

Phuket Gazette

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25 Baht

Tata Young steps up for Love Aid



THAI singing sensation Tata Young is the latest to join a legion of musicians lending their names to the Love Aid concert scheduled for Saturday, April 2 on the island.

The event will raise money for survivors of the Japan earthquake and tsunami.

Organizers expect huge crowds of 5,000, and aim to set a new record for funds raised through a single charity event on the island.

For more on this story see page 14

BUTTI MURDER INVESTIGATION

Hunt on for killer

Business partner charged, hitman still at large

By Yodsak Jarana

POLICE have launched a manhunt for three men all allegedly involved in the execution of Italian businessman Luciano Butti, 61.

Mr Butti was gunned down while riding a rented motorbike through Pa Khlok at about 10pm on March 15.

The manhunt aims to net alleged trigger man Suchart Nimla-or and his younger brother, Ekkachai, along with Ponwat Jongrak.

The three remain at large while four alleged conspirators to the murder remain in custody.

Phuket Provincial Police Region 8 Commissioner Lt Gen Kokiak Wongvorachart presented the four suspects at a press conference at Phuket Provincial Police headquarters last Saturday, just four days after the murder.

The suspects were named as Denis Kavatassi, from Italy;

Somprasong Yongkit, from Krabi; and Ratchanon Sawaree and Somchai Klasuk, both from Phang Nga.

Kavatassi was a partner with Mr Butti in several ventures on Phi Phi Don, including Italiano Restaurant and Bar and Ciao Bella restaurant.

The arrests came after police discovered that the last phone call made to Mr Butti before he was murdered came from Somprasong, who was a manager at one of Butti's restaurants on Phi Phi.

Somprasong caved in to pressure after being brought in to Thalang Police Station for questioning and confessed that Mr Kavatassi had paid him to hire a "hit squad" to take out Mr Butti, Lt Gen Kokiak said.

Mr Butti had cheated Kavatassi out of "seven or eight million baht", which angered him, Somprasong told police.

Somprasong phoned Mr Butti



Denis Kavatassi has denied masterminding the murder of Luciano Butti.

on the Tuesday and invited him to a meeting at a restaurant in Pa Khlok.

He lured him to the secluded area by telling him that he wanted to discuss the business problems between the two Italians and that he sided with Mr Butti and would help him in the matter, police said.

Mr Butti was in Phuket for a brief stay and was scheduled to appear in court in a divorce case on the Wednesday.

After meeting at the restaurant, Mr Butti rode his motorbike back toward Phuket Town as the hitmen assembled and followed him.

Somprasong, driving a white sedan, identified the "mark" to Ratchanon and Ponwat on one motorcycle, Somchai on another, and Suchart and Ekkachai on yet another, said police.

The gang closed in and Suchart allegedly shot Mr Butti four times, killing him.

It was initially reported that the trigger-man was a "civil servant" based in Yala, in Thailand's troubled Deep South region.

Three of the four arrested have confessed to their involvement.

Kavatassi is maintaining his innocence.

Convention center one step closer

By Pimwara Choksakulpan

FINANCE Minister Korn Chatikavanij told a public hearing in Phuket last week that he can "guarantee" the project to build a convention and exhibition center will go ahead if his Democrat Party holds on to power in the upcoming elections.

Mr Korn was speaking at a public hearing at The Metropole hotel in Phuket Town last Sunday to present three architectural plans for the Phuket International Convention and Exhibition Center (ICEC) from three different firms selected as candidates to design the structure.

"I expect the center to be finished by the start of 2014," Mr Korn said.

The three designs presented at the hearing shared a common theme: Shelled creatures.

The first presentation was by KAED 103, which put forth a design in the form of a tortoiseshell. The second was by SPAN & FED, whose plans called for a "conch shell" design, while ASD presented a pearl oyster shape for the building.

All three companies detailed their interior design, functional area, security system, hotel, landscaping and other plans.

One of the designs will be selected be-

fore the end of this month, said Treasury Department Director General Winai Wittawatkaravet, who called for the public meeting to be held.

After that, a search for a construction company would begin in July in the hope of signing a contract for construction in September, he said.

Construction is expected to take about 900 days, he added.

"During this time we also need to figure out what is the best choice for transportation systems connecting the center with the airport and Phuket Town," Finance Minister Korn added.



