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Inside: Saigon revisited 44 years after its fall from grace

SCALINI

— RUSTIC GRILL —



SCALINI SATURDAY BRUNCH EVERY SATURDAY | 12:30-15:00

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The Landmark Bangkok appoints Francis Zimmerman as General Manager

Francis Zimmerman recently joined the Landmark Bangkok as General Manager having previously overseen operations and business development for Next Story Group as Managing Director, South East Asia.

During his 30-year career, Francis worked with leading luxury hotel brands Anantara, AVANI, Le Meridien, Shangri-La and Westin throughout Asia and North America. In South East Asia, he was Resident Manager for Le Royal Meridien and Le Meridien President Hotels in Bangkok and General Manager at Le Meridien Jakarta.

In 2008, Francis moved back to Bangkok to join the Marriott Resort & Spa as General Manager where he led the successful transition of this city resort to the luxury hotel brand Anantara in 2011.

Francis was promoted to Director of Operations and Area General Manager Thailand of the Minor Hotel Group leading eight of the group's prestigious hotels and resorts until 2016.

A passionate culinarian and mixologist, Francis lives by the mantra, "Do what you Like. but Love What you Do". He is an avid sports junkie having completed his first Half IronMan and also a keen family man to his four children and wife Dyan.

With a wealth of knowledge, experience and results in Thailand and South East Asia, Francis is looking forward to leading Bangkok's most successful independent and enduring five-star hotel.



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■ Vacation homes have become a great source of pleasure for holidaymakers looking for a cheap alternative to hotels – but a growing headache for permanent residents who live nearby and often have to face revelers' noise and pollution, especially at weekends.

With rents as little as 4,000 baht a night for a three-bedroom property in popular resorts like Pattaya, Hua Hin and Khao Yai, the take-up from people desperate to escape Bangkok's traffic and pollution at rates well below most hotels is huge – and increasing rapidly.

While this is good news for owners of houses and condos that have been acquired for the express purpose of satisfying this rental market, it's not always greeted so enthusiastically by locals who have to face this weekly influx of visitors.

With no official rules regarding the number of guests staying in these holiday homes – provided it does not exceed 40 – they have become extremely popular. Above that number, the property is regarded in law as a hotel with a long list of complex rules and tax obligations.

Renters often take advantage of the situation and share the nightly fee with many others, often members of the same family. "I've seen at least 18 people, including a few kids and babies, stay together in one relatively small three-bedroom vacation home," said the Thai wife of a Canadian expat, who lives in a nearby property. "It can't be pleasant for so many of them to stay under one roof. But I suppose it's OK because it is usually only for one or two nights at most."

The couple, who purchased their "dream home" in Hua Hin several years ago and live there permanently, have witnessed the growth of these vacation houses quite literally on their doorstep.

"When we bought our house, this part of Hua Hin was still relatively undeveloped. There was lots of empty land and few other houses. It was really pleasant. But that's all changed

over the past couple of years, with something of a building boom here. We're surrounded by other houses now," explained the Canadian.

"We expected change, of course, but not on this scale. Many of the properties are for short-term rent – and that means lots of weekend vacationers staying in the area. They don't have our sense of community, they crowd the streets with parked cars, make loads of noise and leave behind lots of rubbish.

"Most of the houses have swimming pools, so there's lots of screaming, which we can tolerate as it's people simply enjoying

themselves," continued the expat. "What is unacceptable, though, are the giant stereo systems and monstrous speakers that belt out noise sometimes past midnight. The only thing that's worse are the karaoke machines and the awful singers who hog the microphone.

"When three or four houses are occupied at the same time, you get the feeling that each is trying to out-do the others with the noise they make."

The couple have been advised to contact the local authorities about the unwelcome level of noise, but so far they declined to do so for fear of upsetting the properties' owners.

They are now considering selling their house, but won't tell any prospective buyer about the weekenders. "We will only show them the property during the week when it's quiet around here."

Owners of condos have related similar stories about mass occupancies, almost always by complete strangers, in their buildings. Many complain

about noisy parties continuing to dawn and the lack of respect for the privacy of neighboring apartments.

To a person, they believe that the situation is causing a fall in the value of their investment.

One family had an even worse problem when the occupiers of the condo on the floor below began holding weekend-long barbecues on the terrace. Faced with the smell of never-ending cooking, they eventually complained – only

to discover that the tenants were actually using the condo as a temporary kitchen for a nearby restaurant.

Property owners in Thai resorts believe that the situation is serious enough to cause a fall in the value of their investment. And with a tax holiday on rental income for the next five years, the advent of weekend holiday homes is not going away soon.

The plight of permanent residents is bound to worsen.

How **noisy** weekend vacationers are making life intolerable for permanent residents





The Skies Light Up

At Hilton Pattaya 2019

Friday 24th – Saturday 25th May 2019

Hilton Pattaya invites you to celebrate a magical Pattaya International Fireworks Festival with an array of tempting cuisine. We offer a choice of setting with panoramic views across the bay.

edge

OPEN: 6pm - 11pm
Located on Level 14.

INTERNATIONAL BUFFET

Edge brings you closer to the dazzling display. Enjoy a sumptuous International dinner buffet and savor the electric atmosphere whilst an array of colors and sounds light up the night sky.

Outdoor: THB 2,800 / person
Indoor: THB 2,400 / person

drift

OPEN: 7pm - 11pm
Located on Level 16.

HOT SEATS

Relax and enjoy a panoramic view of the Pattaya bay at one of the best locations in town. Drift is the place that you can dazzle and amaze with a grand fireworks display. The package is inclusive of free flow beverages. A la carte menu offers available.

THB 2,200 / person

LOUNGES AT DRIFT

Celebrate with friends and family on a unique private Island. Plush lounges offer a sanctuary for the night, while an explosion of color light up the sky for a truly exclusive experience. Price includes full beverage package and complimentary Island platters. Private Islands (Limited numbers)

Island S (4 people): THB 15,000
Island L (6 people): THB 20,000

H O R I Z O N

OPEN: 6pm - 11pm
Located on Level 34.

SELECTION OF MENUS

with unlimited buffet stations

Wine and dine at our spectacular rooftop restaurant & bar, located on level 34 floor. A modern menu created by our Chef will provide the ideal setting for a luxurious and comfortable evening, together with the most exclusive views in Pattaya.

THB 3,500 / person

BEVERAGE PACKAGE

Enjoy VIP access at our infinity bar and stargazer lounge, imbibe on a drink and watch in wonder as the fireworks explode over the ocean below.

THB 2,550 / person



For booking please contact **038 253 000** or email **BKKHP_Pattaya_Festive@hilton.com**

All Prices are quoted in Thai Baht and are inclusive of Service Charge and Government Taxes.



Reports of Mizu's demise may have been exaggerated

Bangkok's oldest restaurant is being renovated

■ For more than half a century, Mizu's Kitchen has been one of Bangkok's culinary curiosities – a tiny restaurant tucked away rather innocuously at one end of Patpong Road that's famed for its great value steaks served 'sizzling' on a heated plate, and the 'exotic' smells that often permeate the premises.

It's also the city's oldest independent, non-Thai restaurant, though no one is exactly sure how old (see box).

Right now, Mizu's is closed for renovations. A sign dangling on its front door says as much, thus scotching rumours that it had closed for good. This will come as welcome news for its legion of fans, who include foreign correspondents and homesick expats, even though most admit they haven't eaten there for ages.

Bangkok's oldest restaurants

Other 'old' Bangkok restaurants that are not part of a hotel, include the following (some of which have changed ownership and location over time):

1969 Neil's Tavern (Steakhouse) Soi Ruam Rudee	1983 Pan Pan (Italian) Sukhumvit 33	1986 Bourbon Street (American and Cajun)	1995 Gianni (Italian) Soi Tonson, Ploenchit	1998 Philippe (French) Sukhumvit 39	Bangkok old-timers talk nostalgically about restaurants that once flourished here, only to close after just a few years. To name but a few: Nick's No 1, The Two Vikings, Madame Suzanne, The Metropolitan, Mitch and Nam's, The Barrel, Trattoria da Roberto and Bobby's Arms.
1977 The Cedar (Lebanese) Sukhumvit 49	1984 Bei Otto (German) Sukhumvit 20	1989 Ratsstube (German) Soi Goethe, Sathorn Soi 1	1995 Le Bouchon (French) Patpong 2	2000 Indigo (French) Soi Convent	
1980 The Cup (English) Rachadapisek	1984 L'Opera (Italian) Sukhumvit 39	1994 Witch's Oyster Bar (International) Soi Ruam Rudee	1996 Crepes & Co (Mediterranean) Soi Lang Suan, Soi Thonglor		

How The BigChilli reported on Mizu's in 2013

THE only person who really knows when Mizu's Kitchen first opened in Patpong is its Japanese owner Mr Masakai, but since he's now in his eighties and rarely around these days, you have to rely on the staff for the answer. And they're not sure.

"Sixty years ago," says Miss See, who's worked for the restaurant for 35 years. "I think so anyway," looking for confirmation from a colleague who may have been with Mizu's even longer. Her friend nods vaguely in agreement, not really knowing either.

What is certainly true is that Mizu's is Bangkok's oldest independent non-Thai restaurant, a stalwart of the city's naughtiest road and for a couple of decades the choice of advertising types, foreign correspondents and go-go bar owners.

It's had its heydays but then, so has Patpong. A cubby hole of a place, Mizu's is now quieter by far but it still serves some of the best value western and Japanese dishes in town. Where else can you get a five-course

steak ("New York cut or Black Pepper") dinner for B370? Or "Queue de boeuf braisee au vin rouge" for only B180?

And there aren't many Bangkok restaurants that still stock Mateus Rose for B650 a bottle. Not available any longer, though, is Dubonnet at B160 a glass. At least Miss See couldn't find it.

Probably Mizu's most famous dish is the Special Sarika Steak, served sizzling on a hot plate with vegetables on the side. Just 220 baht. None of the Japanese dishes cost more than 160



baht, while international favorites like the tasty Chicken Cordon Bleu are all priced 140-160 baht. And there's not a soup over 80 baht. Corkage is a steal at a mere 100 baht a bottle.

Apart from being the city's oldest non-hotel restaurant, Mizu's is also famed for the "exotic" smells and aromas that hover over the place. But after 60 years of daily cooking and dining, you wouldn't expect anything less.

Mizu's Kitchen. 32 Patpong Road

www.pesca-bangkok.com

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Four decades later, the Saigon building that signaled the end of the Vietnam War

■ Without question, one of the most iconic images of the fall of Saigon on April 29, 1975, the last day of the Vietnam War, was a line of people trying to board a helicopter atop a building.

Taken by UPI photographer, the late Hubert Van Es, the famous photo sums up the desperation and panic felt in the city as the North Vietnamese forces closed in.

Forty-four years later, Bangkok

architect Geoff Morrison went in search of the same Saigon building featured in countless stories, documentaries and movies about the Vietnam War.

Geoff knew that the building was not part of the former US embassy, as was initially reported by mistake in a UPI dispatch, but a private apartment block.

“As communist troops closed in on Saigon at the end of April 1975, shelling had rendered Tan Son Nhat Airport unusable. The evacuation of US personnel and Vietnamese officials had to be carried out by choppers. This seriously limited the scale of the evacuation and meant that many Vietnamese were left behind,” recalls the long-term Canadian expat.

Geoff eventually located the building at 22 Ly Tu Trong (formerly Gia Long) in downtown Saigon. It



Top, the famous image of people fleeing Saigon, April 1975; below, the same building today as photographed by Bangkok expat Geoff Morrison.



Above, North Vietnamese soldiers enter Saigon; right, the apartment building today and graffiti depicting the Vietnam War



was, says Geoff, the residence of Thomas Polgar, the Saigon station chief of the CIA.

"Today the site is unmarked, Tom Polgar's 9th floor (top) apartment abandoned. I paid the guard, navigated the dark corridors and up the single lift, wandered the terrace, scrambled up the ladder...knocked on his door...all was empty and quiet... as close as I could get to 1975," says Geoff.

"Polgar had helped lead the evacuation effort at the embassy, lifting people over fences and destroying files. Just before Mr Polgar destroyed the cable-sending

“

Today the site is unmarked, Tom Polgar's 9th floor (top) apartment abandoned. I paid the guard, navigated the dark corridors and up the single lift, wandered the terrace, scrambled up the ladder...knocked on his door...all was empty and quiet....as close as I could get to 1975.



machine the agency had used to communicate, just before he boarded a helicopter himself, he took a moment and typed; "This will be the final message from Saigon station, It

has been a long and hard fight and we have lost."

Geoff completed his mission and *The BigChilli* thanks him for the photos taken in Saigon recently.

CONCERTS IN MAY



Premier League Fixtures this month

Friday 3rd May

20.00 Everton v Burnley

Saturday 4th May

12.30 Bournemouth v Tottenham Hotspur

15.00 West Ham United v Southampton

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Sunday 12th May

15.00 Brighton and Hove Albion v Manchester City

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Sunday 5th May

14.00 Chelsea v Watford

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Monday 6th May

20.00 Manchester City v Leicester City

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20.00 Manchester City v Leicester City

The FA Cup Final will be played on Saturday 18th May at Wembley Stadium. The official kick-off time is yet to be announced.

ICC Cricket World Cup 2019

Date	Match
May 30, Thu	England vs South Africa, Match 1 Kennington Oval, London
May 31, Fri	Windies vs Pakistan, Match 2 Trent Bridge, Nottingham
Jun 01, Sat	New Zealand vs Sri Lanka, Match 3 Sophia Gardens, Cardiff Afghanistan vs Australia, Match 4 County Ground, Bristol
Jun 02, Sun	South Africa vs Bangladesh, Match 5 Kennington Oval, London
Jun 03, Mon	England vs Pakistan, Match 6 Trent Bridge, Nottingham
Jun 04, Tue	Afghanistan vs Sri Lanka, Match 7 Sophia Gardens, Cardiff
Jun 05, Wed	South Africa vs India, Match 8 The Rose Bowl, Southampton Bangladesh vs New Zealand, Match 9 Kennington Oval, London
Jun 06, Thu	Australia vs Windies, Match 10 Trent Bridge, Nottingham
Jun 07, Fri	Pakistan vs Sri Lanka, Match 11 County Ground, Bristol
Jun 08, Sat	England vs Bangladesh, Match 12 Sophia Gardens, Cardiff Afghanistan vs New Zealand, Match 13 The Cooper Associates County Ground, Taunton
Jun 09, Sun	India vs Australia, Match 14 Kennington Oval, London
Jun 10, Mon	South Africa vs Windies, Match 15 The Rose Bowl, Southampton
Jun 11, Tue	Bangladesh vs Sri Lanka, Match 16 County Ground, Bristol
Jun 12, Wed	Australia vs Pakistan, Match 17 The Cooper Associates County Ground, Taunton
Jun 13, Thu	India vs New Zealand, Match 18 Trent Bridge, Nottingham
Jun 14, Fri	England vs Windies, Match 19 The Rose Bowl, Southampton
Jun 15, Sat	Sri Lanka vs Australia, Match 20 Kennington Oval, London South Africa vs Afghanistan, Match 21 Sophia Gardens, Cardiff
Jun 16, Sun	India vs Pakistan, Match 22 Old Trafford, Manchester
Jun 17, Mon	Windies vs Bangladesh, Match 23 The Cooper Associates County Ground, Taunton

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Date	Match	Time
Jun 18,	Tue England vs Afghanistan, Match 24 Old Trafford, Manchester	4:30 PM 09:30 AM GMT/10:30 AM LOCAL
Jun 19,	Wed New Zealand vs South Africa, Match 25 Edgbaston, Birmingham	4:30 PM 09:30 AM GMT/10:30 AM LOCAL
Jun 20, Thu	Australia vs Bangladesh, Match 26 Trent Bridge, Nottingham	4:30 PM 09:30 AM GMT/10:30 AM LOCAL
Jun 21, Fri	England vs Sri Lanka, Match 27 Headingley, Leeds	4:30 PM 09:30 AM GMT/10:30 AM LOCAL
Jun 22, Sat	India vs Afghanistan, Match 28 The Rose Bowl, Southampton	4:30 PM 09:30 AM GMT/10:30 AM LOCAL
	Windies vs New Zealand, Match 29 Old Trafford, Manchester	7:30 PM 12:30 PM GMT/01:30 PM LOCAL
Jun 23, Sun	Pakistan vs South Africa, Match 30 Lord's, London	4:30 PM 09:30 AM GMT/10:30 AM LOCAL
Jun 24, Mon	Bangladesh vs Afghanistan, Match 31 The Rose Bowl, Southampton	4:30 PM 09:30 AM GMT/10:30 AM LOCAL
Jun 25, Tue	England vs Australia, Match 32 Lord's, London	4:30 PM 09:30 AM GMT/10:30 AM LOCAL
Jun 26, Wed	New Zealand vs Pakistan, Match 33 Edgbaston, Birmingham	4:30 PM 09:30 AM GMT/10:30 AM LOCAL
Jun 27, Thu	Windies vs India, Match 34 Old Trafford, Manchester	4:30 PM 09:30 AM GMT/10:30 AM LOCAL
Jun 28, Fri	Sri Lanka vs South Africa, Match 35 Riverside Ground, Chester-le-Street	4:30 PM 09:30 AM GMT/10:30 AM LOCAL
Jun 29, Sat	Pakistan vs Afghanistan, Match 36 Headingley, Leeds	4:30 PM 09:30 AM GMT/10:30 AM LOCAL
	New Zealand vs Australia, Match 37 Lord's, London	7:30 PM 12:30 PM GMT/01:30 PM LOCAL
Jun 30, Sun	England vs India, Match 38 Edgbaston, Birmingham	4:30 PM 09:30 AM GMT/10:30 AM LOCAL
Jul 01, Mon	Sri Lanka vs Windies, Match 39 Riverside Ground, Chester-le-Street	4:30 PM 09:30 AM GMT/10:30 AM LOCAL
Jul 02, Tue	Bangladesh vs India, Match 40 Edgbaston, Birmingham	4:30 PM 09:30 AM GMT/10:30 AM LOCAL
Jul 03, Wed	England vs New Zealand, Match 41 Riverside Ground, Chester-le-Street	4:30 PM 09:30 AM GMT/10:30 AM LOCAL
Jul 04, Thu	Afghanistan vs Windies, Match 42 Headingley, Leeds	4:30 PM 09:30 AM GMT/10:30 AM LOCAL
Jul 05, Fri	Pakistan vs Bangladesh, Match 43 Lord's, London	4:30 PM 09:30 AM GMT/10:30 AM LOCAL
Jul 06, Sat	Sri Lanka vs India, Match 44 Headingley, Leeds	4:30 PM 09:30 AM GMT/10:30 AM LOCAL
	Australia vs South Africa, Match 45 Old Trafford, Manchester	7:30 PM 12:30 PM GMT/01:30 PM LOCAL
Jul 09, Tue	TBC vs TBC, 1st Semi-Final (1 v 4) Old Trafford, Manchester	4:30 PM 09:30 AM GMT/10:30 AM LOCAL
Jul 11, Thu	TBC vs TBC, 2nd Semi-Final (2 v 3) Edgbaston, Birmingham	4:30 PM 09:30 AM GMT/10:30 AM LOCAL
Jul 14, Sun	TBC vs TBC, Final Lord's, London	4:30 PM 09:30 AM GMT/10:30 AM LOCAL

Diplomatically speaking

What foreign ambassadors and diplomats been telling us over the years

Maxmilian Wechsler looks back on the 90 interviews he's conducted for *The BigChilli*

Foreign diplomats accredited to Thailand provide great benefits to the country by promoting cooperation in the spheres of diplomacy, trade, culture, law enforcement, sports, entertainment and other areas of bilateral interest.

