— Magazine of the Year —

BigChilli June-July 2023

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EDITOR'S PAGE



The BigChilli is proud and honored to receive recognition as 'The Magazine of the Year' in the Prime Awards Asia 2023, held recently at the Sheraton Grande Sukhumvit, Bangkok. Now in its 24th year, The BigChilli was cited for its "Excellence in Media & Publication" by a panel of judges and businessmen.

On hand to receive the award was the BigChilli's editorial team, including Managing Director and Publisher Colin Hastings, along with regular contributors Agneta de Bekassy, Robin Westley Martin and Kathleen Pokrud.

The BigChilli is Thailand's original expat magazine, launched in 1999 and published in both print form and on social media on a regular basis ever since.

Its readership has grown consistently over the years and now includes a large number of Thais as well as members of the international community.

Our editorial focus has remained the same - stories and features on important and influential people, restaurant and hotel reviews, travelogues, interviews with diplomats, real estate, international schools, social occasions and grand openings, and updates on local events.

To ensure our advertisers reach their target audiences, we are constantly expanding our distribution to the right people.

As "Magazine of the Year' it is our pledge to continue serving our readers and advertisers with a quality publication that will entertain and inform Thailand's expat and international community for many years to come.

Enjoy this issue of The BigChilli.

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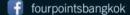
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BANGKOK & BEYOND

Thailand leading the way on ending ban on blood donors

hailand is the first country in
Asia to lift the ban on blood
donors from the UK and several other
European nations that experienced
the 'Mad Cow Disease.'

It is estimated aimed that the easing of restrictions will mean that the number of potential expat donors in Thailand can increase by up to 40%. The Thai Red Cross has been at the forefront of the bid to end the ban, which is now being rolled out across Thailand by the Ministry of Health. It is now hoped that the search for new donors of all blood groups will

be widely promoted and may even attract the attention of international schools with their large number of expat senior students.

In the past, Thai hospitals have often struggled to stock sufficient blood because of the ban on certain blood donors. In particular, Rh O Neg blood is in desperate need every day with limited donors available.

One long-term expat with a background in donating blood in Thailand for more than 20 years has personal reasons for applauding the lifting of the ban after requiring several



Sue Ultman recovering in hospital after receiving life-saving blood from her son John

lifesaving transfusions herself during recent hospitalization in Thailand.

"My blood group is Rh O negative, which is very rare in Thailand," explained Ms Sue Ultmann. "Only 0.3% of the Asian population is Rh negative".

Fortunately, the hospital she was attending was able to locate supplies of her blood group "but it was touch and go."

Sue also received lifesaving Rh O negative platelets from her son John Armstrong who raced to Thailand to donate blood as he is a perfect match. "It is a curiosity that Rh O negative is known as the 'universal' blood that can be used for people in all other blood groups - but not the other way round.

"The impact of the ban on donors from those countries has been immense. People needing transfusion have been put in perilous situations on many occasions, and unfortunately, there has been the loss of life due to the lack of supply," she continued.

"Now we want to see more people from all communities coming forward and become regular blood donors."

The Thai Red Cross Society's National Blood Centre has called for immediate donations and has listed locations where donors can go. "Due to the Covid-19 situation, hospitals across the country are facing critical blood shortages. Doctors are having to postpone surgeries as blood stocks are running low. The society urges all healthy people to urgently donate blood to help these patients. Donations can be made nationwide in different locations or at provincial hospitals."





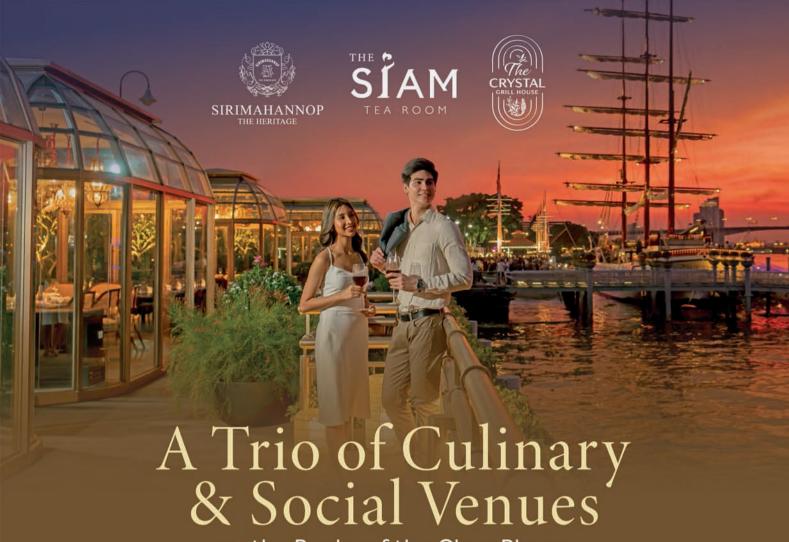
Down to Earth on Ekamai

umped into our old friend and colleague Jhor Padchcharrin, one of the two sisters famously behind Gourmet One food supplier, while exploring the new urban retail space known as 'Earth Ekamai' on Sukhumvit 63. It was a fortunate meeting because this charming lady was able to give me an exclusive tour of her latest about-to-open venture, La Brace, Grill House & Wine Bar, which occupies a prime space in Earth.

Husband Johnny Kang from Singapore also happened to be at the new restaurant on that day and showed around the rest of Ekamai's smart new retail area, including an aroma-laden bakery and a (very) high end Japanese bar/restaurant.

Another prime area here has been taken up by Tops for its latest and swishest Bangkok supermarket.

Earth is located roughly 100m on the left inside Soi Ekamai from the BTS station.



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Marina and beach extension planned for Bangsaray







lans to upgrade the popular fishing village of Bangsaray as a tourist destination by building a marina for yachts on the main bay and extending the beach have been unveiled by the Marine Department.

If the proposal is approved, the new, wider beach will cover some 2,800 meters from Bangsaray Beach Park northwards to the beach head rock in Na Jomtien. Similar beach extensions have been successfully implemented in the resorts of Pattaya and Jomtien, some 20 minutes' drive from Bangsaray.

The marina in Bangsaray will be constructed in front of the Beach Park, according to Marine Department documents.

The aim of the plan is to support the government's Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC) initiative, which includes the promotion of tourism in this part of Thailand. In its promotional material, the Marine Department says it has received complaints from local people and businesses about coastal erosion problems in Bangsaray. The beach extension will help solve this issue, it claims.

Future studies will focus on objectives and designs of the marina, causes of beach erosion, and the preparation of an environmental impact assessment (EIA) on sand reinforcements.

The department says it wants to involve various interested and affected parties in the final proposal according to the Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning guidelines, including local hotels and tourist-related businesses, the media and local people.

Bangsaray is well known as a traditional fishing village, with busy wet and dry markets, as well as trendy boutique hotels, homestays and small bars lining the main beach area. Its low-key atmosphere is in sharp contrast to Pattaya's bright lights.

However, recent years have seen the construction of a multi-storey condominium and a huge hotel apparently belonging to a high-profile politician.

Although the Bangsaray 'upgrade' is still in its early stages, and will need government approval before going ahead, it has already garnered opposition from at least one hotel manager who believes the main beach should not be extended and insists the resort does not need to be changed.

It is not known how many others have received copies of the Marine Department proposals.











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MANPOWER marks 25 successful years in Thailand with Simon Matthews at the helm

A quarter of a century after its official launch, the company has grown into a leading global workforce solutions company with a proven track record in recruiting top-notch temporary and contract employees for a wide range of clients.



arlier this year, ManpowerGroup Thailand celebrated its 25th anniversary. The occasion was especially poignant for Simon Matthews, the company's Regional Manager of Southeast Asia. Simon, a renowned British businessman with more than 30 years of business experience in Thailand, also founded Manpower right here in the kingdom. He selected Manpower's initial temporary offices, appointed the company's lawyers and recruited its first employees. A quarter of a century after its official launch, the company has grown into one of the country's leading employers.

Simon came to Thailand in July of 1992 to work for SGS, a Swiss company based in Bangkok. His responsibility was recruiting oil and gas personnel to work for Total Oil & Gas.

In May 1997, he responded to a personnel advertisement in the Bangkok Post placed by ManpowerGroup, a successful American recruitment company that was looking for a general manager to start up a new office in Thailand. With his extensive experience in

recruitment, Simon got the job and embarked on the challenging task of setting up Manpower's operations. Initially, he worked out of serviced apartments and on March 1,1998, Simon officially launched the company.

Today, ManpowerGroup under Simon's leadership is a significant provider of workers to various business sectors. In addition to its 15,000 contract workers, it has over 250 permanent staff based in offices in key locations around the country, including Bangkok & Greater Bangkok, Chonburi, Songkhla, Hat Yai, and Lampoon. It also has three offices in Bangkok as well as 10 recruitment hubs. Further, the company's pipeline holds over 150,000 job seekers' resumes.

In addition to supplying staff to myriad companies here in Thailand, Manpower has an export license permitting it to send skilled and semiskilled personnel to various countries in Asia and the Middle East.

Last year, ManpowerGroup Thailand's earnings exceeded five billion baht.

Simon explains ManpowerGroup Thailand's phenomenal success thus:







"We are a US company with a longstanding reputation for providing quality service and high ethical standards. Global companies prefer to work with global companies like us. Our clients can sleep easily when they use Manpower."

He attributes most of the company's success to the way its employees are treated, ensuring they feel taken care of and are motivated to outperform the competition.

"We take care of our staff, providing them with important benefits like social security and medical coverage," says Simon.

However, he also emphasizes that ManpowerGroup Thailand has been so widely successful because it strictly adheres to business practices that some might flout. Simon is emphatic that cutting corners is never part of the company's game plan.

"Everything we do is strictly by the rule book, legal and ethical. Indeed, ManpowerGroup is very proud to have been recognized as the World's Most Ethical Company for the 14th year by the Ethisphere Institute."

Manpower's clients include those from the financial and banking sectors, as well as those from general manufacturing. The company also has offices in Lampoon and Hat Yai that are located within major industrial estates.

With a vast number of resumes in its database, Manpower can quickly find suitable candidates for all kinds of jobs. And when necessary, it will seek specialists from the wider market.

The company's website posts senior vacancies for personnel in many different fields.

Successful candidates are also not charged fees. The normal procedure is for Manpower to charge a percentage of the annual starting salary. In certain cases, a management or success fee may be included. Manpower's expertise is recognized by many institutions, including the Thai government's Labor Department, which regularly seeks the company's advice on trends affecting the local and international labor markets. This includes information on vital matters, such as Thailand's aging population, unemployment rates, those working from home and the state of the country's economy.

COVER STORY

To stay ahead in its market, the company runs a Manpower Talent Academy that trains young people and helps them develop their skills. Out of 40 recent graduates, 30 joined ManpowerGroup Thailand. Manpower's contribution to Thailand's labor market is immense. As for his own contribution, Simon says with great pride: "It's an honorable job - we find people work."

Outside of work, Simon is a prominent member of the British community in Thailand, having been Chairman of the British Chamber of Commerce for four years and is now a member of the General Committee of the British Club Bangkok. He is married to a Thai national and has three children and two grandchildren. In his spare time, Simon attends networking events organized by local chambers of commerce, and relaxes at his house in Pattaya.

Providing Global Workforce Solutions

ManpowerGroup, Thailand's the leading global workforce solutions company, helps organizations transform in a fast-changing world of work by sourcing, assessing, developing, and managing the talent that enables organizations to succeed. It develops innovative solutions for hundreds of thousands of organizations every year, providing them with skilled talent while finding meaningful and sustainable employment for millions across a wide range of industries and skills. Its expert family of brands -Manpower, Experis and Talent Solutions - creates substantial value for candidates and clients across 75 countries and territories and has done so for nearly a century.

ManpowerGroup has been named one of the World's Most Ethical Companies for the past 14 years and has just been named one of Fortune's Most Admired Companies for the seventeenth year, confirming its position as the industry's most

trusted and admired brand.

Manpower in Thailand: Who We Are

Manpower is part of ManpowerGroup - the world's leading workforce experts. Every day, all around the world, hundreds of thousands of people go to work because of Manpower; and countless companies thrive because of the right people we find for them. With offices in 75 countries and over 70 years of history, Manpower is the global leader in contingent and permanent staffing, providing organizations of all sizes with a continuum of staffing solutions to enhance business agility and competitiveness.

With our thorough understanding of staffing trends and our deep pool of highly qualified candidates, Manpower can deliver the talent, matching the right individual to the right job - faster and with better business results than most of its competitors.

Manpower provides staffing services in banking and finance, office service, information technology, engineering, and technical areas.

These can be separated into three types of services:

- ☐ Permanent Service
- ☐ Temporary Service
- ☐ Contract Service

Vision & Values

OUR VISION is to lead in creating and delivering innovative workforce solutions and servicesthat enable our clients to win in the changing world of work.

Having the talent with the needed skills and experience has become the scarcest business resource and potential competitive advantage. Manpower's staffing solutions provide your organization with the talent you're looking for and the agility you need to win. Your success is our success.



Tap into Our Global Presence and Local Expertise

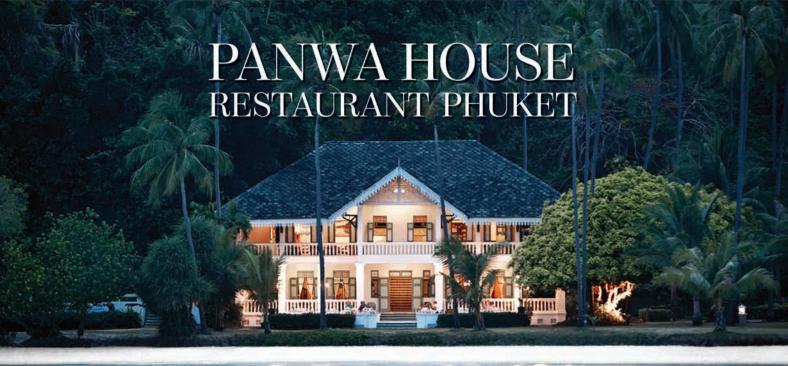
Manpower Thailand is part of ManpowerGroup, whose expert family of brands creates substantially more value for candidates and clients across 75 countries and territories in 3,500 global offices and has done so for 70 years. With our global presence and local expertise, and by leveraging ManpowerGroup's thought leadership, we influence how people and companies work now and how they will work in the future.

Services We Offer Executive Management

We dedicate our efforts to finding senior executives or senior experts. We will partner with you throughout the entire search process and beyond, from assisting with position definition and behavioral requirements, to resolving terms of employment, and helping to ensure a smooth transition in leadership. Using our strong industry knowledge backed by market research, we identify the most effective sourcing strategy for each role.

What Are the Benefits of Hiring

Permanent Staff Through Manpower? As a client of Manpower, our experienced recruiters will save you







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time and money, ensure you find the right people and give you the best chance of retaining them. Manpower can save you time without cutting corners. We match candidates with your business needs and culture to encourage retention.

What Are Your Expectations for Your Contract and Temporary Staff?

Manpower has a proven track record in recruiting top-notch temporary and contract employees for our clients. Our national office network allows us to match candidates to clients and clients to candidates.

We look deeply into each assignment, getting to know your company, business objectives, and talent needs. We match that knowledge with our proven assessment methods to pinpoint an individual's abilities and personal attributes to identify the right match for your needs and work environment.

We have developed a pool of associates who are highly qualified and experienced in the skills most needed in the marketplace today. Through continuous screening and assessment of current and potential associations around the world, we are able to quickly provide our clients

with access to the talent they need.

ManpowerGroup Thailand – Salary Guide Report 2023

This important annual document provides everything you need to know about salaries for each position and occupation for a wide range of business sectors. The information comes from our database, so you can efficiently plan the manpower, HR and budget needs for the coming year.

A Partnership with Manpower Can Give Your Company:

Better Skills

Our associates hone their skills using our proprietary Training and Development Center, with over 4,000 courses, ensuring that they have the skills to power your business from day one.

Better Results

To manage the complexity of today's world of work, you require talent solutions that support business strategy and meet your workforce needs. We work closely with you to deliver the business agility and staffing flexibility needed to deliver the talent you need and to uncover opportunities for increased efficiency you may not even have seen.

Better Match

We delve deeply into each assignment, getting to know your company, business objectives, and talent needs. We match that knowledge with our proven assessment methods to pinpoint an individual's abilities and personal attributes to identify the right match for your need and work environment.

Better Speed

We have developed a pool of associates who are highly qualified and experienced in the skills most needed in the marketplace today. Through continuous screening and assessment of current and potential associates around the world, we are able to provide our clients with access to the talent they need, faster than other recruitment.

Organizations must have the flexibility to quickly respond to opportunities and continually drive productivity across their entire organization. To stay ahead of the competition, you need expertise beyond your core capabilities and quick access to the right talent to deliver the outcomes you need to achieve more.

That's why organizations are turning to us for outsourcing solutions.



Uncover the spectacular natural wonders of Ha Long Bay, Vietnam's famous UNESCO World Heritage site, at Best Western Premier Sapphire Ha Long – settled on the coast at Ha Long city ("Descending Dragon") with a stunning 31-story waterfront hotel that overlooks this iconic, island-studded seascape.

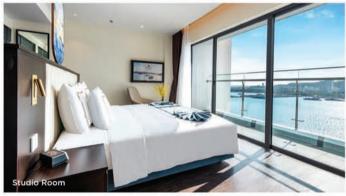
This impressive upper-upscale hotel is surrounded by tourist experiences, including sightseeing cruises into Ha Long Bay, which is home to approximately 2,000 islets, hidden caves, secluded beaches and floating villages, as well as choice of 18-hole championship golf courses.

Features 1,005 rooms and suites which blend timeless Vietnamese décor with contemporary style and come fully equipped with comfortable king or twin beds, modern amenities, and private balconies with panoramic views of Ha Long Bay.

Guests can unwind in style with a wealth of leisure facilities including indoor and outdoor swimming pools, a whirlpool, a steam room and a state-of-the-art fitness center. Youngsters can enjoy endless hours of fun at the kids' club or splash in the children's pool.



A major highlight of Sun World Ha Long is the awe-inspiring Queen Cable Car, renowned for its breathtaking views of the mesmerizing Ha Long Bay. This remarkable attraction proudly holds the prestigious Guinness World Record for being the highest and longest single-rope cable car system in existence. Transporting passengers from the mainland to the summit of Ba Deo Mountain.



The hotel offers two onsite restaurants providing a wide range of Vietnamese, pan-Asian and international cuisine for breakfast, lunch and dinner with a vibrant open kitchen concept, while a specialty restaurant showcases fresh local seafood. The sophisticated bar & lounge is a chic social space to relax during the day or sip cool drinks after dark.

Learn more about BWH Hotels in Asia, please visit **bwh.com**

Exploring Ha Long's magical onboard Sea Octopus

7-hour experience of the heritage bay, starting with the majestic scenery of the Sacred Dragon land followed by Sung Sot Cave, the largest and one of the most beautiful caves in Ha Long. Explore Luon Cave by a bamboo boat or kayak and continue to Titov Island enjoying a 360-degree unobstructed view of Ha Long Bay. Then, satisfy all senses with an appetizing lunch of Asian & Eurasian cuisine, seafood dishes, and local specialties prepared by professional chefs. Don't miss the opportunity to witness the icon of Ha Long Bay "Ga Choi Islet".





Exciting times ahead for Thailand's trains, says top blogger Richard Barrow

By Colin Hastings

or more than 130 years, the
State Railway of Thailand (SRT)
has chugged along merrily and
mostly rather uneventfully, while
being largely ignored by Thais who
see it as inefficient with trains that
are forever late, but adored by foreign

visitors who've always relished its quirkiness.

That's all about to change, however, with exciting though probably less quirky times ahead for this giant government monopoly.

So says Richard Barrow, Thailand's

foremost expat blogger, a 30-year veteran of this country who's been writing about travel and life in general for most of that time. It's won him a huge international following, surpassing several major media companies, and even a British royal accolade.



In recent years, this gently spoken 55-year-old Englishman has turned his attention to Thailand's rail and train system, exploring mostly at first hand the SRT's surprisingly extensive network and the telling the world about its services, special excursions and historic steam trains and locomotives.