Finance Minister Korn Chatikavanij

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This Week

Storm season



The Phuket MET explains why we're getting so wet. **Page 5**

Business



New auto showroom roars into luxury car market. **Page 11**

People



Meet celebrity and babe magnet Mr Michael Venezuela. **Page 18**

Travel



Hop over the bay to Koh Yao Noi for less than 1,000 baht. **Page 24**

Property



Solar power bright idea for going green – and cutting costs. **Page 31**

Sport - Exclusive interview



The Gazette's Neil Quail goes toe-to-toe with MMA fighter Roger Huerta. **Page 45**

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Roads blamed as truck flies off curve in daylight

By Pimwara Choksakulpan

POOR road engineering is being blamed for a six-wheeled Phuket Provincial Administration Organization (*OrBorJor*) water tanker overshooting a dangerous curve on Monday, leaving the passenger dead and the driver badly injured.

The accident happened at about 9:30am on Thepkrasattri Road northbound, along a stretch of road known as "Bang Duk Curve".

When police arrived at the scene, they found *OrBorJor* worker Prayoon Srikrajang, 45, dead of massive head trauma.

Driver Somchai Kitprasert, 30, was standing nearby, dazed and covered with blood.

Mr Somchai was rushed to Thalang Hospital for emergency treatment.

An initial investigation at the scene failed to reveal what caused the truck to breach the guard rail and take out a wide swath of roadside thicket before coming to rest on its side, said Lt Col Prakob of Thalang Police.

OrBorJor Public Works Divi-



The truck was making a routine delivery when the accident occurred.

sion acting chief Wasana Rongphol told the *Gazette* the truck was delivering 6,000 liters of water to Mai Khao government offices at the time of the accident.

Narong Singkala, an *OrBorJor* council member from Mai Khao, blamed poor road engineering for the accident.

"Accidents take place almost daily on three dangerous curves on Thepkrasattri road in Mai Khao:

at Bang Duk, Kho En and Ban Yid.

"This is because of poor engineering. This issue has been raised many times in *OrBorJor* council meetings and with the Phuket Provincial Highways Office, which is responsible for this road," Mr Narong said.

"As nothing has been done so far, I urge drivers to slow down in these areas. This is for their own safety," he added.

Murder suspect arrested after 17 years on the run

AFTER 17 years on the lam, a suspect wanted for a 1994 stabbing murder of a man in Uthai Thani province was arrested by Phuket City Police on Monday.

Pornsak "Nu" Ketkaew, 44, was arrested when he took a 10-wheel dump truck for repairs at a garage off Thepkrasattri Road.

Mr Pornsak was arrested by officers who confirmed his resemblance to the picture in his arrest warrant, issued on February 12, 2004.

The arrest followed intelligence supplied by the Ban Rai District Police in Uthai Thani.

Investigating officers from that station were informed of the imminent arrest before it happened.

Sen Sgt Maj Thanakorn Pirothong of the Ban Rai Police investigation team said, "Pornsak confessed to us that he had a fight with a man who tried to attack



Mr Pornsak's new mugshot

him. He said he wanted to protect himself, so he used a pocket knife to stab the man in the chest."

Mr Pornsak said he was acting in self defense and the stab was not intentionally directed at the man's heart, the officer said.

The Ban Rai Police team escorted Pornsak back to Uthai Thani, where he will face charges.

Rescue drill for upcoming Songkran

RESCUE organizations and medical staff will stage a traffic accident rescue drill in Cherg Talay on March 29 ahead of the April 12-18 "Seven Days of Danger" Songkran road safety campaign.

The emergency response drill will be staged at the Tesco-Lotus intersection on Srisoonthorn Road from 10am to 10:45am.

The simulation will include motorcycles, a *songtaew* and a six-wheeled truck with an "emergency treatment center" set up in the parking lot of the Tesco-Lotus store.

Earlier that morning, a motorcycle procession will start at the Cherg Talay Tesco store at 9am to promote the ongoing island-wide campaign for all people on motorbikes to wear helmets.

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FAMOUS NIGHTCLUB PATONG



The Chinese trio and the 'tools' of their alleged trade. Photo: Yodsak Jarana

International hotel thieves caught on TV

CHALONG Police have arrested three mainland Chinese they think are part of a gang who specialize in burglarizing guests at luxury hotels the world over.

Chalong Police Deputy Superintendent Narong Laksanawimol identified the three suspects as: Liu Shuiping, 45; Liu Jianhua, 39; and Liu Shuidong, 40.

All were identified as residents of Jiangxi, China.

The three were arrested as they were leaving the grounds of the Karon Sea Sands Resort and Spa last Friday. They tried to flee on foot, but were run down by police, officers said.

A fourth member of the gang got away and remains at large.

