

INSIDE: 20 YEARS OF THE BIGCHILLI AND THE PEOPLE WE PHOTOGRAPHED

THE BigChilli

THE ORIGINAL EXPAT MAGAZINE

INTERVIEWS, TRAVEL, NEWS, CULTURE, DIPLOMACY, BUSINESS AND GOURMET GUIDE



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Like all media companies, The BigChilli has gradually built a substantial social media platform that includes Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and our own website (www.thebigchilli.com) featuring regular updates and news on issues affecting Thailand's expat community. Thanks to the services, our online presence here and around the world has grown significantly.

At the same time, we continue to produce a printed edition of the magazine every month of the year. This highly popular version is available through bookshops or via subscriptions (see below).

To ensure the widest possible readership, we also distribute complimentary copies of The BigChilli to people or institutions in Thailand that play key roles in the life of expats here.

They include VIPs in government and commerce, Ambassadors and Embassies, Business Owners, International Schools and Universities, Hospitals, Medical Centres, Chambers of Commerce, Banks, Airlines, Cooking Schools, key members of the Media and a host of clubs, specialist groups and international women's groups.

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New Klong Toey flyover will exit into Charoen's upcoming convention centre project



There's no question - Bangkok's traffic woes have worsened noticeably in the past year. And one of the major causes is the ongoing demolition of the overpass that previously connected Rama III road to Rajadispek road, and headed up to the busy Sukhumvit-Asoke junction.

This has resulted in a huge number of diverted vehicles re-routing along other already heavily congested roads, especially the Expressway, which is now more or less constantly jammed around the Klong Toey area of Bangkok.

To replace the old flyover, City Hall has commissioned a new four-lane overpass that will take another two years to complete

and, like its predecessor, will take traffic over the congested Na Ranong intersection and Bangkok's popular Penang Market.

But unlike the old structure, the new bridge will feature an additional flyover that will exit directly into the former Queen Sirikit National Convention Center (QSNCC), which coincidentally was recently demolished to make way for a new convention centre to be constructed by NCC Management & Development Co Ltd (NCC), a company affiliated to Thai Beverage Plc, owned by Thai billionaire Charoen Sirivadhanabhakdi.

Under a contract signed with the Treasury Department, NCC will become the owner of the convention centre for



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50 years. Scheduled opening is the end of 2022 – the same completion date as the new flyover project.

Some regular users of the Rama III road have been left to wonder how the new flyover will ease traffic in this part of Bangkok since most vehicles will still be blocked at junctions near the Customs Department and at Asoke-Sukhumvit.

There is no doubt, however, that the revamped QSNCC will benefit by having its own exit from the new flyover.

Featuring a three-storey complex of 180,000 sqm, five times the size of the former facility, the new QSNCC will have underground parking for 3,000 vehicles. It will also be linked via a tunnel to a station of the mass-transit MRT network.

Thai Obayashi and Design 103 are responsible for construction and design work. The budget is six billion baht.

Meanwhile, the Port Authority of Thailand (PAT) has announced it plans to use only about a half of the 900-rai area at nearby Klong Toey port for its own projects, while the rest will be handed to a real-estate developer to create a new business city complete with a giant shopping mall, business centre, shops, and condos overlooking the Chao Phraya River.

Some 12,500 families currently illegally occupying the densely populated area near the port will be evicted and re-housed elsewhere.

The last Gurkha Curry in Bangkok

■ The Gurkhas guarding the British Embassy have been part of the UK's presence in Thailand for many decades, but sadly things have changed dramatically in recent years with the demolition of the embassy and its move to an office block on Sathorn Road.

As the Gurkhas will be returning to Nepal shortly, Bangkok St. George's wanted to bid an apt farewell by holding a curry lunch at Bistro 33 on 11 January. John Hocking, the new President of Bangkok St. George's Society, coordinated the arrangements between Sgt. Major Hari Lal Pun MBE and the staff at Bistro 33 to make it a most successful albeit emotional afternoon.

It proved a busy event with almost 70 people attending, including representatives of the Royal British Legion, and everybody thoroughly enjoyed the tasty Gurkha curry.

After a rather noisy raffle draw presided over by Laura and Martin Smith, the Sgt. Major made a surprise presentation to John Hocking and Gale Bailey. Both were delighted but overwhelmed, especially as the kukuri knives badges they received are regarded as a high honour.

The Sgt. Major then held an auction for a kukuri (Gurkha knife), with the proceeds being shared between the Gurkhas and St. George's Society. Many bids were made but finally it was won by Andrew Dalton, a former Australian soldier (2002-2013) who completed three tours of Afghanistan where he worked briefly with the British Gurkhas who he holds in high regard.

To round off the event, a donation was made to the Royal British Legion Chonburi Branch Thailand to help their welfare work.

St. George's Society would like to thank all concerned for making this event so successful, with special thanks to Barry Shea, Susan and staff of Bistro 33 for their generosity and service. Thanks also to the Royal Oak and others who donated raffle prizes as well as R.B.L. representatives.





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Profile

Peter Brongers

Popular former Bangkok resident explains why he is happy to have moved to Phnom Penh



Name: Peter Brongers.

Age: 62.

Born: in Groningen, The Netherlands.

First family and today: Since many years with my lovely wife Palida Janthewee and our two Dobermann dogs.

Education: MBA, ME.

Languages: Dutch, English, German, French, Spanish, Thai, Khmer.

Employment background, including Thailand: I started my career at Fokker Aircraft in The Netherlands. The

company went bankrupt and I moved to Heidelberg Printing Presses as corporate Planner. I came to Thailand in 1995 initially as Managing Director of Euromill Engineering, then moved to Thai Scandic Steel. Before I moved to Cambodia, I was the CFO of Topaz Inc, the last Thai company listed on the AMEX.

What do you do in Cambodia – and how long have you been in your present job? I came to Cambodia to build my own beer brewery, Kingdom Breweries. It came out of some brainstorming about opportunities in the region with



my friends Patrick Davenport and Jeremy King. We found an American private equity fund prepared to put most of the money in. We were a couple of years too early with bringing a high-end boutique beer to the market. We were also limited in our investment.

In the end we were too big and expensive for a boutique brewery and too small to compete with the big boys - even though in the first year we passed Tiger and Heineken in number of cases sold in Phnom Penh. Ultimately it was not sustainable. I then moved to the Royal Group as Senior VP and became the Managing Director of its subsidiary BMW Cambodia and Executive Director of KFC Cambodia.

In addition I am the president of the Dutch Cambodia Chamber of Commerce and the Vice President of the Cambodian Tourism Federation. I am also heading the Cambodian Chapter of the Chaîne des Rotisseurs.

Until recently I was the President of the Cambodian Automotive Federation.



Where do you live, and what is it like? For the past eight years we have lived in a beautiful villa close to the so-called Russian market. When we moved there the whole street was quiet, only houses, not one car parked outside at night. Now only two houses are left in the street, the rest have been turned into apartments, a university and a couple of hotels. Not quiet anymore!

How long have you lived in Cambodia? We moved to Cambodia in 2008. I have been coming here since 1994, initially to sponsor the construction of the Don Bosco school. It was the first vocational school in Cambodia, probably the first real school after the Khmer Rouge. As Euromill we donated the steel structures.

When the doors opened for the first semester there were some 3,000 kids queuing up to get one of the 300 available places. Now there are 14 Don

Bosco schools over the country. Over the years my Rotary Club Bangkok South did many projects in Cambodia and we came over quite a few times to assist.

What's keeping you in Cambodia? There are a lot of opportunities in Cambodia. The infrastructure, industry as well as social structure were all destroyed during the Khmer Rouge and it has taken decades to rebuild. Before the KR there was quite a lot of industry, now even milk is imported either from Vietnam or from Thailand. With a population of around 16 million there is still a lot to be done.

Do you have as many friends in Cambodia as you did in Thailand? The community in Phnom Penh is, of course, much smaller than in Bangkok. After so many years you get to know a lot of people. Real friends - I would say about the same. But then, my friends in Thailand and I go much longer back, of course.

How do you spend your spare time in PP? Spending quality time with family, friends, playing golf, etc.

Are Cambodians as welcoming and friendly as the Thais? I would say Cambodians are as friendly as the Thais used to be (and still are if you go up country). It also seems that more Cambodians speak better English, which gives them more confidence in dealing with foreigners and welcoming them.

How is the bureaucracy in Cambodia? The red tape in Cambodia is far less complicated than in Thailand. It is very easy to get a one-year visa although officially you need a work permit for that. Work permits are also much easier to get in Cambodia. Actually, there is no comparison as Thailand seems to be getting more and more difficult.

Are there many business opportunities for SMEs? Many, there is a market for everything. But with more and more people starting up SMEs the market is competitive, so know what you do, prepare a good business plan and prepare for some disappointments in the beginning.



What kinds of businesses do you suggest? Food and beverage is doing very well.

Chinese investment seems to have a major impact on Cambodia in several ways. Has it been beneficial?

Most of the Chinese investment is in gaming and related infrastructure. Chinese money is used to buy Chinese materials for Chinese hotels and facilities that are built by Chinese for Chinese customers. That said, of course some of the money flows into the Cambodian economy. Recently the government started to push back on zero-dollar tourism.

Do you see many Thai companies investing in Cambodia? Yes, more and more. It took me four years to convince Major Cineplex to come to Cambodia. But since arriving here five years ago, they never regretted it and made their investment back in less than a year. In their wake came a large influx of Thai companies. Currently many Thai companies are eyeing Cambodia as they appreciate the opportunities here, just over the border.

In your opinion and experience, is ASEAN a good and beneficial concept for its members? Absolutely, especially as reduction of import taxes improves trade over the border.

Do you visit other provinces in Cambodia? Most of them. My favorites are the coastal provinces. The islands and the beaches are beautiful. You can still find pristine beaches and waterways that are harder to find in Thailand.

Is the government doing a good job? Fantastic.

Overall, how does Cambodia compare to Thailand? For us as foreigners looking at both countries the people are very similar in religion, family values, culture. Most Thais are not even aware of this (or don't want to be), but much of the Thai culture is Khmer in origin, even the Thai classical dance has its origin with the apsara dancers in Angkor wat.

From a cost point of view, I think that living in Thailand is cheaper. Cambodia has a dollar economy and that creates higher prices. The only thing cheaper in Cambodia is wine. **Did you ever think as a young man that you'd end up in SE Asia?** Absolutely not.

Who or what do you miss about Thailand? Good roads, amazing restaurants (some of the best Italian restaurants I found in Bangkok, my favorite is still Gianni), culture in the form of music, opera, and ballet, things we almost don't have here in Cambodia. And of course, medical facilities - Thailand has some of the best in the world, incomparable to Cambodia.

What do people who live in Thailand not fully appreciate about Cambodia? The openness and friendliness of the people. They probably are like Thais were 20 years ago. Also, in Thailand it is very unusual to be invited by Thais to their home, even those you know well. This is a bit different in Cambodia.

What's the best part of your job? Freedom.

And the worst? The risks that go with freedom.

What are your favorite restaurants in Phnom Penh and Bangkok? Phnom Penh: Topaz, The Déli, La Residence, Khema, Open Wine Bangkok: Gianni, Khin Lom Chom Saphan, Bourbon Street, Normandie Grill, Eat Me, Rossano's and many more.

Most interesting person you've ever met in SE Asia? Prof. Dr Tasman Smith.

Most boring or irritating? None that I can think of, maybe DC (he knows who he is).

Beer or wine? Wine.

Thai or Cambodian cuisine? Big overlap with these two, but Thai for me.

French or Italian? Italian.

Favorite getaway destination? Italy.

What's next? At some stage we will go back to Thailand. All said the quality of life is better and everything is here. But before that happens we will remain in Cambodia and enjoy the country. I would also be happy to assist any company that wants to enter the Cambodian market.



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Advance bookings are recommended.

Swissôtel Bangkok Ratchada as Bruno Rotschaedl sees it

Like any 5-star hotel general manager, Bruno Rotschaedl, who's current charge is Swissotel Bangkok Ratchada, oversees all the day-to-day operations of a multi-faceted organisation. That means managing the hotel's executive team and over 400 staff.



But there's more to it than that. The 407-room hotel with extensive leisure and conventions facilities has been extensively renovated under his watch, from the exterior to the guestrooms, function rooms, restaurants, spa, swimming pool and state-of-the-art fitness.

Fortunately, with over 25 years' experience in the hospitality industry, Bruno takes it all in his stride. After all he previously held multiple senior management positions under various hotel brands in the US, Europe, Hong Kong, Taiwan, China, Singapore, and Thailand. His previous post was as

“

OUR HOTEL OFFERS BUSINESS AND LEISURE GUESTS AN AUTHENTIC LOCAL TRAVEL EXPERIENCE COMBINING SWISS HOSPITALITY WITH THAI CULTURE IN WAYS FULL OF ENERGY, PASSION AND VITALITY.”

Director of Food and Beverage at JW Marriott Hong Kong.

“Working with Swissotel is different and exciting,” he says. “The brand is synonymous with all there is to love about Switzerland and it remains true to its roots.”

He further ventures that the brand subtly combines genuine Swiss hospitality with intelligent design and local flair in over 30 top locations worldwide.

20-year-experienced Swissotel Bangkok Ratchada is thus a proud component of AccorHotels, the world-leading travel & lifestyle group with almost 5,000 hotels, resorts and residences around the globe.

“Our hotel offers business and leisure guests an authentic local travel experience combining Swiss hospitality with Thai culture in ways full of energy, passion and vitality.”

Thus Swissotel’s brand attributes, of which the most important is vitality, are a perfect fit with Bruno’s personal lifestyle. Any free time he grabs can see him jogging in the park or pumping iron in the gym.

“Running helps me clear my head from work and brings peace of mind”, he says.

“

**LOGISTICALLY,
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SOCIALY, RATCHADA
IS EXTREMELY
WELL CONNECTED.
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AND PLAY HOST.**

Vitality, as Swissotel sees it, is both a philosophy and a programme that focuses on wellbeing and the quality of life of guests, partners and associates alike.

“By offering many possibilities for stimulating physical and mental fitness in the guests’ own time and comfort zone, vitality ensures they feel as good on the road as at home.”

It’s a point that touches all aspects of the Swissotel Bangkok Ratchada offering, from the cuisine to our extensive meetings and events offerings.”

The hotel thus hosts a steady succession of world-class events, from closed-door conferences to public cultural extravaganzas.

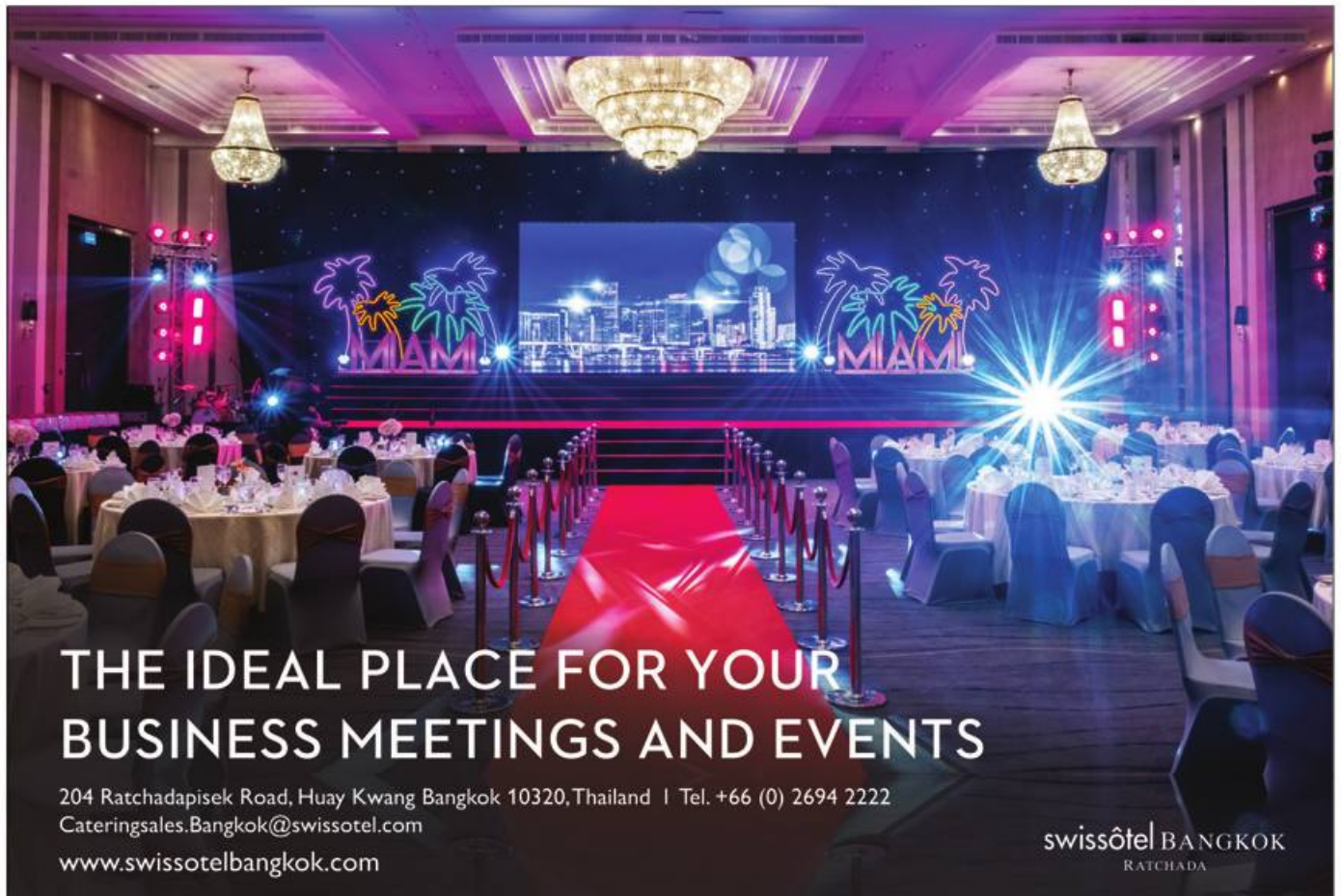
“Being located on Ratchada steps from MRT Huay Kwang station gives us an edge over many hotels along Sukhumvit.”