The "exciting times" Richard mentions revolve around the government's hugely ambitious vet little known 33-billion-baht rehabilitation plan that envisages SRT becoming the largest railway state enterprise in ASEAN.

To publicize his travels and unique insight, Richard has launched a series of booklets for passengers containing stacks of fascinating and normally hard-to-find information about Thailand's rail network.



To publicize his travels and unique insight, Richard has launched a series of booklets for passengers containing stacks of fascinating and normally hard-to-find information about Thailand's rail network.

> TRAVEL







Published monthly in English as 'Richard Barrow's Thai Train Guide' these user-friendly publications are essential for train enthusiasts. They're available free online.

A recent edition focused on Bangkok's new train station, Krung Thep Aphiwat Central Terminal, featuring just about everything you need to know about this enormous structure, including how to get there, maps showing food courts and shops, departure and arrival boards, buying a ticket, and even how to board a train. "Hopefully, by the end of 2023 I will be able to put together a complete guide book on train travel in Thailand

and Southeast Asia. My inspiration is the Bradshaw guide, which was a kind of a bible for rail travellers in the UK and Europe during the 19th and 20th centuries," explains Richard.

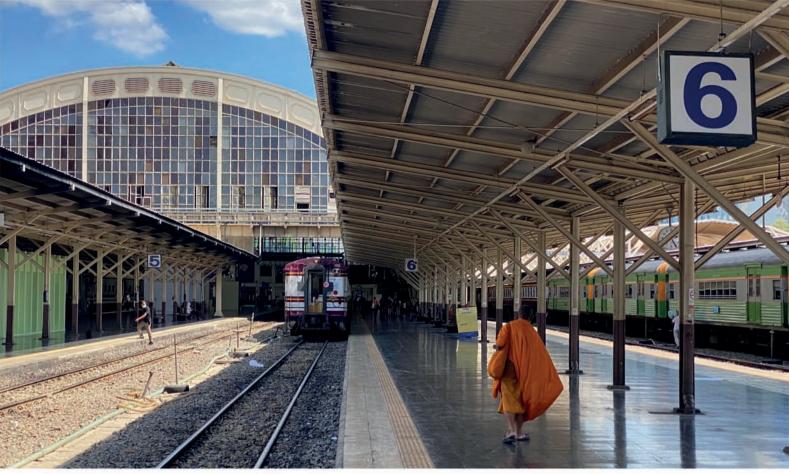
Curiously, there's no Thai language equivalent, which doesn't surprise Richard, who often suggests that debt-ridden SRT (currently estimated at nearly 190 billion baht) as well as the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) are missing a golden opportunity to promote one of this country's most attractive assets, boost tourism, and reverse the fall in passenger numbers.

Richard's passion for trains

knows no bounds. He spends most of his spare time travelling somewhere by train, stopping off to gather more knowledge about local towns and what they have to offer.

He writes: "A slower and more of a local experience is the growing trend among travellers. People no longer want to rush to their destination but rather have a more of a meaningful experience during the journey.

"My Thai Train Guides promote slow and sustainable travel by train across the kingdom. Instead of flying, or sitting in a bus speeding down a highway, why not take a slow train where you can interact with locals







Richard's passion for trains knows no bounds. He spends most of his spare time travelling somewhere by train, stopping off to gather more knowledge about local towns and what they have to offer.

and immerse yourself in the passing scenery? At the same time, you will be helping to reduce the carbon footprint of your trip.".

Born in Kent, England, in a family of tenant farmers, Richard's first job was a film editor for the BBC. "Although I commuted from home to work by train, I was never that interested in trains or trainspotting. In fact, I was a film buff."

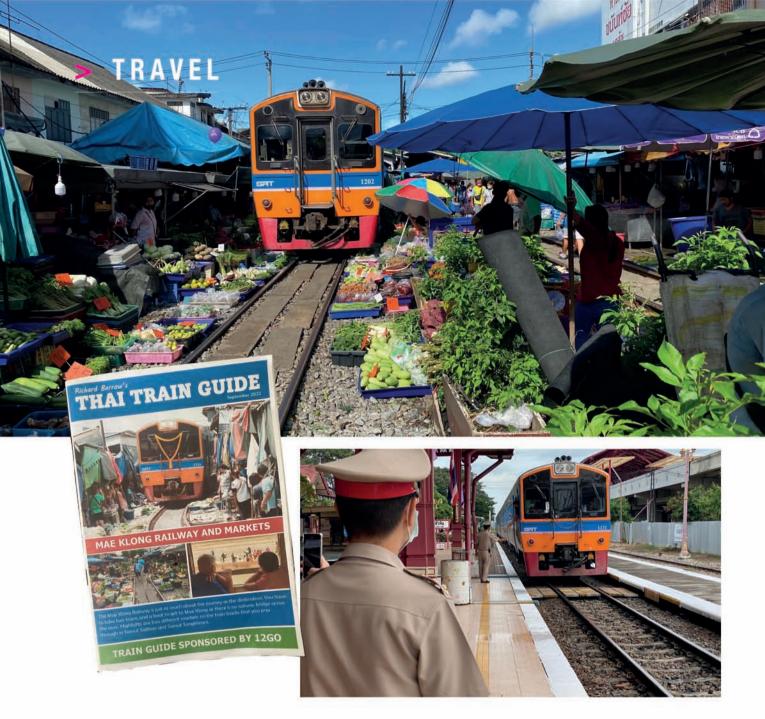
He arrived in Thailand in 1994

for a two-week stay on the invitation of two Thai sisters his mother had met while she was running a scout commissioner course in London that they had joined. "They kept in touch and my mother suggested that I should stay with them."

Australia was his next stop, but not for long, as the sisters invited him back to Bangkok to run the computer department for their privately owned school, Sriwittaya Paknam, in the

southern Bangkok suburb of Samut Prakan. He accepted their invitation and has been there ever since. Soon it became apparent that the local social media scene needed an independent English language reporter. Richard took up the challenge.

"I believe I was one of the first bloggers in Thailand when I set up a travel website in 1997. I set out to report on a combination of tourism and trains.



"At school, I wanted to be a photo journalist, using photos to tell a story. "I had always dreamed of doing live uploads – quite literally, everything I did, everything live. People feel they are there with you. Although it is extremely exhausting, having to deal with constant inquiries, it is my trademark and I will continue. I like the idea of bringing people along as virtual tourists."

Richard first caught the public's attention during the mass political protests in Bangkok 2010, when most foreigners in Thailand had little idea about that was going on. Fluent in both reading and writing Thai, Richard was able to tweet an English translation of the latest updates on

the situation from local sources. He was hours ahead of the country's two main English language newspapers, the Bangkok Post and The Nation. Interestingly, his followers included a great number of Thais.

He gained further prominence during the Covid pandemic when, almost exclusively, his blog carried the latest news on the pandemic, again, way ahead of other English language media in Thailand.

His work over the years has been recognized by his mother country with a prestigious award – the British Empire Medal (BEM) – for helping fellow Brits and other foreigners in Thailand. Richard admits the British Embassy in Bangkok played a role in

highlighting his work back in the UK and earning this accolade.

Actually, it's not the first award his family has received – Richard's father received an MBE (Member of the British Empire) for his work in scouting.

But his social media presence in Thailand hasn't always been appreciated. When Richard posted news about the air pollution in Chiang Mai earlier this year, the TAT was unhappy. When he reported on Thai politics, he was accused of bias. "I report on the good, the bad and the ugly," says Richard." I have no agendas. People believe me. And that's why I have a lot of Thai followers.

"Today I have nearly as many followers as the Bangkok Post."







Can he make a living through his work on social media? "I want to keep it as a hobby," he says. "When it's paid-for, things change.

"If, for example, I'm invited for a complimentary stay at a hotel, I tell them that I will devote five per cent of my report to the hotel, and the rest to the destination. That's it. Hotels usually agree.

"If a hotel invites me or wants to pay me because they see me as some kind of influencer, I delete them." The government's plan to rehabilitate the country's rail network is comprehensive, with double tracks for all the major routes, new tunnels and viaducts 55m high spanning valleys and offering spectacular views of the countryside.

Passenger capacity will double, while freight capacity will increase three-fold. By 2037, the network length is expected grow by 60 per cent with routes added to tourist destinations and border towns.

Bangkok's new main train terminus, known officially as Krung Thep Aphiwat Central Terminal (and also called, somewhat confusingly, Bang Sue Grand Station), has taken over from the dated but elegant Hua Lumphong station as the start and finish point for most long-distance train services in Thailand. The new station is Southeast Asia's largest train station.

High speed trains are coming

to Thailand, the first being the Bangkok–Nong Khai high-speed railway. The first phase, between Bangkok and Nakhon Ratchasima, is expected to open in 2026. The rest of the line is expected to be operational by 2028. The railway is seen as a major connection along the Kunming–Singapore railway central line. Another high-speed train initiative links Thailand's three international airports, but is progressing slowly.

Richard's sponsor 12Go. asia makes it possible to offer his Thai Train Guides as free downloads. Use their popular website to book seats for trains, buses, ferries, and flights in Asia. www.ThaiTrainGuide.com



ORANGE VIBES AT SATHORN

On the weekend of 27-28 May, Aperol was painting Sathorn bright and bold orange with The Hamlet Block Party: ASAI x Aperol Neighbour-Fest, a community gathering that marked the opening of ASAI Sathorn Bangkok and showcased the unique neighborhood vibe of Sathorn soi 10 and 12.

The two-day fest was a zesty cocktail of art, culinary delights, and vibrant performances throughout

the day and night, fueled by Aperol throughout a dozen of food and beverage outlets in the hood, namely Err Urban Rustic Thai (located at ASAI Sathorn Bangkok), Sorrento, Kai, XII Mediterranean, Café des Stagiaires, Giglio, Cetara, Mezcal, Bardo and Modkeaw with Thanamon "Still" Suthon, Brand Ambassador, Campari Thailand, and Jane Kaew-yod, Co-founder of Suvarn Bar in Samui as guest bartenders at ASAI Sathorn Bangkok.



Apart from Aperol Spritz, guests could also opt for one (or more!) of some of the Italian classics that included Negroni, Negroni Sbagliato and Campari Spritz.

The classic Italian cocktails were served to the partygoers throughout the participating outlets as they enjoy the eclectic soiree filled with inspiring art, thrilling drum shows, sensational drag performances, live music, DJ sets as well as culinary treats and live cooking demonstration from early afternoon well into the evening.

The weekend was truly about fostering connections, sparking creativity, and building a stronger community.



> TRAVEL



Why the future for

rail tourism is bright

by Richard Barrow





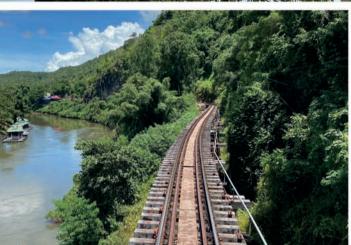


There are some scenic rail routes in Thailand that are already attractive to tourists. For example, the route that follows the Khwae River in Kanchanaburi Province. This is not only beautiful, but it is also of historical interest to foreign tourists. Another popular route is the Bua

Yai branch line that passes along five viaducts over Pasak Chonlasit Reservoir in Lop Buri Province. Other scenic routes include a stretch of the Northern Line between Den Chai in Phrae and Lamphun. Here you will pass Khun Tan which is not only the highest railway station in Thailand, but it also has the longest tunnel. Khun Tan is also a good

example of combining "The Journey' with 'The Destination'. This is home to Doi Khun Tan National Park, which is very popular with hikers and campers. This is probably the only national park in Thailand where you can walk into the park from the railway station. Thailand has presently 4,044 kilometres of railway tracks that pass through 47 out of 77provinces.







There are some scenic rail routes in Thailand that are already attractive to tourists. For example, the route that follows the Khwae River in Kanchanaburi Province. This is not only beautiful, but it is also of historical interest to foreign tourists.

A new branch line that will pass through Chiang Rai has already started construction. Land-clearing for another branch line to Nakhon Phanom has already started.

Of the lines that are open already, Chiang Mai, Ayutthaya, Lop Buri, and Lampang on the Northern Line are all good places to visit by train. On the Northeastern Line you can easily visit Nakhon Ratchasima, Buriam, Surin, Ubon Ratchathani, Udon Thani, Khon Kaen and Nong Khai.

On the Southern Line, you can visit Kanchanaburi, Phetchaburi, Hua

Hin, Prachuap Khiri Khan, Nakhon Si Thammarat and Hat Yai to name just a few. The train is also a good way to visit the second-tier destinations. Other stations are jumping off points to explore a bit further. For example, both Chumphon and Surat Thani are popular destinations among backpackers to do a bus and boat transfer to the islands of Koh Tao, Koh Phangan and Koh Samui. On the Northern Line, you can take a train to Phitsanulok and then easily transfer by bus to Sukhothai Historical Park. In fact, you could do a slow train

tour linking the four ancient cities of Ayutthaya, Lopburi, Sukhothai and Chiang Mai and then come back by sleeper train.

ORGANISED TRAIN TOURS

For a number of years now, the State Railway of Thailand (SRT) has organised weekend train excursions to two popular tourist destinations. The first one goes to Sai Yok Noi Waterfall in Kanchanaburi and the second one goes to Suan Son Pradipat Beach in Prachuap Khiri Khan. Unlike regular trains, these ones stop at

TRAVEL

places along the way to allow tourists to get down and explore the location for around 20-30 minutes.

At the final destination passengers are given around four hours before the train takes them back to Bangkok. The SRT also do occasional tours during the year. For example, between November and January it organised the 'Floating Train' trip to Pasak Chonlasit Dam. Then they arrange steam train excursions six times a year to four destinations. Namely Ayutthaya, Nakhon Pathom and Chachoengsao. These trips are always very popular, and tickets sell out fast.

Last year, the SRT launched its Kiha-183 excursion train, which is a refurbished Japanese train. They now run special one and two-day trips to neighbouring provinces every weekend.

Over the last year, two companies have organised rail tours with varied levels of success - Inn Train and Lanna Modernization Railroad Travel.

Inn Train rented SRT Prestige carriages to offer luxury travel to various destinations. At first, they were only targeting wealthy Thai tourists, but after I started translating their tour itineraries, they discovered that many foreign tourists and expats were also interested.

Lanna Modernization Railroad Travelhave partnered with the SRT to offer three-day tour packages to Lampang, Lamphun and Chiang Mai. They have actually organised four packages so far, but this one was cancelled due to "lack of interest". I think this was due to bad publicity and shortness of notice. It was also expensive at 6-7,000 baht. One common theme for all these excursions is that publicity is only in Thai language. Each one seems to be only targeting Thai tourists. Inn Train is the only company I know so far that has identified the potential of the foreign market.

RAIL TOURISM FOR FOREIGNERS

One of the problems with the SRT





trips to Northern Thailand and the recent one to Chachoengsao is that the itinerary very heavily leans towards visiting temples. Trips to waterfalls, beaches, and the floating train have a much wider

appeal. These kinds of excursions attract both Thais and foreigners. There is an Australian tour company that arranges Battlefield Tours. They take tourists to destinations around the world that have connections to wars. In Thailand they bring guests to the Death Railway to visit the war cemetery, the bridge, ride the train on the Death Railway, in particular along the Tham Krasae wooden trestle bridge, and then go to Hellfire Pass. A popular time of year for this trip is during April as there is a dawn service at Hellfire Pass on April 25 for Anzac Day. Many foreigners come to Thailand just for this event.

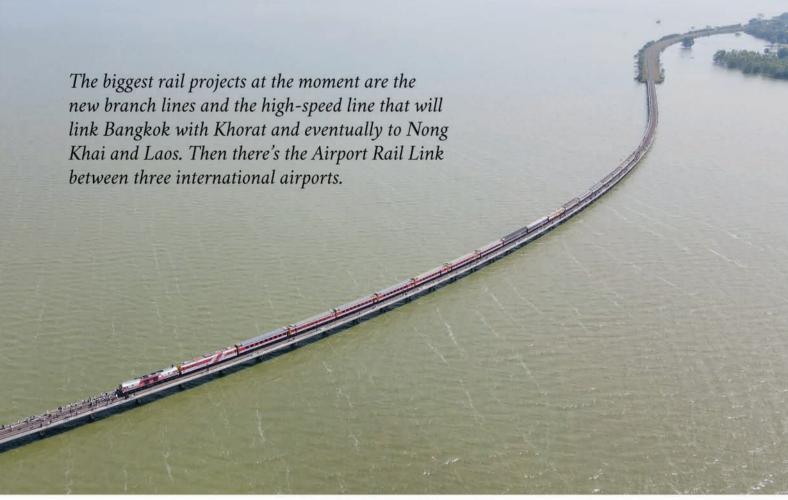
In other countries there is a strong rail culture. These railfans ride

trains just for the fun of it. Some even come to Thailand. In recent months I have helped international YouTubers ride on certain lines to share the journey with their viewers. Last year I also helped a rail author who is now writing about his train journeys in Thailand. Railfans are not only interested in riding trains, but they also want to ride trains pulled by certain locomotives.

They also do challenges like 'All the Lines' where they have to ride to the end of every line in each country. These kinds of people would be willing to rent diesel railcars just to be able to do this kind of journey easily. There are already Thai railfan clubs who do this. I have been on a few such trips with Thai railfans.

INTERNATIONAL AND LUXURY TRAIN TRAVEL

The Eastern and Oriental Express has shown that there is a market for



luxury train travel. Their trains go from Singapore to Bangkok and are always popular.

The SRT own their own luxury carriages called SRT Prestige that can be rented out by any tour company and then added to any train. These include luxury seating, dining cars and even bedrooms with double beds. I've travelled on a few of these trips by tour companies such as Inn Train and they have always been popular. At the moment, the only international train originating in Thailand is the Bangkok to Padang Besar Express in Malaysia. In Nong Khai there is a shuttle train that takes you across the Friendship Bridge into Laos but that is only a five-minute ride and doesn't connect to Bangkok. However, in the near future, there should be long distance trains from Bangkok to Vientiane.

There are also advance plans for a sleeper train that will go along the Eastern Line from Bangkok to Phnom Penh. At the moment there is only a Third Class train that terminates at the border. There is a potential for Thailand to arrange its own Eastern and Oriental Express along this route,



with side trips to Angkor Wat and the Great Lakes.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

The SRT are busy with the double tracking project and upgrading railway stations, which will allow trains to run faster and more efficiently.

As part of this project, they are also building new viaducts and tunnels to shorten journeys. Some of the viaducts are very long with the tallest reaching 50 metres. Two notable viaducts are the Lopburi bypass track and the elevated tracks through the

valley in Muak Lek in Saraburi. Once finished, these should offer fantastic views of the countryside.

The biggest rail projects at the moment are the new branch lines and the high-speed line that will link Bangkok with Khorat and eventually to Nong Khai and Laos. Then there's the Airport Rail Link between three international airports.

Not to be forgotten is a high-speed station planned for Pattaya, which will really open up that area to tourism.

The future for rail tourism in Thailand is very bright.



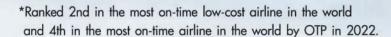


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He's loving it – the Digital Nomad who's sold on AI Digital Design

On a serious not i would actually like to use this one as my mum passed away last year and this was the a photo at her 80th Birthday at her favourite holiday destination Benidorm.



fter a successful career in the jewellery industry stretching back more than 25 years,
Bangkok-based digital nomad Paul
Groocock recently discovered AI
Digital Design – and it's become a passion and an obsession, as he readily admits.

"AI Digital Design has taken over my life, and I'm loving every minute of it. I do see myself as a creative but this AI technology backed up by three decades of my creative ability is quite honestly 'out there,'" says Paul, now in his 50s.

"The world has certainly changed because of this technology, and I'm up for the challenge."

Born in Nottingham, England, Paul studied fashion/advertising photography at Bournemouth & Poole College of Art before heading to SE Asia in 1994.

Since then, he has been immersed in the silver jewellery industry, gaining valuable experience in everything from sourcing and manufacturing to retail and eCommerce marketing.

"I've used Southeast Asia as a base to build a solid network of suppliers, products, and industry contacts.