A search of the room and luggage uncovered two cameras, a mobile phone and equipment such as box cutters, rubber gloves and string allegedly used to break into the rooms of tourists.

The arrests followed a spate of hotel room break-ins all over the island, Lt Col Narong said.

The men confessed to the break-ins only after being shown

CCTV footage catching them in the act, he said.

"They posed as tourists, staying just one night at hotels to break into other guest rooms. They initially denied all charges, but confessed after viewing the CCTV images," he said.

Hotel owners came forward to positively identify the suspects, confirming that some of the recovered items belonged to their guests.

Phuket Immigration said the four arrived in a group of eight, which then apparently divided into two teams of four each, Lt Col Narong said.

"They refused to show how they got into the hotel rooms, but the footage shows they gained access easily. I am still amazed at how they could get in using just a small piece string and sheet of plastic," he said.

"This team was responsible for breaking and entering, and theft. The other team of four would receive the goods and sell them or smuggle them out of the country," he said.

- Yodsak Jarana

Health Minister Jurin vets anti-radiation pills

By Janpen Upatising

HEALTH Minister Jurin Laksanawisit was in Phuket last Sunday to inspect first hand the anti-radiation tablets being issued free to passengers at Phuket International Airport bound for Japan.

"In the past five days, 71 people - 69 Japanese, one American and one Thai - have each collected a 130mg bottle of potassium iodide from the booth," said Minister Jurin.

The tablets, available at the booth on the second floor of the main terminal, will continue to be available free until the situation in Japan returns to normal, he added.

The booth is open from 6:30am to 9:30pm daily.

"We originally intended to provide the tablets for Thais traveling to Japan, but Japanese people returning home also asked for them," Mr Jurin said.

"So we are providing the tablets for free to any people whose passports and boarding passes show they are heading into areas declared by the Japanese government as 'risk areas' for radiation."

Mr Jurin also confirmed that the Ministry of Public Health was now testing food imported from Japan for radiation.

So far samples from 31 shipments had been tested, he said.

"Three of the shipments were agricultural products and 28 were seafood. We found no traces of radiation at all," he said.

On Tuesday, the Food and Drug Administration began testing food from Japan arriving at Klong Toey Port and Laem Chabang Port, Mr Jurin added.

"People are advised to take a



Health Minister Jurin confirmed the anti-radiation tablets will continue to be handed out free until the situation in Japan 'returns to normal'.



VIAL TREATMENT: The pills

tablet each day, from one to 12 hours before entering radioactive areas. One tablet is active for 24 hours," explained PPHO chief Dr Sak Tanchaikul.

The tablets are available in two dosages: 130 milligrams for adults, and 65mg for children aged 3-18 and not weighing more than 68 kilograms, Dr Sak added.

The booth was initially stocked with 320 bottles of the 130mg

adult doses and 80 bottles of the 65mg tablets for children, Dr Sak said.

Pregnant women were advised to take just one tablet - and only once.

"Any people with health conditions such as nephropathy [a kidney condition related to diabetes] or hyperthyroidism are advised not to take the tablets at all," Dr Sak said.

The tablets may have side effects such as vomiting, skin rashes or stomachache.

"People should consult a doctor or stop taking the tablets if they suffer strong side effects," said Dr Sak.

"These tablets just provide some protection from radiation. However, the best way not to be affected by radiation is to avoid going near affected areas.

"Travel to Japan is currently not advised. Go only if necessary," he added.

Brit pilot dies in head-on

POLICE are investigating the death of a 41-year-old British pilot after he came off his motorbike south of Patong and was run over by an oncoming pickup.

Capt Weerapong Rakkittoon of Patong Police said that Martin William Wooller was riding to Patong after spending the afternoon at Karon Beach when the accident happened last Saturday.

Mr Wooller was struck by a pickup heading southbound near Le Meridien Phuket Beach Resort at about 6pm.

Mr Wooller survived the initial impact, but later died in hospital from his injuries.

"He might have been overtaking another motorbike heading toward Patong or he may have slipped off his bike and fallen onto the wrong side of the road, before he was struck by the oncoming pickup," said Capt Weerapong.

Tuptim still fighting for life

DESPITE enduring an 18-hour life-saving operation in January to remove her cancer-infected liver and receive a transplanted section of her mother's liver, Phuket infant Tuptim Jadngooluem is still fighting hard to stay alive.

"She remained in ICU at Ramathibodi Hospital in Bangkok and was improving daily while the hospital monitored her liver to ensure her body was accepting the new organ.

"Unfortunately her liver developed an infection and she began

to reject it," said Will Elliott of Tiger Muay Thai camp in Chalong, which was instrumental in raising 1.5 million baht needed to pay for the surgery.

