

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

THE **BigChilli**

THE ORIGINAL MAGAZINE

INTERVIEWS, TRAVEL, NEWS, WOMEN AND GOURMET GUIDE

A woman with long dark hair, wearing a vibrant red strapless gown with a flowing train, poses elegantly. She has a decorative hair clip and large hoop earrings. The background is a soft, light blue gradient.

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SECRETS OF STARDOM

**Legendary beauty Lukkade Metinee
reveals all with her new Academy**

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SECRETS OF STARDOM

Thailand's most famous model and beauty queen Lukkade Metinee Kingpayome opens academy 'Muse By Metinee' and reveals the secrets for success



Ms. Metinee 'Lukkade' Kingpayome, Thailand's first supermodel, actress, entrepreneur and title holder of Miss Thailand World 1992, is officially revealing her secrets to success and stardom with the recent launch of Muse by Metinee.

With almost 30 years in the industry, Lukkade has garnered many awards and accolades for her success, learned the pitfall and secrets to make it in the industry and put all her learnings together in a well-crafted Muse by Metinee curriculum taught by Metinee herself and handpicked professionals.

Courses at Muse by Metinee will help those that want to build their skills to become a top model, an actress, a beauty queen, an entertainer or simply how to bring out the best version of yourself.

Muse by Metinee is an inclusive learning grounds open to all genders and races from ages four and higher and is held at the state of the art and newly opened Minimize Dance Studio located at The Street on Ratchadapisek Road, starting from March 2020 onwards.

Metinee uses her many years of experience, and her defining title as the 'Queen of the Catwalk' to coach and inspire those how to rule the runway. Classes are built for all experience levels, either group session or one-to-one and teaches how to correct posture, proper body movement, body balancing, shoulder and hip movement, body language, etiquette, presentation and for those looking to become a beauty queen; teaches how to walk, talk and think like one.

"Before you can set your goals on becoming a model, actress or professional, everything starts with believing in yourself and having the inner confidence to face your fears and push yourself to the limits. Everything we teach at Muse by Metinee, is not only how to perfect self-expression, but it's about how to believe in yourself, respect others and really bring out from deep inside, the passion of what you desire to become", said Metinee.

Muse by Metinee, is made up of a team of highly skilled professionals hand selected by Metinee herself. All coaches are part of the Team Experts that trained all the 60 contestants of Miss Universe Thailand 2019, led by Master Mentor Metinee and in their own right each helped lead Miss Paweensuda 'Fahsai' Drouin to win Miss Thailand Universe 2019 and eventually placed top five in the highly televised Miss Universe 2019.

Facebook: Muse by Metinee
Official Line: @musebymetinee
Instagram: @musebymetinee



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China's Great Wall Motors buys GM's plant in Rayong



China's growing influence in Southeast Asia's automobile industry has taken a major step forward with the acquisition of US car giant General Motors' Rayong manufacturing plant to Great Wall Motors of China. Sales of Chevrolet vehicle in Thailand will end later this year.

Thailand has more than 300,000 Chevrolet customers through its authorised service outlets.

Formed in 1984, Great Wall Motors is China's largest sport utility vehicle (SUV) and pick-up truck producer. It sells passenger cars and trucks under the Great Wall brand and

SUVs under the Haval and WEY brands.

Great Wall vehicles are available across the globe, including Australia, Europe, the UK and South America. Earlier this year, the company said it would buy GM's car plant in India as part of its plan to manufacture and sell cars in India.

Lookalike controversy

It's been claimed that some of Great Wall's car are lookalike copies of other manufacturers' vehicles. Complaints have come from Italian automaker Fiat as well as Japanese companies Toyota, Nissan and Isuzu.

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Scaling Bangkok's famous 'Ghost Building'



Towering above Sathon Pier, the empty high-rise scares locals who fear it might fall on them unleashing ghouls. Braving zealous 'guards', Nicholas de Gersigny decided to climb this infamous edifice anyway.



As we cruised along the Chao Phraya enjoying the sights on a balmy November night, my friend asked: "What's with that big derelict building – it looks like it's been empty for a while?"

"It's the ghost building," our guide said. "It's a hotel they were building but had to abandon their plans when it was half built during the Asian financial crisis in the late 90s – the money just ran out."

"Now the structure has too much exposed concrete rot to continue building and will cost too much to pull down so it just sits there – and is haunted – according to locals."

"Can we climb it?" we inquired, our interest intensely piqued.

Our guide told us it was reputed to be notoriously unsafe. He said he had heard of some "not so friendly" vagrants who inhabit the lower floors, and some "undead" folk on the upper floors.

"But if you guys want to I reckon you might as well try – just be careful."

My companion and I, having spent many nights of our misspent youth finding ways into abandoned buildings to scribble on walls and whatever else, had a certain curiosity and a strong affinity with abandoned buildings – and with no disapproving, sensible wives to talk us out of it and no fear of ghosts or vagrants – our minds were made up.



We disembarked from the boat, grabbed a couple of beers and headed to the ghost building.

After circling around it, we noticed a few spots where people had decided to build shanty like homes, which at first glance appeared to be empty and much to our delight we discovered nothing stopping us except one guy patrolling with a flash light and a flimsy, easily scaled fence.

We found a good place to jump the fence, waited until the guy patrolling wasn't looking and made our attempt to enter, we scaled the fence and quickly looked around for a place to get in but all we found was a gate leading to a staircase that was welded shut. The guy patrolling caught us and it turned out he wasn't a security guard but a local entrepreneur trying to charge people to unlock the gate to the stairs on the other side.

While we admired his spirit we were not willing to pay some guy wearing a YOLO shirt 1,000 baht to show us the way up when that was half the fun. So we pretended to leave, noticing a fence on top of a concrete wall the other side of the staircase that was almost a floor up but had a barrel and a chair conveniently located beside it.

We saw him distracted, doubled back, placed the chair on top of the barrel and climbed up and scaled the fence that led to the second set of fire stairs, noticing the shanty closest was occupied but the occupant was far too wasted to be concerned with us.

With iPhone torches in hand we began the long climb and we soon discovered we were far from the first people to have had this idea; there was no shortage of graffiti on the walls and someone had even gone to the trouble of numbering each floor.

We stopped a few floors up when we felt we were clear from the self-appointed corrupt security guard. We went looking around the rooms until we discovered one that was full of debris and had the stench of rotting meat in it. It could have been a dead dog or a cat but with it looking like the perfect place to dump a body we weren't too keen to find out what it was so we kept going up until the staircase was blocked off again and to get to the next floor we were forced to climb up some hastily and precariously built stairs of thin wooden planks with drops on either side that would have broken a lot of bones if we fell.

Regretting all the beers we had consumed earlier and, not taking the easy route offered by our friend in the YOLO shirt, we managed to make it up crawling slowly and clinging for dear life. Nothing was going to stop us getting to the top.

Stopping every five to ten floors we started to notice the rooms to be more complete. The holes in the floors were becoming less frequent with less precariously placed scaffolding, crumbling walls and big holes in the bathrooms that matched up on every floor making the drop even more dangerous. The upper floors, however, were suddenly filled

“

As we continued to climb, our stops became more frequent as the motion of walking around and around in circles up the staircase made us dizzy and the drop in the middle of the staircase was getting higher and more dangerous.



“

The higher floors were much more interesting. The standard rooms we had seen on every floor suddenly became suites with massive wide balconies and unbelievable views.



with bathtubs. The views from the balconies were getting better and better as well.

As we continued to climb, our stops became more frequent as the motion of walking around and around in circles up the staircase made us dizzy and the drop in the middle of the staircase was getting higher and more dangerous, not to mention the big hole in the wall on the other side leading to what we assumed was the elevator shaft and the crumbling stairs were becoming worse.

But the stops on the higher floors were much more interesting. The standard rooms we had seen on every floor suddenly became suites with massive wide balconies and unbelievable views that were no longer being blocked by giant advertising posters, and we no longer had to deal with disapproving looks and finger-pointing from people who could see us from their position in neighbouring buildings.

Some of the rooms were so complete I would have been happy to move in if it wasn't for the long arduous climb up and down to get home every day.

Some of them even had fully made-up beds; the fear of coming across a dead body became less likely as no one in

their right mind would carry a dead body this far.

Having seen as much as we thought was worth seeing, we made the final ascent and reached the top of the stairs - level 54. It was an awesome sight and an uplifting feeling to be there to enjoy the view that is normally only afforded to those with big bank balances who think nothing about paying to stay in luxury high-rise hotels.

After a quick look around, and taking in the unobstructed 360 degree views, we noticed there was one more level to climb – and the way up was far more dangerous than the ones we had encountered earlier – but we were determined. So we climbed the steep thin planks of wood, grabbing hand-rails and made it to the unofficial 55th floor, basking in the amazing views and enjoying our accomplishment that we earlier had considered unlikely to achieve as we pondered our attempt from the river.

Climbing the ghost tower had become the number one on my list of things I would recommend people to do while in Bangkok but not without the advice from what I had learnt on my trip.

If you are not fit and agile do not attempt it; if you are afraid of heights you will not enjoy it. Make sure you are sober when you attempt it and haven't been out at Spice nightclub until 7am with only two hours sleep; bring water to drink on the way instead of beer - and be careful - there are many things that could go wrong. It isn't the safest tourist attraction but not that much more dangerous than crossing the roads in parts of Bangkok and even crossing certain pedestrian bridges that have electricity wires that look like they have placed deliberately to hurt someone.

Basking in our glory would soon have to come to an end though. As beautiful as the sunset was to watch from the 55th floor, it also meant it would soon be dark and getting down was much more difficult than getting up in certain places starting with getting down from the top floor.

So we made a rapid descent down only stopping to climb down the dodgy plank ramps where the stairs were blocked. We scaled the fence and were glad to see the chair and barrel still in place and made a swift exit walking right through the kitchen of a restaurant on to the street. We had climbed to the top of the “ghost building” - and returned safely to the bottom. It was a haunting - and exhilarating - experience.



By Peter L.

R-Haan: Reach Beyond the Stars

■ When R-Haan first opened its doors, the founders knew it was something special. The recognition from Michelin elevated the brand and the team.

A year later, a second star was awarded and R-Haan cemented its position in the global culinary scene. It was a proud moment for Thai cuisine as a whole.

As a burgeoning brand with a stellar track record, one can only imagine the culinary odyssey in the planning. Yet, price has not climbed - a testament to their commitment to diners, friends and gourmards alike.

Our strength and success lies with our people, enthused Chef Chumpol Jangprai, the chef extraordinaire in the driver's seat. Going forward, R-Haan will build on their people and grow further. Forging ahead together, is their motto. To deliver a consistent and eye opening dining experience and a culinary journey to every guest.

R-Haan will also invest in international marketing and will participate in more road shows. To be given this opportunity to promote the wisdom of Thai cuisine, is one of the



highest honour in my life, says Khun Piti (Todd) Bhirom Bhakdi, Director & Executive Vice President at Boon Rawd Brewery Co., Ltd. Khun Piti is an investor and co-founder of R-Haan.

R-Haan will remind you of the amazing range of taste that Thai food has to offer. It can be a nostalgic walk down memory lane for some, or a journey of discovery for the rest of us. Plus, as Michelin puts it: Excellent cooking, worth a detour.

As seasons change, so will the menu and currently they are serving the Winter menu.

This month in March, R-Haan celebrates their 2 year anniversary. Several activities are in the pipeline

to mark this celebration. Picture the red carpet rolling out and chef collaborations across the region. 4-hands and 6-hands dinners are expected, surely.

Like any symphony masterpieces, R-Haan has not arrived at the pinnacle point yet, in our humble opinion. We are very excited to see what's next for this culinary institution. R-Haan will reach beyond the stars. The best is yet to come!

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By Agneta Bekassy De Bekas

Hollywood – and the magic of making movies

American photographer Daniel Herron tells the BigChilli about his life in Thailand over the past ten years



Most people have heard of Nicholas Cage, Jean-Claude Van Damme, Christopher Lambert and Mike Tyson but, who has actually met them, let alone worked with them? Photographer Daniel Herron has just done that. I had a chance to sit down with Daniel to listen to his unique story.

Daniel left the US in 2010 when the economy crashed. He decided he wanted to explore another country while at the same time challenging himself. His thinking is that we grow and accomplish the most when we are “out of our comfort zone” pushing ourselves and finding out just what we are made of.

Starting independently in a new country can be very challenging! There is the language, the culture differences one has to learn and adopt, in order to somehow fit it.

It has taken him nine years in Bangkok of chasing work and finally landing some pretty interesting assignments. I know this, as we have been working together for most of the years Daniel has been in Bangkok.

Interviewing countless ambassadors has been fascinating. The events such as the opening of beautiful Park Hyatt and the huge shopping mall IconSiam, spectacular opening events on the Chao Phraya River, are great memories, Daniel says.

Then Daniel connected with some Hollywood people that have relocated to Thailand.

After establishing a warm friendship that leads to them asking him to work in a feature Hollywood film, starring Jean-

Claude Van Damme, Mike Tyson and Christopher Lambert.

This is an opportunity that photographers rarely are able to get on, Daniel admits. It’s an insider track only possible by knowing people in the film industry and having the skills to work under such unique conditions.

Daniel was thrilled at the offer, but also knew the huge responsibility involved as the set photographers are what is used to promote the movie in advance of its release and must convey the director’s vision with impact!

Long days and nights, sometimes no less than 12-14 hours, six days a week for at least 4-6 weeks. Filming in the heavy humidity in Thailand, Daniel said he lost around four kilos and was eating like a horse on the movie set.

After having finished the first movie and adapted to the normal routines, Daniel two years later, had a call from the director who

made a special request for him to come to Cyprus to work in a movie with Nicholas Cage and many other celebrities, among them; Tony Jaa, Thailand’s greatest martial artist actor, known from his movie ‘Onk Bak’ and ‘The Fast and the Furious’.

Daniel says that working with Nicholas Cage, watching his seasoned skills and performance on the set, was absolutely amazing. “We began the film in a 1000 year-old cave, but during the Ottoman Empire. One hundred feet back underground filled with thick dust and smoke created by machines for effect.

“I just love the whole process of film making, watching the crew set-up, the rehearsals and then the performance on the camera. It’s really Movie Magic. To see it all put together on the big scene with music and effects....make it truly magical.”

Daniel wants to get into producing and directing independent films as well. The creative process is challenging, but also stimulating and if you love what you are doing it almost always works.

The film shot on Cyprus, starring Nicholas Cage is titled ‘Jiu Jitsu’ and is to become released worldwide this coming spring.

I also had to ask Daniel, as we are wrapping up our interview, a few questions I think you readers might like to hear about.

My first and a favorite question, which person would you like to photograph the most?

The answer comes quick. “Ridley Scott, the director. I’m



Top left, Daniel and colleague Agneta share a motorbike taxi while on assignment in Pattaya; other photos show the amazing Dr. Cleopandh, who sponsors 26 children at the Chaiyapruk Children's Home. "Meeting her was one of my most touching experiences", says Daniel.

impressed with his films. Richard Harris said of Scott, he is the best director one could work with. He knows his craft so well and is in complete control of the production. I've seen Ridley Scott in interviews and he seems really down to earth with a great sense of humor."

What were some of the most challenging or funny shoots you have worked on?

"Weddings and shooting for women's organizations such as IWC (International Women's Club). The ladies are having so much fun getting their photos taken I almost don't shoot what the events are supposed to be about. It's all out 'Selfies Fest'". Here I can only confess, Daniel is a 100 percent right.

Are there any risky aspects to your work?

"You, Agneta, and I have worked on many assignments together over the past nine years and once we went to Pattaya to interview a medical clinic working on stem cell procedures. We took the bus down from Bangkok and then we were crazy enough to share a motor bike, for a more than 30-minute ride to the clinic.

"This we wouldn't do anymore, it was dangerous and ridiculous. Today we can laugh at it, but we were shaky when we arrived and I had not even a helmet on," admits Daniel.



"Anything can happen during shooting, but until now I have been fortunate, no bad accidents.

"Among the most touching experiences to me is meeting the Dr. Cleopandh who works at the Bumrungrad Hospital. She is giving 26 abandoned children a warm, safe home and also makes it possible for them to get an education. The money for this, she pulls out of her own pockets. Her Chaiyapruk Children's Home doesn't only extend an orphan's life, but provides love and nurtures independence in each child."

The Philosophy of Chaiyapruk Children's Home: More than just the mere extension of life, our goal is to create a new path for the children.

Daniel has been visiting the home several times and got familiar with the kids. "They are so lovely young beings all of them and so grateful," Daniel says. He is full of admiration for the doctor. The Children's home is located in Ongkharak-Nakhonnayok, not too far from Bangkok. "I will visit them again at my next trip to Thailand," he adds.

Unfortunately Daniel will say goodbye again and go back to the US, but he is not ready yet with Thailand, he will for sure, be back soon. "This country has become my second home."

www.chaiyaprukchildrenhome.com

Pure Wellness Indulgence at the Cliff Spa

Royal Cliff's award-winning Cliff Spa, is located in a harmonious setting overlooking the Gulf of Thailand in the city of Pattaya. The resort has two Cliff Spas – located in the Royal Cliff Grand Hotel and the Royal Wing Suites & Spa. With two havens combined, it offers 18 luxurious treatment suites, saunas, steam rooms and jacuzzis where you can enjoy the view of the tranquil sea from each and every suite.

At Cliff Spa, you'll be greeted by a warm welcome as you step into an environment that immediately leaves you at ease. While choosing or waiting for your treatment, you'll be led to a comfortable lounge where you can choose to sip on a hot or cold delicious herbal tea. From the smell, the lighting, the ambiance, and the overall mood of the surroundings, it is indeed a hidden sanctuary for a heavenly refuge to pamper your body, mind, and soul!



Cliff Spa offers a wide variety of services ranging from facials, body wraps, body scrubs, and massage treatments. You may also indulge in a tailored full day spa package to suit your specific needs. Registered and skilled massage therapists will ease your muscle tensions, improve circulation, and chase away your stress with Cliff Spa's Deluxe Spa Packages that were designed to suit a busy lifestyle.

One may say that one of Cliff Spa's highlights is its outdoor massage under a private gazebo with a breathtaking sunset view. This is a definite must-experience. Enjoy an almost Zen-like encounter that promises you to revel in a new sense of well-being while you absorb the soothing sounds of nature, take in the calming breeze and delight in the scent of the ocean mingling with natural oils as you drift into a deep relaxation.

There is a lot more to what Cliff Spa can offer. It was recently awarded the 2019 Best Spa Destination in Thailand at the 2019 Haute Grandeur Global Spa Awards. Winning the award through a rigorous rating process relying on quality feedback from guests, the Cliff Spa has proven its reputation as a destination for an extraordinary spa, health and wellness experience. Open daily from 10 am to 10 pm, Cliff Spa provides a haven for ultimate relaxation that you must try!

**For more information on the Royal Cliff Hotels Group,
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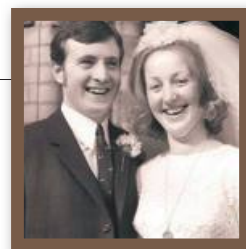
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Profile

Gale Bailey MBE



One of Bangkok's most popular expat ladies reveals all, including her visits to prisoners on Death Row at notorious Bang Kwang jail

Background: I was born on July 26, 1946 at twenty past midnight at 82 Ridley Street, Leicester. My father had been a POW (Prisoner of War) in Stalag 18 at Wolfsberg for over four years, my sister having been born in 1940, so along came Gale.

How was life back then? I did not realise when I was young but we were quite poor monetary wise (no bathroom, outside toilet until I was 22!) but my childhood was filled with love and care and I was never hungry. We were encouraged to read and write and regular trips to the local library were made.

I passed the 11-plus as had my sister before me and also my brother who was born in 1957 when my parents were considered OLD (44 and 46!)