The BigChilli, recognizing that many expats as well as Thais are interested in the perspective of foreign diplomats in Thailand, began publishing my interviews with mainly ambassadors in June 2011 and from May 2012 there has been one almost every month.

As the interviews consistently received a good response from readers, the number of pages allotted to them increased from three or four to six from October 2013, to give the diplomats a broader platform, allowing them to give free rein to their countries' aspirations and even their occasionally controversial views on the world.

It's said that imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, so perhaps we should be pleased to note that other media outlets now run their own interviews with Bangkok diplomats, making them the centerpiece of their publications.

In the 90 interviews I have conducted with diplomats assigned to Thailand, there have been some truly memorable quotes, fascinating recollections and endless interesting observations. The following are some of the best.

Mr Nabil Hussein Ashri, former Chargé d'Affaires for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, June 2011:



"Sadly, for more than 20 years now, relations suffered from major incidents that occurred between 1989 and early 1990, after the infamous jewelry theft case and the murder of a Saudi diplomat in Bangkok in 1989. In 1990 three other Saudi diplomats were also murdered in Bangkok, along with the abduction and murder of a Saudi

businessman, also in Bangkok.

"Riyadh then decided to degrade relations due to lack of progress in these cases and failure of Thai authorities at that time to take appropriate measures to solve these crimes.

"The contracts of all highly insignificant skilled Thai labor in Saudi Arabia were terminated, and Saudi citizens were barred from travelling to Thailand, in light of the risk posed to their lives after the crimes and the fact that no suspects have been named or apprehended. Relations between the two countries became inactive, affecting cooperation, trade, investment and business greatly. Even

today there is very limited trading between Saudi Arabia and Thailand. Tourism from Saudi Arabia to Thailand, which was once a major destination for us, is much decreased.

“Despite these tremendous losses, damages and missed opportunities, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia’s stable and clear foreign policy has allowed for some activities to continue. For example, because Saudi Arabia is the guardian of the Holy sites, regardless of the state of its relations with any country in the world, Thai Muslims are able to perform their Holy rituals in Saudi Arabia every year, and are given all needed support and assistance by the Saudi authorities.”

Former Ambassador of the Russian Federation, His Excellency, Alexander Mariyasov, December 2011:



“Traditionally, we consider the most important (high-level visit) to be the visit of King Chulalongkorn to Russia and his meeting with Emperor Nikolas II in 1897, which resulted in the establishment of diplomatic ties between our two countries.

“However, many meaningful contacts took place even earlier. In 1863, the first Russian navy ship anchored at Siam. Tsesarevich (Crown Prince) Nikolas visited Siam and met King Chulalongkorn for the first time in 1891. More evidence of a close historical bond between our countries is, for example, the fact that King Chulalongkorn’s son Prince Chakrapong graduated from the General Staff’s Military Academy of the Russian Army. The prince was also married to a Russian lady, Ekaterina Desnitskaya. Many people may not know that the music for the Thai Royal Anthem was written by Russian composer Peter Shchurovsky.”

H.E. Mr Lazaro Herrera, former Ambassador of Cuba, June 2012:



“We are not trying to follow any other model of socialism – not the one in China, North Korea or Vietnam, but our own, according to our own characteristics. We can take into account the experiences of all of these countries, but in the end we have to look at our own experiences and conditions, because if not, it will end in failure.

“We are now in the process of updating our system and taking into account past mistakes. Communism is in another stage of development. What we must do is to put human beings in the centre. This is the most important element.

“Cuba is the only country in the world which has suffered for more than 50 years under what people call embargo but which is, in fact, a blockade. Let me tell you, first of all, if you read a dictionary then you can see the difference between an embargo and a blockade.”

H.E. Mr João Freitas de Câmara, former Ambassador of Timor-Leste, September 2012:



Picture a freedom fighter living in harsh conditions in the mountainous jungles of Southeast Asia. He was arrested three times by the Indonesian military and on one occasion imprisoned at Jakarta’s Cipinang top security prison, serving a term of more than seven years after being charged with subversion. Later, this same man is appointed Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste in its capital city of Dili. From there, he takes up the position of Ambassador of his new country to the Kingdom of Thailand.

“Timor-Leste and Thailand established diplomatic relations on May 20, 2002 and ever since these have been excellent. Thailand has provided support to Timor-Leste in many different areas, such as agriculture, health, security, defense and education. Thailand has been supportive of our citizens who come for training in many areas. Also, the Thai government sent military and police officers to the UN mission in our country.”

H.E. Mr Mikael Hemniti Winther, former Ambassador of Denmark, February 2013:



A tour of the embassy compound yields a surprise. Parked in a garage is a Honda Transalp 700cc motorcycle belonging to Mr Winther – probably the only motorcycle in Thailand with diplomatic plates. “I am a devoted biker. As soon as I get to the weekend I try to take it out, and I really enjoy getting out in this wonderful country. There are some very nice spots in neighboring provinces.

“Denmark has very long and very close relations with Thailand. We are both kingdoms and the two royal families have traditionally had close relations and visited each other. Our two countries cooperate in many areas, for example education and the use of sustainable energy resources and designs. There are many cultural exchanges between our two countries within the spheres of music, theater and other art forms.”

H.E. Mr Lutfi Rauf, former Ambassador of Indonesia, March 2013:



“Since I arrived here I have met with so many people from all walks of life. I’ve visited almost all the provinces of Thailand – Mukdahan, Khon Kaen, Nakhon Phanom in the north, Surat Thani, Nakhon Si Thammarat, Phuket and Songkhla in the south, where we have some projects. We have a consulate in Hat Yai because many Indonesians visit this part of Thailand.

“I try to get to know the people, to hear about their

views and aspirations. Everywhere I go I visit local markets, eat food at roadside stalls...that's what I like. Since I can't speak Thai, I try my best to study and master the basic Thai language. I enjoy it very much. As a diplomat representing my country here, I feel a need to explore Thailand."

H.E. General Shantha Kottegoda, former Ambassador of Sri Lanka, December 2013:

For this soft-spoken, humble man is actually a highly decorated former Commander of the Sri Lankan Army. He is also a former chief of staff of the Army and one of the main negotiators in bringing about the end of the civil war that tore his country apart for years.

His military career dates back to 1969 when he joined the Sri Lanka Army shortly after leaving college. Commissioned as a second lieutenant two years later, he was appointed commander of the Sri Lanka Army in July 2004.

Gen Kottegoda served in the Sri Lankan armed forces during the protracted war between his country and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Ealam, whom he repeatedly referred to as "terrorists" during the interview. He has written two publications: *Conflict in Sri Lanka, Challenges Faced by the Sri Lanka Army*, and *Counter Terrorism - Dilemmas Faced by the Armies of the Developing World*.

**Former Ambassador of Finland
H.E. Mrs Kirsti Westphalen, February 2014:**

Mrs Westphalen is one of eleven female ambassadors now residing in the Kingdom. "We keep in close contact with each other, but it would be nice if there were more women in the diplomatic community here. Around 50 percent of Finnish ambassadors abroad are women. On the whole, the diplomatic community in Thailand is very active, made up of wonderful colleagues who are helpful to one another.

"Thailand is an important country in a very strategic location. For decades the economic development in greater Asia, looking at India, China and the Asian 'tigers', has been very impressive. In recent years there has been modest economic growth in Europe and America. The world is looking towards Asia where both the big countries and the smaller ones have great potential.

"We deal with issues of politics, human rights, development and other areas. As does every embassy, we gather information about Thailand from Thai and English media and many other sources. But it is also very important that you communicate with influential and knowledgeable people within Thai society who can translate their views of unfolding political events. It is important that you have multiple sources of information upon which you can base your judgment and try to draw your own conclusions."



H.E. Mr Vítzslav Grepl, former Ambassador of the Czech Republic, March 2014:

"Czech-Thai contacts go back quite far. Detailed information about the Kingdom of Siam was brought to the people of the Czech lands in the 17th century by Jesuit missionaries. After the establishment of the independent Czechoslovak Republic in 1918, economic relations started to flourish and Czech companies like Bata, Škoda and Zbrojovka Brno became strong in the region of Southeast Asia.

"In 1989, the year of democratic change in Czechoslovakia and the end of the communist regime, a new era of Czech-Thai relations began. Thailand soon became a favorite destination for Czech tourists and businessmen."

The Czech Republic is also known in Thailand for fine products ranging from Bohemia Crystal to Škoda passenger cars. It produces the Aero L-39 Albatros, a high performance jet trainer aircraft in service with the Thai Air Force, and CZ pistols, which are especially popular with the Thai police.

**Former Ambassador of Chile
H.E. Mr Javier Andres Becker-Marshall, November 2014:**

"When I first arrived here in September 2011, I visited many people to learn more about the country, including various ministries, government authorities, ambassadors and other people. I also went to the Office of the Royal Development Projects Board (ORDPB) near Rama VIII Bridge in Bangkok in March 2012 to gain more knowledge of the projects. I wanted to inform the appropriate authorities in Chile about the royal projects, so that possibly similar projects could be implemented in my country.

"I think what the ORDPB is doing could be a very interesting system for small communities in Chile where individuals do not have much opportunity to develop agricultural projects. If they join forces, it is much better if you have the support of the government."

H.E. Mrs Eat Sophea, former Ambassador of Cambodia, May 2015:

"By the contemporary historical record, Thailand and Cambodia that a close relationship between our two peoples has been in place many hundreds of years. We have so much in common. Buddhism Cambodia National Museum, Phnom Penh Monument of Independence Silver Pagoda, Phnom Penh Angkor Thom, Siem Reap Apsara dancers at Angkor Wat established diplomatic ties in 1950. However, it is a well-known fact is the main religion in both countries; our



clothing, customs, performing arts and the food we eat are difficult to tell apart.

"I am pleased to say that the relationship between Cambodia and Thailand is currently warming up, after a tense period from 2008 to 2011. There has been a considerable exchange of high-level visits in recent months. Prime ministers Hun Sen and Prayuth Chan-o-cha have agreed to reinvigorate bilateral cooperation.

"During Prime Minister Prayuth's official visit to Cambodia last October, three memorandums of understanding were signed, on tourism, railway connections and the elimination of trafficking in persons and protection of victims of trafficking."

**Former Ambassador of Israel,
H.E. Mr Simon Roded,
December 2015:**

"I look at the Jewish community in Thailand as a part of our constituency here. There are few synagogues in Thailand. In Bangkok there is one on Sukhumvit Road Soi 22 and another on Khao San Road, which is mainly for tourists. Soi 22 is where the local Jewish community goes. I usually go there, especially during high holidays, to pray for peace and for Israel. There are also synagogues in Chiang Mai, Phuket and Koh Samui, and these are attended mostly by Israeli tourists.

"Some Israeli companies are represented in Thailand; mostly they are based in Bangkok. These companies are mainly involved in project management and engineering as well as agro-technologies. There are also a few Israeli jewelry manufacturers operating here. I had a chance to visit one and it was fascinating to watch them work. The Thai workers are exceptionally skilled at making earrings and other jewelry, and their level of accuracy is amazing. The visual focus and steady hands of the workers are quite impressive."

**H.E. Mr Francisco de Assis Morais
e Cunha Vaz Patto, Ambassador
of Portugal, March 2016:**

Mr Vaz Patto was born in Mozambique, which was a Portuguese colony until 1975. "My father, who was a doctor, was called in 1966 to join the Portuguese army and serve in Mozambique during the war for independence. My mother went with him and that's why I was born in Mozambique. My parents went back to Portugal when I was still small and I never returned. Actually I would very much like to return one day.

"Shortly after I arrived I visited the Portuguese neighborhoods in Thonburi and Bangrak, and places like the Church of the Immaculate Conception in the north of Bangkok. We are trying to emphasize this connection in cultural events we are planning for this year, like visits to the areas where Portuguese people settled and where many Thais with Portuguese ancestry live today."



**H.E. Mr Andrii Beshta,
Ambassador Ukraine,
July 2016:**

"Before coming to Thailand, for almost two years I was in charge of our Directorate General for International Organizations. These include the UN system, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the Council of Europe (CoE). This period coincided with one of the most dramatic times in the history of Ukraine – when in early 2014 the Russian Federation first occupied the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the City of Sevastopol and then continued with the armed aggression in the southeast Ukrainian region of Donbas.

"While our soldiers have bravely defended Ukraine against the aggressor on the military front, we diplomats fought on the diplomatic front to consolidate international support and solidarity with our country. And activities within the international organizations were an important element of our diplomatic efforts to resist Russian aggression."

**H.E. Mr Glyn T. Davies, former US
Ambassador, December 2016:**

"I was born in Kabul, Afghanistan in April 1957. My father was assigned there and it's always held a special place in my heart. I don't have an Afghanistan passport, but I have a soft spot in my heart for the country of my birth. It is a beautiful country. People there are fiercely independent, like Americans and like Thais."

Asked how many people work at the Bangkok embassy, Mr Davies said: "Depending on how you count them, the best number to use is about two thousand people. Most of them are Thai citizens and the rest are Americans. I would say that we have about 800 Americans working here. We also have a small but dynamic Consulate General in Chiang Mai, and a few other Americans stationed around Thailand in specialized roles, like with the Drug Enforcement Agency and Peace Corps. Embassy staff works in several different locations around Bangkok. This is a very big embassy. It might be the third biggest embassy in the world, but there are different ways to measure the size. Our embassy in Bangkok is the largest US embassy apart from our very large missions in Iraq and Afghanistan. It is our largest embassy in Asia."

**H.E. Mr Mohsen Mohammadi,
Ambassador of the Islamic
Republic of Iran, February 2017:**

"We are not a nation seeking war or violence, and we are not an extremist nation. We are a nation seeking peace, justice, dignity, and equality in rights. In our Shiite religion, extremism and



bloodshed have no position, and this is why we are the safest and most stable country in the region, without the terrorist attacks that our neighboring countries are facing these days.

“Speaking personally, as someone who was injured by chemical weapons and who lost his brother in the war Iraq imposed on Iran, and someone who witnessed the suffering of his mother after she lost her son in the war, I really hope for a day when nobody in the world has to experience war. I hope that such discriminatory behavior from an unfair world order will never be repeated against any member of the world community again.”

Former Malaysian Ambassador, Her Excellency Dato’ Nazirah Hussain, June 2017:

The Ambassador didn’t shy away from the subject of violence and unrest in Thailand’s three southernmost provinces of Narathiwat, Pattani and Yala, which border Malaysia. She said education and economic development are the keys to ending the conflict. “Malaysia is also affected by the unrest in the South and we are trying to help the Thai authorities as much as we can. There is good cooperation between Malaysian and Thai authorities in facilitating talks with the other side, and there has been progressing on that front.

“The media always highlights when something bad happens, but when nothing happens for 24 hours and then another 24 hours they don’t report it. People in other places get the impression that it is one violent incident after another, but the people who live there see things differently. Day-to-day life goes on as normal. Children go to school. If you go there and travel you will feel safe like in other Thai provinces.

“When I talk to ordinary people in the southernmost provinces I find that the big majority are looking forward to more development in the three provinces within Thailand.”

Mr Richard Porter, Commercial Counsellor and Director of Trade and Investment, British embassy, May 2017:

Mr Porter said that simply put his job in Thailand comes down to three things: “First, to encourage and assist new British companies wishing to come to Thailand. This includes finding opportunities and partners for them; second, to help British companies that are already here to do more for example, to sell more products and more services; and third, to find opportunities for Thai individuals or companies wishing to invest in the UK.

“An important part of our job is to understand and assist the great ambition of the Thai government and the Thai people to move towards a digital economy. We are working very closely with the Thai government to realize the goals of Thailand 4.0 and the Eastern Economic Corridor.”



H.E. Mr Pirkka Tapiola, Ambassador of the European Community, July 2018:

“I am looking forward to strengthening the EU-Thailand relationship in all aspects including political partnership, trade cooperation, environment and climate change, democracy, good governance, human rights and cultural diplomacy. We focus on regional cooperation to address global challenges. Thailand plays an important strategic role in ASEAN and Asia as a whole and the EU and Thailand have had a close and strong relationship for almost 40 years.

“Of course, Thailand’s relationship with Europe goes back much further. Thailand and Portugal, which is an EU member state, are celebrating 500 years of relations. Thailand had an emissary at the court of Louis XIV of France.

“The economic relationship between the EU and Thailand is of course very important. The EU is Thailand’s third largest trading partner after Japan and China. This is an enormous amount of trade and it’s also a very long-standing relationship. The EU is the third biggest investor in Thailand and the second destination for Thai investment. Free trade will be very good for all concerned.

“We want to move towards this because we in Europe believe in openness and empowering countries. I hope that the preconditions, namely an elected government in place, for resuming negotiations on free trade will be in place very soon.”

H.E. Mrs Evren Dagdelen Akgün, Ambassador of Turkey, August 2018:

“Besides vibrant bilateral relations, Thailand and Turkey also cooperate in a number of multilateral platforms, especially UN related. ASEAN is now a big focus for us, and we entered into a sectoral dialogue partnership last year. We are very thankful that Thailand supported us in this respect. We have a special relationship with ASEAN and we will be doing a lot of projects with ASEAN countries. When Thailand takes over the chairmanship of ASEAN next year, we will have even more contacts with Thailand also in this context.

“The trade volume between our two countries is about US\$2.1 billion both ways. We are importing from Thailand products like diesel engines and parts, fibers and sun panels. We export pipes, wheat, nylon fibers, diesel engines and parts. We export and also import car parts and chemicals. The trade balance is in Thailand’s favor, but actually we have recorded a big increase in exports in recent years. We are in the process of negotiating a free trade agreement with Thailand and we’re hopeful this will help increase trade both ways.”

2019

As for this year, the ambassadors of South Africa, Iran, Argentina, Ireland, the Philippines, Cuba and Italy have already given interviews to *The BigChilli*, and more are in the pipeline.