Mr Elliott said doctors recently performed a biopsy. "This was crucial to gauge whether the liver would survive in Tuptim and apparently it was successful.

"It's been an emotional roller coaster ride for everyone, especially her parents, but right now the situation seems positive," he added.

- Neil Quail



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Drug convicts lose right to bear arms

DISTRICT Offices across Phuket have set up special units to identify people in their respective jurisdictions who have been convicted of drug charges in order to strip them of firearms.

The move is part of a nationwide campaign to rescind gun licenses of any people convicted of playing a part in the drug trade, including dealers and users.

The special units are to investigate by cross-checking lists of people convicted of drug charges who hold gun licenses, and to receive tip-offs from the public.

"We received the order from the Ministry of Interior at about the beginning of the year. So far we have identified and are moving to revoke the gun license of one man, who will have to hand in his weapon," explained Suthee Siri-anan, deputy commander of the provincial office of disaster prevention and mitigation (DDPM).

Although key in carrying out the national policy, district offices must first gain approval from the Provincial Office before filing any

requests for gun licenses to be revoked.

If approval is granted, the district office will notify the individuals concerned, who will then have two months to hand in their guns.

"If such people do not comply within two months, a court order for police to seize the guns will be issued," said Mr Suthee.

All guns handed in under the project will be auctioned at a time and date yet to be set.

At a meeting on March 14, Deputy Governor Chaiwat Tepee said officers attached to the Phuket Provincial office's own "immediate drug suppression and prevention" center arrested seven "important" drug dealers and 208 small dealers since the beginning of this year, he said.

The center, which receives tip-offs from the public at 076-210159, also raided 136 entertainment venues including bars and clubs, 56 Internet game shops and 105 public areas where motorbike gangs were known to frequent. *- Atchaa Khamlo*

Explosion fears spark Kathu gas shop raid

By Atchaa Khamlo

FEARS of a serious explosion at a local store illegally refilling gas cylinders prompted a raid by officials from the Phuket Energy Office on Monday.

Led by Phuket Energy Office chief Jirasak Tummawetch, the officers arrived at the unnamed gas shop near Ketho Junction on Wichit Songkram Road in Kathu.

Energy chief Jirasak said, "Normally, small shops are not permitted to refill household gas cylinders because it's dangerous and may cause a serious explosion, like the explosion in Phra Pradaeng in Samut Prakarn in 2004."

"We believe there are a few places that refill gas cylinders illegally. We know about them, but we do not have enough evidence to arrest anyone - yet," he added.

However, instead of finding equipment used to refill gas cylinders, officers found that seven large gas tanks filled at the store



Phuket Energy Office chief Jirasak Tummawetch (left) listens to gas shop owner Kongkij Limsuebchuea (pointing) explain why seven of the large gas cylinders were four kilos lighter than the legal amount.

were about four kilograms lighter than they should be.

"The legally acceptable range for discrepancy is not more than half a kilo," said chief Jirasak.

Shopowner Kongkij Limsuebchuea, 50, denied tampering with the cylinders.

"The cylinders were brought in

from Surat Thani. We don't refill any gas cylinders here.

"If the gas tanks weigh less than the standard amount, then it's probably because of the factory in Surat Thani or the company that delivers them," he said.

"We will investigate this case further," said chief Jirasak.

Local security guard killed in hit and run

POLICE are searching for the driver of a pickup truck that hit and killed an unidentified motorbike driver in Cherng Talay on Monday night.

Cherng Talay Police duty officer Somkhit Khawsung was notified of the fatal accident at 7:35pm.

At the scene, the road from Kuktanode to Layan near the Laguna Phuket Outrigger resort and villa complex, they found the body of a man whose age was estimated at about 40 years.

Villagers said the man was hit by a metallic silver Toyota pickup that sped away after the collision.

No identification was found on the man, who was not wearing a helmet.

The apparent cause of death was a head injury.

The red Suzuki Crystal motorbike he was riding at the time did



Rescue workers at the scene.

not have a license plate.

Local residents said the victim was employed as a security guard in the area, but did not know his name or that of his employer.

The victim was well-dressed, with a bright orange windbreaker, gray slacks and black shoes.

Anyone with information that could help identify the man or otherwise aid in the investigation should contact the Cherng Talay Police on 076-325630.

- Wichai Witthawat



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Season of the storms

By Janpen Upatising

THE daily succession of heavy thunderstorms and rain that have strafed the island in recent weeks has left many wondering if the weather has gone mad, the rainy season come early or if this is the beginning of a long-term shift in Phuket's climate.