It's made me a go-to person for sourcing not just in the region, but also beyond.

"In addition, I've launched successful Commerce wholesale jewellery portals, showcasing my creativity, entrepreneurial spirit, and drive to get results. I've got a







knack for negotiating and a deep understanding of the ins and outs of the competitive jewellery industry.

"Photography has always been my passion, and I've had several websites over the years. In the past, I've sold products on platforms like Lazada, Ensogo, and Groupon here in Thailand back in the day."

He now hopes to market his work to various businesses, such as restaurants, hotels, retail outlets and corporate offices, saying it will add creativity and sophistication to otherwise empty spaces.

Check out some of Paul's Corporate Bespoke Artworks project on https://www.saatchiart.com/ Silverstormer.

What inspired you to become an AI Designer Artist?

I figured I'd jump on the bandwagon and get ahead of the inevitable robot uprising. But seriously, I love the combination of technology and creativity.

Can you describe your style of artwork? It's like a Jackson Pollock painting, but with fewer paint splatters on my clothes.

What are your favorite types of projects to work on?

I love projects that involve napping and snacking, but unfortunately those don't pay the bills, so I'll settle for designing artwork for hotels and resorts.

How has your background in photography influenced your artwork? Well, it's taught me to always put the subject's good side forward, and to

avoid using too many filters... unless it's for Instagram.

What is your favorite color to work with?

I'm contractually obligated to say "all of them."

How do you balance commercial considerations with artistic expression?

Easy, I just put a big "copyright" symbol on everything and call it a day. Can you describe your creative process from start to finish?

I stare at a blank canvas for a few hours, panic, and then furiously scribble until something vaguely resembles art.

What is your favorite piece of artwork that you've created?





Definitely the portrait of my cat that I painted... although, now that I think about it, that might just be because she's sitting right next to me.

How has your upbringing in Nottingham influenced your artwork? Well, it's taught me to be skeptical of anyone wearing a green hat and carrying a bow, for one.

How do you stay up-to-date on the latest trends and techniques in art and design?

I have a secret network of art spies that keep me informed... or, you know, I just read a lot of art blogs.

What advice would you give to someone who is just starting out in the art world?

I have a secret network of art spies that keep me informed... or, you know, I just read a lot of art blogs.

Never underestimate the power of a good beret.

How do you handle creative blocks or challenges?

I usually just eat a lot of chocolate and wait for inspiration to strike... or for the sugar crash to hit, whichever comes first.

You have acute color awareness. What's your favorite color to work with? The color of money. Just kidding, it's actually cerulean blue.

What inspired you to move into corporate commissions for hotels, wellness industry, resorts, and collectors?

The realization that starving artist is not a sustainable career choice.

What advice do you have for aspiring AI designers?

Don't be afraid to break the mold, or the machine might break you.

What's the most challenging part of creating AI Designer artwork? Convincing people that it was actually created by a human, not a robot overlord.

What do you listen to while you create





I just try to capture the essence of what it means to be a woman. You know, things like having a deep love for shoes and crying during every episode of "This is Us".

your artwork?

Mostly whale songs and heavy metal. It's a weird combination, but it works for me.

How do you deal with criticism of your

I just remind myself that beauty is in the eye of the beholder, and some people are just blind.

What role does technology play in your creative process?

Technology is like my trusty sidekick. I'm Batman, it's Robin. But without

the spandex outfits, of course. Your background includes a degree in photography. How does this influence your AI design work?

I like to think of it as having an eye for detail. Plus, it makes me really good at spotting stock images in other people's work.

Your corporate clients include hotels and resorts. Can you tell us more about your approach to designing for the hospitality industry?

I like to think of it as designing for people who have higher standards

than I do. It's a good motivator.

Your portfolio includes a lot of female figures. Can you tell us more about your approach to portraying women in your artwork?

I just try to capture the essence of what it means to be a woman. You know, things like having a deep love for shoes and crying during every episode of "This is Us".

What inspired you to become an AI Designer Artist?

Well, let's just say I've always had a knack for foreseeing the robot apocalypse. But on a serious note, I've always had a passion for blending technology and creativity. Plus, I had dreams of becoming a world-renowned photographer, but my camera had other ideas. So, here





I am, channeling my creative energy into AI design.

What kind of projects excite you the most as an AI Designer?

Oh, the thrill of corporate commissions! There's nothing quite like the adrenaline rush of designing artwork for hotels, resorts, and wellness industries. I get to bring my artistic flair to places where people go to relax and unwind – because nothing says "serenity" like a giant AI-generated painting of a llama doing yoga.

How do you see AI design evolving in the future?

Well, let me consult my crystal ball and check with my AI friends. It's clear that AI design is on the fast track to world domination. Soon, we'll have AI-generated artwork hanging in every home, AI robots running art galleries, and even AI artists receiving their own AI awards. The future is bright, my friend. Bright with pixelated creativity. If your AI artwork could have a theme song, what would it be?
It would have to be "Eye of the Tiger" by Survivor.

Disclaimer: This Article was prompted by Mr Paul David Groocock Portfolio @ https://lnkd. in/gxi4uktR

INFLUENCES
Paul David Groocock,
Bespoke Artwork
Commissions
Resorts - Hotels Wellness - Collectors
Remote Artwork
Designer - UK &
Bangkok

Portfolio @ https://lnkd.

in/gxi4uktR Artistic Influences Thailand:

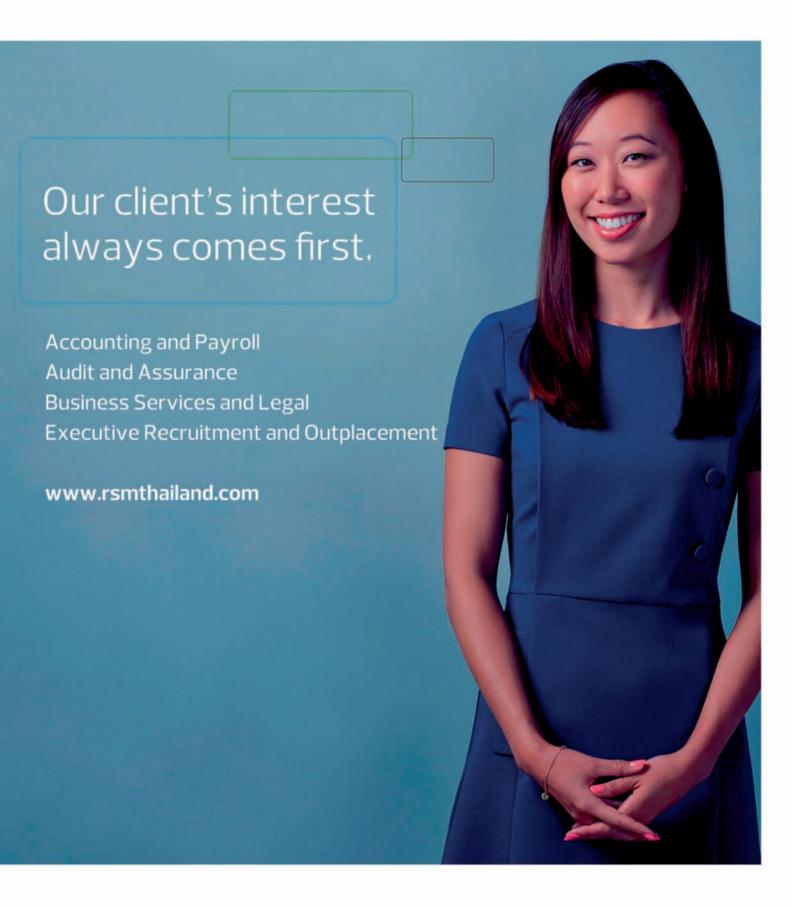
- Tom Hoops UK -Fashion and portrait photographer London - Bangkok - Chamnan Chongpaiboon, Thai painter who merges pointillism and Aboriginal dotting technique in his own unique style

Artistic Influences International:

- August Sander
- German portrait

and documentary photographer. First Published 1929.

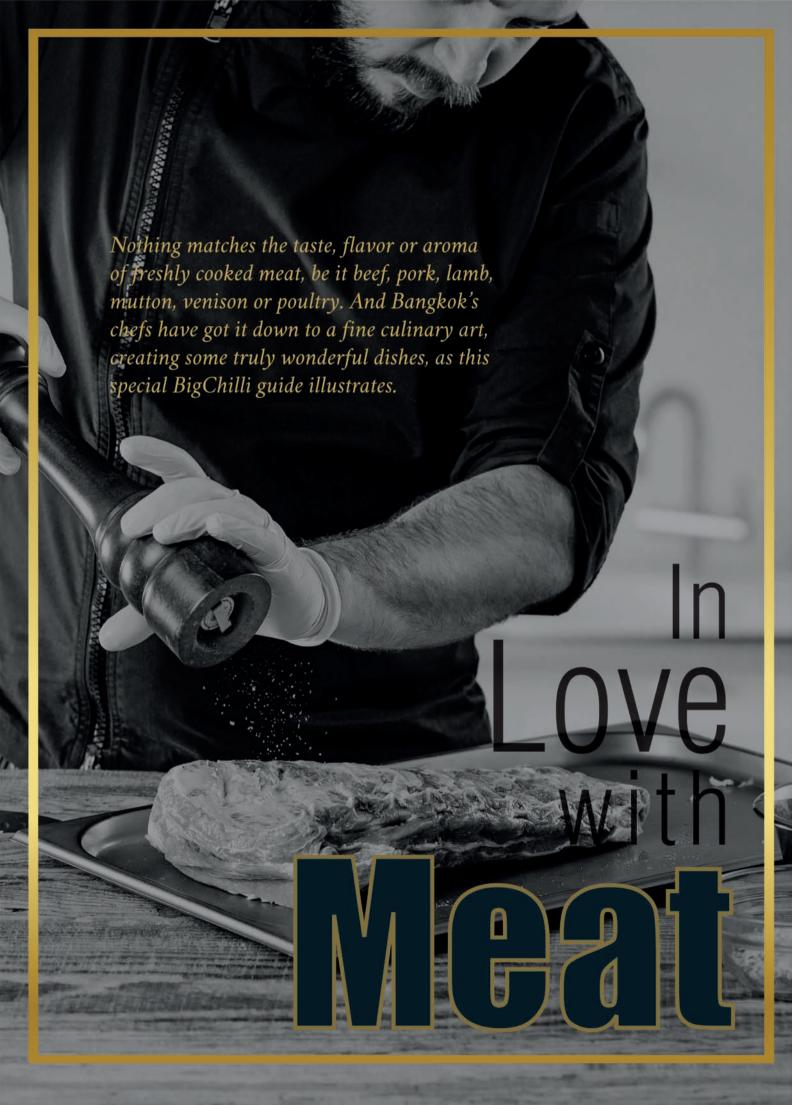
• Jim Glazzard -Recently passed away; my school Art Teacher who inspired me to follow a life-saving artistic path. Georgy Kurasov -Russian painter. His main theme is women, beautiful, sensual women. And so is mine!



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RSM Thailand





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Cosmopolitan brunch featuring the likes of Lobster Caviar Eggs Benedict, Mexican Paella, Kobe Beef and fresh Canadian Lobster. Available every Sunday from 12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. Prices start at THB 2,550++ per person, including food and soft drinks, THB 3,500++ per person for the booze package, THB 888++ for children aged 6-12, and free for children under 6.



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Bangkok Marriott Hotel Sukhumvit

The District Grill Room & Bar



The restaurant's Meat Me promotion every Thursday features Australian tomahawk beef steak, weighing approximately 1 kg, accompanied by a choice of side dishes and sauces at 2,100 baht.

Diners are also offered a wide selection of steaks and grills made with the finest ingredients. Highlights include Australian Wagyu Ribeye and Japanese Hakata Wagyu Striploin A5.

The District Grill Room & amp; Bar

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New York Steakhouse







Our chef-curated menus feature imported cuts of meat from Australia, Japan, New Zealand, and the United States. Meats are seasoned with a blend of spices that enhances their natural flavor and tenderness, creating a perfect balance of taste and texture.

Three dishes that meat lovers should not miss: Australian Grain Fed Beef Tartare – prepared tableside, this premium tartare comes with a choice of nine condiments and seasoned to your taste.

Australian Wagyu Beef Tomahawk - Rubbed with a spice blend, then marked on the grill before being roasted. The meat is then rested before being carved off the bone at your table.

US Certified Angus NYSH Chateaubriand - Cooked sous vide then served in a veil of light hickory smoke to give it just the right amount of flavor. Served with a house-made béarnaise sauce on the side.

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Carlton Bangkok Hotel Cooling Tower Rooftop Bar

Explore our new meat menu while having your favourite cocktail or beer. We also have a new set of 12 constellation cocktails.

Beefy Affair: Australian Beef Cheek Skewers that go perfectly with the homemade Olive Ciabatta and Horseradish Mayo Sauce.

The Cooling Tower Beef Burger is also a must try. The big and juicy beef patty, bacon and cheese trinity is served with fries.

Grilled Charolais Sirloin Steak is another recommended dish. Served with fries and smoked chili sauce.

Cooling Tower Rooftop Bar

Tel. 02 090 7888

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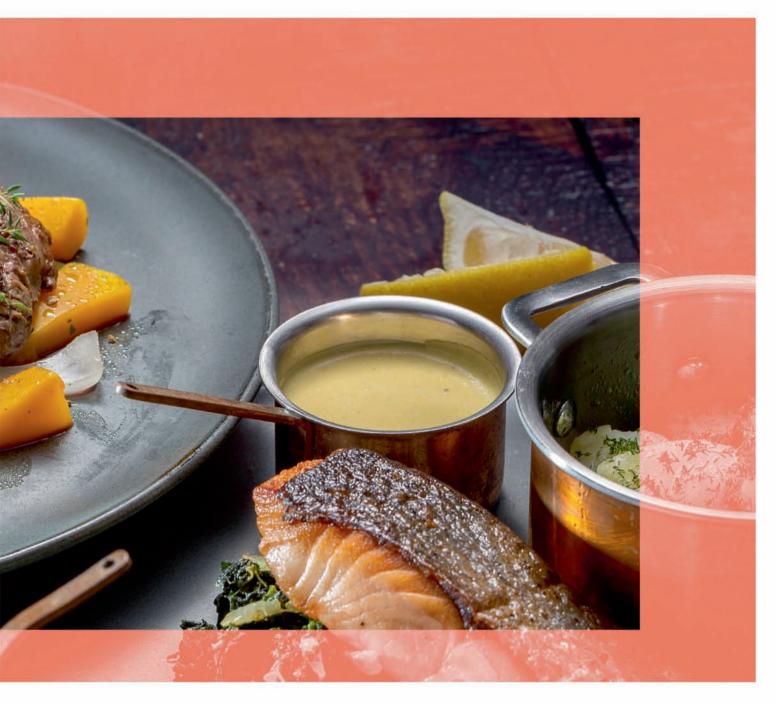


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At Le Meridien Phuket Beach Resort, our restaurants offer an enticing selection of flavours from around the world. Begin your day with a delightful signature breakfast, relish a leisurely lunch with your family at our Latest Recipe, or indulge in a romantic dinner with your loved ones at Portofino and Ariake.

Our talented chefs blend fresh ingredients and innovative techniques to create dishes that will delight your taste buds. Join us and experience a culinary journey that will leave you craving more.



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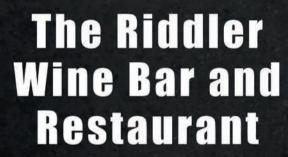
Meat lovers can enjoy Lamb Chop 1,100 baht, Grilled Organic Pork Cutlet (Pork Chop) 680 baht, T-Bone Steak 1,500 baht and Grain-Fed Australian Tenderloin Medallions 1,100 baht.

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Located in Soi Ruamrudee, this Bangkok restaurant offers an artistic fusion of Japanese and European cuisines from an award-wining chef - Chef Isao Shinmura. Highlights include:

Dry-aged Ribeye Steak, a 250-gram homemade dryaged Ribeye steak served with Japanese-style sauce and Thai spicy sauce.

Spicy Herb-crusted Chicken Grilled, thigh and drum, served with cod roe and mayo sauce

Chef's Japanese Inspired Beef Curry, a serving of US Short Plate cooked in a Japanese-inspired herb curry, accompanied by saffron rice.





The Riddler Wine Bar & Restaurant

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For more information and reservations, please call 082 547 7005 LINE: @theriddlerwinebar or reservation@theriddler.co.th





The St. Regis Bangkok Viu Restaurant



Enjoy panoramic views of the Bangkok skyline and menu highlights including: Grilled Australian Kilcoy Ribeye Steak with roasted seasonal vegetables, beets, onion rings and served with red wine beef jus. 1,900 baht

Surf and Turf Burger. Grilled 170 gms Wagyu Beef Patty

Half Boston Lobster, Sesame Seed Bun Served with



Parmesan Truffle Fries and Mixed Salad. 1,050 baht

The St. Regis Classic Beef Burger. Grilled 170 gms Patty, Crispy Bacon, Gruyere Cheese, Sesame Bun, Served with Fries and Mixed Salad. 450 baht.

Viu Restaurant - The St. Regis Bangkok

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Bangkok Marriott Marquis Queen's Park

Akira Back Restaurant & Bar

Akira Back, the award-winning Korean-born, Americanraised chef recommends meat lovers the following dishes:

Wagyu Short Ribs | Root Veggies, Quail Egg, Braising Jus.

This dish is a refined version of Chef Akira's mother's kalbi jjim – an authentic Korean beef stew.

AB Tacos | Wagyu Bulgogi, Roasted Tomato Ponzu.

Reflecting Akira Back's American melting pot heritage, this classic Mexican comfort food is stuffed with Korean style bulgogi wagyu beef and topped with roasted tomato ponzu.

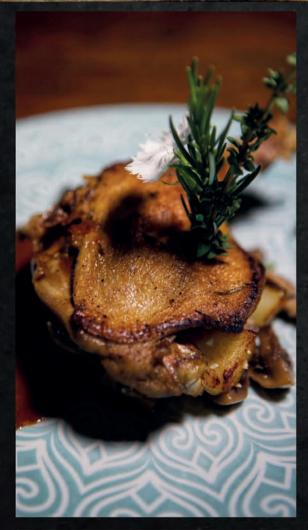
Lamb Chops | Anticucho Sauce, Crispy Potato, showcasing the quality of premium imported Australian lamb chops glazed with South American influenced chipotle anticucho sauce.

Akira Back Restaurant & Bar

Tel. 02 059 5999 Email restaurant-reservations.bkkqp@marriotthotels.com www.akirabackbangkok.com/ www.facebook.com/akirabackbkk Line official account: @akirabackandabar www.instagram.com/akirabackbkk







Pullman Bangkok Hotel G Scarlett Wine

Scarlett Wine Bar & Restaurant

Scarlett Wine Bar & Restaurant: Pullman Bangkok Hotel Rooftop venue features the following meat dishes:
La Côte de Boeuf. A large cut of beef that comes with bone and boasting a superior taste due to its fat marbling that creates a juicy flavour. 3,100 baht.

Kurobuta Tomahawk 800g.

Served with potato wedges and chimichurri sauce, large enough for two persons (400g). Comes with potato wedges and chimichurri sauce. THB 1,150

Le Confit de Canard.

To create this French classic that boasts a beautifully crisp skin, and juicy inside, duck legs that are cured overnight before being submerged in duck fat and slowly cooked in a low oven. 680 baht.

Scarlett Wine Bar & Restaurant

Pullman Bangkok Hotel G, Silom Road, Bangrak, Bangkok Tel: +66 (0) 2352 4000 – M. +66 (0) 84-637 2865 www.PULLMANBANGKOKHOTELG.COM



Asiatique The Riverfront The Crystal Grill House





Recommended meat dishes include: Hand-cut Steak Tartare (THB 680++)

featuring raw beef tenderloin blended with traditional ingredients, seasoned and topped with a sous-vide pasteurized egg yolk jam. Served with grilled sourdough. 680 baht.

Australian Southern Ranger M4 Grass-fed Black Angus Tenderloin – 200 grams. 1,780 baht.