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Profile

Gareth Hughes



Name: Gareth Vaughan Hughes

Nickname (if any): Not sure what the Thais call me but the most commonly used nicknames that I encounter in Wales and Australia are Hughesy, Gazza and sometimes Gary.

Age: 57

Born: Coventry, England, as my Welsh parents sadly were working there in the 60s and my Mum refused to do what a lot of pregnant Welsh mothers residing in England did at the time, which was to hop on the train to deliver her children in Wales to provide the best advantages for them going forward!

Education: Primary and secondary education predominantly in Senghenydd Primary Welsh school (a village where one of the worst mining disasters of all time occurred) and Rhydfelen Welsh Comprehensive school. Obtained a bachelor's degree in business administration and accounting from the University of Wales Institute of Science and Technology (now University of Cardiff Business School). I am also a Fellow Chartered Accountant (FCA) and a member of Chartered Accountants – Australia and New Zealand (CA ANZ).

Family background: Father (deceased) was a town planner from Cardigan County in South Wales and Mother (deceased) a nurse from Anglesey County North Wales. Both were fluent Welsh speakers. Twin Sister (deceased) and younger brother.

A proud Welshman and chartered accountant who collects guitars, performs occasionally in rock bands enjoys arranging rugby dinners for Bangkok based charities.

Family today: Married to Janice Marie Hughes (qualified zoologist) from Sydney, Australia. We have two children – Jack (14) and Alyssa (10), both born in Bangkok and attend Harrow International School.

Where do you live? Don Muang at the Hyde Park compound, which is next to Harrow International School.

How long in Thailand? Arrived on February 1st, 2000.

What brought you here? Following the 1997 Asian economic crisis, the Thailand financial institution was looking for assistance from international insolvency, bankruptcy and restructuring experts to teach them how to implement new bankruptcy laws and restructure some large unsecured debts that they owed locally and internationally. I was invited to join an insolvency firm from Australia called Ferrier Hodgson which had opened an office in Bangkok in 1997. They then seconded me to work at the head office of Bangkok Bank to manage a portfolio of non-performing loans.

Your profession: I have worked in the Chartered Accounting profession most of my working life in the UK, Australia and Thailand. I now manage and am majority owner of RSM (Thailand) Limited which is one of the biggest top ten global accounting and auditing networks, and is part of RSM International.

What services does your company offer? We offer accounting, auditing, executive search & recruitment, corporate finance, legal, payroll and taxation services to individuals and corporations doing business in Thailand and globally. The RSM Thailand operation commenced in April 2001.

What clubs or societies do you belong to? I am the treasurer of the Thailand Lighthouse Construction Charity, committee member and former Bard of the St David's



Welsh Society, the British Club, the Bangkok Club, and Girls Rock Asia. RSM Thailand is a member of nine chambers of commerce in Thailand.

How important is your Welsh background?

Extremely important. I am a fluent Welsh speaker and every year I celebrate St David's Day as St David was the patron Saint of Wales. I follow the Welsh national rugby team (who won this year's Six Nations rugby competition and successfully completed the grand slam.

How did you learn to speak Welsh? As my parents knew that they would return from England to Wales one day, they taught my sister, my brother and myself Welsh before English. Their intention was for us to eventually attend a Welsh School where most of the subjects would be taught in Welsh. Welsh is spoken by approximately 500,000 people. Wales has its own TV and radio stations and I have a number of books, vinyls, cassettes and CDs (all Welsh) here in Thailand. Wales is a member of the Celtic countries and is far older than England. Unlike the other Celtic countries or regions (Scotland, Ireland, Isle of Man, Cornwall and Brittany), Wales is the only one where the language has never died or been in a state of decline. Indeed, there has been a great revival in the level that the language is spoken since the 1960s following the efforts of the Welsh Language Society and the Welsh Nationalist Party.

Do you have a Welsh name? Gareth is Welsh and Hughes is a very common surname in Wales.





“

Indeed, there has been a great revival in the level that the language is spoken since the 1960s following the efforts of the Welsh Language Society and the Welsh Nationalist Party.

Should Wales be independent of England and, like Scotland, demand a vote to that effect? I believe that many Welsh people who are nationalistic would believe that they should, but in all honesty, Wales is reliant on England and the United Kingdom as well the EU and the rest of the world. Wales does have its own Assembly of elected representatives so many important decisions are now made in Wales though a great deal of its funding is from Westminster and the EU.

For or against Brexit? Totally against it.

Favorite Welsh singers, actors and writers / poets? Wales has bands that play or have played via the medium of Welsh and English and the same can

As one of the ancient Celtic languages, can a Welsh speaker converse with an Irish or Scottish Celtic speaker? There are some similar or identical words, but generally the languages are very different.

Do you know how many people from Wales live in Thailand? Nowhere near as many as the English, Irish or Scottish, and I am guessing that it may be close to 100 persons.

be said for its actors. My favourite Welsh musical artists would include Bran, Endaf Emlyn, Dafydd Saer, Bedwyr Morgan, Geraint Griffith, Tara Bethan, Pino Palladino, Stereophonics and Budgie. My favourite Welsh actors include Richard Burton, Sir Anthony Hopkins, Ieuan Rhys, Phil Reid & John Ogwen.

My favorite writers are T Llew Jones and Islwyn Ffowc Elis Any hobbies? I collect guitars and support

Girls Rock Asia and I sometimes perform in rock bands around Bangkok. I also enjoy arranging rugby dinners for Bangkok based charities.

Best project (business or / and social) ever undertaken:

I organized two rugby charity dinners in Bangkok featuring international legends Mike 'Spikey' Watkins, Gareth Davies, Steve Fenwick and Fergus Slattery which were hugely successful. I was also involved in a project called Girls Rock Asia promoting talented female rock stars and bands. We held five events that I was directly involved in, working closely with a very talented Thai female artist EarthCollide.

Worst project ever undertaken: None to date (touch wood) as all have been successful!



Best friend here? Probably Mike 'Spikey' Watkins.

Many of my other great friends have left Bangkok due to expatriates in this part of the world moving from location to location

Favorite hang-out places in Bangkok? Used to be Molly Malone's which recently closed, but enjoy any live music venue and Apoteka in Soi 11 and Check Inn in Soi 33. I also frequent Benihana's Japanese restaurant at the Anantara Riverside Hotel, the Living Lounge at the Sheraton Grande Hotel in Sukhumvit, the bistro in Hyde Park, Paddy's Fields and O'Malleys bars in Silom and Herritty's in Sukhumvit.

Favorite weekend getaway? I tend to just relax at home in the Hyde Park Compound as we are next to a lake

Has your view of Thailand changed over time? When I first arrived, I believed or was persuaded that Thailand was not sophisticated and required a lot of assistance from the West. I have since learnt that Thailand can operate and compete with the best, and Thais are more than capable of running things here. Thailand has developed very quickly since I have been here.

Best thing about living in Thailand? The weather and the music scene.



How can Bangkok be improved? I would have said in the past the transportation or traffic system, but if I compare it to Sydney or London then it is not too bad. Obviously, many safety issues could be addressed.

Most interesting person / people you've ever met?

I went to a presentation at the Shangri-La Hotel and listened to John Major, the UK former prime minister who followed Margaret Thatcher. I did not meet John but thoroughly enjoyed listening to him speak. Most people that I have met have generally something interesting to say.

What bores you? Generally I get very bored listening to people (and especially expatriates) explaining to me how Thailand works or what is happening with politicians or political parties here. The longer I have been here the more I believe that few if any actually really know what is going on or what is about to happen. I get very bored by negative people or even over positive ones!

What's the most overrated thing about Thailand?

Elections.

Where do you exercise? The Bangkok Club gym in the building where my company RSM is situated and I also cycle around the Hyde Park compound where I reside.

Can you see yourself ever going back to live in Wales?

Not really as my wife is Australian and wishes to return there to live one day. However, I always love visiting Wales, which I am fortunate enough to be able to do at least once or twice a year. My brother and I have kept my mother's old home in Anglesey, Wales, which is a beautiful seaside village where I spent almost every holiday as a youngster growing up.

What's next for you? I am waiting for Led Zeppelin to re-form and invite me to join them on a world tour or alternatively for a record company to offer me the opportunity to put an album of hits together! However, on a more serious note, I am looking at building the RSM business and watching my children grow up and guiding them away from some of the many mistakes that I made along the way.



Oskar Winner : Chef Julien

By Colin Hastings

Meet Julien Lavigne, culinary maestro and co-founder of Oskar, Bangkok's outstanding bar and bistro where gourmet dining meets late night edgy glamour



■ YOU have to admit it, the French do have an exceptional eye for style. And when that's matched by a shrewd business brain, you've gone some way to explaining the phenomenal success of Oskar Bistro on Sukhumvit Soi 11.

Stir into the equation a great location, good (or lucky) timing and above average chef, and there you have it: the perfect recipe for a hugely popular bar and restaurant.

There's no question the French owners of Oskar have struck a seam of gold with this wonderfully edgy, exciting and *un peu méchant* venue. Often copied but as yet not convincingly duplicated, it has set the pace for more than a decade in one of Bangkok's most thriving entertainment areas. Oskar's mixture of great food and wine, risqué glamour, high energy music and that inimitable French style is really hard to beat.

Credit for its outstanding cuisine goes Julien Lavigne, one of the bistro's co-founders and a talented chef who first learned his trade in the kitchens of his French and Sicilian grandmothers before perfecting it in collaborations with the Pourcel

brothers, the acclaimed Michelin star restaurant owners.

These collaborations began at the renowned French brasserie La Compagnie des Comptoirs, and thereafter at the London-based French restaurant W'Sens. In 2006 Julien moved to Bangkok to join D'sens at the Dusit Thani. It was there he continued his association with the Pourcel brothers for the next five years.

In 2011, Julien achieved his lifelong dream of working in his own kitchen, becoming part-owner at Oskar Bistro Bangkok and another outlet of the same name in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. But he wasn't done yet. In 2017, he brought his signature brand of 'classic comfort meets creative flare' to Kika Kitchen & Bar. Located on Soi Convent, Kika is best described as a relaxed neighborhood bar with a very European ambiance.

Oskar's seven founding partners are also behind Kika. Well known French-Laotian restaurateur Sanya Souvanna Phouma of Quince restaurant fame has been taken on board as an additional partner in Kika.

Launched in March 2011, Oskar originally occupied the ground floor of a detached building adjacent to Bed Supper Club, then at the height of its success. Both the location and timing couldn't have been better, especially as the area's other popular nightspot, Q Bar, had recently closed, leaving a gaping hole in Soi 11's pulling power.

"Yes, it's true. We were lucky being in the right place at the right time - a great place to start out the night for a meal or a drink before heading



“
Two years later, with Oskar's reputation as a quality restaurant and late night venue firmly established, Julien and his partners were able to lease the two apartments upstairs to accommodate the crowds.

off next door to Bed Supper Club,” remembers Julien.

Two years later, with Oskar's reputation as a quality restaurant and late night venue firmly established, Julien and his partners were able to lease the two apartments upstairs to accommodate the crowds. More space has been added since then, so today it's about twice as big as its original format.

From the outset Oskar's interior has always had a typically Gallic 'feel' created by designer Frédérique Guillouet, the group's talented architect. The focal point on both floors is a large sit-up bar reminiscent of a Parisian brasserie where easy conversation between strangers is encouraged. Sofas and tables of varying sizes line the walls.





After about 10pm, Oskar goes through a subtle metamorphosis, with the dimming of the lights and upping the music volume. What starts out as an early evening snack bar, then becomes a gourmet restaurant before turning into a disco, complete with DJ, attracting Thais and expats in roughly equal numbers. Julien admits that many customers use Oskar as a warm-up bar and meeting point before venturing to other nearby late night nightspots. This is the time when the girls heavily outnumber the men.

With the arrival of many new bars and restaurants on Soi 11, including the revival of Hemingways, competition is intensifying, notes Julien. But his team are ready. “After eight years of remaining the same, we need to stay trendy so some changes are coming.”

The local culinary scene is indeed changing, says Julien, with Japanese and Spanish restaurants making their mark. “People from all over the world are coming to Bangkok to dine. It’s fantastic, but opening a restaurant is not easy – not like 10 or 12 years ago.”

Julien works hard, of that there is no doubt. He can be usually spotted at Kika by day and Oskar night overseeing operations and some 100 staff. So it comes as a surprise of a surprise to discover that last year he and Stéphane Carric launched Ace Consulting Asia, a F&B consulting company, which works closely with restaurants to elevate every aspect of the service industry. One of their first clients was the Pippa rooftop restaurant at Mytt Hotel Pattaya, where they helped devise the menu and perfect the ambiance.

Then, in January 2019, together with Stéphane he opened Mama Pasta, a new chain of Italian restaurants specializing in affordable pastas and pizzas costing not more than 230 baht per dish. One outlet has already opened next to Krungtep Kretha golf course and Wellington College International.

Julien claims to keep Sundays free for himself, but given the workload, that seems unlikely. There is some consolation, however, knowing that his influence on Bangkok’s dining scene continues to grow.



BUY OR SELL A BUSINESS



With nearly 15 years experience in Thailand, we TSBA and our dedicated Business Transfer Specialists provide a professional and personalized service that puts buyers and sellers together. Our centralized database allows us to manage our listings efficiently and accurately. In conjunction with our legal associates we will guide you through every step of the way, from sourcing to completion.

Hostel & Café in central Sukhumvit

Within walking distance to Skytrain and Underground systems. 18 dorms and 5 private rooms which can accommodate total of **78 guests**. Café restaurant on ground floor with **50 seats**. Rooftop area with **40 seats**. Rent for this 4FL triple-shophouse is only **270,000 Baht per month** and new lease is available.

Price Reduced: **8,000,000 Baht**.
Location: Bangkok, Thailand



Bar & 6-Room Hostel

Popular single shophouse bar and 6-room hostel available in a busy location off **Sukhumvit Road**. Close to the BTS Skytrain and many popular hotels and restaurants. The rent is only **80,000 Baht per month**. Annual profits are approx. **1 Million Baht**. The owner is selling due to retirement.

Sale Price: **2,500,000 Baht**.
Location: Bangkok, Thailand

Popular Hostel & Café Silom

This **14-room** hostel/guesthouse & café is conveniently located in the Silom area, near the famous **Jewelry Trade Center** & Fashion Factory Outlet. It has **great online reviews** and a large number of repeat guests. The rent is low at only **110,000 Baht per month** and a **long lease is available**.

Asking Price: **8,900,000 Baht**.
Location: Bangkok, Thailand

English Style Pub & Guesthouse

Three shop-house units converted to a pub and restaurant with **full kitchen** and a **6 room guesthouse** upstairs. The business was **established 8 years ago** and has a regular client base. The restaurant can seat **around 80 guests** and the rent for this property is only **71,000 Baht per month**.

Sale Price: **2,900,000 Baht**.
Location: Pattaya, Thailand

35-Room Guesthouse Sukhumvit

Recently built by the landlord, this property is now available for takeover. Conveniently located **near the BTS Skytrain on Sukhumvit Road** and close to shopping and dining areas. There is also space on the ground floor for a **small coffee shop**. The rent for this **5 storey property (with elevator)** is **450,000 bt/mth**. 6 months deposit & lease of **3+3+3 years**.

All terms can be negotiated directly with the landlord.

Asking Price: **17,500,000 Baht**.
Location: Bangkok, Thailand

Jomtien Condominium Block

The Condominium Block consists of a mix of top quality apartments, studios, 1-bedroom & 2-bedroom units. This **freehold property** is located near the Jomtien beach, shops, supermarkets, restaurants and other entertainment venues. It has a total of **19 rooms**. Parking and access to communal swimming pool is also available.

Sale Price: **55,000,000 Baht**.
Location: Pattaya, Thailand

Biz Contacts & Lead Generation

This business has been formed to assist **SMEs, startups and international companies** in making needed contact. Whether it's **service companies, government agencies, or staff needed**, they have a database to find what is needed and a country manager in each country will do the work. The founders wish to sell **70%** of the shares and keep 30%.

Sale Price: **2,500,000 Baht**.
Location: Pattaya, Thailand

Pub & Restaurant in Ekkamai

This restaurant serves a variety of **craft beers** and a wide array of American comfort food and BBQ. A great place to spend an evening with friends and family. **45 seats** and only **60,000 Baht per month** rent. There are 2+3 years left on the lease but this can be discussed with the landlord.

Price Reduced: **850,000 Baht**.
Location: Bangkok, Thailand

Food Manufacturing/Distribution

This food manufacturing business supplies frozen ready-made meals to **supermarkets throughout Thailand and Laos**. The business can be operated and run from anywhere within Thailand. This is a great opportunity for anyone looking for a **turnkey business**.

Sale Price: **1,800,000 Baht**.
Location: Chiang Mai, Thailand

Furniture Retail Business

This large showroom & warehouse is **situated in an attractive location**. The property has a private villa behind the showroom which is included in the low rental fee of only **35,000 Baht per month**. A long lease is available. The seller is relocating and is **open to negotiations**. Viewing is highly recommended.

Sale Price: **9,800,000 Baht**.
(inventory will be calculated at cost price)
Location: Hua Hin, Thailand

Sprayfoam Company

This business provides roof & wall insulation by spraying poly urethane foam. The best choice for water proofing and heat insulation. The company has a **lot of repeat customers** like contractors and developers. The seller is selling due to relocation to his home country. The business was **established in 2008**.

Annual Net Profits are around **2 million baht**.
Net Price: **3,500,000 Baht**.
Location: Cha-Am, Thailand

Technology Company

This successful tech products company supplies certain **applications for use on mobile phones and other devices** to various communication services such as the popular **Line Application**. The company has a **successful track record** from its start-up in 2007. The owners can give interested buyers a **full presentation on products and a clear accounting of profits** which are steadily rising every month.

Sale Price: **80,000,000 Baht**.
Location: Bangkok, Thailand

Large Pub & Bar on Beach Road

Large international pub in prominent location on Beach Road Pattaya, **near Walking Street**. Successfully and profitably operated by the **same owner for 19 Years** with a very large established customer base. A rarely available Business & Investment Opportunity with an attractive **ROI of approx. 30% per annum**. **300 m2 over 2 Fl. = 50,000 Baht per monh**.

Sale Price: **3,800,000 Baht**.
Location: Pattaya, Thailand



Sports Diner and

Live Entertainment Venue

This business has gained a reputation for serving some of the **best Gourmet Burgers in Chiang Mai** if not the whole of Thailand. Well thought out décor and numerous TV's streaming sports.

Sale Price: **2,900,000 Baht**.
Location: Chiang Mai, Thailand

Live Escape Game

This business is a Live Escape Room Game located close to **Ekkamai BTS Skytrain Station**. This flagship store is **ready for a franchise model** for joint venture partners or by owner. Friendly staff, successful social media marketing strategy and all permits and licenses under Amity Treaty is ready to go.