Family today: I really felt the distance when our sister Pat died 16 years ago aged 64 but me and my brother, Mark Merrill, have a very strong bond despite the 10 years difference! I am very blessed with my family as well as my in-laws!

How did you end up in Thailand? The opportunity to come here for three years when we were both 50 seemed wonderful as we expected to earn a fortune and return home rich! LITTLE DID WE KNOW!! The company my husband Michael worked for wanted to open a representative office in the Far East Asia as sales were increasing but no one predicted the devastating financial crash in 1997!

Michael was Regional Manager and I was Assistant Regional Manager (general dogs-body) and worked for six years until the firm was sold to GE and I was ousted – not allowed to work downline of my spouse!! Their loss!



Proud moment for Gale when she received her MBE at Buckingham Palace. Below, with her grandchildren.



What about your children? Jane and Andrew came with us to Thailand but the timing was not good for them and they both went back to live in Leicester, our home town. It was very traumatic for us all but we have weathered the storm and we are all fairly 'normal'.

Jane returned and lived and worked in Thailand for over 12 years where she met and married her German husband, Henning Hegeler, and they have given us two beautiful granddaughters, Isabel and Mia. Andrew has visited often but prefers to live in UK.

British or Thai food? I love Thai food but never cook it – why would I when it is so readily available and delicious? At home I cook traditional British meals but one of our favourite places to eat out is at The Londoner on Pattanakarn Road where the quality is consistent with good service too!

What don't you like about Bangkok? Traffic is one of my pet hates as I seem to spend a great deal of my time in the back of a taxi – thank goodness for my iPhone. I drove around in my own car for the first 13 years so I know when the taxi drivers take me on the scenic routes!

There is so much construction everywhere and it breaks my heart to see the older and historical buildings being replaced by a chunk of concrete. So many of our favourite places have either gone or been modernised when the character disappears too. I really wonder if Bangkok has a Planning Department with all the shopping malls and condos built and being built. It is sad and scary to me!

So how have you filled your time in Bangkok? After I finished paid work, I was elected Chairman of the British Women's Group which lasted three years. When I stepped down, I was recruited to help with Ploenchit Fair (still do) on the BCTFN committee and a few months later became



President of the Bangkok St. George's Society, a position I held for four years!

It is all a great deal of fun even though hard work at times. However I have met many ambassadors and royalty which I would never have done back home.

Highlights of your time in Thailand: I was overwhelmed to receive an MBE (Most Excellent Order of the British Empire) in the 2014 New Year Honours for 'Supporting the British community and charity work in Thailand' – WOW!

I still feel honoured and humbled by the award but it is fantastic and has created such a feel good factor amongst my family and friends all over the world. The investiture at Buckingham Palace was wonderful – such a privileged experience granted to a few!

Any advice for newcomers to Thailand? Get involved with everything then you will meet and make new friends then decide what you prefer – better to do something

than nothing in this amazing place! Thailand has enabled me to do things I never imagined I could do, so have a go with a good heart and ENJOY!

When I was coming to Bangkok, I told everyone I was going to be a lady of leisure but I am still waiting for it to happen as there is always so much to do here. But you can make a big difference with a little kindness.

Are the local community groups as popular as in the past?

Sadly most of those based in Bangkok are not so well supported nowadays as there are so many new ones, plus not so many expats are arriving in town.

What about the Loyal Societies?

The Loyal Societies (St. George's, St. Andrew's, St. David's and St. Patrick's) who used to have 500-600 attendees at



Gale with Thailand's 'Last Executioner' Khun Chavoret,

their annual Balls suffer as things become more expensive. There also seems to be a different attitude these days – not so many interested in upholding traditions which is what the Loyal Societies are all about – savoring but sharing our differences! I am English but proud to be British and support the other Loyal Societies.

How did you get involved in visiting prisoners in Thai jails?

Little did I know that by agreeing to visit some of the chaps in Bang Kwang prison (sentences of over 20 years plus) how my life would become embroiled with them and their families as well as the prison guards! A friend was leaving Bangkok and wanted someone to visit 'her boys', so to appease her, Katherine Biggs and I went 'just the once' on 25th August 2005! We saw three young British chaps, two of whom were in shackles and on Death Row, and as we were leaving, Katherine said to me "We will have to come again, won't we?" ABSOLUTELY I replied!

What happened then?

Thus began weekly visits with more friends from the British Women's Group joining us so we could call out more chaps after which we began to see their friends who never had visitors (Russian, Tanzanian, Kazakhstan, Burmese, Nepalese, Indian – United Nations.) At that time, we could take 'farang' food to the inmates - bread, ham, cheese, tomatoes etc. as well as post in parcels filled with toiletries, pillows, spectacles and other goodies. No parcels allowed nowadays and only two books per prisoner if it is noted on an embassy letter.

How did the prisoners react to a woman visitor?

They were always delighted to see a female, even if some of us were not too young. We had a few men join 'the jail birds' as someone described us as well as BEVV – British Embassy Volunteer Visitors. We did not judge as they were

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Prisoners were always delighted to see a female, even if some of us were not too young. One said the other prisoners were so jealous he was going on a date, the first one in four years, which was funny as both me and Sally Smith were pensioners.



With Edith Stewart MBE.



Gale's 'Jail Birds'



St. George's Ball 2009

all inside for drug offences, but my family was shocked I would contemplate having anything to do with such people knowing how I felt about drugs!

I saw them as being 6000 miles from home and their loved ones and found that most of them were not only appreciative and grateful for our visits but also highly respectful, which has continued since the first chaps I visited are all now free.

On my first contact visit, Steve B said the others were so jealous he was going on a date, the first one in four years, which was funny as both me and Sally Smith were pensioners! Everyone loves a hug!

Visiting prisons must be depressing.

That is so not the case as our conversations cover everything under the sun - enlightening to all parties. I asked one chap if he would like anything bringing back when I was going to UK - a helicopter, he quipped! On another contact visit, about nine of us called nine chaps as family representatives (not allowed any more - sadly) and one young chap jumped up and said "Give me a hug, Gale", then asked "You smell lovely, what is it?" I replied "Opium" and he came straight back with "That's what I'm in here

for!" Their sense of humour is unbelievable.

Did you know Bang Kwang's most famous officer and movie star, Khun Chavoret Jaruboon?

Yes. He worked in the Foreign Office at Bang Kwang and wrote *The Last Executioner*, the story of his life. He described me as his friend in his second book, *The History of Bangkok Hilton*. He was a lovely man and I attended his funeral as a friend and out of respect to his family.

I still visit prison but not so often as it is such a trek (expensive too as completely out of my own pocket) and have remained friends with most of the chaps who are now free as well as their families. It has been a worthwhile thing to do and so many people have benefitted - on the inside and outside of prison!

What's Michael doing these days? My husband is 74 and still working in his own business. So as long as we are still able to travel back and forth, then life will carry on as normal. We also have family and friends visiting often so have had many quality times together over the years.

We will have been married 50 years in March 2020 and whilst it is not perfect, we are still together so maybe another medal is deserved!



Ross Dunkley, the former publisher of *The Phnom Penh Post* who is now serving a 13-year sentence in Insein Prison in Myanmar, and his former Editor-in-Chief at a *Phnom Penh Post* Christmas Party.



Alan's daughter Michelle, middle, her friend and her Dad outside the King's Palace in Phnom Penh.



My farewell party after resigning as Editor-in-Chief at *Khmer Times* in Phnom Penh.

My life in newspapers

Alan Parkhouse is one of the most respected senior journalists in the region. Fellow writer Scott Murray recently caught up with 'Parkie' to talk about his many experiences in a long and eventful career.

■ Alan was born in Brisbane, Australia, in 1954. He grew up in Grafton, a town of about 30,000, in northern New South Wales. He left Grafton High School at 15 to start an apprenticeship as a hand and machine compositor, or hot metal printer, at the *Daily Examiner*, Grafton's local newspaper since 1859. Later, he went on to the Sydney Graphic Arts College as part of his apprenticeship.

Otherwise, he studied at the school of hard knocks. Alan switched to journalism in the 1980s and became the editor of two suburban papers in Sydney before moving to the bigger national dailies. He has worked in newspapers in Australia, Thailand, England, Cambodia and Hong Kong.

As well as the two suburban newspapers in Sydney, and he has been the editor-in-chief of *The Phnom Penh Post* and *Khmer Times* in Cambodia and the acting editor of the *Sunday Bangkok Post* roughly 10 times while the editor was on holidays.

Q: What brought you to Southeast Asia originally?

A: I left Australia in 1974, when I was 20, on a mission to see the world. I had a ticket from Sydney to London that allowed me to stop anywhere along the way. My first stop was Singapore and I went overland from there all the way to Laos. I liked the region, especially Thailand, so much I decided to stay, plus by that stage, I really didn't have enough money to keep going.

Q: What was it like working at the *Bangkok Post*, a paper that many consider the best in Southeast Asia?

A: I worked at the *Bangkok Post* twice, the first time on the news desk of the daily paper. During my first stint there, the Sunday edition was given a whole new look by Australian Paul Ruffini, who'd been bought in from the SCMP in Hong Kong. I was asked to switch from the daily paper to the Sunday edition, where I took on the role of chief sub-editor.



From left, The Age's Lindsay Murdoch, Alan, author Christopher G. Moore, The Economist's Luke Hunt, Benjawan Singtuen, and the Sydney Morning Herald's Craig Skehan at a long lunch in Phnom Penh.

Paul was a fantastic editor to work with; full of story ideas for the two magazines we did with the Sunday edition, especially Spectrum, which I rated as the best weekly news magazine in Asia. Paul was the complete package – he was a great writer, an excellent sub-editor, a great headline writer and he saw the big picture that few others did. Paul turned the Sunday Bangkok Post into the best paper in Asia and I loved working there.

I eventually left after I was offered the editor's job of The Phnom Penh Post in Cambodia, which I did for four years. I then returned to Bangkok and the Sunday Bangkok Post where I had the title of senior editor, which I suspect was a subtle joke about my age by Paul. I had another two very enjoyable years working with Paul and his small team before I again left to go to Cambodia, this time to be the editor of a new paper, Khmer Times.

The Bangkok Post was a great place to work and I have very fond memories of my time there and am grateful for the friends I made and the talented people I worked with.

Q: Before the Bangkok Post you worked at The Nation. What was that like?

A: I first worked for The Nation here in Thailand in 1990 and was the first dedicated sub-editor the paper had ever hired for its sports section. I still remember how much they paid me when I first started – the grand total of 18,000 baht a month.

I left after a few years and went to Hong Kong and spent almost a year on the Eastern Express, a rival at the time to the South China Morning Post. My second stint at The Nation came in in 2001, when I was offered the job of sports editor. I remained in that job for about six years, and mostly enjoyed it.

I enjoyed being able to go into the field and report on sailing regattas, cricket and rugby tournaments around the country and region. And the small team I had on the sports desk were great people, but I can't say the same for management.

The Nation was started by a former Bangkok Post reporter who resented the fact that the Post had been started by a foreigner, so he went and started his own paper, proudly owned and run by Thais. But he had to reluctantly hire experienced foreigners to edit the English, and the unwritten rule was that few, if any, foreigners could rise in the ranks.

Some of the senior staff seemed to resent the fact that I was the sports editor, and they took my name out of the credit box listing the senior editorial staff that appeared every day in the paper. Some of the most talented journalists in Asia worked at The Nation over the years, but none were allowed to rise to senior positions and few were ever asked for advice by the senior, but far less experienced, Thai staff.

Perhaps if they had been more like the Bangkok Post and appreciated the talent of some of their imports and sought their advice, they might still be in a viable position today. But at the end of the day I did enjoy my time at The Nation, and I had a lot of fun with my counterpart from the Bangkok Post, Roger Crutchley.

Roger and I formed a team each to play the curtain-raiser for the elephant polo tournament for four of five years, and the annual Bangkok Post vs The Nation elephant polo matches were great. For the record, my team only lost once, the only year a trophy was presented. That trophy for their team's only win sat on the sports desk at the Bangkok Post and was regularly pointed out to me when I later worked at the Post.

Q: You've worked for 35 dailies and were the editor of five of them – which of those papers really stood out and why?

A: That's a tough question, and involves papers in Sydney, London, Bangkok, Hong Kong and Cambodia. All the papers I worked on were learning curves, for differing reasons, and they all had their own challenges.

One that really stood out to me and was exciting to be

involved with was The Phnom Penh Post. I took over as editor-in-chief just after the paper went from a weekly to a daily; the newsroom was full of young interns just out of college and there was a lack of experienced staff. We quickly turned that newsroom into a functioning daily operation and thanks mainly to the local staff, we broke some very good stories.

The combination of locals working with foreigners was a success – the locals would get the tips, follow up with phone calls, do most of the groundwork, then sit with the foreign reporters as they wrote the story. In my four years there, the paper won 24 international media awards. I also won the gold award from the World Association of Newspapers for the 68-page special edition I put together for The Phnom Penh Post's 20th anniversary, something I'm very proud of.

Q: Which of your fellow journalists do you most admire and why?

A: Another tough question as I've worked with so many good people over a very long period of time. I'll start with my father, who was the sports editor of a paper in the country town where I grew up. He later moved to Sydney as a racing writer and held senior positions with both the Packer and Murdoch organisations. He taught me the basics, plus a few tricks, and those lessons and advice were the most valuable I ever had.

Paul Ruffini at the Sunday Bangkok Post was one of the best I worked with. Another I admired but never worked with was The Age's Lindsay Murdoch. Others include Bernie Leo from the Daily Telegraph in Sydney, Charlie Webel from the Daily Telegraph in London, Graeme Loveridge and Chris Burslem at The Nation and Gordon Watts at Asia Times. I better stop now before the list becomes a very long one.

Q: You've met and interviewed many interesting folks over the years – who stands out and why?

A: In Thailand, one of the most interesting people I've met, and worked with for two years, was Pansak Vinyaratn. He has been the chief advisor to three prime ministers, all of whom were kicked out in coups – Chatichai Choonhavan, Thaksin Shinawatra and Yingluck Shinawatra.

Pansak was a graduate of the London School of Economics, among other places, a very smart but eccentric guy, and a visionary in so many ways. Many of the successful populist policies credited to prime ministers were his ideas.



Alan, MR Usnisa and Colin Hastings at a Bangkok Post reunion.



At the court commonly known as the Khmer Rouge Tribunal with, from left, award-winning journalist Luke Hunt, photographer Al Rockoff, whose part John Malcovich played in the movie The Killing Fields, and Alan.



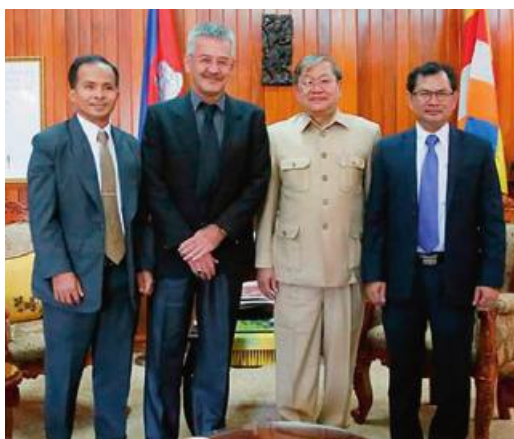
With some of Alan's colleagues from Khmer Times in Phnom Penh.

In Cambodia, one of the most interesting people I became friends with was Prince Thomico Sisawath, the late King Sihanouk's personal advisor, and cousin. Thomico was at Sihanouk's side on trips to Beijing where they hung out with Chairman Mao, to North Korea to stay with Kim Il-sung etc. He's a very funny guy and he has some great stories.

Q: You must have experienced a few hairy moments over the years, please tell us about some of them.

A: When the Thai army opened fire on protesters in 1992 was probably the closest I ever came to being shot. I was with my Nation colleague and fellow Aussie Chris Burslem when the army arrived on Rajadamnoen Avenue that night. A lot of other media were there too near the Phan Fa Bridge.

No one was expecting the army to open fire, but they did and it caused a mass panic and everybody ran. Because



From left, Sam Rith, Managing Editor of The Phnom Penh Post, Alan, Khieu Khanarith, Cambodia's Minister for Information, and Kay Kimsong, a Managing Editor of the Phnom Penh Post.



Interviewing Hun Many, Prime Minister Hun Sen's youngest son, in his office at the Council of Ministers in Phnom Penh.

it was at night, tracer rounds were whizzing past our ears as we ran for cover up a small side street. Most of the rounds were fired in the air, we found out later, but a lot were also fired into the crowd.

As we were running off the main road, a Thai student next to me was hit in the back and half fell on me, so I grabbed him around the waist and while still running, dragged him off the main road and out of the line of fire. I thought he was only slightly wounded, but as I put him down on the side street, I realised I had blood all over my shirt and the poor guy was dead. Then the shooting started again and I had to run, eventually hiding in a shop doorway. His body was one of many quickly taken away by the army after that first volley, so I never knew his name or what happened to him.

Q: What literary figures do you admire the most and why?

A: I admire some of the great Australian writers like Banjo Patterson, Henry Lawson, Tom Keneally, Colleen McCulloch and my cousin Brenda Walker, and the reason I like them is because they captured the spirit and character of our country.

Q: Which city have you enjoyed living in the most?

A: Bangkok has been my home on and off for many years now and I enjoy living here because the people are friendly, the food's great and mostly cheap, there is always entertainment of all kinds, and you can also find a quiet place to reflect. I also loved Phnom Penh in Cambodia, but I fear the charm will soon be lost there in the scramble to develop amid an avalanche of Chinese money.

Q: What do you miss most about Australia?

A: Many, many things, but not bushfires. I grew up in a country town on the east coast and we surfed every weekend in crystal-clear water on deserted, pristine beaches. Australia is such a beautiful country in so many ways, and unique, and I do miss that at times.

Q: In your experience, what are the main similarities and differences between Phnom Penh and Bangkok?

A: The first thing that struck me when I arrived in Phnom Penh was how much like Thailand it was, 40 years earlier. Similar architecture with temples and government

buildings, similar language, and the people were very similar. But the differences very soon become clear.

Cambodia survived a genocide and years of war that Thailand never had, and that certainly left a scar on everyone. Scratch the surface in Cambodia and the scars run deep. Their entire country was destroyed and they had to start again, not so many years ago. One thing I did admire in Cambodia was the determination of the young generation to rebuild their country. They look at Thailand and wonder where they'd now be if Pol Pot hadn't come along.

Q: What has changed most about journalism since you first started reporting/editing?

A: Everything has changed. When I started we used typewriters. When I was a crime reporter for an afternoon paper in Sydney, The Sun, in the early 1980s, we had to scribble our stories into a notebook in shorthand and dictate them over a two-way radio to the office. Everything has changed over the years and the challenge has been keeping up with it.

Q: Any advice for young journos starting out?

A: Don't be afraid to ask for advice if you're not sure about something. That was one of the most important things my father taught me, and in my opinion, one of the most valuable assets you can have. If you try to bluff your way through something, or make out you know something when you don't, you'll get caught out very quickly. It's better to swallow your pride and ask. From my experience, people are happy to explain things to those who don't know.

Q: Any items on your bucket list?

A: One is to take my grandson and my daughter and her husband on a slow cruise around Phang Nga Bay, which I still think is one of the most beautiful places on the planet, on the Silolona, one of my favourite boats.

Another would be taking my wife around Australia in a motorhome or camper, stopping where and when we want. A trip around Europe would be nice too, taking in many of the places I never got to on previous trips there. And Canada, in the summer: my parents went there and loved it and I've always wanted to go. But not when it's cold.



R-Haan

LOCATED in a spacious mansion in the Thonglor neighborhood, R-Haan was recently awarded 2 Michelin Star.

