nga

By Tanisa Bunyasiwa

KOH SIREH: The Austria-Phuket Community Center on Koh Sireh – which aims to help tsunami victims in their daily lives and long-term development in terms of income, occupation, education and health – was officially opened December 15.

The 23-million-baht center consists of three buildings and includes a library, kindergarten, training center, health center and a community park, and is a joint effort between Phuket Provincial Administration Organization (OrBorJor) and the Hilswerk Foundation.

At the opening were Austrian Ambassador to Thailand Dr Arno Riedl, Democrat Party leader Abhisit Vejjajiva, Phuket OrBorJor President Anchalee Vanich-Thepabutr, Dr Heidi Burkhart of the Hilswerk Foundation, and Dr Walter Koren, Commercial Advisor to the Austrian Embassy in Bangkok.

K. Abhisit, said, "Two years on [from the tsunami] we can now say that we have almost fully recovered.

"In no small part that recovery has been due to the friendship and cooperation of friends like the Hilswerk Austria Foundation as well as the hard work done by the local authorities.



WORLD COMMUNITY: Dr Heidi Burkhart of the Hilswerk Foundation, Austrian Ambassador to Thailand Dr Arno Riedl, Democrat Party leader Abhisit Vejjajiva and Phuket OrBorJor President Anchalee Vanich-Thepabutr preside over the opening of the Austria-Phuket Community Center on Koh Sireh.

"The community center today is a symbol of that compassion, friendship and cooperation, and it will be used to further promote the quality of lives of local people."

In the evening after the ceremony, a fund-raising gala dinner was held at Phuja Nirvana, Central Festival Phuket. Goods such as Austrian Swarovski crystal and Phuket pearls were up for auction, with money raised going to the center.

Earlier in the month, Switzerland also marked its contributions to the post-tsunami recovery effort. Switzerland invested about 4 million Swiss

francs (115 million baht) in helping to rehabilitate fishing communities on the islands of Koh Phra Thong and Koh Kho Khao and in the coastal villages Muang Mai, Thung Dap, Tha Pae Yoi and Pak Chok.

The donated money helped to rebuild 28 houses, four schools, a health center, two piers and three meeting halls, and to restore many fishing boats smashed by the tsunami.

Ceremonies were held on Koh Phra Thong and at Kuraburi on December 2 to officially hand over the buildings to the recipients.

The ceremonies were attended by representatives of local and national government, along with Switzerland's Ambassador to Thailand Rodolphe Imhoof, Delegate for Humanitarian Aid and Head of the Swiss Humanitarian Aid Unit Toni Frisch, the President of Swiss Solidarity Remigio Ratti, and Director of Swiss Solidarity Felix Bollman.

Minimum wage rate increased

PHUKET: The Ministry of Labor has announced a five-baht increase in the minimum wage in Phuket, from 181 baht to 186 baht a day, effective from January 1.

The new rate will not affect government employees, people working for non-governmental organizations, cottage industry piece workers or privately-hired domestic help.

The announcement came

with a warning for employers to comply with the new minimum rate, as the Phuket Provincial Land Office and the Phuket Provincial Labor Protection and Welfare Office will carry out inspections to ensure compliance.

The penalties for employers found guilty of not paying the minimum wage are up to six months in jail, a fine of up to 100,000 baht, or both.

The Key Piece of the Puzzle

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Immigration delays mar tourist arrivals

By Supanun Supawong

MAI KHAO: Despite having 60 Immigration officers stationed at Phuket International Airport (PIA), travelers landing on the island are having to suffer lengthy delays in being cleared through Immigration.

Pol Col Surasak Authapanyawanich, Superintendent of Immigration at PIA, explained to the *Gazette* that the long delays are the result of a surge in the number of passengers from 3,000 a day this time last year to more than 7,000 a day this year.

Adding to the problem, he said, was that renovations at the airport had forced the closure of two Immigration clearance counters

"Renovations that started in September have forced closure of three out of eight counters," he said.

However, Col Surasak explained that the problem was tem-



IMMIGRATION IMPASSE: Queues grow longer as tourists wait to be cleared through Immigration at Phuket International Airport.

porary, as the renovations are due to be finished sometime next month.

Following passenger complaints, two more Immigration counters have been opened, tak-

ing the total to seven. Average time to process each passenger was now 40 seconds, he added.

He told the *Gazette* that Immigration would be back to normal in January.

Police hunt for Kamala rapist

KAMALA: Police are searching for a Thai man accused of raping a 23-year-old French tourist early on December 7. Police declined to release the name of the suspect.

Pol Maj Monsak Srisuwan of Kamala Police Station, said that the woman, a waitress in France who was in Phuket on holiday, told police that about 2:30 am as she was walking back from a bar to her rented house, she was grabbed by a man, dragged into a car repair garage and raped.

After reporting the attack, the woman was taken to Vachira Phuket Hospital to be examined. Police are still waiting on the results of the tests, he added.

The victim returned to France on December 13 after testifying in court.

"We know the identity of the attacker and have issued a warrant for his arrest. He is a local man, but he has managed to elude the police," Maj Monsak added.

New Year road-safety campaign sets target for 3 dead, 39 injured

By Tanisa Bunyasiwa

PHUKET: Phuket Governor Niran Kalayanamit held a meeting of provincial office chiefs on December 18 to launch the provincial government's road-safety campaign for the New Year holiday period from December 28 to January 3.

As part of the campaign, the Phuket Provincial Office of Disaster and Mitigation (ODPM) has set a target of no more than three deaths and 39 people injured in road accidents on Phuket during the traditionally dangerous period on the roads.

The ODPM has also set a target of less than 34 road accidents on the island during that time.

Last year, two people died and 90 people were injured in

Phuket road accidents between December 29 and January 4.

On December 16, three checkpoints were set up in each district where officers are on the lookout for drunk drivers, speeding, motorbike riders not wearing helmets, car drivers not wearing seat belts, illegally modified motorbikes and unlicensed drivers until December 27.

Each checkpoint is giving away free chewing gum to drivers in a bid to reduce sleepiness while behind the wheel.

In addition, the ODPM will hold a road-safety fair in front of the Phuket City Municipality offices on Narisorn Rd, Phuket City, on December 27. Exhibitions showing how safety can prevent accidents, and demonstrations of how to assist people injured in road accidents will be on display.

Tsunami memorial services to be held in Patong, Kamala

PHUKET: Tsunami memorial ceremonies will be held at Patong Beach and at Kamala on December 26.

The memorial services in Patong will be in two parts – in the morning, and in the evening – as follows:

9:30 am: Guests to assemble at Loma Park, Patong Beach.

9:45 am: Address by Patong Mayor Pian Keesin.

9:50 am: Memorial service, a merit-making ceremony.

10 am: Merit-making and blessing ritual performed by nine Buddhist monks.

10:20 am: Merit-making offerings to the monks.

10:30 am: Buddhist monks offer blessings.

6 pm: Welcome Ceremony, Guests assemble at Loma Park.

6:10 pm: Welcome address by Phuket Provincial Administration Organization (*Or Bor Jor*) President Anchalee Vanich-Thepabutr.

6:15 pm: Address by Dr Suvit Yodmani.

6:20 pm: Performance by the Baan Sam Thong School choir.

6:30 pm: Wreath-laying and candle-lighting ceremony.

Flowers and floral wreaths will be laid, candles will be lit and traditional *khom loy* hot air floating lanterns will be released in memory of the deceased.

The Kamala services will be held from 12:40 pm to 4 pm at the Andaman Tsunami Victims Monument. Attendees are requested to wear formal dress. The ceremony schedule is as follows:

12:40 pm-1:20 pm: Guest registration.

1:20 pm: Mourning ceremony, a minute of silence for the victims.

1:35 pm: Speech by Kazushi Miyashita, President of the Phuket Japanese Association.

1:40 pm: Speech and eulogy from Phuket Governor Niran Kalayanamit. Eulogy from Hideaki Kobayashi, the Japanese Ambassador to Thailand. Eulogy from Tetsuji Banno, President of the Japan Chamber of Commerce in Bangkok. Eulogy from Panlop Thi-aree, of the World Fellowship of Buddhists.

2 pm-2:35 pm: Japanese Buddhist monk blessing ceremony.

2:50 pm-4 pm: Finale and refreshments.




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Poor way

Phuket's world-renowned status as a paradise isle is a magnet for tourists and hopeful workers alike, but the rapid influx is stretching the limited space and resources of the island beyond capacity.

Phuket has 290,000 registered residents, but its economic growth has attracted a vast body of unregistered migrant workers from around the nation and abroad, all looking to cash in on the tourism bonanza.

Estimates by government officials claim that up to 500,000 actual residents are on the island. The provincial government, however, bases its budget allocation on the official figure of 290,000 residents.

Adding in the almost 5 million tourists that come to this 543-square-kilometer isle each year, one starts to get an idea of the extent and nature of the problem.

This is the local context for the national Thai Poverty Registration Project, which was started in 2003 and aims to identify, quantify and rectify the major issues associated with poverty throughout the country.

As of September 2006, the project database indicated that there were 7.5 million people in Thailand living below the poverty line – earning less than US\$2, or about 69 baht, per day.

In Phuket, that includes 23,314 people registered as financially distressed, and 12,016 listed as homeless.

ACTION

Two key government agencies attempting to reduce the number of people living in poverty are the Bureau of Community Development (BCD) and the Skill Development Center (SDC).

The former is responsible for the Mai Khao mussel farm project, in which the province provided 53,100 baht for 300 pods (at 55 baht each) of sea mussel breeding stock and three cages, to be shared by nine farms.

Patcharee Klomsayna, 27, is running one of the farms on behalf of her sick father. She is also the leader of a mussel-breeding co-operative in Mai Khao.

"We started raising shellfish long before the tsunami, and my father has been a fisherman since before I was born. We have been living here all our lives, and raising shellfish is what we do for a living," she said.

K. Patcharee told the *Gazette* that after the tsunami they heard that the government wanted poor people to register their names so that they could be provided with recovery assistance.

In 2004, K. Patcharee and her family registered twice, once

As Phuket draws an increasing number of residents and laborers, the resources of the government are being stretched, leaving some members of society behind.

Poverty amidst the plenty is widespread – so what's the government doing about it, and which approaches are yielding results?

Suganya Semacote and Gazette Staff report.



PULLING MUSSELS: Patcharee Klomsayna, pictured here with her son, has been working the family mussel farm at Mai Khao all her life. The farm has hit hard times over recent years, forcing her family to seek government assistance.

at the mosque near their village and later at Phuket City Hall, in hopes of getting help to restore their sea mussel farm.

The village received 500,000 baht from the Department of Fisheries (DOF) for disaster relief soon after the tsunami and put it to use buying nets, lumber and other necessities for restoring their farms. The assistance from the BCD only arrived about three months ago, but it too has been put to use buying mussel stock for the farms.

"We just put the mussels in the water about two months ago, now we have to wait and see how they grow and what kind of shape they are in by April of next year," K. Patcharee said.

"In the past it took the shells only about four months to grow, but because the sea has been polluted by the nearby shrimp farms, and because more people are farming in the same area – which means there is less food in the water – it now takes seven

months for them to grow big enough for sale. We are selling sea mussels to the distributor for 13 baht a kilo," she explained.

"What we need most right now is money to upgrade our farm, to repair our mussel cages and to meet criteria to qualify for a loan from the bank. We can then use that money to expand our farm," K. Patcharee said.

"We would also like government funding to start breeding sea bass along with the mussels, as they complement each other, making for more efficient use of fodder.

"Also, bass are very popular, and it only takes four months for them to grow. They are now selling at 150 baht a kilo, and each fish weighs about 500 grams to one kilo. So it will be a good way to start something new and supplement income from the mussels," she explained.

K. Patcharee collects 50 baht in monthly dues from each of the 46 members of her co-op-

to a better life



Yajai Kongtuk and Somsri Prameangkit were given training in jewelry making by the Bureau of Community Development, but found their newly-learned skills alone were not enough to guarantee them a enough income to live on.

erative, which is put into a fund reserved for interest-free loans.

She added that the co-operative, together with the DOF, has plans to turn their sea mussel farm into a tourist attraction where visitors are educated about shellfish breeding and the way of life of coastal Thai villagers.

The Mai Khao project, backed by the DOF and BCD, seems to be succeeding, but not all projects take hold. For example, a jewelry-making training program in Rawai has left villagers frustrated and no better off than before, they say.

Yajai Kongtuk and Somsri Prameangkit were two of the 10 women who went through a jewelry-making class for five days in

September of this year, and said the skills they learned were not enough to set up a business or become financially independent.

They explained that the BCD was supposed to provide all the tools and supplies for the class to make jewelry, but there were not enough to go around, so the trainees had to share glass beads and implements, and buy some implements, such as scissors, for themselves.

They were taught during the day and left with the tools and glass beads to practice at night, but they were only given enough to make two necklaces a day.

After the training was over, they were left the tools and glass beads from the classes, with

which they made some necklaces and earrings. They sold these pieces at festivals and temple fairs organized by the province, but managed to make only 960 baht among all 10 women.

They added that they appreciated what the BCD had done for them, but what they really needed was the capital to buy enough materials to work full time.

The initial costs for stones or pearls was too high for them to put up themselves, and it was too much money to risk borrowing, since such expensive items might be difficult to sell, they said.

K. Yajai and K. Somsri went on to say that loans were available from some people in the

village, but they entailed 20% interest on top of the monthly 100-baht installments.

So now the women are filling orders on demand, part-time, and helping their husbands sell the fish and shellfish the men catch.

Marasri Pramunkit is the only one of the 10 trainees still working full time making jewelry, using a loan her family received from the village reserve fund during the Thaksin government's administration. She said her sales were increasing due to the onset

of high season, and that she regularly supplied retailers at shopping centers including Central Festival Phuket.

Sejthachai Saisang, an officer at the BCD, said that attitude was key in any project. Willingness to learn new things and adapt, and a belief in their own ability to rise out of poverty was essential, he added.

However, it is obvious that positive attitude alone isn't enough, as indicated by K. Sejthachai's request to Phuket Municipality for a 200% increase in his budget in 2007.

Thavicha Chaitong, Phuket Administrative Secretary, said the government has mapped out a poverty alleviation strategy with incremental phases, aimed at bringing 40% of the people in poverty above the poverty line by the end of this year, 30% in 2007 and a final 30% in 2008.

If the goals were not reached, he said, the problem would be referred back to Bangkok for further help.

He said that there were several issues contributing to poverty on the island, including sky-rocketing land values, rapid influx of migrant labor, and those who were beyond help due to self-destructive habits.

One important measure was taking an accurate door-to-door census, which K. Thavicha said would be done imminently. This would enable much more realistic budget allocation, he said.

People need to learn to be self-sufficient, K. Thavicha concluded, the government can provide education and inspiration, but financial aid should not be expected.

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Queer News

Monkey biz

When, in the early hours of December 9 Pol Maj Narongwet Ohn-sungnen, an Inspector with the Amnat Charoen Highway Police, received a tip-off that a pickup truck with a cargo of illegally obtained wildlife was heading his way, he acted swiftly.

He ordered road blocks to be set up and at 3:30 am an old bronze Mazda pickup – exactly matching the description given by the informant – turned up at one of them.

The game was not up so easily, however. Instead of stopping, the driver sped through the checkpoint. All units were mobilized to give chase and eventually the suspects were caught near Baan Kai Kham.

Crammed in the back of the truck, police found 85 long-tailed macaques, all in a pitiful condition.

The driver of the truck, Pramot Seupsing, 30, and his accomplice, Sompot Phlaphon, also 30, possibly realizing that claiming the monkeys climbed in by themselves wouldn't fool the fine minds of the Highway Police, promptly confessed that they had snatched the animals from nearby Don Pu Ta wildlife sanctuary.

This in itself is not so uncommon a story; the smuggling of protected wildlife for food, fur or the pet trade is a worldwide problem.

However, according to the two suspects, the monkeys in question were not destined for a Chinese or Korean banquet, but had been ordered by monks in Central Thailand.

The men admitted that this was not the first time they had been involved in monkey rustling and that the

animals were highly valued at temples as they are popular among villagers and encourage locals to come to temple fairs and donate generously. They also cast the temples in a good light as they are seen to be caring for wild animals, the rustlers claimed.

A few days later this seemingly wild allegation was given substance by no less a person than Phra Khru Kittiphachakhun, the Lord Abbot of Chondaen District, Phetchabun, who admitted that a monk in his district had previously been accused of receiving stolen monkeys and might well be involved in this case.

The Lord Abbot explained that in previous cases, the monk in question had managed to retain his position due to lack of evidence. He urged police to check the monk's bank account for any suspicious transactions.

"If we can prove that this monk is involved in monkey smuggling then we will discipline him to the full extent of the rules of the Buddhist clergy before turning him over to the police," the Lord Abbot said.

As for the police, their glory quickly turned to shame when it was revealed that 37 of the seized monkeys died in their care.

Wisnu Ratanaphan, from the Amnat Charoen Natural Resources and Environment Office, blasted the police saying, "Had the police cooperated with us earlier then the monkeys would not have died like this."

He added that two months earlier, police had come to the assistance of villagers who had found a large python, but had then let the animal starve to death "in their care".

Source: Kom Chad Luek




This magnificent pile can be found on Sakdideth Rd, about a kilometer from the Deep Sea Port. Given its castle-like proportions, it is appropriate that it consists mostly of construction debris.

But rest assured, concerned reader, that this will change as more midnight misanthropes learn about the mound and add their odiferous offcasts to it.


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Migrant workers 'deserve fewer rights'

A study of migrant labor in Thailand has reported that 50% of employers nationwide believe imported workers do not deserve the same rights as Thais.

The study published December 13 said employers restricted movement of their migrant staff, including locking them up at night.

These and other troubling findings are included in the report *The Mekong Challenge – Underpaid, Overworked and Overlooked: The realities of young migrant workers in Thailand*.

It was conducted by the Institute for Population and Social Research at Mahidol University with the support of the International Labor Organization (ILO).

The report said that 60% of domestic workers were forbidden from leaving their workplaces.

Restriction of movement was imposed on 43% of workers in the agriculture, fishing and manufacturing sectors. Employers guaranteed their migrant staff could not go anywhere by confiscating identity cards.

Most migrant workers involved were Burmese. There were a small number of laborers from Laos and Cambodia. The survey was conducted between February and October last year.

"Some 70% of employers said migrant workers should not leave the workplace," ILO consultant and research director Elaine Pearson said.

About half the employers in all sectors agreed "migrants should be locked up at night to ensure they do not escape," the report said.

However, the report noted that mobile telephones had allowed migrants, especially domestic workers, a means of communication.



Tough Act to follow: State enterprise workers cheer as books labeled "State Enterprise Privatization Act" are set on fire during a rally outside Parliament House. The protesters called on the National Legislative Assembly to dump the law, which they described as unpatriotic.

Between 7% and 9% of fishing, manufacturing and domestic workers reported physical abuse by employers.

Forty-one percent of migrant domestic helpers earned 1,000 baht or less a month.

Ms Pearson said that "50% of employers believe migrant workers should not have the same rights as Thai workers".

Compromised convictions? Almost 600 convicted criminals are to have their cases re-investigated because the Corrections Department believes they may be innocent.

The department said that 561 convicted criminals could have been wrongly convicted. It added that 7,206 convicted people had submitted claims of wrongful conviction.

"Our crosschecks are intended to help the innocent and not to find fault with the justice system," Justice Ministry Deputy Permanent Secretary Kittipong Kittiyarak said December 12.

Three women convicted on drugs charges may have been innocently caught up in their partners' drug offenses, he said.

K. Kittipong said convicted people would be given assistance in cases where there was a "strong suggestion of innocence".

"We will establish a committee of legal experts and forensic scientists to re-investigate their cases," he said.

Self service: A former household employee of Democrat Party leader Abhisit Vejjajiva was arrested December 11 on charges of stealing an ATM debit card

belonging to him. She is also accused of using the card to withdraw 873,500 baht.

Chalao Chanchum, 51, was arrested at her rented Chatuchak home after K. Abhisit complained to police on December 5 that a substantial sum had disappeared from a Kasikornbank account.

Chalao worked as a domestic helper in Abhisit's Sukhumvit

Soi 31 home for five years before resigning at the end of September.

She had made 121 withdrawals since March last year, taking between 500 baht and 10,000 baht each time. Chalao allegedly told police she wanted money to buy expensive items to show off to her friends.

Legal lotto: The Thai public wants the government to maintain the two- and three-digit lotteries, fearing that a huge sum of money – up to 370 billion baht – would go to operators of illegal underground lotteries if the state lotteries were stopped, a survey by the Thai Chamber of Commerce University has found.

Most respondents believed that the government ending the two- and three-digit lotteries while being unable to crack down on the underground lottery would have a negative impact, Sawanee Thairungroj, Dean of the university's Economics Faculty, said December 12.

Despite serious police efforts to suppress the underground lottery, it is still popular among gamblers. Up to 30% of the total illegal economy is estimated to go to underground lottery operators.

Around the Nation news round-up is sourced from the pages of The Nation and Kom Chad Luek newspapers.

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Baby found abandoned on Father's Day

On December 5 – HM the King's birthday and Father's Day in Thailand – the Samui Police were called after a baby boy was found abandoned in the middle of Chaweng Beach.

Passers-by found the crying child, thought to be about 18 months old, sitting on his own wearing a Brazilian football shirt with the number 9 on the back. When they failed to locate the parents, they called the Samui District Police Station.

Officers conducted a thorough search of the area but could not find the child's mother or father. The baby was subsequently taken to the police headquarters in Nathon, where one of the team, Pol Sgt Jaran Ingkong and his wife K. Montha, agreed to look after the boy until his parents could be located.