The hotel’s connectivity to the most important businesses, diplomatic offices, national conventions and exhibition centres and hospitals is really exceptional. The same goes for the most prime shopping, dining and entertainment districts.

“Logistically, digitally and socially, Ratchada is extremely well connected. So Swissotel Bangkok Ratchada is really an ideal place to stay, dine and play host.”

Whether to meet, sleep or play, Swissotel Ratchada Bangkok is in a niche of its own and getting more irresistible by the day and night.

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Thailand's Six Pack

The powerful Thai-Chinese families who dominate the country's business scene

By Maxmilian Wechsler

In Thailand there are at least 150 extravagantly wealthy Thai-Chinese families, whose members figure prominently in company boardrooms and social registers. Six families stand over and above the rest in terms of influence and power. Their businesses rake in cash from goods and services that many Thais have come to consider essential, and they often exert enormous influence over politics, economics, sports, entertainment, media and other sectors. It's no exaggeration to say the actions and decisions of several dozen members of these dynasties have a major effect on the lives of close to 70 million country residents.

Inequality reigns

Citing the Credit Suisse Global Wealth Report 2018, a recent article on the Asia Times website calls Thailand's economy the most unequal in the world. It reports that in 2018, 67% percent of the nation's wealth was held by 1% of the population, a rapid increase from 58% in 2016. On May 7, 2019, Forbes website published a report titled 'Thailand's 50 Richest' detailing the country's wealthiest families and individuals. The list – headed by the Chearavanont family with a net worth of US\$29.5 billion is presented annually, with rankings based on net worth.

(For the record, the family of Worawit Weeraborwornpong, chairman of Siamgas & Petrochemicals PCL with net worth of US\$590 million, is ranked 50th on Forbes' Thailand list).

The top 50 families boast a staggering US\$160.56 billion in net worth, about 4.86 trillion baht at current exchange rate. To put this in perspective, Thailand's budget for fiscal year 2019 was three trillion baht. The original budget for 2020 was 3.2 trillion baht.

It's no secret that Thai-Chinese are at the top of the local socioeconomic order. Most of the richest Thais claim forebears who migrated from China several generations back. Some of them were aided in their quest for wealth by affiliations with powerful government officers. Many women born into ethnic Chinese business families married high-ranking civil servants. These unions proved to be win-win, cementing mutually beneficial financial arrangements.

The Big Six

The half dozen families highlighted below don't follow exactly the one-through-six positions on the latest Forbes list, but all can claim a place at the top of Thailand's power structure. The Chearavanont, Chirathivat, Yoovidhya, Sirivadhanabhakdi, Srivaddhanaprabha and Bhirombhakdi clans rank one, two, three, four, six and fourteen respectively on the Forbes list, which gives the combined net worth of the six families as US\$93.55 billion or around 2.83 trillion baht.

Chearavanont family

- **Company:** Charoen Pokphand (CP) Group
- **Net worth:** US\$29.5 billion (892 billion baht)
- **Source of wealth:** Food



Dhanin

The CP Group is a Thai conglomerate based in Bangkok. It is Thailand's largest private company. Charoen Pokphand means in Thai "prosperity for consumers." The CP Group has evolved into a conglomerate of hundreds of companies in many countries, including China. The Group is one of world's largest conglomerates, with investments in 21 countries.



Soopakij

Charoen Pokphand Foods (CPF), in which it owns controlling stakes, is the world's largest producer of feed, shrimp, and a global top three producer of poultry, pork, among other agricultural produces. It also operates Southeast Asia's largest retail business by revenue, with over 10,000 Seven Eleven stores and a leading cash and carry business through Siam Makro. In the telecommunications sector, CP Group subsidiary, True Group, is one of the largest telecom firms in Southeast Asia with over 25 million mobile customers.



Suphachai

Dhanin Chearavanont, or Chia Kok Min, stepped down as CP's chairman and CEO in 2017, but remains senior chairman. His eldest son, Soopakij, is the current chairman and his youngest son, Suphachai, is the CEO. Dhanin also stepped down as chairman of group flagship CPF in April 2019.

Background: The roots of the CP group date back to 1921, when 18-year-old Chia Ek Chor and his 10-year-old brother Chia Seow Whooy arrived in Thailand from Shantou in southern China, and began peddling vegetable seeds from a cart. Shortly thereafter, they opened a seed, fertilizer and insecticide trading business in Bangkok's Chinatown.

In the early years, Ek Chor spent much of his time establishing new markets in neighboring countries, leaving Seow Whooy to manage the Thai operation. Following the communist takeover of China in 1949, the brothers decided to base their operations in Thailand, and adopted the surname Chearavanont.

Chirathivat family

- **Company:** Central Group
- **Net worth:** US\$21 billion (635 billion baht)
- **Source of wealth:** Retail

The family owned and operated Central Group is Thailand's leading department store retailer and service business. It has expanded far beyond Thailand with a



Tiang



Tos

strong presence in Europe and Vietnam. The retail giant is said to get more than a quarter of its US\$12.4 billion (375 billion baht) in revenue from abroad.

Central Group consists of a variety of diverse investments in various corporations domestically and internationally. Its branches have become leaders in retail, property development, brand management, hospitality, food and beverage and digital lifestyle. The firm joined in a US\$560 million (16.9 billion baht) venture with China's JD.com to set up an e-commerce site, JD Central.

Tos Chirathivat, is the grandson of the group's founder, is currently executive chairman and CEO of Central Group. A number of other family members hold important positions in the Group's companies.

Background: Tiang Chirathivat (born Cheng Ni-Tiang) reportedly emigrated with his family from Hainan in China, where he was a rice farmer. He worked in his father-in-law's store before opening his own small shop in the Thonburi area of Bangkok in 1928. In 1947, Tiang moved to a large site on Sri Phraya Road and established Central Trading, a landmark step for the Chirathivat family.

Anticipating a demand for foreign goods, Tiang stocked imported clothes, cosmetics, books, magazine and other periodicals. His business strategy proved to be very successful and he moved again to a building in Soi Oriental adjacent to the Oriental Hotel. In 1956, he opened the Central Department Store in the Wang Burapa district of Bangkok with his eldest son Samrit. The store was the first of its kind in Thailand and revolutionized the concept of retailing here. Among the innovations it offered was the introduction of fixed pricing to consumers accustomed to bargaining over every purchase.

Both father and son, the group's founders, were fully engaged in running the business, and were helped by other family members. In an era of bustling trade and growth, the young entrepreneurs quickly established businesses that were characterized by many 'firsts' in Thailand, including; first to import international cosmetic brands; first to focus on impeccable customer services; and first to implement innovative marketing communications.

Samrit Chirathivat believed that success would come from honesty and hard work, along with providing the best possible services and products for Central's customers.



Chaleo

Chalerm Yoovidhya

- **Company:** Red Bull Beverages Company Limited (under TCP Group)



Chalerm

- **Net worth:** US\$19.9 billion (601 billion baht)
- **Source of wealth:** Energy drinks

Chalerm Yoovidhya heads a sprawling clan that owns 51% of Red Bull, the iconic energy drink which sold 6.7 billion cans across 171 countries in 2018. The family's stake of the company includes 2% owned personally by Chalerm, eldest son of Red Bull cofounder, Chaleo Yoovidhya.

By the time of Chaleo's death in March 2012, his interests had broadened from energy drinks to include health care, real estate and sports franchises. There's some confusion about his actual date of birth. In reports of his death, Thai newspaper The Nation said he was 90, while other Thai media said 88. Forbes put his age at 80, while The Australia Times said he was 89.

At any rate, Chalerm had a major role in the phenomenal success of Red Bull, known as Krating Daeng in Thai. He developed the formula, logo and packaging for the energy drink in Thailand and initiated its international rollout. He is also the founder and managing director of Siam Winery, founded in 1986. The same year he launched SPY Wine Cooler, which now has sales of more than 160 million bottles per annum.

Chalerm also is the majority share-holder of Cavallino Motors Company, the official Ferrari distributor for Thailand, and serves as the company's president. Younger brother Saravoot is now managing director of Red Bull Thailand.

Chalerm's oldest son Varit is involved in the family's winery and Ferrari dealership. His second son, Vorayuth, is unable to take a role in the family business, as he fled the country to avoid an arrest warrant issued on a charge of fatal hit-and-run after his Ferrari slammed into a Bangkok motorcycle cop back in 2012.

Background: Chaleo Yoovidhya's father migrated from Hainan province in China to Pichit province in northern Thailand. Chaleo left Pichit to assist his older brother in the operation of a pharmacy in Bangkok. The brothers eventually established their own pharmaceutical company under the name of TC Mycin Co., Ltd. in 1965. The Yoovidhya family's extremely profitable entry into the energy drinks sector came in 1978 when Chaleo cofounded Red Bull with Austrian Dietrich Mateschitz, a former marketing executive.

Charoen Sirivadhanabhakdi

- **Company:** Thai Beverage PCL (better known as ThaiBev)



Charoen

- **Net worth:** US\$16.2 billion (490 billion baht)
- **Source of wealth:** Real estate, alcohol

Charoen Sirivadhanabhakdi is the founder and chairman of ThaiBev, Thailand's largest brewer known for Chang beer. Other assets include the privately held firm TCC Land; Singapore beverage and property giant Fraser and Neave Limited, of which Charoen is the chairman; and hypermarket chain Big C Supercenter, acquired in 2016. Charoen runs real estate developments and owns hotels in Thailand, Asia, the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia. One of his hotels is the luxurious Hôtel Plaza Athénée in Manhattan, New York.

Charoen's wife, Khunying Wanna Sirivadhanabhakdi, is ThaiBev's vice-charman. One of their sons, Thanapa, is president and CEO of the company and another son, Panote, is the company director.



Wanna



Thanapa



Panote

Background: Like most Thai tycoons, Charoen Sirivadhanabhakdi is ethnic Chinese, from a family of 11 children whose father migrated from southern China. The father was a fried mussel street vendor in

Bangkok's Songwad district. Charoen attended a Chinese-language school but left school when he was nine years old to contribute to the meager family finances.

Charoen's links to the whisky industry date back almost fifty years. His father-in-law's ties to the Sura Mahakhun Group – then the country's most important whisky producer – helped him to secure a machinery supply contract. In 1976 Charoen entered the production side of the industry when he purchased the Tara Whisky Company and changed its name to Sang Som Co., Ltd. producing 'Sang Som' whiskey at distilleries in Nakhon Pathom and in Kanchanaburi provinces.

Aiyawatt 'Top' Srivaddhanaprabha

- **Company:** King Power Group
- **Net worth:** US\$4.7 billion (142 billion baht)
- **Source of wealth:** Duty Free



Vichai

Aiyawatt Srivaddhanaprabha is the chairman and CEO of King Power and the son of tycoon Vichai Srivaddhanaprabha, who died in a



Aiyawatt

helicopter crash near King Power Stadium in Leicester, England on October 27, 2018. King Power is the owner of Leicester City Football Club, but Vichai made his fortune operating Thailand's hugely profitable King Power airport duty-free stores. The family also owns a major portion of MahaNakhon, the 78-storey office and residential building adjacent to Chong Nonsee BTS that is currently Thailand's tallest skyscraper.

Background: Vichai Srivaddhanaprabha was born Vichai Raksriakorn into a Thai-Chinese family in April 1958. In December 2009, King Power received a Thai Royal Warrant from King Bhumibol Adulyadej to display the Royal Garuda emblem and statue in a magnificent ceremony attended by royalty and VIPs. In 2012, the King bestowed the family with the new surname of Srivaddhanaprabha, which means 'light of progressive glory'.

Vichai was awarded an honorary Doctor of Laws by the University of Leicester in 2016. His formal studies were in Taiwan and the United States. An avid sports fan, Vichai owned the VR Polo Club in Bangkok and was president of Ham Polo Club in London.

According to Forbes, the fortune of Aiyawatt and his family currently stands at US\$5 billion (148 billion baht).

Santi Bhirombhakdi



Santi

- **Company:** Boon Rawd Brewery
- **Net worth:** US\$2.25 billion (68 billion baht)
- **Source of wealth:** Beverages

Santi Bhirombhakdi is president and CEO of Boon Rawd Brewery and the head of the family that made its fortune off the popular Singha and

Leo beer brands. The company also produces soft drinks and bottled drinking water. The company's best-known product is Singha beer, but it also produces beverages and goods under the Leo, B-ing, Purra, Sanvo, Syder Bay, Boonrawd Farm, Pundee and Masita trademarks. The company has expanded and diversified its business interests into manufacturing, packaging, agriculture, real estate, food and beverage, retail fashion and lifestyle products and stands over more than 50 affiliated companies. The company also provides medical assistance and disaster relief under the Phraya Bhirombhakdi Foundation.

The Royal Garuda that appears on every bottle of Singha products is a Thai Royal Warrant, the highest honor in Thailand awarded to businesses and organisations. It was granted to Boon Rawd Brewery on October 25, 1939 for exceptional service and commitment to the economic and social development of the Kingdom of Thailand.

Background: Very little is known of Santi Bhirombhakdi's background. According to Forbes, he is 73 years old, married and has three children. Boon Rawd Brewery was established by his grandfather, Phraya Bhirom Bhakdi (Boonrawd Sreshthaputra), in 1933. Originally a primary school teacher in Bangkok, he left the field to set up a successful lumber trading business in the early 20th century. He later established a ferry service that was put out of business when the government built a bridge over Bangkok's Chao Phraya River.

Having served as a loyal volunteer on many projects sponsored by the Royal Family, Boonrawd was granted the title Phraya Bhirom Bhakdi by King Rama VI. In search of a new business opportunity, he decided on brewing since at that time all beer consumed in Thailand was imported from Japan and Singapore. To gain experience in brewing and buy the necessary equipment he travelled to Germany. He returned to Thailand in 1931 accompanied by a German brewmaster, and set up Boon Rawd Brewery Co., Ltd. The rest is history.



CENTRAL Group



Exchange rate for cash at time of writing: US\$1 = 30.25 baht.

Jamie Oliver Group launches new dining concept in Bangkok

Jamie Oliver's international restaurant business has launched an all-day dining concept - Jamie Oliver Kitchen – featuring food from a diverse menu that celebrates the famous British chef's culinary journey over the past 20 years.

Jamie Oliver Kitchen in Bangkok has a contemporary feel, with key features that will include a welcoming open kitchen, flexible seating with both larger tables for sharing and soft seating areas to lounge in. The decor also echoes the fabrics and glassware native to Thailand.

Whether it's a casual lunch, a quiet coffee, drinks with friends, a simple supper, or a selection of sharing dishes or full-on dinner, the restaurant covers all the bases with a host of enticing, tempting dishes, using only the best ingredients.

Menus tap into the best of Jamie Oliver, and offer dishes that have been adapted to local tastes, allowing the menu to evolve alongside changing consumer desires.

Jamie Oliver said: "Over the past 20 years, I have travelled around the world to discover exciting flavour combinations, picking up incredible influences along the way. The new restaurant brings those inspirations to life and serve some of my absolute all-time favourites."

Located at Siam Discovery, Jamie Oliver Kitchen Bangkok is operated by franchise partner HPL and joint venture partner Siam Piwat. This site was previously Jamie's Italian.

"We have loved serving our guests under the Jamie's Italian banner for the past three years and are now really excited to be introducing this brand new concept to Bangkok," said General Manager Sarah Smith.

Dishes using local inspiration include a soft shell crab burger with a green papaya salad and Sriracha mayo created specifically for the Bangkok restaurant, and a low and slow short rib cooked in massaman spices.

Other menu highlights include Salmon fishcakes, featuring lemongrass and ginger served with a chilli dipping sauce or Chicken skewers with a spiced peanut sauce; slipper-shaped pizzas including the locally inspired seafood Tom Yum pizza

featuring tomatoes, prawns, mussels, clams, squid and mozzarella cheese, served with scissors for easy sharing; a range of salads for those looking for healthier options including a Seafood and noodle salad, a prawn, salmon and octopus seafood skewer with a crunchy vegetable noodle salad.

The sweet dishes have everything from a Roasted pineapple and coconut panna cotta to a zesty Lemon curd bar with a buttery biscuit base, raspberries and pistachios.

The beverage menu includes a wine list curated by Sarah Smith the General Manager, to offer old-world classics, new-world favourites and a few quirky labels for those looking to try something new. A range of craft-beers and ciders, cold-press juices from local artisan juicers, MeJuice Press and Italian roasted coffee ensure something for everyone.

Head Chef is Alex Barman,

www.jamieoliverkitchen-th.com



RIB ROOM & BAR STEAKHOUSE HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY

FRIDAY 14th FEBRUARY 2020

Enjoy a romantic Valentine's Night with a four-course, a la carte selection of dishes prepared by Executive Chef Philippe Gaudal.

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please call 02 254 0404 Ext 3100



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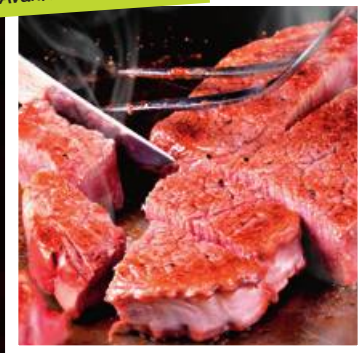


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Avani Atrium Bangkok



Dazzling Delight

Benihana Avani Atrium presents a weekend brunch filled with dazzling daytime delights. Indulge in sashimi starters, an oyster buffet and your choice of select cuts seared to perfection on the teppanyaki grill. Available Saturday and Sunday from 12:00 - 3:00 pm at 1,350++ baht per person.