Internationally acclaimed Chef Chumpol Jangprai has dedicated himself to incorporating the five tenets from 'The Wisdom of Thai Cuisine' to create an authentic Thai food repertoire. These five elements have elevated R-Haan on to the global stage. A symphony of taste awaits! Call 02 059 0433 www.r-haan.com

A Taste of Thai

Entertaining guests from overseas or just fancy great Thai food in restaurants the locals use? Here's the pick of the best Thai outlets in Bangkok



Benjarong Restaurant

SET within the heritage home of Baan Dusit Thani, this tasteful reworking of Dusit Thani Bangkok's famous Thai restaurant offers a fine dining experience in an atmosphere of luxury and comfort. Beautifully restored furniture and refurbished décor set the scene for a culinary journey focused on the fresh ingredients, harmony and balance of flavours.

Tel: 02 200 9009

E-mail: jakaphet.pm@dusit.com

www.dusit.com



Midtown Thai

OFFERING modern Thai cuisine with top quality ingredients, Midtown Thai is set inside Siam Paragon, one of Bangkok's busiest malls. The restaurant's signature dishes include 24-hour marinated Grill Pork Ribs with Northeast dipping sauce, Spicy Glass Noodles 'Midtown' salad, and Extra Large Softshell Crab, deep fried with bird's eyes chili in basil sauce

Tel: 02 129 4516 Facebook: midtownthai Instagram: @midtownthai

Terrace Rim Naam

MANDARIN Oriental, Bangkok's famous al fresco Thai restaurant has appointed Chef Pom, Phatchara Pirapak as its new Chef de Cuisine. Her new menu is available between 5 pm and 10.30 pm nightly. Chef Pom previously worked at Saneh Jaan when it was awarded a Michelin Star. Terrace Rim Naam is located directly across the Chao Phraya River from the hotel.

Tel : 02-659-9000

Email: mobkk-restaurants@mohg.com



The House of Smooth Curry

THE House of Smooth Curry's décor evokes the image of a room in the private quarters of Kandhavas Palace, the residence of Princess Valaya Alongkorn. While the style is reminiscent of the 1920s and 1930s, the design is given a modern vibrancy with splashes of color and vivid patterns. The menu features authentic Thai cuisine from the four regions of Thailand with a focus on recipes from royal palaces and residences. Most of the restaurant's local organic produce is from farmers in the neighbouring Bangkok provinces and from Northern Thailand.

Also on the menu are local spirits, craft beers and wines, and cocktails drawing their inspiration from the provinces.

Tel: 02 650 8800,

e-mail FB.Theathenee@luxurycollection.com or www.theatheneehotel.com

Market Café

THIS new restaurant in the just-opened Hyatt Regency Bangkok Sukhumvit draws on the Nana area of Bangkok's history as an international trading and meeting center to present a menu of real Thai cooking with bold spices and vibrant flavours, crafted by chefs well-versed in truly local cuisine.

Thai objects from everyday life are used to decorate the restaurant, including copper pots and vases, together with antiques and items custom made by craftsmen in Chiang Mai.

Tel: 02 098 1234

www.hyattregencybangkoksukhumvit.com

email bkkhr.marketcafe@hyatt.com



Ros Dara restaurant

SERVING traditional Thai specialties, inspired by owner Khun Pui's childhood memories of the taste (Ros) of her mother's recipes (Dara), together with western favourites, and the best coffee on the block. Located in Daraya Boutique Hotel.

Tel: 02 612 3911, www.darayahotel.com



Spice Market

LOCATED in Parichart Court at Anantara Siam Bangkok Hotel, Spice Market has a new menu has presented authentic Thai cuisine since opening in 1983. Award-winning Chef Warinthorn Sumrithphon stays faithful to traditional flavours and hand-picks local produce to create dishes that pack a punch. Signature recipes include Green Curry with Braised Beef, Crispy Mackerel with Simmered Coconut Milk and Deep-Fried Roasted Duck with Chilli Jam. Set menus of family favourites to share in typical Thai style are also available.

The interior evokes a timeless market feel with teak beams and new furniture along with colourful Thai textiles. A new bar has been added, serving Thai wine pairings, cocktails and international beverages.

Tel: 02126 8866 Ext.1232 or email spicemarket.asia@anantara.com

www.anantara.com/en/siam-bangkok



Paste Bangkok

LOCATED in the heart of Chidlom shopping district, Paste Bangkok showcases Thai produce at its best, with ingredients often sourced straight from the farmers or even the Earth itself. Owner and Head Chef Bee Satongun plays creatively with Thai flavours and textures to create a clean, fresh and exciting menu for a taste sensation.

Tel: 02 656 1003.

www.pastebangkok.com

Bo.Lan

BASED on the belief that the best Thai restaurants should be found in Thailand, Bo.Lan was founded by two chefs, Duangporn Songvisava (Bo) and Dylan (Ian) Jones. The restaurant prides itself on serving modern but authentic Thai dishes. Sourcing only the best ingredients, the restaurant works closely with local farmers to find the best ingredients to bring to the table.

Tel: 02 260 2961, 02 260 2962.

www.bolan.co.th

Supanniga Eating Room

FOLLOWING the success of Supanniga Home Khon Kaen, Thanaruek Laoraowirodge brought her family recipes to Bangkok with Supanniga Eating Room. The idea simply started with a reminiscence of Thanaruek's grandmother and her home cooked meals

Tel: 02 714 7508 (Thonglor)

02 635 0349 (Sathorn)

www.supannigaeatingroom.com



OSHA

FOUNDED in 1997, OSHA is an authentic Thai restaurant that is part of the OSHA restaurant group operating in San Francisco. The restaurant offers delightful traditional Thai dishes while dining amidst a beautiful and relaxing environment'

Tel: 02 256 6555, www.oshabangkok.com



Steve Café & Cuisine

THIS restaurant offers unique tastes of authentic and home cooked style Thai food. Each ingredient is carefully sourced and selected, including a variety of traditional herbs and spices, by the expert chef to make sure the dishes are always fresh all the time. Decorated in a colourful retro style, the atmosphere of the restaurant reflects that of the 60-year-old riverside house. With outdoor and air-conditioned areas, enjoy the peaceful views of Chao Phraya River while dining on the authentic home-cooked Thai dishes is the best dining experience.

Tel: 02 164 2594-5 (Rama V1),

02 282 4003 (Phran Fa),

02 281 0915, 02 280 2989 (Dusit).

www.stevecafeandcuisine.com



Ruen Mallika Royal Thai Cuisine

A THAI restaurant that brings fine dining, authentic traditional Thai dishes, and a traditional Thai atmosphere together as one. Ruen Mallika Royal Thai Cuisine offers the menu that is a work of art in itself. Serving traditional Thai dishes with carefully sourced ingredients by a team of expert chefs, every dish is sure to be rich and flavourful.
Tel: 02 263 3211
www.ruenmallika.com



Nahm

NAHM prides itself on serving the best Thai food in Bangkok. The restaurant offers a flexible set menu starting off with canapes, a choice of nam prik and salad, soup, and stir fry dishes for an all-around authentic Thai dining experience.
Tel: 02 625 3333
www.comohotels.com



Siam Wisdom

EXQUISITE fine dining and delectable Thai dishes inspired by traditional Thai culinary wisdom in the midst of a mixture of oriental and modern Thai decor, Siam Wisdom is nestled in Soi Sawasdee (Sukhumvit Soi 31) and offers a wide range of classic and elegant Thai dishes.
Tel: 02 260 7811, www.siamwisdomcuisine.com



Issaya Siamese Club

A CHARMING Thai restaurant tucked away in a small street near Rama IV Road and surrounded by a beautiful green garden, Issaya offers a menu of traditional Thai dishes amidst the atmosphere of a Thai heritage house. Experience exquisite dining and taste delectable Thai dishes carefully crafted by the renowned Chef Kittichai and his team.

Tel :02 672 9040, www.issaya.com



Celadon

NAMED after the elegant Thai stoneware known for its signature jade green tone and delicately crackled texture, Celadon at the Sukothai Hotel serves authentic Thai food based on classic recipes. Chef Rosarin Sriprathum and her team use time-honored techniques to ensure that the restaurant continues to enjoy its high-standing among local diners. Surrounded by classic Thai lotus ponds overlooking the hotel's romantic grounds, Celadon's two pavilions and two terraces offers elegance and sophistication in a contemporary Thai style.

Tel: 02344 8888



Siam Tea Room

SIAM Tea Room definitely does tea and so much more. The restaurant offers a delightful combination of Thai and Western styles. This deli-inspired outlet spans the culinary divide. Sample a selection of freshly-baked pastries and authentic Thai cuisine alongside.

A welcoming area with comfy sofas, this is the ideal spot for a swift yet supremely satisfying breakfast, lunch or dinner. Many of their main dishes are quintessentially Thai. The special pork ribs and beef noodles come highly recommended.

Siam Tea Room opens daily from 7AM to 11PM.

Tel: 02 059 5999



By Peter L.

Summer on a Platter Khao Chae at Siam Tea Room

■ Siam Tea Room definitely does tea and so much more. This deli-inspired outlet spans the culinary divide but its beating heart is Thai.

Siam Tea Room welcomes diners with comfy sofas and is truly an ideal spot for a swift yet supremely satisfying breakfast, lunch or dinner. The paneled walls are traditional wood. Artistic Thai furniture, classic celadon ceramics from Kanchanaburi Province, Aranyik steel cutlery from Ayutthaya and staff uniforms made using indigenous “mor hom” fabric complete the Thai charm from within.

Many of their main dishes are quintessentially Thai. The special pork ribs and beef noodles come highly recommended. The entire menu is created and overseen by experienced Thai Sous Chef Phukvarun Watchmon who has been in the Thai culinary circuit since a very young age. Chef Phukvarun



started her culinary journey at the Royal Kitchen of Klai Kang Won Palace in Hua Hin, Prachuap Khiri Khan Province before joining the Thai kitchen teams at various top hotels.

Today, we came to savour the wide spectrum of taste that is found in Khao Chae. Available from 01 April till the end of May, Chef Phukvarun brought this seasonal Thai dish to new heights. Our lunch began with Chilled Santol Thai bingsu which came with orange bitter, shredded pork and fried shallots. The spectrum of taste and combination of sweet, sour and salty notes were truly unique and set the scene for the main star - the Khao Chae.

Artfully presented and best enjoyed slowly, the highlights included



the shallot stuffed with deep fried flavored minced fish, fried egg and sweet pickle turnip and green pepper stuffed with shrimp and minced pork in fluffy fried egg. Every condiment provided a varying note of sweetness. Summer on a platter!

Drop by Siam Tea Room between April & May from 11.30 to 5.30PM to enjoy the sublime notes of summer in Thailand...



Siam Tea Room, Bangkok Marriott Marquis Queen's Park, daily from 07.00 to 23.00hrs.

+66 (0) 2 059 5999 or email restaurant-reservations.bkkqp@marriott-hotels.com

Or connect with us via these channels: Website: www.bangkokmarriottmarquisqueenspark.com Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/siamtearoom/>, Line official account: @siamtearoom

Beautiful Restaurants



Quince

Quince, formerly located on Sukhumvit, has taken up a new residence at Siri House, with a Mediterranean-inspired, produce-driven kitchen based on a woodfire oven and grill, led by acclaimed chef Charlie Jones. Quince offers fine dining quality amidst a relaxed atmosphere, and serves aromatic dishes accompanied by the rustic charm of home-cooking, and an ever-changing seasonal cuisine.

No. 14/2 Soi Somkid, Phloen Chit Road, Bangkok

Website: www.sirihouse.com

Telephone: +66 94 868 2639

Hours of Operations: Open 08:00 – 00:00 daily



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.



JACQUELINE

Taking style and hosting cues from Jackie Kennedy Onassis, Jacqueline is the 'Lounge' at Siri House and pays tribute to the cocktail culture from the 60s with a healthy serving of timeless sophistication and a certain naiveté in the pursuit of pleasure. Mixed drinks are spirit-forward, fizzy and with a touch of the old world.

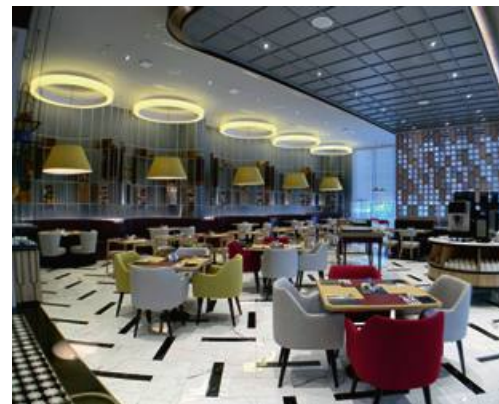
No. 14/2 Soi Somkid, Phloen Chit Road, Bangkok

Website: www.sirihouse.com

Telephone: +66 94 868 2639

Hours of Operations: Open 08:00 – 00:00 daily





The Market Restaurant @ Mercure Bangkok Sukhumvit 24

By Peter L.

■ As the name reveals, the hotel is located on Sukhumvit Soi 24, which is within the pulsating hub of Em District and walking distance from the Phrom Phong BTS Skytrain station. And if you are in the 'hood for some shopping or well-deserved R&R, check-in to this new hotel and head to The Market Restaurant.

The interior is welcoming. Jars filled with spices and ingredients are lined on the peripheral walls. Magazines and light reads are placed side by side with kitchenware decor. The design is in line with the name The Market - where one can find a potpourri of fresh 'everything'.

The pictorial menu depicts an array of international and local favourites. Order a smoothie to go along with your salad. The Fresh Salmon with Avocado and Quinoa (250) is highly recommended and a hearty meal in itself! Or, chow down on their signature 'The Market' Beef Burger which comes with a generous side of fries. Before long, it is time for the perfect reunion - with a glass of cold



beer. As the saying goes, it is 5pm somewhere else! (That is, if you are not already here for an early evening meal).

The quintessential Tom Yum Goong is available of course. From the Wok section of the menu carries 4 local favourites as well from Phad Thai to Pad Kaprao.

For diners seeking something heavier, From The Grill should be your focal point of the menu. We went with Kurobuta Pork Tenderloin - we



loved the presentation, the juicy & succulent pork and the roasted pumpkins.... ahh, we actually did ask for more!

All in, The Market Restaurant is an easy choice for affordable dining, especially when you are in the area. The hotel is also brand new, which is great!

*The Market Restaurant
Mercure Bangkok Sukhumvit 24
02 659 2888*

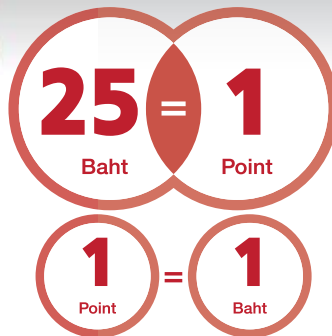
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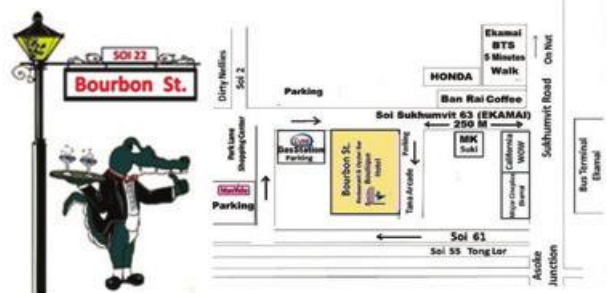


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9/93-40 Sukhumvit 63 (Ekamai) Klongton-Nua,
Wattana Bangkok 10110, Thailand tel : 0 2381 6801-3



ALATi opens at Siam Kempinski

Enjoy casual dining at Siam Kempinski Hotel Bangkok at ALATi, an informal yet stylish restaurant with a menu that reflects the diverse culinary traditions of the Mediterranean.

“Alati is the Greek word for salt, a seasoning and preservative used for centuries by many different cultures and civilisations,” explained Executive Chef Carlo Valenziano. “Eating salt is a symbol of friendship in many regions, and at ALATi, we believe that friendship and good food is a perfect combination. ALATi combines high-quality ingredients, an open kitchen and a relaxed atmosphere in a casual yet stylish setting.”

ALATi is located on the lobby floor of Siam Kempinski Hotel Bangkok and opens daily for an à la carte lunch from 12:00 to 14:30 and dinner from 18:30 to 22:30.

Tel: +662 162 9000 or email alati.siambangkok@kempinski.com.



New on the scene

Hot new restaurants, bars & cafés in Bangkok



World's first 'Kimura Don' opens at Siam Paragon

Japanese restaurant Kimura Don headed by world-famous sushi chef Koji Kimura, whose Sushi Kimura restaurant in Tokyo has achieved two Michelin Stars for five consecutive years, has launched the first branch of Kimura Don on the 4th floor of Siam Paragon.

Chef Koji has revolutionised the sushi industry by proving that the most delicious sushi is no longer necessarily sushi that emphasises the freshness of the ingredients. Sushi that has been cured or marinated with various types of fish appropriate to the season can bring the most delicious taste of each type of fish into a perfect balance of flavour. Chef Kimura has successfully developed the method of curing fish and has earned himself the honorary title ‘Father of Aged Sushi.’ He will still be using his famous sushi techniques at Kimura Don to cook premium imported ingredients from sources such as Japan and Norway, ensuring tastes and textures of super-premium quality.

Prices start from Baht 285++ Baht. Tel. 02-6109611-12, 097-0569228 or email kimura.pg@bigfathen.com



SURF by Seafood Express

SURF by Seafood Express started as a Delivery Premium seafood more than four years ago but has now become a restaurant serving fresh seafood such as Canadian Lobster, Sri Lanka Prawn, Large Crab from and Oysters from Surat Thani.

Open : 10:00 -22:00 (Closed on Wednesday)

Tel: 095-778-9000 Delivery : Line: @seafoodexpress

www.theseafoodexpress.com

FB : theseafoodexpress / FB : SURFseafoodrestaurant



EASY! Buddy, contemporary Thai comfort food at Central World

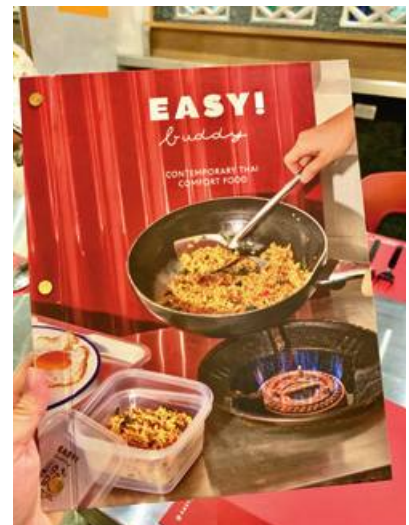
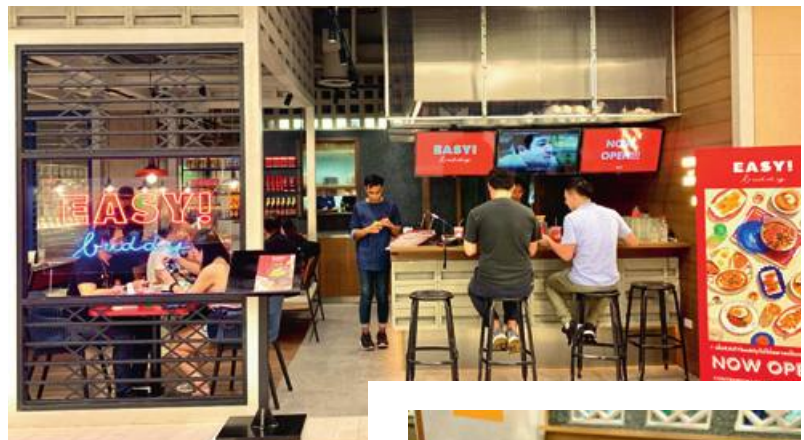
Whether its Kaprao, Jaew or Garlic Peppercorn, Easy Buddy has the perfect contemporary twist on all these Thai classics. Customize the perfect Thai fried rice by choosing your grains (rice, sticky rice or quinoa), sauce base, your choice of meat (beef, pork, salmon) and plenty of other toppings (crispy fried duck egg, caramelized corn, pork cracking chilli paste).