Sale Price: **6,500,000 Baht**.
Location: Bangkok, Thailand

Luxury Wedding Dress Business

Wedding dress shop and e-commerce store stocking **8 imported brands from around the world, plus 5 imported lingerie brands and 1 imported swimwear brand**. Two rooms above the boutique shop are rented out which offsets the **rent for the shop to zero baht per month**. Viewing is highly recommended.

Sale Price: **14,900,000 Baht**.
Location: Phuket, Thailand

Magazine Publication

This well established business caters to many **high-end clients** and produces various types of magazine publications in accordance with the requirements of the clients. The business has **good revenues and profits but also has huge potential to expand**.

Sale Price: **41,000,000 Baht**.
Location: Bangkok, Thailand

Organic Jewellery Wholesaler

Popular business that has been established for more than a decade. Located on the world famous **Khaosarn Road**. **120 SqM over 2 floors with a monthly rent of 80,000 baht**. **60,000 baht payroll for 4 staff**.

Large inventory included in the sale price. Security deposit of **500,000 baht** also incl. Owner has other business interests.

Sale Price: **4,000,000 Baht**.
Location: Bangkok, Thailand

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HERO & VILLAIN: Rarely has an expat attracted more adulation, controversy and curiosity than Australian army captain Barry Petersen, who recently passed away, aged 84, in Bangkok, his home for almost 30 years.

Petersen had a truly extraordinary military career, much of it spent in Southeast Asia. His many exploits included leading top secret CIA operations during the Vietnam War and training Malays to counter guerrilla tactics of the communists during the Malayan Emergency and the Borneo confrontation.

Extremely popular with his men, particularly the Montagnard militia he recruited and trained to fight the Viet Cong, Petersen was nevertheless treated with suspicion by the CIA and ultimately ostracised by many of his military colleagues. He's often likened to Marlon Brando's character Colonel Kurtz in the movie *Apocalypse Now*.

REQUIEM FOR AN OLD SOLDIER

Maxmilian Wechsler reviews the life of Lieutenant Colonel Arthur Barry Petersen, a charismatic and controversial Australian soldier who fought the Communists in Southeast Asia at a time when his homeland was experiencing a major rise in communist influence



Barry Petersen in South Vietnam in 1964.

Since becoming an independent nation in 1901, Australia has sent its armed forces to 14 wars in far-away places. More than 100,000 Australian soldiers have lost their lives in Africa, Southeast Asia, Europe and the Middle East, and many more were injured, captured or listed as missing.

Lieutenant Colonel Arthur Barry Petersen MC, MID was one of the more fortunate members of the Australian Defence Forces, serving in three wars and surviving to tell the tale.

Sadly, the prostate cancer he had battled since 2008 did what the communists in Malaya (now Malaysia), Borneo and the Viet Cong in two tours of duty in Vietnam failed to do. Petersen was finally felled by the disease and passed away in a Bangkok hospital at 8pm on February 28, three weeks after his 84th birthday. He always maintained the cancer was caused by exposure to Agent Orange in Vietnam.



Petersen in South Vietnam in 1965.



Always a military man

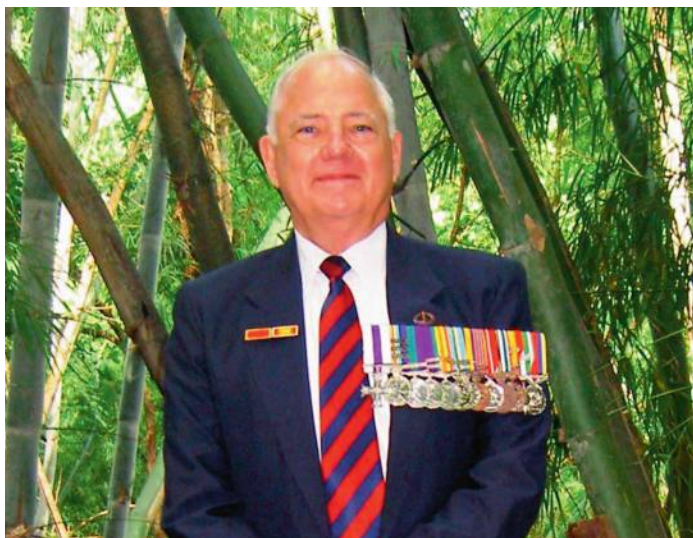
Petersen was born at Sarina, a small town south of Mackay city in North Queensland, on February 8, 1935. He enjoyed his national military service, and in 1953 decided on a military career, graduating as a Second

Lieutenant in the Australian Army in 1954. Later, in 1968, he graduated from the United States Special Warfare Centre (Long Psychological Operation Course), and he also received training at the Australian Army Command and Staff College to become a senior major in the Army.

Petersen's active military duty began with his assignment to the 1st Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment

in operations against communist insurgents in Malaya, where he served from 1959 to 1961. He gained valuable experience in guerilla warfare tactics working alongside the Jahai and Temiar tribes of the indigenous Orang Asli peoples in the mountains and jungles south of the Thai-Malay border.

After returning to Australia, Army headquarters requested that



Petersen at Hellfire Pass in Kanchanaburi province on Anzac Day in 2008.

Medals of Lt Col Barry Petersen

Petersen received 13 awards during his military service:

- Military Cross (awarded for “exemplary gallantry during active operation” in 1965)
- Australian Active Service Medal
- General Service Medal
- Campaign Service Medal
- Vietnam Medal
- Australian Service Medal
- Australian Defense Service Medal
- Australian National Medal
- Australian Defense Medal
- Australian Anniversary of National Service Medal
- South Vietnam Cross of Gallantry (with two silver stars)
- South Vietnam Medal
- Pingat Jasa Malaysia Medal

he volunteer for “liaison duties with guerrillas in the event of future wars”. Because of his experience with the tribes in Malaya, Petersen was selected to join a small group of officers who were to receive special training, and then appointed to an elite group called Australian Army Training Team Vietnam (AATTC) in 1962. Petersen was then loaned to the CIA, and in 1963 sent to South Vietnam to recruit, train, command and develop a guerrilla style force of Montagnard (French term for the mountain-dwelling tribesmen of the central highlands of southern Vietnam).

By 1964 Petersen had put together a group of several hundred men officially called Truong Son Force. They became known as “Tiger Men” because of the stripes on their camouflaged uniforms and a snarling tiger printed on their berets. Truong Son Force was highly successful in its goal of denying the Viet Cong control of much of the high plateau that dominates central Vietnam.

Their primary aim was to fight and interrupt Viet Cong and the regular North Vietnamese Army along the Ho Chi Minh Trail that ran from north to south through the mountains of

Vietnam. They were recognized for their excellent combat record as well as their brutality, inflicting heavy human and material losses on the Viet Cong, who feared them.

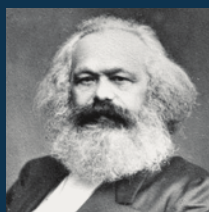
By 1965 the Tiger Men numbered about 1,200 Montagnard fighters who used the same guerrilla tactics as the Viet Cong, which were to ambush the enemy, cause as much damage as possible and then vanish into the jungle.

Petersen claimed the Americans asked him to form his force into small assassination units as part of the CIA's Phoenix Program, a controversial joint venture between the US,

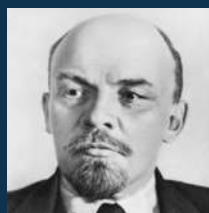
Rise of communism in Australia in 1970s

Around the time Lieutenant Colonel Barry Petersen was heading off for his second tour of duty in Vietnam to fight communists, Australian was witnessing an increase in the number of new communist groups in its homeland. These were quickly gaining influence within trade unions, universities and various important organizations. Communists were particularly active in Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia.

A pro-Soviet Communist Party of Australia (CPA), which was established in 1920, aimed to establish socialism in Australia through peaceful means. However, following the Soviet-led invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968, it started losing both members and influence. Pro-Soviet hardliners who resigned or were expelled from the CPA as a result of their opposition to policy changes formed the Socialist Party of Australia (SPA)



Karl Marx



Vladimir Ilyich Lenin

in 1971. The aim of the SPA was to change the direction of politics in Australia and, eventually, to replace the capitalist system with a socialist one.

Meanwhile, the Maoist-oriented Communist Party of Australia Marxist-Leninist (CPA M-L) had become an even bigger threat. Established in 1964, it was dedicated to overthrowing the government by force, and as such was attracting younger and more enthusiastic members. So were radical Trotskyite organizations who believed in armed struggle, like the Socialist Youth Alliance (SYA) formed in 1970. Some of its members branched off in 1972 to form a new orthodox Trotskyite organization called the Socialist Workers League (SWL), which became the Socialist Workers Party (Australia) in 1974.

Activities undertaken by SYA/SWL members included “training exercises” in the bush. One day the group staged a march down Swanston Street in Melbourne to show their strength. Industrial actions were plotted by different communist groups and unionists in trade halls. In fact, communists



South Vietnamese and Australian militaries. The program's purpose was to identify and destroy the Viet Cong via infiltration, torture, capture, counter-terrorism, interrogation, and summary execution.

Petersen said he refused because he didn't want his men to become assassins. He also felt it breached Australian military rules of engagement.

Mysterious exit from Vietnam

Petersen's refusal to join in the Phoenix Program, along with his success with the Tiger Men, apparently resulted in resentment and

suspicion from CIA insiders who said he had established his own 'personal cult' among the Montagnard. His CIA handler called him 'Lawrence of the Highlands' because, like the legendary Lawrence of Arabia, he was seen as having gone native. There are even reports that Petersen was threatened with assassination by the CIA.

Despite strong support within his force and most of the Vietnamese leadership, he lost command of the Tiger Men and was replaced by an American who apparently failed to earn the same level of respect from the Montagnard or the South Vietnamese in general.

Petersen's assignment in Vietnam suddenly ended in 1965. His forced dismissal came as a huge shock to

his colleagues, especially as Australia then as now was one of the United States' most trusted allies. The CIA shared all kinds of secrets with their Australian colleagues in Vietnam, so whatever they had against Petersen – if the stories are true must have been extremely serious.

A script telling Petersen's life story was commissioned by American actor and filmmaker Mel Gibson decades ago, but to date nothing has materialised.

Military meanderings

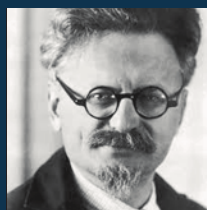
When Petersen's assignment abruptly ended in 1965, he was flown from Vietnam to Singapore, possibly to keep him away from Australian media who might want to question him about his highly secretive role with the Tiger Men. He was back under the command of the AATTV, and soon after was attached to the British Secret Intelligence Service MI6, serving in Sarawak and Sabah on Borneo Island during the Malaysian-Indonesia 'Confrontation'. The MI6 asked him to go there to help train their men who were working with indigenous people in the jungle but were struggling against Indonesian

controlled several trade unions. One of the top CPA members, John Halfpenny, was the organizer of the powerful Metal Workers Union in Melbourne.

Norm Gallagher, a high profile member of the CPA M-L, led the militant Builders Laborers Federation as the Federal Secretary and as Victorian State Secretary. He was responsible for numerous strikes and disruptions on building sites.

The CPA M-L had a sizeable influence on the militant student movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s on campuses such as Monash and La Trobe universities in Melbourne and Flinders University in Adelaide through their front group, the Worker Student Alliance. The Young Labor Association (YLA) was infiltrated by the communists.

The communists also had influential friends in the Australian Labor Party (ALP), which took control of the government in the December 1972 federal elections. One prominent Trotskyite supporter was Dr Jim Cairns. After the 1972 elections he held the positions of Minister



Leon Trotsky



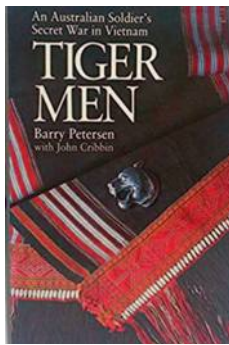
Mao Zedong

for Overseas Trade; Minister for Secondary Industry; Minister for the Environment; and Treasurer of Australia. He was 4th Deputy Prime Minister for a brief period. Other ALP members also sympathized with and supported the communists.

With such friends in high places, the job of the Australian Security Intelligence Organization (ASIO) wasn't easy. They were the target of much criticism and derision from the left, but little did they suspect they would be targeted by the government itself. In an unprecedented move on March 16, 1973, then Attorney-General Lionel Murphy ordered a raid on the ASIO headquarters, then located at 469 St Kilda Road in Melbourne. The raid was conducted by the Commonwealth Police, ostensibly to obtain terrorism-related information that the ASIO was accused of withholding. Three days after the raid, Murphy gave the explanation that the raid had been carried out to ensure the safety of the visiting Yugoslavian Prime Minister.

Special Forces troops. After a few months he went back to Australia.

In April 1970 Petersen returned to South Vietnam for a second tour of combat duty with 2nd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (2 RAR). He commanded the infantry Charlie Company, consisting of about 140 men, which conducted operations against the Viet Cong. Petersen was involved in a transport accident and hospitalized with spinal injuries. While recovering, he was requested by Australian Ambassador to South Vietnam A.M. Morris to return to the central highlands to gather



intelligence. Petersen agreed and went back to his old stomping grounds unarmed, taking with him only one soldier, also unarmed.

In June 1971 Petersen was reassigned to Canberra and made responsible for equipment acquisition for the Infantry Corps there. He was in considerable discomfort due to the injuries he suffered in Vietnam. It was no secret that he wasn't fond of the assignment in Canberra, and he had problems adjusting to life there. He was more than ready when he learned that because of his operations' experience with indigenous peoples he was being loaned, for a period of two years, to the Malaysian Army. During this time he instructed students of the rank of captain and major at the forerunner of the present Malaysian Command and Staff College.

In 1975 Petersen returned once again to Australia, where he was promoted to the rank of lieutenant colonel and posted to Victoria Barracks in Brisbane, Queensland. He retired from

the Australian military in 1979 at the age of 45. His early departure was due in large part to lingering effects of the transport injury.

Heeding the call of Southeast Asia

Petersen acquired a small farm near Cairns city in Queensland, but found life there boring. From the mid-1980s he made regular trips back to Southeast Asia. He returned to Vietnam for the first time in 1987, and in 1989 commenced business activities in the country where he'd participated in a brutal war against the eventually victorious communists. His business was principally bringing various Vietnamese products to Australia.

In 1992 Petersen sold the farm in Queensland and moved to Bangkok. He told people he moved to Thailand because the cost of living was much cheaper than in Australia and health care services were good. His military pension was enough for him to live well.

He opened a consultancy company for foreign companies called Lang Suan House Co., Ltd. Employing 17 Thais, the firm provided services like guiding foreigners through the processes of obtaining visas and work

permits and company registration. He lived in a shop house above the office in a narrow lane off Lang Suan Road in the center of Bangkok.

Medals controversy

Petersen was the recipient of 13 medals in total for his service in Malaya, Borneo and Vietnam. He auctioned all of them in 2010 to help finance his business in Bangkok. The thought of the medals being sold didn't sit well with some people, including Rear Admiral Ken Doolan, then the national president of the Returned and Service League of Australia (RSL). Doolan reportedly said that while it was a "private and sensitive matter", veterans should be "encouraged to retain medals with pride".

Petersen said during an interview with a Sydney newspaper that he expected to be criticized for not donating the medals to Australian history archives, but did what he thought was best. "I don't march to the same drum as others," he said, adding that while he was "very fond" of the men he commanded during two tours of Vietnam, he was never keen on "hanging around at an RSL club to talk about all the exploits and so on".

He explained that the reason he sold the medals was to support his company and the people who worked for him, who had become his "de facto family." Petersen revealed that the proceeds from the sale would be used to buy the building his company leased. That way, he felt he could be sure the future of the staff was secure.

Petersen never married and had no children. He is survived by two sisters, who it is believed live in Queensland.

With the help of John Cribbin, Petersen wrote a biography titled *Tiger Man An Australian Soldier's Secret War in Vietnam*, first published in 1988. Another book, *Tiger Man of Vietnam*, was written by Frank Walker and published in 2009.

Australia's wars

Since the birth of Australia on January 1, 1901, the country has fought 14 wars outside its shores:

- | | | |
|--------------|----------------------------------|-------------|
| • 1899 -190 | Second Boer War | (Victory) |
| • 1900 -1991 | Boyer Rebellion | (Victory) |
| • 1914 -1918 | First World War | (Victory) |
| • 1918 -1919 | Russian Civil War | (Defeat) |
| • 1919 | Egyptian Revolution | (Victory) |
| • 1939 -1945 | Second World War | (Victory) |
| • 1948 -1960 | Malayan Emergency | (Victory) |
| • 1950 -1953 | Korean War | (Stalemate) |
| • 1963-1966 | Indonesia-Malaysia Confrontation | (Victory) |
| • 1965 -1973 | Vietnam War | (Defeat) |
| • 1990 -1991 | Gulf War | (Victory) |
| • 2001 → | War in Afghanistan | (Outgoing) |
| • 2003-2009 | Iraq War | (Stalemate) |
| • 2006 -2013 | Operation Astute | (Victory) |
| • 2014 → | Operation Okra | (Outgoing) |

Dates indicate the years in which Australia was involved in the war.



BENIHANA'S SIZZLING ACTION JUST GOT EVEN JUICIER...

Get your chops around a melt-in-the-mouth Japanese Kagoshima sirloin steak that is prized for its well-balanced marbling, exceptional tenderness and full-bodied taste. Watch your Teppanyaki Chef expertly grill the beef to seal in all the rich flavor, while dazzling your table with a skillful show of flame throwing action.

Available on May – June 2019

Only THB 3,700++ per set, including Benihana appetizers.

Price is subject to 10% service charge and applicable government tax.

For more information and reservations,
please contact Benihana The Japanese Steakhouse T. 02 718 2000

Open daily for dinner from 5:00 pm – 10:30 pm

Weekend Brunch every Saturday and Sunday from 12:00 noon – 3:00 pm

Food & Drink

Bangkok's hottest dining deals and news



Highlighting Healthy Grains

Liu Chinese Restaurant on the 3rd floor of Conrad Bangkok holds some delicious surprises including a dish with a marvellous highlight and unique taste. Braised Pork Leg with Red Kidney Bean is a Hot Pot and a good source of protein, with the sweet taste and meaty texture making a rich and satisfying meal.

Priced at 350++ baht, open daily from 11.30am - 2.30pm and 6pm - 10.30pm.

📍 Tel: 02 690 9999. www.relishbangkok.com/liu



Gourmet snacks on 59th floor

CRU Champagne Bar at Red Sky has new gourmet snacks to enjoy at the top of Centara Grand at CentralWorld. Admire the 360-degree city views while trying Sweet Potato Hummus, Fish and Sweet Potato Chips, 'Flavour Dynamics' of Cheese, Popcorn Shrimps or Pork Rillettes Sliders. With the world's highest al fresco Champagne bar, you can bubble with the new snack menu. Open daily from 5pm to 1am.