Tel: 02 718 2000

Scaling the heights

Scalini's famous Saturday brunch takes on new Italian tastes, including fresh sea urchins, live Maine lobsters and prime Angus beef ribs. Priced at 2,400++ baht, the à la carte main courses include tender flat iron foie gras and succulent lamb tomahawk; the carving station has whole roasted pig and prime Angus rib of beef with truffle mashed potatoes; the 'Main Event' includes grilled wild cod and succulent lamb tomahawk in signature herb crust; while the 'Godfather Room' offers fabulous desserts such as Tahiti vanilla mousse, chocolate soufflé, expresso tiramisu and vanilla panna cotta. Also available is a mocktails package with soft drinks, tea and coffee (299++ baht) and a local beers package (499++ baht). The Unlimited Champagne Package at 1,399++ baht covers sparkling, wines, cocktails, beers, soft drinks, juices and tea/coffee.



Lavish Super-luxe Feast

JW Café's Sunday Brunch experience offers a refreshed selection of gourmet items in an uplifting decor with vibrant Dessert Corner, 5 interactive live food theatres, 11 stations of signature premium delights, a seafood on ice corner, and one epic dessert spread. Featuring signature local delicacies, JW Café Brunch offers a brunch menu with free-flow Foie Gras plus unlimited servings from the seven conservatory kitchens, in particular Seafood on Ice that promises king crab, river prawns, freshly shucked oysters, rock lobster, sushi and sashimi, a salad bar, pasta, cheese, cold cuts, crêpes station and much more. Available every Sunday from 12pm to 3pm for 2,090++ baht per adult (half-price for kids) inclusive of soft drinks and coffee or tea. For an additional 1,190++ baht per person, adults can enjoy free-flow red/white and sparkling wines.



Proudly Pouring Vintage

Niche presents a new-look Sunday Brunch with the touch of Blanc de Blancs Champagne. The buffet includes Canadian lobster, Alaskan king crab, snow crab, French oysters, New Zealand mussels, cheeses, cold meats and homemade bread. Guests receive chef selected bite-sized samples with decadent martinis. Main courses include Wagyu beef medallion "Rossini style", pan-fried Murray Land Lamb cutlet with mint pea purée, and seared giant Hokkaido scallop with squid ink clam sauce. The carvery station serves premium meats. Beverage packages start from 2,400++ baht per person, including juices and soft drinks. Children aged 6 to 12 years pay 1,200++ baht. The free-flow Champagne package is priced at 4,400++ baht per person with upgrade to Blanc de Blancs Champagne for all diners wearing white or carrying white accessories. Available every Sunday from 12:30 to 16:00 hrs until 30 April.

Tel: 02 162 9000

niche.siambangkok@kempinski.com



The Landmark Bangkok

Sensational Imported Selection

There's never been a better time to spoil yourself at our famous international buffet from Atrium Restaurant at The Landmark Bangkok. The new seafood selection is simply sensational, enjoy freshly imported seafood like king crab, oysters, mud crabs, New Zealand mussels, fresh Japanese sushi and sashimi, and enjoy the BBQ Station featuring roast beef, lamb and gammon ham. There is also authentic Thai food and variety of desserts, a chocolate fountain, soufflé, homemade pastries and ice cream. Every Sunday 11.45am – 3pm at 2,900 baht net per person (food only). Special Promotion - Come 4 pay 2 (maximum 12 people. Over 12 people will receive 30% discount on food only)

Tel: 02 254 0404 ext. 7777

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Celebrate Valentine's Day in sizzling, sweet style.

Welcomed with a mocktail and presented with a rose, take your seats for a romantic set menu for two, complete with dazzling "eatertainment" and delicious surprises.

Join us to celebrate love at Benihana, savour every moment and finish with a heart-shaped cake.

Date: 14 February 2020

Time: 5:00 pm – 10:30 pm

Price: THB 3,800++ per couple



STRAWBERRY BRUNCH

Sizzling spectacle and sweet treats for the month of love.

Spoil someone special this February at Benihana with a romantic extravaganza.

Pull up a chair for succulent sushi and Bangkok's most dazzling "eatertainment", Save room for the fabulous finale: A sensational strawberry buffet, guaranteed to delight and impress.

THB 1,550++ per person

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

Available only this February weekend brunch

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

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

Weekday lunch from 12:00 noon – 2:30 pm

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

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www.benihanathailand.com

Taking Brunch to Another Level

The District Grill Room & Bar proudly presents a luxurious Sunday brunch with specialties including Foie Gras terrine with brioche and jam, poached egg or scrambled eggs, special pasta of the day, luscious steak and grilled fish of the day or preferred dishes prepared fresh from the open kitchen. The highlight is live lobsters, to guarantee freshness and taste. In addition enjoy an array of mouthwatering appetisers, salads, premium cold cuts, carving stations, fresh salmon, tuna tartar, smoked, cured and marinated Norwegian salmon and various cheeses. Also discover special seafood on ice, with 3 kinds of oysters and Alaskan king crab legs. Lastly, spoil yourself with pastries or desserts, or try the pastry chef's weekly specialties. The Sunday brunch is priced 2,500++ baht per person. Available every Sunday 12pm to 3pm.

Tel: 02 797 0000

diningbangkok@marriott.com

Bangkok Marriott Hotel Bangkok



Bangkok Marriott Marquis Queen's Park



Great Global Selection

Every Sunday, Bangkok Marriott Marquis Queen's Park showcases dishes and delicacies from around the world at Goji Kitchen + Bar, with live cooking stations preparing dishes from fresh Alaskan king crab to French foie gras, Spanish suckling pig to prime tomahawk beef. Regional preferences are met with a sublime Asian selection, from the freshest Japanese sushi and sashimi to Chinese "xiao long boa" plus traditional Thai favourites. Guests can also enjoy delectable desserts. Packages are priced at 2,128++ baht per person (0-6 years: complimentary, 6-11 years: half-price); 99++ baht for free-flow soft drinks, juices & iced teas; 499++ baht for free-flow beers, soft drinks, juices & iced teas; and 1,288++ baht free-flow house wine, cocktails, beers, soft drinks, juices & iced teas. Every Sunday 11:45 hrs. to 14:30 hrs. Terms & conditions apply.

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Monthly Surf 'n' Turf

Every last Sunday of the month, Bangkok Marriott Hotel The Surawongse offers a Surf 'n' Turf Sunday Brunch from noon to 3 pm at Praya Kitchen, highlighted with an Oyster Bar offering three kinds of oysters on a rotational basis, and special live dishes like gaeng kua koong mangkorn, or signature creations such as "Lobster Xiao Long Pao" and "Peking Duck" from Yao Restaurant Corner. The Surf 'n' Turf section features 12 kinds of great tasting seafood and 55-day dry-aged soft Thai sirloin, plus Australian and US steaks and New Zealand lamb rib-eye. The Thai Station features "Foie Gras with Banana Blossom Salad" and "Chicken Volcano", with Ya Dong (a traditional Thai liquor) at no extra cost. Priced at 1588++ baht (inclusive of juice bar), free for kids under 4, children aged 4 to 12 at 50% discount.

Tel: 02 088 5666



Symphony of Taste

Sunday Brunch by the River at Millennium Hilton Bangkok starts in ThreeSixty Jazz Lounge for aperitif drinks and canapés before the yellowfin tuna cutting show at 1pm. The foie gras station is a pilgrimage offering many foie gras dishes, pâtés and rillettes. The salmon steak station serves Scottish Hebridean smoked salmon alongside seafood on ice including Alaskan King Crab. There's also Peking Duck. 30 types of curated cheese while a pop-up culinary cart offers a special Chef's surprise, and there's ice cream, chocolate whisky truffle and fresh strawberries, meringues, macaroons, and many other international sweets and cakes. Priced at 2,200 baht nett per adult including local juices, hot tea and coffee; 1,100 baht nett for children 6-11 years; top up 1,400 baht nett for 3 hours of free-flow sparkling, wines, spirits, cocktails, beer and soft drinks.

Tel: 02 442 2000

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The St. Regis Bangkok

Magnificent Signature Spread

The St. Regis Bangkok's Signature Sunday Brunch at VIU Restaurant from 12:30pm to 3:30pm is of epic proportions. Commence with antipasti, salads, foie gras, seafood on ice, prime cuts, Thai specialties and house-made pasta. The à-la-carte, à-la-minute menu includes lobster and smoked salmon eggs benedict, Royal Baeri caviar omelette, and beef tenderloin Rossini sliders with truffle mayo. Food Station Highlights cooked to order include Lobster Roll, Boston lobster thermidor or with spicy seafood sauce, pan-fried foie gras with port wine sauce and brioche, and Australian lamb cutlet with blue cheese potato purée. Finally an enticing collection of sweet endings, international cheeses and other delights also await. Priced at 2,850++ baht per person including free-flow non-alcoholic; 1,299++ baht additional for free-flow wine, sparkling wines, Siam Mary, Martinis, beers, smoothies and juices.

Tel: 02 207 7777

www.stregisbangkok.com



The Athenee Hotel Bangkok

Extravaganza with Unlimited Lobster

Every week The Rain Tree Café The Athenee Hotel Bangkok raises the bar with six live stations offering highlights including grilled live unlimited lobster; Fines de Clair, Belon, Irish and US oysters, caviar, crayfish, Alaskan king crab, Peking duck, Australian beef rib, lamb rack, baked salmon, pasta; wok fries;

shawarma, sausages, squid, crab and more. Desserts include triple flavoured sticky rice with mango, crêpe suzette, and chocolate lava. À la carte menus include pan-seared foie gras, Hokkaido scallops, and salmon tartar. Served from 12pm – 3:30pm and priced at 2,400++ baht per person including unlimited lobster

and drinking water (1,200++ baht for children 5-12 yrs, under 5 yrs free). Beverage packages at 1,380++ per person include free-flow of selected beverages (2,600++ per person for premium beverages), plus soft drinks, fruit juices, mocktails, illy coffee and tea.

Tel: 02 650 8800

www.theatheneehotel.com



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Dynamic New Cuisine

Since 1976, Lord Jim's has been a Bangkok institution and Head Chef Nick Gannaway presents a new menu with new perspectives. Spotlighting exceptional ingredients and carefully selected premium-quality seafood and prime cuts from top international sources with locally sourced vegetables and herbs, Lord Jim's offers traditional favourites to inventive dishes. Recommendations include Flame Basted Baby Boudeuse Oyster, Steamed Hokkaido Scallop Pudding, and Grilled Enoki with butter sauce, Tomahawk made with black onyx rib, and Spanish Sea Bass with roast chicken butter, perfect for sharing. From an extensive wine selection, the Sommelier will suggest pairings with meals to enhance flavours and senses. Open daily, the lunch buffet is from 12.00pm to 2.30pm on weekdays and 11.30am to 3pm on Saturdays and Sundays; dinner (à la carte and set menu) is from 7 to 11pm.

Tel: 02 659 9000

mandarinoriental.com/Bangkok

Prestigious Global Brunch

Sunday Brunch at the stylish and informal Up & Above Restaurant, The Okura Prestige Bangkok, includes main course choices prepared to order including pan-seared foie gras and grilled Canadian lobster, Thai-flavoured dishes, fresh sashimi and sushi, takoyaki, yakitori, tuna tataki, udon soup and gyoza, and many international items including French, Australian and American oysters, Maine lobster, Alaskan king crab, New Zealand mussels, rock lobster and Manila clams, Japanese scallops, oysters and squid, homemade ravioli, carvery, salmon gravlax, beef Wellington with Yorkshire pudding, healthy salads, fresh fruits, and indulgent desserts. Available 12:00 – 15:00 at 2,800++ baht per person (including free-flow mocktails, soft drinks); 3,500++ baht (including selected free-flow wines, Prosecco, local beers, cocktails, mocktails, and soft drinks); 4,100++ baht per person (including free-flow Champagne, Prosecco, selected wines, local beers, cocktails, mocktails, and soft drinks); and 1,050++ baht per child under 12.

Tel: 02 687 9000

www.okurabangkok.com



The Okura Prestige Bangkok



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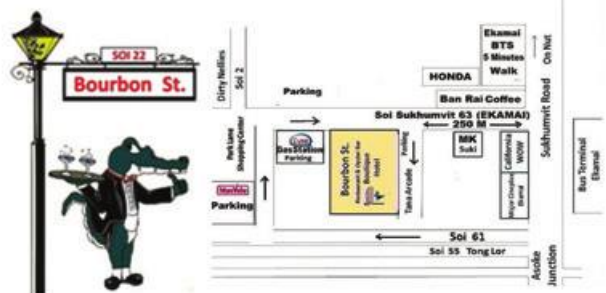


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Wattana Bangkok 10110, Thailand tel : 0 2381 6801-3





Around-The-World-Eating-Trip

International cuisine and exotic flavours comprise The World restaurant's Sunday brunch feast every second Sunday of the month. From familiar comfort food, like pizza and Thai favourites to delicate seafood-on-ice flavours or Japanese station, The World's Sunday Brunch includes signature dishes from Red Sky Rooftop Bar and Restaurant (French bistro), UNO MAS (Spanish & Mediterranean), Dynasty (Chinese & Asian fusion), and Zing (Bakery & Pastry shop). Other features include Indian, Japanese, Thai, seafood on ice like Alaskan king crab, Maine lobster, shrimps, clams and fresh oysters. The carving station serves freshly sliced roast beef, suckling pork or duck and there are tasty vegetarian options at most of our international food stations. Available 12.00 to 15.00 hrs. at 2,590++ baht per person, which includes drinks! Kids 4 to 11 yrs 50% off, and under 3 yrs free.

Tel: 02 100 6255 diningcgw@chr.co.th



Fabuloso Champagne Brunch

For a Champagne brunch with a view (and cooling breeze from 54 floors up), nowhere in Bangkok quite does things like UNO MAS restaurant Centara Grand at CentralWorld. Held every first Sunday of the month, the "Fabuloso" brunch all-inclusive price of 3,555++ baht per person earns you unlimited access to premium imported delicacies (like Iberico ham and cold cuts), signature Spanish cooked-to-order dishes, a tapas selection and much more, while seafood lovers can indulge in four kinds of fresh oysters, jumbo prawns and lobster. All with extra-bubbly free-flow pourings of G.H. Mumm Cordon Rouge, as well as soft drinks. The Fabuloso Champagne Brunch at UNO MAS runs from 11.30 – 14.30 hrs.

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diningcgw@chr.co.th



Exclusive Brasserie Feast

Every Sunday, bring your family and friends to enjoy Exclusive Sunday Brunch at Twenty-Seven Bites Brasserie Radisson Blu Plaza Bangkok. Relish an international feast with live cooking stations serving the best flavours from around the world, including fresh seafood-on-ice, 200 grams River prawns, Grilled kani Miso Crab, Pan Seared Foie Gras, Grilled Rib Eye Beef, Selection of Salmon Don, Tuna Don, Teppanyaki selection, Lobster Sashimi, Ahi Tuna Sashimi, and freshly made Chinese dim sum, as well as international choice-cut meats and Indian food. For vegetarians there is a wide variety of choices, including halal Indian curries, Mediterranean salads, hearty soups, freshly baked casseroles, and spicy Thai salads. Exclusive Sunday Brunch is available from 12.00-15.30 hrs at 2,000 baht net per person including soft drinks, tea, coffee, cocktails and beer.

Tel: 02 302 3333

www.facebook.com/radissonbluplazabangkok

Radisson Blu Plaza Bangkok



Swissotel Bangkok Ratchada



Sparkling Seafood Star Sunday

Oceans of the freshest and finest seafood star on our Sunday Brunch Buffet at 204 Bistro, Swissotel Bangkok Ratchada. And as if that wasn't enough incentive to tuck in, everyone is treated to a free-flow of sparkling wine, cocktails and fruit juices. Wade into selections of Alaskan king crab, freshly-shucked oysters, grilled river prawns, and all kinds of seafood and meat menus, grilled and otherwise, alongside spectacular sushi and sashimi selections as well as Swiss favourites. Not to mention gourmet foie gras dishes prepared to order. And so much more. Every Sunday, 11.30 – 15.00 hours, priced 1,890++ baht per person, with come 2 pay 1 promotion.

Tel: 02 694-2222 ext. 1530.

Anantara Siam Bangkok Hotel



Family Splash Brunch

The decadent Sunday Brunch at Anantara Siam Bangkok Hotel includes fresh seafood, delicacies of foie gras, lobster, oysters, prime rib, and world flavours from across the hotel's award-winning restaurants. Regional highlights include Thai food, Indian cuisine, sushi, flame-grilled meats and Italian dishes, plus exotic sherbet cocktails, craft beers and 'Bloody Mary Twists'. Children can enjoy the Dessert Laboratory with nitrogen ice cream, soufflé baking, cotton candy and a colourful array of sweets. Guests have complimentary use of the swimming pool and the Kids Club. Sunday Brunch 11.30 am – 3.00 pm weekly. Brunch Package at 2,999++ baht per person, including free-flow soft drinks, juices and mocktails (non-alcohol beverages); Champagne Package at 4,100++ baht per person, including free-flow Champagne, cocktails, beer and Burgundy wines. Children under 12 yrs dine free (maximum two children per two adults)

Tel: 02 126 8866 Ext. 1201

www.anantara.com/en/siam-bangkok



Taste the World

Transporting taste buds with its signature "Taste The World" concept, Trader Vic's is known for its unique Polynesian cuisine, flavourful Chinese oven cooking, signature Mai Tai cocktails and great live music. À la carte dishes are presented grilled or pan-served at guest tables. Live chef stations craft dishes precisely to each guest's liking. Abundant seafood on ice, sushi and sashimi, prime cuts from Down South, and Thai favourites bring the best of local cuisine, with world cheeses and fresh hydroponic salads plus decadent desserts. Every Sunday from 11.30 am - 3.00 pm priced at 2,400++ baht per person including soft drinks, juices and Tiki cocktails; or 3,200++ baht per person including soft drinks, juices, Tiki cocktails, bubbly, house wines and beers; and 990++ baht per child aged 11 - 12 years (complimentary for children 10 yrs and below joining 2 adults)

Tel: 02 476 0022 Ext. 1416

www.bangkokriverdining.com

Anantara Riverside Bangkok Resort



Full World Cuisine

Atelier restaurant at Pullman Bangkok Grande Sukhumvit Sunday Brunch buffet is the perfect feast for all lifestyles. Highlights include seafood on ice, fine de claire oysters, New Zealand mussels, river prawns, beef sirloin, lamb chops, and foie gras. Also Chinese hot soup, dim sum, Peking duck, roast pork, Indian curries and a big pan Paella. The sweets corner features homemade confectionery bars, chocolate fountain, crêpes suzette, artisan ice cream, Thai treats and fresh tropical fruits. The cheese room, open until 4pm, offers over 20 varieties including creamy camembert, softly ripened coulommiers, six-month matured mimolette and 24-month aged comte. Available noon to 3pm (cheese room open until 4pm), price 2,199++ baht per person (including soft drinks, hot coffee, tea). Book online to enjoy up to 50% off on food.