Enjoy our Easy Buddy appetizers such as deep-fried pork neck with our jaew paste or our famous Chinese sausage with black truffle

crispy wonton. Finish off your meal with our scrumptious and refreshing desserts, try our soymilk pannacotta with shaved ice and milo crunch or fresh milk pannacotta with shave ice and crispy deep fried dough.

Tel: +66 (0) 65 634 5169 or at Glowfish, Sathorn (BTS Chongnonsri) T: +66 (0) 65 535 9319, Open House, Central Embassy (BTS Ploenchit) T: +66 (0) 89 455 5424

IG: @easybuddybkk
Line: @easybuddybkk
FB: easybuddybkk



Food & Drink

Bangkok's hottest dining deals and news



Red Sky's lunch deal

Red Sky restaurant at Centara Grand at CentralWorld now offers an affordable weekday lunch menu with two courses starting at just Baht 855++.

Choose any two courses for Baht 855++, three courses for Baht 1,055++ or add an additional fourth course for Baht 1,255++.

Tel: 02-100-6255 or email us at diningcgcw@chr.co.th

Website: www.centarahotelsresorts.com/redsky

Facebook: Red Sky Bangkok

Instagram: [redskybkk_centara](https://www.instagram.com/redskybkk_centara)



Afternoon Tea at Waldorf Astoria

Waldorf Astoria Bangkok has introduced a new afternoon tea inspired by Executive Pastry Chef include Garden Carrot Cake, Yogurt & Honey Bee, Spring Nest Tiramisu, Butterfly Macaron, Sakura Lemon & Raspberry Tart, and a range of Asian and Western-inspired savories. In-between these gourmet bites, sip a cup of your favorite Mariage Frères tea.

Peacock Alley enjoys views overlooking the Royal Bangkok Sports Club, or relax in a sofa with the backdrop of a beautiful Art Deco bronze clock designed by André Fu.

The afternoon tea set is priced at Baht 2,200++ including a choice of tea and coffee for two. Guests may also select a Billecart-Salmon Champagne option priced at Baht 4,000++ including two glasses of champagne.

📍 Tel: 02846 8888 or e-mail: bkkwa.fb@waldorfastoria.com



Going E-saan at Bangkok Marriott Marquis Queen's Park

Bangkok Marriott Marquis Queen's Park's Siam Tea Room has added popular E-saan dishes such as Somtam Pla Ra, fried frog legs with garlic, Laab Ped Udorn or spicy minced duck salad and 'Kaeng Om Nua' or spicy slow-cooked beef brisket soup as additional dishes to its menu from today til 31 March 2020 from 11.00 hrs. – 23.00 hrs.

Tel: +66 (0) 2 059 5999 or email: restaurant-reservations.bkkqp@marriotthotels.com

www.bangkokmarriottmarquisqueenspark.com

www.facebook.com/siamtearoom/ Line: @siamtearoom



Chocolate Afternoon Tea

Anantara Siam Bangkok is offering a treat designed for those with a fondness for chocolate from now until 31 March 2020. Featured dishes include White chocolate and strawberry meringue, Dark chocolate truffle tart and a deconstructed exotic napoleon, Gianduja chocolate choux Brest and many more.

Alternatively, enjoy savoury delights by Executive Pastry Chef Ajinkya Soundankar and his team, such as Smoked Duck Lollipop Apricot Gel, Salmon Confit with cocoa butter pesto mayo and Baba Ganoush with white chocolate.

Also served are world renowned Mariage Frères tea, including a Thai-Inspired Tea collection exclusive to Anantara Siam Bangkok Hotel, such as the Eléphant Blanc – Black tea festive fruits & Flowers, Lune Rouge – Mild green tea rose & ginger and Temple De L'aube – Flowery soft green tea with citrus notes.

📍 Tel: 02126 8866 Ext. 1217 or email lobby.asia@anantara.com Visit our website at www.anantara.com/en/siam-bangkok



Friday Seafood Buffet at Twenty Seven Bites Brasserie

Enjoy an 'Exclusive Seafood Buffet' at Radisson Blu Plaza Bangkok's renowned restaurant, Twenty Seven Bites Brasserie. This Friday-only culinary event features live cooking stations serving the best flavours from around the world, including fresh seafood-on-ice such as River prawns 200 grams, oysters, NZ Mussels, and Kani Miso Crab.

Also served are imported meats, Rack of Lamb or Beef, live carving stations, Asian bites including Thai soups, along with international choice-cut meats, and Indian food.

French brasserie-style counters are packed with freshly baked, delicious pastries, and choice of desserts.

Friday Seafood Buffet at 1,800 Baht net including soft drink, tea, coffee, cocktail and beer

Every Friday, 18.30-22.30 hrs.

📍 Tel: 02 302 3333 or www.facebook.com/radissonbluplazabangkok



Great wine deals at Bar@494

Enjoy free-flowing wine at Bar@494 daily from 7:00 pm to 10:00 pm with the added bonus of 'Come 4, Pay 3' only 999 Baht ++ per person. Or go for the 'Happy Hour' – two for the price of one on selected wines and beers. Daily from 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm. From now to 31 March 2020.

Bar@494 is located on the Lower Lobby Level of Grand Hyatt Erawan Bangkok.

📍 Tel: 02254 6250 or email: restaurants.bangh@hyatt.com



'Seafood Sensation' at Atelier

Discover the world's finest catches of seafood, every Friday and Saturday, during dinner buffet at Atelier, Pullman Bangkok Grande Sukhumvit. This 'Seafood Sensation' includes live oyster, mussel and shrimp, while grilled selections include prawn, crab and sea bass.

Also on the menu are European and Asian favourites such as beef steak, lamb steak, pasta, roasted meats, sushi and shashimi, Indian curries, as well as salad bar, soups and cheese selections. Desserts include chocolate fountain, crêpe Suzette, home-made ice cream, cake, fruits and Thai desserts.

Available every Friday and Saturday evenings from 6.00 p.m. to 10.30 pm at Baht 1,899++ per person including free flow soft drinks.

📍 Tel: 02 204 4071

Website: <https://bit.ly/2uRbcZv>



Great steaks at The District Grill Room & Bar

Savor premium T-bone steak cooked to perfection by Bangkok Marriott's Chef Christian and his team.

Dishes including Australian Wagyu 300-day grain-fed beef, American USDA Prime Black Angus short loin grain-fed beef, and Thai - French Charolais 45-day dry-aged beef. All dishes are served with bone marrow gravy red wine sauce, butter café de Paris and two side dishes which are mashed potato and roasted oven cauliflower with beef jus glazed, and pistachio bit. Delectable menu starts from Baht 1,950 ++.

The District Grill Room & Bar is open daily for dinner from 6:00 pm – 11:00 pm and every Sunday from 12:00 pm -3:00 pm for Sunday brunch.

Tel: 02-797-0000 or email to diningbangkok@marriott.com



Slice of Yaowarat at Praya Kitchen

Enjoy some of the most popular dishes from Bangkok's Chinatown, also known as 'Yaowarat' at Praya Kitchen, Bangkok Marriott Hotel The Surawongse.

Whether it is stir-fried with yellow curry powder, stir-fried with garlic, stir-fried with chili and salt or grill, the chefs are able to provide at the live cooking stations. Not to mention such refreshing herbal drinks as Chrysanthemum juice and Chinese mixed herbs drinks.

The Yaowarat theme is every Thursday. The dinner buffet is offered at Baht 1,388++ until 31 March 2020. The 50% for children 4-12 years old; children under four eat free.

Te: 02 088 5666 or visit www.bangkokmarriottsurawongse.com.



Flexible lunch options at The Athenee Hotel

Set Lunch menus at The Allium Bangkok, The Athenee Hotel, a Luxury Collection Hotel, Bangkok offer flexibility and plant-based options, including modern French cuisine at prices that provide choice in all sections.

Menus start from Baht 650++ for two courses, and Baht 750++ for three courses.

Served in contemporary surroundings, the dishes are created by Chef Roxanne Lange, who sources European ingredients in combination with locally grown organic produce.

Open Tuesdays to Sundays (closed on Mondays) Lunch 12:00 pm – 2:30 pm. Dinner 06:00 pm – 10:30 pm.

Tel: 02 650 8800 or e-mail: Fb.TheAthenee@luxurycollection.com or visit website: <https://www.theatheneehotel.com>



River Barge's themed buffets

From Sunday to Wednesday, River Barge at Chatrium Hotel Riverside Bangkok holds its Signature Dinner Buffet while the Thai night is held every Thursday.

Friday and Saturday features a Seafood Buffet.

Available Sunday-Thursday at Baht 1,290 net for adults and Baht 645 net for children (6-11 years old) and Friday-Saturday at Baht 1,490 net and Baht 745 net for children (6-11 years old).

Tel: 0 2307 8888 ext. 1923-1924 or email: riverbarge.chrb@chatrium.com, www.chatrium.com



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Meet the Chef

PHILIPP MAUS

Executive Chef



What's the philosophy behind your creations?

One must never forget that cooking is an art form and akin to all art, simplicity is what comes closest to perfection. I therefore strive to find innovative ways to create a wow factor for our guests.

What's your goal for every dish you cook?

To please my guests with a surprise of flavours.

Most influential chef?

Paul Bocuse.

Most difficult aspect of cooking?

To manage your timing perfectly.

Your biggest mistake as a brand new chef?

Underestimating the pressure waiting for me.

Three words that describe your cooking?

Clean, tasteful, harmonic.

What music do you listen to while cooking?

Minimal house/techno.

What's your favourite wine?

Difficult question but Château Rothschild.

What do you do when not busy cooking?

Serving as a volunteer for a rescue foundation.

What would you be if you weren't a chef?

Paramedic

Chef in focus

■ **CHEF PHILIPP MAUS**

Prior to his appointment at Amari Watergate, Maus held the title of Executive Chef for prestigious hotel chains in Thailand and Vietnam since 2009. In total, he has almost 20 years of experience in the hospitality and gastronomy industries, including Italian, Chinese and Thai, and managed team members from all over the world, bringing a wealth of international experience to Amari Watergate.

"It is a great privilege to take this position," said Maus. "Amari Watergate is a recognised address on Bangkok's dining scene for its excellent venues offering a unique approach to world cuisine and interior design. I am looking forward to maintaining the quality of service and cooking that guests already know and love, as well as guiding the team to reach new goals of passion and creativity in their work."

Dish of the Month

Sunday Roast @ Baba Beach Club Hua Hin

Indulge in expertly grilled roast beef long bone, BBQ lamb ribs, beef cheese burgers or BBQ pork ribs to choose from exclusively highlighting our Josper Grill. All served with french fries, mix salad, BBQ and nam jim jeow sauce, finishing off each Sunday Roast dining experience.

Available every Saturday - Sunday from 11am - 6pm @ Baan Chok beachfront cafe & eatery
Roast Beef Long Bone THB 880++, Roast BBQ Lamb Ribs THB 880++, Roast BBQ Pork Ribs THB 480++ and Beef Cheese Burger THB 400++

Finishing off with an apple crumble paired with caramel ice cream.



french fries

mix salad

*Grilled roast beef
long bone*



Chef in focus

BBH Chef Profile for Big Chill magazine

Niwat Laopein

Chef Wat, Head Chef @ Baba Beach Club Hua Hin

With almost 10 years of culinary experiences, Niwat, Head Chef of Baba Beach Club Hua Hin brings a dynamic and creative energy to Baba Beach Club's various culinary scenes. As well as being trained overseas, Niwat started working for Sri panwa since he were a trainee from preparing vegetables and meats during breakfast. He has learned and developed his skills for 6 years at Sri panwa where he successfully created delicious and authentic Thai-cuisine experiences at the restaurant.

With his passion to learn and explore new specialties, Chef Wat has been promoted to Baba Beach Club Hua Hin as Head Chef where his expertise contributes to the high standards and varieties of dishes from Italian to Thai-cuisine.

For more information & further bookings, please call 032-899-130 or email us at: huahin@bababeachclub.com

Recipe

Sizzling Prawns



cut out and keep



Rui Barata GM BR Munns international Bangkok

Rui Barata is from Portugal but Bangkok is fast becoming his second home. He is French Portuguese and wears many hats in his career. With 24 years in the Food & Beverage industry, Chef Rui is constantly traveling and traversing the globe to discover new flavors and to embark on new culinary voyages.

Chef Rui has been with the BR Munns Group for the past 5 years. Besides leading the kitchen team, he also doubles as a General Manager and oversees the full operations of Piri Piri and six other brands across Thailand.

BR MUNNS INTERNATIONAL CO,LTD
Tel:+662-061-8879
Fax:+662-063-8879
Mobile:+669-0987-0132
<http://piripiriasia.com>

Ingredients

- 4 pcs Tiger Prawns
- 2 pcs Orange Slice
- 1 tsp Minced garlic
- 2 pcs Lemon Slice
- 2 tbsp Orange Juice
- 0.5 tsp Triple-sec
- 0.5 tsp Salt
- 0.5 tsp Pepper
- 2 tbsp White Wine

- 1 tsp Olive oil
- 1 tsp parsley

Method:

1. Heat the hot pan. Fry tiger prawns with olive oil
2. Put Garlic, White Wine, Orange juice, Orange slice, Lemon slice
3. Marinate with triple-sec, salt, pepper, parsley
4. Place the hot pan on a wooden tray.



By Peter L.

Reeling It In

■ The large menu at the entrance is blue in colour. So is the restaurant for the most part with nautical theme taking center stage. The restaurant feels like a welcoming deck on a ship, sailing towards a dream destination in the azure waters of the Mediterranean.

Their promise is in the freshness - of their seafood, so we came to try one fine Friday morning. This is Cafe Fish, and their flagship branch is in Siam Paragon. Located on G Floor, steps away from Gourmet Market, this seafood galore is an easy find...

Positioned as Greek and Mediterranean cuisine, you can be sure that feta cheese and lemon are regular stars in their maritime menu. Besides Siam Paragon, they also operate an outlet in Terminal 21 mall in Bangkok.

Lunch started with Greek salad, of course. The crisp greens and generous spread of feta cheese



awakened the senses. The calamari starter reeled us in even further, ohh with a squeeze of lemon, so much was achieved.

The fish and chips here is done the old fashion way. Using Atlantic cod with a tightly held batter recipe, the accompanying tartar sauce did the final uplifting. Mussels are from New Zealand and the big prawns are served with a sauce of your choice: lemon butter, garlic herb or piri piri (spicy) Portuguese sauce. Tough choice, we say. Go with your heart. And keep a spare prawn or two for another sauce too...

For sharing, we recommend their seafood platter - the portions are huge

and is adjusted based on the number of people dining. Their flagship outlet has been operating since the first day when Siam Paragon opened. That's a while back now, and is a testament to their success!

End your meal with a cup of tea and reminisce or dream of that Greek fishing village, or a scene from Mamma Mia. Don't forget the slice of lemon...

*Both branches are open daily
Siam Paragon | 9.30am – 10pm
Terminal 21 | 10am – 10pm
For more information,
visit <https://www.cafefishasia.com>*



New chef but familiar welcome at Rossano's



■ Our second lunch of the year was held at Rossano's, a venue we had not revisited for several years. Despite the passage of time, Maitresse d' Khun Noi could be found directing the team of servers as she used to do at L'Opera more than 20 years ago.

However, a new Chef, Sr. Francesco, was much in evidence and we learned that he is a Venetian and consequently well versed in combating floods; one hopes these skills will never be needed in Soi Asoke.

Follador Cuvée Torri di Credazzo 2017 (Veneto, Italy) accompanied a limited choice of Canapés; Wine spokesman Brendon Winter found this sparkler made from glera grapes very refreshing and a great start for the meal. He went on to congratulate Thomas Boedinger for choosing this and the other excellent wines month after month within the limits of the Club's budget.

The first course was a Trio of Prosciutto, Burrata and Rocket Salad with Italian Sausage. What might have been at first sight an over-sized olive turned out to be a peach, we were told and appreciated by Food Spokesman Tom Whitcraft. We also learned that Burrata is not readily available in Thailand (it seems Isan holds on tightly to its buffalos!) and is also difficult to prepare.

It was accompanied by Rabl Käferberg Grüner Veltliner Alte





Reben 2013 (Kamptal, Austria), rather different to other Grüner Veltliners I have drunk but fresh with gentle spiciness. Brendon enjoyed this also.

Next came Foie Gras filled Ravioli, Spaghetti Calabrese and Risotto Porcini; the picture does not do justice to the dish as the tastes were excellent. Tom loved the risotto. Cantina Nebbiolo Mascarello 2013 (Piedmont, Italy) was the matching wine; Parker had scored it 96: "This is a classic and traditional interpretation of Nebbiolo with an absolutely pristine and polished flavour profile. The bouquet opens to pressed violet, cassis, liquorice, wild sage and cola. There is an elegant mineral imprint as well with rusty iron and iodine." A little flattering perhaps but so was Brendon's suggestion that it was an Italian answer to New Zealand's love affair with Pinot Noir.

The main dish, Grilled Wagyu Tomahawk served with sautéed potatoes and grilled vegetables was first-rate. The beef had been cooked perfectly for those preferring medium-rare.

Matched with this came Feudo Maccari Mahâris Syrah 2014 (Sicily, Italy) of which Parker (92) said "The wine offers toasted notes of almond husk and Spanish cedar in front of dark fruit, sweet blackberry pie and black spice. This is a masculine and powerful wine that delivers ample muscle and brawn. It presents a thick and chewy structure with loads of dark, plump fruit that should carry it forward over the next five to ten years."

Finally, Tiramisu and Vanilla Ice Cream, a favourite with Rossano fans over the years, was praised by Tom. The accompanying Feudo Maccari Saia 2015 (Sicily, Italy) earned yet more compliments from Brendon who thought that this would

be an excellent substitute for port wine should supplies of that ever dry up.

We always try to mark members' birthdays with a few words of congratulation; Dick Stone (80 years old on 29th February) will have seen only 20 anniversaries of that day. The second member David Dean is almost two years younger than Dick and so it was fitting to ask Dick to present the token of our gratitude to Chef Francesco, Khun Noi and the team at Rossano's.

Rossano's
Asoke Soi 3, 167 Soi Sukhumvit 21,
rossanosbangkok.com
Tel: 02 260 1861



Headmaster says Harrow's legacy is alive and well in Bangkok

By Maxmilian Wechsler

Jon and Suzie Standen are happy with their decision to leave the UK and help bring the unique Harrow experience to young hearts and minds in Bangkok.

Among the more than 70 international schools in Bangkok, Harrow International School stands out as one of the very best. Harrow first came to Thailand 22 years ago, but the institution was founded way back in 1572 under a Royal Charter granted by Queen Elizabeth I in London.

Alumni include Winston Churchill and six other British prime ministers; the first prime minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru; and monarchs like King Hussein of Jordan. The school has educated a long list of renowned business and sports figures, artists, actors and so on. Besides the Bangkok campus in Don Mueang district, the UK-based Harrow has overseas campuses in Beijing, Hong Kong and Shanghai.

The BigChilli is pleased to present an interview with Bangkok Headmaster Jon Standen, whose wife Suzie is Harrow Bangkok Ambassador.

■ “Our school in Bangkok is in a partnership with Harrow School in London,” said Mr Standen at the start of the interview. “Our coat of arms comes from Harrow London’s, which will be 450 years old in 2022. It is one of the most famous independent schools in the United Kingdom and one of the best.

“We have been in Bangkok 22 years and here in Don Mueang district for 16 years. We were the first of the branded British schools in Thailand. There are more and more international schools opening in Bangkok all the time, but none can match Harrow’s history of excellence, which extends to this Bangkok campus.