Signs have been posted around the island, but if no person claims the baby he will be taken into government care.

Critical cruiser: The Thai Marine Department, known locally as the Samui harbor master, announced plans to use a large specially-equipped patrol boat to cruise around Samui, Koh Pha-ngan and Koh Tao during the high season.

The 130-meter vessel is fully equipped with the latest medical equipment and has a launch to rescue victims from accidents at sea.

When a speedboat crashed on the way back from the Full



FROM THE GULF OF THAILAND

By Barry Singleton

Moon Party two years ago, 17 people died.

More recently, a longtail boat sank 50 miles west of Koh Pha-ngan while out on a sight-seeing tour of the neighboring National Marine Park.

Four tourists from Germany and Japan were stranded for 17 hours before they were finally rescued.

Lopburi Yothasiri, Chief of the Samui Marine Department office, said that he hopes to prevent such accidents in the coming months by patrolling the waters around Samui and the neighboring islands.

He added that his officers would also monitor safety procedures closely and check passenger numbers on boats traveling in the area.



Ready to rescue tourists in trouble: The Marine Department's 130-meter patrol boat.

Fewer Thai tourists: Kit "Steven" Pharaphuti, Manager of Lompraya, one of Samui's largest sea transport firms, said that during major Thai holidays the number of Thai passengers has dropped from 90% to less than 10% on the company's high-speed catamarans to popular locations such as Koh Pha-ngan and Koh Tao.

K. Kit believes that many tourist businesses on Koh Samui are so focused on the European market that they neglect to cater to domestic travelers.

He added that the Andaman coast is becoming increasingly popular with Thai tourists, who appreciate its natural beauty and can take advantage of low cost airfares for long weekends and public holidays.

Lompraya offers membership cards with special benefits to Thai passengers, but has found that, on routes from Koh Samui, its business comes almost entirely from foreign passengers.

Brit stabbed in robbery: Late last month Englishman Kevin Smith, 36, was attacked and robbed while riding his motorbike on Samui's main island ring road.

According to an eyewitness who called the police, three Thai men on a scooter pulled up alongside Mr Smith and demanded that he stop the vehicle.

When he did, they attacked him, stabbing him in the side and taking his wallet, which contained 1,000 baht.

Pol Col Chaiyut Nirawong, Superintendent of Samui District Police Station, and an investigation team led by Pol Lt Boonma Geawlaiyat worked quickly to catch the man's attackers.

Officers quickly apprehended three male suspects who then confessed to the robbery and were taken into custody pending prosecution.

Mr Smith was taken to Koh Samui Hospital and treated for serious injuries including stab wounds to the chest.

Immigration fraud: The Samui Immigration Office recently issued a warning to tourists regarding fraudsters on the island pretending to be officials and demanding money from foreigners.

A spokesperson for the island's immigration office said that a group of men masquerading as Immigration Police were demanding to see tourists' papers and then imposing on-the-spot fines if foreigners could not produce a valid passport or showed a visa that was out of date.

Immigration officials occasionally organize spot checks on Samui for security reasons, but these are rarely random and the officers always use an Immigration Department vehicle, making it easier to identify them as genuine Immigration officers.

Samui Immigration urges anyone who suspects they have been approached by bogus officers to immediately report the incident.

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The Patani United Liberation Organisation (Pulo), a long-standing separatist organization fighting for autonomy in the Malay-speaking South, has accused security forces and village defense volunteers of carrying out targeted killings in the restive region.

In a statement to *The Nation* newspaper on December 14, Pulo said that they and local Malay Muslim villagers were aware that government informants had been planted in their communities and pledged "all forms of uprisings".

Thai security units in the Deep South had been quietly assisting units of village defense volunteers in killing "innocent" local Malay Muslim residents, the statement said. Pulo claimed to have dispatched its own investigation team, known as Black Diamond, to investigate the killings.

Pulo accused security officials of discriminating against ethnic Malay villagers by arming their Buddhist neighbors.

Malay Muslim villagers did not trust the security forces to be unbiased arbiters, and thus there was a growing call for them to pull out of their villages, the statement said.

Extracurricular affairs: Eight school students in Thung Song District, Nakhon Sri Thammarat, were arrested December 12 after police found them naked in

Pulo alleges targeted killings



Customs officials display goods seized at Padang Besar checkpoint, Songkhla, December 11. The duty-free haul was estimated to be worth about 300,000 baht and consisted of 530 cartons of Indonesian Djarum Black cigarettes; 120 cans of Guinness beer; 324 packs of playing cards and 15 packs of *phai tong* cards. Customs officers said that the contraband would be destroyed.

hotel rooms they had hired. Seven more students managed to elude the officers and escape.

Police raided rooms 212, 213 and 214 at the Happy Inn, in Tambon Nong Hong, Thung Song District, after they received a report from a worried citizen that a group of 15 students had hired the rooms for illicit purposes.

Pol Capt Chaisit Thongmee, Deputy Inspector of Investigation

at Thung Song District Police Station, said that in room 214 police found four boys and one girl, all of whom were in a state of undress, as well as two empty beer bottles and "a number" of condoms.

All of the five boys and three girls arrested were between 14 and 16 years old and were students at a local high school and a technical college.

The eight students were taken to Thung Song District Police Station, where they tested negative for the presence of illegal substances, Capt Chaisit said.

The Provincial Student Inspector was notified and the students' guardians and teachers were called to collect them.

Arousing suspicion: In the early hours of December 12, three youths in Nakhon Sri Thammarat were detained by volunteer officers from the Sriwichai Special Taskforce after they were discovered brewing a mixture of *krathom*, an indigenous Thai plant that has a stimulant effect when ingested and which is a controlled substance, with mosquito repellent and other ingredients.

The team, led by District Chief Administrative Officer (Palad) Phemsak Luensunthon, raided a house in Tambon Pho Sadet, Nakhon Sri Thammarat City after receiving information that illegal substances were being prepared in the building.

Inside the house, the team found four youths sitting around a large electric rice cooker. On seeing the officers, the youths attempted to flee but the volunteers grabbed three of them.

Two suspects, aged 15 and 17, were students of a well-

known school in the city. Police named the third suspect as 21-year-old Naret Bunthongjan.

The rice cooker contained fresh *krathom* leaves, which were being boiled as the officers arrived. Officers also found more than two kilograms of *krathom* leaves, a bottle of soft drink, a box of mosquito repellent as well as cough medicine and pain killers.

Police also found a bottle of the finished product, which was handed to Nakhon Sri Thammarat City police as evidence.

The 15-year-old suspect confessed that the four were in the process of making a new drug that had recently become popular in the province as it reportedly stimulates sexual desire.

The recipe originally came from the three insurgent provinces in the south, the boy said.

Dr Nophaphon Cheunklin, from Nakhon Sri Thammarat Province Public Health Office, warned against taking the concoction, saying that ingesting mosquito repellent can cause lethargy, hallucinations and memory loss. If consumed regularly it could lead to brain damage.

Around The South news round-up is sourced from the pages of The Nation and Kom Chad Luek newspapers.



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China's art explosion

By Laura Schafer

There was a time in China when artistic expression was limited strictly to supporting political ideology.

Chinese artists were pointedly dissuaded from creating anything that wasn't politically favorable toward the Communist party, but as the free market ideology gradually took hold in the 1980s, these limits ended, and a new art scene exploded.

Phuket Islanders have a chance not just to see some of the results of the cultural boom, but also to purchase them.

Soul of Asia art gallery has procured about 30 oil paintings and authentic lithographs, numbered and signed by some of the most famous contemporary Chinese artists, and is displaying them at its gallery in the Plaza Surin until January 15.

Schoeni Art Gallery in Hong Kong was among the first to pick up on the promising artists, and auction houses Sotheby's and Christie's quickly followed, making contemporary Chinese art the new "must-own" pieces.

Eric Smulders, owner of Soul of Asia, said of the paintings, "The pictures reflect the times and cultural history, which is not a very happy one. This we often find in the unhappy faces of the paintings."

Many of the paintings convey painful emotion and express sorrow and hurt and often depict gruesome scenes that are simul-



There is a sadness to many of the modern Chinese paintings, such as those of Zhong Xiao Gang (above) and Wang Yi Dong, below.



taneously hard to look at and hard to turn away from. Some of the paintings are on individualistic themes that were new to Chinese art at the time, such as money and love. But every painting is mesmerizing and intense.

Looking at Zhong Xiao Gang's "My Memory No. 1", Mr Smulders points out the mark on the face and explains, "To me this means that all Chinese are marked and connected by their mutual past."

Zhong Xiao Gang's most famous painting is perhaps "The Big Family No. 2" from his



Bloodline series. It pictures two parents with their male child.

"The deep sadness in the faces of the parents because of the one child policy and the necessity to have a boy, the artist expresses so explicitly. Did the parents have to lose one or more girls before? Everybody has their own interpretation, of course, but

the impression is haunting and unforgettable," Mr. Smulders remarked.

The paintings are created by artists who lived during Mao's Cultural Revolution – a time of great confusion and fear in China.

"There's often a lot of pain or sadness in Chinese art that I presume has something to do


with their horrible past of the Cultural Revolution," explained Mr Smulders.

But it's not just the powerful subject matter that lends these paintings to popularity, it is also the rigorous training the artists go through. Art schools in China require that most painters do nothing but paint for eight to 10 hours every day. They learn the techniques and how to paint properly before they begin to paint artistically.

As a result, the paintings are exact and precise, each brush stroke carefully thought out based on what came before and what goes next. The abstract pieces have the same cleanliness as the still life paintings.

Artists to be featured at the Soul of Asia exhibition include Wang Guang Yi, who is often called "The Chinese Andy Warhol" as his pictures have a pop-art effect to them, and Wang Yi Dong, who is one of China's most famous portrait painters.

"Chinese contemporary art is very fresh and creative. It brings in new ideas with the Orientalism and the Chinese-ness of the paintings, expressing the culture with the extraordinary technical refinement," said Mr Smulders.



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BEHIND THE WHEEL

By Jeff Heselwood

The planners and marketing men over at Mercedes-Benz must be running out of ideas. Is there any segment in which the automaker is not yet represented? Well, until recently, it was the seven-seat luxury off-roader sector, but with the introduction of the superb GL-Class the range appears to be complete.

The GL is a fairly conventional people-carrier, but unlike many of its rivals, is comprehensively equipped and offered – certainly in other markets – with a variety of engines. There are two diesel and two gasoline units, the former conforming to the latest European emission standards, undercutting the EU4 limits and featuring standard particulate filters.

The two gasoline units available are the 5.5 liter 388 bhp (285 kW) model in the GL 500, and the 4.6l version in the GL 450, developing 340 bhp, or 250 kW. Both these engines also meet the stringent EU4 standards.

The GL was voted SUV of the year 2007 by the influential US magazine *Motor Trend*, fighting off a field of 22 competitors.

Motor Trend Editor-in-Chief Angus MacKenzie summed up the GL-Class, “The first full-size sport utility from Mercedes has astonishing technology, and will be available in a version that runs on the new low-sulfur diesel fuel for greater gas mileage.”

All GL-Class engines are mated to Mercedes’s unique seven-speed automatic transmission that also has manual operation using the steering wheel shift buttons. The use of a seven-speed auto transmission offers excellent performance coupled with low fuel consumption and reduced emissions.

While the new Lexus 460 has trumped this with an eight-speed transmission, Mercedes-Benz was the first to develop the unit fitted to the GL- and S-Class models.

It is a proven fact that few



Astonishing technology: The Benz GL class has won praise from motoring industry pundits and journalists.

Luxury SUV completes Mercedes-Benz stable

off-roaders actually venture off road and in recent years the move has been away from rugged, high-ground clearance machines that can perform anywhere to vehicles that are more sedan-like in both their handling and comfort.

The GL-Class, while retaining an ability to cover difficult terrain, leans more toward the latter, offering a beautifully controlled ride.

Permanent four-wheel drive offers controlled handling in all conditions, while the standard air suspension maintains a smooth and level attitude, particularly when partially laden.

The GL is also fitted with

an adaptive damper system to cope with load variations.

If a driver does want to go off-road, the type of driving demands different settings and, for the first time in this kind of vehicle, a special off-road ABS is fitted, which shortens braking distances on poor surfaces or particularly steep descents by allowing the wheels to lock under certain circumstances.

In addition, there is a downhill speed regulation device (DSR) that permits the driver to select various maximum speeds, which the GL will then not exceed.

Conversely, a hill-start assist system prevents the vehicle

rolling backward on an uphill slope.

The interior layout offers a variety of seating-versus-luggage settings and if all seven seats are required, the third row is a pair of full-sized adult seats with more than adequate head and leg room.

These seats can be stowed electrically at the push of a button, individually or in tandem, to offer a completely flat load area.

Safety features, as you would expect in a Mercedes-Benz, exceed the minimum: adaptive two-stage airbags for the driver and front-seat passenger; sidebags in the front and as an option for the middle row of

seats; window bags across all three rows of seats; and three-point seat belts for all seats.

The GL-Class is built at Daimler Chrysler’s Greenfield plant in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, alongside the M-Class and R-Class. Both of these vehicles also feature four-wheel drive.

With the addition of this third model, production capacity of the Tuscaloosa plant is now around 160,000 units a year. Ten years ago it was barely underway as a production facility.

Jeff Heselwood may be contacted by email to jhc@netvigator.com

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G whizz

Large crowds turned out for Jazz Royale, two glittering nights of world-class jazz on a specially erected stage next to the beach in Karon. Supersaxophonist Kenny G, on his sixth visit to Thailand, wowed ardent fans with his remarks in Thai and with his ability to breathe in through his nose and out through his mouth simultaneously, allowing him to hold a note for minutes on end.

While he went walkabout in the audience, other artistes stayed on the stage – a wise decision given the showers of rain that dampened the audience but not their enthusiasm.

The headliners on the second night were the Dizzy Gillespie All Star Big Band.



Main picture: Kenny G delighted fans with his walkabout in the audience.

Above: Georgie Fame first hit the charts in the 1960s.

Right: Master of the ivories Ahmad Jamal.

Center right: Queen of the strings Regina Carter.

Far right: The Dizzy Gillespie All Star Big Band.



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Happily Ever After

Recent weddings in Phuket



Above: Waraporn Kongdee and Chainarong Chaochata were married in the Phra Pitak Grand Ballroom at The Metropole hotel on November 19.

Left: Rattana Nookate and Songwuth Saipia were also married in the Phra Pitak Grand Ballroom, but on November 1.

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This week



TASTY THAI: Phuket Hilton Arcadia Resort & Spa Executive Sous Chef Danai Thotrakun (2nd from left) and fellow chef Siranee Chankhun (left) appear on the Bulgarian TV show *Morning Talk* on November 9 to discuss Thai cuisine and to promote the Thai food festival held recently in Bulgaria at the Hilton Sofia.



CONGRATULATIONS: The Publisher of the *Phuket Gazette*, John Magee (center), presents a fruit basket to new Phuket Governor Niran Kalayanamit to congratulate him for his promotion and to wish him a happy new year. The *Gazette's* Editor Parichart Utintu (2nd from right), General Manager Oranee Pienprasertkul (right) and Chief Reporter Sangkhae Leelanaporn (left) look on.



29 YEARS YOUNG (above): Saroth Angkanaphilard (right) was elected President of the Rotary Club of Phuket at the club's 29th anniversary celebration held recently at the Pearl Hotel in Phuket City. Present are current President Sakchai Chaowai (3rd from right), Phuket Vice-Governor Vorapoj Rattasima (4th from right) and Phuket Provincial Court Chief Justice Korkiet Supolpong (5th from right).




FREED TURTLES (right): Rear-Admiral Supot Prukha (white uniform) and Phuket Provincial Administration Organization President Anchalee Vanich-Thepabutr (with garland) watch sea turtles scurry for water at a turtle release ceremony on the beach in front of the Third Naval Area Command; 1,299 turtles were released on that day.



TEAM VILLA: Tom Travers (2nd from right), a managing partner of Indigo Real Estate, and the Indigo team join Bjorn Moller (3rd from left), Baan Mandala's developer, at Baan Mandala's show villa launch event. Indigo Real Estate is the managing agent of the project, which is located in Bang Tao.



SIGHT FOR SORE EYES: Phuket Laser Center Director Dr Sasiwimon Jantarasri (center), Managing Director Jaranya Jantakit (3rd from right) and Assistant Medical Director/Aesthetic Medicine Specialist Thanaruch Thayakorn (2nd from left) pose with Thai TV stars at the grand opening of Phuket Laser Center on Thaweewong Rd, Patong Beach.



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By Laura Schafer

Of the many worthy causes that have helped and continue to help tsunami victims and survivors, Tsunami Day Appeal, headquartered in Phuket, continues to assist local children.

This non-profit trust collects donations to help children, many of whom lost parents and siblings in the tsunami, so that they can better their lives through education.

Every baht raised by the Tsunami Day Appeal goes to the children. The charity last year devoted its first full disbursement to Thai children, with zero administration costs.

Tsunami Day raises funds through donations from the public during Flame Appeals that are held once a year – this year from December 10 to 30.

The organization also collects donations by holding a Ceremony of Light. For a donation of US\$10, people from across the globe can each send a message of goodwill or remembrance for tsunami victims and survivors with a message and a candle lit on Patong Beach on the anniversary of the tsunami.

Photos and video footage of the ceremony this year will be posted online at www.tsunamiday.org.

The flame was designed to be a symbol of tsunami remembrance. The flame lapels are for sale online and at businesses on the island, and throughout Thai-



Above: At the Ceremony of Light on December 26, messages of goodwill from donors will be laid alongside candles lit on Patong Beach.

Left: Donations to Tsunami Day Appeal go to help children continue their education by providing uniforms and books.

Remembering to help

land. People are encouraged to wear the flame throughout the Flame Appeal.

All proceeds collected by the Tsunami Day Appeal are given as grants to charitable organizations working to better the lives of the children who were left behind. The funds collected from

the 2006 Flame Appeal will be contributed to the Thai Children's Education Fund (TCEF). The TCEF helps underprivileged children stay in school by buying uniforms, books and other school necessities.

The Tsunami Day Appeal hopes to raise three million baht

this year to help 500 Phuket children for a full year.

The Tsunami Day Appeal offers several ways for interested donors to help: by taking part in the Ceremony of Light; donating money online; sponsoring a child in need; or purchasing a flame lapel.

To make a donation or for more information, contact Tsunami Day Appeal on the 3rd floor, Muang Mai Building, 9/17 Moo 6 Thepkasattri Rd, Phuket City. Tel: 076-213071. Email: mail@tsunamiday.org Website: www.tsunamiday.org



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Pruerk-Lawan	120.6	8,900,000	100,000	4,450,000	4,350,000
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Spa MAGIC



By Sangkhae
Leelanapaporn

**Anumba
at The Racha**

Doing Anumba on Koh Racha



EYE THERAPY: The glorious view from the spa on Koh Racha Yai.

With Christmas upon us and New Year just a week away, it dawns on me that the year has passed by so quickly.

Thinking about the many things I have done during the year, I think I deserve a reward – a day at Anumba Spa at The Racha resort on Koh Racha Yai seems just the ticket.

It is a beautiful day as I leave from Chalong Pier on a luxury speedboat that takes about 35 minutes to travel the 12 miles south to the resort. The sea is so blue it adds to my excitement, even though I have to leave my beloved Phuket behind.

The Racha has been open for two years, with the exception of the 10 months following the tsunami when it was closed for renovation. Anumba Spa opened in August 2005.

As I arrive on the island I see the resort in front of me – white villas nestled on the white sand with beautiful green gardens. It is so beautiful that I forget my seasickness on the boat. The sand is soft almost as if someone had covered the beaches in a fine powder. I can imagine this is the Maldives in Thailand.

Spa Manager Phijitree “Joy” Thongsuk has eight years of spa experience at Banyan Tree Spa and Mandara Spa at the JW Marriott Phuket Resort and Spa.

K. Joy explains that *anumba* means “magic box” in which a person can find everything they want.

“We have decorated in Zen style, using mainly white and large, open windows to take in the sea view,” she says.

The spa area is large and consists of nine buildings, including a reception and spa consultant area, day spa for foot massage and nail painting, four double-bed rooms, four *sala* with double beds for Thai massages,

fitness room, yoga room, souvenir shop, in-room service and coming soon Sunset Massages on the beach.

K. Joy explains that Anumba has seven women therapists, and one male therapist to massage guests who need a stronger massage. “We have about 25 to 30 guests a day, most of them are resort guests and divers. Many divers come here asking for a strong massage. So what each person needs depends on the customer. We also welcome customers who are not hotel guests, but they should book in advance.

“We have many guests from Switzerland and Germany this month. Most of our guests have spa treatment here, including the

walk-in guests who on diving day trips to the island. They have lunch and a spa treatment before leaving the island,” she says.

K. Joy adds that only about 2% of Anumba’s guests have never been to a spa before.

The spa menu lists Therapeutic Massages, Massage Extras, Body Scrubs, Body Wraps, Deluxe Facials and Signature Packages. The prices, excluding 10% service charge and 7% tax, range from 1,200 baht for an hour of Foot Fantasy to 7,400 baht for the four-hour Thai Flower Ritual package, which includes scrub, body massage, face massage and aromatic bath.

The products used are from different countries, such as OPI

nail care and nail polishes from the US, Rose Berry Oil from France and locally-sourced fresh Thai herbs.

I try the Body Scrub for Natural Body Glow and an Oriental Oil Massage. This scrub is suitable for all skin types and costs 2,200 baht for 50 minutes of treatment, and with a massage it takes 80 minutes and costs 2,800 baht.