Tel: 02 204 4071

www.atelierbangkok.com



Westin Grande Sukhumvit Bangkok



Super Sunday Spring Roast

The Sunday roast is an extra special indulgence at Seasonal Tastes Westin Grande Sukhumvit Bangkok throughout February 2020. Succulent slow-roasted free-range spring chickens from Khao Yai National Park are exceptionally tender with their crispy skin and lean white meat, and are irresistible in gourmet recipes from Seasonal Tastes' passionate chefs. Sous-vide slow-cooked free range spring chickens with sweet potato gnocchi, courgette ribbons salad, tomato and olive sauce, excite the eye and palate. A Thai preparation of perfect poultry is included, namely Suphanburi charcoal-grilled free-range spring chicken marinated in Thai herbs, served with spicy tamarind sauce. And the classic Sunday roast is an 8-hour slow-roasted free-range spring chicken with tantalising European trimmings of rösti potato, green pea purée, semi-dried tomato and red wine sauce. Savour the mouth-watering flavours indulgently arrayed with live-action flair.

Tel: 02 207 8000

bangkok@westin.com



The Sukhothai Bangkok



The Mother of All Brunches

More than just a buffet, The Sukhothai Bangkok's Sunday Brunch at Colonnade restaurant is a palate-dazzling showcase of world cuisine, made livelier by a jazz band and singer throughout. Choose from an amazing selection, ranging from delectable seafood, lobster, giant Alaskan king crab, 9-types of oysters, sushi, sashimi and more Japanese specialties, Pan-fried Foie Gras, a fabulous selection of 25-30 varieties of farmhouse cheeses, including Raclette grilled cheese, plus live cooking stations including Roasted Charolais prime rib and weekly rotation choices. Also a cooking rotation show from the chef team, to reveal some culinary techniques to diners. The dessert offerings are simply irresistible, with iconic sticky date pudding, fudge sauce, crème Anglaise Rhubarb and oatmeal crumble and whipped cream for example. Served from 12:00 to 15:00 hrs at 3,000++ baht per person. Free-flow beverage packages are also available.

Tel: 02 344 8888

promotions@sukhothai.com



SO/ Sofitel Bangkok

Family Feast Fun

Enjoy the perfect family get-together every Sunday at Red Oven SO/ Bangkok with a gorgeous view of Bangkok beyond Lumpini and special goodies for youngsters like a recreational playground. Offering cuisine from nine interactive live cooking stations in the World Food Market, Red Oven's flaming hot dishes are a luscious premier in seafood freshness, with silky foie gras, scrumptious sashimi, all-you-can-eat tenderised meat, bountiful cheese selections, and an array of drinks you can indulge in while grooving to melodious music. Available from noon to 3:30pm, at 1,900++ baht per person with non-alcoholic beverages (including free-flow coffee, tea, drinking water and selected juices) or additional 1,100++ baht per person (includes free-flow coffee, tea, drinking water, local beer, selected juices, cocktails, wines and sparkling). Children under 5 yrs complimentary, children 5 to 12 yrs half price.

Tel: 02 624-0000

H6835-FB4@sofitel.com



Cocktail Culture Brunch

The Kitchen Table at W Bangkok presents unlimited food selections, free-flow cocktails, sparkling wines, beer, and DJ tunes every first Saturday of the month. The W Does Brunch carving station has whole Roasted Salmon and Smoked BBQ Pork, Braised Lamb Shank and Prime Ribs. Other stations offer homemade pasta, Truffle Mac and cheese, Pork Lasagna, Braised Beef Short Rib, Seared Snow Fish, Duck Leg with Braised Tofu.

The huge dessert spread offers ice cream and sorbet flavours like Vanilla Horlicks, Dark Chocolate Premium, Sweet Japanese Potatoes, and Honey Yoghurt, with assorted condiments like Coconut Sauce, Chocolate Chip, and others.

Served from 12:30pm to 3.30pm, packages are 1,999++ baht per person inclusive of food, soft drinks and juices or 2,999++ baht per person inclusive of food, free-flow cocktails, wines, beer and sparkling wines. Kids 7-13 years half price, kids below 7 free.

Tel: 02 344-4210 www.wbangkok.com



Amari Watergate Bangkok



Savouring Diverse Flavours

Amaya Sunday Brunch at Amaya Food Gallery features a succulent selection of seafood prepared in the style of each serving station, with unlimited oysters, river prawns, rock lobsters, Alaskan king crabs, New Zealand Mussels, and half a Canadian lobster per person prepared to the diner's liking and French foie gras. Seafood items can be prepared and enjoyed in various styles at the deli counter or flambé at the Italian station, or grilled and dipped in zesty sauces at the market grill. The show kitchens are dedicated to specialities from Thailand, Southeast Asia, India and Italy. There is also a kids' corner, a live band and other activities for your entertainment! Available every Sunday from 12:00 to 15:30 hrs at 1,799++ baht per person (with soft drinks and water) or 2,799++ baht per person (with sparkling, red and white wine, soft drinks, water and juices).

Tel: 02 653 9000 ext. 355

amaya.watergate@amari.com



Exotic International Selection

Enjoy Sunday Brunch at the award-winning restaurant 'The Dining Room', Grand Hyatt Erawan Bangkok, with a sumptuous array of international dishes contrasting with exciting Thai and Asian favourites together with a fresh seafood counter and the full à la carte menu. An outstanding feature is the open display kitchen where our culinary chefs prepare dishes featured at our buffet stations from premium Australian beef and lamb, fresh sustainable sourced seafood like Nordic salmon and French oysters, and authentic Thai and classic Asian cuisines. Highlights include Peking Duck, Chilled Alaskan King Crab, Fresh Oysters and pan-fried Foie Gras. Available from 12pm to 3pm at 2,200++ baht per person (includes iced water, juices, hot coffee or hot tea) Beverage package priced at 1,400++ baht per person (including free flow of House Sparkling Wine, Red Wine, White Wine, Beer and Soft drinks). Dress code: Smart casual.

Tel: 02 254 6250

restaurants.bangkh@hyatt.com

Grand Hyatt Erawan Bangkok



InterContinental Bangkok



Bubbly Weekly Highlight

The renowned Espresso Restaurant at InterContinental Bangkok has something for everyone at its sumptuous Sunday Brunch. Thai and Mediterranean cuisine, Maine lobster, Fine de Claire oysters, Australian and New Zealand mussels, Alaskan and Chilean crab, indulgent meats, Japanese-grade sashimi, caviar and exceptional Chinese cuisine are true highlights of the spread. Available every Sunday from 12:00 to 15:00 hours priced at 2,200++ baht per person. (Children 6-12 yrs 50%, under 6 yrs free.) Sparkling Package 2,800++ baht, Champagne Package 3,500++ baht.

Tel: 02 656 0444 ext. 6430

www.bangkok.intercontinental.com



By Peter L.

Artisan of Chinese Cuisine

Chef Pom Chinese Cuisine By Todd

■ A short drive both from the heart of Sathorn or the bridge when coming from the Thonburi side of Bangkok, Chef Pom Chinese Cuisine by Todd presents affordable Chinese cuisine for one and all. As you enter the restaurant, you will not miss the larger than life portrait of the visionary chef facing the inbound traffic. As you open the main door, a classic round table awaits.

Positioned as the artisan of Chinese cuisine, a unique balance is achieved here, where classic recipes meet heightened creativity, perfected by the wealth of experience spanning decades! To begin, the signature dim-sum dish is so beautifully created - it is a work of art and almost too pretty to devour, but eat we must...

As we gathered at the round table, Instagram and filter settings all fired up, the Chinese odyssey began. The Baked Snow Buns with Barbeque Pork provided an overture of distinctive taste and the freshness



of it all was all revealing. More than 10 items are available in the Steamed section of the Dim-Sum menu - and they were all heavenly. We enjoyed the photo taking and the occasional micro video shoot on-table.

Rice Noodle Rolls is a big part of Chinese meals and in some countries, we take it for breakfast. The multiple plates served triggered a memory from yesteryears, of us boys going for these in a hole-in-the-wall kinda restaurant, after Sunday church service. Best enjoyed steaming hot, naturally.

Before long, the Roasted Crispy Pork Belly arrived and all homage to diet flew out the window. Pick them up respectfully with a fork or chopsticks, and appreciate life as you complete the journey from fork to mouth. #succulent #bestever #memorable

The soup was also artfully presented and the caged duck was a class on its own. All the above are



reasons to return to this culinary temple spearheaded by Chef Pom and Khun Piti (Todd) Bhirom Bhakdi.

At Chef Pom's, don't wait for a festive occasion to visit. Commit a date, and come in to savour the very best of Chinese cooking. Celebrate life, and the life well lived, thus far... and toast to the imminent successes ahead.

Open Hours

Lunch 11.00 am - 02.30 pm

Dinner 05.30 pm - 10.00 pm

662/69-70 Rama 3 Road, Bang Phong Phang, Yannawa, Bangkok 10120
www.CHEFPOM.com



Beautiful Restaurants



Thien Duong at Baan Dusit Thani

Thien Duong Vietnamese Restaurant is set within a former warehouse at the rear of the property at Baan Dusit Thani. This creative and modern dining space features an eclectic mix of modern and antique furniture, stylish lighting, and vibrant artworks. In the open kitchen, the robust flavours of Vietnam meet subtle French influences to result in culinary works of art.

Thien Duong, Dusit Thani Bangkok, 946 Rama 4 Rd., Bangkok, Thailand Tel : 02-200-9000

In this monthly column, The BigChilli celebrates restaurants in Thailand that excel in their design as well as their cuisine. Dining in beautiful surroundings is regarded by many as a key element in their choice of restaurant for lunch or dinner. It sets and maintains the mood for a memorable dining experience – and is often the main reason for a return visit. The purpose of this photo feature is therefore to pay homage to those owners who have invested in creating a Beautiful Restaurant for the pleasure of Bangkok's diners.



Saawaan

A fine dining Thai restaurant championing traditional Thai cooking techniques, Saawaan is set in a converted shop house in a leafy alley off Sathorn Road. The restaurant features a 24-seat dining area offering a nine-course menu.

Dark wooden floors, wooden tables and black walls create an intimate dining experience, with metal decorations and flower-printed wallpapers breaking up the dark tones.

Chef de cuisine and owner is Sujira 'Aom' Pongmorn.

Saawaan, 39/19 Soi Suanplu, Sathorn Road, Bangkok 10120. Tel +66 (0)2 679 3775 - 3776





Extraordinary Michelin Experience

Chef Alain Ducasse, one of the world's most decorated chefs, has opened his first restaurant in Bangkok at ICONSIAM. 'Blue by Alain Ducasse' offers a contemporary French menu in a magnificent setting with inspiring views. Blue's opening menu includes 'Sea Scallops from Hokkaido, Herbs and Salad, Truffled Vinaigrette' (1,150++ baht), 'Blue Crab, Tomato Water Gelée, and Gold Caviar' (1,950++ baht) and 'Grilled Lobster, Savoy Cabbage, and Gala Apple' (2,250++ baht). Open for lunch noon-2pm, dinner from 6:30pm, last orders at 9pm.

tel: 02-005-9412

enquiries@blue-alainducasse.com

New on the scene

Hot new restaurants, bars & cafés in Bangkok



Fashionable coffee lovers meeting spot

CPS Coffee, the edgy design coffee bar serving a savoury and sweet bakery menu, introduces its third branch at Central Festival Eastville in a modern yet luxurious ambience, ideal for young male and female fashionista. The menu includes intense Copper Stout and tropical Amber Ale coffees, sandwich croissants and soft baked cookies, and a selection of delicious aromatic teas. Moreover, CPS Coffee is environmentally conscious and uses biodegradable packaging.

[www.facebook.com/CPS Coffee](https://www.facebook.com/CPSCoffee)





Innovative dining at Park Society



■ SO/ Bangkok welcomed 22 diners shedding post-New Year blues to Park Society for the first B&B lunch of 2020. We were rewarded with the great views of Lumpini Park and an innovative meal prepared by personable Chef Ryan Lee and his team.

We started with an Amuse Bouche shrouded in mist featuring Coconut, Lime, Galangal, Kaffir lime leaf, and Lemongrass accompanied by a refreshingly different sparkler, Claus Preisinger St Laurent Ancestral 2017 (Burgenland, Austria), which was much appreciated and which I found to be very creamy on the palate.

Dining in earnest began with Nori Cold Pasta, a tasty mélange of Amberjack Tartare, Seaweed Sauce and Angel Hair Pasta which was well matched with Weingut Ziereisen Grauer Burgunder 2016 (Baden, Germany). For once, our Wine Master Thomas Boedinger was entrusted with the task of critiquing the food and complimented Chef



Ryan for the delicious explosion of flavours he had unlocked.

Wine spokesman Stan Gierlasynski limited himself to saying he found all the wines excellent to drink having always believed that “tannin” was something one did on the beach.

Potato and Leek Soup followed. The ingredients were Royal Project Potato, Pickled Leek, and Confit Potato but it did not seem to cause the taste buds to tingle. With it came Neudorf Mouterre Pinot Gris 2016 (Nelson, NZ), a wine we have enjoyed on previous occasions; one critic wrote “This is an elegantly concentrated, refined, but intense off-dry Pinot Gris with vibrant, detailed flavours of stone fruits, pears, florals and minerals on a lively palate” and this was fair comment.

Next came Prawn Ravioli with pasta cooked al dente and Cauliflower, Bisque, and Baby Arugula (a leafy salad green that retains that peppery essence and mustard quality that distinguishes arugula from other herbs).

It was a success, a dish that Thomas would re-order if given the chance, and even more successful was the Daniel Rion Pinot Noir 2013 (Burgundy, France) which came with it that was quite unlike any Pinot Noir I had tasted before and an excellent purchase made by the Club.

The main course was 120 Days Grain Fed Wagyu Beef Striploin accompanied by Mushroom Crème, Red Wine Sauce, and a generous



serving of asparagus. It had been cooked to perfection and Thomas had productively matched this with Casanova Di Neri Brunello Montalcino 2014 (Tuscany, Italy). The latter was “only” 14.0% ABV and given 93 points by Suckling but it was a beautiful affordable Brunello that was “complex & intense nose of ripe and jammy cherry, tobacco, leather and chocolate. Already great and very well-balanced, but will only get better in the coming years”.

Nam Dok Mai Mango, Coconut Ice Cream, and Sweet Sticky Rice, the Thai classic, concluded the meal on a high note along with Director's Cut Cabernet Sauvignon 2016 (Alexander Valley, CA) and excellent coffee.

As usual we invited the birthday boy, this month Alex Fiske, to thank on our behalf the Restaurant Manager and his team for their hard work and also GM Jean-Francois Brun for opening Park Society especially for us.

2 N Sathon Rd, Bang Rak, Bangkok
10500 Tel: 02 624 0000

Food & Drink

Bangkok's hottest dining deals and news



Winter Flavours Menu

Come and experience the exceptional wintry menu at DEAN & DELUCA Central Embassy, Emquartier and The Crystal until 15 March, with scrumptious dishes from exotic mushrooms like Truffle Burrata with Stuffed Portobello (345 baht) to exciting mains including Braised Chicken Airline with Cream Foie Gras Sauce (395 baht) or Wagyu Tenderloin Truffle Foie Gras Rossini (1,695 baht), with savoury courses and winter fruits fulfilling the delicious menu selection.

saisa@deandeluca.co.th

All-You-Can-Eat Japanese

Tsu Japanese Restaurant at JW Marriott Bangkok presents "All You Can Eat Japanese" exclusively on Saturday and Sunday from 11:30am to 2:30pm, including Unagi Teriyaki sushi, Kyoto Uji cold green tea noodles, sashimi, tempura tiger prawns, spicy tuna roll, Australian Angus Tenderloin and over 50 other unique creations, plus dessert and green tea. Priced at 1,950++ baht per person, half-price for children 6 to 12 yrs.

📍 Tel: 02 656 7700

www.facebook.com/JWMarriottBKK



Monkey on the Roof

Join the launch of Monkey 47 Gin at Octave Rooftop Lounge & Bar, Bangkok Marriott Hotel Sukhumvit Saturday 18 January between 9pm and midnight. Monkey 47, an awarded gin from Germany's Black Forest prepared with 47 botanicals, creates special cocktails you can discover at "Monkey on the Roof" from 18 - 25 January between 5pm and 2am. The pop-up bar is on 48th floor while exclusive drinks are available 45th to 49th floors.

📍 Tel: 02 797 0000

diningbangkok@marriott.co



Italian Signature Dishes

No.43 Italian Bistro, Cape House Hotel, Bangkok, offers authentic Italian cuisine including Parma Ham and Rocket Pizza (350++ baht); Black Ink Pasta with Seafood and White Wine in Tomato Sauce (310++ baht); Snow Fish with Truffles and Porcini Mushroom Sauce (640++ baht); Imported Lamb Chops (800++ baht); Rib Eye Steak (750++ baht) and many more delicacies. Available for dinner until 30 April from 18.00-24.00 hrs.