“How my wife Suzie and I got here is a good story. I was previously headmaster at Plymouth College, an

independent school in the southwest of England. The college is particularly famous for swimming and aquatics. Suzie was originally an accountant there, and also did a lot of work at the college helping our physician and working with the parents. I was headmaster at Plymouth for just under four years, and gained a lot of experience and recognition there for my work.

“Suzie and I came to Southeast Asia to recruit foreign students to study and board at the school. One day I got the idea that when it came time to move another step up the career ladder to a bigger school, maybe we should look for a school in Southeast Asia rather than in England. Suzie thought about it and said ‘yes.’ She likes travelling and she loves this part of the world as much as I do.



The Harrow approach to education encompasses the arts, athletics and academics.

“We agreed that when a position at the right school in this region became available we would apply. When Harrow International School Bangkok announced an opening we went for it, and here we are. There were a number of applicants. We were interviewed initially at Harrow in London and the final interviews were conducted here. This was in early 2018; 10 months later, in January 2019, we came to Bangkok.”

Duties

“As Headmaster of the school I am ultimately responsible for the quality of everything we offer. I have, of course, a good team to help me. At the top are seven people who report directly to me. They include the head of secondary school, the head of primary school, the director of finance and the director of operations, who makes sure the site is safe, beautiful and well-maintained, and also looks after new building projects. Then I have a director of external

relations, who looks after missions, marketing and alumni. Rounding out the team is the director of human resources.

“We have about 200 teachers and roughly 100 academic support staff. We have about 100 general support staff as well, making the total around 400 people. Most of the teachers are British, with a few South Africans, Australians and Irish. They are all highly qualified and experienced.

“There is a great deal of paperwork involved in the job of headmaster, and of course it must be done. But to be honest it isn’t a part of the job that I enjoy, so I try to get out as much as possible to break it into manageable parts. I like to get out and see what’s going on in the classrooms, on the sport fields and in music rooms. I want to get a first-hand look at school activities as much as I possibly can. Of course, I am also in my office quite a lot out of necessity.

“Suzie and I live in a nice house in the school compound, which is very convenient because we don’t have to travel to work and therefore save a lot of time. I get into the office at 6.30am, plan my day and make sure I



have all the resources I need for the day and so on.

“My wife has the title of school ambassador, and she has a number of jobs to do in this respect, including helping me when we recruit teachers and recruit students who live here. We have now about 130 boys and girls aged 9-18 living at the high quality Boarding Village in the compound.

“One of the things my wife has been doing recently is helping the operations team with the interior design of the new staff condominium block we are building. We are adding on another 30 apartments because we are now short on on-campus housing for our staff. Suzie is liaising with the operations team and the staff, to make sure the apartments have the features and characteristics that our people say they want. At one time we were temporarily relocating staff in order to refurbish existing townhouses. Suzie was very involved in looking after their well-being during this transition period. A good portion of our staff prefer to live on campus.

“Since I am the public face of the school, I have to attend various functions outside the campus. It is important that Harrow Bangkok is represented at certain events in Bangkok and sometimes outside the metropolitan area,” said Mr Standen. When asked how students are attracted to the school, he replied: “A very effective means of advertisement is parents who tell their friends how happy they are with the education their children are receiving at Harrow Bangkok. That’s probably the main reason parents come to ask about joining the Harrow family.

“Of course, we also advertise in various media to keep our profile prominent. Social media is also an important tool these days. Magazines like yours are also very effective in getting the word out about our school,” said the headmaster, adding that he likes to browse through a magazine he’s holding in his own hands, rather than always clicking on stories he sees on the internet. “In fact, I tried online subscriptions to some magazines I like, so I

could read them on my iPad, but I went back to the hard copies. I just like the feel of a magazine.

“I don’t have any set working hours – I work as long as it takes to get the job done on any given day. In order to do a good job as a headmaster you must be prepared to work as many hours as needed, and to show up for a great many diverse functions and events that are important for the school. For example, we usually have a lot happening on weekday evenings, like musical performances, and we also have many activities on weekends, sports in particular. Last weekend I was back in the UK recruiting teachers. It’s now been two weeks since I’ve had a day off.”

A superior learning space

“The area of Harrow Bangkok is 35 acres. This encompasses state-of-the-art teaching spaces and facilities for design technology, drama, music and sports, as well as living spaces for students and staff, plus a lake and well-maintained green areas.

“Currently we have 1,628 students. As I mentioned before, 130 students live at the high quality Boarding Village. The rest are driven to the school in private vehicles or school minibuses. We have just opened a new access road from the main road to allow parents to drive directly to the school instead of making turns on a narrow street. This will make life easier for them and for the local residents.

“The majority of our students are Thai, but we have a diverse student body, with around 30 nationalities represented. Children in our school start at the age of three and they can continue with us until they graduate from secondary school, usually at 18 years of age.

“We follow the British curriculum and we also teach Thai language. The older students study IGCSE and A Level material. These are British qualifications and they are a very high standard. Our students can easily get into universities in the UK, the US, Thailand and Australia. These are the most popular destinations for our students.”

Taken with Thailand

Mr Standen said both he and his wife have absolutely no regrets about making their move to Thailand. They both love the Thai culture and friendliness of the Thai people. “We usually cook for ourselves and sometimes our maid cooks, but Suzie loves going out for street food. We eat a mixture of Western and Thai foods.

“We have been able to enjoy a lot of travelling in Thailand and the whole region. Recently we’ve gone to Koh Samui and Phuket and over to Cambodia. We really like living in Bangkok, but you have to pick the right times to go out to avoid traffic and crowds. The weather here doesn’t bother us, apart from March and April when it does get very hot.

“I love my job and hope to stay here until I retire, which will probably be in about ten years. This is a wonderful school. Suzie loves it here as well. We are having a great time in Thailand. It is a wonderful place to live and work. Hopefully we will be here for a long while to come,” Mr Standen said.



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 - Enormous Land of 60 Rai.

Interview with Cameron Fox, Founding Head of School, VERSO

VERSO, a new international school located at Thana City, opens in August 2020 and is currently accepting applications and hosting campus tours.



Cameron Fox is the Founding Head of VERSO International School.

For the past 19 years, Cameron has served the American International School (AIS) in Hong Kong, as a teacher, vice-principal, principal, and since 2005, as the Head of School. As the school's senior administrator, Cameron has a deep knowledge of the educational and operational requirements of a dynamic international school community. He is also an experienced Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) Chair and regularly leads accreditation visits to international schools across the East Asian Region.

Cameron is originally from Scotland where he completed his undergraduate studies at the University of Strathclyde in Politics and Industrial Relations. He moved to Hong Kong in 1993 and did a master's degree through the University of York in the UK in Teaching English to Young Learners. This was followed by a post graduate diploma in Education at the University of Hong Kong, where he received his full teaching qualification.

Please provide details of the school – the history, background, and philosophy.

The starting point for VERSO International School began in 2014 with a simple question: How can we design a new international school that will truly prepare its students for a world that is changing faster than at any other time in human history?

When my team and I sat down to answer this question, we realized that this was a challenge because as educators, we were conditioned by years of being in a traditional school environment.

I decided to approach IDEO, one of the world's leading design and innovation firms in San Francisco, with this same question. IDEO is recognized globally for using Design Thinking, a methodology that uses a human-

centered design process to find solutions to a problem in a creative and innovative way.

I took this question to a group of people whose job was to innovate, create, and look at things from a different angle. I asked them to help reimagine what a school of the future could and should be," Cameron explained, adding that the intention was to get a different perspective from non-educators on what a future school could be like.

Intrigued and challenged to design a new kind of international school, IDEO formed a team comprising their designers, and together with me and a group of international educators, we spent 4 months in Bangkok, New York, San Francisco, Hong Kong and Singapore, visiting more than 25 innovative schools, doing extensive field research, and looking for powerful insights on how to



VERSO's iconic looped buildings create a feeling of flow, movement and an underlying sense of continuous learning

design a school for the future.

Using this research data, the IDEO team tested a number of school design prototypes with students, families and educators in Bangkok. This feedback and insight shaped VERSO's unique purpose pillars, the mindsets and behaviors that our students will develop, as well as our signature learning experiences.

The construction of the school began in 2017 with the hiring of the architects, interior designers, contractors and landscape artists. Many of our teachers, who we call Learning Designers, joined in 2018 to help develop VERSO's innovative curriculum, approach to teaching and assessment.

VERSO is located close to Suvarnabhumi Airport (15-minute drive) on a total project space of 168 rai, or 66 acres, making VERSO the largest school in the Bangkok metropolitan area. The school is divided into three sections which we call loops: Lower Loop (Early Years 2 – Grade 4), Middle Loop (Grades 5-8) and Upper Loop (Grades 9-12) with a total capacity of 1,800 students.

What is the school's philosophy?

VERSO is built on three simple beliefs. We are an international school that supports learners to develop a strong sense of personal and cultural identity along with a deep understanding of, and an ability to actively engage with the world around them. Our students will gain the confidence to lead their own journey and pursue any path they choose.

VERSO is the first international school in the world to be designed in partnership with IDEO. VERSO's unique DNA fuses human-centered design with a progressive future-ready international school education.

VERSO is designed to give students a much more meaningful and personalized school experience. Our goal is to give students an international school education that empowers them to achieve their full potential. We see VERSO as offering students and teachers a highly creative and collaborative environment where kids are active participants because learning has relevance and purpose. When our students graduate, they will be confident

young men and women who understand how to navigate the world around them, and that's really what VERSO is all about.

What is the school's chosen curriculum?

VERSO delivers an innovative American curriculum from Early Years 2 to Grade 12 that is aligned to New York State Education Department Standards with an emphasis on learning that is interdisciplinary, project-based and increasingly personalized.

We chose the New York State Education Department Standards because they're comprehensive, research-

based and internationally recognized. They also provide clear learning progressions for all students, outlining what learners should know and be able to do.

The key components of our curriculum include immersive language-learning, human-centered design, digital media arts, and a holistic approach to health, physical activity and well-being.

VERSO students will be organized into cohorts instead of single grade levels. A cohort combines two grade levels and is served by a dedicated team of teachers coordinated by a Cohort Leader.

Students will work in a variety of group settings, including one-on-one, small groups, and larger project teams. Our student to teacher ratio ensures that each student receives a high degree of personal attention and individual support. This is an essential piece of VERSO's educational philosophy.

VERSO will be fully accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) and our high school diplomas will be accepted by universities around the world.

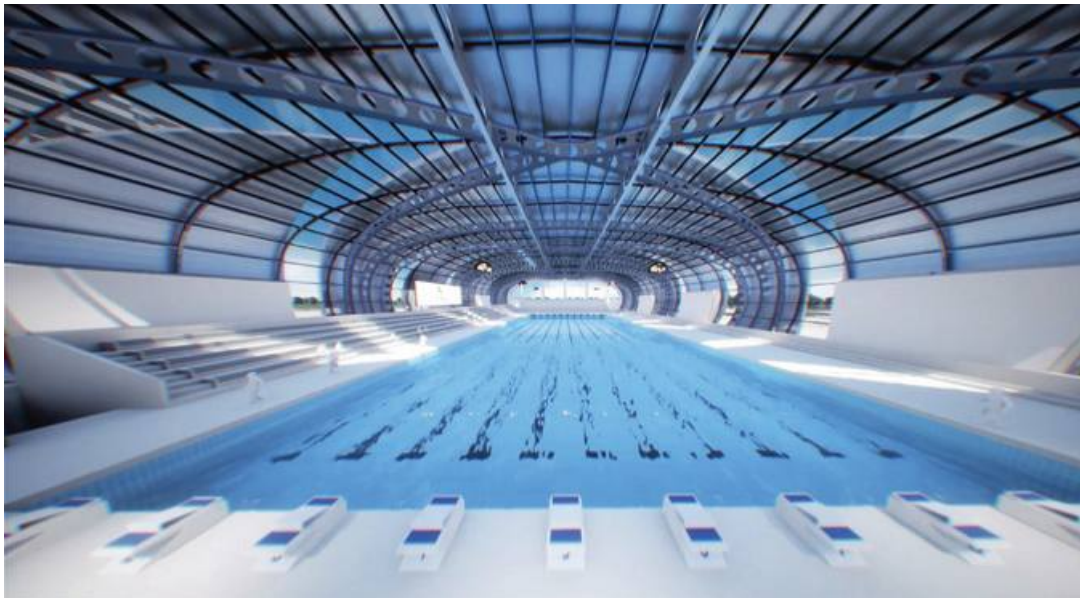
Who are your local partners?

VERSO is a joint-venture partnership between U City Plc, an affiliate of BTS Group Holdings and a private investor from Hong Kong.

Tell us about the school's architecture.

The architecture at VERSO is inspired by our research into the design of learning spaces as we understand the critical role our physical environment plays in the way we behave and learn. Our unique looped buildings are intentionally designed to promote a sense of flow, movement and an underlying sense of continuous learning.

The loops enable learning to transcend the confined nature of traditional classrooms. Students and teachers work together in a variety of uniquely designed spaces that support independent learning, group work, and full-scale projects, as well as quiet spaces for focused instruction, coaching and mentoring. Our campus has been designed as an ecosystem that interconnects buildings and spaces



The Olympic-size indoor swimming pool is one of the many athletic facilities at VERSO

with the natural landscape.

Where else in the world can we find VERSO schools?
VERSO is the only international school of its kind that is located in Bangkok, Thailand.

VERSO is the Latin word for the left-sided page in an open book, and alludes to the idea that we have 'turned the page' in school design.

We are committed to delivering a highly personalized educational experience for each student that will ignite their inner passions, inspire creativity and purpose, and develop the skills and mindsets needed for their future.

What are the benefits of an international education?

An international education is rich in its diversity and gives families and students a much broader vision of the world. Families invest in their children's education, so we have a huge responsibility to deliver a high quality school experience. Standards and expectations are high which attracts great teachers. International education is a highly dynamic and attractive sector to be in. At VERSO, students work with highly experienced teachers in wonderful facilities, getting an incredible experience.

On what basis does the school select its teachers?

At VERSO we intentionally call every teacher a Learning Designer. They are passionate and highly qualified international educators hired for their experiences working in progressive educational models around the world. They work collaboratively in Design Teams, using their diverse talents and skills to create and deliver high impact projects and deep learning experiences for every student.

How can you assure Thai parents that their children will fit back into Thai society once they graduate?

One of our purpose pillars is for children to develop a strong sense of personal and cultural identity. VERSO students will explore their Thai cultural heritage through experiences and interactions with a

international students who come from traditional schools?

Supporting the transition to VERSO for all students, regardless of their background and educational experiences will be a priority. We recognize that each child is unique and how they transition to VERSO will vary. Learning designers will get to know students on a close and individual basis to build a complete understanding of each child. Working with families is key in supporting a successful transition. Open communication with families about previous experiences and updates about progress during the transition is important to us. During the school day there will be multiple opportunities to foster peer relationships through collaborative learning experiences and social interactions.

How important are extra-curricular activities, and what does VERSO offer?

As VERSO's curriculum is project-based and interdisciplinary, extra-curricular activities will play an important role in what our students do. Some of our sports facilities include Thailand's only 50m climate-controlled Olympic-size indoor swimming pool with a salt chlorination system and 10 competition lanes, a 2000-seat arena consisting of basketball court, gym, climbing wall, yoga, stretching area, lockers and changing areas, a 1,000 seater outdoor athletic stadium with hybrid grass soccer pitch for competitions of football, rugby, and track and field, an all-weather multi-purpose outdoor training pitch, tennis courts and basketball courts. Our arts facilities include art

rooms, exhibition spaces, multimedia production and large recording studios, a black-box theater, dance studios, game design studios, and multiple makerspaces throughout the school.

For more details on VERSO, please visit www.verso.school or call +66 2 080 6200



The Arena at VERSO will be a space for all types of events



SHL's closest season ever

The Sport Corner Siam Hockey League has entered the home stretch of the 2019-2020 season. With two regular season games left on the schedule, followed by the SHL playoffs and SHL Championship, all culminating before the Songkran holiday, the season will end with a flourish.

Added to this huge dose of hockey, the SHL standings, at time of writing, have never been closer. The top three teams, Hertz, PEAK Biolabs and Novotel Spitfires, all sit tied at the top with 19 points. Aware, not to be forgotten, has seen a big improvement since the New Year, and will be a force to be reckoned with in the playoffs.

After the final games on February 27, the first place team will select their first round opponent in an exciting change to the SHL playoff format. The first place team will play the team of their choosing in a best of three series and the remaining two squads will also play a best two out of three series. The winners will play on March 14 in a winner take all championship, followed by the season ending

championship party.

As with the standings for the SHL season, the race for the scoring championship is also not finalized. With two games to go, Corry Day still leads the league in points with 23. He is followed by Harrison Oztemel with 20. However, in recent SHL injury news, Oztemel has suffered an injury that will keep him sidelined at least for the rest of the regular season. This opens the door for Jesse Starosta and Mike Freeson to chase Corry for the points' championship. For the goal scoring title, Day is in first with 13 followed by Freeson with 12, and the injured Oztemel with 11.

All residents of Thailand, and tourists in town for a holiday, are encouraged to come watch the fastest game in Thailand, the SHL. Admission is free at The Rink, Central Plaza Rama 9.

If you can't make the game, catch SHL action with Keith Mueller on ThailandTV.tv. And please check out the BigChilli SHL game report podcasts at www.siamhockey-league.com.

Photography by Tadamasa Nagayama

Revisiting great stories of the past

Thriving on the competition

In this 10th part of a BigChilli exclusive series, veteran correspondent **Maximilian Wechsler** recalls some of his most interesting assignments from the past two decades.

FROM THE YEAR 2006

Foodland was Bangkok's first Thai-owned modern supermarket chain, and thanks to general manager Edwin Lim, after 34 years and the coming of foreign mega-stores it's still the first choice of a legion of loyal patrons.

■ “Think of food, think of Foodland!” urges a radio commercial for the oldest Thai-owned supermarket chain – Foodland Supermarket Co., Ltd. and judging from its ten stores open 24-hours (the last one was inaugurated only a few months ago), with a workforce of 1,800, offering 20,000 items kept in stock by 1,000 suppliers, Foodland's motto has been taken to heart by its patrons despite the competition from several mega-stores. The fame of Foodland has spread far beyond Bangkok and Pattaya, where the stores are situated.

The store on Sukhumvit Road Soi 5 in Bangkok has been dubbed a “mini-United Nations,” because, besides the many Thai clients, it is particularly popular among foreigners, whether tourists or expats. You can meet people there from the Middle-East, Africa, Europe, North and South America, Australia and all over Asia who enjoy shopping in the supermarket or having a meal at the *Took Lae Dee* (meaning Cheap and Good) restaurant. They will pass the message on to their friends and this constantly increases the customer base.

A great deal of the credit for the success of Foodland must go to its managing director, Edwin Lim. One might expect that since the business is running smoothly and profitably, as well as expanding, he can afford to sit back in a comfortable chair behind his office desk and play around with the computer or have lunch with VIPs.

The truth is that you may have to wait for him all day at this office because he still prefers – as he has for almost 27 years – to be out in the aisles. Mr Lim visits three or four stores each day, where he chats with customers and staff. “We always get on very well with our customers and we get feedback from them.

“We opened our first supermarket on Ploenchit Road in Bangkok in May 1972, and two weeks later opened a second outlet at Patpong, which was then already a well-known night-life area with many bars. At that time there was only one modern supermarket in Bangkok, on Ploenchit Road. The name was Dairy Lane and it belonged to a Hong Kong-based company,” Mr Lim said.



Mr Lim: “When our business started 34 years ago, we pioneered the one-stop shopping concept.”