K. Joy schedules my treatment in the Diamond Room – a villa complete with steam room, double bed, dressing room, toilet room, outdoor shower in the garden, big bath area and lounge area, all decorated in minimalist white.

I start with 10 minutes in the steam room. K. Pink, my therapist, then cleanses my skin for 50 minutes with scrubs made from natural honey, fresh walnut, plain yogurt, tomato and crushed rice. Next I rinse off the scrub in the *al fresco* shower. My skin feels soft and silky smooth.

After the scrub I continue with the Oriental Oil Massage, a popular signature treatment using palms, thumbs, fingertips and hand heels to draw upon the best fusion of Eastern and Western techniques.

This massage takes about 80 minutes, but I have limited time of just 35 minutes. It was still enough to let me really relax.

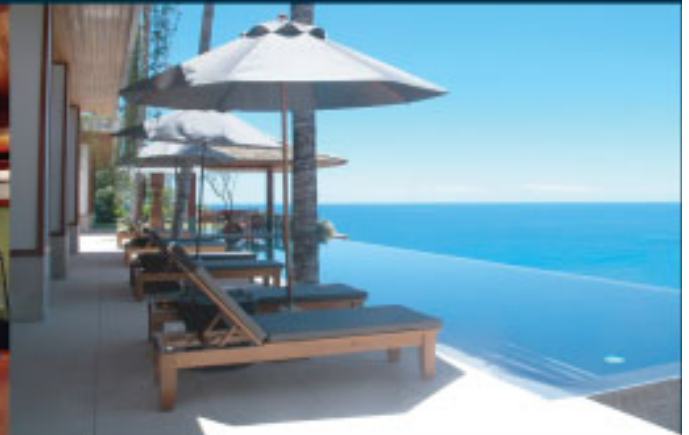
Time passes so fast that I have to rush to catch the 4 pm boat back to Phuket, but I take the time to enjoy the hot ginger tea served in the reception area after my massage. I also take the time to fill out a summary of my spa experience here, and the only box I check is “Excellent”.

During the boat trip back there is only one thought on my mind – I will come back... one day... to my Maldives of Thailand.

Anumba Spa, The Racha. Open daily, 9 am to 9 pm. Tel: 076-355455. Website: www.theracha.com

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By Frank-Daniel Jagdt

HAMBURG (dpa): Nobody would ever buy a pair of shoes that do not fit. But many men wear suits that do anything but fit properly.

Shoulders are often too narrow, jackets are too short and trouser legs are just too long.

Although Phuket is certainly not short of tailors who in theory should be able to leap this hurdle for you, are you sure you can rely on their judgment?

And is a cheaply-tailored suit from a Patong backstreet really better than a similarly priced one from a department store?

"The problem does not lie with the selection on the racks," says the Cologne-based style expert Bernhard Roetzel, adding, "You don't need an expensive tailored suit, as long as you are of normal build."

Many men are better off with a ready-made suit as they can see in the dressing room whether the jacket and trousers fit properly and whether the fabric and the cut is to their liking.

Joerg Staben, the owner of a men's clothing shop beside Hamburg's City Hall says "An off-the-rack suit is usually fine. Budget so that you can buy accessories like a good shirt, a nice tie and proper shoes."

THE MATERIAL WORLD

It can be quite fitting to suit yourself

A suit of good fabric, good tailoring and a timeless, classic cut should cost around US\$650 (23,000 baht), say both Mr Roetzel and Mr Staben.

To get a custom-made suit in an individual style, go for a handmade suit, says Petra Claessens, President of the German Fashion Institute (DMI) in Krefeld. Experts can tell a handmade suit from afar because it fits perfectly. Up close they can see details like jacket sleeves

with buttonholes that actually button up.

Handmade suits are more costly and time consuming. Just taking the measurements can last from 30 minutes to a full hour and then it might be another three months until delivery.

Many tailors in Phuket make promises of delivery within a much shorter time frame than this, though hurrying the process could well impact on the quality and precision of the cut.

Made-to-measure clothing is another option.

"This involves a business that offers suits based on standard cuts.

"There are factories where the suits are then cut to fit an individual," says Roetzel.

These "hybrids" sell for as little as US\$460 (16,000 baht). A good made-to-measure piece can sell for more than US\$1,300 (46,000 baht) he adds.

Regardless of where the suit comes from, fitting remains the most important step.

If you do not trust yourself or do not have a good friend to judge whether the suit fits well,



Suits you? Caution should be used when buying a new suit, whether tailored or off the shelf, or your attempts to cut a dash like George Clooney could come off leaving you looking more like a used car salesman.

put yourself in the hands of an experienced men's outfitter.

"And ideally, he's an experienced tailor or someone who

has spent years working with fabrics and cuts. Ask around," Claessens advises. With the huge numbers of tailor shops here in Phuket, it really is worth heading this advice and trying to find a shop that comes with a reliable recommendation. Remember that what may appear the height of fashion to a Burmese tailor, may not quite cut such a fine figure in the streets of Berlin, London or Stockholm.

A standard mistake is buying a jacket which is too small, according to Staben. Undersized jackets pinch the arms or stretch along the shoulders.

"This has nothing to do with figure conscious fashion, it's just uncomfortable and destroys the line."

Roetzel says people routinely buy trousers that are too long. "As a rule, the front of the trousers should fold in slightly and in the back cover half of the shoe's heel at the most."

Overly-long jacket arms look awful. "Then the entire jacket looks too big." Arms should hang loosely along the torso, long enough to just let a wristwatch peek out.

Different brands of suits are cut differently and switching brands may work wonders.

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Mermaids' tears or gifts dropped into the sea by gods are just two ancient explanations of where the smooth, opalescent spheres found in some shells came from.

Of course now, thanks to science, we know that pearls are found in oysters and caused when an intruder enters the oyster.

To rid itself of the aggravation, such as a grain of sand, the oyster will make a smooth coating around it, thus creating a pearl.

Since this discovery man has endeavored to harvest pearls.

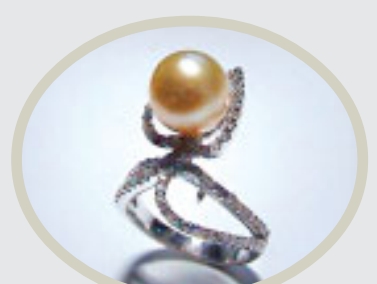
On Phuket, the Pearl Factory on Thepkasattri Rd cultures its own pearls by selecting quality oysters and adding a small bead with a piece of mantle tissue to each oyster, which then begins secreting layers of a crystalline substance, nacre, to create the pearl.

Up to 400 pearls are harvested within 12 to 20 months, depending on the size and type of pearls desired.

With its own pearl farm, this company produces pearls of many sizes and colors for its unique-design jewelry, which is created by in-house and freelance designers.

The smooth gifts from the sea are fashioned into necklaces, bracelets, earrings and rings, and the lining from the oyster shell – called mother of pearl – is used to adorn silverware, key chains,

Mother pearl



decorative plates and other items.

"People who buy pearls are those who really love them, and the price doesn't matter. Most of these people buy pearls because they are fascinated with them," says Amorn Intorncharoen of the Pearl Factory.

"Pearls keep their value. The luster of each pearl determines its value and quality – the shinier it is, the greater its value. To us, beauty must come first: our pearls must shine, have a good shape and be colorful. The best pearls must sparkle with many colors, like a rainbow," he adds.

In caring for pearls, he advises to keep them away from perfume, cosmetics and perspiration. Each time after the pearls have been worn, wipe them carefully with a soft cloth and keep them separate from other jewelry.

K. Amorn adds that the silk thread of a pearl necklace will wear over time, so he recommends checking the thread regularly and replace it if necessary.

This third-generation family business has grown and now exports its pearls and jewelry, with most of its products now bound for Europe.

K. Amorn says that pearls will keep their popularity because they can be added to nearly all forms of jewelry, and that designers at the Pearl Factory stay in touch with fashion trends.

Cocktail

By Suganya Semacote

Finding harmony at Orchid Kata Hotel



Ampol Sansern and his Siam Harmony Cocktail.

If you're looking for the best cocktail for relaxing by the pool, it stands to reason that you would go to the best bartender. According to the Thai Hotel Association, that is Ampol Sansern, the bartender at Phuket Orchid Resort on Karon Beach. There you will find the Siam Harmony Cocktail, a blend of fruit juices and rum, garnished with a piece of yam cut in the shape of Thailand.

K. Ampol, now 24, began working as a bartender at the resort four years ago, training and learning the craft. He begins the drink with a base of light rum and coconut rum over ice, followed by Malibu. Over this he pours the fruit juices – pineapple, guava and lime – and a splash of grenadine before shaking the mixture with

all of the style and flair befitting a top bartender.

The drink is served in a champagne glass with the tuberous map perched on the lip. The result is a soft pink color with a sweet smell similar to lychee. A taste reveals a smooth and soft drink, with the guava mixing with the coconut rum to produce a refreshing concoction.

Ingredients:

Rum	1 oz
Coconut Rum	½ oz
Pineapple Juice	2 oz
Guava Juice	2 oz
Lime Juice	½ oz
Grenadine	½ oz

Price at Phuket Orchid Resort: 127 baht.

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AFTER Barzah DARK

By Zach Fridell

How Barzah

In the seemingly-saturated club and bar scene in Phuket, there are a few obvious choices of where to park your bottle on an idle Thursday night. Patong is perennially popular, with the widest variety of establishments, followed by some quieter bars sprinkled through Kata and Karon.

Much underrated Phuket City, however, has a wide variety of clubs rivaling the music and crowds of Patong, without as many working girls underfoot. In town are some genuinely good places to see – and be seen – by trendy young urbanites.

Barzah, tucked away at the back of the Phoon Phol shophouse development, is a refreshing change from the shiny veneers of other clubs on the island and has a “raw” edge, as General Manager Jakkapong Sukjai calls it.

Adding to the club’s image are the spray-paint motifs inside and outside the club that look like they belong on subway cars in New York circa 1980.

The club, which opened in April, fills up after midnight when



crowds from other bars begin to trickle in for a last late-night drink, and perhaps another chance to score a date, before heading home. The DJ spins the typical tracks, but the band, with lead singer Andy, livens up the crowd with a big stage presence and lots of hair gel.

The Phoon Phol area is often regarded as the wrong side of the klong and is largely overlooked by farang on the island,

and on this Thursday evening the *Gazette*’s intrepid barhoppers were the only non-Thais in the house. But this is not a cause for concern; quite the opposite, in fact. The doormen are always welcoming and “Heineken” and “gin tonic” easily translate to a glass in hand. “Singha” was once translated into “Singha Light”, but that’s a small price to pay for the in-house entertainment.

As a good club should,



Barzah leaves creating the atmosphere to the patrons, which they do well and often. A small, one-person stage with rails is positioned among the high tables for any girl with enough inspiration, liquid or otherwise, to gyrate into the limelight. If she is even moderately deserving she is well-rewarded by cheers and sips of drinks from nearby admirers.

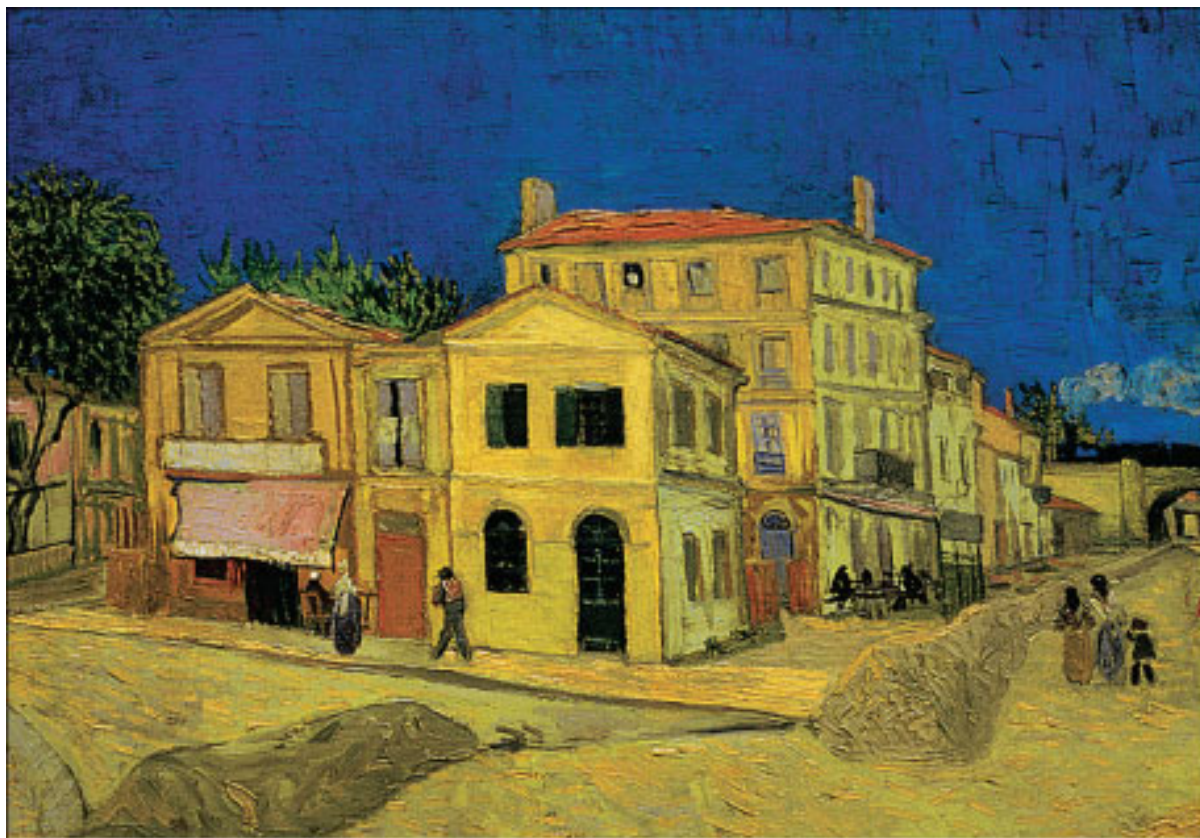
That trend will be broken from December 28 for five days when a group of ‘coyotes’ will come from Bangkok to help ring in the new year in Phuket.

To liven the liver there is currently a promotion of a bottle of 100 Pipers whiskey with five mixers and a pile of popcorn for

500 baht, if ordered before midnight. Other prices include 120 baht for a small Heineken and 100 baht for a small Singha.

If you’re still looking for that little bit more after Barzah kicks out, there are a number of nearby options to satisfy your late-night cravings. Noodles before bedtime is almost a tradition in town, or across Phoonphol Rd is Soi 11, where halfway up the concrete gauntlet is a laid-back tiki bar of bamboo and thatch that offers a curbside view of the passing late-night traffic.

After that? Well, if you are still up when Soi 11 closes, the sun will be rising and you probably should be somewhere else.



The Yellow House, by Vincent Van Gogh

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Backwater bliss

On my previous trip to Chiang Mai, my old business partner and frequent traveling companion Alex suggested a short, new trekking and river trip.

"Two hours drive north, then a 30-kilometer drive off the main road, followed by a short hour's trek. Camp overnight near a small Karen village then, the next day, an easy six-hour paddle down-river in a whitewater raft," was the suggested itinerary discussed over a few too many beers.

"Why not? Let's go!" came my reply. I was either going mad or that was the Heineken talking.

So the next morning, packed and ready to go, we headed north out of town and along the highway to Chiang Dao. Famed for its caves and Thailand's most famous and oldest elephant camp, and especially for its magnificent photo oppor-

Thailand TRAVELER

By Bill Owen

tunities of elephant caravans trekking through the river.

The drive to Chiang Dao was easy, despite rather heavy Saturday morning traffic, mainly trucks packed high with vegetables or camping gear.

The first part of the drive was along the flat plains to the north of the city – a little boring at first, but after 50km or so the road begins to wind into the foothills and the scenery changes dramatically as the road follows the Ping River.

The area near the town was dominated by the sight of Doi Luang, which, at a towering 2,225 meters high, is Thailand's third

tallest mountain. Turning west at the center of town, we followed the signs to the caves and after typically long and relaxing Northern Thai lunch we decided a short side trip into the caves was a must.

It's not possible to go through the whole cave system, which is made up of five interconnected caves believed to stretch more than 12km deep into the mountains. Being the type of intrepid travelers that we were, we managed to explore only two of the outer caves, Tham Phra Nawn (360m) and Tham Seu Dao (540m), which, thankfully, were lit by electric lights. Great stalagmite and stalactite formations abounded, and were well worth the short side trip.

A short afternoon walk and several stops later we realized we were too late to venture further, and it was time to find some place to stay the night. As luck had it, there were some excellent, small and inexpensive bungalows in the area. One resort especially caught the eye – The Chiang Dao Nest, run by Stewart, a friendly English guy, and his Thai wife, Khun Wicha, who is also an excellent cook.

The couple has been there for years and have built up quite a reputation for outstanding food, basic yet comfortable accommodation and for being a gold mine of information on what to do in and around the region.

K. Wicha's menu in their "fusion" restaurant was a real treat and worth an overnight stop



for the meal alone.

The next morning, slightly hungover and a little worse for wear, we decided to simply relax and take it easy as we explored the very natural, peaceful area.

To the east of the town we found great locations for easy trekking and mountain biking. To the west, Doi Luang offered the possibility of a two-day, one-night trek to the top, with views reputedly all the way to Chiang Mai on clear days. Check with the local authorities and national park officers for full details as trekkers through the national park must be escorted by rangers.

For less physically active entertainment, there were bird-watching tours – more than 300 species can be seen locally – a meditation center in Chiang Dao Cave Village, and hill tribe tours. For more adventurous types, river rafting, elephant trekking and mountain biking were all nearby.

If none of that appeals to you, the area's natural serenity is ideal for those who want to just sit and read a book, or jump into a hammock and drink a beer.

So much for our ever-intrepid travel plans, but in such a beautiful place doing nothing is always an option.

Where to stay

Chiang Dao Nest, Chiang Dao Cave Village. Good, clean bungalows from 500 baht a night. Tel: 053-456242, 053-455795. Email: nest@chiangdao.com Website: www.chiangdao.com/nest

How to get there

By bus – From Chang Puak Bus Station in Chiang Mai – take the bus to Tha Ton or Fang (bus leaves every 30 minutes until 5 pm). Ask to be dropped off at Chiang Dao, outside Alien bar. From there, walk to the accommodation in town or get a taxi to Chiang Dao Cave Village.

Accommodation is also available just outside of town for about 80 baht per person, 100 baht for two people.

By car or motorcycle – Take highway 107 north from Chiang Mai towards Fang. At 77km you arrive in Chiang Dao town. Turn left at the town to go to Chiang Dao Cave Village. The caves are about 5km down this road.

Other travel options

For details or to book two- or three-day trips for mountain biking, trekking, hill tribe visits and river rafting in and around this area, email my friend Alex (alex@activethailand.com), who runs one of the best soft adventure companies in the north.

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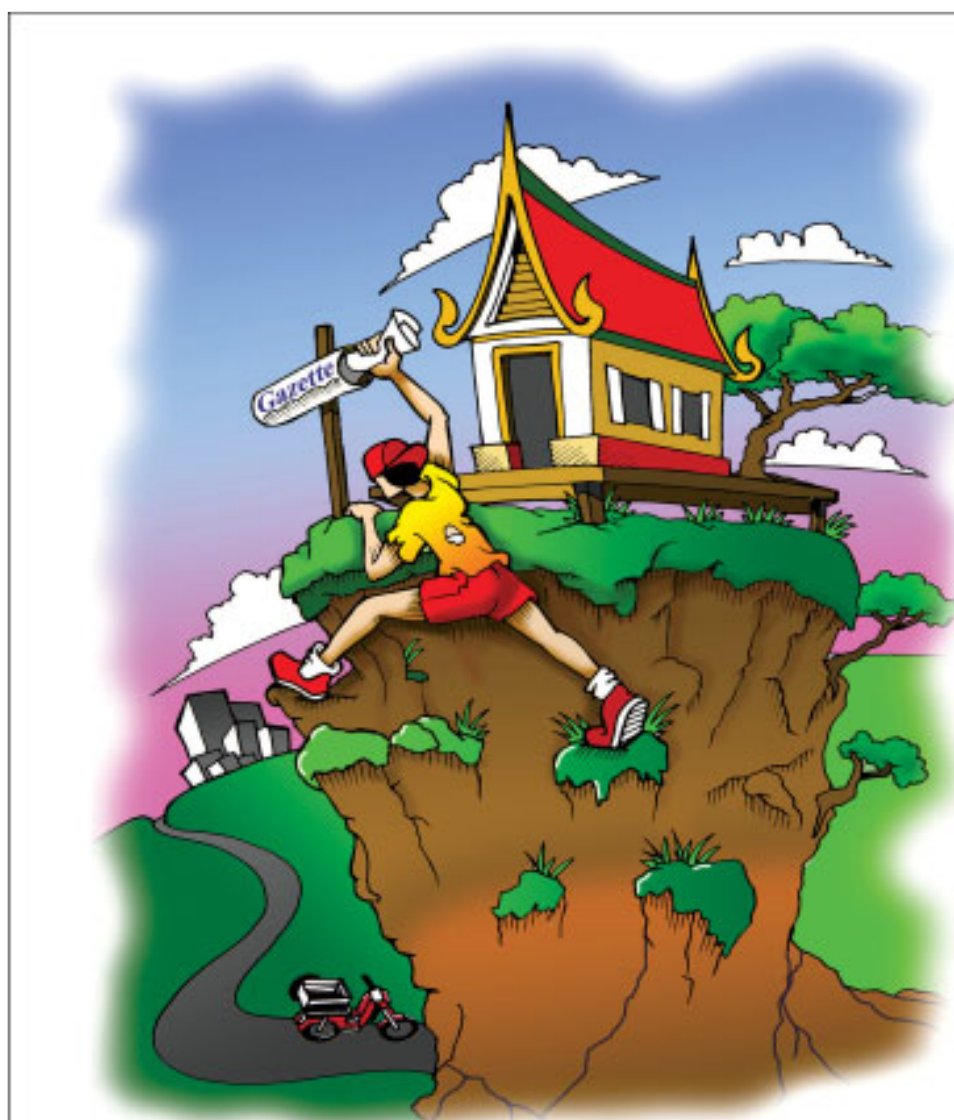
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Puzzles

Spot the Difference



Can you find the seven differences between the two cartoons below? And can you find them faster than the rest of the family?



su | do | ku

© Puzzles by Pappocom

Solution, tips and computer program at www.sudoku.com

		7	9		4
		1		8	
		3			2 5
7		4			
	2			9	
6					7
8	1	9	3		2
				2	8
			6		8 4

MEDIUM

The principle of Sudoku is very simple: each row, each column and each “box” of nine squares within the puzzle must contain all the numbers from 1 to 9 with, naturally, no repetitions. Guess if you will, but each Sudoku puzzle can be solved using logic alone. Beware: this puzzle has only one solution, which is on the next page.