The good news for those who fear the big wet may continue for the foreseeable future is that Roongrawee Onkot, a meteorologist resident at the Southern Meteorological Center (West Coast) based near the airport, says the storms are set to cease this weekend.

"Between March 20 and 22, the low-pressure system in the Strait of Malacca moved northward and spread over Southern Thailand.

"This caused thunderstorms, heavy rain and strong gusts of wind for one to two hours in the late afternoon and early evening," Mrs Roongrawee explained.

That weather system dissipated, making way for clear skies, but only to be replaced by another cold front, this time from the north.

Speaking to the *Gazette* on Wednesday, Mrs Roongrawee predicted that between March 23 (Wednesday) and March 26 (Saturday) a cold air mass from China would move south, covering Southern Thailand.

"Phuket will be affected by the cold air mass, which will cause the same intensity of thunderstorms, rain and gusts of wind as the low-pressure system from the Strait of Malacca caused earlier," she said.

Then came the good news: "However, these weather condi-



GROUND STRIKE: Lightning strikes the hilltops during a Phuket evening thunderstorm. Photo: Dean Noble

tions will not last long. It is forecast that after March 26, Phuket's weather will return to normal," she said.

Contrary to concerns expressed by *Gazette* readers that the high-daily series of thunderstorms was a new phenomenon, Mrs Roongrawee said the recent weather was nothing new to Phuket.

"These weather conditions prevail in Phuket every year at this time. Actually, it can happen anytime of the year because Phuket is located in a tropical zone and the weather is changing all the time.

"It doesn't mean the rainy season has come early, either.

"The season will change – and the rainy season will come – in May, just as it always does," she explained.

In the meantime, people heading out to sea should beware of large waves brought on by storms, she added.

That's a warning local fisherman Suriyan Somsa took in stride.

He has been putting out to sea from Bang Tao Beach for the past eight years.

He said that he always checked the forecast before heading out. As far as he's concerned the weather recently had been "normal".

"The thunderstorms and rain in the evening do not affect us much compared with the rainy season conditions that come in May.

"I think it is very normal since Phuket's weather is always changing," he said.

the morning instead," he added.

But Patong jet-ski operator Singthong Charoensap said the rain had damped beachgoer enthusiasm.

"The weather hasn't affected the jet-ski businesses much: Beach chair operators have been affected the most," he said.

"When the sun isn't shining all day, and especially when there's bad weather, the number of tourists who rent beach chairs decreases.

"There are far fewer tourists coming to the beach for other activities, as well. Those who do come do not stay all day like they would if the weather were good," said Mr Singthong, who says he's been working Patong Beach for about 20 years.

"For example, some tourists come just for a swim and leave. Likewise, some come and rent a jet-ski and leave as soon as they are finished. So beach operators have limited time and fewer chances to offer and sell to tourists," he explained.

"But what beach operators including me have done for many years in order to adapt ourselves to this situation is to hurry and find customers during the day before the rain comes in the evening," Mr Singthong said.

MARCH AT A GLANCE

Max temperature: 30 C - 35 C
 Min temperature: 22 C - 24 C
 Rainfall: 148mm on 13 days of rain
 Thunderstorms covering about 30% percent of Phuket.

Data collated between March 1 and 22 by the Phuket MET weather station at Phuket International Airport.

LONG-RANGE FORECAST

April: Songkran coming = it's hot. Sporadic showers throughout the the month, with most rainfall in this month falling in the final days of the month.

May: The rainy season arrives and the annual southwest monsoon will bring its regular heavy rain throughout the Andaman region.

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Luangta Maha Bua remains in Phuket

By Atchaa Khamlo

ABOUT 200 people joined a ceremony last Saturday to place bone fragments of the highly-revered Luangta Maha Bua Yanasampanno at a temple in Phuket Town.

The fragments were installed at Wat Jaroen Samanakij, known locally as Wat Lang San, near Phuket Provincial Hall.

The event began at about 7am with the giving of alms to monks, followed by the ceremony to place the bone fragments starting at 7:45am. The ceremony finished around 10am.

The fragments were previously at the residence of Phra Arjan Jamrat Jantachotoe, an abbot at Wat Jaroen Samanakij who once studied under Luangta Maha Bua.



The bone fragments were enshrined at Wat Lang San, near Phuket Provincial Hall.

During the ceremony, the bone fragments were enshrined in a sala at the temple, where ashes and strands of hair of Luangta Maha Bua were already kept.