“I shopped there often and met K.W. Lam, who was the general manager. Like me, he was also born in Hong Kong. At that time there were not so many Hong Kong people living in Thailand, so we started to chat and became good friends. My brother and I persuaded Mr Lam, who had been working for 20 years at Dairy Lane and was the ‘workhorse’ there, with a lot of experience in this type of business, to join with us. He accepted and ran the supermarkets since the first day we opened until he succumbed to cancer in 1979. When I first started, I was only an investor and to be honest, I knew absolutely nothing about how to run a supermarket,” confessed Mr Lim.

Mr Lim that after Mr Lam's death he was a “victim of circumstances”, as all shareholders and directors were looking to him to run the business. At that time he was involved in the import-export business. He accepted even though he had to learn everything from scratch.

Surviving the ‘invasion’

The second big test for Foodland, according to Mr Lim, was the arrival of competitors. “They began arriving in the early 80's, with the Japanese being the first. They didn't

expect that the local operator could withstand their force. They were all well organised, with strong purchasing power.”

Fortunately, at that time Foodland had already developed a large regular Thai and foreign customer base. However, in many aspects the mega-stores put them at a disadvantage. Mr Lim said: “When they arrived, the suppliers treated them better than us. They had some price advantages, so it was very tough for us, especially in the beginning, because they were selling at a lower cost.”

But Mr Lim then explained how the arrival of mega-stores actually benefited Foodland: “When these guys came, they advertised and published brochures. They created more interest from the customers, and this broadened our base as well. When the new customers started to explore retail outlets, quite a lot of them discovered that we offered better service and quality. Not everybody is after only cheap things. The result of the ‘invasion’ was that we not only survived, but expanded!”

“We opened two new stores in 1979, one in 1988, another one a year later, two outlets in 1991, more stores in 2000 and 2003 and the latest in November, 2005. We had closed our Ploenchit store because the lease ran out and the building was demolished to make way for a new development project.”

Mr Lim also said Foodland is a ‘family business’ and this will continue. Many of the staff, both Thais and foreigners, has been with the company for many years, some right from the opening in 1972. “When our business started 34 years ago, we pioneered the one-stop shopping concept. We opened *Took Lae Dee* restaurants in most of our branches, pharmacies, small bakeries, dry cleaning services, newspaper and fresh flowers sections. We were the first in Thailand to introduce ready-to-cook meals in the early 1980s.

“We have a meat processing plant at Ladkrabang that produces over 300 items, including processed meats, sausages and other products, not only for our stores but also for some 100 hotels and restaurants all over Thailand, as well as air-catering companies and so on. The factory has a staff of about 100 and so does our large bakery. We produce Butcher’s Choice and Oven Fresh brands. We also have a vegetable processing and packaging facility.”

Mr Lim disclosed that his only store outside Bangkok, the one in Pattaya, is the busiest of all branches.

“Despite our successes, we still advertise in the media. We were the first-ever colour advertiser in the Bangkok Post, with a full-page ad published on Saturday, June 26, 1982.”

He admits that the biggest problems he faces are with personnel. “We train them and someone tries to pinch them from us.”

When he travels he likes to visit supermarkets in other countries to get ideas to take back to Foodland.

Behind the story:

Edwin Lim is a remarkable person and real businessman. You won’t meet another one like him in Thailand. He would talk to his customers when visiting Foodland branches and sometimes pays cash for his drink and food. He is a man who could play a ‘big shot’ but doesn’t. Mr Lim didn’t possess a mobile phone but his driver did. If you would like to contact him – and this applies until today – you must call Foodland’s head office and leave a message with his secretary. He will call back.

‘Corruption is a universal problem – not only in Thailand,’ says the country’s famous graft-buster

Klanarong Chanthik, current member of the NCCC and past secretary-general of the organisation, strongly believes that corruption can be beaten if it is placed high on the national agenda and every citizen participates in finding a solution.



Mr Klanarong demonstrating his skills on the accordion.

■ Klanarong Chanthik, current member of the NCCC and past secretary-general of the organisation, strongly believes that corruption can be beaten if it is placed high on the national agenda and every citizen participates in finding a solution.

Though he is easily recognised as a tough talking graft-buster, very few people know Klanarong Chanthik also as a family man who loves music, animals and sports. And despite all the attention he receives almost daily from Thai and foreign media, the 63-year-old barrister-at-law is a rather shy man. During a two-hour interview at his home, Mr Klanarong’s naturally polite and attentive demeanour never deserted him. Although his English is passable,



Mr Klanarong with his favorite pouch, Khao Suay.

“

Many people have bothered and tried to intimidate him, but the “worst period was during the time that Thaksin was the prime minister. I was followed, received threatening calls and someone even sent me an envelope containing excrement. At the same time, many people called and encouraged me on my mission to expose corruption.”

he preferred to give the interview in his native language, through an interpreter.

Mr Klanarong's white terrier, *Khao Suay* (Steamed Rice), provided a noisy welcome and the only noticeable security, staying close by his side as she kept an eye on her master's visitors. One of ten dogs at Mr Klanarong's residence, *Khao Suay* is his favourite.

“I came from a middle-class family,” he began. “My father was a civil servant who retired as deputy comptroller-general of the Ministry of Finance. My mother was a nurse. I have been married to Ms Panthipa for 38 years and we have one son and two daughters.”

The youngest one, Sunissa, joined the interview and helped translate. Her mother, who also joined the interview, is a businesswoman. The family lives in a compound of three buildings located off Phaholyothin Road in Bangkok with 16 other family members. “I have been here for 52 years,” Mr Klanarong declared.

Articles that mention his name and accomplishments have been published in many countries around the world, including Australia, China, Japan, Malaysia, South Korea and Vietnam.

Mr Klanarong explained how he began his anti-corruption crusade: “After the Office of Counter Corruption Committee (OCCC) was established, the chairman at the time asked me to join the organisation. I started as young official and worked right up to secretary-general. Later on, His Majesty the King appointed me secretary-general of the newly-established National Counter-Corruption Commission (NCCC).”

In all, Mr Klanarong has spent 35 years working for the government, 27 of them specialising in exposing and punishing corruption. He retired in 2003, but was reappointed as a member of the NCCC after the September 19 coup under the new government.

“I love this job and believe that I have achieved a lot

of good for the people of my country. Of course, after so many years of investigating corrupt people, I have made and I still have enemies. But I don't worry because I'm just doing my job,” said Mr Klanarong, adding that “no one ever offered me a bribe. Never!”

He said that during his tenure many people have bothered and tried to intimidate him. “I was followed, received threatening calls and someone even sent me an envelope containing excrement. At the same time, however, many people called and encouraged me on my mission to expose corruption.” Mr Klanarong continued: “I used to have two military bodyguards assigned to me by the government. They came from the Armed Forces Security Centre (AFSC).

He then explained that under NCCC regulations, as the secretary-general he was eligible to have bodyguards provided for him, but the protection was not extended after his retirement in 2003. Since his reappointment to the NCCC he has declined security personnel. “Recently the AFSC offered me protection, but I refused. I don't need bodyguards,” Mr Klanarong said.

A universal problem

On weekend and holidays he often can be found at the Phaholyothin compound, watching television, passing the time with his two young grandchildren or playing his German-made Hohner accordion. He proved his talent and skill on the spot during the interview by playing several Thai songs.

Mr Klanarong said that his election as a Bangkok senator earlier this year was one of the happiest events of his life. “I got approximately 146,000 votes, which was the third highest in the constituency and the fourth in the whole country,” Mr Klanarong said, adding that he would like to be a senator again, whether elected or appointed.

Turning to the problem of corruption, Mr Klanarong said: "The cause of corruption in Thailand or anywhere originates with the individual, in their thoughts and actions. It is a universal problem – not only in Thailand."

The German-based organisation Transparency International recently published its annual Transparency Index for the year 2006. Out of 163 countries surveyed, Thailand occupies the 63rd spot in terms of the prevalence of corruption.

According to him, corruption can be solved if, most importantly, every citizen realises how harmful it is. Secondly, the leaders of the country should set the example or model for everyone. They must focus on solving the problem without making exceptions for the power or influence of the persons involved, or how close they are to themselves. "The leaders have to be sincere to solve the problem," emphasised Mr Klanarong.

He went on: "The argument that government officials are forced to be corrupt in order to gain extra income because their salaries are not sufficient to live on is

absurd! I absolutely reject this argument!" He pointed out that corruption is pervasive not only in government, but in the private sector.

"Corruption and narcotics are the two biggest dangers to the development of Thailand and the well-being of its people. These two evils go hand in hand," he said. Yet, he feels that while many resources are directed to solving the drug problem, there has not been enough effort made to stop corruption. He added that the maintenance of a consumer society would destroy the traditional Thai way of life.

"We have to rely on the sufficiency economy, as is being urged by His Majesty the King," Mr Klanarong also said he would like to be remembered as an honest and unprejudiced person, loyal to HM the King, the country and the people. "I deeply respect His Majesty the King and I would give my life for him. My motto is: Never be prejudiced and treat everyone equally, whether it is the prime minister or an ordinary citizen," he said.

Behind the story:

Klanarong Chantick is a heartening example of a devoted and modest public servant. He spent many years fighting corruption. We were introduced by a mutual friend, an army colonel who is also a judge at the military court. Mr Klanarong and I have some things in common. We are both animal lovers. He looks after a dog and I look after a cat. We both play the accordion, a piano accordion for me, and a button accordion for him.

Bangkok's "massage parlour king" rejects corruption

Since he renounced the title of Bangkok's massage parlour king and began running for elected office, Chuwit Kamolvisit has added more than a little drama to the front page and the nightly news.

■ Dubbed as controversial and a maverick, the super-rich massage parlour king turned-politician Chuwit Kamolvisit made front-page headlines again on July 25, 2006 when he carried food and drinks to the three election commissioners sentenced to four years in jail by the Criminal Court. His presence led to a noisy quarrel with supporters of the commissioners and a charge of contempt of court, for which he was given a one-month suspended sentence by the Criminal Court.

Mr Chuwit is no stranger to scandals; he became a household name after exposing police corruption in 2003. The media frenzy has subsided, but he continues to attract attention from the local and foreign press.

Anyone who meets him face-to-face must be impressed by his charisma and straightforward views about politics, corruption, his business – and himself. But Mr Chuwit apparently feels remorse for some of his past; he has sold the six luxurious massage parlours.

Everyone knows what the words "massage parlour" really stand for and what transpires inside such establishments. Says Mr Chuwit: "The customers

Chuwit: "Do you have corruption in Italy, Japan or in the United States? Yes. Corruption is everywhere, but in Thailand it is so widespread and so easy to do."



come to the place like that not because we have a comfortable sofa or good decorations, but because of the girls.”

His 360-degree makeover, from a “sinner” to an “angel”, must have impressed the voters who gave him third place in the Bangkok Governor election in 2004, and a year later elected him as a member of Parliament.

Theatrical touch

In January 2003, Mr Chuwit was accused of having hired men dismantle around 100 shops and bars on a plot of land he owned in Sukhumvit Soi 10. (The Criminal Court dismissed all charges against him on July 13 this year.)

“The police told me to pay (for the damaged property) because I owned the land. I paid them almost 10 million baht. They asked me for an additional three million baht and I refused. I was arrested and spent one month in jail,” Mr Chuwit said of the event.

He denied any wrongdoing and was released on bail. Furious over his arrest, he decided to expose police corruption to the media and even turned up at the residence of Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra with a list of the names of about 1,000 police officers, including ten generals, whom he said he had bribed in connection with his massage parlour business.

Shortly after the revelations, he disappeared for two days, and claimed later to have been abducted and abused by police. Others alleged that he had staged his own abduction.

Maybe their doubts about what exactly had happened were reinforced by his subsequent theatrical stunts – like when he smashed bathtubs with a sledgehammer to show that he was no longer involved in the massage parlour business, or when he laid down in a casket to show that the “old Chuwit” had died.

Later he played a key role in a demonstration outside the US embassy in Bangkok, in which the US was accused of stealing a centuries-old royal Thai crown. He held up a model of the crown while the cameras were clicking and later submitted a letter to embassy officials demanding the return of the royal Thai head piece, then displayed at the Asian Art Museum in San Francisco.

Mr Chuwit claims that a visa refusal was linked to his effort to have the artifact returned to Thailand. “I wanted to visit my daughter in the United States for only three or four days. An embassy official refused to issue me a visa after questioning me for three hours,” he complained.

Mr Chuwit says he now regrets having gotten into the massage business: “You can blame me for what I have done. I was then only 30, surrounded by beautiful girls,

making a lot of money. I enjoyed the life. I shouldn’t have done it but I did.

Don’t pay

When asked about how to tackle corruption, Mr Chuwit had plenty of advice. “Don’t pay,” he said. “But it is difficult. Because I stopped paying, I wasn’t able to operate my business even though it was perfectly legal. This is the system. How can people run casinos which are entirely illegal?”

“Do you have corruption in Italy, Japan or the United States? Yes. Corruption is everywhere, but in Thailand it is so widespread and so easy to do. In Singapore you are jailed for corruption. Here in Thailand, when a traffic policeman stops you, you will give him 100 baht because it is convenient, and the majority of motorists prefer it.”

Problems led to politics

“In Western countries, people get into politics because they admire the system, but in Thailand people like me get into politics because they have problems. In the past, when people had a problem with the government they went to the jungle and became the communists. But now they get into politics and become politicians.

“I got into politics because I had problems with the police. My massage parlours paid taxes, I had licenses. But what about the illegal casinos? Do they pay taxes or have a license? No. Absolutely not, they don’t pay anything except bribes to the police,” Mr Chuwit lamented.

He said that when he was abducted his family was afraid. They went to the police station and told them he had been kidnapped, but at first the police did nothing, saying it wasn’t a kidnapping.

“Our society is very different from the West. This is very important and very clear. In western society, when someone does something wrong they try to help, not cover it up. But in Thailand, they do the wrong thing and repeat it again and again,” Mr Chuwit said.

He also said that his only business these days is running the Davis Hotel. He is very proud of one of his non-profit projects – ‘Chuwit Garden’, in Soi 10 Sukhumvit Road, a beautifully landscaped park on the same plot of land where the shops and bars were destroyed.

“I could have built a five star hotel or a department store there. I could do whatever I want. It is a very valuable property which I bought for 500 million baht and I can sell it now for 1 billion baht. But I do nothing with it, just keep it as a garden. I will pass the land to my children, I will keep it very tight,” Mr Chuwit pledged.

Behind the story:

The interview with Chuvit Kamolvisit took place in his plush office inside a building behind the Davis Hotel in Sukhumvit Soi 24, which he also owns. He spoke in perfect English on many subjects. There was no need to prod him with questions as he described his action-packed life and addressed issues that made him a constant focus of media and public attention. He came off as very smart and convincing in the interview.

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DIPLOMATS

▣ Meet the people uniting nations



His Excellency Tugsbilguun Tumurkhuleg

Mongolian Ambassador puts cooperation at the top of his agenda

Diplomat: H.E. Tugsbilguun Tumurkhuleg

100th interview BigChilli with Diplomats Mongolian Ambassador puts cooperation at the top of his agenda

Words **MAXIMILIAN WECHSLER**

His Excellency Tugsbilguun Tumurkhuleg began his term as Mongolian Ambassador to the Kingdom of Thailand in August 2015. He's one of the younger members of the Bangkok diplomatic corps and may be the only member who has studied formally at a Thai university. His father, also a career diplomat, served as Mongolian ambassador to Laos in the mid-1990s. The younger Tumurkhuleg lived with his family at the Mongolian Embassy in Vientiane most of that time, but came to Bangkok when he was 20 after he was accepted for a fellowship at Srinakharinwirot University. He studied the Thai language there in 1994-1995.

This is his first ambassadorial assignment, and he's also accredited as ambassador to Malaysia and Myanmar, as well as Permanent Representative of Mongolia to the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP). As his term is coming to an end sometime this year, the ambassador was happy to sit down with The BigChilli for this interview.

Background

Ambassador Tugsbilguun Tumurkhuleg was born in February 1974 in the Algerian capital of Algiers, where his father was posted at the Mongolian Embassy. "I don't have Algerian nationality, however. Three months after I was born we went back to Mongolia. We returned to Algeria when I was five, and stayed there until I was eight. My father is fluent in French and therefore was mostly posted to French-speaking countries. He was posted twice in Algeria as attaché and then as second and first secretary. He served once in France as counselor and was an ambassador to Laos.

"I visited Thailand for the first time in 1991. I was on the

way to meet my parents in Laos and I stopped in Bangkok, spent a few days here and continued on to Vientiane. My father was a Mongolian ambassador to Laos from 1991 to 1996 and he also had responsibility for Thailand and Cambodia. For most of that time I stayed with my parents in Laos. I became very interested in Southeast Asia and Thailand in particular. That's why I applied for a fellowship at Srinakharinwirot University, and I was very happy to be accepted."

This is Mr Tugsbilguun's second posting in Bangkok. He served as attaché at the Mongolian embassy here from 2004 to 2007. Just 46 years old, the ambassador has held several other important positions since joining the Mongolian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) in 1999 (see CV).

Blooming bilateral relations

“Our embassy here has four Mongolian diplomats and one local staff. My family and the families of other Mongolian staff live nearby the embassy, which is on Soi Ekkamai 22. We moved to this location from a place on Asoke Road in 2006. We are close to some government offices and the embassies of Bangladesh, Nepal and Egypt among others. Previously, one of our embassy staff was looking after both consular affairs and UNESCAP, but this became too much for them. With a growing number of Mongolians visiting Thailand, we now have a consular officer fully dedicated to the consular affairs, after separating UNESCAP and consular portfolio.

“There’s no Thai embassy in Ulaanbaatar, the Mongolian capital; the Thai embassy in Beijing has responsibility for Mongolia. Thai colleagues tell me that Mongolia is at the top of the list for new Thai embassy locations, and we are looking forward to that day. Mongolia has three other embassies in Southeast Asia, in Singapore, Vietnam and in Laos. Vietnam and Laos are our long-standing friends and traditional partners. We established embassies in our respective countries because we were in the same camp under the old global political system, and we are happy to maintain our traditionally friendly ties now that things have changed.

“There are 49 Mongolian diplomatic missions around the world including embassies, missions to UN and consulates, and our economic growth makes it possible and worthwhile to maintain them. We have big embassies in Moscow, Beijing, Washington DC, Tokyo and in Seoul, while other embassies are comparatively small. Our embassy in Bangkok is about average in size.

“In terms of bilateral relations with Thailand, my time here has been very busy and eventful. One of my main goals, even before coming to Thailand as ambassador, has been to initiate the inter-governmental mechanism of cooperation that was agreed on during the visit of the Thai Prime Minister to Mongolia in 2013.

“At that time, our two governments signed an agreement to set up a Consultative Body on Bilateral Cooperation. In 2018 we organized the first session of this body, which took place in Mongolia. The Thai side was represented by Mr Damrong Kraikruan, deputy permanent secretary of the Thai MFA. In launching this mechanism, we expect not only political cooperation but also cooperation in economic, trade, investment, tourism and other areas. The next meeting is expected to be held here in Thailand sometime this year.

“Another high moment of cooperation was when Thai Prime Minister General Prayuth Chan-o-cha attended the 11th Asia-Europe Meeting Summit (ASEM11), held in July 2016 in Ulaanbaatar. Gen Prayuth met with our President as well.

“A big achievement for our embassy and our colleagues in Thailand was when Bangkok and Ulaanbaatar became sister cities. The governor of Ulaanbaatar came to Bangkok in August 2017 and signed an agreement establishing the sister-city relationship.

“In October 2017 direct air flights between Bangkok



Ambassador Tugsbilguun presents a report as Chair of the Committee on Trade and Investments during the 75th session of UNESCAP in Bangkok, May 29, 2019.

and Ulaanbaatar were resumed after being suspended for a time. The flights are operated by our national air carrier, MIAT Mongolian Airlines, but they are only seasonal, from October to March. That’s when many Mongolian tourists like to come to Thailand, during our winter, especially during the New Year and the Lunar New Year. Mongolians love Thai beaches.