The Cryptic Crossword

ACROSS

- CIA part is, oddly, tick-like. (9)
- Little sister and AI make rope material. (6)
- Machine part 'n' Nate are of common origin. (7)
- Riders in a team from Oakland. (7)
- Dope container. (3)
- Recent coil is fixed to work like semiconductor. (10)
- Beer gives Jackie gravity. (5)
- Period of expression. (4)
- Encourages chicken products. (4)
- Latin, therefore, may, er, proceed. (4)
- Not dry – block water quietly. (4)
- It takes a lot to make a game of chance. (5)
- Official desk take note of pest. (10)
- Personal Assistant and I go to northern town. (3)
- Doctor should make dry spell. (7)
- Let go UN, meadows and hotel. (7)
- In north, went quickly to disburse. (5)
- Cut curtain and type of light. (9)

DOWN

- Choose scar and French thief. (10)
- Back at Territorial Army, small German boat event. (7)
- Check through garbage for a little science and take revenge. (8)
- At which time, changed theater. (7)
- Short clergyman, or museum chief. (7)
- Tap sputum, go in. (6)
- Looking for – and sight – monarch. (7)
- Luxuriant drunk. (4)
- Amazed as Toni shucked skin. (10)
- The Spanish letter to a tree. (3)
- Aloft, I'll disturb group of boats. (8)
- Go around Luc to get points for sweet stuff. (7)
- Water-related – a question for you and a spasm. (7)
- Ship's money man takes you a chaser. (7)
- Spinners not well finding piece of canvas. (7)
- Pleaded for bed with food in it. (6)
- Chances of not getting even? (4)

Compiled by Tortuus. © 2006

Scribble Space

Rhyme Time

The words or phrases described below all rhyme with “sprite”. What are they?

- Escape.
- Perform poem.
- Pickle.
- Actor’s butterflies.
- Savior.
- House eater.
- Disease.
- Regretful.
- President Eisenhower.
- Bay.

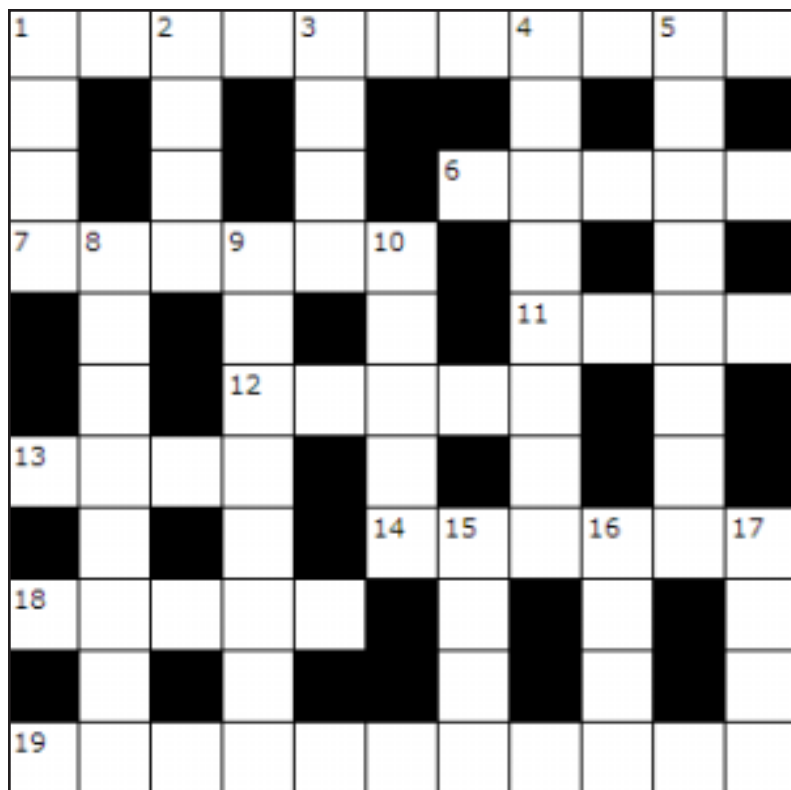
Answers on next page

EZ Trivia Quiz

- Who went up the hill to fetch a pail of water?
- What kind of animal is Mrs Tiggywinkle?
- What is the capital of Canada?
- Honda, Suzuki and Ducatti are all types of what?
- In the animated movie, what kind of fish is Nemo?

- What word can mean a spy, an animal and a skin blemish?
- What is rum made from?
- Gerbils, lemmings and hamsters are all types of what?
- What are the colors of Russia’s flag?
- In which country is Chernobyl?

Answers on next page



Quick Crossword

ACROSS

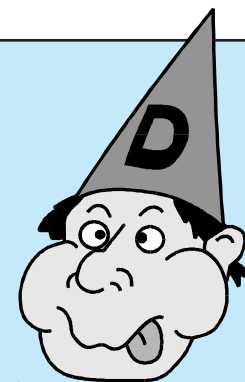
1. Most distant.
6. The father of psychoanalysis.
7. To-do list.
11. Bacchanalia.
12. Kitchen bosses.
13. Close with a key.
14. Back-of-eye membrane.
18. Passport stamps.
19. Yielding to others' opinions.

DOWN

1. Greek cheese.
2. Asian staple.
3. Group of cows.
4. Small monkey.
5. Caviar fish.
8. Auto fuel.
9. Kind of jewelry.
10. Love in Paris.
15. Level.
16. Zulu army unit.
17. Missing from the army.

Solution below, right

Get your brain in gear with The Monster Quiz



Kids! Ask Mum and Dad to help you find the answers to these questions. They're not easy but, if you do some research, you should be able to find the answers to all of them.

1. If M=2,197 and Q=4,913, then H=?
2. In a demarchy, how are holders of political posts chosen?
3. And who runs an ochlocracy?
4. What is the literal meaning of "republic"?
5. Who founded the German Worker's Party, which became the Nazi Party?
6. In which year was the French royal palace, the Tuileries, burned to the ground?
7. By what acronym was Russia's Main Camp Administration better known?
8. What was the colloquial term for inmates?
9. Which US President was known as The Great Communicator?
10. What was his middle name?
11. Who was his first wife?
12. In which year was Britain's Labour Party founded?
13. Who was the first Labour Prime Minister?
14. Which large territory did Sweden lose in 1809?
15. In which year was Italy unified under one government?
16. Which fascist leader died on November 20, 1975?
17. For how long had he ruled?
18. What does the word "soviet" mean?
19. Which political party won the US presidency in 1800?
20. Which party did they defeat?

Answers below, left

Puzzle Solutions

Monster Quiz Answers

1. 512 (Position in alphabet, cubed); 2. By lottery; 3. The mob; 4. "A thing of the people".
5. Anton Drexler and Karl Harrer; 6. 1871; 7. Gulag; 8. Zeka; 9. Ronald Reagan; 10. Wilson; 11. Jane Wyman; 12. 1900; 13. Ramsay MacDonald; 14. Finland; 15. 1861; 16. Generalissimo Francisco Franco; 17. 39 years; 18. Council of workers; 19. The Democratic-Republican Party; 20. The Federalists.

Solution to Cartoon Puzzle



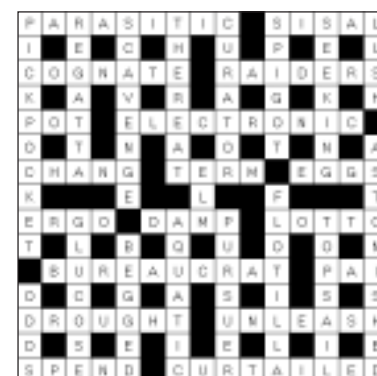
EZ Trivia Answers:

1. Jack and Jill; 2. A hedgehog; 3. Ottawa; 4. Motorbikes; 4. Clownfish; 6. Mole; 7. Cane sugar; 8. Rodents; 9. White, blue and red; 10. Ukraine.

Rhyme Time Answers:

1. Flight; 2. Recite; 3. Plight; 4. Stage fright; 5. White knight; 6. Termite; 7. Blight; 8. Contrite; 9. Dwight; 10. Bite.

Cryptic Crossword Solution



Quick Crossword Solution



Sudoku solution



A good man in Thailand

Never has a book title or cover been more misleading. *Bangkok Kiss* (Bangkok Books, Bangkok, 2006, 318pp) is illustrated with a lush pair of lips in garish red lipstick. The idea is that you're reading another F&B novel – farang and bargirl.

This couldn't be further from the truth. This is David Thompson's first person account of his experiences mostly in the boonies of Thailand, North, South and North-east. *Bangkok Kiss* is not billed as a novel and it does indeed have the clumsy ring of truth.

As a writer, Thompson is an obvious amateur. His sentences are liberally studded with unnecessary first-word locutions such as luckily, fortunately, unfortunately, happily, thankfully.

He uses way too many exclamation points to jazz up tired sentences. And the word is "expatriate" not "ex-patriot".

A 42-year-old electrical engineer from England, he travels for the first time to Thailand on a three-week vacation.

He opens his book like so many others: arrival at Don Muang airport, ripped off by an un-metered taxi, first impressions of searing heat and chaotic traffic. He gets

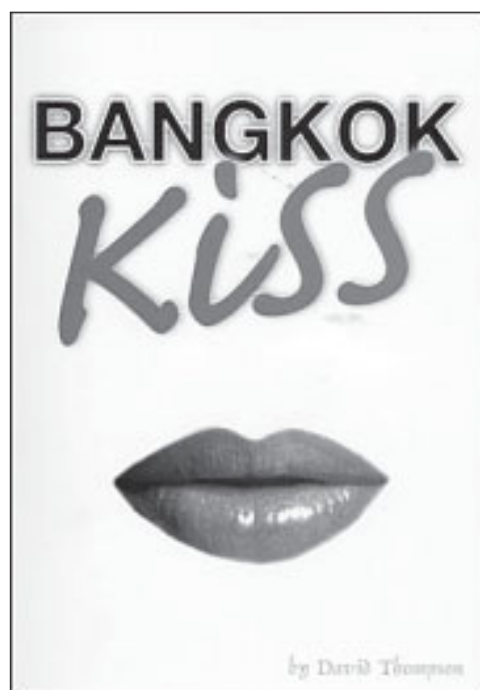
a guided tour of the usual tourist attractions.

He is taken under the wing of an old Aussie expat for a tour of Soi Cowboy but, drunk as he gets, he wakes up alone.

He learns from his tour guide the next day that "not all girls in Thailand were available for sex and that the majority frowned upon such behavior... So what I had learned the previous night was not the whole truth. Prostitution did flourish in certain areas, but they seemed to be only those place that the farangs visited. Places like Bangkok, Pattaya, Chiang Mai and Phuket! All the places I was going to visit! I began to think about my behavior the previous night. Was I just another farang with money who had no respect for Thailand and was only looking for cheap and easy sex?"

He is disgusted by the go-go bars in Pattaya. He goes on an elephant tour in Chiang Mai, a diving trip in Phuket. Why would anyone be remotely interested in this mundane tourist stuff?

He meets the inevitable hooker, Wan, not in a bar but in a disco. A former assistant hotel manager who speaks good English, she has had to go on the game for the usual reasons: divorced with a son,



is there in Phuket when he arrives for his second vacation. They consummate their love at last. Thompson flies back to England to sell everything he owns.

He returns to Phuket to take a diving instructor's course and then decides to see Wan at her home village in Udon Thani. He does this aboard a 110cc Yamaha Spark.

The 80 pages he devotes to this trip form the core of the book as he constantly bumbles into trouble and is rescued by kind Thais. He is indeed off the beaten tourist track and revels in it.

Reunited with Wan in her village, he helps the family repair long-disused farm machinery and decides to become a sugar cane farmer.

"This was what I had always dreamed about! Well, not exactly this, not sugar cane farming obviously, but the excitement, the thrill of doing something completely different, something adventurous! The risk of losing it all! The challenge to succeed! To confront the unknown and meet head-on the obstacles of life! To forego the safety net! To stand up and face the possibility of failure! The ability to change one's destiny! I felt as though I was defying whatever the gods had chosen for me!"

See what I mean about all those exclamation points? But give the author marks for sincerity.

Papa dead, Mama penniless on the farm in Isarn.

Thompson doesn't sleep with her but keeps in phone contact throughout his travels and when he's back in England, he sends her 20,000 baht a month to support her family while she goes to university in Udon Thani. Now where have we heard this before?

But if this tale is to be believed, Wan

PHUKET DIARY

Until December 30: Art sale at Keimandrian 26 Café Gallery, Kathu

Art sale by local artists Sam Fruin, Cindy Shaw, Claire Lester and Kathy Manthei.

Work includes photographs, screen prints and paintings. Also on sale are Christmas gifts and crafts made by the Life Home Project.

Comfort food and drinks available. Come in and chill.

The sale is open from 10 am to 10 pm daily.

For more information contact K. Rin at Tel: 084-1935124 or by sending email to info@keimandrian26.com

Until December 31: Test drive Windows Vista and Office 2007.

Test the next versions of Microsoft Windows and Office today. If you're curious about Windows Vista and Office 2007 - both due in January - you can take final beta test versions for a whirl through the end of December.

We have Windows Vista build 5744 (a.k.a. "Release Candidate 2") and Office 2007 Beta 2 Technical Refresh available on a test computer at the Sandwich Shoppe in Patong - hooked up to the fastest wireless connection in Phuket.

Drop by any time: Sandwich Shoppe in Aroonsom Plaza, opposite the CAT office and Patong Language School, near Andaman Beach Suites.

For more information call Woody Leonhard at Tel: 076-290-468 or send email to woody@khunwoody.com

Until March 30: Rewind at Watermark Bar & Restaurant

Watermark and Tommy Double T (Soundwaves) hook up once again to bring you more sleeve-rollin', fringe-flickin', tramline shavin', ass-shakin' good times.

Rewind - something new by

way of something old taking it back to where it all began.

Every Friday at Watermark we will Rewind to the best sounds of the '70s, '80s and '90s, from the Sex Pistols to the Chemical Brothers.

Disco classics? New Romantics? A journey thru New Wave, ska and disco. Duran Duran, Madness, Soul II Soul, Motown, Philly Soul and sooo much more.

Happy Hour 5 pm-7 pm. Rewind 7 pm-midnight. Admission free.

December 25: Christmas Day.

Christian festival. Not a public holiday.

December 31, January 1 and 2: New Year's Holiday.

New Year's Eve and New Year's Day are public holidays. Since December 31 is a Sunday, January 2 will be a substitute holiday. All banks and government offices will be closed.

December 31: Eid Al Adha.

The Feast of the Sacrifice, holiday observed by Muslims around the world to remember the willingness of Ibrahim to sacrifice his son at the command of Allah.

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Thank you

The events of December 26, 2004, drew an eternal line through the history of the island. Since that date, heroic effort has been made to commemorate and dignify those killed by the tsunami, while helping those left behind.

However, some perspective on the disaster is needed. As cold-hearted as it may sound, and despite reports in the global media, Phuket was not devastated by the great wave. Khao Lak to the north, for example, suffered much greater damage. Areas outside Thailand bore the brunt of the wave – Aceh, Indonesia, was badly hit, and affected families have still not been returned to permanent housing. Sri Lanka is similarly still far from full recovery.

But in Phuket, just two years later, everyone who has helped the island recover should take a well-deserved bow. The complaint this week that airport Immigration cannot handle the record number of tourists is more good news than bad – although still not to be overlooked as an issue that needs addressing.

Other good work goes on. The Inside Story in the *Gazette* last week highlighted that even as the remaining unidentified bodies were being laid to rest, the tireless work of the Thai Tsunami Victim Identification Center (TTVI) had led to the identification of one more victim.

As a result, the family of 21-year-old Turkish tourist Yasemin Seda Tekoz regained their daughter's body, and at least some measure of closure.

Aware that the job of victim identification may never be finished, Pol Col Khemmarin Hassiri, head of the TTVI, keeps his mobile phone on 24 hours a day, just in case he gets that one call that will make a difference.

The number of long-term projects to assist tsunami victims and survivors is also heartening. The tsunami victim shelter at Koh Sireh opened through the Austrian government's assistance. In Phang Nga, the Swiss Ambassador to Thailand made a tour highlighting his government's assistance to fishing villages (see news pages).

Another such effort, the Tsunami Day Appeal (see page 17), focuses on direct assistance, but also recognizes that world-renowned Phuket has the potential to attract more donations than it might need; opening the door for Phuket to become a donations center to assist tsunami victims outside Thailand.

What is particularly commendable is that these Phuket-based projects all offer direct assistance to those in need.

The *Gazette* knows that many less-publicized relief efforts have gone unreported in these pages. To all those who have helped – and are still helping – Phuket recover from that dark day two years ago, the *Gazette* thanks you.

– The Editor

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Letters

The *Gazette* is pleased to receive mail from readers. Please write to us at 367/2 Yaowarat Rd, Amphur Muang, Phuket 83000, fax to 076-213971 or send an email to editor@phuketgazette.net

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.

Motorbike taxis fueled by greed

When gasoline prices were on the rise and the fare for a modest motorbike-taxi ride was increased from 20 baht to 30 baht, everyone understood and gladly paid the higher rate, but when gas prices went down the fare remained at 30 baht.

I used to ride a motorbike-taxi at least once a day, frequently twice daily, for a monthly cost of 600 baht to 800 baht. As the price remained at 30 baht, I now restrict my rides to one round-trip a week. I get much needed walking exercise and spend only 240 baht a month.

Greed can kill the goose that lays the golden eggs.

Don Aleman
Patong

Are top priorities given a back seat?

I was contemplating moving to Phuket to live but upon opening your most recent edition it really does concern me that I might be moving to a lawless society – perhaps something akin to the old Wild West? It certainly does contrast to the oft-advertised “little piece of paradise on Earth”.

Perhaps the first three pages of the *Gazette* should have been written in blood, as they were full of deaths, from reckless driving to shootings to stabbings and so on. I do recall two Thai fishermen who got fueled up on Sang Som and pornography before rowing ashore to beat, rape and drown a young European girl...

Now a Welsh tourist gets stabbed – *for a disagreement over a tuk tuk fare?*

A friend of mine recently had a nasty experience with a tuk tuk driver. The driver showed my friend a rather large knife and insisted that he pay double the agreed fare because he had stopped off at a 7-Eleven for a couple of minutes.

I would welcome any comments, as in my opinion the only help given to tourists by the police is to empty one's wallet through silly traffic fines for not wearing helmets and the like, rather than any form of protection from villains. Is it that traffic violations generate more revenue and therefore are given priority over tackling real crime?

As a *farang* I can only warn my peers to travel in company, agree to fees and fares beforehand, watch each other's backs and wallets, and on the whole be very, very careful in Phuket.

Put an end to the 'tourist tax'

My wife and I came to Phuket hoping to contribute to the economy after the tsunami. Let me say the Tourism Authority of Thailand and the hotel owners have done a great job with package deals to get the tourists back.

But once tourists get here, they are stopped up to five times a day to see if they are carrying their foreign drivers' licenses with them. If they are not, they are fined 300 baht. What are the police thinking? Didn't Phuket just have a whole year of no business?

The tsunami was a temporary business interruption, but this tourist tax will have a much longer effect because everyone who gets a ticket is going back to their

home country and spreading the word that Phuket is a rip-off. The rental companies don't tell you that you need to keep your foreign license in your bathing suit.

People come to the beach to have a positive experience after a long year of working. They want to be treated well because it's their money they are bringing, and they can easily take it elsewhere.

Rather than going to a police station to pay the fine, most tourists pay the fine on the spot in cash. But then you plainly see the policeman stick the money in his pocket and tear the ticket out of his book. What an image for Phuket to send around the world.

If the different governing groups, business groups, the TAT and large hotels don't put a stop to this practice you will see in the not-too-distant future what effect it will have.

My wife and I have been stopped at least 20 times in one month. Once three times in one day. We have been stopped at 10:30 pm at the corner of Nanai Rd and at the southern end of Rat-U-Thit 200 Pi Rd. We have been stopped going to Central. They're everywhere.