📍 Tel: 02658 7444 Ext. 285 www.capecollection.com

All You Can Eat Dim Sum

The “All you can eat Dim Sum Special” at China Table, Radisson Blu Plaza Bangkok includes main course, soup and dessert with highlights such as steamed pork ribs in black bean sauce, steamed scallop dumpling, deep-fried crab meat, unlimited suckling pig and Peking Duck and drunken chicken, plus many salted egg yolk selections. Weekdays 770 baht net, weekends 870 baht net from 11.30- 14:30 hrs. and 18.30-22.30 hrs.

📍 Tel: 02 302 3333

chinatable.bangkok.blu@radisson.com



Signature Steak Sandwich

Enjoy a pampering at Babette's The Steakhouse with “Babette's Wagyu Beef Tenderloin Steak Sandwich”, served with french fries and organic green salad. Made with juicy grilled Australian tenderloin in a French baguette with Dijon mustard, caramelised onions, crispy cos lettuce and homemade red wine sauce reduction. 650++ baht. Available at Hotel Muse Bangkok Langsuan for lunch from 12pm to 2.30pm and for dinner from 6pm to 11pm.

📍 Tel: 02-630-4000

<https://babettesbangkok.com/online-booking/>



Seafood Dim Sum Buffet

The Square at Novotel Bangkok Silom Road's weekday international lunch buffet, “Let's Lunch”, includes seafood on ice with New Zealand mussels and shrimps, international and Thai dishes, soups, sushi, salad bar and a quality dim sum menu, plus cakes, fresh tropical fruits, ice cream, and much more to round out your meal. Available Monday to Friday 12.00-14.30 hrs, at 359 baht net per person including water, Thai herbal drink, tea and coffee.

📍 Tel: 02 206 9291-2

<http://bit.ly/30N5ZNB>



Talk-of-the-Town Feast

Sheraton Hua Hin Resort & Spa presents “Fabulous Sunday Brunch”, an indulgent Sunday feast from noon till 3 at The Deck and inAzia restaurants every 1st Sunday of each month. Live stations for Japanese, Indian and Chinese specialties, foie gras risotto, lobster ravioli, grilled meats and seafood, assorted pasta/sauce combinations, plus cheese and oyster corners, and divine desserts including a chocolate fountain. Priced 1,490 baht net (food only) per adult, add 800 baht to enjoy free-flow draught beer, wine, cocktails and bubbles.

📍 Tel: 032 708 000 ext. 1112

Warisara.Thai-Udom@sheraton.com

Recipe

New Zealand Lamb chops



cut out and keep



Ingredients

- 300 gr New Zealand Lamb chops
- 50 gr Fregola
- 1 piece Aubergine
- 6 gr Feta Cheese
- 15 gr Walnut
- 45 gr Mascarpone
- 1 piece Rosemary
- 1 piece Thyme Pepper / Salt

Method:

1. Marinate the lamb chop with olive oil, rosemary, thyme, pepper and salt.
2. After 10 min grill it on the Josper oven. (If you don't have the Josper oven

please pan seared it.)

3. After that let it rest for 10 min.
4. Grill now the aubergine in the oven till when is soft and roasted nicely.
5. Take out the inside from aubergine and mix it with the chopped walnuts, mascarpone, pepper and salt.
6. Bring some water to the boiling point to cook the fregola for 6 - 8 mins.
7. After that you can put back you lamb chop in the oven for 3 a 4 mins. (Chef recommended to eat the lamb medium)
8. Serve by put the lamb chop on the plate first. After that the aubergine puree, Feta cheese and fregola. Make it nice with some flowers and greens.



Chef Rick Dingen

**Rick Dingen,
Chef de Cuisine
at Madison Steakhouse,
Anantara Siam Bangkok.**

Originally from Eindhoven, Chef Rick worked his way up through various Dutch kitchens, including those of Restaurant La Rive at the InterContinental Amsterdam and the Michelin-starred De Heer Kocken. He also worked as Chef de Partie at the celebrated Inter Scaldes, which was awarded three Michelin Stars and named the best restaurant in the Netherlands.

In Bangkok, he was Chef de Cuisine at Michelin-starred Savelberg before bringing his penchant for light, fresh flavours to Madison. Inspired by all the chefs he's cooked with, Chef Rick says, "You don't learn from someone, you learn from everyone". He brings that inspiration, wealth of knowledge and a culinary Midas touch to our designer steakhouse.

Why cooking as a career?

It started when my mother was a chef in a hotel restaurant. I worked as a casual staff in the restaurant and I thought "this is fun."

Two biggest influences on your career?

Vincent Maillard, Executive Chef of Lily Of The Valley in St. Tropez / Frédéric Vardon, Chef and owner of Le39V Paris.

Best early kitchen experience?

Two or three months ago, when I had a chance to work with Michelin chefs from Italy.

Worst kitchen experience?

When I started out as a chef in a Michelin-starred restaurant in France, I was not used to the way they work and had lots of pressure.

Best meal you've ever had?

Lunch at L'assiette in Paris, very nice handcraft French comfort food.

What's your cooking philosophy?

Classic, Tasty, Beautiful and Hot.

What's your signature dish?

Slow-cooked 48-hour Chuck Roll at The District Grill Room & Bar.

Favorite cookbook?

Le Dictionnaire Amoureux of Chef Alain Ducasse.

Most difficult ingredient to cook with?

I believe that every chef should be able to cook with any ingredient.

How do you keep in touch with latest food trends?

Instagram is the best!

Have you ever created an entirely new dish?

Still working on my best new dish.

Greatest achievement to date?

Becoming a Chef de Cuisine.

Famous people you've cooked for?

The actor Steven Seagal.

Who do you like to cook for?

My wife and my kid.

Utensils you can't do without?

No knife, no job.

Most influential chef?

Chef Alain Ducasse.

Music you listen to while cooking?

Linkin Park.

Best advice you've ever received?

Chef Roland Debuyst told me to move from Belgium to France and become a great chef.

What's your favorite dish to cook for yourself?

Mackerel in tomato sauce.

Favorite dish cooked by someone else?

My mother's Pad Thai and Thai Custard Cake.

Which restaurant above all others would you like to work for?

I would like to open my own restaurant.

If you weren't a chef, what would you be?

In the military.

What's next for you?

Develop my career path in hotel restaurant business, then I would like to open my own restaurant one day.

Meet the Chef

CHRISTIAN CALUWAERT

Executive Chef



[Chef in focus]

■ CHEF CHRISTIAN CALUWAERT

A Thai-born chef with extensive European experience, Chef Christian's unique background has enabled him to gain a deep understanding of both Thai and European culinary cultures.

During his ten-year career, Chef Christian has added many Michelin Star restaurants to his impressive repertoire, including L'Orangerie in Belgium and Hostellerie de Leveinois in France. He has worked under some of the most legendary names in the industry, including Alain Ducasse and Frédéric Vardon

The District Grill Room & Bar 2nd Floor, Bangkok Marriott Hotel Sukhumvit Soi 57.
Tel: 02 797 0000 Email: diningbangkok@marriott.com

Dish of the Month

Fish Maw Soup

Ginseng

Ginseng has beneficial antioxidant and improve general well-being

20 Aged Dried Fish Maw

one of the precious traditional Chinese ingredients which contains rich proteins and collagen.

Cong Cao

the tea tree mushroom contains high protein, low fat, no pollution, no phytotoxicity, and has great value of nutrition, health care, physical therapy

Dried scallops

added to balance the flavors, enhancing the flavor of the fish maw soup

Chef in focus



Chinese Head Chef Xiaoyang (Bruce) Hui
Bangkok Marriott the Surawongse

Food enthusiastic, hard-working and humble, Bruce Hui is the culinary brain behind Yào Restaurant and Rooftop Bar, Bangkok's first modern Chinese influenced multi-level hot spot at Bangkok Marriott Hotel The Surawongse. Chef Bruce's passion is to develop and refine the traditional Chinese food recipes, the chef needs to make sure that the diners can deeply appreciate the profound nature of Chinese food culture and focuses on spirits inheritance but not adhere strictly to tradition. In terms of the presentation, he stylishly presents his dish in a simple yet sophisticated style by minimizing the use of excessive decorative items and highlighting the main ingredients. Leading the culinary team from a pre-opening stage, the Chinese Head Chef dedicates his knowledge and experiences to the restaurant's distinctive food concept with an extra effort devoted to each menu, and he is excited to present his culinary creations to discerning guests from across Thailand and around the world.

Yào Restaurant 32nd floor Bangkok Marriott Hotel The Surawongse 262 Surawong Road, Siphaya, Bangkok, Bangkok 10500, Thailand Tel: 02 088 0666 FB : yaobangkok IG : yaobangkok www.yaobangkok.com

Last month's foodie functions in focus

Scrapbook



A 'honeyfull' themed chef table

➔ Spearheaded by Food Factors under Boonrawd, Chef Kong from Locus hosted an exclusive Chef Table in Bangkok for specially invited guests, influencers and members of the media. The food was divine and themed around honey



The banker from war-torn Lebanon with a mission to tell others that beauty comes from within



Talar & hubby

Talar Zambakjian has all the right credentials and personal experiences to give others help and advice on living a beautiful life.

Born and raised in Lebanon, she grew up during that country's long civil war, and when the situation became very dangerous was even forced to live underground for a year with her parents. "I was nine years old when my family escaped the turmoil and we went to Paris for a year. When the war ended, we returned to Lebanon.

"After high school in Lebanon I studied Business Administration with a major in Finance. I graduated with Honors. I am also a MBA graduate from the Lebanese American University. I wished to become a global citizen and so I pursued an international degree which would give me opportunities to live and work all over the world."

"At a very young age, my passion for fashion started, maybe already in my mom's womb. When my parents hosted dinner parties at home or when I was just a bit bored, I disappeared and emerged back to the festivities

with make-up, high heels and accessories, borrowed from my mother's wardrobe. I enjoyed dressing up and being glamorous, it became a creative outlet for me."

Talar met her future husband in Lebanon. At that time he was already living in Thailand, but often returned home to visit his family. Says Talar: "We happened to meet through a good, common friend.

"Two years before I met my husband, I visited Thailand and immediately fell in love with the country and the beautiful and serene culture. I especially fell in love with Bangkok's bustling vibe. I remember during my first visit I made a wish at one of the shrines to come back and live here. Two years later I met my husband who had already built a life in Bangkok.

"After courting for two years we decided to get married and live in Bangkok. My wish was fulfilled when I settled here in 2008.

"Although I was educated as a banker, I have always followed fashion trends very closely. Lebanon, in my eyes, has always been up to date in the fashion arena for both

women and men. I grew up amongst a diverse community of people who reveled in fashion. For us it was normal to always dress up. My upbringing in Lebanon honed in on my ability to absorb what was in-trend and what to wear, and I learned how to become creative with my own style preferences.

"When I made the transitional move to Bangkok, I left behind not only my family and friends, but also a successful career in the finance world. It was a big change from being at home in Lebanon. My husband is a successful business man and I often accompany him to work functions as well as to private dinners and events.

"I noticed at an early stage, that people didn't know my name, I was only seen as my husband's beautiful wife and people called me 'khon suay' which in Thai means 'beautiful person'. Nobody seemed to know I was a banker by profession. I decided that 'beauty on the outside' was definitely not enough for me.

"I knew I had a calling and the desire to be something more than just a pretty face and my husband's beauty queen.

"I strived to create a life for myself that would empower me and other women. Beauty isn't the only constant in one's life. With the birth of my three children, I knew I couldn't just accept being 'khon suay'. I felt I was destined for something more. I wanted people to debate with me about life, current affairs, the news, fashion and motherhood among other topics.

"I am a woman who has seen and lived through a war, experienced poverty, achieved a degree and got a job without my parent's guidance.

"I didn't accept being just a beautiful frame to decorate my husband. It was time for me to transform and I enrolled into a life coaching program in 2014 and soon I was ready to help others. My long term vision is to be a role model."

Today Talar is involved in a project called 'Women Uplift Women' founded by Natalie Glebova and Dr. Patama Mokaves Dumas. The purpose of this foundation is to address intra-gender equality issues, while encouraging all women to raise one another and treat each other with respect.

"Personally I don't believe in total equality between men and women. We have to accept that our DNAs are different. We women have the power to give life, but of course we couldn't do it without the men. To me it's important that a woman stays and behaves feminine. Women should celebrate each other and strive to give each other esteem while

working in unison with each other for a greater purpose. We are all worth it."

It was against this background that Talar launched her 'Be a Starlette' blog. "To me all women are beautiful," she says. "And if they take good care of themselves and allow themselves some 'me time' it's easier to feel beautiful and happy.

"To be a happy person is a state of mind and if we allow ourselves to dress up, while possessing a positive attitude, there is no reason we shouldn't feel like a Starlette. My mission is to let women know that motherhood, being newlywed or single, should not alter our inner resilience.

In my blog I discuss: fashion trends, beauty, and women's most common concerns like wrinkles, menopause, cellulitis, stretch marks and motherhood. I share information about all the products I use and I share techniques on how to keep healthy and fit.

"We all have our bad and good days, so with my blog I show my followers that vulnerability is okay. It's my absolute belief that we can be happy from the inside out and vice versa."

When asked what Talar focuses is on the most nowadays, the reply comes rapidly, "Motherhood is my essential role and my three kids are the light of my life. Looking at them I know they are our future and I want them growing up knowing that life has its ups and downs and family always remains constant.

"Occasionally my social life by my husband's side can be very hectic and to balance home life and work has been quite a challenge. I try to be completely present at each moment, which makes me feel satisfied and happy. Through

my blog I want to provide the right message to the world. I'm focusing on organizing events for women covering important topics like health, style and beauty. I will host workshops in Thailand soon.

"Stay tuned," she says. "My goal is to change more people's lives for the better. I often remind people - what would you lose if you try or don't try?"

"I also want to round up more fashion events here in Thailand similar to those hosted in cities like New York, Paris, and London and also of course, Lebanon. Fashion brings us all together.

"My future goal is to create a 'fashionable' platform with Be a Starlette, which represents a life changing resource and a solution to many women's concerns. It's important for me to be a positive role model for my children and their friends."



Although I was educated as a banker, I have always followed fashion trends closely. Lebanon has always been up to date in the fashion arena for both women and men. I grew up amongst a diverse community of people who reveled in fashion. For us it was normal to always dress up.



“

I am a woman who has seen and lived through a war, experienced poverty, achieved a degree and got a job without my parent's guidance. I didn't accept being just a beautiful frame to decorate my husband.

Talar is fortunate in having lots of opportunities to meet interesting and role-model people. “Every day I try to learn something. I have met politicians, celebrities and even royals, and I have come to understand that when you are face to face with these people, you feel that they are totally human, some of them fragile, which can be very different from the image they portrait in public.”

If Talar could pick one woman to enjoy a private dinner with, who would it be? “Oprah Winfrey,” she responds without hesitation.

“Since I was a young girl living in Lebanon I have admired her. Meeting Oprah would be my ultimate dream. She has lots of power and charisma. If I had a choice to dress her, I would imagine her in an elegant, classic suit. She is a woman who keeps up with fashion trends, especially when it comes to her make-up, hair and clothes.

“Jennifer Lopez represents a hard working woman, and I really admire her. She's not only beautiful, but also a mother of two children, a singer and actress. This woman sets people's hearts on fire. Her hours of hard work and the dedication behind her success is truly commendable. She has a talent for discovering new and upcoming designers' talents and she seems not to have any issues working with them, instead of playing it safe and sticking with the known, big brands. She doesn't forget where she comes from and she reminds everyone that poverty is a state of mind. She nails everything she does.”

As talented and beautiful woman, one wonders whether Talar senses jealousy from other women.

Talar says she was born with a ‘sixth sense’ about people and their thoughts.

“Of course I sometimes both sense and feel jealousy from others and I try not to give it too much attention. I try to make those women comfortable with me and also try to improve their self-confidence. I remind people that I'm not at all perfect and that I also have lots of faults and sometimes a

less ‘pretty side’. That's what makes us human, isn't it?

“I respect other people's feelings and accept their choice if they choose not to be around me. If a woman comes up to me saying, she is jealous of me, I think it's bizarre. I absolutely don't want women to think I'm a threat to them. I let them know I also have my insecurities and that I don't see myself as perfect.

“I remind myself and people who are close to me that we are all a work in progress. You can't please everybody unfortunately, as we all have different priorities in life.”

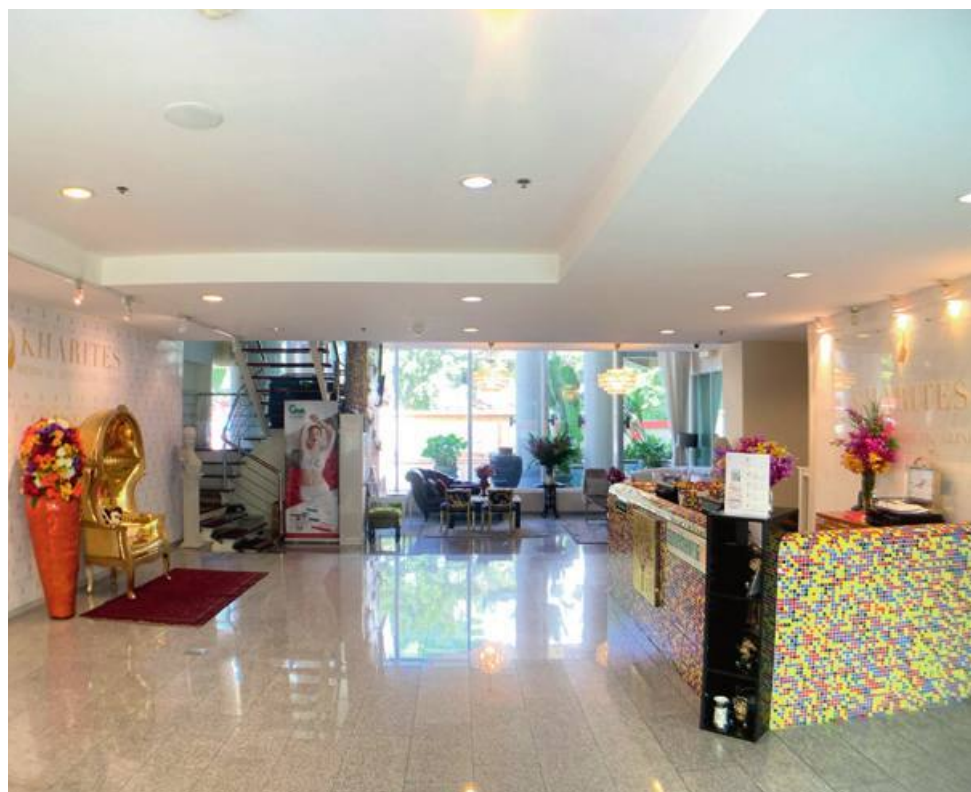
What are her recommendations for women to ‘look good’?