Donations are being sought to

build a pagoda that will become the final resting place of the late revered monk's remains.

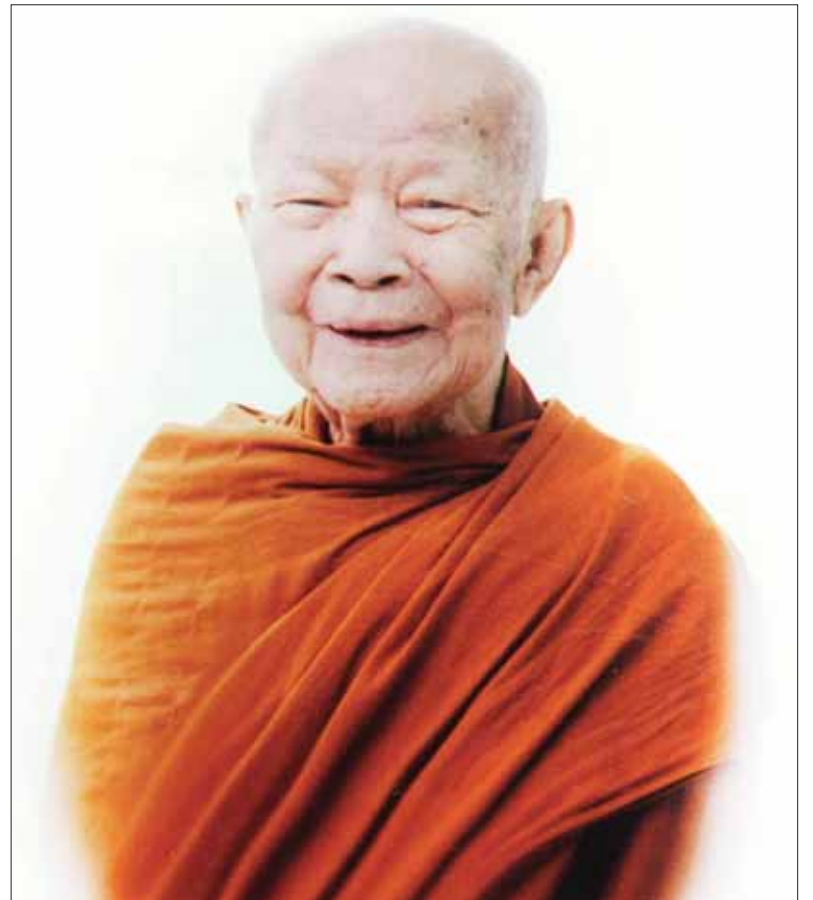
More than 200 people welcomed the arrival of the bone fragments in Phuket at 8pm the previous Sunday.

Hundreds more since visited the temple to pay their respects.

Luangta Maha Bua was abbot of Wat Pa Ban Tad Forest Monastery in Udon Thani.

He passed away at age 97 and was cremated in a ceremony that captivated the nation. Among the guests of honor was Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva.

Bone fragments of Luangta Maha Bua are being distributed to more than 300 different temples nationwide so that people may pay their respects.



The highly-revered Luangta Maha Bua Yanasampanno.

Parents seek return of runaway girl, 14

THE parents of a 14-year-old girl who ran off with her young boyfriend are asking the public for help in securing her safe return.

Jintana Wangnurat and her English husband Huwy Williams told the *Gazette* that their daughter Grissana "Green" Wangnurat ran off with her 16-year-old Thai boyfriend on March 17 and had not been seen since.

Mr Williams, a nine-year Phuket resident originally from Gloucestershire, expects the boy has taken her to Patong, where she used to be enrolled as a student at Wat Suwankiriwong School.

"We want her back as soon as possible so we can know she is



Grissana 'Green' Wangnurat, 14.

safe and she can continue her studies," said Mrs Jintana, who is a native of Phang Nga.

Anyone with information is urged to call Huwy (087-889 5736) or Jintana (080-538 4943) directly or contact the police.

— Stephen Fein

QSI student finds his voice

FORMER QSI-Phuket student Philip Songkran Upton has won the International Public Speaking Competition (Thailand) 2011.

He will represent Thailand in the international finals of the competition to be held in London in May this year.

Philip was one of four Stamford International University (STIU) students who competed against 14 other students in the semi-final round of the competition on February 25.

The contest, organized by the Ministry of Education and the English Speaking Union, is open to Thai students from high schools and universities across Thailand.

The other three STUI students were Ms Suchanart Preecha, Mr Napas Nilobolwong and Ms Hataichanok Chantaluksuk.