📍 Tel: 02 100 6255. www.champagnecru.com



The Beauty of Summer Journey

Sra Bua by Kiin Kiin at Siam Kempinski Hotel Bangkok reveals "Summer Journey", available from 1 April as a collaboration between Michelin-star Chef Henrik Yde

Andersen and Chef Chayawee Suthcharitchan. The set dinner menu features Thai ceviche, larb duck salad, and sea bass, followed by Flowers and Leaves of Thailand. The Summer Journey Set Dinner Menu is priced at 3,200++ baht per person, available from 6pm to midnight.

📍 Tel: 02 162 9000. www.srabuabykiinkiin.com



Central Thai Savoury

Thara Thong at Royal Orchid Sheraton Hotel & Towers proudly presents "Regional Thai Food Festival" this year from four main regions of Thailand.



Through May and June, central region dishes include an Appetiser Set at 650++baht, and tasty main dishes like Fried River Prawns at 800++ baht or Deep-fried Fillet of Snapper at 650++baht. Available from 1st May - 30th June from 6pm to 10.30pm with mesmerising views of the Chao Phraya River.

📍 Tel: 02 266 0123. www.royalorchidsheraton.com



FLAMENCO BANGKOK Without Passion, Life is Nothing

By CK Lee

FLAMENCO BANGKOK is a sky bar with a Latin soul. Set to be the newest hangout spot in the heart of Bangkok, Flamenco is a dedication to the rhythms and beats of the Latin culture. The tagline “Without Passion, Life is Nothing” is not just a phrase, it is an embodiment of what its believe in. At Flamenco, you are welcom to celebrate the passion of living and life.



While its name FLAMENCO is a music genre and a dance style from Spain, inspired to bring the culture, music, contemporary arts and the flavors of the global Latin community right here to Bangkok. Its interior is a confluence of Latin motifs and colours.

With carefully curated drink list is a nod to the best of Latin liblation. From Cuba Libre, Caipirinha, Maracuja Daiquiri and Tequila Shots, our mixologists are here to deliver an upbeat and memorable Latin evening. While Spanish-Latin kitchen serves a medley of signature tapas dishes like Kingfish Ceviche, Chicken Empanada, Patatas Bravas, Gambas Pil Pil and Jalapeno Poppers.

Boasting a space of 800 square meters, Flamenco is divided into different function styles. The vast indoor area features a grand hall adorned with a crystal chandelier and dotted with classic furnitures. The mezzanine lounge is a private sanctuary designed for our special privileged guests. The live stage features noted DJs and live music paying homage to everything Latin. From Rumba to Samba, the beat goes on nightly. The outdoor rooftop bar invites you to enjoy the sunset and the panoramic nightscape of Bangkok.

FLAMENCO BANGKOK opens everyday from 5pm - midnight located on the 9th floor, The Helix, The EmQuartier shopping complex. For reservation or more information, please contact Tel: 02 003 6006

Follow and share our passion on Facebook @FLAMENCO BANGKOK and on Instagram @FLAMENCOBANGKOK



Wagyu Tomahawk Carvings

Renaissance Bangkok Ratchaprasong Hotel's popular Flavors restaurant presents Wagyu Tomahawk carvings, an exquisite way to enjoy perfectly marinated and grilled Wagyu Tomahawk at Flavors' carving station, served with a choice of sauces and a wide range of side dishes that will complement your superb meal.

Wagyu Tomahawk Carvings is available every Friday and Saturday from 6pm to 10.30pm until the end of June at 1,890++ baht per person.

📍 Tel: 02 125 5010
www.renaissancebangkok.com



Siamese Fighting Fish

Anantara Hotels, Resorts & Spas announces a captivating exhibition "The Beauty of Siam: Anantara Siamese Fighting Fish" by the renowned photographer Visarute Angkatavanich. The exhibition will show at Anantara Siam Bangkok Hotel from 5th April to 31st May and Anantara Riverside Bangkok Resort from 5th June to 31st July. A special Afternoon Tea with Mariage Frères is served weekdays from 2pm to 6pm for 850 baht per set inclusive of one drink (tea or coffee), with Afternoon Tea buffet every Saturday and Sunday at 950 baht per person.

📍 www.anantara.com/siam-bangkok
www.anantara.com/riverside-bangkok



One baht Buffet

Throughout April, Seasonal Tastes restaurant at The Westin Grande Sukhumvit, Bangkok is offering '1 Baht Deal' for every second diner at International Lunch Buffet (Mon to Sat 12pm - 2.30pm), which offers a vibrant multinational dining experience at only 890++ baht per person, and Weekday Dinner Buffet (Sun to Thurs 6pm - 10.30pm) which offers a new collection of weekday dinner buffets, each with rotating highlights. Terms & conditions apply.

📍 Tel: 02 207 8000. www.diningwestinbangkok.com



Special Seafood Buffet

Skyline Restaurant on 11th Floor Avani+ Riverside Bangkok Hotel invites you to the special Seafood Buffet "3 for the price of 2" promotion, providing imported international and Thai dishes including blue crab, slipper lobster, river lobster, fish, 4 kinds of oysters, sushi, fresh sashimi and other delicacies. Seafood Buffet "3 for the price of 2" is available every Friday and Saturday from 6pm to 10.30pm throughout the month of April at 1,589 baht nett.

📍 Tel: 02 431 9100. www.avanihotels.com/en/riverside-bangkok/restaurants/skyline-restaurant



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Continent marks Coronation with special treats

Throughout May, the Continent Hotel Bangkok will mark the Royal Coronation of His Majesty King Maha Vajiralongkorn and the celebration of 500 years of the Italian genius Leonardo da Vinci by creating some delectable Thai and Italian delights.

Bangkok Heightz restaurant will serve Coronation Chicken (352 baht net), flavoured with curry powder, mango, chutney and Greek yoghurt and served on a bread baguette. Vegetarians can enjoy the Coronation Tofu and the dish can be paired with local Thai beer at 399 baht net.

Also offered is the Coronation Thai Curry feast that presents green, red, yellow, panang and massaman curries with a variety of meats and fish. With water and the river Chao Phraya playing a central role in the ceremonial rites, the Signature Cocktail/ Mocktail Chao Phraya is highlighted as the signature drink of the month.

Paired with unlimited steamed jasmine rice, the Coronation Thai Curry package is priced at 599 baht, including a Chao Phraya cocktail/ Mocktail and 999 baht for Coronation Beef Curry and Signature Cocktail.



The Medinii restaurant celebrates Leonardo da Vinci's birthday with a Tuscan tasting menu paired with Davinci Wines such as Pinot Grigio, Mona Lisa Vino Bianco d'Italia or Leonardo Chianti.

The four-course set will begin with a refreshing Tuscan salad "Panazanella" followed by a choice between Tuscan soups "Papa al Pomodoro" and a hearty Potage of vegetables "Ribollita". Curated by Chef Satjar Thongsirkaew, the grilled Tbone steak (Bistecca alla Fiorentina) comes with baked potato, sauteed wild mushrooms and various choices of sauce such as Black pepper corn demiglace or Red wine truffle sauce. Round up the meal with Castagnaccio or Chestnut cake.

The meal is priced at 3,599 baht per couple and 5,399 baht including a bottle of Leonardo Da Vinci wine from Italy.

📍 Make a reservation at (02) 686 7056 or email dining@thecontinenthotel.com



Beautiful Bargain Buffet

Experience Food Exchange lunch buffet at 7th Floor Novotel Bangkok Sukhumvit 20, including rolled sushi, organic salad, som-tam, noodle station, fresh seafood and more, with French oysters and cheese selection at weekends. Specially priced too: Weekdays 750 baht net; Weekends 999 baht net including tea/coffee; Children from 6-12 years at 50% discount. June Exclusive: book through Resdiary.com and pay 450 baht net weekdays and 650 baht net weekends! Served daily from 12pm - 2.30pm.

📍 Tel: 02 009 4999. www.novotelbangkoksukhumvit20.com



Gourmet Buffet Dinner

Hotel Nikko Bangkok announces a gourmet dinner buffet at its Oasis restaurant with speciality dishes prepared to order with other buffet items. Specials include Oasis Hamburger; Mount Fuji pasta; Pork Ninja, tender pork roll; Fish Samurai grilled cod; Oriental Quessadilla stuffed with prawns; Gai Kamin.; and traditional Japanese Seafood Curry. Priced at 780++ baht per person, or 395++ baht for children 6-12 years

📍 Tel: 02 080 2111. www.nikkobangkok.com

The Wisdom of Thai Cuisine

By CK Lee

■ R-Haan is a Thai fine dining restaurant located on Thonglo Soi 9, Bangkok. In Thai, the word R-Haan means “something consumed for sustenance”. The experience though, transcends far beyond – it is a culinary journey. From plate to palate, the wisdom of Thai cuisine is shared and appreciated. R-Haan received global recognition in 2019 and was awarded its first Michelin star.

R-Haan recently unveiled their Royal Summer Menu. As the season changes, Chef Chumpol Jangprai embraces the warmer days and highlights seasonal ingredients sourced from across the country. We were privileged to receive a ‘sneak preview’.

To kick off the journey, we began with Smoked Coconut with Homemade Pork Sausage served with



Ground River Fish mixed with Ground Roasted Rice and Aromatic Coconut Milk with Bitter Orange Foam. Great care was given to the presentation of the dish – it was an exquisite sight. Service team executed in perfect sync, always anticipated our needs.

Three appetizers soon followed, each a nod to a medley of ingredients that brought out diverse flavours. For the main courses, five dishes were presented for family style sharing. The steamed new crop Hom Mali rice is from the Yasothorn province. The organic brown rice features 5 different variety including Riceberry, Hill Tribe Brown Rice and Chitralada Palace Rice.

Highlights in the menu:

- Hot and spicy Soup with Smoked Dried Fish and Giant Catfish Caviar Baked with Flower of Salt from Baan-Dung.
- Thai Steamed Free Range Chicken Curry with Young Coconut Shell and Wild Basil Leaves.
- Stir Fried Asparagus from Don Tum with “TAK BAI” Salted Threadfin.



- Beef Charcoal Grilled with Ancient Thai Copper Pod Curry “Kaeng Khe Lhek”.

There was also a surprise dish from the chef and the dessert was picture perfect (the ice cream simply divine!) Petit Fours and a hot cup of beverage marked the end of the voyage. We are honoured to have experience this wonderful creation by Chef Chumpol. R-Haan is a success story that is just beginning...

Opening hours: 6pm - 11pm
Tel : 095 141 5524, 02 059 0433 - 34
e-mail : reservation@r-haan.com
website : www.R-HAAN.com
Facebook : R.HAAN / Instagram : rhaan_restaurant





An Uplifting Steakhouse Visit

By CK Lee

Review : Outback Steakhouse

OUTBACK Steakhouse is not just a typical restaurant, it is an institution right here in Siam Discovery. Despite moving locations thrice with the same mall in the last decade, the Outback charm remains constant, if not better.

Currently located on the 4th floor, the restaurant exudes warmth and conviviality. Staff are laid back, friendly and confident. The menu is focused on the outback dining experience that is quintessentially Australia.

Interesting photos showcasing the vast landscape of Australia dot the walls. Our lunch began with a thirst quenching summery drink, the Cherry Limeade.

Crispy Parmesan Shrimp Salad was simple in design, as it should be, and elegant in taste; the shrimp were bursting with freshness and flavor. Phones down, and we continued on with the grilled salmon and their Signature Steak beef.



The huge cut of Pepper Crusted Salmon was glazed in a special homemade sauce and that made all the difference (we wanted a second plate!). Signature Striploin was seared just right with a side of Red Wine Demiglace.

As lunch progressed, we swapped anecdotes and soon learnt how caring for their people is a key tenet of the company. With over 900 restaurants spanning the globe, Outback is operating in Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia and The Philippines in Southeast Asia. When their Thailand branch had to close for a year for mall renovation, their team was given paid leave and also the option to work across the region in other locations. Talk about cross-cultural experience!

The new seasonal menu in Outback is salt-themed. Hence, the Salted Caramel Cheesecake rounded up our lunch. Before the sweet end, we did a detour and savoured their mainstay Baby Back Ribs and can't help but revisit their signature homemade brownie, the Chocolate Thunder from Down Under.

Boisterous Australian-themed chain serving steaks, seafood & other hearty steakhouse fare is how Outback describes their style. We are in full agreement!

*Outback Steakhouse
4th Floor Siam Discovery
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*Opens daily from 11AM
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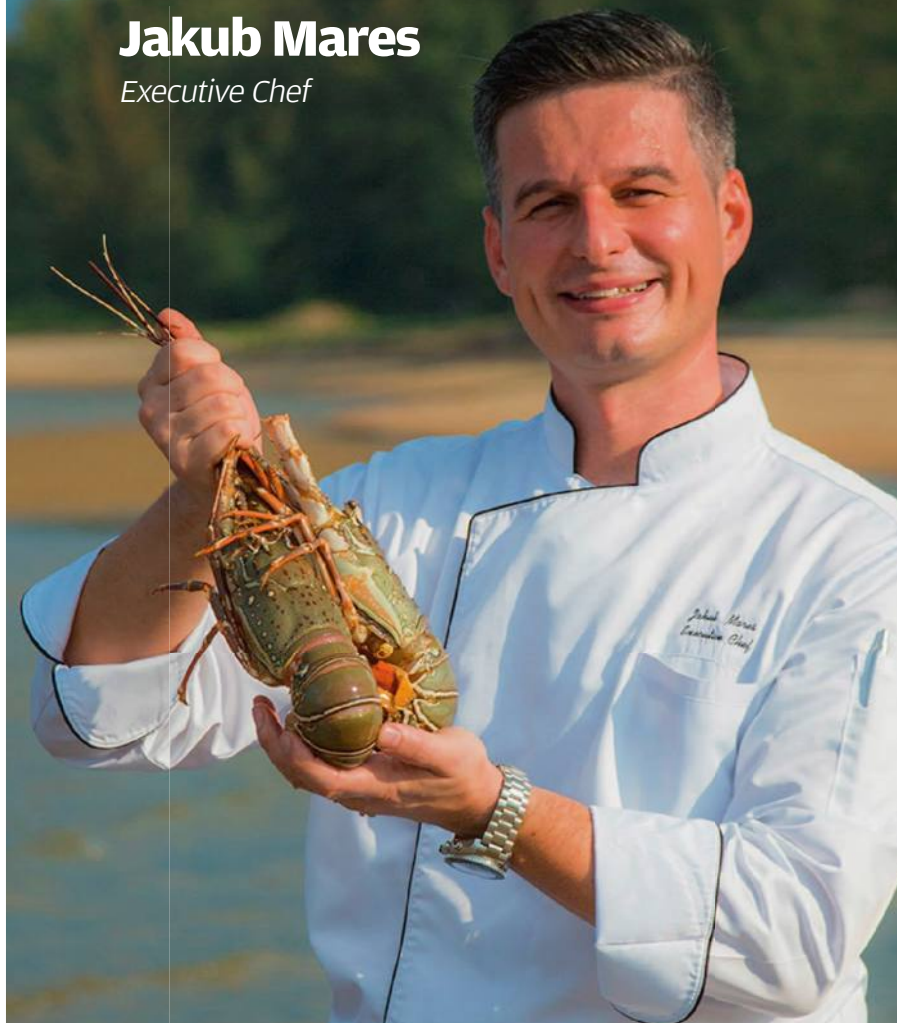
Line ID

All prices include VAT and service charge. Prices subject to change without notice

Meet the Chef

Jakub Mares

Executive Chef



Chef in focus

■ **Chef Jakub Mares**
Chef Jakub grew up in Czech Republic, Switzerland and Germany.

In 1998, aged just 16, Jakub began his culinary journey at The Grand Hotel Pupp in Carlsbad for three years. After compulsory service in the Czech Air Force, he joined

The Four Seasons Prague Hotel, where he worked at the Allegro Restaurant, the first restaurant to receive a Michelin star in a post-communist country. He then transferred to the Four Seasons in Park Lane, London, before joining Heston Blumenthal's famous Fat Duck Restaurant, a three Michelin Stars establishment.

After stints in Malaysia, he became Executive sous chef at The Landmark Bangkok, and then joined the Anantara Riverside Resort.

Currently, he is Executive Chef at Sheraton Hua Hin Resort & Spa and Sheraton Hua Hin Pranburi Villas.

Sheraton Hua Hin Resort & Spa. www.marriott.com/hhqsi

Sheraton Hua Hin Pranburi Villas. www.marriott.com/hhqps

Tel: 032 708 000 Fax: 032 708 068

Why cooking as a career?

It was my first and only choice from childhood. As a third generation of chefs in my family, it was an easy decision.

Two biggest influences on your career?

My father as a chef and the first big chef I worked with, Vito Mollica, at Four Seasons Prague. It was one of my first jobs after the army. A great experience that opened my eyes within the culinary industry.

Best early kitchen experience?

Apprentice studies at Grandhotel Pupp which has a heritage dating back to 1701. It was a great experience at the beginning of my journey.

Worst kitchen experience?

There are good and bad situations in any kitchen on a daily basis. I don't keep a record of the bad ones. I move forward, learn from each situation and try to avoid repeating any bad situation again.

Best meal you've ever had?

I appreciate any fresh meal prepared with care and love. This can be from a Michelin star chef or a street vendor.

What is your cooking philosophy?

Take the best possible ingredients and prepare them with respect and harmony.

What's your signature dish?

Technically, I consider any dish I prepare as my signature dish.

Favorite cookbook?

French Laundry by Thomas Keller is a classic.

Most difficult ingredient to cook with?

Any new ingredient used for the first time.

How do you keep in touch with the latest food trends?

Magazines, shows and cook books.

Greatest achievement to-date?

Being 20+ years in industry and still keep going.

Famous people you've cooked for.

Pope Benedict XVI, Princess Sirivannavari Nariratana and Madonna.

Who would you like to cook for?

Mark Wiens.

Utensils you can't do without?

Chef's knife, good blender, stove.

Most influential chef?

Vito Mollica.

Music you listen to while cooking?

None.

Best advice you've ever received?

Work hard.

What is your favorite dish to cook for yourself?

Breakfast.

Favorite dish cooked by someone else?

My wife's marinated pork belly, crispy-fried served with "forget husband" sticky rice and nam jim jeaw is a dream on a plate.

What is next for you?

Getting ready for our next event at Sheraton Hua Hin Resort & Spa.