“Good health should be the first priority in everyone's life; then beauty comes from the inside. I recommend that everyone should adopt a healthy lifestyle, invest in yourself, learn something new every day, eat healthy, work out and exercise your brain as well as your body. To dress appropriately and beautifully is part of the image you reflect to the outside world. Looking after your complexion should be a lifelong process, but must not reach an obsession.”

Does Talar get any time off? Has she time to follow a sport or hobby?

“Of course I wish I had more time,” says Talar. “I'm always busy creating projects for myself and my family. Before I had the kids, I used to read lots of books and I also performed Latin dance and ballet. I stopped this because of my studies and lack of time. Currently I have some projects in the pipeline, relating to health and wellbeing. For my next big project in Bangkok, I will be hosting and organizing an event for International Woman's Day in March 2020.

“I already have a solid idea in mind for this event and I'm really looking forward to getting started. This event includes both men and women from our community and it will be a lot of fun. I will soon reveal the details, so folks, stay tuned!” - Agneta Bekassy De Bekas



■ It is the start of the year, and a new beginning with a new decade. Time to go through that new year resolution checklist, and if one of them is to take more care and splurge more on yourself, Kharites has an uplifting offer and technology to match!

They recently launched an Ultimate Ultra Super Lift Package - billed as the most innovative offer in Thailand to date. The package deploys not one but two HIFU machines in its treatment.

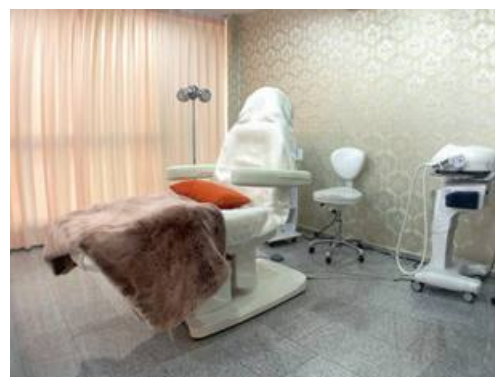
What is HIFU, you may wonder. As did we, when we stepped into their clinic located on Sukhumvit Soi 11. Homemade cake was served with hot tea as we read their brochures and

admire the plethora of packages on offer.

HIFU stands for High-intensity focused ultrasound. It is a new treatment that is non-invasive and painless - for face lifts. The procedure is used for overall facial rejuvenation, lifting, tightening, and body contouring. It also refines or removes your wrinkles - now that is interesting indeed.

The treatment at Kharites is handled by doctors, and you lie down on a comfortable chair, like a reclining business class seat on a plane. As the doctor adjust the frequency of the ultrasound waves, I felt a slight tingling sensation but that was about it, truly non-invasive and painless. The entire procedure is less than an hour - perfect for those of us with a tight schedule.

The first HIFU machine is the one



By Peter L.

Lift Yourself Up!



that most clinics used but it is the second machine that sets Kharites apart. The second machine has the newest technology installed and can impact the harder to reach areas on our face. The slender head can accessed the narrow alleys around your forehead and eyes. Contouring, lifting and every element in this painless procedure becomes more efficient and wholesome.

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Arts & Crafts at BAAN Sunsaray

Kids and adults together enjoyed a weekend of arts & craft, organic foods and products, and a classical Thai circus at the recent Bang Saray Fest, held at BAAN Sunsaray, Sattahip. Many of the exhibitors and guests travelled all the way from Bangkok to join the fun.







Explore Active Learning

Shrewsbury International School Bangkok Riverside presents Shrewsbury Stars Playgroup on Wednesday afternoons from 1:30pm to 3:00pm throughout term time, for parents to experience Shrewsbury's Active Learning Approach, and a chance for children and parents to make new friends and spend quality time with each other, plus advice sessions from our Early Years experts. 300 baht per child (100 baht for siblings and Bambi members).

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<https://www.shrewsbury.ac.th/riverside/events-community/playgroup>



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Denla British School



Novotel Spitfires sit atop SHL standings mid-season

Photography by Tadamasa Nagayama

The Sport Corner Siam Hockey League turned the page on an eventful 2019, and began 2020 with what will be an exciting race to the finish.

The excitement has spread across the world as the Thailandtv.tv broadcast numbers have increased every week and the SHL is now available to be watched live on every continent.

As the calendar turns to the season home stretch, the SHL standings see Novotel Spitfires in first place with a record of eight wins and four losses. Peak Biolabs sits at 7-5, Hertz, the defending champions are at 6-6 and Aware is 3-9.

The race for the top statistical category awards is also tight. For the top points award, Aware veteran Corry Day has 19 points, three points more than Peak surprise points leader Jesse Starosta. After Starosta, the race is very tight with Novotel winger Bill Bredesen at 15, and Novotel's Mike Freeson and Peak captain Harrison Oztemel both at 14.

In the goals category, Day also leads this category with 12 goals. Freeson sits at 11 goals, Starosta and Bredesen are tied for third with nine, followed by Darius Konotopetz with eight.

The SHL has six games left on the schedule before the playoffs start. As a reminder to longtime fans, and for new

fans, the SHL will complete the regular season on Thursday, February 27. The first game of the SHL semifinals will start on Sunday, March 1.

Game two will be on Thursday, March 5. The third game of the semifinals, if necessary, will be on Sunday, March 8. The two semifinal winners will play for the fourth SHL Championship on Saturday March 14.

This year, for the first time, the SHL semifinal matchup will not be determined by the order of finish, but will be decided by the captains. After the final game of the season, the captain of the first place team will select the first round opponent for his team. The other semifinal matchup will be determined by this selection.

All games, including playoffs and finals are open to the public and will be held at the Rink, Central Plaza Rama 9.

Games can also be watched live and on demand on Thailandtv.tv and the Binge Network. For more information and media outlets visit the SHL website and please follow us on Facebook and Instagram.

Listen to the BigChilli SHL podcast at: www.siamhockeyleague.com.

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All set for the Bangkok International Rugby Tens

The 15th edition of Thailand's top annual rugby fixture tournament - the Bangkok International Rugby Tens Tournament - kicks off on Saturday, February 29 and continues the following day on Sunday March 1st, 2020, at the Sports Complex of Bangkok Patana School.

Teams from New Zealand, Australia, South Africa, France, Papua New Guinea, UK, India, Sri Lanka, Japan, China, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Burma, Indonesia, Singapore and host country Thailand are taking part. Many are bringing fans from their home countries.

The event is organized annually to raise funds for Nak Suu, a charity established by ex-Canadian rugby international and Chairman of the Bangkok Rugby 10s, Eddie Evans.

The charity helps underprivileged children in the slums of Bangkok. Children in these areas are being subjected to substance abuse, prostitution, lack of education and poverty. Funds raised will help these children by creating a supportive environment through team sport and activities as well as providing guidance and care.

To support this initiative, all proceeds from the tournament will go directly to Nak Suu, which will ensure this valuable work can continue.

As testament to its popularity, the Rugby Tens is once again booked out with a wait list of teams still trying to be included. Visitors can expect the 2020 tournament to be another exciting weekend full of fast-paced rugby, food stalls offering great cuisines, kids' zone with supervised activities, plenty of socializing and the legendary after-parties. Each year the event attracts around 100 teams from around

the world competing in the men's open division, vets, women's, youth rugby as well as touch rugby. Youth games run in the morning and adult games in the afternoon. 24 men's open teams, 12 women's teams, 10 vets teams, 42 youth teams and 10 touch rugby teams have already confirmed their attendance as well as 24 referees.

The entire event will be streamed live all over the world with live commentating in English.

"In 2019 we welcomed about 3,500 spectators and 1,500 players, and we're expecting bigger numbers this year," explains Eddie Evans. "Our reputation as a premium fun rugby tournament keeps on growing and attracts more participants and supporters."

"Our goal is to offer something for everyone, the players, the fans, families and youngsters, basically a great weekend out for all."

"I would also like to extend a massive thanks to our generous sponsors, some of which we have been working with for several years now," Eddie continues.

"These young children we support through our Nak Suu program are benefitting so much and we can see we are really making a difference in their lives and future. This would not have been possible without the support from Four Points By Sheraton Bangkok Sukhumvit 15, Radisson Blu, Dream Hotel, Blue Horizon, Thai Beverage, Bumrungrad Hospital, Spirit of Bangkok, United Relocations, Prostar, Bangkok Patana School, KIS International School, X-treme Sports Gear and our PR partner, Midas PR Group."



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Revisiting great stories of the past - Part 9

David Lyman: Lawyer in the 'eye of the hurricane'



David Lyman; photo taken during January 2006 interview.

Veteran correspondent *Maxmilian Wechsler* recalls some of his most interesting and exclusive assignments from the past two decades.

FROM THE YEAR 2006

The head of Thailand's oldest and biggest independent law firm, David Lyman has found peace and serenity in his adopted home

■ As a youngster, David Lyman didn't want to become a lawyer as his parents and many of his relatives were. Instead he joined the US Navy, but couldn't escape his destiny. While debating whether or not to stay in the Navy,

he decided to try studying law, and said to himself after the end of the first semester: "This is what I really want to do!" Four decades later he can still say, "I never regretted it."

Mr Lyman is now Chairman and Chief Values Officer

of Tilleke & Gibbins International Ltd., which is the oldest and biggest independent law firm in Thailand. With 265 employees, the company serves more than 5,000 corporate and business clients from over 100 countries. The clients include national government agencies, banks, airlines, shipping companies and fashion houses.

“The company was established in 1890 by a Ceylonese, Mr William Alfred Tilleke. It was bought by my father in 1951 and I took over after his death in 1984,” Mr Lyman said.

“I came to Thailand for the first time with my parents in 1949, when I was 12 years old. They had decided to live here for good because it was a very friendly place – as it still is today – in comparison with other countries in the region at that time, when wars of independence raged in many nations around Thailand.

“My father compared Thailand to the ‘eye of the hurricane’ because the eye is always calm, sunny, no wind blowing while the storm rages all around. Thailand is still a land of calm and sun,” Mr Lyman said.

“Of course,” he continued, “I know what is happening in the South and so on, but generally speaking the Thais are a quite accepting and open society.

“They are open to new ideas. I have learned how to appreciate their culture and how to function within it, just as my parents did. I have also adopted the ‘Thai way’ of doing things. I try to live by a code of ethics, stay out of local politics, be honest, work hard and do my best to understand how the system works, because you have to work within the system. And that’s how we have developed a world-wide reputation.”

David’s parents made substantial contributions to the Kingdom. Mr Albert Lyman was a founder of the American Association of Thailand (now the American Chamber of Commerce) and also a founder and chairman of the Bangkok Stock Exchange (now the Stock Exchange of Thailand).

Mrs Freda Lyman received the Most Noble Order of the Crown of Thailand 5th Class in 1961 for her work with the Foundation for Crippled Children and was the first foreign woman to be decorated by His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej.

“We have had a good relationship with virtually every government because we don’t involve ourselves with political matters,” Mr Lyman said. “Of course we have to understand the political situation and to know the politicians. I have known some of them since we were all young. We grew up together.



Portrait of David Lyman in US Navy uniform by famous British artist Paul Barton.

“I am not concerned about ‘good or bad’ government. All my concern is that this country must develop. The Thai people want to see it develop. There’s a saying that ‘Thailand succeeds despite governments’. It succeeds because of the nature of its people and their culture. And as I said, it is the ‘eye of the hurricane’. It has a peace and serenity that you can’t find anywhere else in Asia.”

Business-wise, Mr Lyman said that there was not much competition here until 1965. “Now, there are a lot of foreign-owned or foreign-oriented firms as well as the Thai lawyers who were trained in Thailand or overseas, and lawyers who left their firms and established themselves here. There are fine lawyers in this country. Good client service is a key to a successful practice. Many law firms can do the same things we do, and we can do the same things they do,” Mr Lyman stressed.

Thailand changes you

“It is true that the Thai people want to combine work with pleasure. Why should you do business and work hard all your life if you don’t enjoy what you do? But on the other

hand, you can't live only for pleasure as you will give back nothing to society," said Mr Lyman.

"There's a growing middle class in Thailand and this has been going on since the 1960s. The strength of Thai society is in the women. They are the real power in this country and you can rely on them. They know more and they are more reliable than men. And if you look at my website, you will see that most of my employees are women.

"A foreigner who comes here thinking that he can change Thailand will be very disappointed. Thailand changes you! Thais have a nice and slow way in doing things. We westerners tend to want instantaneous results, pleasure and service. Everything has to be done immediately. The Thai way is to take the middle path, take life a little easier. It is a Buddhist and also a Hindu philosophy. I find it compatible with my character. When I came here I was also too demanding, impatient and shouted a lot. But I have mellowed, as do many people, especially when they get older," Mr Lyman admitted.

"My first question to a foreigner who wants to open a business in Thailand is: 'Have you done it anywhere else?' If they have then they should understand the difficulties of a foreigner doing business in a foreign environment. If they never have done business in a foreign environment before then I will tell them: 'Don't start in Thailand, go somewhere else first.' But they usually never listen," Mr Lyman pointed out.

"Anyway, in the initial stage we will try to help them to overcome all the obstacles, and there are many to overcome. We'll teach them what can or cannot be done here. Sometimes we have to also teach them what can or cannot be done in their own home countries.

"They have a perception that by leaving their home country with all its laws and regulations and going somewhere else, like to Thailand, they are free to do whatever they want. This is not true and not the reality. Sometimes, I will tell them: 'Expect more difficulties here than in your home country'." He added that a few, of course, have never even had a business in their home country before.

"How can we compete with the other law firms here? Some people say that we are more expensive, some say we are cheaper. Client service seems to be the key. We serve as a bridge between the foreign and Thai communities. We understand what the foreigner wants and how the foreigner thinks. They don't all want the same thing and think the same way. As they don't, so we try to be more flexible."

Mr Lyman stressed that to do business is a lot of sweat no matter where you are, you have to have luck and very often you need a good partner. "But to find one, as I have learned many years ago, is much more difficult than to find a good spouse, whether you are in China, Malaysia, the United States or Thailand," he said.

"Having worked for the past 48 years, since I graduated from university, I would like to have a kind of 'retirement', but I have to do it in steps. First, I have to slow down. But if you retire then you have to find something to do. And it happens that I love what I do now and so far everybody around me wants to keep me around as well. There are times when I want to go and they will say 'no, please don't'.

My mother and my father worked virtually until they died," David said.

Anyway, if it happens one day that he retires, "I will scuba dive with my wife, Khun Poo, do photography, spend more time with my textile and carpet collections and our elephants, read more and correspond with the friends I have all over the world."

But above all, he will focus on the environment, because that's where his main interest lies. "I don't like pollution or what is happening to the forests and wildlife. I support the preservation of wildlife," Mr Lyman emphasised.

Who will take over the business one day? "Well, this is the problem and the biggest, most immediate goal – to find that person or persons," he admitted. "It should be somebody with the same mindset and with the same vision as I have and to find someone like that is not going to be easy. I have been searching for that someone for the past 9 years!"

"It takes many, many years to build a good, solid reputation and only a few seconds to destroy it. My parents, our partners, and colleagues and staff and I have worked very hard to establish the company's reputation and it is my desire to see the firm continue on. But, of course, not everything always runs as smoothly as I would like, because if it was like that then I wouldn't have a job," he acknowledged.

"Being born and having lived in the US and for many years in Thailand, I have my feet in both countries. I am too Thai to be an American, and too American to be a Thai. When a westerner lives in Asia, he or she either loves it or hates it. There is no middle ground. I personally love Asia. I am comfortable here and people are comfortable with me. Thailand has been very good to my parents, to my family and to me," Mr Lyman said.

"I will never, ever move to any other country. Heaven's no! You can't find a better country to live in than Thailand," Mr Lyman concluded.