I read about two 11-year-olds killed on a motorbike, and last week a 12-year-old boy died in an accident. The police need to be out policing the road for speeders, reckless drivers, underage drivers and people driving on the wrong side of the road – not tourists who have traveled far and saved their hard-earned money to spend it here.

Someone needs to take action and soon; we want to come back.

Taxed out
Patong

Letters conveying views and suggestions are published here. Those seeking comment from government officials or business owners are published as *Issues & Answers* in the *Phuket Gazette* Online.

Letters

Promenade designer should take a walk

I must take exception to the utter eyesore of the rather long and hideous promenade under construction [at Rawai].

I was eating in Nikita's only yesterday and in my opinion, the new promenade destroys the wonderful 180-degree view of the nearby islands. It is a vile, hideous eyesore and the person who designed it and the officer who approved the construction of such a monstrosity have no concept of natural beauty.

Cedric Smythe
Rawai

Tasty apparel

I read that the sexy dancers at the newly-opened Erotica nightclub in Patong wear pasties (A-Go-Go gone good, *Gazette*, December 16-22).

I'm all for this novel idea and would like to order a chicken and mushroom pasty, please!

Brian Davis
Bang Tao

Priced out of Patong

It seems there is a never-ending attempt to discourage beachgoers in Patong.

First there was the restriction on the number of loungers, then the prices were doubled to 100 baht per lounge chair, then drink prices went from 20 to 30 baht despite there being no increase at the local market.

Now the latest, police have decreed that food from beachfront restaurants may no longer be sold on the beach. The powers that be would prefer we buy sun-baked chicken, spring rolls or dried squid. Where will it end?

Getting Ridiculous
Patong

More than fare

I agree with Mike Salans's positive remarks regarding The Tavern in Kata (Letters, *Gazette* issue of December 16). I have eaten at The Tavern many times in the past three years and I wholeheartedly recommend the "Ploughmans Lunch".

Similarly, I was pleasantly surprised recently on discovering Nasa Burger in Kata Center, which does an excellent chicken doner kebab.

The vendor uses whole chicken breasts coated with his own recipe sauce. I defy anyone from England to try one and not agree just how delicious this rather unusual fine fare is.

The owner is a pleasant Welsh chap who took great delight in explaining that some of his best customers have been Turkish holiday makers. Now, if they continued to return for more helpings, Mr Kebab of Kata Center must be doing something right.

James Harrington
Phuket

A plea to help the handicapped

There are 1,687 handicapped people who have joined the PHA. They are from all over Thailand, but they live here in Phuket.

Even though we have that many registered members, I would guess that about 10% of the handicapped population in Phuket is still unregistered.

Our association accepts every handicapped person who wants to register, but some of them are already well cared for and do not need our help.

Our association has been running for six years. We have two full-time staff, and we work with the Phuket Deaf Club, Phuket Blind Club, Physically Handicapped Club, a club for parents of mentally handicapped children, and the Autistic Club.

Our organization focuses on studying and working, and all of the handicapped associations we work with provide work training, including courses in sewing, traditional massage and computers.

We also promote the association to handicapped people in Phuket, so they understand that if they don't have food or money, they can ask us for help – they don't need to beg on the street.

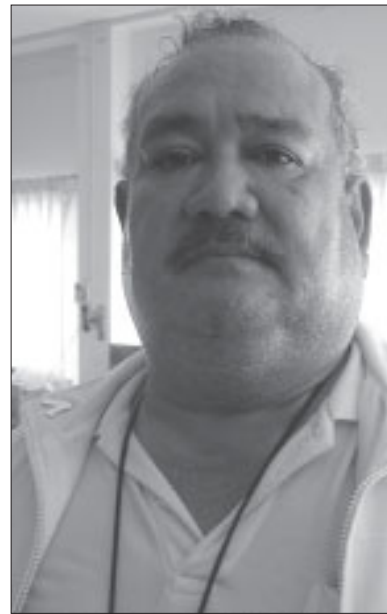
The work we do often has great results for handicapped people.

One man was a beggar on the street, but after I saw him, I brought him to the association and

FIRST PERSON

For the past six years The Phuket Handicapped Association (PHA) has been dedicated to improving the lives of handicapped people on Phuket. They provide scholarships, cash assistance, job training and placement.

However, as the PHA president **Sawai Promchinda** explains, it comes at a price. This year the association has received just 5,000 baht in direct donations, and government money from Bangkok is in short supply.



organized for him to work as a singer in a restaurant. Now he is a professional singer and he has released his own album.

We also helped another man who used to beg for food and money. We took him in and gave him some money to study at Phuket Polytechnic College. Now he is the owner of a radio repair shop.

Obviously we need some money to achieve results like these, and I ask for help from any organization I can to raise money

to help handicapped people so they can study and work.

The association provides scholarships of 2,000 baht a year to handicapped students, and we already have eight graduates with bachelor's degrees.

Also, if a member dies, we help the family by providing 2,000 baht.

But our biggest problem is that this year we simply do not have enough money because we have received no government assistance. The central govern-

ment gives money to the national organizations such as the Thailand Handicapped Association or the Thai Deaf Association, but it's up to those organizations how they distribute the money.

The money we receive is provided by the Lions Clubs on Phuket and other private donations. Some years we receive 30,000 to 40,000 baht in donations from individuals, but this year we have received only 5,000 baht.

We are always looking for funding for our annual meeting, and I don't want to constantly ask for money from the local businesses because I don't want to annoy them too much. Although we are handicapped, I understand that companies and other organizations need to spend their money on other things, not just donate it to a handicapped association.

It seems that every time we run out of money we need to turn to the Lions Clubs on Phuket for help.

I would like to ask people who have enough money to give to the association or any of the clubs that assist the handicapped so they can continue their work.

For more information or to donate to the club, contact me at the Phuket Handicapped Association at 1/2 Montri Rd, Phuket City, in the building opposite the Seng-Ho Bookstore, or call us at Tel: 081-5398596.

*Compiled by
Supanun Supawong*

Barking mad over my neighbor's dogs

Are there any Thai laws regarding how many dogs a person can own as pets? I recently moved into a house in Chalong and a neighbor has more than seven dogs that he runs in a pack every morning and evening.

He lets them run with no control – he uses no leashes and the dogs bark constantly. He even tries to get them to harass and fight other dogs in the area.

This is a real nuisance at 6:30 am, and I'm concerned for small children who play in the area as they may be bitten as the dogs become more aggressive.

My neighbors have spoken to this man and the area property manager, but it doesn't seem to bother him. Can something be done?

Jerry Hess
Chalong

Dr Veeraphap Termkiatpaisal, an officer at the Phuket Livestock Office, replies:

In Bangkok, certain commercial buildings, housing developments and townhouse projects have regulations about how many and kinds of animals tenants may keep as pets.

However, there are no regulations in Phuket limiting how many dogs a person can have as pets.

If the dogs or other animals kept as pets are a nuisance, however, people can complain to their local Tambon Administration Organization (*OrBorTor*) about the noise they cause or the harm they do.

The local *OrBorTor* is the organization responsible for looking after this type of problem.

Issues & ANSWERS

Write to: The Phuket Gazette, 367/2 Yaowarat Rd, Muang, Phuket 83000. Fax 076-213971, or submit your issue at www.phuketgazette.net

ROOSTER NOISE POLLUTION

I rent an apartment in Phuket City, and one of the downstairs businesses acquired two roosters. They keep these at the back of their shop in a space of about one meter between two walls. The apartments are upstairs, about six meters above.

All the bedrooms are at the back of the building and every morning the roosters start crowing at 5:30 am. It is impossible to sleep – even with earplugs. The noise echoes off the walls and everyone is being sleep deprived. Some have moved into their living room at the front just to get some more sleep.

Are there any laws that

protect our rights against this noise?

Colin Smith
Phuket City

Vichit Pedchanan, Health Inspector, Phuket City Municipality, replies:

If they are raising only two roosters as pets, not for sale or fighting, then it is legal, but it also depends on which part of the city you are in because there are different rules for pet control.

You can file a complaint with the local authority where your apartment is registered. The officers will investigate your complaint then decide what to do.

THE DREAM

I have an aversion to being complained at, sued and shot, so I don't bother writing property stories unless it's something special, and this is something special.

Many Phuket residents were saddened by a friend passing away suddenly at a relatively young age. John Seebach, who had been living and working in Phuket with his wife K. Autcharawan for some 10 years, had just started a new housing project called Luna Phuket, a development of courtyard-style homes spacious enough to be comfortable residences or holiday homes.

They had just begun building when John passed away. I have known K. Autcharawan, better known as K. Gay, since she was managing a crab meat canner in Haad Yai years ago. She was pretty capable of looking after herself then and she still is now.

K. Gay has managed to negotiate a deal whereby Luna Phuket has now been taken over by one of Phuket's most success-

ful developers, Paul Moorhouse, and the project is up again.

Luna Phuket is in the same area as Paul's other projects, Lakeshore Villas, near Laguna, Lakewood Hills and Layan Gardens and he is confident the Layan Beach area has a solid future. A bit like Soi Langsuan in Bangkok, Layan has nice apartments,

luxury condos and expensive Italian restaurants, much like Cherng Talay.

With the beach, golf courses and airport all

close by, Luna Phuket is a good buy at around 16.5 million baht a unit, with quality Internet connection, fully-fitted kitchen, swimming pool with waterfall feature and alfresco showers off the bedrooms. They are definitely right for romantic tropical living.

I think it's a good thing to know that Phuket is a solid community, where a man's dream doesn't die with him, but can be carried on to completion by other capable members of the community. Luna Phuket is a good project and a good dream, and I am sure that it's going to end up being a good place to live.

LARGER THAN LIFE

By Graham Doven

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In The Stars

by Isla Star

CAPRICORN (December 22-January 20): Your partner's enthusiastic approach to Christmas festivities leaves you as cold as snow. However, by Monday you'll be feeling much more in the mood to pull crackers. If you have little time off work you will find it difficult to get into gear – eat more fresh fruit and less mince pies to have more energy. If you're celebrating a birthday this week, you could consider delaying the party until after the New Year.

AQUARIUS (January 21-February 19): You are usually guaranteed to liven up any party, but your energy will be at low tide this week. Don't force yourself to do too much socializing, or you could start 2007 in an unhealthy state. As business grinds almost to a halt during the coming days, make this a time for personal pampering. Libra is developing a crush on you and will make their interest known soon.

PISCES (February 20-March 20): While others around you are enjoying roast turkey and Christmas pudding, you will probably be content to paddle around in your own pool. You shouldn't turn down an invitation from Scorpio on Sunday, however, as there is strong chance that you will meet an influential Arian. The stars promise progress in your career; a dream you have early next week gives indication of a new direction.

ARIES (March 21-April 20): You have done as much as you can to help a lonesome Leo friend. Now you must set them free. Where love is concerned, you should take heart in the knowledge that your partner has ideas of their own. Reflect on the qualities that attracted you to this person in the first place and you will realize that nothing has changed. Wear holly-leaf green to encourage a jolly mood.

TAURUS (April 21-May 21): Allow yourself to have an extra long weekend break. People will respect your desire to take it easy, but you should make some effort to catch up with friends over the Christmas period. A telephone conversation with family or friends overseas reveals exciting news on Sunday. Many of you will be able to look forward to being reunited with someone special after this. Be careful what you ask for when pulling the wishbone.

GEMINI (May 22-June 21): Your seasonal spirit stimulates others and this should be an enjoyable Christmas. As the year draws to a close, start thinking of some more sensible New Year's resolutions than those you made for 2006. Capricorn would like to meet you under the mistletoe, but Pisces is planning ways of playing hard to get. A late gift leaves you speechless next Tuesday.

CANCER (June 22-July 23): If you can't enjoy a white Christmas you should be happy to settle for celebrations in the sun. If unhealthy finances were the reason you couldn't get away for the vacation, rest assured that money matters will improve once the new year comes in. Focus strongly on your ambitions during the coming days and you will realize there are realistic ways of creating a rich harvest. The number 3 is lucky on Monday.

LEO (July 24-August 22): You will see just who is batting on your side and who would like to make things more difficult. Take deep breaths and resist the temptation of confronting someone about their negative attitude. You will gradually get into a merrier mood and be ready to enjoy an impromptu celebration on Monday. Aquarius has an interesting proposition, but you shouldn't commit to anything until the middle of next month.

VIRGO (August 23-September 23): Your generosity doesn't go unnoticed this Christmas. If you take the time to help friends you will be on the receiving end of something wonderful. On Sunday, a Libran friend gives well-meaning advice that could rub you the wrong way. There is at least one pearl of wisdom in what they say, but it could be a few days before the penny drops. The color silver promotes a cool demeanor.

LIBRA (September 24-October 23): Put money worries on one side; you will be in a more practical mood early next year. For now, you will want to make the most of an unusually active social life. The cosmic lights are green this Sunday if you have been waiting for the right time to make a romantic approach. The person concerned doesn't want to spend Christmas alone and will appreciate your invitation.

SCORPIO (October 24-November 22): An introspective mood affects you this week. Friends will be surprised at your reluctance to join in with the festivities, but don't allow yourself to be pressured into partying. Starting off with the right attitude will guarantee that 2007 is the year when you can really make your mark. Romance continues to blossom and you will be delighted to discover that your partner has splashed out on a really special gift.

SAGITTARIUS (November 23-December 21): You will be ready to get as much fun out of the Christmas vacation as possible. A steamy start to the week is forecast on Saturday. If you are single, you will experience much more than a meeting of the minds with an interesting individual that evening. A last minute change of plans could make you pause for thought on Monday, but the outcome will be a party to remember.

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Only 50 years after the first jetliner flew through the air, travel has become the world's largest industry, offering a multitude of benefits, including prosperity, relaxation and even education.

Here on Phuket we've seen such bounty first hand, and thanks to the geographical serendipity of our chain of west coast beaches, the island gracefully embraces a wide array of hotels.

I enjoy a deserted beach, but I still admit that Our Rock provides a good foundation for well-designed resorts – and we're seeing better architecture every year. From a planning standpoint, Phuket's west coast carrying capacity is a hotelier's bonanza, and local workers have seen a definite increase in living standards in the 17 years I've lived here.

But Phuket is where these resorts belong. Taking resorts off-island is very risky business. The Koh Racha Resort is tasteful, low key and that island's only resort – but it's still mainstream concrete and air-con. To find a true 21st century eco-resort around Phuket, visit Shanti Lodge or Koyao Island Resort.

In the case of Koyao Island Resort, its first obvious asset is that it can't be seen from the sea – wonderful! It's also elegant, open-air, expansive yet low volume, serves reasonably-priced quality food, and blends in with the local environment and culture. In contrast to the expat-ridden operations so common in Thailand, this 15-bungalow hotel em-

ploys 33 locals, creates off-property jobs for another 30, runs a children's community center and buys locally.

General Manager (GM) Gavin Pereira says, "The locals enjoy us because we sincerely care about Koh Yao." He adds that, as a foreign GM, his work permit requires him to help his Thai staff improve their skills and knowledge; and he tries to live up to that obligation, unlike many other GMs, who he feels exploit their staff for their own benefit.

The resort isn't a bamboo bungalow or something like the rustic Sabai Corner. A vanguard

of things to come, Koyao Resort is an upscale eco-retreat frequented by professionals and millionaires looking for an alternative to tasteless modernity. Elegant yet inexpensive, this jewel is ideal for travelers who are affluent yet environmentally-aware and cerebral. This is about natural beauty over tacky theme parties and noisy bars, traditional longtails

over speedboats. It's about low-impact, sustainable use.

Pereira says, "Our open-air ambiance without AC is a great marketing point...It's all about innovation. Sometimes it's best to look back so you know where you are going. My family gets along just fine in our wooden Thai house, shaded by a jungle canopy. I have lived in modern concrete 'heat sink' homes without air con, and I thought I would die."

THE GRAY AREA



By John 'Caveman' Gray



The Koyao Resort has natural air conditioning only.

Unfortunately, despite the eco-resort's example, quiet Koh Yao Noi is going mainstream, and Gavin Pereira is worried. The resort is only six years old and recovering from 70% tsunami damage, yet now it also has to cope with noisy construction next door. Gavin is worried that encroachment by modern hotels will eventually bastardize Koh Yao into another Phuket or Samui.

Developers see virgin territory such as Koh Yao as a morsel too good to be missed, but many observers are outraged by the lack of judgment and denial of downstream impacts associated with coastal development, be it luxury hotels or sewage treatment plants. It's a fine balance between preserving natural

beauty through sustainable use and trampling the garden into the ground and sucking its resources dry.

Koh Yao Noi isn't Ao Nang or Phuket, and doesn't have their carrying capacity and infrastructure. The conservative Muslim culture is in for a big surprise when wall-to-wall beer bars form behind the hotels and topless Euro-tourists line the few beaches. The east bay islands that form such a magical view have only two small beaches, and Koh Bele was over-run by Krabi tourists years ago.

TV crews are already exploiting the pristine beauty of the area to promote the new developments.

There are an estimated 24

to 38 new Koh Yao Noi hotel plots, so we can expect a few thousand guests looking off their balconies, yearning to visit the two beautiful islands before them, each with beaches capable of holding only a couple of dozen tourists each.

Yet to be seen is how power and water will be supplied to thirsty, electricity-greedy mainstream hotels. Even without swimming pools and thousands of hotel showers, locals complain about water shortages.

Will hotels be required by law to provide solar hot water? Will solar cell panels be used, or Koh Yao's little power station upgraded, or will inefficient underwater cables be installed? Whatever the case, it will be expensive, and the taxpayer will bear the brunt of the bill.

It is to be hoped that the hotel developers who have bought land on the island take a cue from the Koh Yao Resort's universally-appealing combination of minimalist aesthetics, open air comfort and responsible management of the isle's natural resources.

In Phuket, Shanti Lodge is the market leader and local role model for natural style, ambience and ecological balance.

For investors, eco-tourism is the way of the future, with the market increasing each year. And as shown by such disasters as Class 5 tropical cyclone Durian, which killed 1,000 in the Philippines this month, the blow-back from irresponsible mismanagement of our cosmos can be devastating.

Navrang Mahal

Indian Food

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The lowdown on high speed

Q For two years now I've subscribed to Internet access through Jasmine Internet at 2,600 baht a month for a 512Kbps line, but most of the time I can get only 32Kbps or 64Kbps, or I can't connect at all.

I live on the old airport road, Route 4031, leading to Nai Yang Beach, about five kilometers from the intersection. As I do not speak Thai, I have a problem getting information and support, and since I'm also not a computer specialist, I sent a Thai friend to the TOT office near the airport to ask if they could offer me something more reliable.

They said that they cannot give me a high-speed connection because they do not have any more telephone numbers available, but they could give me broadband access through an IPStar satellite connection. This would cost 2,000 baht for the installation and a monthly fee of 2,200 baht for a speed of 512 Kbps, or 2,600 baht for 1,024 Kbps.

Does this connection work on a laptop or on a PC?

What is the difference between high-speed connections through a telephone line and TOT's system? Which system is more reliable?

I also don't understand why my telephone number starts with 205-XXX, but TOT says that it's a TT&T number, but my bill is from TOT.

Is CAT connected to TT&T? Is its system better? Do I also have to install a satellite dish

as with TOT? Is its system compatible with an ordinary computer?

Is ADSL not the same as High Speed?

Ankie Thalang

A Let me start with your last question first. In most parts of the world, "high-speed Internet" usually implies reliable download speeds of 2Mbps or more (1Mbps = 1 million bits per second = 1,024Kbps). In the US and Europe you can routinely get lines offering 4Mbps to 8Mbps.

In Hong Kong, South Korea, Sweden, parts of the UK, Japan and Singapore, a 2 Mbps line is considered a tad slow. If you routinely visit sites such as Flickr or YouTube, or watch news video snippets on the Web, you need at least 500Kbps. Otherwise you'll spend more time twiddling your thumbs than clicking your mouse.

ADSL should be synonymous with "high speed". Unfortunately, in Phuket, it isn't. I have a TOT ADSL line that on weekday afternoons and weekends routinely runs about 60Kbps, which is just slightly faster than a typical dial-up modem in North America or Europe.

I just tested the line with the DSLReports website, using their server in Seattle, www.dslreports.com/test?loc=97, at 8 pm on a

Saturday night. I clocked in at 16Kbps. I'm being billed for 1Mbps, so at that moment I was getting about 1/64th of the speed I'm paying for. Many times I feel like paying 1/64th of the monthly bill they send.

I know several people who use mobile phone GPRS connections. They get Internet service through their mobile phone provider, and connect their mobile phones to their computers. I don't know any of them who routinely get more than 40Kbps.

I also know people with IP-Star satellite systems. Generally, they're happy with their systems because they can't get phone

lines. But they rarely see sustained speeds in the afternoons above 300Kbps to 400Kbps. Often it is much less.

The only people I know in Phuket who are happy with their Internet speeds are people who have direct telephone line connections to a CAT ADSL service, and people who use CAT EV-DO cards. I have a direct line CAT ADSL connection at my Sandwich Shoppe in Patong, and I routinely clock it at 1,400Kbps to 1,800Kbps.

I've tested CAT's AirCard all over the island, and found speeds ranging from 400Kbps to 600Kbps – quite respectable, given the alternatives.

For many people, speed isn't important. For me, it's crucial. In

the past six months I downloaded beta test versions of Windows Vista and Office 2007 more than a dozen times. When I tried to download the 3.7GB Vista file on my TOT ADSL line, the download took more than two days. At the shop, it took six hours.

The interrelationship between TOT, TT&T and CAT continues to baffle me. I have lines with all three, and get bills from all three, but it's hard to tell which bill goes with which line, and I get more bills than I have lines.