PIRIPIRO

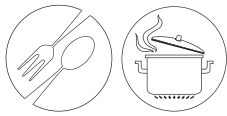
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Recipe



Pumpkin Risotto with Sous Vide Lamb Shanks with Red Wine Sauce

Imported lamb shanks cooked by a French culinary sous vide technique (vacuum cooking) which keeps the integrity of the shanks. After being put in hermetic sealed plastic and immersed in water at precisely controlled temperature, the shanks are topped with European red wine sauce. The taste then is fulfilled with pumpkin risotto served in a pumpkin.



cut out and keep

Ingredients

• Lamb shank	400 gr
• Risotto	100 gr
• Onion	10 gr
• Garlic	10 gr
• White wine	50 gr
• Pumpkin	50 gr
• Stork	150 gr
• Parmesan cheese	100 gr
• Whipping cream	50 gr
• Red wine	150 gr

• Truffle oil	5 gr
• Green Bean	30 gr
• Bell pepper	30 gr

Method

Sous vide mutton by putting it in a vacuum bag. Add olive oil, red wine, bay leave, rosemary, butter, salt, and black pepper into the vacuum bag and exhaust the air. Then immerse it in water with 75 degrees Celsius for 8 hours.

Pumpkin Risotto

Fry onion, garlic, butter, and rice. Pour wine and stock and put mashed pumpkin flavor with salt and pepper into the pan. When the rice is almost cooked, add cream and parmesan cheese.

Then serve it in a baked pumpkin. Roasted green peas flavored with salt and pepper.



Chef Kittisak Khuengthi

Chef in focus

Chef Kittisak Khuengthi or Chef A position: Executive Chef

He began with the experience as a chef specializing in the traditional Thai royal cuisine from the business of traditional royal family that owns a Thai royal restaurant in Sukhumvit. He started learning to be a chef from experts since he was 20 years old and cooking became his favorite activity. Previously, he was slowly getting into the circle of cooking. Then he got an opportunity to work with some leading hotel brands such as Amari, Hilton, Marriott. After that, he got another opportunity internationally. He worked and studied abroad in the fields of cooking and hotel. He got a chance to work with some global brands such as Marriott, ITC, Starwood, Residence at Sea, and Pacific Resort in many countries including America, New Sea Land, and India. Moreover, He got a chance to cooperate in creating promotions for food in many regions around the world such as Europe, South America, Asia, etc. In 2015, he came back to his hometown and got a chance to work with the well-known hotel again. For this time, he has brought the excellent experience about cooking and culture in other countries with him to apply it to his career as a chef. For example, he currently works in the luxury hotel which is globally famous in Pattaya, Cape Dara. He has created various kinds of dishes for visitors to try.

Award Winning

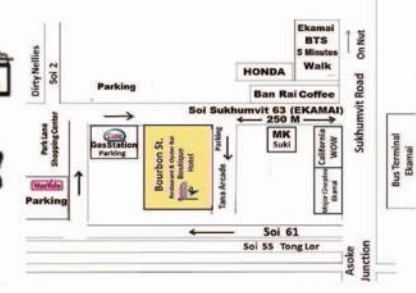
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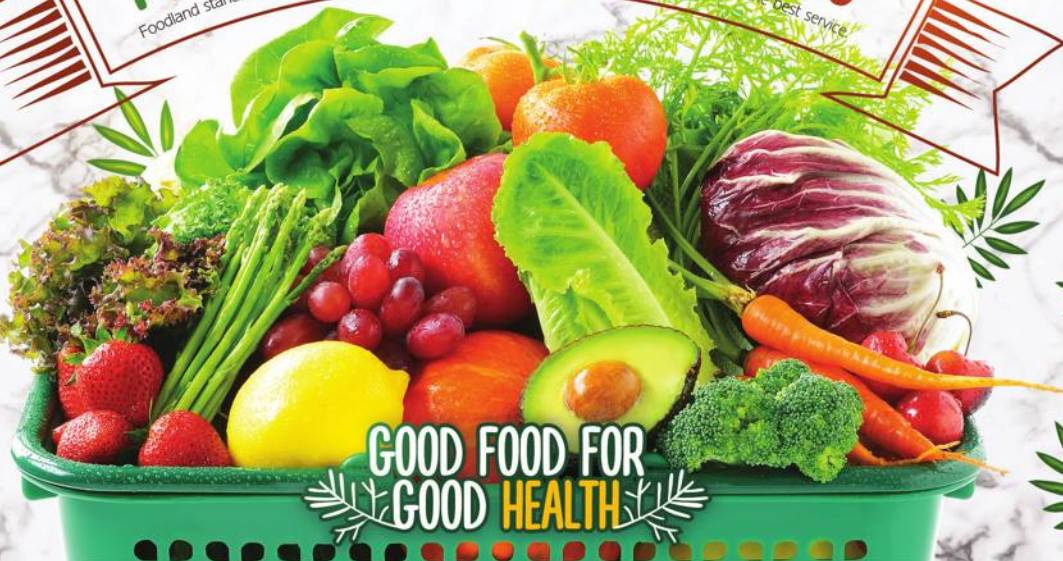


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Last month's foodie functions in focus

Scrapbook



The EXCLUSIVE “DOUBLE H PARTY”

➔ Greyhound Café & Another Hound Café together with Dewar's premium Scotch whisky organised an exclusive party titled “DOUBLE H PARTY” to introduce “HIGHBALL” culture to Thai consumers under the “#D15NIGHTS” concept with numerous entertainment lineups in the relaxing ambience of “Green Hideaway” with celebrity guests.





Guest review by

Bangkok
Beefsteak &
Burgundy

Le Dalat – worth waiting for



Le Dalat opened around 40 years ago and so one might wonder why it took us so long to visit this charming Vietnamese restaurant located toward the end of Soi 23. We can wonder no longer.

We assembled in the cosy bar area where we sipped NV Valentin Zusslin Crémant d'Alsace Rosé, a refreshing crisp fizzy that is the second-most popular sparkling wine in France, trailing only Champagne.

Moving to the private room we found an assortment of starters comprising Crab Meat Flute, Beef Betel Leaf, Crunchy Rice Cake, and Summer Roll. Vietnamese cuisine includes much green vegetable and food spokesman Jake Meerman praised the generous assortment he found along with certain of the sauces, rapidly consumed by foodies opposite.

Your author was having “a senior moment” so not all the starters were captured by the lens but I did enjoy each of the dishes. They were served with Zillinger Weissburgunder Reflexion 2016 (Austria) acclaimed by Danny Arn, our erudite wine spokesman of the day, and excellent value for money. It again was crisp, and bright yellow and spicy.

Fisherman's Sweet and Sour Soup came next. Jake found the dish less hot than he would have wished but commended the fish itself, fresh and



well cooked.

Cha Ca - Hanoi Sizzling Red Snapper Plate “was different” said Jake; a little difficult for us farangs to consume with panache though, once one had mastered a suitable technique, it was certainly nice to eat.

It came with Denogent St. Veran 2014 (France); the nose is buttery with floral notes which blossomed into yellow plums and apples on the palate and I found it to be my wine of choice of the day though served a little too cold to bring out the full range of flavours.

Braised Pork with Rice Noodles and Vegetables followed. This was Jake's dish of the day; perhaps a little

too sweet but very tender and with a nice assembly of vegetables.

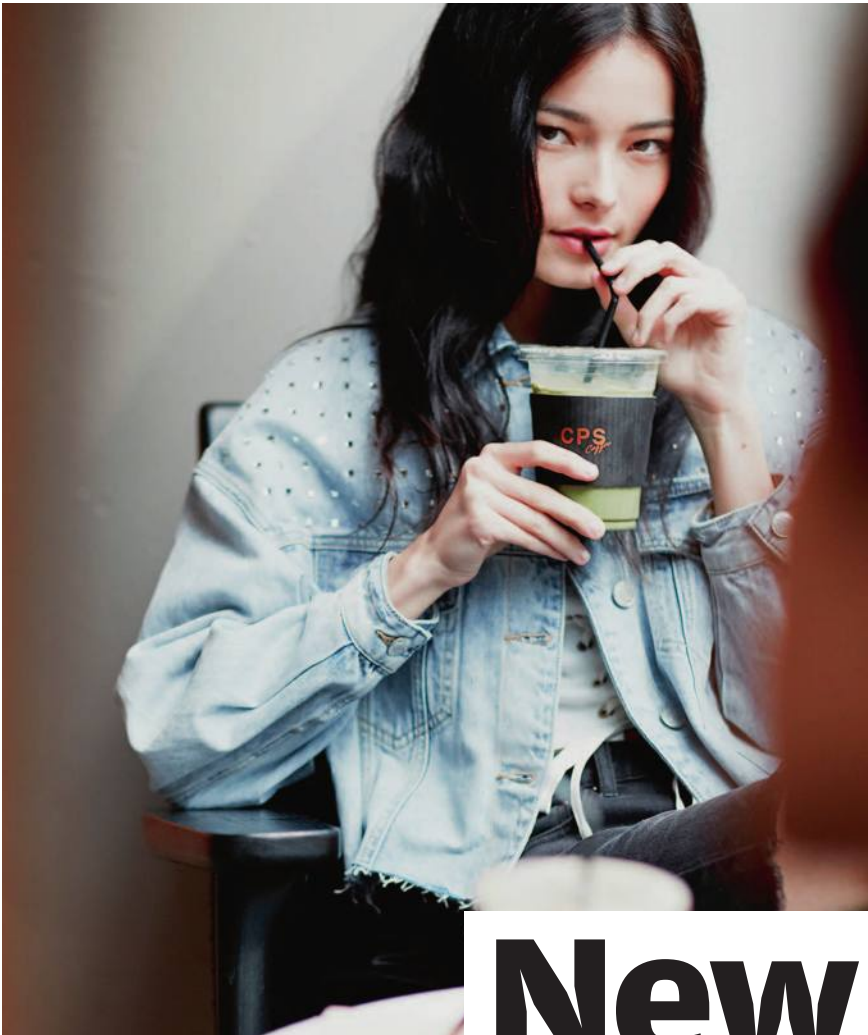
The accompanying Cherubino Cabernet Sauvignon 2015 (West Australia) perhaps proved how difficult it is to serve wines with Asian food though Danny did an excellent job of describing the wine; although medium bodied, it has depth, power and gentleness. The finish is long and persistent.

Indochine Beef Stew with Saffron Rice and French Baguette again found to be a little too sweet for some but very flavoursome.

Jake was delighted by his Banana Fritter with Ice Cream but left Thomas Nowak to describe the assorted cheeses that Thomas had donated big-heartedly to the diners. It came with Feudo Maccari Saia Nero d'Avola 2015 (Sicily). This is a well-structured, full-bodied, heavy tannins wine, which most agreed was enjoyable though young.

After coffee, we were left with the pleasant task of thanking Alan Rankin for his generous donation of Glenmorangie Malt in celebration of his birthday and asking him to show our gratitude to the team at Le Dalat which had done an excellent job for us.

*Le Dalat. 57 Soi Prasarnmitr,
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Without Passion, Life is Nothing

FLAMENCO BANGKOK, the latest modern sky bar with a Latin twist, is now the newest hangout spot in the heart of Bangkok. Decorated with styles influenced by Latin cultures around the globe, the bar is filled with colours, new experiences and exciting entertainment reflecting the motto "Without Passion, Life is Nothing". Open every day from 5pm - midnight on 9th floor, The Helix, The EmQuartier shopping complex.

Tel: 02 003 6006. FB : FLAMENCO BANGKOK



The Land of the Dawn-lit Mountains

By Christian Schulz

Beautiful and remote, Arunachal Pradesh on India's far eastern border is home to the country's greatest biodiversity, with as many as 600 species of orchids, one third of its plants of India, along with numerous mammals and over half of India's 1,300 birds. But there's a sense of urgency to explore the region as rapid development threatens its isolation



SURROUNDED by Bhutan to the west, China/Tibet to the north, Myanmar to the east, and the Indian state of Assam to the South, Arunachal Pradesh, is one of the most sparsely populated states of India and one of the world's least-explored regions.

Being the easternmost state of India, Arunachal Pradesh is truly the place where the sun first rises. It is the largest of the northeastern states and much of it has hardly been explored or catalogued. Ethnic and linguistic diversity in the state may be the highest, not only in India, but perhaps in any comparably-sized Asian region.



The Author with Tagin tribal elder



Three Generations of the Adi Padam tribe



Houses of the Galo tribe with rice terraces

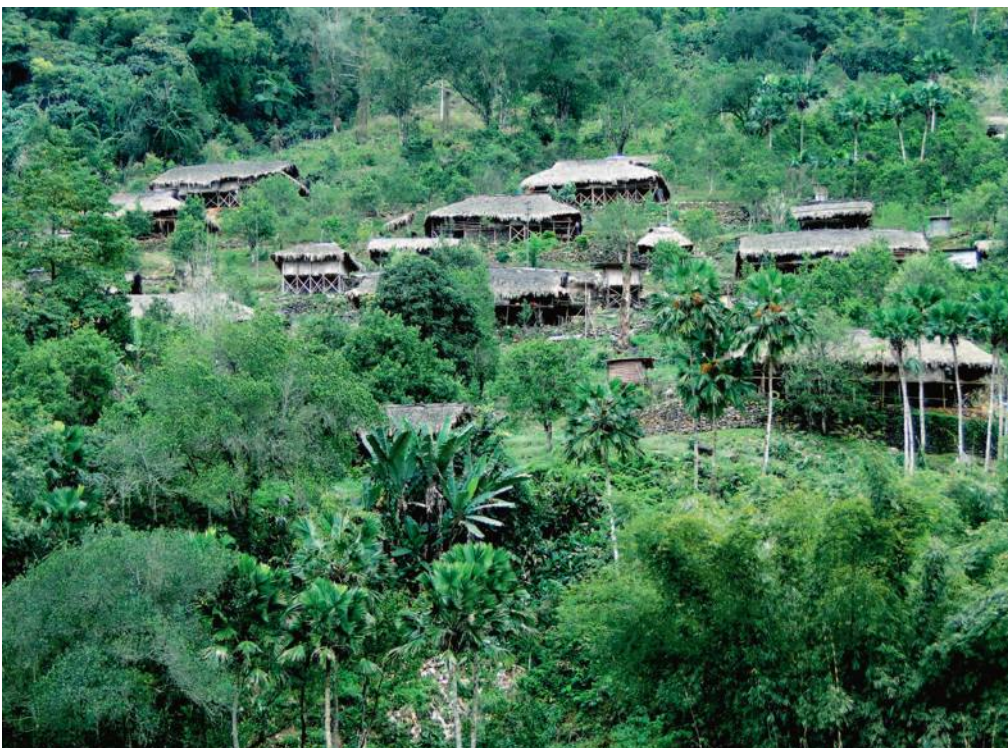
Although the British annexed the area in 1858, the exact boundary between Tibet and India remained undefined until 1914 when British and Tibetan authorities signed the Shimla agreement. The international border is also known as the McMahon Line, after Henry McMahon, a British administrator.

However, the McMahon Line has never been fully recognized as an international border by China. During the short 1962 war with India, China briefly occupied parts of Arunachal Pradesh but then unilaterally withdrew its armed forces beyond the Line.

China today claims Arunachal Pradesh as part of its territory, resulting in very close control over access to the region by the Indian Border Police Force.

The land is mountainous with Himalayan ranges along the northern borders, and other large mountain ranges running North-South. These ranges divide the state into five major river valleys with the Siang River being the largest contributor to the Tsangpo River, which takes the name Brahmaputra as it enters Assam.

Arunachal Pradesh may also have the greatest biodiversity in India, with as many as 600 species of orchids and



Thatched roof houses of the Adi Minjong tribe

one third of the plants of India, along with the same proportion of mammals and over half of India's 1,300 birds.

However here, just as in other parts of the Indian subcontinent, biodiversity is threatened by numerous factors, including development of infrastructure such as roads and hydroelectric dams, agricultural expansion into forest areas, and ineffectual resource governance. All of this promotes a feeling of urgency to explore the region, one of the last remote parts of the world.

With no airport and with a mandatory requirement for foreigners to have a special Protected Area Permit and to be continuously accompanied by a certified guide, a domestic airport in Assam is the easiest place in which to arrive, make

arrangements, and travel on.

The people of Arunachal Pradesh can be grouped into four broad ethnic groups based on geographical, cultural, and linguistic affinities. In the western section adjoining Bhutan live the Monpa, immigrants from Tibet. East of here lies the territory of the Nyishi, the most numerous. Amongst the Nyishi live the Apatani. The central part is dominated by Galo people. In the far eastern region are the Adi.

Close to the Bhutan and Tibetan borders, Buddhism is the main religion and colorful Buddhist prayer flags decorate every mountain pass. At higher elevations of the central region, the majority of the tribes are animists having a strong feeling for the spirituality of nature or a belief in



Galong tribe boy fishing in the Subansiri River, a contributor to the Brahmaputra River



Panggi tribe girl weaving

the Sun and Moon as supreme Gods. In the lower valleys, the influence of Christian missionaries from southern India is witnessed.

Experiencing some of these diverse ethnic communities, consisting of 26 major tribes and a number of sub-tribes, requires long hours in a Jeep (with a skillful driver) as the roads are not in the best condition and are very vulnerable to landslides. Driving up endless narrow valleys, winding roads, and crossing the occasional snowy mountain pass is required in order to search for different local tribes still living and following the lifestyles of their forefathers.

On our visit, whenever a cluster of wooden, thatched-roof houses on stilts was seen, the journey was



Apatani Tribe women with a heavy load of rice



Adi sub-tribe



Mechukha Valley: Local hunters chanting at the bad spirits occupying the body of a young Memba tribe girl



Mechukha Valley: Memba tribe girl with Buddhist monks during religious ceremony

interrupted to hike up steep paths or cross cold rivers on dodgy suspension bridges to visit and explore these remote “estates”. While we were greeted with initial skepticism by many older people, we met with more child-like curiosity from the younger ones.

However, with the help of an experienced guide and humble small talk, the ice was soon broken and often followed by an invitation into houses where tea and sometimes snacks like pieces of ginger or fruit were offered.

On special occasions “home-brewed” rice beer that had been fermented in a funnel made from banana leaves was served. The epicenter of a tribal home, the kitchen fire, is not only used for cooking but helps to keep the house warm and dry. It also allows for the smoking of meat, usually kept on a rack above. Occasionally a collection of Mithun heads sacrificed for ceremonial feasts adorn the walls of tribal homes.

Close to the houses, vegetables are grown, while some of the dense jungle next to the villages was often cleared and skillfully constructed rice terraces covered the slopes. Besides cultivation of crops (even opium poppies) and breeding of livestock, braiding baskets and weaving is a widespread skill.

Each tribe seemed to have their own different colors and patterns. Spending the nights in homestays allowed a very close encounter with the locals and the chance to be part of their day-to-day life. While rice and vegetables were the main food sources, on some occasions chicken, pork, or river fish was served. Tea is the widespread drink.