Australian Stone Axe MB 6/7 Wagyu NY Striploin Steak boasts a marbling score of 6/7. 2,480 baht

Australian Stone Axe Wagyu NY Striploin, MB 6/7 – 250 grams

complete their culinary masterpiece.



The Crystal Grill House, Asiatique River Front

Tel: +66 (0) 2 059 5999 Email: restaurant reservations.bkkqp@marriotthotels.com www.thecrystalgrillhouse.com Facebook: www.facebook.com/thecrystalgrillhouse LINE: @crystalgrillhouse Instagram: www.instagram.com/thecrystalgrillhouse



Royal Orchid Sheraton Hotel & Towers Siam Yacht Club









Also on the menu are cuts of New York sirloin, priced at 1,898 baht per 300g serving, and rib eye at 1,998 baht per 300g. A selection of peppercorn, red wine, mushroom and herb, and Kansas BBQ sauces are included.

Siam Yacht Club

Royal Orchid Sheraton Hotel & Towers Tel: 02 266 0123 Email: siamyachtclub@gmail.com. www.sycbangkok.com/









Mercure Bangkok Makkasan Hotel

M Wine Lounge

Australian Wagyu Picanha has been added to the Lounge's menu. This highly sought-after cut of beef known for its exceptional marbling, tenderness and rich flavor is available at only 1,600 baht, lunch and dinner.

M Wine Lounge

10th floor, 1599 New Petchaburi Road, Makkasan, Ratchathewi, Bangkok 10400 Tel. +66 2 115 3333 Email: H8422-FB@accor.com









Vsenso by Chef Toey

Suvarnabhumi Airport, V Senso by Chef Toey is an Italian restaurant. Its

Chef Recommended menu for meat lovers includes:

Bistecca Fiorentina featuring grain fed Australian T-bone

Wet-aged for 10 days, charcoal grilled and rested to make it more tender and juicier. Served with grilled Italian veggies and Himalayan. 980 baht.

Australian Braised lamb shank

slow cooked in fruit sauce for 24 hours, with potatoes fondant, vine tomato confit. 650 baht.

Grilled Marinated Jerk Chicken,

Romesco grilled pepper served with mashed potatoes 350 baht.

Open daily 11:00 – 14:00 h. and 17:00 – 22:00 h. for lunch and dinner also for special function such as Chef Table private dinner available to serve with Chef Toey's creative dining idea with never repeat same menu to surprise customer in every event.

V Senso by Chef Toey Tel: 0855565566









Centara Grand at Central World

Uno Mas

Roberto Gonzalez Alonso as Chef De Cuisine recommends the following three dishes on the restaurant's new meat menu:

Charcoal grilled Gundagai lamb loin with lamb jus and beetroot-rhubarb salad. The lamb is cooked for 72 hours in sous vide, then finished in the Josper for the colour and smoked flavor.

Charcoal grilled Presa Iberica with eggplant pure, spring onion and fresh herbs butter. The pork presa is cooked in the Josper and then sliced.

Charcoal grilled Spanish Chuleton 1 kg. Rested at room temperature for 20 minutes and then cooked in the Josper for 10 minutes.

Uno Mas, Central Grand at Central World

999/99 Rama I Rd., Pathumwan, Bangkok 10330 Tel: 0 2100 6255 E-mail at diningcgcw@chr.co.th www.diningcgcw@chr.co.th







Siam Kempinski Hotel Bangkok ALATI

The restaurant is renowned for its extensive meat selection

Costoletta alla Milanese

Featuring imported breaded veal cutlets, topped with saltflakes. 1,450 baht.

presented by Executive Chef Carlo Valenziano including

Pure Black Angus Prime Picanha

A cutlet of 250 g Picanha from Australia served with a selected side and sauce. 1,690 baht.

300 g 'Pure Black Angus Ribeye

Cooked to guests' personal temperature. 1,850 baht. Catalana', duck leg confit, prunes, pine nuts and duck jus served with mashed potatoes. 690 baht.

ALATi , Siam Kempinski

991/9 Rama I Rd, Pathum Wan, Pathum Wan District, Bangkok 10330 Tel: +662 162 9000 email: dining.siambangkok@kempinski.com Line Official Account @Siamkempinskihotel. www.kempinski.com/en/siam-hotel/restaurants-bars/alati





Hilton Sukhumvit Bangkok Scalini





A Mediterranean restaurant located on Sukhumvit Soi 24, Bangkok, Scalini has introduced a new menu with a special focus on meat lovers.

Must-try dishes include: Pure Black Australian Angus Ribeye

Grilled to Perfection. Hill Side Tomahawk Lamb Rack | Australian Lamb, slow roasted with garlic and rosemary, parmesan herb crust sauteed butter vegetables and grilled polenta.

Scalini Meat Platter

All in One. Char-grilled rib eye, striploin, oyster blade, roasted lamb rack with tomatoes, grilled potatoes with aromatic herbs, red wine jus, chimichurri.

Mezze Platter

For two or four guests features a selection of quality Italian cold cuts, including Parma Ham and Salami, paired with exquisite French, Italian, and Spanish cheeses.

Scalini, Hilton Sukhumvit Bangkok Hotel

991/9 Rama I Rd, Pathum Wan, Pathum Wan District, Bangkok 10330 Tel: 065 715 2368 email: dining.siambangkok@kempinski.com
Facebook: www.facebook.com/scalinibkk Instagram: www.instagram.com/scalinibkk www.hilton.com/en/hotels/bkksuhi-hilton-sukhumvit-bangkok/dining/

The St. Regis Bangkok Zuma Bangkok











Recommended dishes for meat lovers include Spicy beef tenderloin, featuring 270 days dry aged Black Angus beef from Australia, with sesame, red chili and sweet soy at 1,650 baht; Spiced Lamb Cutlet from Australia, marinated overnight and continuously brushed while cooking with a mix of red miso, honey ginger and chili paste at 750 baht.

Zuma, The St. Regis Bangkok

159 Ratchadamri Road, Lumpini, Pathumwan, The St. Regis Bangkok, 10330 Tel: 02 252 4707 www.zumarestaurant.com





Hotel Indigo Bangkok CHAR Bangkok



CHAR has launched sharing platters showcasing various cuts of beef. Created by Chef Jaime "Jimmy" Rojas, they include:

The Meat Deluxe platter

Price 2,500 baht, with different cuts of wetaged premium beef.
Recommended is the Australian Wagyu tenderloin (220g) and flank steak (220g), alongside Angus 150 days grain-fed rib eye (220g).

CHAR, Hotel Indigo Bangkok

81 Wireless Road, Lumpini Pathumwan, Bangkok, Bangkok, 10330

CHAR Rooftop Bar

the 26th floor, 81 Wireless Road, Lumpini Pathumwan, Bangkok, Bangkok, 10330 Tel: +66 (0) 2, 059 5999 Facebook: www.facebook.com/thecrystalgrillhouse LINE: @crystalgrillhouse Instagram: www.instagram.com/thecrystalgrillhouse www.thecrystalgrillhouse.com







The Athenee Hotel, a Luxury Collection Hotel Bangkok The Allium Bangkok



French restaurant The Allium has introduced a Meat Lover menu, whose highlight is the Iberico Pork. This dish packs a spicy punch. The celeriac, sourced from our chef's hometown in the Middle East, adds a unique and spicy component to this dish. Paired with succulent Iberico pork from Spain, this dish is the perfect combination of savory and spicy flavors.

Don't miss the Slow Cooked Duck, with crispy gratin potato.

The Allium Bangkok, The Athenee Hotel

61 Wireless Road (Witthayu) Lumpini, Pathumwan Bangkok, Thailand 10330 Tel: 02 650 8800 www.thealliumbangkok.com







Eastin Grand Hotel Sathorn Bangkok

Antito

Italian cuisine is not only about pasta; it can also be perfect for meat lovers when created by our One-Star Michelin Chef Amerigo Tito Sesti. The Wagyu Beef Striploin, for example, just melts in your mouth, and is served with tangy salsa verde and roast potatoes on the side. Our Half Baby Chicken is freshly baked to its fullest flavor and served with seasoned roast potatoes.

Antito, Eastin Grand Hotel

14th floor of Eastin Grand Hotel Sathorn. Tel. 02 210 8100





Chatrium Grand Bangkok Savio













The menu highlight here is Iberico Pata Negra 18th Month cured from Spain. This is the most expensive air-dried ham in the world as it comes from specially fed pigs whose meat is rich in omega 3 and 6.

Chef Darius's Signature Wagyu Beef Stroganoff

D is a Russian dish consisting of sautéed pieces of beef in a sauce of mustard and sour cream. Cooked in the traditional way, the only difference from the original is that the chef uses Australian wagyu Beef MBS 6 and cooking it in in Portuguese Madeira Wine. From 1,300 baht.

Savio, Chatrium Grand Bangkok

728 Phetchaburi Road, Thanon Phetchaburi, Ratchathewi, Bangkok 10400 Thailand

Tel. 02-126-7999 www.chatrium.com/grandbangkok/dining/savio or www.opentable.co.th/r/savio-bangkok. or book your table at https://bit.ly/3Hac661





Jim Thompson House Jim's Terrace

Located in the heart of Bangkok, this trendy establishment offers its Maison Fostier Artisan Thai Charcutier, Made in Thailand, featuring cold cuts, infused with the fiery essence of red curry and peppers.

Jim's Creamy Croquettes have a crispy exterior and filling of slow-cooked oxtail infused with Thai-style red curry, served Kaeng Phet mayo and topped with crisp basil leaves.

The slow cooked Isan Style Beef Tongue is infused with a blend of oyster sauce, light soy sauce, and sugar. Charcoalgrilled and sliced like a tender brisket, it's sprinkled with Phetchaburi salt and served with fried shallots, garlic, and Nam Jim Jaew sauce.

Jim's Terrace, Jim Thompson House

6/2 Soi Kasemsan 2, Rama 1 Road, Bangkok, Thailand Tel: (+66)2 216 7368 or 02 612 3603

Facebook: htwww.facebook.com/JimThompsonHeritageQuarter www.jimthompsonrestaurant.com/restaurant/bangkok/











Panorama Restaurant

The newly renovated Panorama offers a variety of delectable dishes for all meat lovers, carefully curated by Executive Chef Andre Buser.





His signature dishes include:
Five Founders Beef Tomahawk Steak
Imported from Australia, perfect for sharing.

Also, on the menu are:
Beef Tenderloin Stroganoff
Wagyu Beef Donburi
Wagyu Burger
Five Founders Grilled Beef Tenderloin
Yam Nua Yang
Thai-style marinated beef salad.

Panorama Bangkok, Crowne Plazza Bangkok Hotel

61 Wireless Road (Witthayu) Lumpini, Pathumwan Bangkok, Thailand 10330 Tel. 02 632 9000 Emailpanorama.bkkcp@ihg.com

Grand Mercure Bangkok Atrium

Benihana











Benihana The Japanese Steakhouse: Grand Mercure Bangkok Atrium Now serving Premium Diamantina beef from Stanbroke, a family-owned Australian beef and cattle company, delivering the highest levels of tenderness, juiciness and flavour thanks to a diet rich in grain and grass. 3,200 baht.

Also on the men is Margaret River Wagyu Beef Striploin 4/5, exquisite beef with abundant marbling that carries the delicious flavour Wagyu is renowned for. 2,900 baht.

Benihana The Japanese Steakhouse: Grand Mercure Bangkok Atrium

1880 New Petchburi Road, Bangkapi, Huay Kwang, Bangkok, Thailand 10310, Tel: 02 718 2000 Email: Benihana.Atrium@accor.com

Facebook: www.facebook.com/benihanaatgrandmercurebangkokatrium/?locale=th_TH









VIE Hotel Bangkok YTSB

Yellow Tail Sushi Bar serves Wagyu A5 Sushi-Niigata's sushi rice prepared using a red vinegar marinade aged for over 20 years. The beef is lightly seared to enhance its aroma, tenderness, and juiciness. It is served with a garlic shoyu sauce, a recipe unique to the restaurant.



Royal Cliff Beach Hotel Royal Grill Room & Wine Cellar



Serving prime cuts of imported meats beautifully prepared together with stunning panoramic views of the Gulf of Thailand. A wide selection of cuts includes ribeye, tenderloin and striploin from grass-fed beef imported from Australia and Japan.

Japanese Full Blood Wagyu Rib Eye A5

- the highest grade of beef - is the house's signature cut.

Another highlight is **Australian Black Angus Beef Tenderloin** from 270-days grain-fed Rangers Valley Black Onyx raised in the cool climate of the New England Tablelands.

Royal Grill Room & Wine Cellar, Royal Cliff Beach Hotel

Tel: 038 250 421 Email: gro-main@royalcliff.com Line ID: @Royalcliff Facebook: www.facebook.com/ royalcliff www.royalcliff.com Also on the menu is Australian Angus Beef

Striploin made from Little Joe premium grass-fed beef which has a minimum marble score of 4.

For an intense beef flavour, opt for the Australian Pure

Angus Beef Flank from Rangers Valley Black Onyx -

the 27-day grain-fed beef with a good amount of marbling and a great texture.

All steak dishes come with a choice of side dishes.











El Gaucho Argentinian Steakhouse

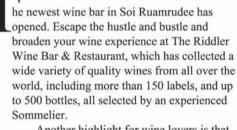
Refined yet relaxed, El Gaucho is a meat lover's ideal venue with its quality steaks prepared using premium meat imported from selected farms in New South Wales and the United States. Recommended dishes include Angus beef, Fillet Platter, Chateaubriand, Beef Steak Tartare, homemade Burger with Foie Gras, and homemade Chorizo.



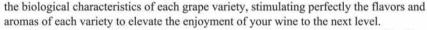
8/4 - 7 Sukhumvit Soi 19. www.elgaucho.asia







Another highlight for wine lovers is that the wine bar serves wine using Riedel glasses and accessories. It is a brand designed to suit



The food is equally outstanding as every item on the menu is prepared by Chef Isao Shinmura, the Iron Chef Thailand challenger, who has accumulated more than 20 years of culinary and butchery experience in Nagoya, and created a Japanese-Italian fusion cuisine known as 'Yoshoku.'

In producing this western-style cuisine with a blend of Japanese styles, he has adhered to traditional principles of cooking, which is to add less seasoning and focus on the delicious taste of natural ingredients.

This concept is a perfect complement to the wine selection, as it enhances the dining experience. Menu highlights include Chicken Liver Pate, Crab Meat and Anki Fish Liver Croquettes, Mentaiko Spaghetti, Straw Grilled Gindara Fish with Yuzu Sauce, Straw Grilled Dry-aged Ox Tongue. Also not to be missed is a selection of Beef Steaks that Chef Isao dried aged himself.

Inside, the restaurant is divided into different zones. In front of the store is a Wine Cellar displaying over 500 bottles of quality wines from all over the world along with cabinets featuring cold cuts and homemade dry-aged steaks. Customers can buy food to eat at home.

The second zone is a restaurant that simulates the atmosphere of a 'Wine Cave'. It's as if you're dining in an underground winery.

The restaurant also has a semiprivate room, which is suitable for customers who want privacy but still maintain a friendly atmosphere.



The Riddler Wine Bar & Damp; Restaurant

The Woodberry Common 1 st floor, B Building Soi Ruamrudee, Ploenchit Road, Lumphini, Bangkok 10330 Tel: 082 547 7005 LINE OA: @theriddlerwinebar Facebook.com/theriddlerwinebar Instagram: @theriddlerwinebar

> NOSTALGIA

Renoir $oldsymbol{D_{ali}^{ ext{DEGAS}}}$ PAN PAN Vincent Van G O G H **∼**Monet Goya VÄÄ UGIN Vall Street NAPOLEON Lookie Lookie ¬ Livingstone's →REEN PARROT Chelsea Christie's Tenderloins The Office MOJOS emonia





• Sukhumvit's 'Artists' Street was once the hottest choice for Bangkok expats

> Today, it's making a comeback – but not like before

> > By Colin Hastings

SOI 33 Rise & Fall (and Rise again)



> FEATURE

or a truly memorable period lasting more than 25 years, Soi 33 on Sukhumvit reigned supreme as the city's favorite hangout for affluent expats - a welcome upmarket alternative to the go-go dancing and skimpy bikini formula favored by established nighttime competitors like Soi Nana, Soi Cowboy and Patpong, all of which targeted mostly tourists.

Instead, Soi 33 venues offered punters comfortable lounges with soft seating and background music in pleasant surroundings, where they were served by beautifully groomed hostesses wearing seductive cocktail dresses.

It was different, subtle and full of promise. The aim, of course, was the same as the go-go bars: to persuade their main customers - foreign businessmen and well-heeled Thais - into parting with their cash by whatever means, fair or foul. And it worked a treat.

In the early days, a number of Soi 33 bars and lounges were named after long-gone Impressionists and Surrealist painters such as Renoir, Degas and Dali, hence its various nicknames, 'Painters Soi' and 'Artists Soi' and the unflattering 'Soi Dead Artists'. In fact, these venues were very much a minority when the area peaked in popularity mid-2011. By then massage parlors, sports and pool bars, clubs, Japanese bars, and restaurants were dominant.

Soi 33 first rose to prominence in 1986 with the opening of Pan Pan, an Italian restaurant with the almost novel attraction of valet parking. It's still there today, 40 years later, one of the few reminders of a golden era. What happened the following year was far more significant – the launch of Renoir, the street's first lounge and hostess bar. It was a brave move by owner Alex and his partners, considering Soi 33 had never seen this kind of attraction before. But its neo-sophistication clicked almost immediately with expats who quickly flocked there, especially during

'happy hours' when the price of drinks was almost in line with nearby Soi Cowboy.

The hostesses were friendly and chatty, and duly rewarded with expensive drinks of their own. Not surprisingly, many of the girls, given their good looks, grooming and reasonable English fluency, ended up marrying regular customers become favored areas for expats to live, so the close location of so many bars and lounges near to home proved very handy.

The area wasn't without its irritations and controversies, including gambling and moneylending on a major scale. One issue that every Soi 33 regular recalls with a shake of the head was the

The success of Renoir prompted the launch of a slew of similar 'arty' lounge bars, such as Vincent Van Gogh, Monet, Goya and Gaugin, though none really matched its unique ambiance.

and moving overseas. Indeed, one former hostess who tied the knot with a Renoir regular now enjoys a jet set lifestyle in some of the world's wealthiest cities and resorts.

The success of Renoir prompted the launch of a slew of similar 'arty' lounge bars, such as Vincent Van Gogh, Monet, Goya and Gaugin, though none really matched its unique ambiance. Other unthemed venues included Wall Street, Napoleon, Lookie Lookie, Chelsea, Christie's, Santana, Livingstone's, Green Parrot, The Office and Mojos. One curiosity on the street that never failed to raise eyebrows, to say the least, was Demonia, an S&M bar that catered to quirky locals, expats and inquisitive tourists. Tellingly, perhaps, Demonia not only survived Covid and Soi 33's recent demise, but recently moved into new premises opposite its original location and is today welcoming a new generation of people who want to discover something different and kinky. A few farang veterans of Bangkok's night scene are today finally ready to admit they occasionally partook in Demonia's special services - and have scars to prove it.

By 1992, the area was filling up with all kinds of entertainment venues, increasing from 16 in 1999, to 20 in 2000, 32 in 2002, and about 70 at its peak in 2010.

While Renoir set the pace for

much of the time, in later years The Office took over as the street's most popular bar, thanks to its dual offering of live TV sports and a phalanx of pretty hostesses. The owner tried to duplicate its huge success and also, it was said at the time, to match the increasing popularity of Titanium, a live music club and ice bar on nearby Soi 22, by opening another venue called Mojos opposite The Office. All three are now distant memories. So too is Chelsea, whose owner also tried to double her money by opening another bar across the road.

The rise of Soi 33 can be traced to a combination of factors, all equally pertinent. They include a huge influx of well-paid foreign experts in the mid-1980s to work on a slew of major infrastructure projects in Thailand like Suvanarbhumi international airport, expressways, the Skytrain and a rapidly expanding private property market.

Mostly male expats, they found the street's veneer of sophistication and respectability more to their liking than Bangkok's other more garish and tourist-oriented nightspots. Many came with watchful wives, so Soi 33's early happy hours enabled them to have a drink (and fun) after work without going home unacceptably late.