My current advice for getting high-speed Internet in Phuket is:

- Go to your CAT office. If you live in Patong or nearby, CAT is located just outside Andaman Beach Suites on Rat-U-Thit 200 Pi Rd. If you live anywhere else, go to the main CAT office on Phang Nga Rd in Phuket City.

Take your passport, work permit (if you have one) and a good map showing your location. It helps if you take a computer-savvy friend who speaks Thai, but that's becoming less and less necessary; the CAT computer staff generally speak good English.

- Ask CAT if they can run a line to your location. You don't want a TOT or a TT&T line. You want a CAT line. You can't use your CAT line for telephone service – there's no phone number. But you can use it for CAT's ADSL. The CAT ADSL service costs 2,600 baht a month, and it's worth every *satang*. That's what I have at the Sandwich Shoppe,

and I'm about to switch my home line over to CAT ADSL.

- If CAT can't run a line to your location, and you have a laptop or some other computer that can take a PCMCIA card, sign up for EV-DO service. CAT will sell you a Sierra Wireless 580 AirCard, which I've described before in many of these columns. It isn't a great card – in fact, Sierra Wireless has discontinued it. But it works very well with CAT's DO service.

Sierra assures me that drivers for Windows Vista will be available soon, so you're covered if you upgrade your computer.

The Sierra Wireless card costs a pricey 16,000 baht. CAT's DO service costs 1,300 baht a month for unlimited use. Supposedly the card will work in most parts of Thailand.

- If you don't have a PC with a PCMCIA card, or CAT won't sell you an AirCard because you're out of their service area, you're hosed. You have to start shopping for ADSL service – if you can get a TOT or TT&T phone line – or IPStar service if no phone line is available.

Alternative #1: Tell CAT that you live in the middle of downtown Patong and get your AirCard installed that way. Then take it to your home and see if it really works. I've actually recommended one reader to do precisely that, because CAT keeps telling him that EV-DO service isn't available where he lives. I tested the AirCard right in front of his house and it works great.

But be aware of the fact that EV-DO service is *not* available everywhere in Phuket. CAT is building more towers, but it's anybody's guess where they'll go and how well they'll work.

Alternative #2: You can schlep your laptop to a free wireless hotspot. I run lists of free hotspots in this column regularly. That's a decent alternative if you don't spend hours in front of your computer – particularly if you find a fast connection for downloading and uploading email.

That's the best I know, and the best advice I have. I invite Phuket's Internet Service Providers to show me a better way. If any of you folks can show me a reasonably-priced, widely available Internet service that can deliver, say, 500Kbps or more all day, I want to hear from you!

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HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL!




Black hole of pension obligations

In the past, many companies provided their employees with defined-benefit pension plans. Under this arrangement the employee could expect, for example, 2% of their final salary as a pension multiplied by the number of years of service. Therefore, employees with 30 years' service received 60% of final salary.

However, in reality, the situation of employee pensions has been different. People changed jobs, companies went bankrupt and so on.

Today, most employers are reluctant to join any pension plan that gives a defined benefit. The reason for this is simple: it means the firm has entered a contract whereby the future cost is unknown but likely to be enormous.

They would have effectively entered into a contract that depends on their investments being able to provide pensions for a large number of people; pensions that rely on financial markets producing consistently high returns. This, combined with pension fund retirees living longer than ever before, creates a situation that is financially frightening.

The single largest cause of company takeovers and acquisitions failing to transpire is pension fund liabilities. For example, company A wants to sell its operations to company B. The latter looks at company A's balance sheet and all looks good, but when they start to look at company A's pension fund obligations they realize they are looking at a black hole.

This is a huge problem.

Many large companies, as well as their smaller counterparts, have massive pension fund deficits. General Motors has often been described as a pension fund that happens to manufacture motor vehicles.

Companies are avoiding this problem by offering "money purchase options", whereby they contribute a certain amount to the employee's pension fund but refuse to guarantee the final result.

Many governments have found themselves in identical situations. Advanced countries with falling birthrates and longer life expectancies are in this position. However, governments are officially in denial. They simply will not admit the extent of the problem as its solution would cost them votes at the next election. They do their best to leave this nightmare to the next politicians to be voted in, a trend that has been going on for decades.

Many people have taken out private pensions or money purchase pension agreements. A number of expats have approached me with their individual situations. To assist them, I have made a formal relationship with a firm of independent financial advisers in the UK that is authorized, under the Financial Services Act in Britain, to legally deal with these matters.

The process is straightforward. I complete application forms enabling my UK associates to gather full information on the situation and then forward a full analysis, together with a variety of options.

The process is straightforward. I complete application forms enabling my UK associates to gather full information on the situation and then forward a full analysis, together with a variety of options.



MONEY TALKS

By Richard Watson



If pension schemes in the West collapse, many of the elderly could end up like this woman in the Republic of Georgia, sweeping the streets. — Photo EPA/Zurab Kurtsikidze

Each case has been completely different. In some cases, the relevant government has allowed contribution to a private pension in lieu of a government scheme. This entails what is known as protected rights and leads to a different set of options being available. In nearly all cases, the individual has been allowed to take an initial cash amount of 25% tax free with the balance dealt with via an enormous range of choices.

The UK government has promised to try and sort out the complexities of the whole issue of personal pensions in March and April 2007, but we all know politicians.

Many people have contacted me, explaining that they are, not surprisingly, confused about interest rates and returns over longer periods of time.

Many years ago I was employed by a large Australian finance company and they were experts at manipulating interest rates. Fortunately for the public, the government of New South Wales had anticipated their financial sectors ability to confound the public and had enacted legislation to stop this practice.

However, when I was promoted to Assistant Manager of their leasing department, I found there was no protection afforded to this sector. They charged

what they liked to call effective interest rates that were a formula this group had created themselves that gave the impression to the borrower that the interest rate charged on the contract was significantly lower than the real rate.

It is not just on borrowing money that people are purposefully misled but also in the investment world. I recently had an individual call me to promote a real estate investment in North America and I found that they were trying to use the same tactics.

For example, an investment would have been described as having yielded a profit of 17% a year over the previous 10 years. Due to my experiences in both lending and the investment of money, I asked for an explanation.

For example, US\$10,000 invested 10 years ago would have given a profit of US\$17,000 and was being described as a 17% annual return.

This is a total return of 170%, when divided by the term of 10 years, equates to 17% per annum. This in reality is called a "level annual yield" and is used to confuse rather than inform investors. The true annualized rate compounded annually is around 10%, a vast difference.

There is a very successful absolute return fund that has given investors a profit of a staggering 2,806% since early 1996. The managers are honest and, while giving the correct return, this also equates to a compounded return of just more than 35% per annum.

However, if they had been trying to express this return as a level annual yield, it would have been around 270% per annum. A truly vast difference.

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: 081-0814611. Email: imm@loxinfo.co.th.

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ON THE MOVE

Tanguay Kwangkaew, 37, from Pissanulok, has been appointed Executive Chef at Kata Beach Resort. K. Tanguay has more than 19 years' experience and training in Thailand and abroad, including working as Sous Chef for Renaissance cruise liners in France, Executive Chef at Twin Lotus Resort & Spa on Koh Lanta, and as Executive Chef at Santiburi Dusit Resort in Phang Nga.



Kanok-Orn "Ann" Tancha-roen, 27, from Bangkok, has been appointed Assistant Public Relations Manager of Club Andaman Group. K. Ann has worked in Customer Relations for BMW Thailand, as Administrative Representative at The Regent's School in Pattaya, and as Assistant Guest Relations Manager at The Horseshoe Point Resort & Country Club Pattaya.



Phuket native **Anucha Lim-chootrakool**, 24, has been appointed Restaurant Manager of Santa Fe at Central Festival Phuket. K. Anucha has a science degree from Kasetsart University in Bangkok. Before taking up his new position he worked for the Phuket Provincial Livestock Office as Chief of the Mid Road Dog Shelter in Thalang.



Gas stations not keen to return to 24-hour service

By Tanisa Bunyasiwa

PHUKET: Last month the cabinet issued an order rescinding the limitations on gas station opening hours which kept pumps closed between 10 pm and 5 am. Despite this, most local gas stations will continue to close by 10 pm.

Roya Jantarattana, Acting Director of the Region 11 Energy Office explained that the order for early closing was repealed in order to help truck drivers and other night workers but that discretion as to opening hours has been left to businesses.

Gas station operators, however, are reluctant to go back to 24-hour service. Difficulty in securing graveyard-shift workers, robberies, thieving employees, and electricity costs have all been given as reasons for the continuation of the reduced hours.

Promsit Suppokeekul, Manager of the Shell station on Phang Nga Road, delineated the local opening hours for each station in the Shell chain, "In Samkong, next to Bangkok Hospital Phuket, we are open from 6.30 am to 9 pm everyday. On Phang Nga Rd and on Thepkasattri Rd, we used to be open 24 hours, but ... now both are closed by 10 pm."

Although he spoke in favor of all-night opening, citing the benefits to late night truckers, for example, he gave electricity costs and a lack of employees as the major reason for the continued short shift.

Managers of other gas stations on the island echoed K.

Promsit's opinions, Chantira Duangrat, Manager of PTT on Thepkasatri Rd. said, "We don't want to be burdened with the large increase in electricity consumption and the larger workforce that would be needed to stay open 24 hours a day, therefore we have decided to stick to the 10pm closing time."

"Being open all night would also put us at a higher risk of robbery as well as pilfering by our own employees."

The experiences of Ampol Manpanawongsin, Manager of the Caltex station at the Kathu intersection, show that the oil companies' concerns are not unfounded. "We've been open 24 hours a day since December 1 but have been spending more on electricity than we've been taking in from sales," he said.

"People have got used to filling up before 10, so it may take

a while for them to go back to nocturnal habits; but we want to be there to help motorists in need of fuel at night. However, if the number of users doesn't increase soon, at least enough to outweigh power costs, we will go back to 10pm closing," he added.

Not surprisingly, perhaps, given the island's gas stations' reluctance to increase their service hours, fuel consumption has remained largely unaffected by the change in the law. Wichitpong Chuenthongsurp, Manager of the PTT Phuket Oil Terminal said, "The quantity of fuel transferred to gas stations hasn't really been affected by the change in opening hours, just by the shift from low to high season."

He added that, in his opinion, 24 hour service was unnecessary, as consumers had altered their behavior to conform to shorter opening hours.

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IN BRIEF

Phang Nga Bay Regatta dates set

PHUKET: The organizing committee for the 2007 Phang Nga Regatta announced that registration is now open, but this year's regatta will be limited to 45 yachts.

The race will take place over the Chinese new year, as the opening party will be held on February 16, with the race continuing around Phang Nga Bay and returning to Phuket February 20.

To register, teams should visit the website at www.bayregatta.com or contacting the secretary at Email: info@bayregatta.com.

Satree Phuket mini-marathon

PHUKET CITY: Satree Phuket School will hold a fun run and walk on December 23. There will be two race distances: a 10-kilometer run and a 5-km walk, both beginning and ending at Satree Phuket School.

Entry costs 100 baht per person. The first three competitors to finish in each age category of the 10-km run will receive a trophy and 2,000 baht.

Registration will be held from 4 am to 5:15 am on race day, and races will begin at 5:30 am. Breakfast and water will be provided for all participants. Proceeds from the event will go toward the construction of a new building at the school.

Coyotes score another victory

PATONG: Coyote Bar is picking up the pace with another win and three more points to move to a four-point lead, while Queen Mary, Shakers and Didi's have put themselves in a three-way tie for third.

December 12 results: Funky Monkey 5 - Didi's* 4; Piccadilly 6 - Shakers* 3; Dog's Bollocks* 5 - Offshore 4; Coyote Bar* 5 - Queen Mary 4; Beach House 6 - Valhalla* 3 (*winner of beer leg).

Standings: 1. Coyote Bar (14 pts.); 2. Piccadilly (10); 3.= Queen Mary, Shakers, Didi's (8); 6. Dog's Bollocks (7); 7.= Valhalla, Offshore (6); 9. Beach House (5); 10. Funky Monkey (3).

December 26 fixtures: Didi's vs Shakers; Dog's Bollocks vs Valhalla; Piccadilly vs Funky Monkey; Beach House vs Coyote bar; Queen Mary vs Offshore (home team first).

Neramit win Volunteer cup

PHUKET: The Ban Suan Neramit team won first place in the Phuket Civil Defense Volunteer soccer tournament, held December 15 to 17 at Saphan Hin gymnasium.

Forty teams competed, with 15 representing the Civil Defense Volunteer Centers around Phuket and 25 teams from the community. Each team had five players ranging in age from 14 to 45 years old.

The Ban Suan Neramit team received a trophy, presented by Anucha Mokkhavesa, Director General of the Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation, and 10,000 baht in prize money.

The Thepkasattri Municipality team came in second and received 7,000 baht, while Borrea Sports Club Team A was third, with 5,000 baht.

Perdpum team won the "praise prize" of 3,000 baht.



Students compete for OrBorJor honors

PHUKET CITY: The Phuket Provincial Student Games 2006 were held in Surakul Stadium December 16 to 19, organized by Phuket Provincial Administration Organization (OrBorJor) and Phuket Provincial Education Office.

Students aged from 13 to 18, representing more than 40 schools in Phuket, competed in a range of track and field events.

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Rubson Raid champions dethroned

The Rubson Benelux team from Belgium beat two-time defending champions Yann Roussel by just nine points to win the 2006 Rubson Raid Turquoise, held from December 9 to 15.

The race, held on land and sea, saw 27 teams from 12 countries compete over five days, racing boats and competing in physical challenges in stages that saw them race from Phuket to as far south as Koh Tarutao, back to the Phi Phi Islands and finish at Koh Racha Yai.

The event was marred by one mishap this year when a boat overturned near the Phi Phi Islands.

Russian competitor Konstantin Byshevoy, 30, had to be airlifted out by the Royal Thai Navy. He was taken to Vachira Phuket Hospital.

Although an initial report by the RTN said that Mr Byshevoy had suffered injuries to his neck and back, a nurse at Phuket In-

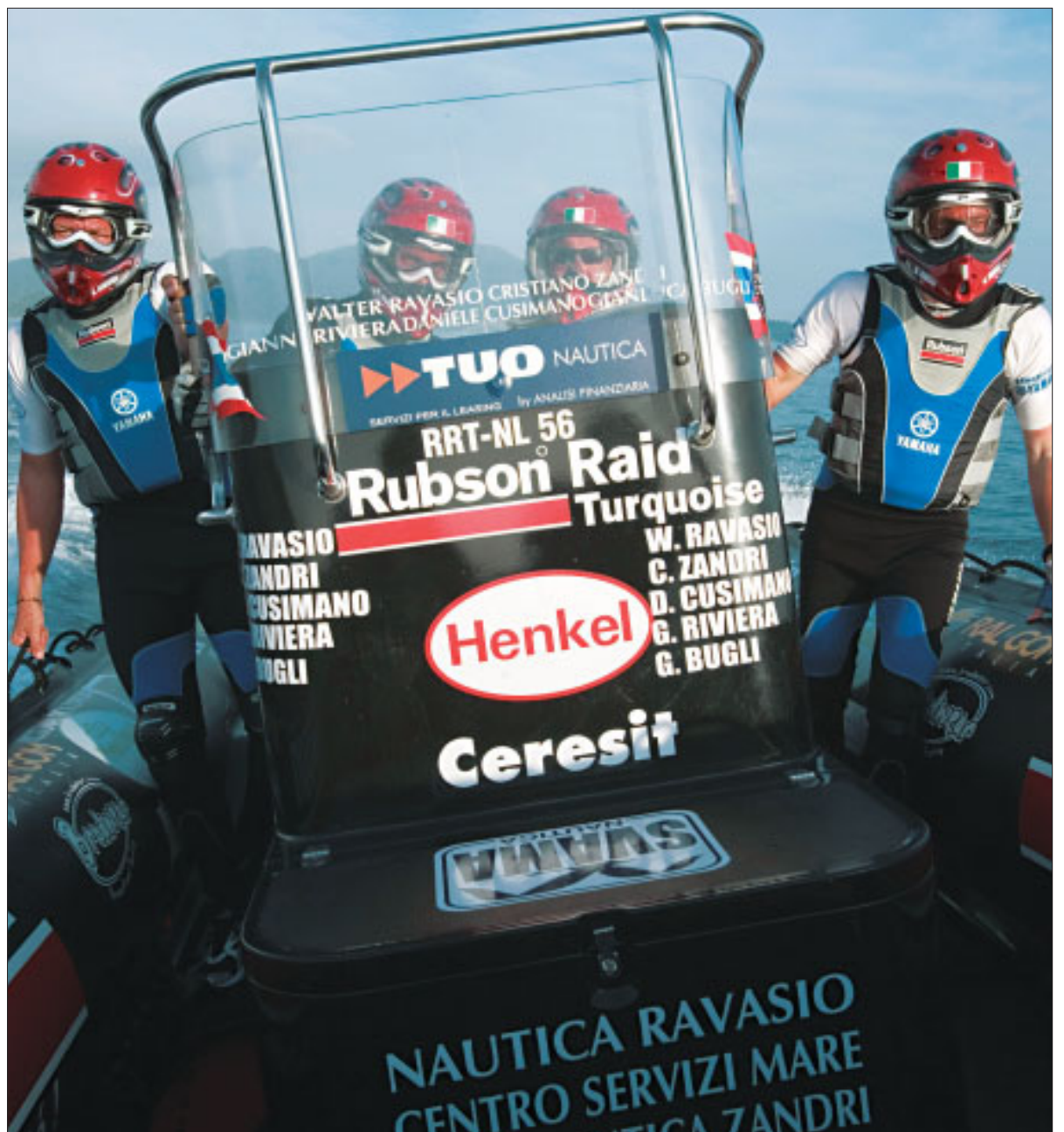
ternational Hospital told the *Gazette* that he was expected to make a full recovery.

This was the first Rubson Raid for Rubson Benelux, and although the team won only two first-place finishes and two second-place finishes in the 14 competitions throughout the week, it was described as the most consistent.

Rubson Benelux team members include Ryan Van Esch, Marco Di Giorgi, Gerard Bergsman, Tim Verkley, Frankwin Van Beers and Bob Van Nieuwenhuyzen, who range in age from 21 to 41.

The Pattex team was awarded a special "Fair Play" award for immediately abandoning the race to render assistance to Mr Byshevoy.

This is the sixth year for the Rubson Raid. In previous years it has been staged in Brazil, Martinique, Guadalupe, the Amirantes Islands (near the Seychelles) and the Seychelles.



The Ma-Fra-Yamaha Italia team, led by Walter Ravasio, takes off on another leg of the Rubson Raid.



New Courts Phuket

Take a look at The New Look Courts Phuket and you will be surprised! They have completely re-invented themselves.

The ground floor has now a bright and exciting display of Electrical and IT products.

As I have just moved into my new home I was looking for a 32" LCD television and Courts now has over 30 models to choose from. Being an LCD novice I was confused by the many different specifications, so it was time to get educated. I had many questions. What's the difference between

Plasma and LCD? I asked the salesman. What's the difference between that Samsung model priced at 49,000 Baht and that one at 89,000 Baht? The salesman was very patient as he guided me through this technological maze.

What adds to the excitement of the store is the concept displays that showcase the latest products from leading brands such as Sony, Panasonic, Samsung, Pioneer & LG. And if you want a special order just ask, they can get it for you.

The IT section also has a large range of computers and notebooks to choose from, probably one of the largest displays on the island!

After my LCD lesson I headed upstairs to the furniture floors. All the products in Courts are guaranteed to be exclusive. This is due to their huge regional buying power (sister companies in Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia). Khun Jom, the buyer explained that the company sources and buys products from all over Asia in order to get the best price and designs for their customers.

To go with my new LCD TV I decided on buying a full leather sofa set the Marcel and I only paid 33,990 Baht for something that looks like its just come off an Italian designer cat walk!

ELECTRICAL



FURNITURE

They also have a full range of bedroom suites to choose from. There are the essential "must have" bedroom furniture options through to the designer styles. Literally, something for everyone. If your budget is tight I would recommend the Samantha range. It also comes with a free mattress and is fully flexible. Want just the wardrobe and bedside table? No problem, can do!

I particularly fell in love with the New Monaco bedroom suite which makes the most of the wardrobe space with built in central dressing unit. What a great use of space and what's more it looks stunning!

So my recommendation is take a fresh look at the New Courts Phuket. You will be both surprised & inspired!

Happy shopping ☺

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Construction Update

by Janyaporn Morel

Following the success of their previous developments, Palm Garden housing development in Pa Khlok and Palm Spring Condominiums in Patong, SG One Co Ltd have begun their 500-million-baht Palm Breeze Resort condominium project on Saiyuan Rd in Nai Harn.

The project, on six rai two kilometers from Nai Harn Beach, will comprise five buildings in contemporary Thai style, each with its own private entrance and elevator to all floors.

The buildings will be set in lush tropical landscaping, with a putting green 30 meters by 40m, an 8m-by-12m tennis court, a 10m-by-20m pool with a large sunbathing deck, a fully-equipped gymnasium and spa, and a restaurant-coffee shop and bar. There will also be a reception that will be manned 24 hours to provide all services, and private, secure parking.

Sucdeep Akrasanee, Managing Director of SG One, told the *Gazette* that the company is offering 80 freehold condominium apartments fully fitted with Western kitchens and bathrooms.

The apartments are available in four types: 102 square meters with one bedroom; 115 sqm with two bedrooms; 218sqm with three bedrooms; and luxury penthouse units of more than 400sqm with Jacuzzi, private terrace, plunge pool and rooftop garden.