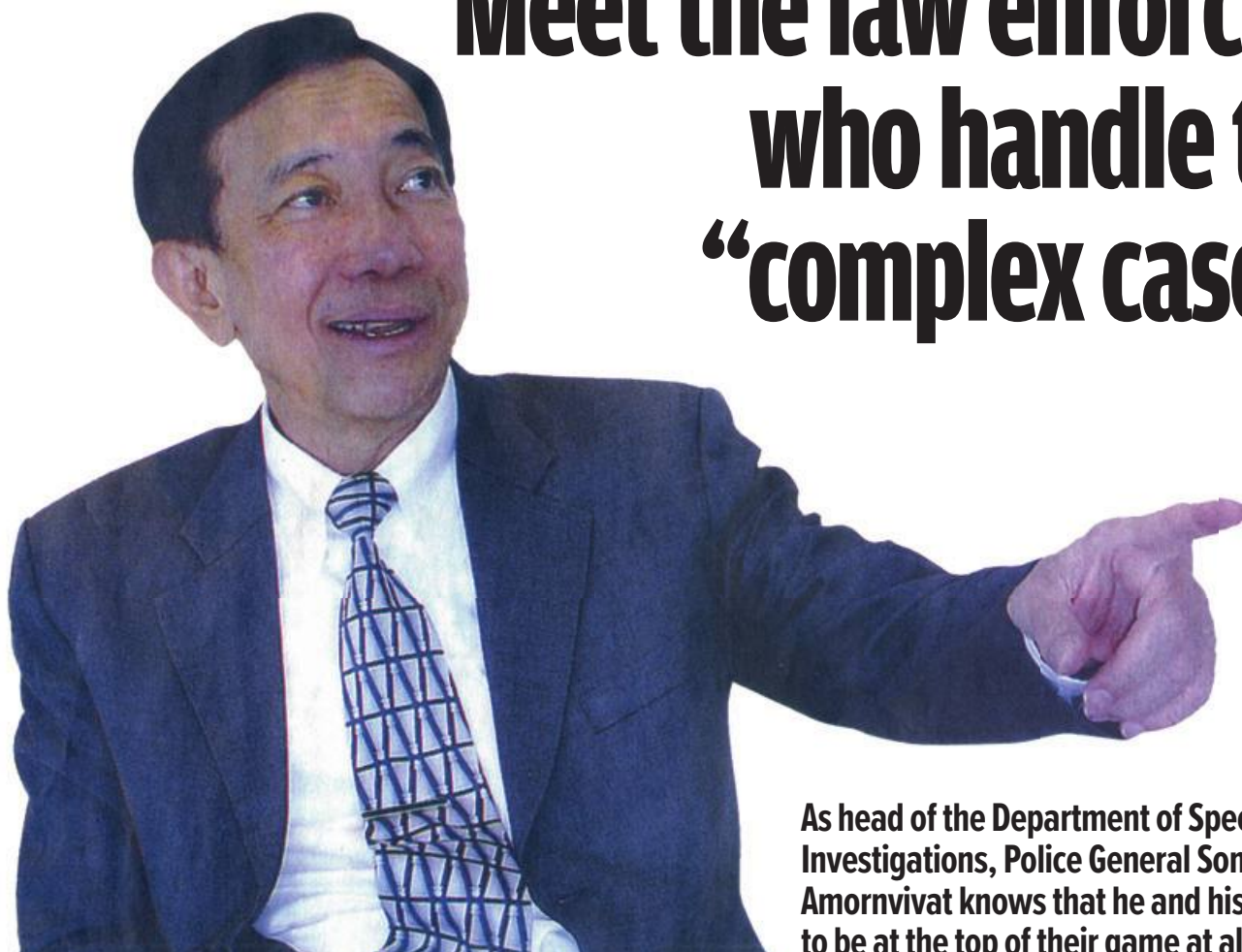
Behind the story:

My first interview with David Lyman took place in his law office at the round-shaped Supala Grand Tower building on Rama 3 Road, the firm's head office. It was quite an experience to spend over an hour with this highly knowledgeable long-time Bangkok resident who has been active in business and civic affairs in Thailand for many years. He's known as a humanitarian and an animal lover, especially elephants. David inherited the already well-established law firm from his father in 1984, maintaining its stellar reputation and significantly expanding the clientele. He's also taken on cases and projects from abroad, but the law firm's roots remain firmly in Thailand.

In the interview David freely offered invaluable advice for foreigners wanting to do business in Thailand. Among the insights he shared was an observation on the importance of women in Thai society: "The strength of Thai society is in its women. They are the real power in this country and you can rely on them."

Who can argue with that?

Meet the law enforcers who handle the “complex cases”



Police General Sombat Amornvivat, January 2006.

As head of the Department of Special Investigations, Police General Sombat Amornvivat knows that he and his team have to be at the top of their game at all times.

■ When he was a young police captain attending an 11-week course at the Federal Bureau of Investigation's National Academy in Quantico, Virginia in 1973, Pol Gen Sombat Amornvivat never imagined that one day he would lead a similar agency in Thailand, the Department of Special Investigation (DSI).

"I consider it a very special assignment because we handle many important and high profile cases. While the police deal with general crimes, the DSI targets more complicated cases, especially those dealing with financial crimes which are too complex for ordinary police work to bring about a successful prosecution. A classic 'difficult' case was the collapse of the Bangkok Bank of Commerce," he explained.

The DSI was established in October 2002 primarily to create a strong, proactive law enforcement agency that would focus on national security and also transnational and organized crime.

Pol Gen Sombat has been director-general of the DSI since his move from the Royal Thai Police in January 2004. The DSI now has only one office in Bangkok but there are plans to expand to other regions of the country.

"We have got here many highly qualified officers chosen from the ranks of police, customs and revenue

departments, as well as prosecutors, accountants and lawyers from a variety of other government departments."

Pol Gen Sombat said that the biggest problem for the DSI is training. "Some of our recruits don't know how to investigate, so we have to train them. We have a close relationship with foreign investigation experts in the United States, the United Kingdom and several other countries. They come here to instruct our officers," he revealed.

Pol Gen Sombat dismissed a criticism that was rife in the agency's early days: "Some officials didn't like the DSI because they thought it overlaps other agencies. They still had an old working culture mindset. Things are better now and we cooperate very well."

He also admitted that in the beginning some officers thought that they were better than other law enforcement people because they were selected to the DSI, but that situation has also been resolved.

Pol Gen Sombat highlighted two controversial cases currently being investigated by the DSI. First, the disappearance of human rights lawyer Somchai Neelaphaichit, who had defended several suspects in connection with the violence in the restive South and who went missing on March 12, 2004.

The second case was the murder of environmentalist Charoen Wat-aksorn, who was gunned down on June 21, 2004 after testifying before a Senate committee about attempts by some influential people to grab public land. He was instrumental in pressuring the government to scrap plans to build the Bo Nok power plant in Prachuap Khiri Khan province.

Pol Gen Sombat is well aware that the handling of both cases has received a great deal of attention, and criticism, from local and foreign media as well as human rights organisations.

"I can assure you that everyone at the DSI is doing their utmost to solve both cases," he said.

The DSI was assigned to investigate the Somchai case about five months ago because it was a priority case that the police were having difficulties with.

"I am really trying to solve this case and I am confident that we will succeed. But a lack of evidence makes the investigation very difficult. You see, Somchai's body has not even been found yet."

As for Mr Charoen, he added, "we have arrested several people, but his wife is not quite happy and still wants us to arrest more. We have no evidence on which to do so, and this has disappointed her. We work according to the evidence, and not because of pressure from any party. We do our best but we have to follow laws, regulations and to respect human rights."

Record speaks for itself

The record of Pol Gen Sombat might serve to dispel any doubts as to his sincerity and determination to apprehend criminals whoever and wherever they are. For example, in 2003 he was in charge of the police's anti-mafia centre, with 844 suspected underworld mafia figures and their gunmen on the blacklist.

His former subordinates say that Pol Gen Sombat gained a lot of respect from ordinary people around Thailand during his years as a policeman, including from Thai Muslims in the South. And the reputation he has earned is helpful to the DSI in investigating important cases there.

Pol Gen Sombat revealed that the DSI – which participated in the investigations in the South from the beginning of the crisis – has successfully solved several important cases by tracking down and arresting the suspected masterminds behind acts of violence.

"There are a number of government law enforcement organizations now operating in the South and there is good cooperation between them and the DSI," he added.

Touching on the state of law enforcement in Thailand,

he said that big progress has been made. Police officers are more knowledgeable than before and the force has been slimmed down, allowing basic salaries to be increased.

"We now focus on quality not quantity. We are in the process of downsizing. A smaller force will be better paid. The law enforcement agencies in Thailand are generally up to international standards," he said.

"The improvement of law enforcement procedures in Thailand hinges around two critical issues. First, we have to respect human rights. Due process has to be respected. Second, we have to use more scientific evidence to help obtain convictions, including fingerprints, DNA and forensic techniques.

"My job is very demanding – more so than when I was in the police force," he admitted. "I have to spend around 18 hours a day on the job, either in directing my staff on how to proceed with investigations or doing it myself, and also in training our officers."

What free time Pol Gen Sombat has during weekends is spent with his family or playing golf. He also enjoys reading magazines, books and one English newspaper he is subscribed to as well.

"I am family man and always have enough time for my wife. Who understand that I have to work for long hours. I plan to travel around the world and golf when I retire within a year-and-a-half."



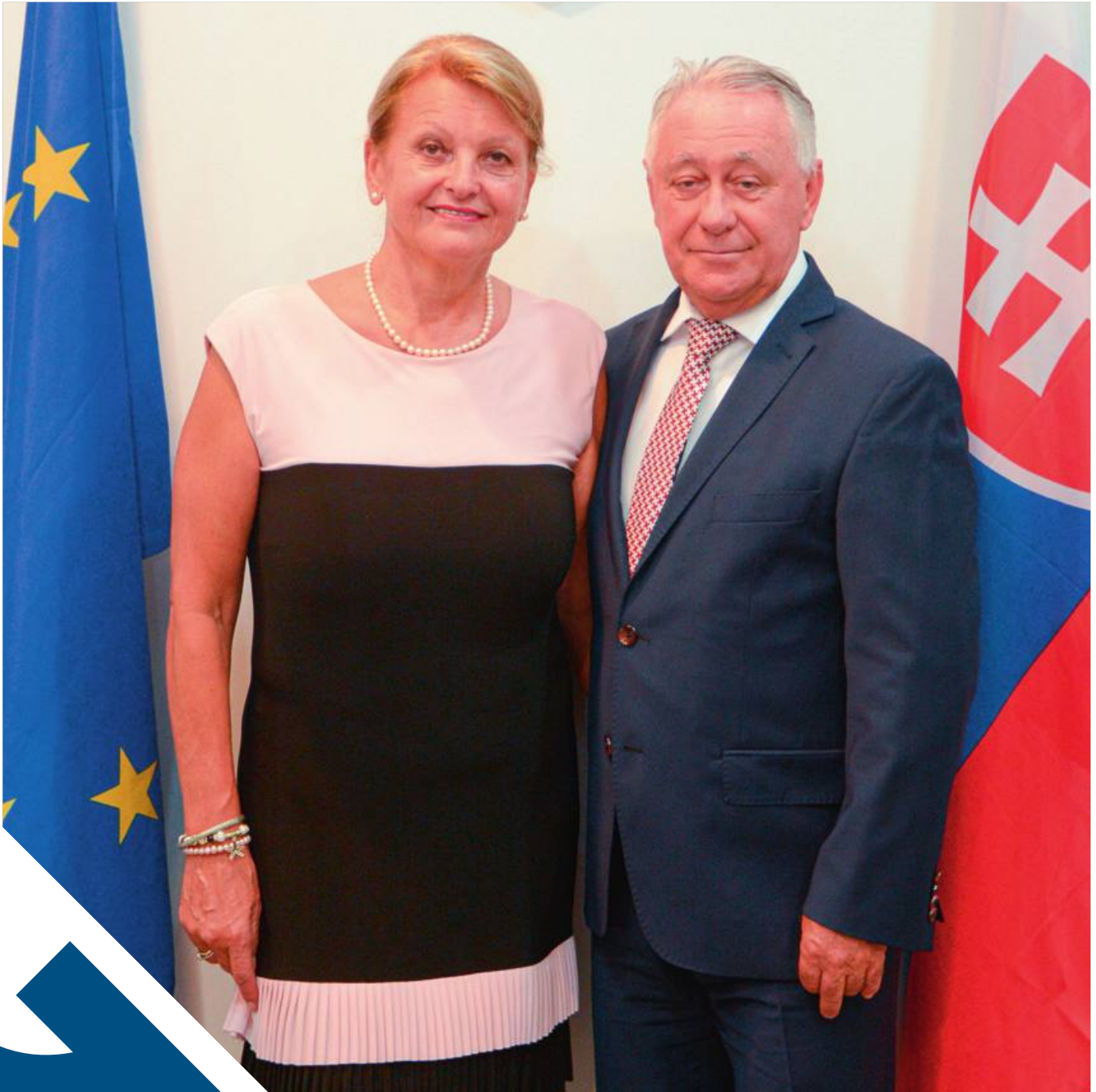
Behind the story:

It was a big change for Pol Gen Sombat Amornvivat to leave the Royal Thai Police and take an assignment to head the DSI two years it was established. His appointment was no accident; arguably there was no one better suited to take charge and promote the new law enforcement agency modeled after the United States' Federal Bureau of Investigation. It was obvious during the interview that he had taken on a grueling task and was under a lot of pressure. Some of this was due to constant attacks in the media on Pol Gen Sombat and his organization. He was keen to present the DSI in a positive light.

The interview was published in January 2006. In early December the Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) issued a report which said in part: "The Asian Human Right Commission wishes to inform that the head of the Department of Special Investigation has been removed from his job over the failure to solve the March 2004 abduction by police of human rights lawyer Somchai Neelaphajit. Police General Sombat Amornvivat was transferred to another part of the justice ministry..."

DIPLOMATS

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His Excellency Stanislav Opiela

Slovakian ambassador and his wife prepare to bid Thailand a fond farewell

Slovakian ambassador and his wife prepare to bid Thailand a fond farewell

Words **MAXMILIAN WECHSLER**

His Excellency Stanislav Opiela is nearing the end of his final assignment for the Slovak Republic. When he and his wife Wiera return home sometime this year, they will be missed by many good friends they've made in Thailand.

Ambassador Opiela is known as one of the most active and astute members of the Bangkok diplomatic corps (see CV), and colleagues and Thai officials alike are keen to hear his take on developments in international affairs. Though not a trained diplomat herself, the ambassador's cheerful and elegant wife works long hours assisting him at the embassy and is a constant companion at the myriad social functions that go with the job. It seemed only fitting to interview both husband and wife, but for the sake of clarity their comments are presented separately.

Embassy and trade

At the start of the interview the ambassador said candidly, "During the last four years in Thailand I have had some positive as well as negative experiences. The plan is always to achieve maximum success in the initiatives undertaken by the embassy, but the reality doesn't always correspond." This honest and straightforward assessment was typical of the ambassador.

"Our embassy is very small, with only two diplomats, myself included, and we cover four countries – Laos, Cambodia and Myanmar as well as Thailand. There are a lot of consular issues and my deputy is almost completely dedicated to them. Everything else is on me," said Mr Opiela.

"I have to follow what is going on in four countries, and this is not so easy because I don't speak the local languages. My main sources are English-language newspapers and other publications. In Thailand, Cambodia and Myanmar there is pretty good information available, but in Laos there's only one accessible English newspaper. Vientiane Times. I send reports back to my Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), and this takes time. I include important developments in all four countries in my evaluation reports, and from time to time I receive instructions to supply information on specific developments."

The ambassador is tasked with promoting the interests of the Slovak Republic in Laos, Cambodia and Myanmar.

However, as Thailand is undoubtedly Slovakia's most important partner in the region, this is where the primary focus of the embassy lies. "We are a young country. Relations with Thailand were established only after the creation of the Slovak Republic on January 1, 1993, following the peaceful dissolution of Czechoslovakia. We are trying to put Slovakia 'on the map' for Thais by broadening ties in the spheres economics, culture, people-to-people contacts and all manners of activity.

"As a diplomat, I know that you can't expect big results in a day. Concrete results take time to achieve. My work has been mainly concentrated on introducing Slovakia to the Thai people and to Thai officials and institutions. I want to make sure they know our country exists in Europe, that we are a member of the EU and are relatively well developed country, and that we are becoming an important player in international affairs.

"Although Slovakia is a new country, we have a rich history and a high level of cultural development. So this is one area which I am promoting. Of course, initiatives for improved economic relations, especially trade, must also be given great importance. If you just look at overall trade volume between Slovakia and Thailand in 2018, the numbers aren't bad at all – about 263 million euro (around 8.7 billion baht at current exchange rate for cash). But what's bad for us is that Thailand's exports to Slovakia totaled about 225 million euro or about 7.5 billion baht. We are trying out ways to balance out the trade exchange, but it is not so easy. For one thing, many of the most



President of the Slovak Republic Zuzana Čaputová with Ambassador Opiela in Bratislava on July 3, 2019.



Thai Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-o-cha with Ambassador Opiela and Mrs Opielová at Royal Thai Navy Day reception held at Royal Thai Navy Convention Hall in Bangkok on November 20, 2019.

important companies in Slovakia are foreign-owned. This is particularly true in the car production industry.

“Most people don’t know that Slovakia is the biggest producer of passenger cars per capita in the world. In 2019 we produced 1.1 million cars. The population of Slovakia is 5.3 million people, so that amounts to 202 cars per 1,000 citizens. The manufacture of cars represents about half of industrial production in Slovakia, and almost 14% of the GDP. Almost 50% of Slovakian exports are cars. But as I said, foreign companies control the plants that make the cars. Brands like Volkswagen, Peugeot-Citroën, KIA and Jaguar are the main producers of cars in Slovakia.

“There’s a positive trend in trade volume between our two countries. It is increasing every year. But I must stress that this doesn’t depend on the work of the embassy, but this more a result of activities our businessmen, traders and companies. Our companies are unfortunately not too strong or active which doesn’t apply to Thailand but to other Asian countries with the exclusion of China, India, Japan and Korea,” Mr Opiela stressed.

“There is a lot of untapped potential in terms of our economic relations. From time to time some Slovakian companies come here to explore the situation and try to do something to penetrate the Thai market on their own, but without Thai partners this is not easy.

“For example, one Slovakian company that owns a patent to a unique technology for the liquidation of used tires wants to bring this technology to Thailand and to build a plant to do it here. It is theoretically a simple

technology, but it is very useful and environmentally friendly. After liquidation of the used tires you have no bad waste.

“So here we have something we can offer to the Thai market which is very useful and unique. However, the Slovakian company has been negotiating with a Thai company for three years, but until now nothing has happened. I understand that this is partly due to the distance between our countries and the fact that we don’t know each other very well. Thais are much more likely to trust German or Swiss technology, for example. But I firmly believe there’s a possibility for real and mutually beneficial economic progress in the near future.”