By the mid-80s, Soi 33 and neighboring streets had already



widespread padding of bills. This went on relentlessly in many of the bars, aided by the fact that the cups holding the bills were usually placed behind the bar, out of sight of customers. After a few beers and a couple of girlie drinks, memories started to fade, so when the final tally was presented, it often exceeded what was expected. And it wasn't really possible to contest the amount because of the effects of alcohol and various diversions have on one's memory.

Another disagreement frequently occurred when customers bought 'rounds' for friends, only to find that both buyer and friends were charged for the same drink. Unravelling these situations was usually impossible without causing an upset and attracting the attention of 'minders, but it's fair to say the bar very rarely lost out.

An American expat who sat in the same seat in the same bar and drank the same number of beers every night for several years was so shocked and incensed when staff he knew well tried to overcharge him that he paid up, reluctantly of course, left the place and never returned.

Expats tended to fill the bars during 'happy hours' from 5 to 9pm, while Thai usually took over thereafter, when the cost of drinks increased significantly. When one 'farang' owned bar tried to extend its happy hours, he was approached by a delegation from the other bars who 'advised' him to keep his prices in line with theirs. He heeded their advice, naturally.

By 2014, Soi 33 was beginning to run out of steam and when Covid struck six years later, people were saying it had had its day.

Throughout this golden reign, the street underwent almost continuous development, with long stretches of property that hosted some of the most popular bars and lounges being demolished to make way for new upmarket condos and commercial buildings.

Nonetheless, the decline of Soi 33 remains something of a mystery. Its lounge-bars had already proved beyond doubt their popularity and financial viability. Former regulars invariably have positive memories of the street in its heyday but today are nevertheless mystified by its sudden demise. So what happened?

Most people blame Covid, which had a deleterious effect on entertainment areas nationwide, but since the disease didn't really occur until 2020, way after the street's downward momentum had begun, it may not be a major contributory factor. Others say Soi 33's fate was sealed when many of those expats with deep pockets started to leave the country, job well done. They've been replaced many times over by a



Nonetheless, the decline of Soi 33 remains something of a mystery. Its loungebars had already proved beyond doubt their popularity and financial viability.

new breed of foreign worker who is younger, has different tastes and far less cash to splash.

None of the artist bars exist today, suggesting that the theme was merely a fad with an expiry date.

As mentioned elsewhere, development of the area began in earnest in the early 2000s, which simply forced some establishments to make way for the bulldozers. Rents also increased in response to the street's popularity.



NOSTALGIA



Soi 33's

of the street share their memories



Jonathan Pritchard

Former regulars

"It was vital that you kept checking the almost constant stream of paper bills being stuffed into your allocated personal pot"

Jonathan Pritchard was captain of Bangkok British Club's

hugely successful rugby team in the 1990s. After training and games, the team often discussed their strengths and weaknesses while playing pool in various Soi 33 establishments. Jon recalls some of the highlights:

"In its heyday, there really was no other street or back alley that could equal Soi 33 in any capitol city anywhere in the world for sheer rest and recouperation and possibly mischief... whilst the evening was still very young.

"Bangkok, renowned for its awful traffic in the 90s and 2000s meant that after a hard day's work one could meet chums either before that witching hour or just after and then bask mentally in the comfortable knowledge that you had a justifiable alibi for the wife when you eventually trickled home...after the rush hour!

"It must have been serendipitous, because after 30 years living here, I cannot believe that all the Thai bar owners got together and collectively decided to name their bars after famous European painters... but they did!

"Renoir offered beautiful dusky maidens in long white diaphanous shoulder-strapped evening gowns, gliding and spinning about the spacious bar smiling and serving truly ice-cold beers that even an Australian barman would have been proud of.

"These ladies would chat with you and your group standing or sitting in a booth or on a knee. And with the trained eye of a professional (following many hours of a mamasan's lecture) ensure that your beer or your G&T or whisky was regularly encouraged to be sipped or glugged and when nearly finished, offer to get you another round...and with a snigger and a flutter of those carefully mascaraed eyelashes and the delightful slightly abashed Asian downcast head - ask for another for herself and her fellow sirens.

"It was vital that you kept watching and checking the almost constant stream of paper bills being stuffed meaningfully into your allocated personal pot. All too often, though, they went into one pot for the entire group. Chatting, cussing, mindless thoughts about sport, lying and cuddling can cause one to forget this vital task and if you failed to do so, then there really was no way to argue when the time of reckoning came to pass. Your final paper tabs slip tabs could, for the unwary or simply daft drunk, be so densely packed into that wooden receptacle that they were almost reconstituted back into real timber.

Our group of rugby mates always liked Van Gogh bar further down 33 nearer the Sukhumvit end because it had a cool almost private upstairs pool table on the mezzanine floor overlooking the bar and a WC up there too. The stairs 'up' were a Vietcong lethal man trap of tiny irregular sized steep stairs that curved at the top to no known geometric pattern and so any fresh rounds of beer were definitely supplied by yet more dusky maidens but dressed more for work than a Ball.

In those early 90s the only really drinkable beers (the Singha beer then was said to contain so much formaldehyde that if you died you wouldn't rot for a century!) were the locally brewed Kloster and Amstel. Amazingly, if the bar ran out of cold ones or one of those two – you simply asked one of the waitresses to kindly go down to the nearest shop and buy some more – chilled, of course. Off she would trot with a smile and wiggle.

Our leader at that time, let's call him Tor, decided that everyone's bickering about Pool rules was frankly annoying so...he simply made up his own rules. None of these were written down, so were he to be playing and a dispute arose (inevitably) he would simply stop and look up in the imaginary book, even licking a finger to turn the non-existent page and find an answer that suited his predicament, which generally resulted in you losing and paying for the next round. We still play to those rules to this day!

Tor also liked to end an evening 'accompanied' and it seemed that he was somehow able to book an 'escort' from the working stock in the bar and gradually work his way through the entire staff list without any known cat-fights. Newly employed maidens would of course fall for the wily charms of Tor and when we returned the next evening, they would be hiding in a corner trying not to be noticed... we never knew why?

As an observation; towards the end of our love affair with Van Gogh, after so much straight forward blatant, brazen, shameless bill cheating...the owner, despite taking-in the equivalent of the entire Nigerian national debt each time we came in – never, ever, ever, ever bought our small



Chelsea Christie's SANTANA

select group even one round of beer. What a cyclist!!!

All the other bars along the street, each with their various charms and lures, differing décor, faulty abacus calculators and bamboos pits, would have their teams of sirens on stools outside enticing the 'happy-to-be-enticed' passing expats into their webs. The bar names trip off the tongue: Monet, Dali, Degas, Rembrandt, Goya, and later even a Christies – an auction house rather than a painter but relevant of course.

The infamous end of street Napoléon Bar was renowned for its numerous pool tables, hard playing, hard-nosed Thai contingent of serious players for money with a distinct lack of humour should they ever lose a game or face...especially to some smart arsed Farang! One evening I was in there with Tor after a few hours of successful pool in Van Gogh, we were playing like demons and one of the leather clad locals challenged Tor to a best-of-three match. This unsmiling youth was soundly thrashed in the two first games.

By then we were a mini-Amphitheatre of shiny black leather comrades when said youth chose to double or quit and was unfortunately once again thoroughly dicked by a smiling, Midas-touched, confident Tor.

Funnily enough we were asked very politely by a muchscarred dark brown face to leave immediately.... after paying the bill which had to include a round for the injured party numbering at least ten!

Napoleon Bar was most certainly a wholly unreliable tab keeping bar and it was best to pay as you went... literally in this case!

Brad was the Australian who would become the owner of the superbly named steak house and bar cumbistro Tenderloins after some hard training elsewhere in Soi 33. He arrived in the area after being the successful manager of a well-known parcel delivery company and rented two shop units and fashioned the fabulous Aussie styled Blue BBQ Bar up a side Soi opposite his eventual goldmine.

This bar offered delightfully juicy, thick home-made beef burgers (with beetroot!) and had a huge selection of wall-mounted tilting sports TVs around all the walls accompanied by the best trained female staff serving proper chilled-to-the-bone beer.

Brad went on to open Lookie-Lookie bar up that same small Soi. This was truly the piece de resistance of

all things chauvinist. It had Shrimp's famous calendar featuring naked poster girls on all the walls interspersed by numerous ancient opium enjoyment devices and a pool table. Small round elevated tables with comfortable quality high stools allowed you to really lounge about in. It had clean, sweet-smelling WCs and a DJ who knew his customers and simply repeated all the 70s music ever recorded at a discrete and amiable level.

But the lady staff...wow...all were extremely pretty and demure and wore only large long-sleeved men's pale blue office work shirts and were carefully coiffured so their black or auburn locks were suitably tussled to look like they had just got out of bed...which in fairness, they probably had!

Almost every working expat's disposable family income ended up in more of Brad's bars, which of course allowed him to move up in the world from loosely shirted fillies to owning Tenderloins until he sold that and changed his name to Elon Musk!!

John Furlong

"The way the girls dressed was fantastic. Some of them were university students paying for their studies"

British businessman John Furlong was one of Soi 33's most loyal customers. Indeed, he has the distinction of being at Renoir's opening night in 1987 and its final night more than 20 years later.

"If you had business customers to entertain, the format adopted by many of Soi 33 bars worked – it wasn't in your face, unlike Soi Cowboy. And not shocking like Nana or Patpong. The area targeted expats, not tourists.

"My favorite bar was Chelsea. The way the girls dressed was fantastic. Some of them were university students paying for their studies.

"Chelsea was always heaving – until the owner opened another bar opposite.

"Soi 33 was busy early on, during happy hours from 5-9pm. Not many people went to places like Soi Cowboy at 5pm.

"The early start suited married guys who could be home at a reasonable time.

"Later, when British-style pubs opened, people thought they wouldn't work – why go to a pub without hosteses? But they did catch on!

"If Soi 33 was still around, I'd still be going there."



The more famous, well-established bars on Soi 33 such as Renoir were always reasonably busy, but Chelsea, a newcomer around 1994, quickly rose as a go-to place.



Brad McElroy

"Generally, the older customer demographic felt safer in Soi 33 surrounded by more mature, less aggressive ladies in evening dresses speaking better English"

Australian entrepreneur Brad McElroy operated bars and a

restaurant in Soi 33 for a period of nine years.

How did you get involved in running bars in Soi 33? I leased a shophouse in a small sub soi off Soi 33 with an office upstairs for our consulting business. We decided to try our hand at a restaurant/bar which we opened downstairs in January 1999. The thinking was that Soi 33 could do with a simple offering of pretty girls and a good steak. Staff wore a blue beret and oversize white businessman's shirt.

It was called The Blue Barbecue and we grilled BBQ foods on a built-in BBQ. As the first Soi 33 bar with a foreign connection, we were very conscious of not wanting to upset "the artist bar establishment" on Soi 33, so our location wasn't in anyone's face. It became quite popular quickly with the mix of an eating option and cute staff.

After opening The Blue Bar Barbecue in 1999, a couple of years later we launched the Richmond Bar and the Lookie Lookie Gallery Bar, which featured lots of Shrimp's famous "calendars" and Chuck's framed extensive opium pipe collection, which a senior official said was one of the best he'd seen.

In 2003 we opened Tenderloins Sports Bar and restaurant, also on Soi 33. By 2008, we'd moved on.

What were the streets most popular bars?

Renoir, Lucciano's, Degas, Chelsea, Bacchus and later the Lookie Lookie. The Office was a much bigger bar, while The Green Parrot had a golfer following.

Why was Soi 33 so successful?

It was reasonably central to the Sukhumvit residential area and for many, "on the way home". Soi 33 was more a place where business guys met after work. Construction and finance guys mingling and solving Thailand's and their home countries' political, economic and sports issues over a beer - and spruiking porkies that only a demographic like this could invent, much like pubs anywhere.

The more famous, well-established bars on Soi 33 such as Renoir were always reasonably busy, but Chelsea, a newcomer around 1994, quickly rose as a go-to place. Cold beers, OK prices, pretty and well attired staff was certainly Chelsea's winning recipe. The owner was relatively fair and approachable.

The Office had quite a few hostesses, live sports broadcasts and food. Later in the evening those punters unattached and with energy and could if they so desired find their way to Soi Cowboy, not too far away.

What caused Soi 33's demise?

Business expat numbers in Thailand dwindled, patrons aged as did staff, younger expats weren't so interested in what Soi 33 had to offer. To a certain degree there was nothing "new and interesting" and therefore less of a reason to visit Soi 33. The Londoner Brewpub (on the Sukhumvit corner of Soi 330 closing also seemed to have an effect. Plus the opening of various expat pubs in the 33/1 zone.

Did the street attract the city's best -looking girls? Generally, the older customer demographic felt safer in Soi 33 surrounded by more mature, less aggressive ladies in evening dresses speaking better English. Certainly, there were some very attractive ladies working in Soi 33 (not all were disposed to accompany customers). If the required spec was a younger whippy body coupled with a "carefree" attitude, this was available in spades elsewhere.

Who were the main customers?

Mainly expat businessmen. Punters under 40 were rare!

Soi 33's

Is it true that many of the girls working in Soi 33 met their husbands there, and more than a few have enjoyed very successful marriages?.

We know quite a few in Thailand and overseas, in the US, UK, Scandinavia and Australia - happily married with families, very well assimilated and accepted. I think this is fabulous. Not all were able to take this route.

Apart from your own place, which was your favorite Soi

In the older days. Renoir. Later when they opened, Chelsea and The Office.

Any chance of a revival for Soi 33?

Doubtful. Those days are gone. That customer demographic is no longer the same. Plus remember the song VDO killed the radio star, well social media killed some of the go-go and hostess bar scene.

How do you feel today about Soi 33?

There are a couple of quality Thai restaurants on Soi 33. Pan Pan has been there forever. 'North' is very stylish, specializing in northern Thai cuisine, 'Gedhawa' is a great place to eat. Nowadays, quite a few condos have been built. A couple of happy ending joints remain, as does the highly specialized Demonia, originally known as The Cave.

Do I miss the mainstream Soi 33?

Certainly! I met lots of my business and social friends at the various bars and we still keep in touch, reminiscing about the old Soi 33 days.

Any amusing memories?

After a big night on Soi 33, a very good friend and Soi 33 regular woke in shock thinking he was having an out of body experience, seeing his own naked body lying face up on a bed. After a few terrifying minutes he realized he was gazing at a huge ceiling mirror...

On race day one year the Melbourne Cup was also run on Soi 33. Traffic was halted for a couple of minutes. Richmond Bar lady jockeys in breeches riding caps and wielding riding crops had chosen chose their horses - well lubricated punters dragged out of the bar. With the jockeys piggy backed on their steeds, the field raced 50 meters along the Soi and back. A couple of horses pulled up lame, with one claiming excess whipping. Drinks all round!

When Bob "The Tart" Merrigan celebrated his 50th, blindfolded at the Lookie Lookie Bar, his gift was delivered in a large cardboard box by his rugby mates. The blindfolded "Tart' gingerly opened his box and out popped his present with open arms and a big kiss from the 'lady' - well, person - whose job was to make-up the hostesses before the bar opened its doors.

Patrick 'Shrimp' Gauvain

"The place was packed with glamorous and exotic young ladies dressed in ballgowns... many being university students making money for their education; a far cry from the Patpong lasses who were supporting their families upcountry"



"I suppose Soi 33 evolved out of the need for more acceptable lounge bars rather than go-go bars...something a little more upscale... which was a migration away from Patpong, Soi Nana and Cowboy.

No one knows Bangkok's bar scene better than Patrick 'Shrimp' Gauvain, a British advertising executive who has lived in Thailand for more than 50 years.

"I suppose Soi 33 evolved out of the need for more acceptable lounge bars rather than go-go bars...something a little more upscale... which was a migration away from Patpong, Soi Nana and Cowboy.

"The first lounge bar I recall was Renoir, which became a hot spot for the advertising fraternity as well as a new breed of young Thai executives. From 6:00pm onwards every evening the place was packed with the likes of these individuals along with glamorous and exotic young ladies dressed in ballgowns... many being university students making money for their education; a far cry from the Patpong lasses who were supporting their families in the country.

"From Renoir the soi evolved into a plethora of 'Dead Artists' lounges (a rather irreverent name for the street) whose names were perceived to be somewhat more sophisticated names than the likes of Bada Bing, The Pink Panther, Pussy Collection or The Strip in Patpong. Their interiors all looked very much the same like a cross between kitsch Chinese and bad classic French interior design. "By the late 90s and early 200s, Soi 33 had over 30 lounges competing with similar offerings, which led to the need to diversify with karaoke, an S&M establishments Demonia and those catering for Japanese clientele.

"With the redevelopment of the street and the advent of Covid, Soi 33's popularity waned and several establishments closed. It seemed destined to follow the fate of Patpong, but recently a few high-end clubs like Check Inn 99, social bars like Propaganda and pubs have given the area a new lease of life. This, and the soon to be opened Emsphere - directly opposite Soi 33 - will undoubtedly attract a younger audience with disposable income, and will likely see an emergence of a new eclectic selection of establishments."

NOSTALGIA

How the street is filling up with new and very different businesse?

A quick stroll down Soi 33 today will confirm the area is far from a shadow of its former self. Indeed, it is thriving. As in the past, change here is continuous, with all kinds of businesses moving in - and out. New condos are being built at a dizzying pace. And the tempo is almost back to the street's peak a decade or so ago.

Part of its resurgence is due to the near proximity of the gigantic Emsphere shopping centre now being built on Sukhumvit, opposite Soi 33. Wiley entrepreneurs have seen the huge potential of the project's multitude of shoppers who will converge on this already increasingly busy area of Bangkok, and are opening restaurants, coffee shops and girlie bars.

indeed, there are many significant recent newcomers, including Tibet Gate, an impressive enterprise presumably selling Tibetan cuisine, that occupies the former Christie's bar at the top of the street. Almost opposite is North, a plush restaurant specializing in Lanna food from northern Thailand, while Gedhawa at the far end of Soi 33 is another stylish venue serving Thai cuisine.

Propaganda, a smart speakeasy set up in the lane next to Pan Pan by PR expert Tom Athey, is always busy with expats in search of reasonably priced drinks.

Pan Pan, a 40-year veteran of Soi 33, is still popular with lovers of Italian cooking. Right opposite on the ground floor of the Novotel is Avra, one of the city's few Greek restaurants. Down the side street made famous by The Office bar is a couple of upscale venues, including Warn Warn Chinese restaurant.

Ever-popular Bistro 33, located on a peaceful side street, is one of the area's few family-friendly restaurants and venue for parties.

Among the girlie bars and massage parlors keeping Soi 33's 'red light' label alight are The Cat's Meow, New Mystique, Hunny Bunny, Dream Heaven, Casanova, Daisy Dream and 666 Class.

Reminders of the past exist in the form of the massive 'horns' that welcomed guests to Livingstone's, and the boarded-up frontage of what was once The Office. There's no doubt Soi 33 is making a comeback, but not in the way that first brought it fame.





Part of its resurgence is due to the near proximity of the gigantic Emsphere shopping centre now being built on Sukhumvit, opposite Soi 33.





















he second Eastin Grand branded hotel in Thailand has opened in one of the most popular areas of central Bangkok.