Philip and Hataichanok qualified for the final round, along with two other competitors from Chulalongkorn University and another from Assumption University (ABAC).

The final round began on March 18, with competitors speaking on the theme "Words Are Not Enough".



Philip Upton flanked by Samuel Peter Shuler (left), chair of the Judging Committee, and ESU (Thailand) chairperson Lalivan Karnchanachari.



"I had to think about in what cases when words aren't enough," explained Philip.

"I wrote about the first things that came to my mind – saying one thing, but doing another; promises; the differences between a manager and a leader; and examples of people to back up my points.

"I knew what I wanted to write about – words and actions – so I made that the title and the central idea of my speech," he added.

"First of all, I would like to thank my professor at my university, William Stanley, for helping me through the editing and the rehearsing.

"We spent a lot of time doing my speech over and over again to get it right.

"Another person I would like to thank is a former teacher back in my high school in Phuket, Rachel Geary.

"She also assisted me in the editing and was probably the teacher that helped me out the most in terms of how to write good essays," he said.

"Also to my friends, family, and university for supporting me through this.

"I'll do my best to represent my university and my country at the competition in London," he said.

— Phuket Gazette

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Seventh death adds to Chiang Mai mystery

SPECULATION is growing in Chiang Mai after it emerged a seventh person died suddenly in the city in the same month.

Shortly before his death on January 26, Canadian Bill Mah, 59, had used the facilities of the Downtown Hotel, where four other people died within two weeks.

Friends of Mr Mah, from Edmonton, were shocked by the death of a man who seemed perfectly healthy.

After complaining of lack of sleep due

to chest pains, he was taken to Chiang Mai Ram Hospital. Doctors tested him for heart disease, but all tests came back negative, journalist Andrew Drummond reported.

Mr Mah was discharged, but soon complained of being ill again. After he collapsed in his room in the People Palace Hotel, he was rushed to hospital again, but died within 15 minutes of admission.

Ken Fraser, who was holidaying with Mr Mah, said, "His death is a complete mys-

tery. He seemed fit enough, with no history of heart problems. We have not been told his cause of death. We only have an initial report."

An American woman, Soraya Pandola, 33, died in the city in early January. Mrs Pandola's husband claims she had the same symptoms as a 23-year-old New Zealand woman, Sarah Carter, who died in February after staying at the Downtown Inn.

An elderly British couple in their 70s and

a Thai woman also died while staying at the hotel. A French woman is also understood to have died in the city around the same time.

The authorities have so far played down the deaths, claiming they were a "coincidence".

The Downtown Inn is owned by a millionaire businessman and former Chiang Mai mayor, leading to speculation of a cover-up.

- *Phuket Gazette*

Man arrested for lese majeste import CDs

A THAI man faces up to 15 years in jail after being caught selling CDs containing a controversial Australian documentary deemed insulting to the monarchy.

Eakachai Hongkangwan, 35, has been charged with lese majeste and selling CDs without official permission, Lt Col Nattakorn Kumsap of Chana Songkram police told AFP.

"Under the law he faces between three and 15 years in prison," he added.

The documentary, which was made by the Australian Broadcast Corporation, was broadcast in Australia during last year's red-shirt protests. The program, entitled "Long Live The King", was not shown outside of Australia.

Eakachai's arrest follows a 13-year sentence handed down earlier this month to webmaster Thantawut Thaweenarodomkul for lese majeste and cyber offenses.

Thantawut, 38, was arrested last year after the website he ran, a US-based pro-red site, published comments deemed insulting to the monarchy.

A campaign is also underway to defend Chiranuch Premchai-porn, editor of Prachathai news website, who is also charged with lese majeste and computer crimes.

Chiranuch allegedly failed to remove lese-majeste comments posted by anonymous users on the Prachathai web board quickly enough and faces decades in jail.

Abhisit survives censure



PRIME Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva and nine Cabinet ministers survived a no-confidence vote on March 19, paving the way for what is expected to be a hotly contested election later this year.

The censure vote followed four days of debate during which the opposition Pheu Thai Party accused the government of corruption, incompetence and killing innocent civilians during red-shirt protests last year.

"The parliament has voted to give confidence to the prime minister and another nine ministers to stay in power," said House Speaker Chai Chidchob.

Mr Abhisit was supported by 249 members of parliament, with 184 voting against him and 11 abstaining. Deputy Prime Minister Suthep Thaugsuban also received 249 votes of support.

The results were unsurprising, given that the governing coalition holds a majority in the Thai House of Representatives. No Thai government has ever been dislodged through a no-confidence motion, the *New Straits Times* reported.