"The project will be built in two phases. Buildings A and B are part of the first phase, along with the shared swimming pool, reception, gymnasium and spa, restaurant and bar, and the car parking spaces.

Work on the first phase started at the beginning of this month and is expected to be completed by February 2008. The first phase is already about 10% complete," K. Sucdeep said.



Artist's impression of the Palm Breeze Resort condo development on Saiyuan Rd.

Palm Breeze breaks ground in Nai Harn

"The second phase will be buildings C, D and E, along with the putting green and tennis court. Completion is expected by February 2009, and the landscaping for each phase will be done as it

is completed," he added.

The first, second and third floor of each building will comprise two one-bedroom units and two two-bedroom units. The fourth floor will have two three-bedroom units, and the fifth floor will have two three-bedroom penthouses.

"We have studied the current market and have found that, regardless of whether the property is for permanent or short-term use, buyers of tropical property look at certain criteria when making a purchase: location, quality, design, value for money, investment and potential capital appreciation.

"Short-, medium- and long-term rental returns top the list, along with obvious factors, such as on-site facilities, quality on-site management, security and safety," K. Sucdeep said.

"During construction we are offering low-deposit terms and easy repayment plans, which can be tailor-made to each buyer," K. Sucdeep said.

"Foreign freehold ownership is available, which means that foreigners can hold the freehold titles in their names under current Thai law.

"Financing is also available to foreign buyers but only on selected units. The finance plans

can also be tailor-made to suit individual circumstances," he added.

The off-plan launch prices, which range from 3.5 million baht to 9.9 million baht, provide an opportunity to buy a unit with the potential for large capital appreciation during the construction period, K. Sucdeep said, adding that early off-plan buying gives buyers a wider choice of units.

For more information contact SG One Co Ltd, 237/9 Thepkra-sattri Rd, Thalang, Phuket 83110. Tel. 081-3034299, 087-8933635. Email: sgoneco@yahoo.com.

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Decor

by Nat cha Yuttaworawit



Nuts over coconuts

Walking around Phuket, it turns out, you are constantly surrounded by pieces of art in waiting. Hanging on every coconut palm are potential centerpieces for your dining room table – lamps waiting to be carved.

Coconut shells are the material of choice for Montri Wisai- ket's shop on the third floor of the Big C supercenter, where carved elephant and giraffe lamps, made from coconut shells and sugar palm wood, are lined up next to frog and duck ashtrays.

K. Montri, 24, from Petch- aburi, buys all of his stock from Chiang Mai. Before he moved his shop to Phuket's Big C, he helped his uncle sell coconut shell prod- ucts for five years at the JJ mar- ket in Bangkok.

He said that in the five months since he opened his shop



here, most of his customers have been foreign tourists. The biggest response from tourists, he said, was that they like the natural and creative products that represent Thailand, so they can buy the pieces as souvenirs for their friends.

Customers are also able to order custom-designed items to suit their taste.

K. Montri's shop is open daily from 10 am to 8:30 pm, or for special orders call K. Montri at Tel: 086-6906324.

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Home of the Week

Rawai

Space and plenty of peace

Located up a quiet, concrete soi is this large property in Rawai. Built just 80 meters from the water, the two-story, contemporary-style home has ocean views from each room of the house.

The land plot is more than one rai of tropical gardens, with palms and frangipani, as well as a 60-square-meter swimming pool surrounded by a wooden deck with a sala nearby. Surrounding the land is a perimeter security fence with all gates run on electric motors.

The house has outdoor balconies for taking in the ocean view. The ceilings are made with exposed wood and enhance interior space.

All bedrooms have en-suite bathrooms and walk-in wardrobes, and the 32sqm master bedroom features a bath overlooking the ocean.

An office is on the second floor.

The living area is stylishly finished and has black granite

tiles throughout, and opens onto the pool and terrace through folding wooden doors.

Interior design throughout the home has been well thought out, and the home is available with many items selected by the owners.

The house includes a maid's room with bath. The whole property has ducted air conditioning and all windows have screens installed.

Installed utilities include satellite TV, telephone lines, broadband Internet access, central water heating and three-phase electricity.

There's also undercover parking for two vehicles and a rooftop terrace.

The property has Nor Sor 3 Gor title and is available freehold or leasehold at 45 million baht.

For more information contact Richard Lusted at Siam Real Estate at info@siamrealestate.com or visit www.siamrealestate.com



Above: the home's imposing exterior. Below: It's just a couple of steps from the living area to the elegant pool.



Gardening

There are many things that are predictable in this world: *The Sound of Music* appearing on TV at Christmas, Air Asia flights being late all year, getting wet at Songkran whether you want to join in or not, and totally gratuitous digs at citizens of South Canada in the gardening column of the *Phuket Gazette*. The list goes on. And on.

Christmas has its own predictability in the West. You can guarantee that the number of pointless Christmas cards you send out will be pretty much in line with the number you receive every year; many from people you hardly know. Probably just as many from distant relatives you'd rather not meet up with ever again. The easy way out is to take my line of thinking on this one – just don't bother.

And what is it with the obsession with turkey that the Brits seem to have? It's not an especially aroi meat in the first place – a drier, tougher version of chicken, I suppose. So why do we insist on cooking a bird the size of Belgium every Christmas day?

We end up eating the remains of the thing for the next week. Turkey casseroles, turkey soup, turkey salad and turkey sandwiches. Post-Christmas turkey binges are just one of life's certain facts in the UK. All this not particularly pleasant meat from one of the ugliest birds on the planet. I think I'll just stick to tom yam kung this year, as I usually do.

TV programming takes a nosedive during the Christmas season, too (sorry – I just can't bring myself to use that awful American "holidays" thing). They seem to take the very worst TV programs that have regularly appeared all year, chuck a bit of holly in the background and give everyone a Santa hat, and call it the "Christmas edition". Excruciating stuff.

The Christmas season seems to get longer every year there. There are shops in the UK that are breaking out the Christmas decorations at the beginning

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with Bloomin' Bert

Tis the season not to bother



Predictable poinsettia: Probably due to its festive coloring, the poinsettia has become another predictable Christmas favorite to be brought out for the holiday season.

of October – nearly three months ahead of the day itself. Why not just leave them up all year, and have a 365-day Christmas, from Boxing Day to Christmas Day, every year? Just a thought.

Christmas in Thailand is more than a little strange to us Westerners, but at least doesn't go on for too long. Hearing *Santa Claus is Coming to Town* blaring out of the speakers at Big C and Tesco Lotus isn't what I would expect, but is as predictable as the baubles hanging from the lights and the Christmas tree in the lobby. All of this covered in fake snow in a country where snow hasn't fallen for several million years and Christmas isn't even a holiday.

I suppose I should be predictable myself, and get onto

something vaguely Christmassy. Every year at around this time, one plant in particular makes a regular appearance *en masse* at the various garden centers around Phuket – the poinsettia.

As far as the plant world is concerned, it's about the closest we can get to Christmas in this region of the planet. It's also known as the Christmas plant, or completely predictably, "kisse-mass" in Thai. In many other areas, this is one of the most popular plants in many homes over the Christmas holiday season.

For those who care, it got its name after it was first introduced to the United States in 1825 by the first US ambassador to Mexico, Joel Robert Poinsett. He took cuttings from a shrub he found growing next to a road in

the wilds of southern Mexico and brought them back to his greenhouse in South Carolina.

The poinsettia's official species name, *pulcherrima*, means "most beautiful". It actually really is, with its huge display of rich foliage. It probably became known as the Christmas plant purely because of its coloring – vivid red and green – being long associated with the Christmas season.

The showy, colored part of poinsettias that most people think are the flowers (bright scarlet) are actually colored bracts, or modified leaves. The actual flowers or cyathia of the poinsettia are in the center of the colorful bracts, and in reality are a little disappointing. They're tiny.

Any gardening center in

Phuket will happily part with a 40-centimeter-high example of the Christmas plant for around 150 baht. Unlike most floral purchases in Thailand, it's one of those plants that needs little translation – just ask for "kisse-mas" and you'll get what you're after. There is certainly no shortage of "kisse-mas" vendors at present.

To check the poinsettia's maturity examine the true flowers, which are located at the base of the colored bracts. If the flowers are green- or red-tipped and fresh looking, the bloom will last longer than if yellow pollen is covering the flowers. A fresh poinsettia is one on which little or no yellow pollen is showing on the flower clusters in the center of the bracts.

Poinsettias prefer moderately moist soil, so when the soil begins to feel dry to the touch, add enough water so the excess drips out the drain holes if they're in pots, but never allow the plant to sit in water. Ideally, they should be fed every couple of weeks with a fertilizer when the plant is growing. Do this and they'll thank you forever – even after Christmas.

Poinsettias are perennials, so it is theoretically possible to

keep them growing from year to year, and doing their thing at Christmas. In theory (I've never tried this here myself), to get them to produce their flower bracts again next December, they must be kept in a cool spot and in total darkness for 14 hours per day beginning in mid-September.

Any light, even turning on a light bulb for a few seconds will delay the bloom. I have to say that this advice is designed for more temperate climates, so I'm not honestly sure that it would work here. "A cool spot"? Yeah, right.

One word of caution with the Christmas plant. Poinsettia sap may irritate your skin, so perhaps rubber gloves would be a good idea whenever you are doing any pruning, pinching or cutting of these plants.

Christmas in Phuket? It may not be celebrated here in the traditional sense, but at least there are one or two ways we can be reminded of the festive season here. And we don't even need to put up with Julie Andrews wailing about lonely goat herds or endure turkey sandwiches for weeks to come.

Merry Christmas. I'll see you at the beach.



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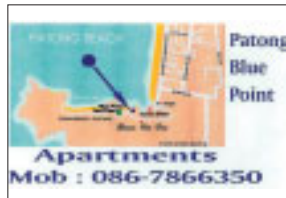
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Property Gazette

EXCEPTIONAL VILLAS



Quiet Rawai-Chalong area, private development of 8 villas, security, living area 350sqm, open plan living, swimming-pool, stunning and amazing design, 6 villas, 17 million baht. Tel: 076-381490. Email: info@sea-property-international.com

HOUSE WITH POOL

Rawai. New 3-bedroom, 2-bathroom house with pool in Rawai. 5.5 million baht. Tel: 076-388-685, 086-595-1499. Fax: 076-388684. Email: info@andamanthaiproperty.com Please visit at: www.andamanthaiproperty.com/atp_property_395.htm

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Quiet and safe Chalong area, modern concept, 280/320sqm living space, 800 sqm land plot each, 3-4 bedrooms, swimming pool, 9-11 million baht. Tel: 076-381490. Email: info@sea-property-international.com

OFFICE BUILDING

Executive office building for sale. 102 sq wah. Includes AC, security system and private carport. Price: 15 million baht. Tel: 076-282211, 081-958-0815. Fax: 076-283251. Email: moo@mintcard.net

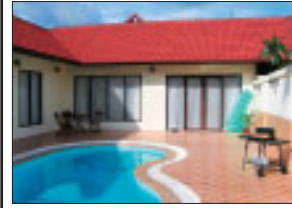
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On beach. 2 rai. 7 million baht. Full infrastructure, ready to build on. Tel: 089-4700223 (Thai), 087-2670714 (Eng).

AFFORDABLE LAND

For sale: 20 x 21m plots, mountain view, quiet, walled & ready to build. 1.5 million baht. Tel: 076-355488. Email: agogniat@loxinfo.co.th

HOUSE WITH POOL IN CHALONG



Beautiful house for sale on 224sqm of land, with private pool. Two bedrooms, big living room, bathroom with Jacuzzi and shower, European kitchen. Fully furnished, 3 aircons, ADSL, UBC. 5 million baht. Tel: 076-310362, 086-533-6089. Email: gazette@glibber.com

LAND FOR SALE



Koh Yao Noi/Phang Nga Bay, 10.2 rai, east coast, unobstructed postcard sea and island views, 165m beachfront, electric, water, road access, 38 million baht or 5.1 rai at 20 million baht. Tel: 076-381490. Email: info@sea-property-international.com

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Freehold. Rawai beach condo. Nice room, can register in foreigner's name. 27sqm. Newly decorated. 300m to Rawai Beach. Please contact for full details. Tel: 084-658-4437. Email: property1998@hotmail.com

NEW VILLAS RAWAI

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HOUSE FOR SALE

Kathu. Fully furnished, 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, fully-fitted kitchen, garden, parking space. Quiet soi close to Country Club Golf Course and Central. 3.2 million baht. Tel: 076-323192, 01-4998719. Email: marshall_hugh@yahoo.co.uk

40 RAI BEACHFRONT

Koh Yao Yai. Chon Lat Beach with famous views of Krabi and 100s of islands. 150 meters of white sand beachfront, water, road and electricity. 3 million baht a rai. Ideal for a resort or an investment project. Tel: 076-346346, 086-2726508. Fax: 076-346263. Email: info@phuketrealstate.com

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NICE PATONG CONDO

With pool. 60sqm, fully furnished. Please contact for more details. Tel: 081-7727-100, 081-5657427. Email: snonticha@hotmail.com

NEW HOUSE

Chalong. Large 3-bedroom house, Western spec, 8 x 4m tiled pool. For sale with company if required. 8.2 million baht. Tel: 087-8984125.

KATA COTTAGES

Sea view from 2.6 million baht. Kitchen, terrace, furnished. Tel: 081-4874812, 084-6301770.

RAWAI BEACH

Condo. Sea view, freehold. 350,000 baht. Tel: 086-686-5567. Email: freeholdprop@yahoo.com

AO CHALONG BEACH FRONT



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Email: jimmys@loxinfo.co.th

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Property Gazette

Properties For Rent

VILLA FOR RENT



Ban Prangthong Villa Estate, 400sqm living space, 5 bedrooms, open-plan living/dining, garden with swimming pool, Jacuzzi, 80,000 baht a month, minimum 12-month contract, Tel: 076-381490. Email: info@sea-property-international.com

NEW HOUSE

Phaklong, Thalang. 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, furnished kitchen. 13,500 baht per month. Palm Garden 56/6. Tel: 081-6063525.

9 RAI FOR LEASE

Located in Kathu. 2 minutes from Central. Suitable for long-term investor. For more info email: leekuab@yahoo.com

VILLA FOR RENT

Beautiful new 2-bedroom villa. Fully furnished, air con. 2 mins to Rawai beach. Private pool/walled garden. Available mid-Jan minimum 6-month let 35,000 baht a month. Tel: 081-9701716.

CHALONG

Nice house for rent. 2 bedrooms, big kitchen, cable TV, aircon. 9,000 baht. Utilities extra. Tel: 076-344487, 086-767-7245.

PATONG TOWER

Sea view. 1 bedroom apartment, 100 meters from beach. UBC, pool, parking. Tel: 084-8473304.

HOUSE FOR RENT

7 rooms. 540sqm, free space 300sqm on 1 rai, Sapam, Phuket City. Looking for long-term renter. Tel: 086-689-3289.

AMAZING SEA VIEWS

Large villa in Cape Yamu set in delightful gardens surrounded by rolling hills and countryside. Superb views out to Phang Nga Islands. 3 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, lounge dining, snooker room, maid's room, kitchen, study, sauna and swimming pool, furnished, UBC, Internet. 80,000 baht per month. Tel: 086-279-6283.

LAGUNA AREA

House with pool, spa, poolside bar, aircon, large garden, like resort. Lease: 39,000 baht a month. Tel: 089-5944067.

BUNGALOW

for rent. 1 bedroom bungalow in front of Chalong Bay beach with terrace, kitchen, aircon, fully furnished, car park 15m from house, 12,000 baht a month. Tel: 084-6584437, 089-7297978. Email: property1998@hotmail.com

SHOP FOR RENT

1,000sqm, fully furnished, with parking area. Located near Heroines' Monument. Contact for more information. Tel: 089-4711585. Email: theveewan@yahoo.com

SHOPHOUSE

Near SuperCheap. 4 stories (300sqm) with 5 rooms, 7 aircons and 5 phone lines. For rent at 30,000 baht a month. Tel: 076-238777, 081-7371-678. Fax: 076-239739. Email: supotpac@phuket.ksc.co.th

FOR RENT OR SALE

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LUXURY PENTHOUSE



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KATA PENTHOUSE

and rooms to rent near beach. Swimming pool, cable, TV fridge, etc. Clean views. 7,000 baht a month. 400 baht a day. Tel: 086-276-6597.

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Chao Fah Rd. 4 bedrooms, 5 bathrooms. Nice garden. Safe and quiet. For long-term rent at 38,000 baht a month. For sale at 7.3 million baht. Contact for more details. Tel: 081-7872201. Email: phuket8@hotmail.com



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COMMERCIAL

building, Chalong. Near traffic circle, 3 stories. Tel: 081-9895487. Email: aasvogel06@hotmail.com

HOUSE FOR RENT

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CHALONG NEW HOME

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KOH LANTA - LAND

For rent. 10 rai of land for short- & long-term rent at Business Center. Call Ratree, Tel: 085-8885143. Email: lanta_greatland@yahoo.com

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Nice apartments or houses for long-term rental, furnished or unfurnished, 2 or 3 bedrooms. 20,000-25,000 baht a month. Tel: 084-3059606.

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HOUSE FOR RENT

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QUIET HOUSE

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- ◀ Fluent in spoken & written English.

Project Admin Manager

The successful candidate should possess these qualifications:

- ◀ Thai national.
- ◀ Bachelor's degree in any field.
- ◀ Experience in property business is preferable.
- ◀ Strong ability of negotiation.
- ◀ Management capacity
- ◀ Fluent in spoken & written English.
- ◀ Ability to work under pressure.

All positions offer an attractive package.

For interview please send all CVs, resumes, and photographs to **info@thepalmbeachclub.com**

GST International Co., Ltd.

326 Prabamee Road, Patong, Kathu, Phuket 83150
Tel. (076) 310 402-4 Fax. (076) 310 405

ACCOUNTANT/SALES

Some English experience, good knowledge of Phuket projects, flexible. Good salary, great future. Tel: 081-537-6866.

BARTENDERS

Qualified bartenders needed. Thai ladies for elegant bar near the beach at Patong - Dolphin Bar. Good salary, lady drinks, tips & commissions on sale. Call Richard for more information. Tel: 087-2677965.

OFFICE SECRETARY

Real estate agency's Chalong branch requires female for office. Good written and spoken English, computer skills and results oriented. Duties will be property scouting, telemarketing and following up listings for our properties. Salary up to 15,000 baht + incentives scheme. Please send CV by email or contact for more information. Tel: 084-0535780. Email: info@ayudhya.net

CLEANING MAID

Guesthouse wants Thai lady to clean 12 rooms. Good conditions for 8 hours of work a day (flexible). Call Sa. Tel: 087-9334327.

WANT PHOTOGRAPHER

Need for 3-hour daytime photo shoot. Experience working with models helpful. Tel or call Phil Tel: 085-2212883.

MODEL WANTED

Need female for beach photo shoot. Must be attractive, thin, blonde. Age between 18-30 years old. Text Phil or Tel: 085-2212883.

CHEF/GARDENER

Now seeking job. Good Eng skills and can drive. Tel: 087-3809942.

TOUR GUIDE

Thai- Must have very good spoken English, for new venture in Phuket. Own transport [car] and live in Phuket. Contact us to arrange an interview. Tel: 076-289-044, 088-4376427. Email: gsmith100@gmail.com

ADMINISTRATION

Assistant required by one of Phuket's leading yacht charter companies. Duties include liaison with government departments & clients and general administration tasks. Based in Boat Lagoon. Please contact for more information. Tel: 076-273476, 081-9684188. Fax: 076-273476. Email: Peter@phuket-yachts.com

SALES/OFFICE

Person required. Our office in a Karon hotel needs an English-speaking Thai person to sell our company's excursions. Good English required, and some computer skills. Phone for interview. Tel: 076-289-044, 081-0817163. Fax: 076-289044. Email: Info@simbaseatrips.com

OFFICE STAFF

Wanted. Our office in Chalong is looking for an English-speaking Thai person with computer skills. Interested candidates please send full CV by email or contact. Tel: 076-282425, 081-8454667. Fax: 076-282425. Email: prapaipit@octopuswetsuit.com

BAR MANAGER

Thai lady, some English, good customer care to lead team of six girls. Dolphin Bar, near beach at Patong. Good salary, commission on daily income basis. Please call Richard for further information. Tel: 087-2677965.

SALES ASSISTANT

Wholesale food company is looking for a sales assistant. Basic knowledge of English required. Tel: 084-1893070.



1) Vessel Manager

Long-term position available for male, under 40 yrs

- Excellent English
- Speaking Thai preferable
- Excellent communications skills
- Excellent organisational skills
- Marine industry experience
- Computer literate

Please contact Gareth at **Gareth@yachtsolutions.net**

2) Positions Available

- Experienced engineer
- Experienced fiberglass and painter
- Experienced electrician
- Thai national
- Basic English skills
- Marine experience

Please contact Nicolas at **Projects@yachtsolutions.net**

SALES MANAGER AND SALES EXECUTIVE

- 25 to 40 years old
 - Sales Supervisor experience
 - Can speak, read and write in English
 - Sales background in advertising, insurance, investment, etc
 - Own transport advantageous
- Please contact for more information.

Tel: 076-203365
02-3324600-5.