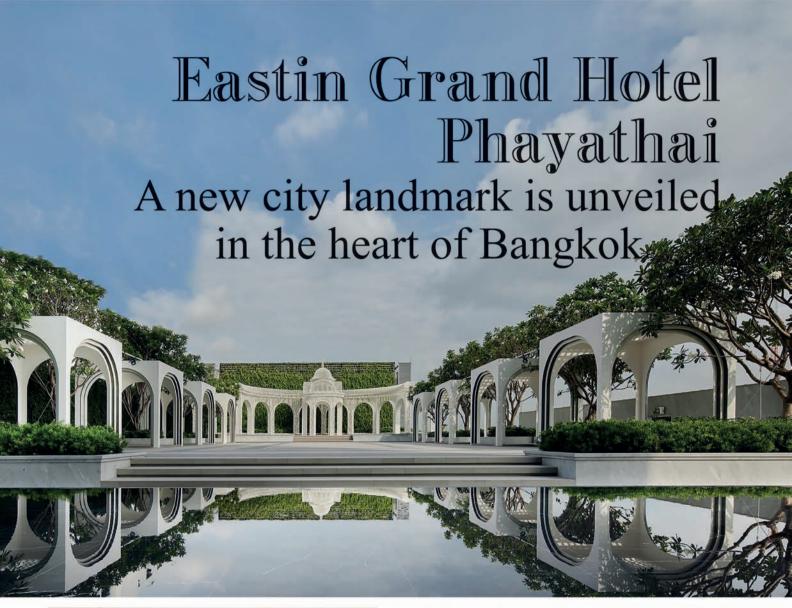
The Eastin Grand Hotel Phayathai features 494 beautiful rooms and suites ranging from 34 to 370 sqm in the case of the hotel's luxurious penthouse suites.

Other facilities include a 1,200 sqm. all-day dining market-style restaurant, a specialty Mediterranean restaurant, fitness centre, spa, executive lounge and two large outdoor swimming pools.

The striking interior design of the hotel was inspired by Phaya Thai Palace, which served as King Rama V of Thailand's recreational residence.

With a total area of 4,570 sqm., the function and event spaces at Eastin Grand Hotel Phayathai are one-of-a-kind and feature the latest modern technology to serve all kinds of functions and special events. The hotel also has a 720 sqm. multi-purpose wedding space for the perfect celebration.

The hotel features two restaurants. The Market@5







is an international all-day dining and buffet restaurant inspired by street food style food trucks and features an eclectic choice of international cuisine focusing on the classic dishes of each country.

For something different, Trattoria@22 offers diners the opportunity to dine on world class Mediterranean cuisine with a modern twist.

Eastin Grand Hotel Phayathai is located at The Unicorn building, a mixed-use complex with office space and retail stores. The hotel is conveniently located with

direct access to the Phayathai BTS Skytrain Station and is only three minutes' walk from Airport Rail Link Phayathai Station, making it easy to get anywhere in Bangkok

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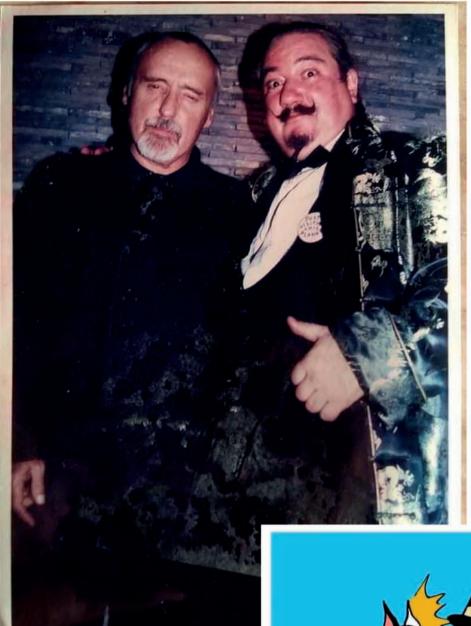
Hashtag: #EastinGrandPhayathai





Lonely Planet's Joe Cummings & Magical Dr Penguin





In an age when AI bots supervise humans, and materialism has consumed the masses...It is refreshing to see that some free spirits remain.

e can see many of these sensitive souls taking refuge in Thailand, the land of smiles. Some of the world's most celebrated artists have come through, sometimes not even to perform, but to quietly visit friends and enjoy the gentle Thai hospitality. Among a cadre of expat artists

and entertainers in Thailand, are two creative icons who have made Thailand their home: Joe Cummings, founding writer of The Lonely Planet, and Chedly Saheb-Ettaba, the magician everyone calls 'Dr Penguin'. Both of these irrepressible spirits come with a long and storied history...

Dr Penguin with Dennis Hopper in Shanghai

JOE CUMMINGS

Inveterate explorer of people and places

If Joe Cummings were Korean, he would be labeled a 'triple threat' because he excels in three fields. He is a renowned writer, plays in a rock band, and has three movies coming out this year.

> PEOPLE: Joe Cumming



"I like a woman who thinks creatively, and can give advice, bounce back ideas, and make decisions that help my career"

While his accomplishments are notable, what makes Joe truly interesting is his drive towards the unknown. Full of both confidence and common sense, Joe is an inveterate explorer of people and places. Why?

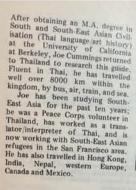
"As an army brat, I grew up in a traveling family. By the time I was 11, I knew what I wanted." The family shuffled between Asia, Europe, and the US. "Because I was constantly

changing schools, changing friends made me adaptable. I had to be really quick. I had to catch up academically constantly because we never lived anywhere beyond 9 months or 1.5 years during the whole time that I was in K-12 grades. This means I learned fast. Between that and travel, it gave me a varied outlook on the world."

"For me, everything is new. It's a pathology. My early life stimulated a learning process in me, an insatiable curiosity. So if people see me as interesting, it is because this is how I see the world. I am addicted to it, this curiosity. My family traveled so much since birth, and we never lived anywhere longer than 3 years."

Even though Joe didn't initially want to be a writer, he became good at it through writing essays in schools, and receiving constant comments. "The teachers would often say, "you're a good writer, that's what you should





Acknowledgements Immeasurable thanks go to my friend and mentor, Bill Kuo. Grat-tiude also to Steve McCafferty. Thanasuk Sudhides, Achaan Budhadasa, Don & Siriwan Camp-bell, All Jassby, and the Tourist Authority of Thailand, for their aid and inspiration.



nd a Request

Travel guides are only kept up to date by travelling. If you find error or omissions in this book we'd very much like to hear about them. As usual the best letters will score a free copy of the next edition or any other Lonely Planet guide if you

be when you grow up". Joe's major in college was in Political Science because that's where his intellectual interest laid. But his real dream while in his 20s was to be a musician. Eventually though, reality set in and he got sidetracked by the need to make money.

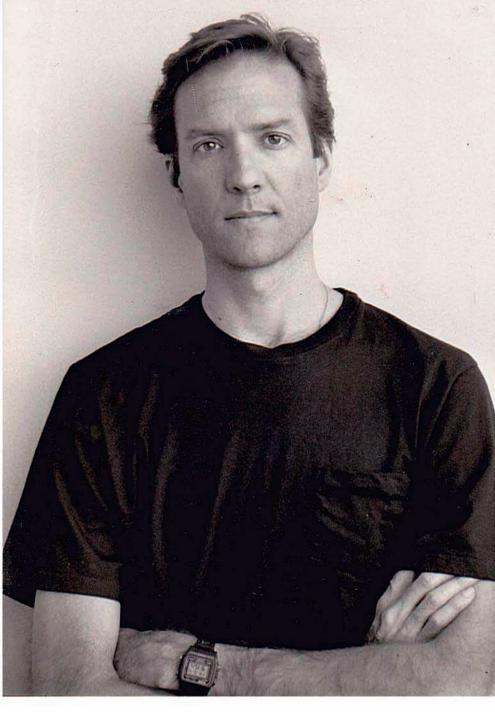
Joe started playing guitar at the age of 12, and joined a band at the age of 15. He played part-time in high school and college in small bands.

And after he got his BA, he played in a band full-time, twice, for 3 years each, before he went broke. His band had played up and down the East coast, getting paid \$200 per week, in the 1970s.

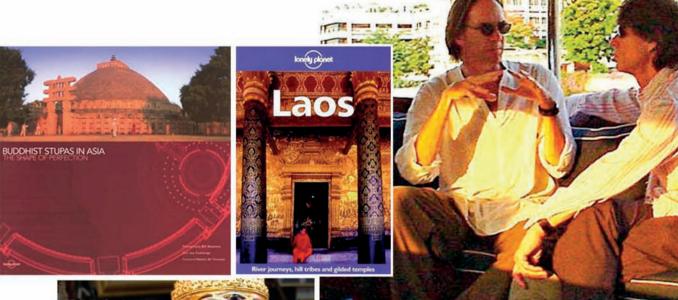
Although he enjoyed his roving musician life, it was easier to make money through his writing. Joe started writing for the Lonely Planet in 1981, and continued for 25 years. HIs success allowed him to move to Chiangmai from 2005-2008, where he enjoyed a relaxed life before his royalties dried up. Then the offer came to be Deputy Editor for the Bangkok Post Magazine from 2008-2012. From May 2008, he also worked in

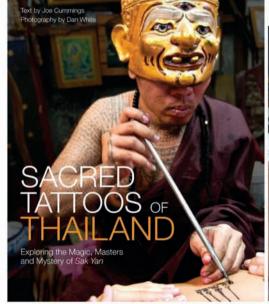
the offices of Didier-Millet, and the initial six months term was extended to a year.

On a personal level, Joe enjoys being in a steady relationship, and normally relies on this to stimulate him. "I like a woman who thinks creatively, and can give advice, bounce back ideas, and make decisions that help my career." Joe's first wife was an American, and they lived in Mexico. His second wife lived with him in Chiangmai, and helped him learn the Thai language. Recently, he had a five and a halfyear relationship with a Bhutanese, Jeytsuen Sujata Wangmo, who came to Thailand as an ABAC student, and is now Marketing Director for the



> PEOPLE: Joe Cumming







F&B and entertainment department of a global corporation based in LA.

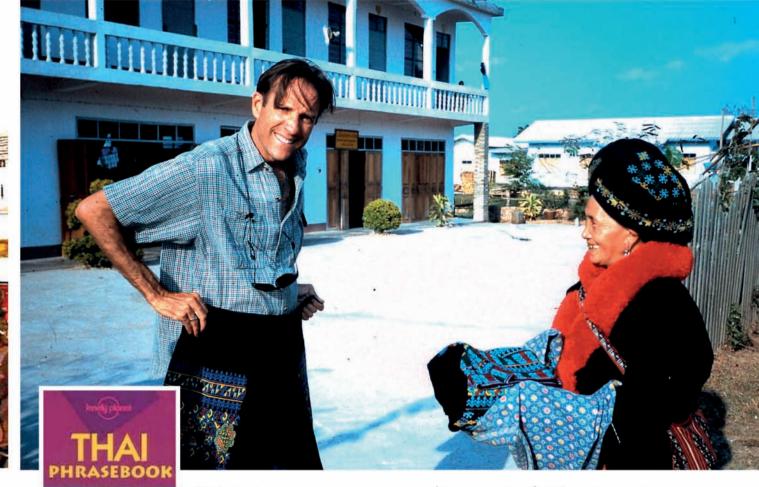
On a creative level, between writing and music, Joe has found that: "Music is way more expressive, it's a true art. There's this connection with the universe. At one point, you can feel free. But writing is a craft. Even the best writing is a craft, whether it be an opinion piece, or thought piece, you never feel set free. We need to edit all night long." As a musician, in a band playing on a stage or in a stadium: "We are not even thinking anymore - on the astral plane - I can never have that experience as a writer."

"I became a writer because I knew that I could do it. I had the opportunity to write for US magazines for 25 years. It just happened accidentally, in a way: through luck, the opportunities crossed my path."

During Joe's post-Peace Corps trip to Thailand, before going to India and Nepal, he found two Lonely Planet guides, one for Sri Lanka and one for Burma, and realized that it was a new paradigm for travel guides. He wrote to suggest a Thai guide to the Founder, Tony Wheeler. "I told him that Thailand gets more tourists than both of those countries combined." Tony asked for a sample chapter. When Joe complied, Tony sent him \$9,000. And the rest is history.

"While I was doing my postgraduate field studies in 1981, I was also researching the first edition of Lonely Planet Thailand. It became their fastest selling guide. Tony and I became friends and I even helped him find his first US office in Berkeley, California."

"In fact, I was the founding writer, I was his first hire. For 18 years, I lived comfortably on royalties



"Music is way more expressive (than writing), it's a true art. There's this connection with the universe. At one point, you can feel free. But writing is a craft. As a musician, in a band playing on a stage or in a stadium, we are not even thinking anymore - on the astral plane - I can never have that experience as a writer"

from my writing. This stopped in 2002. But it was a good run, during which I received up to 360k per year."

The Lonely Planet established Joe's name, and for that he is grateful. "In the end, though, they did not promote the authors. It was a gradual process. By the year 2000, the writing was on the wall. In 2002, author fees started getting lower, and in 2006, I left. They decided they didn't need outstanding contracts, and the fees got lower and lower. I went from making 360k a year to making maybe 50-60K."

"I don't look behind me very much. I am a non-nostalgic person. I look to the present, not to the future nor the past."

"Wherever you go, the people who really advance in the business world, in Hollywood, etc., they are good at messing people over, and that's how they get rich. They are either so motivated by money, or they

have no empathy for people."

Joe continues to enjoy many creative endeavors in different directions: Writing film music, playing in a Rolling Stones cover band, and this year, playing major roles in 3 different films. "For me, music is so much fun, but it takes way too much time, and is a distraction from the rest of life. Swimming every day brings me a lot of joy. It's easy for me, because I live 10 steps from the pool. I also enjoy going to the cinemas and catching a good movie."

"Someday, I'd like to write a script about me chauffeuring Miles Davis around N Carolina, it would be fiction based on a real story. I want to back away from the kind of band I played in for the past 4 years. I only have just so much time. I'd like to write film music, and a novel."

"My goals are to live a more healthy lifestyle, drink less, exercise more, in order to go further. As you age, you've got to fight this battle of decay. Muscles shrink. We have to train twice as hard to achieve the same results as before."

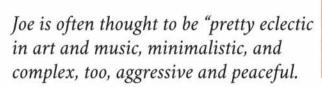
Joe feels no need to be politically active in society. "After all the activism of my youth, I feel like I made no difference. After the US withdrew from Vietnam, they have gone everywhere else: Iraq, etc. I did my part. I was really into changing the world. My wish was to join the foreign service. I was idealistic. But that's a young person's battle. I was done with all that by the time I was 24. I had lost all my political ideals."

Writing enabled Joe to live his curious life, it gave him a base. He used his skills, his expertise to write music reviews, travel articles, critiques, every type of news and features for various publications around the world. In the late 70s and 80s, he wrote for the Indochina Chronicle, the Asia Record, he had his

> PEOPLE: Joe Cumming







own column, and books in print. And in 1979-82, Joe also read every single book published at that time about SE Asia, all Asia related literature.

Joe has long considered Thailand his favourite place. "Even after Mexico, my infatuation with other places wore off. But my curiosity about Thailand is infinite. Compared to other societies, Thailand is socially opaque. It is mysterious and stimulating, like a perfect mistress. The second reason that I stuck around in Thailand, is that I made my living here, I was known as the expert, here in the center of SE Asia. It was also practical for me to be here."

"I am learning about the world, learning meditation. I was influenced early on by Ajarn Bhudadhasa, whom I discovered on my first day at college, from my first book. When I found that inner world, I felt less struggle for the power of the outside world. I was impressed that the Ajarn gave equal time to government troops and communist troops. He was coopted by the establishment, whereas before, he was shunned by Bangkok establishment. I learned about young Thai pacifists, extrajudicial killings, the killing of communists, and the politicization of Thai Buddhism."

"I like to think that the work that I have been doing is on a different battlefield. Politics is just a struggle for power. They may have a lot of ideas, but it's a smokescreen for selfish desires. I lead people to find good restaurants or bands. And I also do my bit for the environment. But luxury hotels are ruining the environment, there's a lot more that they can do to make their guests enjoy their stay more. I have small influence there."

"John Lennon once said: 'You better change yourself instead.' I agree. We should work on our relationships: small groups, families and tribes. (You yourself are at the center of every network, your little circle.) Then everything falls into place. There's a ripple effect. Little ripples. Systems are not perfect, humans are not perfect."

Joe is often thought to be "pretty eclectic in art and music, minimalistic, and complex, too, aggressive and peaceful. He says this is because he possibly had ADHD. He was feeling hectic before. In 1989, he was close to a total burnout, and had to reorganize the way he works. "Now it flows better, I take less work. My attitude is not to be so reactive to

things when they go wrong."

"I practice Vipassana mindfulness. We cannot empty the mind, but watch the mind. The mind is uncontrollable. Just watch it. Sati. Mindfulness. Cultivate it not through calling into being. Observe sensations and thoughts. Watch the show, and eventually sati comes up."

"That's the reason I came to Thailand - it was to study Buddhism. I started right away, going every Wednesday night to class at Wat Bovornivet. The leader of the class just happened to be Phra Sangkaraj, the Supreme Patriarch. Three teachers formed my whole platform: Sanharaja, Bhudadhasa, and Sujin, the top expert in the country on Abhidhama, Buddhist metaphysics."

"I believe that AI is a more advanced version of calculators, because it frees up humans to be more creative."

"I was talking to Anthony
Bourdain about it. And he had the
same opinion. He was practical:
'Show me the money.' I found
Anthony to be streetwise, with a wise
humor, even though he was not well
read. He had a deep empathy for
people. He was intelligent, and open.
He would eat whatever was put in







from of him, and was respectful."

"Other celebrities I met were not quite as amazing, but there were some interesting ones. For example, I found Mick jagger to be super bright, well read, and respectful. And Iggy, who started the Punk Music movement, before the Sex Pistols: Iggy revolutionized music. He invented 'Stage Diving'."

"Iggy and Bourdain were interviewing each other once, and they were talking about: How late in life at their age, they had a crazy youth, did shit, how they made that transition just to survive, to see the world in different ways."

When asked: "If you were there, what would have been your

THE MAN FOR MOVIES

Because of his expertise in Thai language and culture, Joe is often hired behind the scenes in film production in Thailand. "I've been asked to help with location scouting, to translate text or to find extras, all kinds of odd jobs. I was given a few small parts here or there too. Then, all of sudden, over the last year and a half, three major movie roles came my way in quick succession."

"In the first film, 'Inhuman Kiss 2', I play a Catholic priest and botanist living in a small town in upcountry Thailand from 1963 to 1993. This is a sequel to the massively successful 'Inhuman Kiss' (2018), a Thai romance-horror film which was picked up by Netflix in several countries and was the first Thai film in history to break the THB 100 million mark at the box office." The sequel was released in Thailand on March 30, and will later enter various markets around the globe, including Netflix again.

The second film to be released this year is 'Morrison', which stars the talented Hugo Chula Alexander Chakrabongse. "I play an ex-US Air Force pilot who has been living in Thailand for 50 years in a decaying hotel. It's directed by Phutthiphong Aroonpheng, who won the Orizzonti Award at Venice Film Festival for his feature 'Manta Ray' in 2018."

"In the third film, 'Letting Go', a Swedish production, I'm playing another US military veteran who went AWOL from Vietnam and lives as a hermit in northern Thailand in a shack, in a very remote area."

> PEOPLE: Joe Cumming



"I practice Vipassana mindfulness. We cannot empty the mind, but watch the mind. The mind is uncontrollable. Just watch it. Sati. Mindfulness.

contribution?" Joe replied: "It probably would have been something trivial: a story about eggs being prepared, or trivia on some place neither of them had been."

For a Free Spirit and an infamous Adventurer, Joe is surprisingly pragmatic. "I believe in science. People say: 'Science is just a belief system', but I believe that it has predictive power."

THE REBEL - Anti-War Activities

After France, Joe's father worked in Washington DC. "This was the late-60s and a lot was going on politically. I became Vice Chairman of the Student Moratorium Committee organizing student strikes against the Vietnam War and helping organize demos for example, on the Pentagon steps while my father was working inside.

"Three friends and I started our own underground newspaper called 'The Judgment' because I had been censored while writing for the official high school newspaper. The principal called me into his office after we were distributing issues in the hallways one day, and said he was expelling me from high school. I immediately called the local NBC affiliate, it became national news and they had to reinstate me on the grounds of freedom of speech.

"At home, I had huge arguments with my dad about the war. But years later, after my father retired, he called me in for a private discussion and he said, 'Son, you were right about Vietnam. We should never have gone'."—

DR PENGUIN

By always doing whatever crossed his path, Chedly's dots connected - and all roads led to Thailand

Our second Free Spirit is light hearted, full of smiles and mischief. Chedly Saheb-Ettaba, known publicly as 'Dr Penguin', flowed on a natural path towards magic and comedy, almost without a thought.