At the far end of the Mechukha Valley (30 km south from the Indian-Tibetan border) the sounds of Buddhist horns from inside a wooden house belonging to a family from the

Memba tribe caught the attention. The family head, with distinct Tibetan features immediately invited us in to have butter tea and witness a ceremony lead by Buddhist monks. Long, monotonous Buddhist prayers, interrupted by horn sounds and drum beats, accompanied local hunters equipped with bows and arrows and large knives who chanted at the bad spirits occupying the body of a young, beautifully-dressed girl from the Memba Tribe.

A life-sized doll meant to absorb these bad spirits was later dumped



Adi Padam tribe dance during annual clan festival



Inside the home of Idu Mishmi tribe



Ziro Valley: Apatani tribe women with facial tattoos and nostril pierced with large resin disks



Ziro Valley: Myoka Festival – Shaman of the Apatani tribe pours rice wine on sacrificed pig



Ziro Valley: Myoka Festival - Apatani tribe women in traditional dress

into a nearby river. This 17-year-old girl said later that she had been suffering from severe stomach pains for over two years. After several failed attempts to get help from conventional doctors, this spiritual way was seen as the last hope for a cure.

The Ziro Valley is intensively cultivated by the Apatani. Unlike most other tribes in the region, this group is known to have practiced sedentary cultivation for a long time, using well-planned irrigation networks and spending a large amount of time in weeding and maintenance of paddy fields, making the area one of the most productive agricultural belts in Arunachal Pradesh.

Complementary fish culture was introduced into canals and flooded paddies, reducing the infestation of

rice with pests, reducing the number of insects, and providing a source of protein to supplement an otherwise carbohydrate-rich diet based on rice.

Festivals form an essential aspect of the socio-cultural life of these tribal people. The annual Myoko Festival of the Apatani Tribe in the pine-clad hills of the Ziro Valley provides a rare insight into their rituals. Starting before dawn, a shaman priest blesses animals, such as pigs and chickens that are to be sacrificed. Later he pours rice beer onto the animals while traditionally-dressed women sprinkle rice flour on them before they are slaughtered. This procedure is not for the faint-hearted as it involves the slitting open of the chest and the ripping out the heart which, still beating, is then granted to and consumed by a special and highly-

respected family member.

Known for their beauty, Apatani women were, in the past, often abducted by neighboring tribes. To discourage this, their noses were turned into hippopotamus-snouts by means of large resin disks being thrust into the pierced nostrils, while facial tattoos were forced upon them to blemish their beauty – a tradition which only ended in 1969.

Dance forms a vital element in the lives of the tribal people. During a stroll through an Adi Padam tribal village in one of the lower valleys, a large group of people was seen gathering in front of a house. Advancing closer, and once the barking dogs had been calmed down, we were invited to join their annual family reunion, witness their traditional dances, and have a meal.

After lunch (men first, followed by women), served on banana leaves and consisting of rice, vegetables, potato, cooked chicken, and roasted field rats, we were indulged with rice beer.

Modernity is approaching fast in Arunachal Pradesh. Traditional lifestyles and values based on living in harmony with nature are still extant there. Many of the tribal people do live in close harmony with nature, have simple lives, but seem happy. Life there provides a stark contrast to life governed by tight schedules in the hectic and polluted concrete jungle of Bangkok and leads the thoughtful visitor to ponder the really important things in life.

Ballet masterclass at the Russian embassy

Teacher Julia brings her amazing talents to Bangkok



■ The Russian embassy in Bangkok has become a centre of ballet excellence, thanks to the young and beautiful Julia Tutarskya, a former prima donna who is working wonders as a dance teacher at the in-house school.

Opened in 2014, the ballet school was the brainchild of former Russian Ambassador to Thailand, Mr Kirill Barsky. Since then it has attracted students from many nationalities, including Thais and Russians.

Julia was born in Michurinsk, a town named after the great biologist Ivan Vladimirovich Michurin, located in the Tambov region of Russia.

When Julia was just four years old, her parents took her and her elder sister to the Michurinsk Choreography School for ballet classes. “At that young age, I already knew I wanted to become a ballet dancer,” says Julia.

With support from her parents and the school, Julia pursued her dream, which eventually led to her current profession.

Julia’s childhood was filled with exciting concerts, daily dance lessons, and both classic ballet and traditional folkdance. She began piano lessons at the same age as she started dancing and wanted to become as good a piano player as her mother. Julia was a dedicated student and loved history, literature and foreign languages.



She talks fondly about her first teacher, Mrs Lyubov Viktorovna Benderskaya, who not only taught her students a perfect ‘pas de deux’ but also instilled a love and appreciation of ballet.

“I started to explore classic ballet and learned a lot from her. In this school, choreography became a part of the students’ lives. Russia is known for supporting children with a certain gift - ballet, gymnastics, music or anything else.

The country promotes the development of people intellectually and culturally and has a program in all regions of Russia called ‘Federal support for gifted children.’

“After I had achieved some of my goals, including winning several Russian and international competitions, I won a scholarship aged 13 from the Ministry of Culture for ‘Young talents of Russia’”, she says.

“I continued my studies at the Moscow State Academy of Choreography at the celebrated Bolshoi theatre. I had a wonderful teacher, Mrs Luydmila Alexeevna Kolenchenko, who taught me and my class mates, in classic ballet.

“

I started to teach in Bangkok after receiving a positive answer to my request to teach here by the Russian Federation in the Kingdom of Thailand.

The Young talents of Russia award was presented by Mrs Leonova Marina Konstantinovna, the principle of the Moscow State Academy of Choreography. Known as the People’s Artist of Russia, she had a PhD in Art studies, was a professor and a globally recognized dancer.

“From the moment I met her, ballet became the most important thing in my life. It became my life, and I was breathing and dreaming ballet.

“I was performing several variations of the famous ballet Giselle and had a main part in Chippolino. I also received a diploma for my part in Blue bird, the Russian National Children’s Festival of Ballet in Moscow, as well as a diploma

“At that time my own secret dream was to perform the part of Kitri in Don Quixote

“At school I also learned to dance parts of the Nutcracker, Esmeralda and Swan Lake.

“I have worked more than 10 years now with ballet and choreography and I’m still participating in master classes to improve my knowledge.”

What brought Julia to the Russian embassy School in Bangkok?

“I started to teach in Bangkok after receiving a positive answer to my request to teach here by the Russian Federation in the Kingdom of Thailand.

“Since 2014, thanks to the former Ambassador Mr Kirill Barsky, the Russian Embassy School has had a



ballet school, a structural educational unit of the embassy.

"Today several students, both female and male, study classic dance, folk dance, music, rhythmic, gymnastic and swimming. Each topic contributes to a diversified personality of the students.

"The students often take part in receptions organized by the embassy, showing their skills in various performances. One of the most popular is known as the Kalinka dance, particularly among the male students as it consists of many dance tricks that require good and strong physical condition. This dance is also the most popular among visiting guests and the local audience.

"Kids as young as three can start taking lessons from me. I also teach Russian ballet to Thai students, as well as other nationalities at the Dance-Center school of Performing and Arts.

"Russian ballet has become extremely popular among the foreign students.

"I have a dream that one day, a student of mine will become a famous ballerina like Anna Pavlova, Galina Ulanova or Mathilde Kschessinska, and I want children from all nationali-

“
On my bucket list is to visit the Similan Islands and in Europe, I would like to visit The Hague. My biggest dream is to travel to Peru and visit Lima.

ties to become familiar and get to love Russian ballet.

"My students and I have taken part in the annual Bangkok International Festival of Dance and Music. It's the perfect event for my students to demonstrate their talent on the same stage as several famous Russian dancers."

How long does Julia plan to stay in Bangkok? "I really love my work and

the students and I feel very happy in this beautiful country. The Thai people are awesome, friendly and interested. The Thai language is very complex, but beautiful and melodic. I'm also very impressed by the art of Thai dances, the colorful costumes and the uniqueness of images that can hardly be found anywhere else. "For some years I have been practicing Ashtanga yoga at the Ashtanga Institute (AYBKK), which helps me to get ready for my working days and to tune my body and soul. Another extreme hobby I have is wakeboarding.

"I love the Thai spicy food and I think Thai cuisine is one of the best in the world.

"On my bucket list is to visit the Similan Islands and in Europe, I would like to visit The Hague. My biggest dream is to travel to Peru and visit Lima."

Does Julia miss anything here in Asia? Yes, she says. Believe it or not, it's Russia's famous winter! Who'd have expected that?

Hopefully this talented young woman will stay here for a lot longer so we can enjoy performances by Julia and her students in the future.



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Cricket: Chiang Mai Sixes Toufiqul inspires NCL Dynamites to victory again

Many observers believed that 2019 would be the year when the most successful side in the Chiang Mai Sixes would finally meet their match. NCL

Dynamites had won six matches in a row to reach the Cup final as they comfortably disposed of UN Irish Pub in the semi-finals, but Gloucestershire Gipsies had matched the defending champions win for win as they also had an unbeaten record after easily beating NCL Masters in the semi-finals.

Gloucestershire Gipsies were in fact regarded at potentially the stronger side at least on paper, but it was a different story when the two teams met in a high-class Cup final.

Faysal Ahmed bowled Henry Cooper, the leading run-scorer in New Zealand first-class cricket last season, with the third ball of the innings and Toufiqul Haque dismissed Ben Hyde in the next over as Gipsies slipped to 16 for 2. Nick Kelly and Tom Smith had launched an array of shots earlier in the competition, but although they rebuilt the innings they found the Dynamites bowling and field tough to combat.

A total of 52 for 2 rarely proves enough to win the Cup final but Gipsies gave their all in the field even after Syed Mokammel had blasted 27 from 10 balls. Ben Hyde claimed his wicket and only conceded six runs in the third over but Toufiqul Haque so effective with the ball throughout the week hit two sixes to take his side to victory with seven balls to spare.

NCL Dynamites had done it again and Toufiqul was named player of the tournament for taking six wickets as well as scoring 102 runs without being dismissed.

There were five other finals as well as eight semi-finals on an action-packed finals day which saw Central Spirit defend their Ladies Cup after a spirited performance from Thai Angels was brought to an end by Rose Moore who took three wickets without conceding a run.

Ios Malakas were popular winners of the Spoon as they celebrated the memory of Terry Skillett as they beat NT Bushrangers with eight balls to spare. Sol Chatterjee hit 21 from 10 balls helping to raise 6000 Baht for junior cricket as Sons of Pitches and Malakas hit donated 1000 Baht for each of his three boundaries.

Gymkhana Cavaliers used to be regular contenders in the Spoon but they have raised their game thanks to the addition of several talented youngsters, so the veteran team members Eric and Chris were able to celebrate their 20th competition by winning the Bowl as they beat Awali by two runs. Julian Fagen and Angus Leslie both hit 30s in a total of 70 for 2 but despite a rare failure from Ishti Awali got close to their target as Waqas hit 31.

Thai Thevada had come into fine form later in the week to reach the final of the Shield as Chanchai hit thirties in wins against Darjeeling and Clifton Hill, but even though he made it three in a row against Yorkshire Puddings, it was not enough to chase down their total of 74 for 1 as the bowlers cleverly took the pace off the ball. The Puddings finished as worthy winners of the Shield as Thai Thevada finished 14 runs short.

Following the excitement of the Cup final, Red Lion Wombats faced Tokyo Dingbats in the final of the Plate to bring the 32nd Chiang Mai Sixes to a close. The Wombats have played in all 32 tournaments but their total of 58 for 2 was easily overtaken by the Dingbats inside three overs as their opener Peter Richardson hit 34 from nine balls.

The presentations were made at the ground and an enjoyable Finals Dinner was held at the Empress Hotel where it was announced that the 33rd Chiang Mai Sixes would be held from 29th March to 4th April in 2020.

Thank you to all of you who support the tournament and give so generously to ensure that junior cricket in the North of Thailand continues to flourish.

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His Excellency Lorenzo Galanti

Italian Ambassador is focused on forging an even stronger Ital-Thai partnership

Italian Ambassador is focused on forging an even stronger Ital-Thai partnership

Words **MAXMILIAN WECHSLER**

His Excellency Lorenzo Galanti took up his post as Italian Ambassador to Thailand, Cambodia and Laos in July last year. Mr Galanti is a seasoned diplomat with strong experience in the economic sector, particularly trade and investment. He told The BigChilli that these are exciting times for both Thailand and Italy, and there are interesting possibilities for mutually beneficial cooperation.

THE interview took place at the ambassador's embassy office on the 40th floor of CRC Tower on Wireless Road, with an amazing view of Bangkok and the greens of Lumpini Park. Mr Galanti began by saying: "The outset of my mission last year was auspiciously marked by the celebrations for the 150th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Italy and Thailand.

"My ambition is to turn the longtime friendship between our two countries into a long-lasting and strong partnership. Italy looks at further developing business relations with Thailand and I think there are many opportunities that we haven't entirely developed yet. This is especially true of the infrastructure projects that are receiving a strong push from the Thai government. We look forward to increased participation from Italian companies in these projects, and in other areas as well.

"We are also looking to stimulate investment in both directions, on the basis of some success stories. For example, Central Group has purchased the historic La Rinascente department store chain in Italy, and Italian companies have invested in Thailand's Eastern Economic Corridor."

Background

"I was brought up in Florence, Italy, although I was born in Germany. My mother is from Germany and my father is from Veneto in Italy. At the time of my birth, they were living in Stuttgart. My father was an engineer. When I was one year old, the family moved to Florence, where I

received my primary education and attended university. I studied political science and after graduating from university, I applied with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) to enter the diplomatic service. This was in 1993. Surprisingly, I was successful, so I moved to Rome with my girlfriend, who was later to become my wife, and started working at the MFA the same year."

Mr Galanti credited a prominent Italian professor, who unfortunately passed away recently, with helping to ignite his interest in international relations. He was particularly interested in relations between Italy and Germany at the outbreak of the Second World War, and wrote his thesis on the subject. After graduation, it seemed only natural to pursue a career in diplomacy and international relations.

"I joined the foreign ministry and then I was drafted in the Italian Air Force, since military service was compulsory at that time in Italy. One year later I returned to the Foreign Ministry, working in the press office. In 1997 I was posted in Damascus, Syria, and worked there for four years. As first secretary at the embassy, I was in charge of consular affairs, trade and development cooperation. Syria was a much more peaceful place then. I witnessed the passing away of Hafez al-Assad and the very swift coming to power of his son Bashar al-Assad. It was a very interesting time.

"Most of the country didn't have any internet access and what was available was very slow. Cell phones were only starting. It was really a different environment, but it was beautiful from the point of view of archeology and tourism. We had a young daughter, and we travelled a lot around Syria, which was then a very safe country. We visited Aleppo, Palmyra, the Krak des Chevaliers and many other places.

"Next I was posted to Dakar in Senegal, where I was the deputy of mission. The embassy was the hub for our diplomatic relations with seven countries: Senegal, Capo Verde, Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Guinea Conakry, Mali and Mauritania. I used to travel quite a lot throughout the West African region from 2001 to 2005.

"After leaving Senegal I returned to the ministry in Rome, where I was assigned to Human Resources for a while, and later became chief of staff to our secretary general, who would be the equivalent of the permanent secretary in other systems. It was a very compelling time for me.

"Next was a posting at the Italian Embassy in Washington DC. We lived in Maryland. I was in charge of economic relations, trade, investment, finance and also science and technology. Everything from relations with NASA to sanctions on Iran was under my responsibility. This was 2010 to 2014, during President Obama's tenure. It was another very exciting time for me professionally. Washington is an amazingly interesting place to work and I enjoyed it a lot. Surprisingly, many taxi drivers there are from Ethiopia or Eritrea, and most of them speak some Italian because they spent some time in Italy before going to the States.

"In my position I interacted with the scientific, business and other communities throughout the US in interesting ways. Throughout my career I have placed emphasis on dealing with the business sector to support trade and investment and to promote Italian technology, taste and lifestyle."

A somber introduction to Thailand

"After serving in Washington, I returned to Rome and served as chief of staff to a former Deputy Foreign Minister, who was also in charge of relations with Asian countries. The first time I came to Thailand was to accompany him at the 21st ASEAN-EU Ministerial Meeting that took place in Bangkok in October 2016. When we arrived in Bangkok on the morning of October 13, the Italian Ambassador, my predecessor, met us at the airport with some very bad news: His Majesty King Rama IX had passed away that very day. We could feel the emotion all around.

"We were uncertain whether the program would hold up and the meetings would take place. Eventually it was confirmed that the meetings would go ahead and they went quite smoothly all things considered, but we could really sense and share a feeling of intense grief, especially from the Thai people around us.

"When the Italian Council of Ministers announced my appointment as ambassador to the Kingdom of Thailand, Cambodia and Laos on January 2018, it was my first ambassadorial assignment. I had the privilege to meet with Thai Foreign Minister Don Pramudwinai during his visit to Rome in March 2018. We were introduced by my Foreign Minister at that time, Angelino Alfano who had been in Thailand the previous month and was the first EU minister to visit Thailand after the change of the EU policy towards Thailand.

"I arrived in Thailand six months later, in July 2018. In meantime I met in Rome with Sudhitham Chirathivat, Senior Advisor of the Board of Central Group. As I

mentioned, Central has acquired the Italian department store La Rinascente, which is an important investment. We share a passion for Italy."

Diplomatic duties

Mr Galanti said being accredited in three countries is a challenge, but one he feels competent to take on. "We work on all three countries. Thailand is obviously the country we enjoy the broadest relationship with, but I am doing my utmost to also further develop relations with Cambodia and with Laos. Also in the regional perspective, Italy is keen to develop stronger relations with ASEAN as a group, and it is critical to entertain friendly and fruitful relations with the entire membership. I plan travel to both Cambodia and Laos at least two or three times a year.

"Last year we celebrated the 150th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Italy and Thailand. The Treaty of Friendship, Commerce and Navigation was signed on October 18, 1868. To highlight and celebrate this historic anniversary we organized a programme of cultural initiatives and events here, in the framework of the Italian Festival in Thailand, with the support of Italian and Thai sponsors. The Italian Festival reached its 14th edition this year.

"The Italian Embassy has a staff of 30, including expats and local staff," said Mr Galanti. "There is also an office of the Italian Trade Agency located in different premises. This agency, which promotes business-to-business relations, is staffed by one director from Italy and five local employees.

"Most of my staff at the embassy works on consular matters, providing Italians in Thailand with passports and other kinds of consular services.