“Presently MIAT operates two flights per week, and the airline plans to extend the flights throughout the year. This will contribute to the already increasing tourism. A non-stop flight between our capitals takes about six hours. In 2019, over 10,000 Mongolians visited Thailand and more than 4,000 Thai nationals traveled to Mongolia. Thais don’t need a visa to visit my country.

“We are working to introduce various Thai technologies in Mongolia, for example the Royal Rainmaking Project initiated by His Majesty the late King Bhumibol Adulyadej. People from relevant agencies in Mongolia came here and called on Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn, who is very supportive of introducing the project in Mongolia. We are presently working on a draft MoU for cooperation on the project.

“The Mongolian government is also involved in a trilateral project for sustainable tourism with the Thailand International Cooperation Agency and the GIZ (German Corporation for International Cooperation). Some heads of local Mongolian administrative units came to Thailand with the aim of learning from the Thai experience on developing sustainable tourism and adapting measures and policies to Mongolian circumstances and conditions. We believe sustainable tourism is a very important concept.

“The embassy also works to promote business relations between our two countries. For example, a Thai company has invested in renewable energy in Mongolia. This has great potential. I facilitated contacts between Thai





General Prayut Chan-o-cha, Prime Minister of Thailand, with Ambassador Tugsbilguun during the Asia Cooperation Dialogue Summit in Bangkok, October 10, 2016.

and Mongolian companies and representatives of these companies have already exchanged visits.”

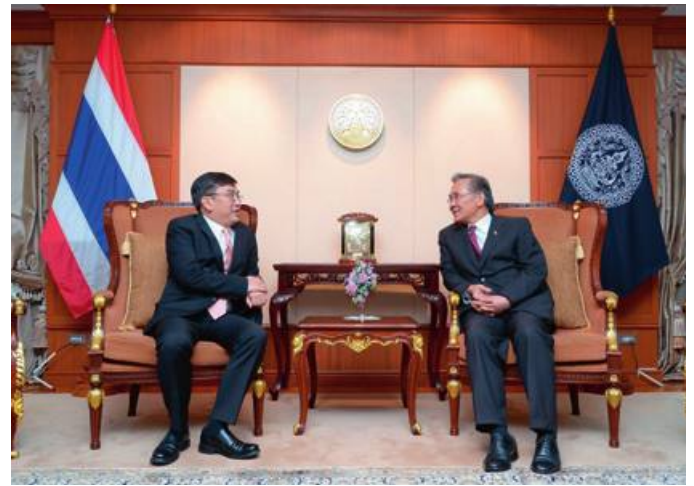
Malaysia, Myanmar, UNESCAP

“My duties as ambassador for Malaysia and Myanmar take time and careful consideration on my part. In 2016 we organized a visit of our President to Myanmar. It was soon after the national election and the new Myanmar government was already sworn in. The Mongolian President was the first head of state to pay a visit after the elections in June 2016 and he and Aung San Suu Kyi enjoyed very good relations. I have visited Myanmar quite a few times myself to attend meetings or for bilateral talks.

“I have also visited Malaysia several times. We have an honorary consulate in Malaysia, and the honorary consul is a Malaysian national who is very helpful to me. We keep in contact and I am fully informed on what is going on there.

“I am also Mongolia’s Permanent Representative to UNESCAP. I have worked with this organization a great deal over the past four years. For example, I took charge of preparations when foreign minister came to Bangkok and chaired the 75th session of UNESCAP in May 2019. It had been 20 years since a Mongolian minister was elected to chair the session.

“We have also been doing a lot of work in promoting the Ulaanbaatar-based International



Mr Tugsbilguun calls on Don Pramudwinai, Thailand's Minister of Foreign Affairs, September 10, 2015.

Think Tank for Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDC). This inter-governmental organization was set up under our initiative because Mongolia has a keen appreciation of the problems, constraints and challenges a lack of maritime access present to LLDCs. There are many land-locked developing countries in the world, and we want to work with them to find innovative solutions.

“The think tank has the full support of UNESCAP. Last year Mongolia was elected to the governing boards of two institutions in UNESCAP – the Statistical Institute for Asia and Pacific and Asian and Pacific Centre for Development of Disaster Information Management.”

Personal

“I am now into the fifth year of my post as Ambassador to Thailand, and my term is coming to an end. I will leave in a few months. I have been so busy and the time has gone very fast. So many things have happened in my professional and private life. I will always cherish my time here. My family – myself, my wife and our two sons – have made many friends here. We have all enjoyed our time in Thailand and we will miss it when we go home. We have visited many provinces, and we really love the beaches. Our favorite holiday destinations are Phuket and Hua Hin,” said Ambassador Tugsbilguun.

Asked about the most memorable events in his time as ambassador, he listed the presentation of his credentials

“
In October 2017 direct air flights between Bangkok and Ulaanbaatar were resumed after being suspended for a time. The flights are operated by our national air carrier, MIAT Mongolian Airlines, but they are only seasonal, from October to March. That’s when many Mongolian tourists like to come to Thailand, during our winter.



Chuan Leekpai, President of the Thai National Assembly and Speaker of the House of Representatives, with Mr Tugsbilguun, November 26, 2019.

to His Majesty King Maha Vajiralongkorn Phra Vajiraklaochaoyuhua, who was then the Crown Prince, the passing of His Majesty King Rama IX and the incredible outpouring of grief and affection from the Thai people, and finally the coronation of King Rama X.

"I think that because of the influence of Buddhism, Thai people are very tolerant. In a way almost every Thai person is like a diplomat, because they represent their country very well. People on the street are very friendly and helpful toward foreigners. Thais have an amazing ability to never lose face. This applies to almost all Thai people. So it's not surprising that the Thai officials I have worked with and gotten to know here are all very good and able representatives of their country.

"As for the negatives, for someone from a cold country the heat and humidity of a tropical country is sometimes a bit much, but I've gotten used to it and so have my wife and kids. We have adjusted. For me especially it hasn't been a real problem because I was born in Algeria, which has a hot climate, and have also lived in Laos and Australia. The only difficult thing about life in Bangkok is maybe the traffic.

"We also have traffic jams and pollution in Ulaanbaatar, which now has a population of over one million people. Compared to Thailand, Mongolia has much more open space. The total population is only about three million, and Mongolia is three times large as Thailand. As I have said, it is also a lot colder, but because of climate change the winters are warmer now.

"I have visited many places in Thailand, not just during this posting but also during my first assignment. I studied Thai language in the 1990s and I can speak, read and write Thai. I am not really fluent but I have improved a lot since coming back in 2015. I received an award last year as a Thai language distinguished speaker, presented to me by the Ministry of Culture on National Thai Language Day, which occurs each year on July 29. My mother tongue is Mongolian and I am fluent in English and Russian, and can get by in French.

"I like all types of food. As for Thai food, I like it all – Isaan, Central and South. It's all very delicious but sometimes maybe too hot.

"My wife Doljinsuren is very busy looking after

the family and she also devotes a lot of time to SHOM (Spouses of Heads of Mission) activities. She was on the organizing committee of the Diplomatic Red Cross Bazaar and last year she received a Red Cross medal from the hands of HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn, on behalf of Her Majesty Queen Sirikit.

"After returning to Mongolia I will continue working at the MFA. I am expecting to work in the capital for three or four years before being posted again. Before coming here, I worked at the MFA in Ulaanbaatar for three years.

"In closing, I would like to thank the Royal Thai government, the MFA and Thai other ministries and organizations, and our friends, not only in the government but also the private sector and in various social circles, and all Thai people, for the hospitality, cooperation and assistance they have given us. My communications with the Thai MFA, the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration and other local organizations have all been excellent, as has the cooperation I have received from them. As a part of my work, I attend many functions like dinners and receptions organized by the Royal Palace, Thai government and by different embassies.

"I also want to send a special greeting to the diplomatic community in Thailand, which is very close and supportive, maybe more so than in other countries. We meet very often and we become very good friends. Even after diplomats leave Thailand they will communicate through social media."

CV of H.E. Tugsbilguun Tumurkhuleg

Education

Mr Tugsbilguun Tumurkhuleg graduated from the National University of Mongolia in 1999, specializing in British Studies and International Affairs. He received his Master of Arts (International Relations) degree with honours from the Australian National University in Canberra, ACT in 2008. From 1994 to 1995 he attended a Thai Language and Thai Studies Training Program at Srinakharinwirot University in Bangkok.

Career

A career diplomat, Mr Tugsbilguun joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) of Mongolia in 1999 and has served in various capacities at the ministry and missions abroad.

- **2004-2007:** Attaché at the Mongolian Embassy in Bangkok.
- **2009 to 2011:** Third Secretary, later Deputy Director-General, Department of the Americas, Middle East and Africa, MFA, Mongolia.
- **2011-2012:** Deputy Head of Mission and Counsellor, Embassy of Mongolia in Australia.
- **2012-2015:** Director-General, Department of Neighbouring Countries (Russia and China), MFA.
- **Since Aug 2015:** Ambassador of Mongolia to Thailand (concurrently accredited to Malaysia and Myanmar) and Permanent Representative of Mongolia to UNESCAP.

Publications

Mr Tugsbilguun is an author of various articles on foreign policy, security, alliance politics, Shanghai Cooperation Organization and Central Asia, published in Mongolian and international publications.

BigChilli stories from
the past 20 years



BIGCHILLI

The BigChilli 'Swiss Night'



Apr 2013

*Gourmet dinner sees veteran Swiss hoteliers
Peter Gautschi and Kurt Rufli get together
again after 40 years*



EXPAT

Nov 2014

BIGCHILLI

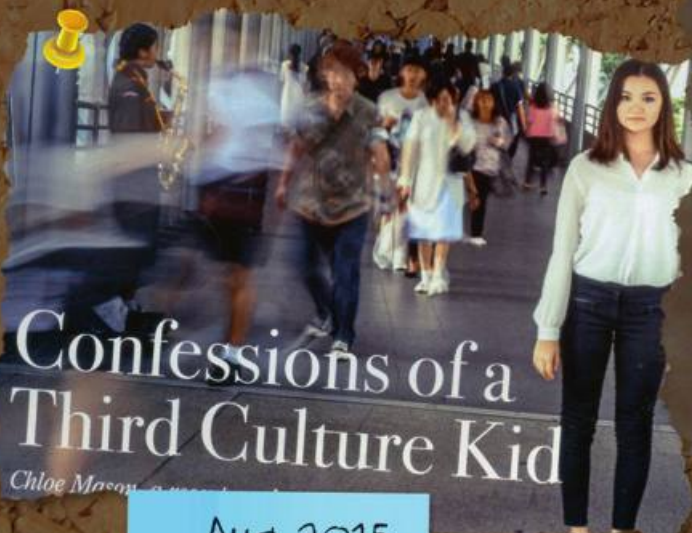
BNOW
BANGKOK NOW
Bangkok's Networking Community

Thailand's Witness to History

ANAND PANYARACHUN

A brilliant new book about the country's two-time former Prime Minister gives the inside story on what really went on behind the scenes during some of the most unforgettable and turbulent episodes in Thailand's recent past

By Colin Hastings



Confessions of a Third Culture Kid

Chloe Mason

Aug 2015



Apr 2019

Anand Panyarachun, former Prime Minister of Thailand, speaking at a microphone.



Coming soon!

Bangkok's amazing 26 billion baht 'Village' on Soi Langsuan

May 2015



Nov 2014

CHINATOWN:
FOUR DAYS,
FOUR NIGHTS



May 2015

Obituary
Barry Owen: Artist, Humorist, Ad Man

Remembering one of the true pioneers of Thailand's advertising

Nov 2014



JAN 2000

profile



AFTER 34 YEARS, **BERNARD TRINK** AND HIS WEEKLY 'NITE OWL' COLUMN IN THE BANGKOK POST HAVE BECOME VIRTUAL INSTITUTIONS. LIKED AND HATED IN ABOUT EQUAL MEASURE, ITS AUTHOR AND WHAT HE SAYS REMAIN HIGHLY CONTROVERSIAL

BigChilli stories from
the past 20 years



Oct 2011

A night in jail

■ NOW I know what it's like to be behind bars. And I don't mean the kind of place where waitresses wear impossibly tight outfits. This particular venue is most

a breathalyzer on Sathorn, as well as several locals in various states of inebriation. One noisy fellow was clearly massively over the limit. For some reason the officers removed his belt, which resulted in his trousers falling down to his knees. He began shouting abuse while the only woman among us averted her eyes and hid in the corner of the jail. Later the noisy one fell asleep on the stone floor and proceeded to snore like a stone grinder. Six other men were fast asleep at the back of the cell and remained totally oblivious to whatever else was going on.

Another smartly dressed young man joked with a group of friends seated outside in the station lobby. I inquired why he hadn't been released after spending two hours or more in the cell. After all, he had a licence, ID card and his buddies had the bail money. His reply surprised me. His friends thought it incredibly

pleasant, and definitely to be avoided. We're talking here about a cell, in a police station. Locked in a dark, dank cage is a bewildering, humiliating and dehumanizing experience. It's also uncomfortable, an irritating waste of time. At moments, a bit scary. And I don't want to go there again. But I observed the following now on.

Thailand's movie master

Irish-Thai filmmaker Thomas de Warrenne has a long list of local and western movie successes behind him. Now he's looking to China's booming market for new opportunities, reports **Maxmilian Wechsler**

Apr 2016



Jun 2010

The Esarn pig farmer from South London

Like most people, Andrew Lewis wanted to get away from the stresses and strains of city living. But unlike most people, he headed to Esarn in Northern Thailand

City of Noise

Sep 2014

Annoying, unhealthy and miserable, noise levels in Bangkok are on the increase – and yet little or nothing is apparently being done to curb this festering phenomenon



Sep 2019

Sep 2010

Memories of Patpong

For years, Bangkok's most famous street was unchallenged anywhere in Asia as the ultimate playground for tourists, expatriates and locals. In this report, The BigChilli has invited some of Patpong's best customers over the past half century to go down memory lane and explain the district's special magic and why they believe it is now in decline

By Colin Hastings

With its tropical gardens and community spirit, this is a special place

THE AMAZING BAMBOO SCHOOL

Kids learn first about nature and the environment in Bang Saray's inspirational project



Chris Craker's Karma Sound Studios

Award-winning musician who built a world class music studio in Bang Saray

Jul 2016

BigChilli stories from
the past 20 years

Remarkable life, times and untimely death of a true conservationist

Memories of Mark
ham, one of this
country's greatest
friends who reveled
in Thailand's natural
wonders but feared for
their future. Sadly, his

Jan 2019



Dec 2007

The day David Lyman let his hair down

HE used to be in good
company, sharing a secret with
the likes of Sean Connery, Bruce
Willis, Burt Reynolds and John
Wayne. But it took a beautiful
young Thai lady to make a
veteran Bangkok lawyer realize
that bald is best.

IT was both an uplifting
and hair-raising moment when
Bangkok's former best known
wig wearer revealed

would grow back and so there was
nothing really to worry about. This
early loss was no big deal - or so I
deceived myself."

Despite a family history of
baldness among its men folk, David
thought that his "bountiful mane of
rich black close knit hair" was for life.

It wasn't. And it was his then
wife in 1965 who first pointed out his
growing bald patch while following
him into a cinema.



the LMIM collapse: One year later, an investor speaks o

"I was completely shattered, my life in ruins"

Dozens of expats in Thailand lost their life savings when the huge Australian property
went into voluntary liquidation in March 2013. The collapse of LMIM had a
devastating effect on many of these investors who had been led to believe their money
was managed by

Apr 2014

DOWN AND OUT IN KLONG TOEY

Oct 2011

Maxmilian Wechsler explores probably the country's
biggest slum and talks to three addicts about the drugs
trade that flourishes there

Klong Toey slum is a desperately poor and run-down area of Bangkok containing an
estimated 80,000 residents. It probably also has the city's largest concentration of
addicts. The BigChilli recently interviewed three addicts who live and buy drugs in
the slum, an area that came into existence almost 60 years ago when rural migrants
came to Bangkok mostly to work in the boat building industry.

PARK LIFE

Swap concrete and cacophony for
grass and serenity by visiting one
of these lush oases in Bangkok

Research by Amanda De Silva
Photographs by Chai Boonjumnart
Suthorn Danutranakulwich, Jaran La

Benjakiti Park

OPENED in 2004 in honour of Queen Sirikit's 72
birthday, this 130-rai (approximately 21 hectares) park
on what was once the Tobacco Monopoly, boasts a 2km
walkway that attracts a fair number of morning and eve
joggers around the lake (where you can go for a cruise
a pedal-powered swan boat). The park also has a dedi
bicycle lane completely removed from the pedestrian
so no chance of any unfortunate collisions. Bikes of all
can be rented for B40 per hour. Other facilities includ
grounds, a skateboard/freestyle bicycle ramp, a medi
zones.

Sep 2014

(Located next to the Queen Sirikit
Open daily 5am-8pm)

Nov 2015

The Landed Gentleman

The Big Chilli chats with Nigel Cornick, Chief Executive Officer of Raimon Land, about why it's such a good time to invest in the property market

So why are you so upbeat about the property market?



Sathorn's Cooking!

Two leafy lanes in the heart of Bangkok are undergoing a dramatic change – with trendy restaurants and quirky businesses creating a village atmosphere



Jun 2014

'My Dad loved the sun. But it killed him'



May 2015

he went to see a doctor, he didn't have it removed as he was about to return to the UK for a short visit. He knew of the dangers of too much exposure to the sun and had already had other smaller moles successfully removed, so thought that a small delay on this occasion was ok.

"By the time he got back to Thailand, the mole had changed in appearance. It was bigger and had a different colour and its shape had changed. A subsequent hospital biopsy showed it was melanoma, skin cancer, and because of its position on Dad's body, was in danger of getting into his lymphatic system.

"Later tests showed that the cancer had indeed reached his deep into his body with dire consequences. It was left to me to tell my Dad, someone who'd always been as fit as a fiddle, what he now faced. True to his character, Dad fought very hard against the cancer, continuing to exercise for the next year or so, to keep

up a tan that he mistakenly thought would protect him. Sometimes I think on these

IN 2007, Philip Collins, a Briton who loved the outdoor life in Thailand, had a mole removed

Aug 2015

Our unpredictable weather

This year is the driest in Thailand since 1995, and yet Bangkok experienced its wettest-ever month in June. What's going on?

CK clouds unleashed heavy rain in Bangkok during the last few days of July, but the downpours didn't mean that Thailand is in the grip of a drought and unprecedented drought – without lots more rain 2015 will be the driest on record. How accurate is that forecast? No one knows. We have five months until the end of 2015 and it's plainly impossible to predict what will happen to Thailand's weather.



ml, while May and June 2015 were a source of concern by being the driest on record.

The North's wettest was the 'year of the great drought' 2011 (1,688.7 ml) and the driest 1998 (1,012.7 ml).

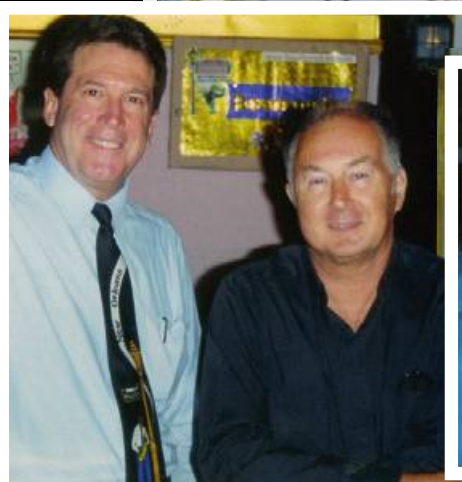
Corresponding figures for the Central region are the wettest (1,514.4 ml) in 2011, the driest (993 ml) in 2014; the East is the wettest (2,258.6 ml) in 2014 and 2004 (1,012.7 ml) and the South is the wettest (2,356.1 ml) in 2014 and 2004 (1,012.7 ml).