Chedly was born in Morocco to a Tunisian father and an American mother, both writers in Tangiers who mixed with the Beat Poets scene. Surrounded by creatives, he received artistic inspirations early. "When I was five or six, my grandfather showed me a trick: he did something quick and easy with a handkerchief, and I was fascinated. I never forgot it - never figured it out - it was magical for me and piqued my interest in magic.

"We moved to the US after my father died. I was six-and-a-half. When I first arrived at '39 School' in Rochester NY, in that old building, they were doing nuclear bomb raid rehearsals. I spoke Arabic, French and Spanish, but no English, so everyone thought that I was cute - 'the kid from Africa'."

"When my teacher asked 'Oh, did you have a pet lion?' that got me going, so I started to tell my stories. I made up these stories in English, and had the classroom going.

"I taught them Arabic, the bad words, like 'fart'. They made me sing 'Frère Jacques', and I sang three songs, but before I started on my third song, I taught them dirty Arabic, like 'hazakah', which meant 'wet fart'. Moroccans are famous for being pranksters. Even in politics, there are so many different ways, even the way the Berbers would win. This was second nature for us, and it continued with me.

"We moved to LA and at my school, there was a magic show. The guy put two chairs facing each other, and then hypnotized a lady who was made stiff and flat like a board, then

PEOPLE: Dr Penguin

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placed her lying across the top of the chairs. He got up on a ladder and walked right on top of her." Chedly was hooked.

Chedly auditioned in LA for St Paul's Cathedral Choir School, which was very competitive, only accepting two new students per year, and he ended up becoming the lead soloist. "St Paul's featured boys from everywhere: Trinidad, Jamaica, and even Japan, and toured all over the world, especially throughout the UK. If you've ever heard of the Vienna Choir Boys, this group was the English version of it."

Chedly's choir had a fight with the Vienna Choir Boys (who often toured with them). This was kind of traditional. "They look like angels in their choir robes, but when those robes came off they could be quite tough."

The choir performed in famous cathedrals and Chedly's first big solo was 'Rejoice' from Handel's Messiah



"When my teacher asked 'Oh, did you have a pet lion?' that got me going, so I started to tell my stories. I made up these stories in English, and had the classroom going.

in front of the Queen at St. Paul's.

"It was the first time I was separated from the choir: I was standing out front next to the harpsichord, violas and other period instruments played by musicians. I was wearing the traditional choirboy robe. It was the first and last time he ever had stage fright. "Once I started

singing, I was completely comfortable and at ease. I felt at home on that stage. Since then I've always felt at home on stage."

Mr Owen, the headmaster, who was also the Choirmaster and Head Organist, worked with Chedly six days a week. "When we toured, Mr Owen put me through four hours of



With David Ellzey at Duddles

> PEOPLE: Dr Penguin









rehearsal daily. I had an ear for music and was always tapping on things. Even during our sessions, I could find every note, so I got lazy in reading the music. Mr Owen knew that. To test me, he would play off into a different tuning...and I would do it perfectly."

At Chedly's school, a cricket bat with holes was used for discipline. "I received the highest number of whacks in the history of the school. I did pranks all the time, and was

constantly in trouble." Money earned by the choir on these tours was used to help the boys fly home or for their once-a-year vacation. The Bishop had other ideas, however; he wanted to buy a new car for himself. "So, it was announced that he'd use the money to buy the car. Naturally we were all angry about this, including the parents, but what to do?"

The program for the service had a picture of the Bishop on the front. "I took all the programs and spent the whole night drawing over his picture and writing: 'Bishop Bloy is a fink'. The next morning, before the service started, my Fag (English school term for an assistant or gopher) Paul Schmidt, helped me distribute the programs, I personally placed my best work inside Bishop Bloy's throne."

From the classrooms the boys could hear the organ in the cathedral, so Paul and Chedly sat patiently, waiting for the service to begin, their mission accomplished!

"The organ started, I was laughing to myself when, ten minutes later, the headmaster/organist Mr Owen, his arms overflowing with the naughty programs, burst into our classroom! Out of breath and staring right at me, he says, 'I want to know who did this? Now!' Nobody said a word, and I just sat there looking dumbfounded. Mr. Owen turned his gaze on Paul and says, 'I already know whose handiwork this is, I want to hear a confession!' Paul breaks under pressure. I got the whack of the century."

All the boys in the choir and their parents confronted Mr Owen - saying that even though Chedly had done a bad thing, the consensus was that what he did was right. And because of the pressure from the parents, the bishop returned the money.

During his youth, Chedly witnessed antiwar protests and other civil rights activities. Although he was just a kid, he shared those sentiments. But his own life went in other directions and he enjoyed all kinds

of adventures with some infamous personalities, but somehow the stories all ended in mayhem and laughter.

"A friend at school, Shawn Makepeace, was so huge, I put him in my magic shows. I built a closet box for him. I would close the curtain, and then open it again, and he was supposed to disappear through the trap door. But he could barely fit in the box and as I was doing the chanting, I opened the curtain, and there was his ass sticking out the trap door where he was stuck. It was an image I will never forget. The audience was laughing their asses off and that's how I discovered comedy."

At UC Santa Cruz in California, Chedly had a belly dancer girlfriend named Nancy. As he was majoring in magic in the Paidea program for his final grade, he had to perform an original magic trick. So he chose an illusion, 'Levitating a belly dancer and making her vanish in the air.'

"I asked Mr. Randall Cain, the owner and founder of the Catalyst Club in Santa Cruz if I could perform my illusion there one night, for my grade. He thought it was a terrific idea, and booked us on a night that coincided with finals week."

Due to delays building the set, the magic team had only one rehearsal before the big night. "What the audience sees is the magician on stage, introducing the beautiful belly dancer who does a short dance and finds her way to a table in front of the back stage wall. She lies down on the table and the wizard makes her levitate up into the air!

"Then a big red satin sheet is pulled over her. Once she's covered, the sheet is pulled away, and the girl disappears with only balloons remaining in her place.

"Well, that was what was supposed to happen!

"That night, the place was packed, the DJ was stoned out of his mind. I gave him the music tapes. He lost them and didn't tell us. When I got up on stage, instead of our '1001



At UC Santa Cruz in California, Chedly had a belly dancer girlfriend named Nancy. As he was majoring in magic in the Paidea program for his final grade, he had to perform an original magic trick.

nights', he played the 'Blue Danube Waltz' for the belly dancer's entrance. She managed to dance to it, but it was ridiculous! Everyone was laughing.

"At this point I lead Nancy to the table, direct her to lie down, then turn to the audience, saying: 'I am about to perform an unnatural act!' The audience laughs and at the same time, the DJ puts on the music from the movie, '2001: A Space Odyssey'!

Things went downhill thereafter. The 'invisible' hydraulic jack was jerking, so instead of pushing her up smoothly, it looked like her ass was jerking with every pump. "The audience was in hysterics.

"Then the trap door wouldn't open, revealing Nancy, who sits up but also realizes she can be seen by the audience, and lies back down. Then my buddy Dave opens the door, sees the audience, and with a look of despair cries out, 'Oh No!' And then shuts the door!

"Eventually the door opens again and the audience sees Nancy 'vanishing' while Dave throws the balloons out the door, and they land everywhere except where they're supposed to go. With a straight face, I take a bow.

"The audience went crazy.

As I headed up to the green room

> PEOPLE: Dr Penguin



"The local communities loved the magic and the music, and we traveled all over the country together, as 'The Magic Circus'." We did shows in villages, up in the mountains, the market places, Zagorra and even the J'Mal Fi'Nal market place in Marrakech."

I kept thinking 'I am ruined, I'm never going to pass this class!' My team were all waiting for me, looks of disappointment and anger on their faces – but before I could say anything, Randall Cain came rushing in and said loudly: 'Best comedy magic show I've ever seen. If you want a job, it's yours!"

Page Smith, the Provost of UC Santa Cruz, and Professor Paul Lee, who had to grade Chedley's performance, also came into the room and said: "What a brilliant performance, and keeping the comedy a secret! Brilliant."

Chedly passed his final grade. And pledged to forget about doing straight magic, stick to comedy.

Chedly and Nancy had plans to tour Europe. They both had a ticket, but at the last minute got robbed at gunpoint, so they ended up at the airport with only US\$27. Once they arrived in England, they performed every day on the streets. Later the couple headed to France, Barcelona,

and ended up in North Africa.

With Siegfried and Roy

One day, while walking on Banana Beach near Agadir in Morocco with their friend, flute player Patrick Iversen, they heard the sound of a siren from a distance. "We were the only people on that beach, when a guy called Che and a crazy group of people drove up in a 1944 Mercedes Fire Truck. They parked right next to our tents!"

Che jumped out and said: "Ja! This is the place!" They had drums, and musical instruments!

The new friends all ended up jamming and forming a mobile Magic Circus together. "The local communities loved the magic and the music, and we traveled all over the country together, as 'The Magic Circus'." We did shows in villages, up in the mountains, the market places, Zagorra and even the J'Mal Fi'Nal market place in Marrakech.

"One night, up in a mountain village, we were jamming to music, drums, percussions, around a big open fire, having a great time, the villagers bringing food and dancing to our music. I opened up my backpack, and saw that my ticket home was... that day! I was supposed to fly back to America."

But Chedly had other plans. "I'm not going back," he told himself and tossed the ticket into the fire. In Italy and Germany, winter was coming, and Che said: "I'm going to Goa, India, want to come?"

Nancy, Che, Elke, and Chedly got separated on the first day of travel from Munich. They were supposed to meet up at the famous Pudding Shop in Istanbul, Turkey. Elke and Che got there first, and left just a few hours before the others arrived. Chedly wanted to see the great city, so he and Nancy stayed on.

But the weather was creeping in on them, and the roads over the mountains were being closed due to bad weather, so they booked the only public bus they could find that would take them to Ezarum, close to the Iran border.

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"Every time the bus stopped in a village, I'd do a street show. Passengers got into it and became part of the team. They'd help pass the hat, and would announce my show in Turkish.

"At one village I was introduced to a 'Dancing Bear.' It held me tight in its grip and carried me like a doll as it danced to some really bad disco music! Everybody laughed, I smiled, but inwardly I was frightened. That bear was incredibly strong, and there was no way I could loosen his grip!

"From Iran, Nancy and I made our way to the Afghan border, where we had to camp outside in no man's land! There was a small hotel with a bar/restaurant on the ground floor. It was too expensive for the likes of us. but it was full of people waiting for the border to open in the morning."

Curious, Chedly wandered into the bar. Inside were the Afghan immigration officers and a few affluent travelers - an audience! Chedly happily pulled out his magic bag, donned the magic vest and chapeau cloak, and performed an impromptu show. The audience was laughing and filling his hat with Afghan money, buying him beer and food. The next morning as he was waking up in his sleeping bag, two officers came over and told Chedly to pick up his stuff and follow them into the office building. They looked very serious, so Nancy asked, "What did you do?"

Inside the building were all the men from the night before. The immigration chief asked if Chedly could do magic for him, which he was happy to oblige.

"They brought me tea and naan bread, and even arranged a ride to the town of Herat in a Mercedes which was being driven by a Pakistani delivering it to Lahore. The chief arranged for us to stay at his brother's guesthouse, which was a real Afghan hotel, complete with good food and an amazing musical duo, playing old Afghan music on a Rebab and tabla. I fell in love with Afghanistan!"



A new magic circus came together, including Mickey the clown, and Mountain Man Moss from Canada, who was being chased out of his home by The Children of God (his wife had joined, and he ended up tripping around the world playing music.) They were joined by Mustafa, a Turkish acrobat who'd been left behind by the Pakistani Circus when he broke his ankle. "He was down and



How did you get the name 'Dr Penguin'?

"I had been one half of 'The Too Much Brothers'. My partner, Count Bruno The Terrible (Che), and I did our shows all over the Himalayas, Indian subcontinent and Southeast Asia. Unfortunately, my partner lost his right leg in an explosion in New Mexico. So that basically was the end of The Too Much Brothers."

Chedly went back to Singapore where he managed to book shows on TV and radio plus live shows at schools. "Meanwhile, I was reunited with my Japanese girlfriend who I'd lost touch with for several years. It turned out she was in Bali looking for me and I didn't know it. A few days later Kyoko was on a plane to Singapore.

"I was in a dilemma, I couldn't call the show, 'The Too Much Brothers'. So I was looking for a name, something new."

He and Kyoko jumped on his Honda 750 motorbike and rode from Singapore to Thailand. On the way to Phuket, they hit heavy rain. "We stopped the bike and sat in a small Thai sala, where some local guys were drinking Mekong whisky, and we joined them. I started doing some magic and they freaked out. They asked me if I could do a show that night at the local temple. I agreed. After all, I had my magic costume with a chapeau claque."

The audience were all under a big tarp, and Chedly wanted to make a great entrance through the rice field. "The heavens opened up and it started raining heavily as I came through the field!"

They put a spotlight on Chedly, and the announcer said: "Oye! Nok Penguin!" He said it a few times. "And the funny thing was, I heard 'Doc Penguin'! Kyoko imagined she heard the same thing!"

The next day, they headed back to Singapore, "I had found my new name," So 'Dr. Penguin' was born in 1984-5 during a rainfall somewhere in the south of Thailand!

PEOPLE: Dr Penguin

out in Kabul, so I paid his bills. He taught us a lot. We formed a circus, 'The Rolling Marble Review'. I still have a poster and a copy of my work permit!"

Their first big show was on 'Kabul Nin Dari': not TV, only radio. It was the number one show in Afghanistan on Friday night, prime time! This was Chedly's first time performing magic on the radio. The announcers described everything that went on during the show.

"We toured all over Afghanistan with many adventures. I got sick, and nearly died. Still, I didn't want to leave, and I learned the language. All my friends said I was going to die if stayed there. Eventually I left and went overland to India and Nepal.

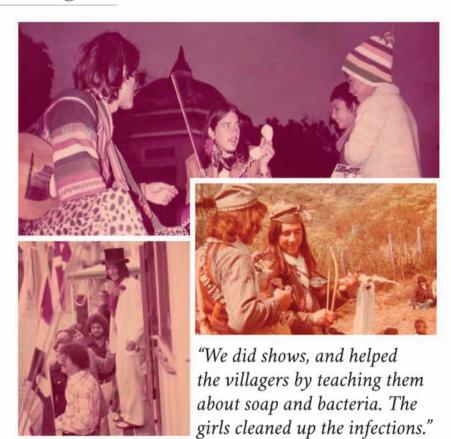
Reuniting with Che and Elke, the friends put on a show in Kathmandu in 1978. At Ramdi in Nepal, Chedly's crew got stuck in remote mountains when their bus broke down. They were there for a month in a village that didn't accept paper money. They survived by trading medicines.

"We did shows, and helped the villagers by teaching them about soap and bacteria. The girls cleaned up the infections." At the waterfall, they gave a mime theatre show. This simple start snowballed later, and by the time the bus was repaired, Che and Chedly decided to stay on. "I said goodbye to my girlfriend to told her I'd see her in Amsterdam'.

"Many times, I was supposed to be doing what I was supposed to be doing."

And that's how Chedly's life unfolded, from one serendipitous event to another. "I had so many moments when things all came together in mysterious ways. We would be where we were supposed to be. It's like a kind of magic.

"After we left the Magic Bus and stayed in Delhi, we put on our costumes, and went to the New Delhi TV station. Che had a one-man band and I had my top hat and a coconut bamboo violin with two strings.



We announced that we were doing a show. A producer came running down the stairs and said: 'You are sent from heaven. Manna from heaven. We want a TV show for kids. You answered my prayers'.

"Well, we're here. The Doog Doogi show. It was a hit that lasted 13 episodes and circulated all over India. It was educational, like 'Sesame Street'. (I worked with them too)."

"While we were doing a show in Kathmandu, an aristocratic Thai man bought us a bottle of champagne and two weeks later, we had a ticket, a visa, and US\$2,000 in cash. Unfortunately, we missed our flight, but somehow, made our way to Thailand one or two days later. We ended up staying at the Malaysia Hotel in Bangkok. It was funky. We spent the money in the first few days.

After we got ran through the money, we were broke, and didn't know what we were supposed to be doing."

Eventually, their sponsor arrived at the hotel. He said: "No problem, you're under my care." He rented a house for Chedly and friend on Sukhumvit Soi 12 and arranged for their first show at an orphanage in Khlong Toei.

This was followed by countless shows in orphanages, schools, and social events. "He would send us to these great places!" But somehow, like magic, Chedly was hooked on Thailand. By always doing whatever crossed his path, Chedly's dots connected - and all roads led to Thailand. The free spirit built his nest here. For a man who had devoted his life to smiles and laughter, the Land of Smiles was a natural home.

Next Issue of The Big Chilli

Stay tuned for more about Dr Penguin in the next issue of The Big Chilli, when we'll hear about Dr Penguin's experiences with: Stevie Wonder, Robin Williams, Sir Run Run Shaw, and Michael Jackson. (Use the photo of Chedly with Michael Jackson).



O/OFF



FIRST TUESDAY OF THE MONTH



he expansion of Expressway
No.3 from Sukhumvit
Road, Pattaya, to Sattahip
is expected to be completed by
2024, although several bridges and
interchanges have either just opened
or are due to open shortly.

The aim of this multi-millionbaht infrastructure project is to improve transportation on the Eastern Seaboard, a key component in Thailand's tourism industry and an area of major industrial development. The project involves widening the existing expressway to up to five lanes on each side, building new flyovers and upgrading the road surface to improve safety and reduce travel time. Once completed, Expressway No.3 will provide a faster and more efficient transportation route between Pattaya and Sattahip, as well as to other towns in the region such as

Bangsaray. Notorious bottlenecks, especially at weekends and holidays, will be a feature of the past.

Economic growth will be boosted and quality of life improved for residents and visitors to the area. Local businesses will benefit too. Already hotels, restaurants, tourist attractions, and real estate companies along the expressway upgrade are recording increased interest, especially from Pattaya and Rayong residents and tourists.

From Na Jomtien to Bang Saray and further onto Sattahip, the mood is upbeat, particularly with the massive roadworks nearing completion.

People arriving by car from Bangkok on Expressway 7 at the Ocean Marina junction now have the option of either heading north to Pattaya, or south to Na Jomtien, Bangsaray and Sattahip, where they can enjoy a choice of quieter

seaside locations and attractions.

The number of top-quality hotels here is also on the increase, the most recent being Andaz Jomtien Beach, Hyatt's five-star leisure property. Others include the U Pattaya, Renaissance and Movenpick.

Bangsaray, a traditional fishing village, is known for its local food and excellent restaurants as well as beautiful beach.

On Na Jomtien beach, popular established restaurants like the Glasshouse have already expanded to keep up with demand.

While all this is happening, demand for property in very much on the increase. Houses, condominiums and pool villas are seeing a significant surge in value as people see the attraction of the Eastern Seaboard. It's clearly a good time to invest in the area.









Magnificent house for sale in Bang Saray





Coastal Real Estate is pleased to present one of the finest homes in the Pattaya area. Located in the Bayview Residence, an exclusive estate in Bang Saray, this magnificent property offers seven bedrooms, seven bathrooms and two ensuite rooms for staff.

The beautifully landscaped 2.24 rai plot features a guitar-shaped swimming pool.

The main lounge is spacious and comfortably furnished, including a baby grand piano. will certainly provide hours of entertainment for guests and family.

In addition to a more formal sitting area with high ceilings, there's a stylish lounge with a large TV and a choice of other dining venues..

The home has two kitchens, one that opens up to the pool while the other is perfect for prepping meals.

The second floor has three bedrooms, two of which are ensuite. The master bedroom and ensuite master bath are larger than many condos in the area.

Four well-appointed ensuite bungalows are located on the property.

The grounds are absolutely fabulous with mature trees and two large salas plus that fabulous swimming pool. There is covered parking for cars and large storage room accessed via the garage

For more information: info@crethailand.com and 081 269 0742



Superb house on Phoenix Golf Course, Baan Amphur

This outstanding three-bedroom house is located on popular Phoenix Golf & Country Club in Baan Amphur.