Background of H.E. Lorenzo Galanti

- Born in Stuttgart, Germany, in 1968; graduated in political sciences in Florence in 1992.
- Started diplomatic career in 1993 at the Department of Cultural Affairs; complied with national military service in Air Force in 1994; once back at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1995 took up post in the Press and Institutional Communication Service.
- 1997 to 2001, served as First Secretary at the Italian Embassy in Damascus, dealing mainly with commercial, development cooperation and consular sectors.
- 2001, moved to the Embassy in Dakar, with competence for Senegal, Capo Verde, Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Guinea Conakry, Mali and Mauritania, acting as Counsellor and Deputy Head of Mission until 2005.
- Returned to Rome in 2005, assigned to the Directorate General for Human Resources, Budget and Innovation until 2007, when appointed as Head of the Office of the Secretary General.
- 2010, moved to Washington, DC, taking position of First Counsellor responsible for economic, commercial and scientific affairs.
- Returned to the Ministry in 2014, appointed as Head of the Office of the Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Senator Benedetto Della Vedova, and in this role frequently visited Asia, particularly Southeast Asia.
- Promoted Minister Plenipotentiary in 2016; in 2018 he was appointed as Ambassador to the Kingdom of Thailand, accredited also in the Kingdom of Cambodia and Lao P.D.R. He is also Italy's Permanent Observer to UNESCAP.
- Ambassador Galanti is married and has three children. Two daughters live in Italy and one son lives in Bangkok.





Matera, Basilicata

(bluejayphoto / Getty Images)



Pacentro Abruzzo

(gmalandra / Getty Images)



Manarola, Cinque Terre, UNESCO World Heritage

(pixelliebe / Getty Images)

“We have two honorary consuls, one in Phuket and one in Chiang Mai. The consul general in Phuket, an Italian national, is in charge of the southern part of the country, which sees the most Italian tourists and also residents. The honorary consul in Chiang Mai is a Thai national, in charge of the northern part of Thailand. Both are kept very busy, I can tell you that.”

Bilateral relations

“Regarding bilateral trade, we buy from Thailand mostly electronic materials, and what we sell is mainly industrial machinery and, of course, also the traditional 3Fs: food, fashion and furniture.

“Italian luxury cars like Ferrari, Maserati and Lamborghini are very popular in Thailand among those that can afford them. There is a new Lamborghini dealership on Rama 9 Road in Bangkok and they are very active. I was invited for the grand opening of their new showroom in January. It was a great party.

“The showroom is not far away from a Ducati dealership, another Italian brand with dealers in Bangkok and in other provinces. Ducati will again participate in the annual MotoGP to be held at Buriram International Circuit on October 6, 2019. I also attended the grand opening of the Maserati showroom at IconSiam in December 2018, and the presentation of the new Maserati Quattroporte car held at Park Hyatt Hotel in March this year.”

Mr Galanti said Italy is looking forward to the resumption of trade agreement negotiations between Thailand and the European Union, which is expected to happen once a new, democratically-elected government is in place here. “We look forward to a trade agreement because we believe it will be mutually beneficial for all concerned – the EU, Thailand, and eventually the entire ASEAN group.

“About 265,000 Italian tourists visit Thailand every year and the number is increasing. We estimate there are as many as 10,000 Italian residents here, although only about 6,000 are registered with the embassy. A growing number of Italians are moving here after retirement.

“The embassy issues around 37,000 Schengen visas per year to Thai nationals. Most visitors are tourists, but several travel for business. It’s of course likely that many more Thais visit Italy with visas issued by the embassies of France or Germany or any other Schengen country.

“In addition to our consular and other duties, the embassy manages a large cultural program. We hold an Italian film festival, and I want to emphasize that this is an opportunity for the film communities in both countries to meet and form artistic relationships – directors, producers and actors. Culture is a foundation for stronger bilateral relations. Ultimately, building a partnership between our two countries is about supporting people-to-people relations, about bringing people with similar interests together. That’s the texture of it all, and that’s what the embassy is supposed to provide a platform for.



Capri, Campania

(Janoka82 / Getty Images)



Canal Grande, Venezia, Veneto

(Rudy Balasko / Getty Images)

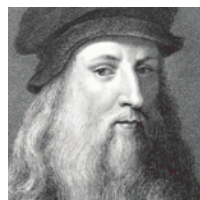
"This month marks 500 years since the death of the brilliant scientist and painter Leonardo da Vinci. To celebrate this unrivalled artist, scientist, engineer and genius of the Italian renaissance, we will hold a number of events here in Bangkok this year, including digital exhibitions, seminars and conferences, in collaboration with our partners in Thailand. It is a very exciting theme. Leonardo is so many things at once: for example, he is among the first who related science and technology. Before him, they were two separate worlds.

"The Italian government also supports archeological excavations in the Lopburi basin that have been ongoing for 30 years. We have had exhibitions featuring the findings of the archeologists, which cover a long stretch of time from the second millennium before Christ through the first millennium after Christ.

"There are many examples of Italians who are making a positive contribution in Thailand. In sports, one Italian we are very proud of is the trainer of the Thai women's national water pole team, Daniele Ferri – they always win the ASEAN competition.

"Italian food has long been a favorite for Thai people. Italy's great chefs are truly ambassadors for the country. Michelin starred chefs often come here to practice their art and host culinary events, and there are some excellent Italian restaurants in Bangkok, Phuket and other cities. In recognition of this," said Mr Galanti, holding up a book titled: A guidebook to Italian cuisine in Thailand, "the Italian-Thai Chamber of Commerce has published this book. The restaurants named in the book have passed the test on an authentic Italian cuisine, and there is some interesting information on the restaurants as well."

“This month marks 500 years since the death of the brilliant scientist and painter Leonardo da Vinci. To celebrate this unrivalled artist, scientist, engineer and genius of the Italian renaissance, we will hold a number of events here in Bangkok this year in collaboration with our partners in Thailand. Leonardo was among the first who related science and technology. Before him, they were two separate worlds.



to understand the culture because the language reflects the mindset of the people. So I think it is important and I intend to invest some time in doing so. Of course there are different levels of Thai language, including Royal Thai. My ambition for now is just to be able to have a simple conversation.

"My wife Francesca and I enjoy living in Bangkok. The diplomatic community here is very lively, friendly and welcoming. Everyone has been very friendly to us. There are many events hosted by the diplomatic community in Bangkok and we enjoy going to them. There are also many initiatives involving the Italian community, especially through the Italian-Thai Chamber of Commerce, and I am pleased to attend many of their events."

Hobbies, languages

"I do some yoga exercise first thing every morning for about 30 minutes, which is very important to me. Then I walk on a treadmill for about 12 minutes. This is how I start the day. In my free time I like listening to music and I like reading a lot. You could say I am a 'book eater'. Many friends suggested I should start playing golf and I can see the value of it and how it might be pleasurable, but I still haven't decided to undertake that commitment.

"I like travelling and I have already visited several places in Thailand outside of Bangkok with my family. The first place I went to was Ayutthaya, and on the way I visited the beautiful Royal Palace at Bang Pa-In. I have been to Chiang Rai and recently visited Krabi, Phuket and Ko Kut, an island close to Cambodia.

"I speak English, German, French and, of course, Italian. When I was in Syria I tried to learn Arabic, but I have just a small vocabulary. I can read some Arabic. I nurture the ambition to learn some Thai. It is important to know the language if you want

Social

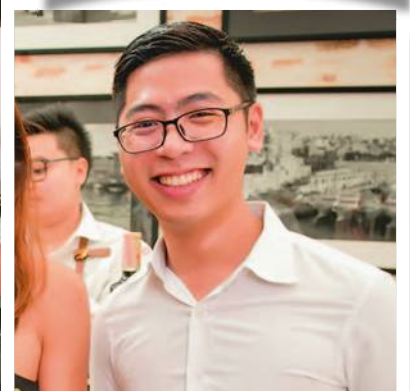
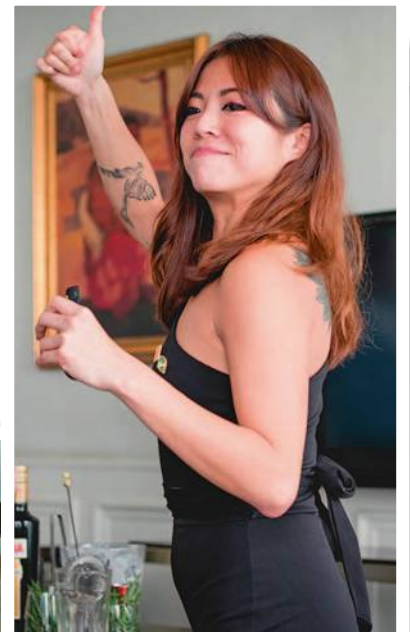
▣ Last month's best events in pictures





Bartender Training

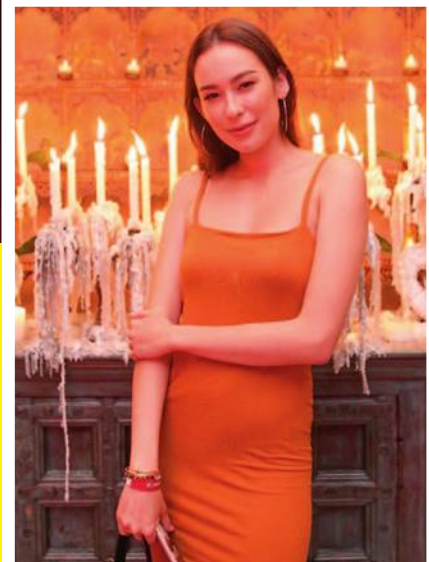
Campari Group & Alchemy Wines & Spirits Thailand Co., Ltd. hosted the "Italian Amaro Training Class" at Sorrento Sathorn, a trade event for all Bartenders, and lead by Symphony Loo, Campari Group Regional Brand Ambassador, South East Asia.





Painting the sky Latin

FLAMENCO BANGKOK, the latest modern sky bar at The Helix, 9th floor, The EmQuartier shopping complex, hosted their opening ceremony filled with energy and excitement from many celebrities and honourable guests enjoying Latin dance performances which made it a night to remember.





O'Malley's

Irish Pub & Restaurant

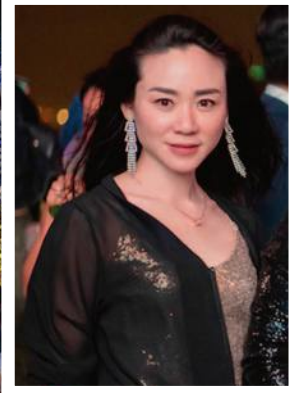


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Rooftop Bar Party

Spectrum Lounge & Bar launched at Hyatt Regency Bangkok Sukhumvit with an evening of cocktails and tapas energised by entertainment on 2 floors with a Swedish and Thai singer plus celebrity DJs from the region, highlighted by Khun Sammy welcoming guests while flying from 31st floor to 30th floor.





► **LGBT-Friendly Renaissance**

Renaissance Koh Samui Resort & Spa today offers an LGBT community-specific package prioritising a diverse and inclusive environment and aligning with Marriott International's #LoveTravels program. Special rates on Pool Villa Garden (10,000+++ baht) and Beachfront Pool Villa (15,000+++ baht) per room per night subject to availability include complimentary in-villa breakfast, daily cocktails per day, an afternoon tea set and the 4-hour Navigator program.

Tel: 077 429 300 www.renaissancekohsamui.com

MATES' RATES

Need a quick cheap getaway? Check out these great offers



► **Family Getaways**

Great escapes with 25% off at Mövenpick Asara Resort & Spa Hua Hin with the exclusive "Family Getaway" package start at 7,104 baht for stays booked until October 2019. Kids up to 6 years eat free and youngsters from 7-12 years get 50% off with a free scoop of premium Mövenpick ice-cream and parents can enjoy 15% off on food & beverage plus 15% off treatments at Asara Spa.

Tel: 032 520 777 [Facebook.com/movenpickhuahin](https://www.facebook.com/movenpickhuahin)



▲ Golden Triangle Specialities

Throughout April to June, Flare Asian Restaurant at Hilton Pattaya invites you to experience the authentic taste of traditional foods from Thailand, Laos and Myanmar including 'Lanna Khantoke' an exquisite set at 950 baht nett, 'Or Lam', Laotian striploin stew at 450 baht nett, spicy dish 'Abb Pla' at 400 baht nett, or 'Khauk Swè Thoke' which is Burmese Khao Soi at 350 baht nett. Open daily from 6pm - 10.30pm.

Tel: 038 253 000

► Tuna to Love

Kampu Restaurant of Mövenpick Asara Resort & Spa Hua Hin invites diners to enjoy the Mediterranean Tuna Salad, a healthy salad from their à la carte menu, created by sophisticated chefs at Kampu Restaurant. It comprises local herb-crusted seared tuna sprinkled with Niçoise olives, salted capers, green beans, heirloom tomatoes, anchovies and potatoes, served with French-style orange dressing. Available daily at only 350 baht net.

Tel: 032 520 777 ext. 472

Facebook.com/movenpickhuahin





Life's a big beach

■ IT may be hard to believe, but Thailand's busiest resort is gradually but most definitely improving itself. Most visible is the expansion of the beach, which has been doubled in size thanks to some extremely clever engineering, including the laying of thousands of tons of sand.

Beach widening will continue to the south end of the main Pattaya Bay, where, it is rumoured, not for the first time, the wholesale demolition of Walking Street bars, restaurants, shops, apartments and even tennis courts that have been built and operated illegally over the sea for decades, will finally ensue.

Property bargains galore

■ IT'S a great time to buy property in Pattaya, local real estate agents are claiming - not for the first time. The price of condos in particular are plummeting as retired expats find the cost of living and tougher visa requirements increasingly difficult to handle. Selling up and moving back to their home countries is the only option for many of these foreigners.

One estate agent is putting his money where his mouth is by personally buying several recently vacated condos at bargain prices. "When a beautiful top floor penthouse with great views of the sea in a nice area of Pattaya comes on the market for only 40,000 baht per sq m, it's hard to turn it down," he said.

The agent cites other bargains now available in the resort, including an 80 sq m condo which was recently sold for only 1.3 million baht, and another in Jomtien on the market at an incredible 12,000 baht per sq m.

But not every property in Pattaya is currently at a knock-down price. The agent says that prime land in popular areas like Pratunmak Hill now cost up to 100 million a rai (1,600 sqm), an eye-watering prospect.





Summer Trip for 700 Children

Tirapongse Pangsrivongse, executive director of Kasemkij Co., Ltd. and board member of SOS Children's Villages Thailand opened the "Annual Summer Trip 2019" for more than 700 children from SOS Children's Villages Thailand for a 2-night stay in Cape & Kantary Hotels including travel and full board.





Bask in the Sun, Embrace the Sea

Escape from the Big City, at Mercure Pattaya Ocean Resort *By CK Lee*

MERCURE Pattaya Ocean Resort on North Pattaya Soi 2 is moments away from the beach and the ideal choice for an escapade from the big city.

The hotel has direct access to the beach and from the 210 rooms available, aim for the 24 Deluxe Ocean View rooms or 8 Ocean View Suites. If you are here with family or a larger number of friends, the Executive Family Suite is for you. Besides the tranquility of the ocean view, these rooms/suites also come with added features of an espresso machine, Bose Bluetooth speakers and a selection of

complimentary drinks.

The hotel has a water playground! A fabulous mini water park with a dramatic rock wall and caves, tropical gardens, two swimming pools and a slider. To catch up with your reading (and we don't mean emails), grab your book and head to the pool deck.

For the immediate chows, or a cup of coffee, our Molten Restaurant dishes out Thai and international selection all day, complemented by Mercure's "Flavours of the Cellar" wine offers.

Watch your kids play with sand and water as they embrace the sea with the biggest of smiles. Watch as your parents look out beyond



the horizon and reflect on their memories. Walk down the beach and actually listen to the waves and simply, reconnect with yourself.

After witnessing the setting sun and finishing your pot of Earl Grey, or completing the hearty conquest of the second tall glass of cocktail, the Alcazar Cabaret is less than one kilometer away. The newly opened Terminal 21 Pattaya mall is also nearby.

For reservations or further information, please contact: Tel: 02 659 2888 or visit mercure.accorhotels.com.



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MASON villas bring a new level of luxury and style to beautiful Na Jomtien Beach

MASON, a collection of ultra-modern and luxurious beachfront pool villas, has officially opened on Na Jomtien Beach, one of the Eastern Seaboard's fastest growing new destinations.

Featuring 35 stunning villas overlooking the glittering Gulf of Thailand, this amazing beachfront retreat blends contemporary style with cultural sophistication, artistic design and an outstanding setting.

Designed by award-winning studio Vaslab, MASON is unquestionably an architectural masterpiece that celebrates the rich traditions of masonry, particularly the stone carvers of the Ang Sila community.

Thanks to these unique and exceptional qualities, MASON has become a member of an elite group of hotels marketed by Design Hotels.

With a soon-to-open expressway linking Bangkok's Suvarnabhumi International Airport to U Tapao Airport nearby, MASON enjoys an unrivalled location on Na Jomtien Beach that offers tranquility and privacy.

The heart of popular Pattaya Beach is a mere 15 minutes away. MASON is also close to a wealth of new entertainment facilities, from water parks and golf to sailing, that are now available in this exciting region.

"Pattaya is one of Thailand's best loved beach destinations, so it is our pleasure to unveil a spectacular luxury pool villa resort on a private coastline under our concept 'A Uniquely Crafted Beachfront Experience'" explained Pornpun Ratanapitakkul, General Manager of MASON.

"I am very proud that MASON was designed by award winning architect Vasu Virajsilp of Vaslab and that we were selected to join Design Hotels, which represents and markets a curated selection of over 300 independent hotels in more than 60 countries across the globe, each reflecting the ideas of a visionary hotelier who has a passion for genuine hospitality, cultural authenticity, thought-provoking design and architecture.

"Our goal from the start was to combine a high-end luxury beachfront with thoughtful design and a crafted hospitality experience."

MASON's fabulous villas include the 180 sq m elevated Double Grand Pool Villa with two ocean view bedrooms and 90 sq m Garden Pool Villa.

The 168 sq m elevated Beachfront Grand Pool Villa is located at the very front of the sea-facing private beach, while the Beachside Seaview Pool Villa, also 168 sq m, is set on the



second row just steps from the sea.

The 154 sq m Duplex Grand Pool Villa is spread over two floors. All villas are set within the resort's lush tropical gardens.

Guests can sip cocktails at Krok-A Café Espresso Bar before savoring internationally sourced fresh ingredients at Zila Street Bistro & Bar, with its choice of indoor and outdoor seating.

At the Beachside Bar, a beautiful terrace and patio, guests can recline on sun loungers on a beautiful terrace and patio with their favorite drinks.

For a relaxing treat, guests can have a day at MASON Spa, where Eastern and Western massage techniques have been combined into extraordinary treatments, including the "MASON ZILA Signature Massage", which features special stones with unique qualities only found in the Ang Sila community.

visit masonpattaya.com, email hello@masonpattaya.com or call +66 (0) 38 194 699.



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