Blossoming cultural cooperation

Mr Opiela was pleased to reveal that bilateral cooperation in the cultural arena is showing a lot of promise. “Slovak folk groups are participating in different festivals in Thailand on a regular basis every year. We have started participating in film festivals here with other EU countries. I can say that the reaction of the Thai people to Slovak films has been very positive. There was a very good reception for a film shown in celebration of the 30th anniversary of the Velvet Revolution,” said the ambassador, referring to popular demonstrations led by students and dissidents from November 17 to December 29, 1989 that led to the remarkably smooth collapse of the one-party communist regime.

Last month the world premiere of the opera 'Helena Citrónová', composed by Thai Maestro Somtow Sucharitkul, was presented at the Thailand Cultural Centre.

"The strong-willed Helena Citrónová was a Jewish woman from Slovakia who would not give up her humanity in the horrors of the Auschwitz concentration camp," explained the ambassador.

"Everyone knows Thais enjoy showing off products made from Thai silk around the world. I've been very interested in local fashion events connected with Thai silk over the last four years, including Thai Silk International Fashion Week in November 2019. This was with the participation of foreign designers, who made dresses from Thai silk in their own countries. In Slovakia one designer made a dress for my wife. During the Gala on the closing night wives of ambassadors and female ambassadors presented the dresses on the catwalk," said the ambassador.

Mrs Opielová interjected: "The Gala is a different event, but connected to Fashion Week. It involves the same designers and Thai silk. The Gala is the final activity. It has become so popular that many male ambassadors participate. In November I made my modeling debut, wearing a dress made by a Thai designer."

In a separate but related event, a Slovak designer received silk from Thailand to make around 12 dresses that were shown by Thai models at fashion shows in shopping malls in Thailand. The designer came here with the dresses, and during the events videos about Slovakia were shown on the podium. "This is a very good activity and good PR for Slovakia," said the ambassador.

Ambassador's thoughts on Thailand and retirement

"When I first came here I was generally surprised to find that Thailand is a rather developed country. I expected that only the capital would be developed, as in many underdeveloped countries. But in Thailand everywhere you go you see some kind of industry and various business activities. Outsiders' impressions of the country tend to be very positive. Thailand is clean and well-organized and everything seems to work well. I was most surprised to learn how nice Thai people are. They are very calm, not nervous like in Europe. They don't rush and they always have smiles on their faces. This is a very friendly country.

"We haven't had all that many contacts with the Thai authorities because the embassy hasn't staged so many activities, but all the contacts we've had have been very good, especially with people from the MFA. All the people

we've met from different ministries, organizations and institutions, the private sector and NGOs at various social events have been very friendly and open and have shown an interest in meeting with us.

"After the very busy life in Bangkok, retirement will be difficult. I can't image now what I am going to do every day back home. Here we are busy from morning until night. I am a little bit worried how I will survive. There are not many possibilities for retired people in Slovakia. Nobody needs them. We are also somewhat in a bad situation because our three children, two sons and a daughter, live in Canada. We will, of course, sometimes visit them there.

"There's no possibility of continuing to work for the MFA, or becoming involved in some political organization or working as a TV commentator. I know a lot about foreign policy, but by and large Slovak people don't care too much about this. They prefer business, celebrity news and stupid TV shows. I don't have any intention or dream to write a book or something like that. I suppose I will

occupy myself with some sports activities, reading and travel, but what to do during the cold winter in Slovakia?"

Viera Opielová on Thailand and retirement

"Before we came to Thailand, I was little bit worried because we'd never being in Asia and I was told there are snakes everywhere, the weather is always hot and nothing is very special. Over the past four years I've found that this image is very wrong. Thailand is a beautiful country and I can tell you that we are very sad that we may have to leave this year. We will always have very good memories of this country. People in Thailand are very nice, usually smiling and very friendly. Bangkok has grown so much over the four years since we've been here. There are so many new high-rise buildings, and

they are such beautiful and modern structures."

Asked what she likes most about Thailand, Mrs Opielová answered with a smile: "It is very hard to say because most of the time I have been at the embassy working. But really, I especially like the people. We have taken the opportunity to take trips organized by the Thai MFA, Ministry of Tourism and Sports and other agencies and we have seen many beautiful places here. We visited Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, Phuket and a number of other Thai provinces. Besides enjoying the beauty, it is a very good way to learn about the country.

"I prefer it a bit cooler, but generally the weather is nice here. I can swim almost every day, which you certainly can't do in Slovakia. I like the social life in Bangkok. It's great. We were assigned to the Slovak embassy in Ottawa



Most people don't know that Slovakia is the biggest producer of passenger cars per capita in the world. In 2019 we produced 1.1 million cars. The population of Slovakia is 5.3 million people, so that amounts to 202 cars per 1,000 citizens.







Ambassador and Mrs Opielová at Diplomatic Bazaar in Bangkok on November 15, 2019.

in Canada, and there is no comparison. We are very happy with the diplomatic corps in Thailand. Nice people all around. We are lucky here, because it's not such a friendly group in some other places.

"My husband and I agree that the most memorable time we experienced during the past four years was the passing of His Majesty King Rama IX. I've never seen such an outpouring of grief. We attended the funeral together with other diplomats. The coronation of His Majesty King Rama X was also quite memorable. We were present at some events. Another unforgettable event was meeting His Holiness Pope Francis during a mass at the National Stadium late last year.

"The people here are so nice, so friendly and so helpful. We've seen so many nice places and attended so many great social events like concerts and exhibitions. I have made many friends in Thailand from many walks in life. What I also like about Bangkok is there are so many restaurants with any type of cuisine. It is very easy to take friends for lunch or dinner. I like cooking myself and do so almost every evening that we don't go out.

"I can say almost nothing bad about this country. I don't know if I should say this, but I am not fond of Thai food because many dishes are too spicy for me. However, I do like Thai fruits. I am not fond of the traffic either, but for the most part we get around that by living close to the embassy. When we first came here and were looking for a place to stay, after we saw the traffic and how difficult it is to get around we decided it had to be close to the embassy.

"We are very happy with our residence in a high-rise, only a 10-minute walk from the embassy at the YMCA Tower on Sathorn Road. We don't always walk. It is very convenient to live close to your work, but when we are going to a reception or dinner in the evening it is very difficult because the traffic is always heavy. The lines of vehicles on Sathorn Road stretch a long way and the red

lights are on for a long time. The motorcycles really add to the traffic chaos. They don't follow traffic laws and they are everywhere, driving fast and zooming around our car. Many of them don't watch out for people crossing the road.

"We are expecting to be recalled back to Slovakia but we don't know when. It could be very soon or maybe a little later. After our assignment ends we will return to Bratislava, the capital of Slovak Republic. We don't know yet what we are going to do there and this is a little bit scary. Now it is very hectic and exciting for us in Thailand, and when we go back it will be only the two of us. Maybe we will start to fighting," Mrs Opielová joked.

"But in a way, I am looking forward to going back home because I have been working very hard here and it is tiring at my age. Most of the time, I help at out in the consular section. It is an extremely busy section, really more than a full time job. It is time to relax."

CV of H.E. Stanislav Opiela

Education

- 1971-1975: Moscow State Institute of International Relations.
- 1970-1971: University of Economics, Bratislava.

Work experience

- 2014-2015: Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic, Director of the Office of the 1st Deputy Minister.
- 2012-2014: Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic, Department of Americas, Senior Desk Officer.
- 2011-2012: National coordinator for Slovak Republic to the EU Strategy for Danube Region in Prime Minister Office.
- 2010-2011: Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) of the Slovak Republic, UN Department, Senior Desk Officer.
- 2005-2010: Embassy of the Slovak Republic to Canada, Ambassador.
- 2002-2005: MFA of the Slovak Republic, Senior Desk Officer.
- 1999-2002: Embassy of the Slovak Republic to Canada, Deputy Head of the Embassy, Minister - Counselor.
- 1998-1999: MFA of the Slovak Republic, National coordinator of the Slovak Republic for Central European Initiative.
- 1997-1998: Embassy of the Slovak Republic to Canada, Charge d'Affaires a.i.
- 1995-1997: Embassy of the Slovak Republic to Canada, Deputy Head of the Embassy, Counselor.
- 1994-1995: MFA of the Slovak Republic, Department for European Integration, Acting and later Deputy Director.
- 1993-1994: Embassy of the Slovak Republic to Tunisia, Chargé d'Affaires, Counselor.
- 1975-1993: Federal MFA of the former Czech and Slovak Federal Republic, different position at the headquarters in Prague, including foreign postings in Congo (1984-1988) and in Tunisia (1990-1992).



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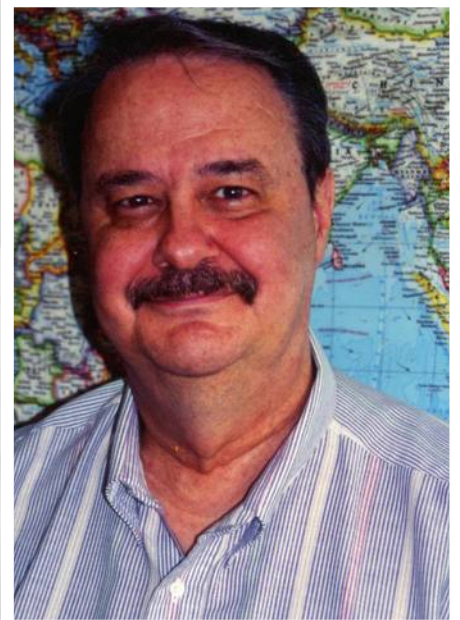
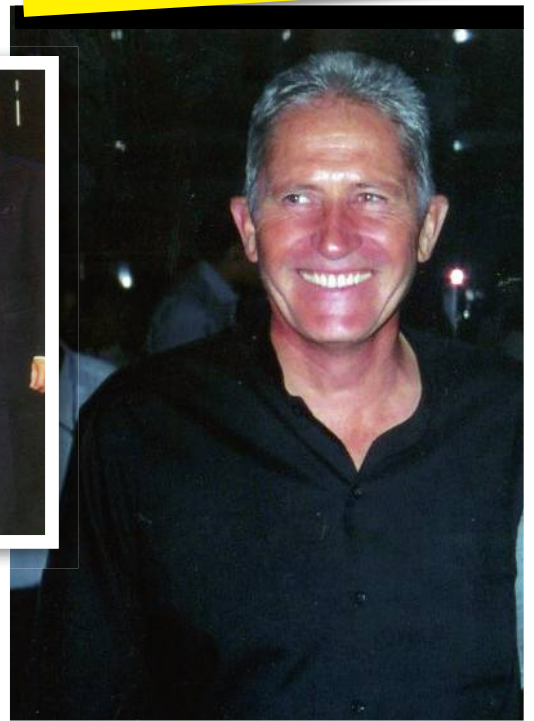
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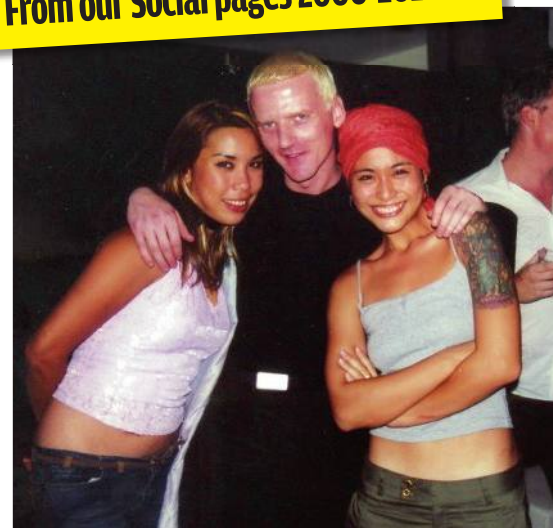
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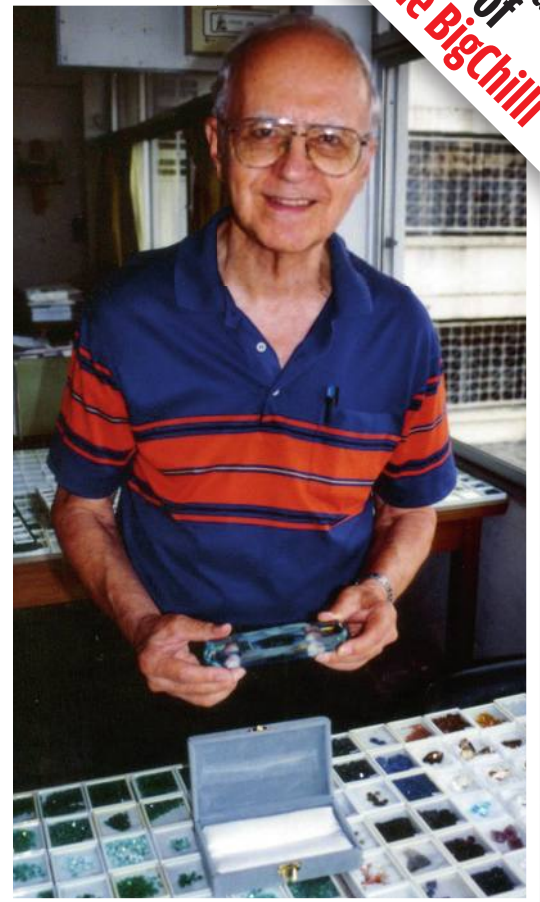


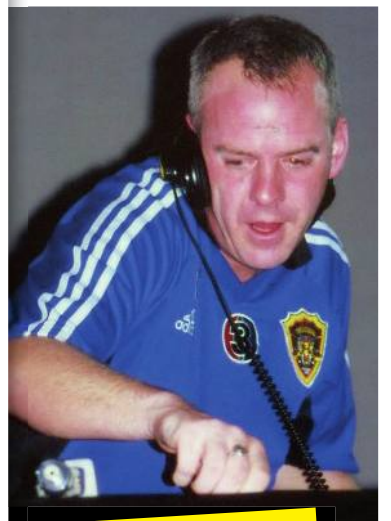




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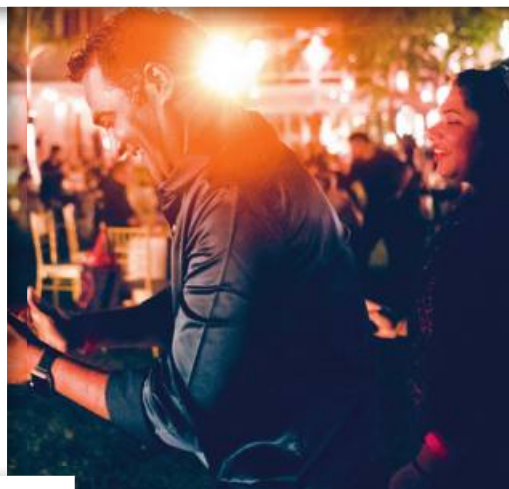
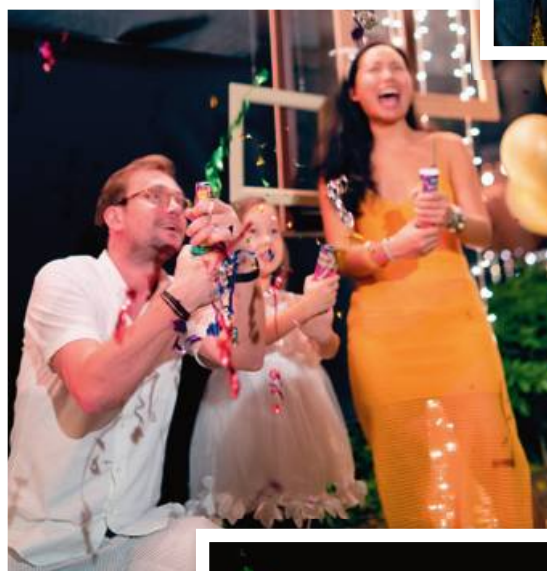
▣ Last month's best events in pictures





Happy New Year!

Baba Beach Club Hua Hin welcomed the New Year with an exclusive feast, fireworks, and family fun activities. Over 150 guests celebrated the countdown dancing late into the night with fire shows on the beach, Soul & Funk beats and a grande finale of majestic fireworks over the beach.





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Sport of Kings Tournament

137 Pillars Hotels & Resorts hosted the 3rd Annual Polo Puissance tournament at the Polo Escape in Pattaya with local and international players including the Maharaja of Jaipur. Guests included high society Thais and company CEOs.





The first Carlton Hotel in Thailand set to open in February 2020

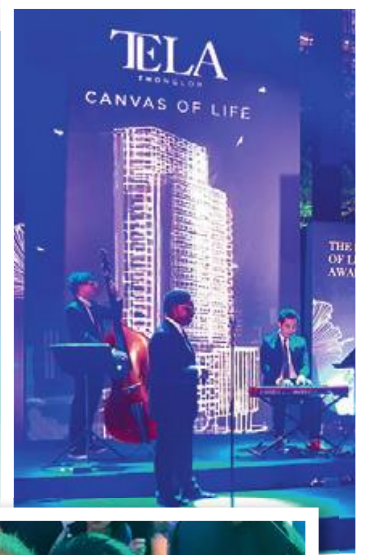
General Manager Mark Bulmer, recently held an exclusive Pre-Opening Preview to showcase the hotel's unique facilities to its partners, key accounts and industry professionals.





A 'honeyfull' themed chef table

Spearheaded by Food Factors under Boonrawd, Chef Kong from Locus hosted an exclusive Chef Table in Bangkok for specially invited guests, influencers and members of the media. The food was divine and themed around honey



Tela Sky Villa launch

A gathering of friends, well-wishers and media representatives enjoyed a cocktail party to launch the Tela Sky Villa, a spectacular penthouse at the Tela Thonglor by Gaysorn Property. Located on Sukhumvit Soi 55, this unique property is furnished with Roberto Cavalli Home Interior by DM Home.



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