Situated on the golf course with a beautiful view of the fairway, this home is a perfect size for a small family and is laid out to offer various areas for entertaining and relaxing.

The living and dining areas open up to the pool to create a lovely indoor/outdoor space that is perfect for entertaining.

The well-equipped European kitchen has plenty of counter and cabinet space.

All three bedrooms are en-suite. The large master bedroom has a walk-in closet with loads of room. There is also a one-bedroom ensuite guest house.

The home has a storage room inside and two additional storage rooms outside. There is also a home gym at one end of the private pool.

Set on a 190.2 square wah plot, the home has been constructed to a very high standard. There is covered parking for cars and motorbikes and plenty of room for guest parking.

Amenities at Phoenix Golf & Country Club include a



communal pool, tennis courts and a nice clubhouse. Membership to the country club is optional and not included in the price.

For more information: info@crethailand.com and 081 269 0742

Happy to be back at **ENOTECA** ITALIANA





Our only disappointment was a result of this timing. Since our visit occurred during the hottest part of the year, it was impossible to relax and enjoy aperitifs in the lovely garden area of this beautiful old home restored as a restaurant.

Fortunately, it was cool and comfortable inside, and the welcome we received from owner Nicola Bonazza, Michelin Star Chef Stefano Borra, and their staff was as warm as ever.

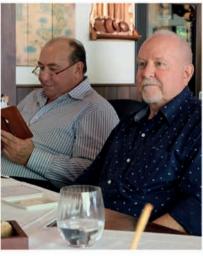
As each sweaty lad arrived, he was greeted with a nice chilled aperitif - a glass of Ciro Poicariello's 'Ciro 906' Fiano di Avelino 2018 (from Fiano di Avelino DOP, Campania Region of Southern Italy). Wine Spokesman Alan Rankin

reported that some of Italy's best white wines are made from the Fiano grape, which is indigenous to the region around Naples.

He further explained that 'Ciro 906' refers to a single plot of vines as the source of grapes used to produce this wine. Only the first press was used, and the wine was unfiltered, but after five years it was near peak perfection. He described it as having a light lemon color, and while being slightly flat and sour on the nose, it lightened up on the tongue exhibiting flavors of lemon, peach, and other fruits. He thought it made an excellent aperitif, and also went well with the hors d'oeuvres.

Once all of us were present and seated, we were served an Amuse-Bouche Trio of cold hors d'oeuvres and advised to eat them in order, from left to right: crab-meat stuffed mini-cannoli, chicken liver pate in chocolate macaroon, and creamy gorgonzola cheese sandwiched between thin slices of deep-fried beetroot. Food Spokesman Alex Fisken thought it was a great start to





our lunch, and it certainly achieved its purpose of whetting our appetites. Our first starter was an Enoteca specialty, Black Ink Cappuccino. Served in a clear glass jar, it consists of two distinct layers that together resemble the iconic espresso-based coffee drink. The bottom layer contained small chunks of squid that were cooked with sweet onion, garlic and white wine until slightly browned, and then mixed with a vegetable gelatin broth and black squid ink. The top layer was a rich potato cream sauce with parmesan cheese. Alex appreciated Nicola's instruction to eat both layers







together, by digging a spoon deep down into the jar, to best experience all the contrasting flavors and textures. He also noted that the squid was amazingly tender.

To accompany the Black Ink Cappuccino, we had our first red wine, Dante Rivetti's Mara Barbera d'Alba 2019 (from Barbera d'Alba DOC, Piedmont, Italy). Alan appreciated its deep ruby red color, and found its subtle fruity aromas relatively light on the nose. He also said it felt "a bit thick" (full-bodied, I guess), with a slightly frothy texture on the palate. Overall, he liked it, declaring it an easy drinking wine that went well with the food.

Our next dish was an unconventional take on a traditional Italian favorite, Eggplant Parmigiana. This might best be described as a savory millefeuille, given its beautiful construction featuring thin alternating layers of finely-sliced eggplant fried in parmesan-breading and zesty tomato sauce. Also unusual, it was intentionally served cold (room temperature), which Nicola explained was to better highlight its

delicate flavors, which include finelyjulienned deep-fried basil leaf and a watermelon and tomato water sorbet used as garnishes.

Alex liked the creativity on two levels – its unique appearance and its great taste. While some said they would have preferred it served warm, all agreed it was interesting and flavorful.

To accompany both the Eggplant Parmesan and our subsequent pasta dish, we were served Casanova di Neri's Rosso di Montalcino DOC 2016 (from Tuscany, Italy). This producer is well-known to our Club, and we have enjoyed several







of their wines over the years, including some bearing the more exclusive designation of Brunello di Montalcino DOCG. Both styles are made from the same grape (Sangiovese), often grown in the same vineyards, with their main difference being aging – Brunello can be sold only five years after harvest, while Rosso must be aged for only one year. Alan liked our choice of the Rosso, saying it was mellow, a bit spicy, and had a slightly fruity finish.

Next came our pasta course, Tortelloni Roasted Tomatoes, Mascarpone and Basil. As noted by Alex (and implied by its name), tortelloni are bigger than tortellini, which means they can be stuffed with even more goodies. Ours were served with a basil foam, but without any sauce or broth. Instead, they contained a delicious liquid filling that was made of mascarpone cheese and roasted tomatoes. We were instructed to eat them by placing each piece whole in our mouths, to experience an explosive release of the liquid filling as you bite into it. They were simply delicious, light and delicate.

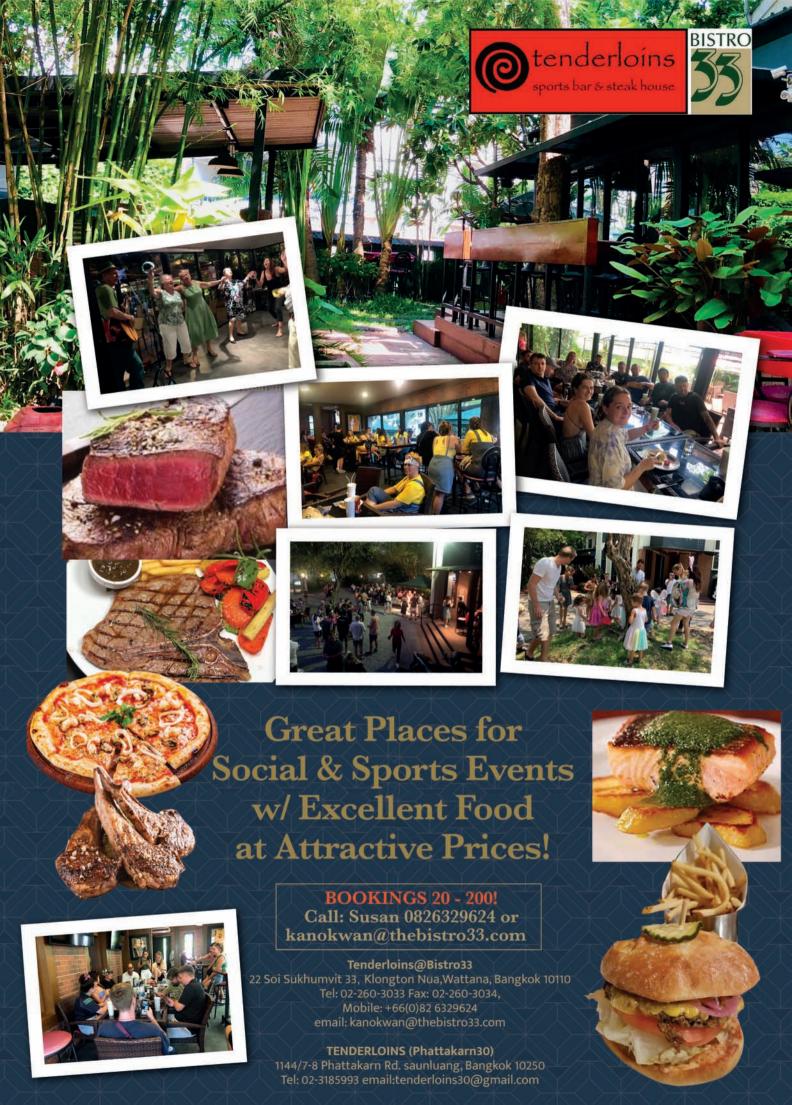
For our main course, we were served Beef Cheek Braised in Red Wine with Roasted Vegetables. Alex liked the artful presentation and 'massive tastes' represented in this dish: the melt-in-your-mouth richness of tender and savory beef, the sweetness of roasted carrots, and

a hint of anise in the slightly crunchy roasted fennel.

With the beef we had a big Italian red: Zenato's Amarone Della Valpolicella Classico 2015 (from Valpolicella, Veneto, Italy). This is a truly serious wine, made from a traditional Valpolicella blend of grapes (85% Corvina Veronese, 10% Rondinella, 5% Oseleta and Croatina) that are harvested, selected, and left to rest in the drying loft for three to four months before pressing and maceration. The finished wine is then aged in oak for at least 36 months, giving it lots and lots of body, with an alcohol content of 16.5%. Alan liked its musty nose and slightly dry finish, but acknowledged that some people might not appreciate the taste. Nobody at our lunch complained. To complete the meal, we were served some Mixed Cheeses consisting of three types: Toma Del Castagno (wrapped in chestnut leaves), Testun Al Barolo (coated in wine-making lees), and a Blue Cheese with onion compote. With our cheese, we had a somewhat lighter red, Baglio del Cristo di Campobello's Lusira Syrah 2018 (from Sicilia DOC, Sicily, Italy). Lighter in terms of alcohol content for sure (14.5%), but with a very dark ruby color. It was rich and oaky on the nose with vanilla, toffee and coffee bean scents over ripe dark fruit, and had a creamy and round palate with a smooth, velvety texture. Alan

declared it a 'great drinking' wine.

To go with our coffee, we enjoyed donations from two birthday boys: Ian Cunningham brought a couple bottles of 12-Years Old Roger Groult Calvados Pays D'Auge, while Alan Rankin had donated a bottle of Glen Elgin Single Malt, 10-Year Old (special to commemorate the Hongkong Scottish RFC 10th Anniversary). These were both truly special spirits to cap off a great lunch. We showed our appreciation to the birthday boys by ensuring they would not have to carry home any leftovers. This luncheon was also special because among our guests was Mr. Vin Thomas, General Secretary of Beefsteak & Burgundy Club worldwide, who was visiting us from Adelaide, Australia. Vin was kind enough to address us concerning the wider world of B&B, which in addition to Australia and New Zealand includes chapter in nearly a dozen cities throughout Asia. We also called on Vin to present the gratuity, along with our heartfelt thanks to Nicola, Chef Stefano, and their staff who made this, our 'lucky number 13' visit to Enoteca, so memorable. We look forward to our next visit, and hope it may occur during a cooler part of the year!



> SOCIAL





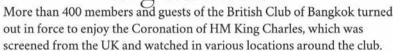








King's Coronation wins big audience More than 400 members and guests of the British Club of Bangkok turned

















SHORT STORY

Beat Stops!

After a chance meeting with a pop superstar, a brilliant drummer plots his downfall

By Colin Devonshire

our seat, sir,' the air hostess cleaned some imaginary dust from its cushion.

The passenger looked around before answering, 'Thanks, I'd like to sleep, so no interruptions.'

His crumpled Daily Mail hit the floor. The headline glared up at him, 'Guitarist - Dead'.

'I know you,' wailed a girl sliding into a seat nearby.

Mr Giles Goodly tutted and glared at the hostess. The Thai Airways lady offered an embarrassed smile.

'You're the drummer! I know you. Why have you cut your hair?' she continued.

The once bouncy black curls are now styled as a grey crew cut.

Excuse me, young lady. Please leave him in peace,' said the hostess. 'We are about to take off; sit and fasten your seat belt.'

Your hair didn't fool me; I recognize your tattoos,' the young girl said, sitting down.

Giles Goodly, better known as Beat-Em Up, or Beat for short, the drummer for chart-topping, "Forsaken", an ageing band of hell-raisers, was wearing a blazer and Levi jeans, his long-sleeved denim shirt covered his arms, his jacket now stowed above.

You should have worn gloves,' aughed Amy, his neighbour,

for the long flight to Thailand.

'Next time, I'll take your advice,' he grinned.

'You look good without the curly bonnet,' she noted. 'Pity about Pots, I loved his voice, and how odd and sad about the guitarist; what was his name?' she asked, judging Beat's facial reaction.

Please let me rest,' he said, reminding him of his friend

did not improve his mood.

'Sure, sure, I bet you are still upset. Half a band dead!'

He closed his eyes and hoped to drift to sleep without thinking about the group's leader, with whom he'd had a love-hate relationship. But, once more, he started visualising the Ferrari spinning and smashing into an M4 barrier.

'What happened to Jethro?' he wondered. That was news to him.

Beat's relationship with the fastest fingers in London had been far friendlier than with their leader. He slept fitfully the rest of the way to Bangkok's Suvarnabhumi Airport.

Amy rushed to join him at the exit, 'Where are you heading?'

'A day in the city, then down to Phuket for a party. Are you alone? You are young. I hope someone is meeting you?' he asked.





s soon as the porter left, Beat read his note, then checked Google on his phone, 'Oh no. 'Bassist found dead in his bedroom. There was no trace of foul play.

'I'm fifteen, quite old enough, thank you,' she answered, almost stamping a young foot.

'Okay, be careful. Bye, have a wonderful trip,' Beat jumped into a taxi.

'I will,' she mouthed. 'It will get better.'

'Follow that one,' Amy ordered her taxi driver. She felt like James Bond as she entered the hotel. Keeping back, she tracked Beat into the reception. She scribbled a hasty note on hotel-headed paper, 'Your bass player is dead too!'

Folding the paper in four, 'Please deliver this to that man's room,' she asked the receptionist, pointing to Beat as he entered the lift.

As soon as the porter left, Beat read his note, then checked Google on his phone, 'Oh no. 'Bassist found dead in his bedroom. There was no trace of foul play. Police suspect he died following an overdose. Time of death approximately forty-eight hours ago,' Oh God, oh God,' he said, fighting back tears.

He went to the room's mini-bar and downed all the spirit collections.

Should I go back to London?' he asked himself before ringing his manager.

"There's nothing you can do. Stay there; we've got a new release to sell. Imagine the sympathy sales we'll get. Do it for the band,' said the manager.

'Take me to the airport,' Amy

said as she signalled the next taxi cruising to head the rank.

Checking all the following day's flight times, she bought a ticket for the next plane to leave for Phuket.

It took only two phone calls to hotel receptionists to discover which place hosted the "Drummer Hammer Night", an international gathering of the world's renowned drummers.

She was pleased she needed only one further call to determine if he was staying in the same hotel.

'Has Mr Goodly told you of his dietary requirements? Of course, as his personal assistant, I need to check that he keeps to his regime,' said Amy. Her spy skills did not reveal his room number, however.

SHORT STORY

'Are you press?' asked the receptionist. She disconnected the call.

She then checked into the hotel herself.

Excited, she whispered to herself, 'Not long now.'

After a much-needed shower, she planned the next day's activities before sliding back into the quilt to enjoy a refreshing night's sleep.

'Good morning, madam, you're the first for breakfast,' grinned a server.

Amy sat patiently waiting for Beat to arrive. Instead, she flicked through the pages of a pop magazine, whistling to herself.

'Khun Giles, welcome, welcome to our little hostelry,' gushed the manager. 'I hope you find everything to your liking. We will do everything to make your stay happy,' continued the limp man.

Amy watched them enter the nearest elevator in a bank of four. The lit number said floor seven. She jumped into the next-door lift, pressing button seven; she arrived as the grinning porter exited room number seven-one-zero, pocketing his hefty tip.

Downstairs, the drummers started arriving at the party just before eight o'clock; they were all seated around large circular tables with all chairs facing an enormous stage. They had positioned ten drum kits awaiting attention. Lights beamed and flickered as a spritely drummer leapt from one kit to the next as an athletic warm-up act.

All seats were occupied but one. The backing music quietened, guests turned to face the entrance doors, lights dimmed, a drum roll started, applause began, gradually increasing in volume as they saw their hero Beat, arms above his head, hands waving, he grinned at the attention given by his adoring fellow drummers.

Young drummers took to the stage, banging out their favourite star solos. Then, starting with Buddy Rich,



eather-clad Amy walked across the stage, throwing drumsticks spinning high in the air, beaming. Without looking up, she caught the sticks, one in each outstretched hand. She glanced around, then hammered out 'Moby Dick' in an exact copy of John Bonham's 1970 Led Zeppelin performance"

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Colin Devonshire is a British author known for his captivating short stories and novels. His short stories are renowned for their gripping plots, vivid characters, and unexpected twists. Devonshire's writing style is characterized by concise and precise prose that draws readers in from the first sentence.

Devonshire's short stories cover a wide range of genres, from horror to thrillers, and often explore the complexities of the human experience. Some of his most popular collections of short stories include "Beat The Beach," all set in Thailand or featuring Thais. "71 Short Stories", and twelve anthologies of twisted tales.

In addition to his short stories,
Devonshire is also the author of four novels.
All set in Thailand. The series begins with the

debut novel, "Not Far Enough From Worries," a gripping thriller following two English lads starting a new life in Hua Hin. The other books in the series "Worry No More," "Children With No Worries," and "We Have More Worries" which explore dangers and paranormal adventure.

Overall, Colin Devonshire's writing is a must-read for anyone who enjoys short stories that are both thought-provoking and entertaining, as well as novels that keep you on the edge of your seat.

You can read some of Colin's free short stories at: https://colindevonshire.substack.com/

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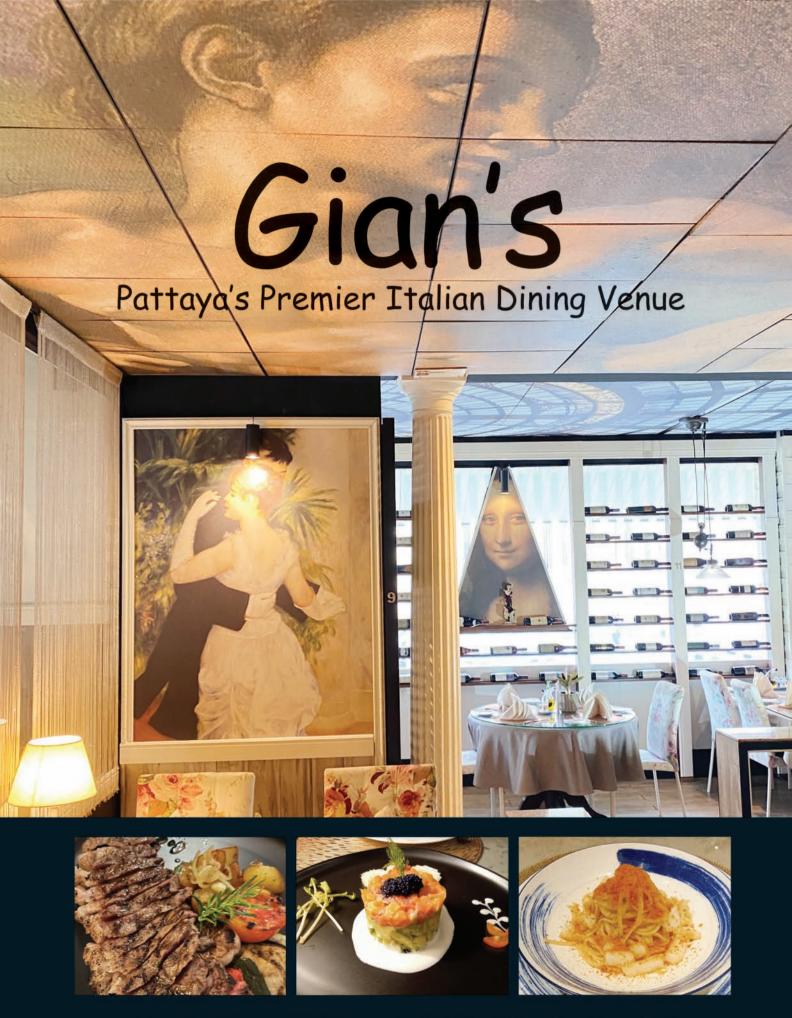
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