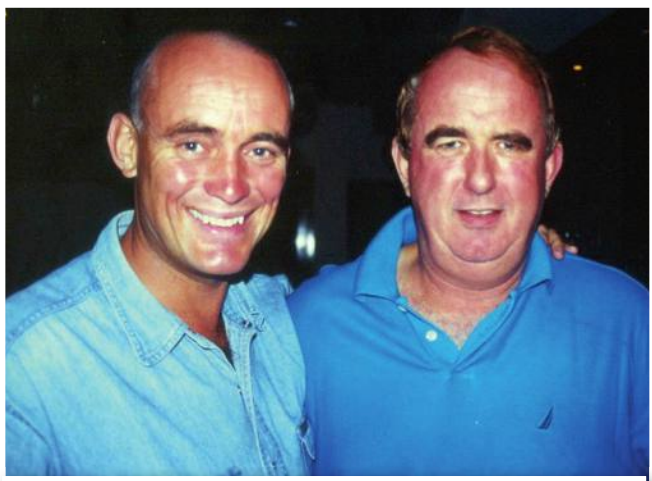
But in a strange twist which

20 YEARS of The BigChilli



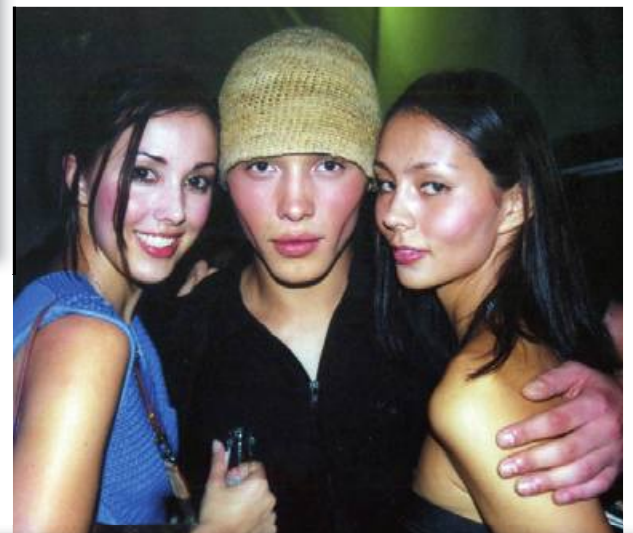
FACES FROM THE PAST
From our Social pages 2000-2019

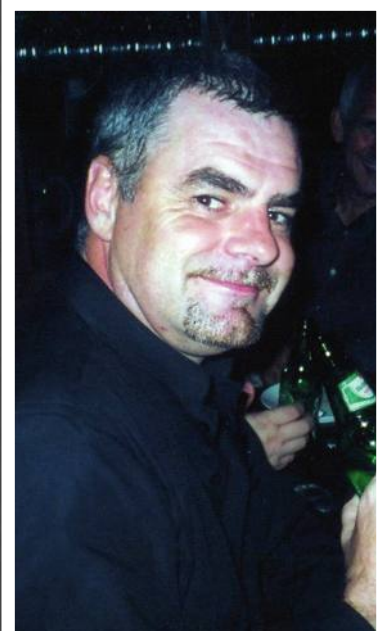
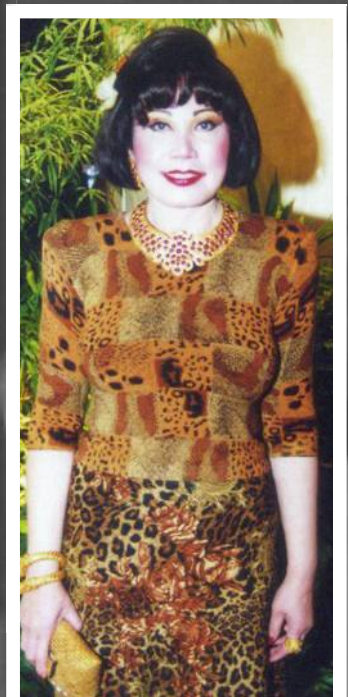
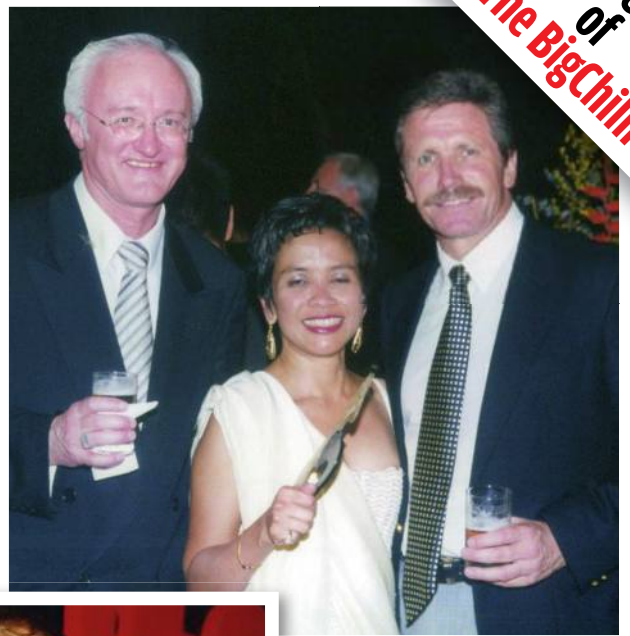






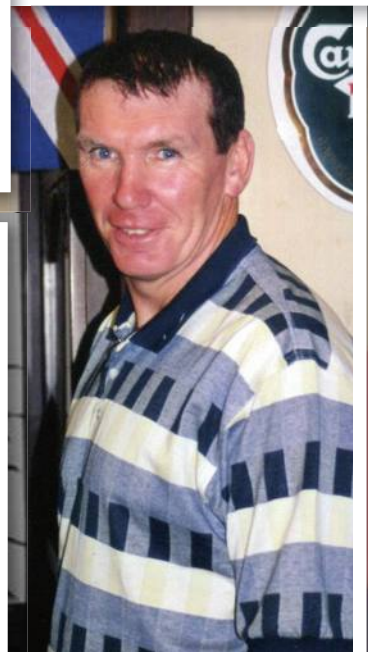
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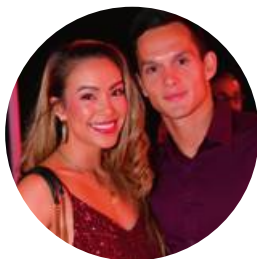


FACES FROM THE PAST
From our Social pages 2000-2019



Social

□ Last month's best events in pictures





Circoloco's awesome non-stop Ibiza party at Baba Beach Club, Phuket

Circoloco and Baba Beach Club Phuket hosted a music festival with full scale production, music and entertainment imported from Ibiza, Spain. Partygoers were entertained by a series of top DJs for two full days, non-stop. The stunning Baba Beach Club grounds were transformed into a world-class party venue.





Campari Bartender recognized

Campari hosted Makham's Thank You Party as a part of Campari Bartender Competition Thailand 2019 at Asia Today. Tamaryn 'Makham' Cooper is one of the top finalists of Campari Bartender Competition ASIA 2019





Ladies Polo, gloriously in Pink

Now in its 11th year, the annual Queen's Cup Pink Polo 2020 drew its biggest ever crowd of polo enthusiasts and guests gloriously attired in pink to watch the action between four all-ladies teams. Held at the beautiful Thai Polo and Equestrian Club Pattaya, proceeds from this popular event were donated to The Queen Sirikit Centre for Breast Cancer Foundation. Other highlights of this special day included Marching Band performance, Horseback Fashion Show, and Yorkshire Terrier Club Thailand dog show.







CRU Champagne Third Anniversary

CRU Champagne Bar held a celebratory evening to mark its partnership and friendship with G.H. Mumm. The highlight was the opening of the Mumm Olympe Rose to celebrate this special occasion. Guests had a chance to sample the champagne for the first time. Entertainment also included fun music from DJ Kurrypup.





Benihana returns with a theatrical flourish

Located at the Riverside Plaza on Charoennakorn Road, Benihana is back and better than ever.

The restaurant is located on the third floor of the plaza, with a contemporary Japanese façade, zigzagged foyer (to ward off evil spirits), a dramatic interior of Benihana's signature black and red hues.

Guests are invited to take a seat at the theatre-like communal tables, each with teppanyaki grill. The chef takes centre stage, slicing, dicing, sizzling and searing your chosen meal.

Mains prepared live on the teppanyaki grill include Australian and Japanese beef, New Zealand lamb, Hokkaido scallops, lobster and foie gras.



Anniversary Charity Event at The Sukhothai

The 10th Anniversary of Gift of Happiness Foundation was marked by an amazing evening at the The Sukhothai attended by both private and public organizations who joined hands to raise more than 100,000 Baht. The Foundation was set up in 1992 by British and Swedish born circus performers, Mr & Mrs Eddie & Charlotte Ha to help orphans, vulnerable street children, Bangkok slum dwellers, families living in garbage dumps, AIDS centres and other under privileged people.



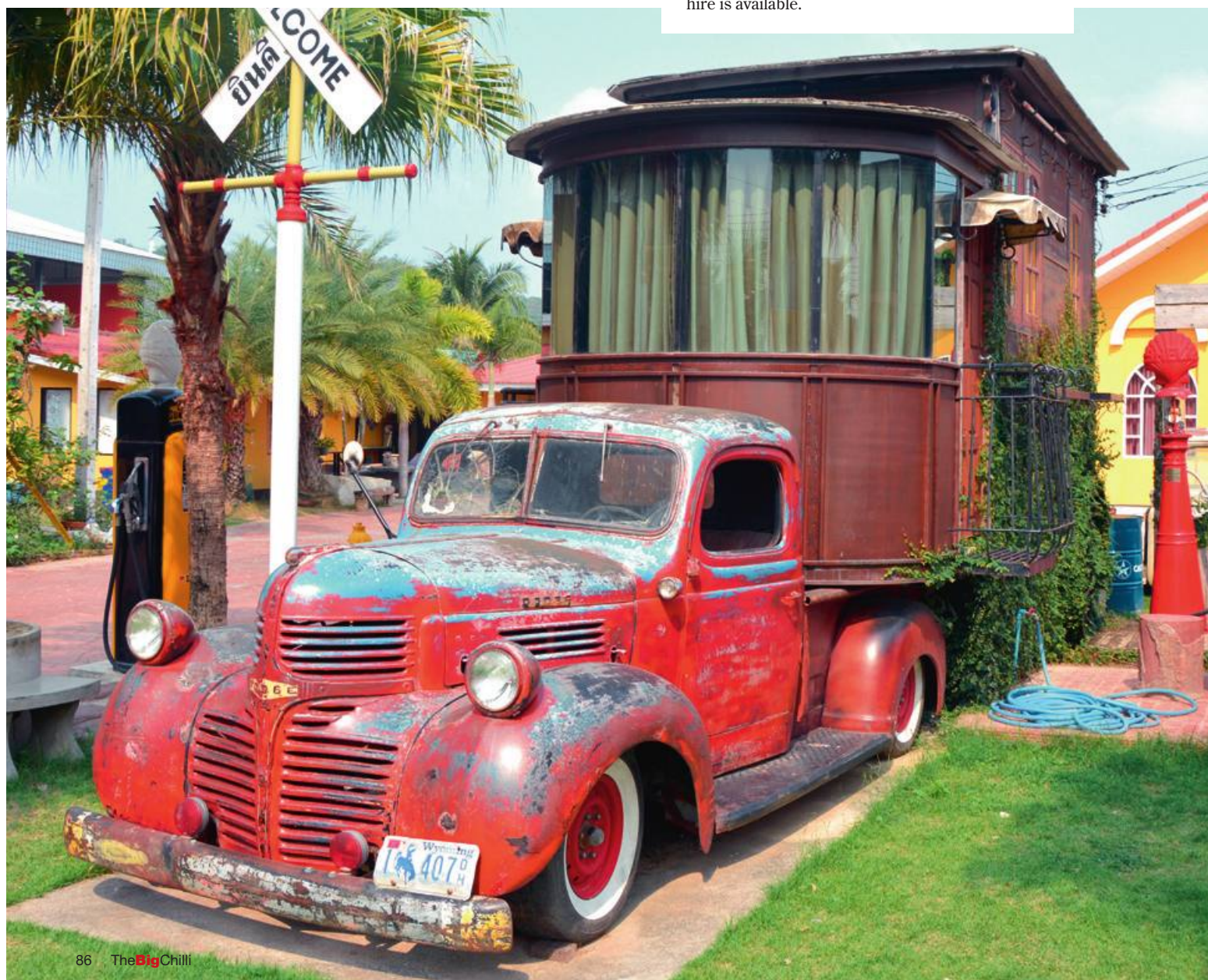
Is this Thailand's quirkiest resort?

With antique caravans attached to extremely rare American trucks from yesteryear providing most of the accommodation, Apinya Resort in Bangsaray has to be among the front runners for the title of Thailand's quirkiest hotel.

Other surprises at this low-key resort include an old bus, a rusty tractor, British public telephone boxes, out of date petrol pumps and all kinds of life-size figurines and cartoon characters. A dilapidated yacht and a lighthouse also find their way into the grounds.

But Apinya Resort does have some features more usually associated with a hotel, such as a swimming pool overlooking an empty valley, communal loos, barbecue facilities, restaurant and shop. And if sleeping in a metal caravan doesn't appeal, then you can always stay in one of the resort's villas, though even most of these sport a wonderfully eccentric design. Each is equipped with a flat-screen TV, air conditioning and private bathroom.

Apinya Resort is eight kms from Rama Yana Water Park and 14 kms from U-Tapao International Airport. The area is popular for cycling, and bike hire is available.







‘Summer Splash’ at Phuket Marriott Resort and Spa, Nai Yang Beach

Phuket Marriott Resort and Spa, Nai Yang Beach is offering a special seasonal promotion that combines contemporary accommodation with complimentary breakfast, high tea and generous discounts on hotel activities, including delectable dining and serene spa treatments.

Available for bookings made between now and the end of April 2020, the Summer Splash promotion coincides with Songkran – Thailand’s famous water festival, which runs from 13-15 April.

Guests who book a minimum three-night stay at any time during April will enjoy a choice of stylish and spacious accommodation, including the Two Bedroom Suite or Beachfront Two Bedroom Pool Villa. All stays include daily breakfast - ideal for couples, families or groups of friends.

The Summer Splash promotion starts from just Baht 6,000 per room per night, and a minimum three-night stay is required. Stays can be taken at any time between 1 and 30 April 2020, including during the Songkran holidays!

Website www.phuketmarriottnaiyang.com
Facebook www.facebook.com/PhuketMarriottNaiYang/
Instagram www.instagram.com/phuketmarriott_naiyang/



‘Canadian Lobster’ at Horizon, Hilton Pattaya

Horizon Rooftop Restaurant & Bar, Hilton Pattaya features Canadian Lobster as the Chef’s Recommendation this season. Experience its sweet and tender meat from choices of grill, bake or with pasta from today to March 31, 2020.

Selections of special creations from Canadian Lobster include Giant Lobster Thermidor served with mixed salad and crouton bread at Baht 4,150 nett, Grilled Giant Lobster served with Truffle cheesy fries and three kinds of sauce including seafood, lemon butter and BBQ at Baht 3,950 nett, Lobster Mac & Cheese Conchiglie pasta with four kinds of cheese served with mixed salad and honey dressing at Baht 1,950 nett and Lobster Aglio e Olio black spaghetti with lobster, chili, garlic, basil and sun-dried tomatoes served with crouton bread at Baht 1,950 nett.

Horizon Rooftop Restaurant & Bar is located on level 34 of Hilton Pattaya and opens every day from 6pm to 11.30pm for dinner. For more information or reservations, please call +66 (0) 38 253 000 or LINE ID @hiltonpattaya or BKKHP.PATTAYA.HORIZON@hilton.com

Extraordinary Buffet Dinner at Kantary Bay Hotel, Sriracha

The Orchard Restaurant at Kantary Bay Hotel, Sriracha is holding varied buffet promotions every Thursday, Friday and Saturday from now until 31 March 2020.

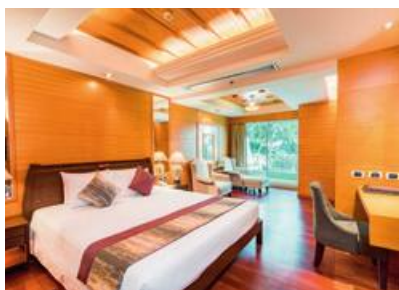
* International Buffet Dinner Every Thursday & Friday (18.00 - 22.00 hrs.) enjoy an extensive selection of Asian and Western dishes including the salad bar with pasta prepared fresh at our show corner and a sushi corner. The price is only Baht 480+ + per person. (Children under 12 receive a 50% discount.)

*Sushi Buffet Dinner Every Saturday (18.00 - 22.00 hrs.) features chef’s selection of tempting rolls and colourful sushi made with the freshest ingredients. The buffet also includes our popular Japanese rice and noodle dishes at only Baht 480++ per person. (Children under 12 receive a 50% discount.)

Contact Kantary Bay Hotel, Sriracha on Tel: 038-771-365 or visit our website at: www.kantarycollection.com

MATES' RATES

Need a quick
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Check out these
great offers



Family Time at Royal Cliff

With its many family-friendly benefits, Royal Cliff's new Family Time package combines luxury and fantastic entertainment for parents and their kids.

Benefits include:

- Accommodation with breakfast buffet for four persons
- Welcome drink upon arrival
- Welcome chocolate cake
- Complimentary in room tea and coffee
- One tray of pizza of your choice at the Panorama Pool View
- Four ice cream vouchers for the Ice Cream Parlour
- 10% discount on food only in all eleven of our award winning restaurants
- 15% discount in all treatments at Cliff Spa
- One hour complimentary pass for children (3-12 years) at Funtasea Kid's World

This offer is valid from now until 31 October 2020

Minimum two nights' stay. Tel: 038 250 421



Island escape at Cape Fahn Hotel, Koh Samui

Cape Fahn Hotel, Koh Samui, a member of Small Luxury Hotels of the World, presents a luxury escape with its 22 pool villas on two private islands.

Price starts from 19,656 baht ++ per room per night including breakfast for two persons from now until 30 June 2020. (The price varies depending on period of stay).

Activities include Feet in the Sea Picnic, Sunset Cruise, Snorkelling, Moonlight Cinema, Fruit Sommelier, Floating Breakfast in your pool villa, Thai Dessert Cookery, Private Thai Boxing Training, Private Thai and Dance Class.

Tel: I. 66(0)77 602 301-2 email: reservations@capefahnhotel.com or visit our website at www.capefahnhotel.com.



'Eat with us - and stay free' at Eastin Grand Hotel Sathorn Bangkok

Spend a minimum of 10,000 baht at Blunos or 12,000 baht at the buffet at The Glass House, and get a complimentary one night stay in a Superior Room for two persons excluding breakfast.

Eastin Grand Sathorn features a full range of facilities and services, including a 14th floor infinity swimming pool, a fully equipped fitness center, Wi-Fi and a free extra bed for children under 16 years old.

Tel: +66 2 210 8100 or rsvn@eastingrandsathorn.com or visit our website www.eastingrandsathorn.com



New animal kingdom for kids themed Family Suites at Siam Kempinski Hotel

Seven animal-themed family suites are the latest additions to the choice of accommodation at Siam Kempinski Hotel Bangkok. Each is named after a member of Thailand's animal kingdom and includes an attractive selection of games and entertainment for younger guests.

Every family that books an animal-themed suite also enjoys additional benefits at the hotel's partner stores and entertainment venues, including KidZania, Sealife, Madame Tussauds and ToysRUs.

Prices per night start from 25,000 baht ++

Tel: +662 162 9000 or email reservations.siambangkok@kempinski.com.



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