Email: **ajapply@yahoo.com**

Island Job Mart



We are an international property consultant with 200 officers worldwide providing property agency services, asset valuation, property and facilities management, research and consultancy. Due to a rapid expansion, we are looking for qualified personnel to join our company as follows:

1. Estate Manager:

- Age over 28 years
- BA in Management or related fields
- At least 2 years experience in building/estate management
- 3 years in management level
- Knowledge in Juristic Person Acts is an advantage
- Strong leadership, good problem solving skills
- Able to work under pressure

2. Chief Engineer:

- Male, age over 25 years
- BA in Electrical or Mechanical Engineering
- At least 2 years experience in building services
- Knowledge of system maintenance management is an advantage

3. Project Coordinator:

- Age over 22 years
- BA in related fields
- Self motivated and possess good coordinating and problem solving skills with service mind

Knight Frank Phuket Co., Ltd.

1 Plaza Del Mar Building, Room No. 109-111 & 201-202,
Pasak-Koktanod Road, T. Cherngtalay, A. Talang,
Phuket 83110
Tel: 076-318151-58, Fax: 076-318159,
Email: chutima.nirawani@th.knightfrank.com

4. Accountant:

- Male or female, age 25-30 years
- BA in Accounting or Finance
- At least 3 years experience in related fields
- Familiar with accounting software and knowledge of MS Office, especially MS Excel
- Should be strong literacy in MS Office (Excel)
- Proficiency in both written and spoken English

5. Receptionist:

- Female, age over 22 years
- Vocational or higher in related fields
- Good telephoning, communication and interpersonal skills

6. Technician:

- Male, age over 22 years
- Vocational degree or higher in Mechanical/Electrical
- Vocational degree or higher in Mechanical/Electrical
- At least 1 year experience in system maintenance

Interested candidates are invited to write in with full resumé, present and expected salaries, and a recent photo to:

Remark:

Thai Nationality only. Position 1-5 good command of spoken and written English and computer literacy is essential, male applicants must complete or exempt from military service. Knowledge of real estate is an advantage



Not all gems come in a little box

Indigo Pearl is a unique design hotel in Phuket, Thailand. Architecture inspired by Phuket's tin mining past. Modern décor evoking a Thai factory of a century ago. Extensive, imaginative gardens. The resort is currently seeking professionals who share enthusiasm for creating a one-of-a-kind experience for all guests – an experience as rare as an indigo pearl. Highly talented individuals are invited to apply for the following positions:

Food & Beverage Department

- * Banquet Manager
- * Waiter / Waitress
- * Bartender / Bartender
- * Steward

Kitchen Department

- * Chef de Parte - Grill Room

Resort Service Department

- * Resort Service Manager
- * Sport Officer
- * Kids club Attendant

Front Office Department

- * Guest Service Center Operator - Supervisor
- * Guest Service Agent - Supervisor
- * Guest Service Agent (night)
- * Assistant Concierge
- * Guest Relation Officer

Housekeeping Department

- * Executive Assistant Housekeeping
- * Public Area attendant

Apply in person or send your resumé to: **Director of Human Resources**
Indigo Pearl, 116 MI T. Sakoo, A. Talang, Phuket 83110
Tel: 076-327006 Fax: 076-327338-9
E-mail: samran@indigo-pearl.com Web: www.indigo-pearl.com

British International School, Phuket.

Required due to maternity leave: Temporary Part-time Teacher of Physical Education (Girls) to begin in March/April 2007

The British International School, Phuket requires a dedicated and innovative, temporary part-time Teacher of Physical Education (Girls) to join an enthusiastic team of PE specialists. This is a part-time teaching position involving mainly KS3 and KS4 classes including activity lessons. Knowledge of GCSE Physical Education will be an advantage.

At KS3/4 we broadly follow the National Curriculum of England and Wales.

Application by letter and CV including a recent photograph to nbotting@bcis.ac.th

An attractive package is offered with details available on application. Further information about the school may be obtained from our website: www.bcis.ac.th



British International School, Phuket (BIS)

59 Moo 2, Thepkasattri Rd, Koh Kaew, Muang, Phuket 83000 Thailand
Tel: 076 238 711-20 Fax: 076 238 750 Bangkok Tel: 02 636 8991-2 Fax: 02 636 8992



Sabana Resort, ideally located on Nai Harn Beach, is seeking young and dynamic individuals for the following positions:

1. Activity Manager

2. Executive Housekeeper

3. Executive Secretary

4. Management Trainee

(Foreign National French and / or German speaking)

5. Assistant Front Office Manager

Suitable for young and junior level willing to promote within a dynamic organization.

6. Training Manager (Experience 3 Years. up)

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED, PLEASE CONTACT:
HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT
TEL: 076 289333 Email: hmr@sabana-resort.com

MIDDLE MANAGEMENT OFFICER

- Thai female, aged 26-45 years.

- B.A. or Master's degree

- Very good English (esp. listening and speaking)

- Good communication and computer skills.

Please contact for more information.

Tel: 076-264770-2.

Fax: 076-264773.

Email: info@kajonkiet.com

OFFICE STAFF

Wanted: Thai female with very good communication skills in English. Good personality, self motivated, service minded. Tel: 076-264773. Email: info@kajonkiet.com

ENGLISH-SPEAKING

Accountant. Min 2 years experience wanted. Tel: 076-280447, 081-0808557. Fax: 076-280447. Email: info@no1visa.com

HOSTESS/COOK

Hostess/cook wanted for sailing boat. Experience required. Please call for more information. Tel: 081-970-1260.

Le Meridien Khao Lak Job Opportunities



We are currently seeking for dynamic and innovative people to join Le Meridien Khao Lak Beach & Spa Resort. Applicants who feel they would excel in a motivated and challenging environment are invited to apply for the following positions by sending your resume (in English) with a recent photo to the address below:

Room Division

- Japanese Guest Relation Mgr./Officer (Japanese National Only)
- Assistant Front Office Manager
- Guest Relations Officer
- Reservation Officer
- Assistant Housekeeper

Food & Beverage Division

- Assistant F&B Manager
- Restaurant Manager
- Waiter/Waitress/Bartender
- Chef de Partie
- Demi Chef de Partie
- Executive Sous Chef
- Bakery Chef

A & G Department

- Executive Secretary to GM

Finance

- Financial Controller

Sales & Marketing

- Convention Operation Manager (Experience in Banqueting & Convention/Event Organizing Field)

Sport & Leisure Department

- Sport & Leisure Manager
- Babysitter (Good English)

Attractive salaries, fringe benefits and career opportunities are offered to successful candidates.

Human Resources Department

Le Meridien Khao Lak Beach & Spa Resort
9/9 Moo 1, Tambon Kuk-kak, Amphur Takuapa, Phang-Nga 82190
Tel: (076) 427509, Direct Fax: (076) 427559
n.waiwong@khaolak.lemeridien.com

LOOKING FOR MAID

Foreign couple is looking for a long-term maid with basic English. Working location: Kamala, in a new house. Must be honest and self-motivated. Maid has to stay at our place for cleaning and cooking. Good salary for the right candidate. We offer private maid room with bathroom, TV, etc. Tel: 086-1727974. Email: rene.koller@bluewin.ch or www.romsai.ch

RESERVATION

Officer: 3 positions. Urgently need online reservations agent for airline booking system. Male/female Thai national with English-communication and computer skills. Energetic & hard working, own transport and able to work on shift. Please call for more information. Tel: 076-328598. Or send CV to email: bee@destinationair.com

RESTAURANT

Manager & Chef. Sunset Beach Resort is looking for a restaurant manager & European chef. Tel: 076-342482-5. Fax: 076-342500. Email: info@sunsetphuket.com

Employment Wanted

SEARCHING JOB

Male, 33, Belgian. Anything considered, hard-working, can speak Dutch, English, Spanish. Please contact. Tel: 089-2897180. Email: reynaerts666@yahoo.co.uk

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www.phuketgazette.net/

Tout, Trader & Trumpet

Articles for Sale

ROAD RACING BIKE

Giant OCR3 Compact Road Racing Bike (medium frame, 19.5"). Sella Italia saddle, Cane Creek headset, Shimano SORA shifters & derailleurs, FSA 3-ring crank (52, 42, 30), Shimano cassette-1225 Wheels w/ A2Z hubs, Alex DA13 rims, Continental tires. Just serviced, excellent condition. 14,000 baht ono. Tel: 076-350020, 089-5902014. Fax: 076-350022. Email: shaunboulter@aegiasia.net

BIG NEW 3-DOOR

Fridges. Two big 3-glass-door fridges for sale. Only 4 months old, like new. EVEREST COOL-MCD-30TM. 2m high x 1.80m wide. Good for food and beverages. Only 25,000 baht each. (New: 35,000 baht each.) Tel: 076-388621, 084-8519072. Email: goodtasteforgoodlife@yahoo.de

SCUBA CONSOLE

Has depth gauge, pressure gauge and compass. 12,000 baht. Please contact for more information. Tel: 085-7855365.

SCUBA BCD

Sequest raider, 9 months old. 12,000 baht. Tel: 085-7855365.

MUSIC EQUIPMENT

Guitars, amps, drums for sale. Leaving Phuket. Call for details. Tel: 081-5379196.

FOR SALE FISH TANK

Beautiful fish tank. New, 40,000 baht, sale price 15,000 baht. Please contact for more information. Tel: 087-1466622.

Articles Wanted

POOL TABLE

Wanted: Secondhand pool table for personal use. Tel: 076-260468.

Bulletins

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

Is holding meetings in English at the following places in Phuket:

Mission Hospital Phuket City
Wed and Sun 7 pm
Bangkok Phuket Hospital Phuket City
Fri 7 pm

Patong Hospital Patong
Mon, Tue, Wed, Sat, Sun at 7 pm and Fri at 8 pm
For Phuket info (English) call 081-9564031, 081-8912895

Scandinavian speaking Group Wat Karon School-Karon
Tue and Sat 7 pm
Tel 081-2732053 (Nor)
087-2795636 (Nor)
086-7458910 (Swe)

For info on other Thailand AA meetings inquire at Tel: 02-2318300 (for Thai language press 3) www.aathailand.org or email info@aathailand.org

PHUKET CHESS CLUB

Saturday from 2 pm. Tel: 081-8948446. Email: info@southernfriedrice.com

CHRISTMAS CAROL

services add love, peace and joy to your Christmas this year and join us in singing carols and watching our Christmas show with a difference! Come together with people from all over the world at Phuket Christian Centre, Phuket City, on Friday, December 22 at 7:30 pm (Traditional Carol Service) and December 24 at 10:30 am (Christmas Celebration Service). Tel: 076-246381. Email: Fisherbernadine@yahoo.com

Business Opportunities

EJECTION SEAT FUN RIDE

Ejection seat bungee fun ride machine, imported from Austria. Full working machine and operating site, in Kathu next-door to go-cart track. This ride launches 2 people in a safety cage 60m into the air at a speed of 100kmh, in 1.8 seconds. I am looking for a working partner to invest and help run the ride. For full details contact Andy. Tel: 081-891-3466. Fax: 076-296160. Email: antc@phuket.ksc.co.th

INVESTOR/PARTNER

Wanted. For real estate project with excellent return! Tel: 084-0572743. Email: admin@no1phukethomes.com

KAMALA

Restaurant & bar. Famous for pizza & Texmex. 40 seats, air conditioning, equipment, stock and furniture. For sale at 500,000 baht + rent 6,000 baht per month. Tel: 086-2878966. Email: boomerkamala@hotmail.com

KATA BEACH

Resort & Spa, 12-year lease-hold for sale. Cafe, restaurant and subleases included. Zero rent, no key money: 12 million baht. Next to beach and city center too! House included & can get 1-year visa and work permit. Tel: 086-5413629. Please see our website at: www.phuket-massage.com

CLUB FOR SALE

JBL, lighting and fully furnished. Newly remodeled. Asking 4 million baht, willing to negotiate. Please contact for more information. Tel: 089-7240927.

PATONG BAR(S)

Wishing to concentrate on one bar, have the option of either GoGo on Seadragon (6-year lease) or Beer Bar (2-year lease) on Happy Rd (next to Seduction disco). Tel: 089-9546433. Email: kjralph@hotmail.com

BEAUTY SALON

Beauty salon for sale in Kathu 150,000 baht, or rent for 8,000 baht a month. You can live inside. Please contact for more information. Tel: 084-8448589. Email: bb-anaiya@hotmail.com

BAR FOR SALE

Soi Gonzo, Bangla Road. 2 years left on lease. Genuine sale. 800,000 baht. Tel: 085-7826492, 085-7571301.

RESTAURANT FOR SALE

Prime location Kamala beach. Well established with seating for 100 pax. Owner retiring. Tel: 081-6777185. Email: resortinvestment@hotmail.com

JOINT VENTURE

18rai beach land Koh Yao Yai for high class eco-tourism bungalow and many cash flow possibilities. Need investor/partner. Min investment 20 million baht. Adventure Island Healthy Spa Ltd, Thai Reg Co. Tel: 087-2670714. Email: charlesaraines@hotmail.com

RESTAURANT

For lease. Located at Kata beach. 2 floors (live in). Fully furnished, ready to move in. Tel: 081-9206054.

BEAUTIFUL GUESTHOUSE

For sale. 5-minute walk from Kata beach, new building. Has bar/restaurant, Wifi Internet, massage, laundry, seven beautiful rooms. The best equipped guesthouse in Thailand. Buy the company, start business now with fully-booked high season. Tel: 081-8948446. Please see our website www.southernfriedrice.com

KATOYS'R'US

Speak to Nick if you would like to buy all or part of this successful business. Please contact for more information. Tel: 081-8922824. Email: junaworn@hotmail.com

FUN DATING BIZ

For sale. Unlimited income potential! Price for quick sale: only 500,000 baht. Please email for information. Email: info@fun-dating-thailand.com

WOW! PAY LESS MONEY

Get big return of your investment. K's Car Clinic is available for a serious and creative entrepreneur. Land lease 3 years. Property is sustainable build and special design for a high performance. Easy to manage. Tel: 081-5698649(Thai), 086-2828213(Eng, German, French, Dutch)

GUESTHOUSE LEASE

8 rooms, bar, restaurant in Patong. Lease 2 years + 3 years option, no key money. Quick sale for family reasons. Tel: 089-6489932. Email: rodsimms@hotmail.com

RESTAURANT

For sale. 50 seats with modern kitchen. Good corner location with low rent. Please contact for more information at Tel: 089-7291113, or Email: richard_melen@hotmail.com

BAR FOR SALE

Popular and successful Amigos bar on Soi Seadragon for sale. Pool table, darts, own sound system. Price negotiable dependant on length of lease required. Tel: 087-883-8721.

BAR IN PATONG-SALE

Bar in Soi Dongtan for sale at 1.6 million baht with 2-year contract. No key money! Tel: 076-342193, 089-7240706. Email: tamonwan_opas@yahoo.com

HOTEL FOR SALE



In Karon beach, 1-minute walk to the beach. With coffee bar, freehold Chanote title, 6 aircon rooms with bathroom inside, TV, fridge plus 70sqm big apartment on the top floor. Price only 9.2 million baht. Tel: 081-1719705. Email: atetayap@yahoo.com

DIVE SHOP IN KRABI

Mantapoint Khao Lak is looking for an ambitious instructor or instructor couple who are willing to become either a 50% partner of our brand-new Ao Nang branch or who perhaps are looking for 100% ownership. Become a part of our Mantapoint network now! Tel: 081-2739279. Email: info@landportal.com

BEACH RESTAURANT

Surin beach. Own beachfront, long lease. 700,000 baht. Email: swisstreff@gmx.net

BUSINESS IDEA

Looking for a business idea or opportunity? Email: admin@no1phukethomes.com For further details please visit: www.no1phukethomes.com

TIME IS MONEY!

Farang offer for Thailand. Applications from Thai women are welcome, too! Establishment of new Thai Ltd company. Visa and work permit no problem! No competition, no wasting time, clients enough! Start-up investment: 30,000 euros. Email: adventuraintern@hotmail.com

BAR/RESTAURANT

Including two rooms for rent. Nanai Rd, Patong. Tel: 081-0809802.

BUSINESS OPPOR.

Ready to run. Business opportunities: hotels, guesthouses, restaurants and bars for sale and lease. Ready to run. Tel: 086-0043008. Email: info@ayudhya.net Please see our website at: www.ayudhya.net/english/business/index.php

FOR SALE/RENT

Restaurant, Koh Lanta. Seats 27 inside, 12 outside. Lease contract to Mar 31, 2009. Rent: 200,000 baht per year. Asking price: 150,000 baht. Rent until Mar 1, 2007, included in the price. Please contact K. Conny for more information Tel: 089-9858309. Email: crockstrom@hotmail.com

INTERNET-CAFE-BAR-

Snacks. Directly on a beautiful beach. 14km from Chumphon. 600,000 baht. Rent: 6,000 baht per month. Tel: 084-8497208. Email: franckphuket@hotmail.com

INVESTOR/PARTNER

Wanted. For real estate project with excellent return! Tel: 084-0572743. Email: admin@no1phukethomes.com

INTERNET CAFE

Big office with 11 desks, 8 PCs, fax, ADSL fully equipped, parking. 300,000 baht. Tel: 086-154-6097. Email: didier55@hotmail.com

BAR BANGLA ROAD

Main road top location, food license, draft beer. Price: 4.4 million baht ono. Email: thomaspatong@gmx.de

SANDWICH SHOP

In Patong on Soi Sansabai (opp. Soi Bangla) with all equipment. Good location. Tel: 089-4729870.

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Departs from Tesco-Lotus on Sundays, 11:30 pm
Tel/Fax: 076-263475, 076-264476
Mobile: 081-892 9960

Month	September 2006	October 2006	November 2006	December 2006	January 2007
Date	3.10.17.24	1.8.15.29	5.12.19.26	17	7.14.21.28

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Tel: 084-0068736 Fax: 076-209058.
Email: iaa@intllicense.com
www.intllicense.com

WILSON STAFF

Golf set. Nano Tech with Ignite + woods and Odyssey XG putter and bag – all brand new. Price: 40,000 baht. Please contact for more information. Tel: 081-2739279. Email: info@landportal.com

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Three 6-meter beer bar awnings. Excellent condition. 1 year old. Cost 7,500 baht each new. Will sell for 5,000 baht each. Please contact for more information. Tel: 081-0781-914. Email: kangaloo@west@yahoo.com

Personal Services

MODELS WANTED

Hello! I am a freelance photographer specializing in stock photography. If you would like to have your photo taken for free please contact me. Email: ginaellen@hotmail.com For further details, please see my website at: www.gina.homestead.com

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I am a Thai teacher. If you want to learn Thai or your friends want to learn English, I can teach privately at your place. Tel: 084-9925882.

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Personals

ESCORT, COMPANION,

Tour guide. Do you want to be my companion and care for me during my vacation in Phuket in February? Do you speak English and are you a funny and pretty Thai girl? I am German, slim, sporty, good looking and generous. Interested? Please answer soon with a photo to email: golfo1@freenet.de

NO EMPTY PROMISES

I can't PROMISE you happiness, health and success. But if you are a truly genuine and honest girl of up to 35 years of age and looking for a loving and respectful partner - and you'd like to learn more about this 50-year-old guy - let's start an email friendship and see if it leads anywhere. You might be pleasantly surprised. I can PROMISE that I am genuinely looking for that one special lady to spend the rest of my life with. I haven't met her yet, so maybe you are hiding in Udon Thani, Khon Kaen or Phuket? Why not give yourself a chance at a new beginning for 2007? I have taken the first step. Now it's your turn to tell me a bit about yourself so I can reply. Please contact for more information by email: nednegus@hotmail.com

HOLIDAY HOUSE EXCHANGE

Couple (experienced exchangers) coming Feb/March seek exchange for beach house Spain. Non-simultaneous exchange possible. Tel: 34-639074433. Email: romanoasis@europa.com

SWEDISH MAN 50

Non smoking, likes sports, looking for a good, young lady. 20-30 years old. Send SMS message to Tel: +4670-3407279, 0084-60407079.

FRIENDSHIP

Female English teacher new to Phuket, young 50s, slim, attractive, personable, seeks unattached, nice guy for good times together. Tel: 084-3087974.

MALE FOR FUN

Athletic, healthy Western male for fun, enjoyable times. No \$. Please contact for more information. Tel: 085-2451637.

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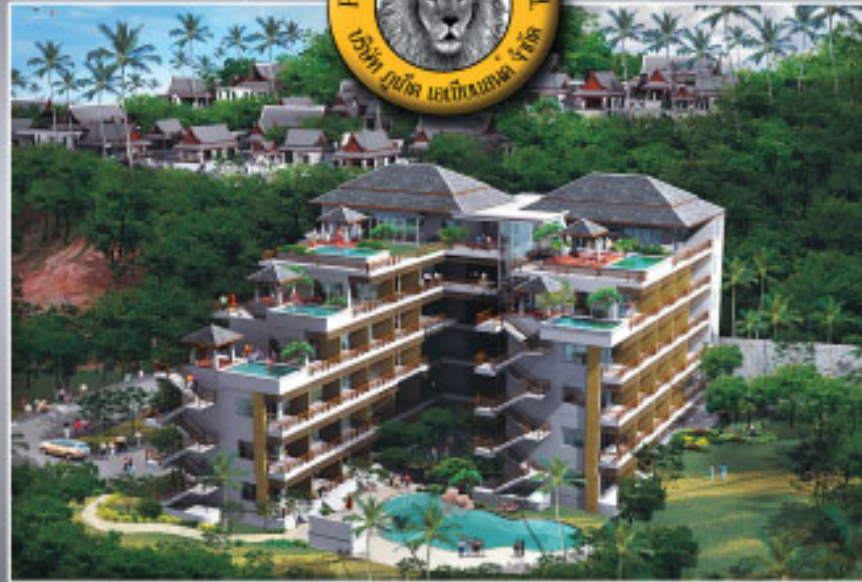
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