Regardless, the debate was seen as the opening salvo in this year's election campaign, with the opposition seeking more to con-



PM Abhisit (2nd from left) as he leaves Parliament. Photo: The Nation

vince the public of the government's lack of credibility than other MPs.

Among the accusations leveled at the government were that it had racked up huge public debt and failed to control prices and ensure supply of key commodities.

In a speech lasting more than one hour, Pheu Thai MP Anudit Nakhonthap accused Deputy PM Suthep of deliberately allowing palm oil stocks to run out in order to allow refiners based in south-

ern Thailand to profit. Mr Suthep admitted mistakes were made, but denied corruption.

The opposition also accused Mr Abhisit of allowing tobacco giant Philip Morris to evade payment of 68 billion baht in tariffs on cigarette imports, which he denied.

Red-shirt leader and Pheu Thai MP Jatuporn Prompan accused the government of "colluding to kill people" during last year's red-shirt protests, in which more than 90 people died.

The debate served as a proving ground for Pheu Thai MP Mingkwan Sangsuwan, who led the opposition's attacks on the government after reportedly being nominated to do so by Pheu Thai patriarch Thaksin Shinawatra.

"After the House dissolution, I will volunteer to contest for the prime minister's seat against Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva. The people will make their decision on that day," Mr Mingkwan said in his closing speech, *The Nation* reported.

Commerce Minister Porntiva Nakasai of the Bhum Jai Thai Party, who was accused of corruption related to the recent palm oil shortage, received 251 votes of support. Bhum Jai Thai Party leader Chaovarat Chanweerakul, who is Interior Minister, received 250.

A number of Pheu Thai MPs who are planning to defect to the Bhum Jai Thai Party at the next election voted in favor of the government and in defiance of party whips.

- *Phuket Gazette*



At "Into the Sea", the signature restaurant at the Evason Phuket & Bon Island, chef Thomas Jakobi's Modern Logical Cuisine showcases his latest innovations in the form of new, creative interpretations of a cuisine that has both visual and textural appeal. The taste and focus on fresh, wholesome and local ingredients are paramount.

The wine program, created by our sommelier, Harry Haan, has been granted the Wine Spectator Award of Excellence for the second year in a row.



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Repaying Japan in kind

Re: Gazette online, 'LOVE AID - To Japan From Phuket With Love' benefit concert scheduled, March 18

This is payback time and it's good to see both the Thais and expats united in this.

Give it all the support you can, the Japanese deserve it as they were one of the major donors after the 2004 tsunami.

See you all at Karon Beach on April 2.

j.d.
Gazette forum

Double-tier pricing

Great to hear the tin mining museum opening.

Sad to see the same outdated double-tier pricing scheme rolled out. When will we see change in this policy?

I would really like for Thais abroad to be charged the same way.

Oh, I forgot - that would be viewed as discriminatory.

T Hinton
Chalong

Job well done, police

Re: Gazette online, Phuket Butti murder: Italian business partner charged, hitman still at large, March 19

If these are the guilty ones, and I say "if", my most sincere congratulations to the Royal Thai Police for such a quick and successful investigation.

Hopefully, they will manage to catch the rest of them as well.

Hugo
Gazette forum

Residency rules punish the sincere

Phuket Gazette

IT IS high time that the Ministry of Interior (MoI) set up a special task force to begin fast-tracking the processing of the huge backlog of permanent residency (PR) applications it is now sitting on. Such a move would have multiple benefits for all sides involved, including boosting Thailand's all-important tourism industry and confidence among foreign investors.

For reasons that have never been directly addressed by the MoI, stacks of permanent residency applications, faithfully submitted at great time and expense by law-abiding foreign residents, continue to gather dust at the ministry.

The situation has developed to the extent that any foreigner who technically qualifies for permanent residency status under the Immigration Act would certainly be put off from applying at all, given that the current backlog of applications dates back to 2006.

The breakdown in processing these applications reportedly harks back to a xenophobic decision put in place almost a decade ago by Purachai Piemsomboon, Interior Minister under former Thai premier Thaksin Shinawatra.

Thailand's current requirements for foreigners to obtain residency are among the most restrictive in the world, at least for male applicants seeking residency on the basis of marriage and support of a Thai family.

Current regulations make it far easier for the spouse of a Thai man to obtain residency, a fact which is inherently sexist and completely at odds with the spirit of the current constitution.

At its heart, qualification for residency status requires male applicants to prove beyond any doubt that their presence in the Kingdom is advantageous to the country. Applicants are required to prove they have been in the country for a minimum of three years on consecutively-issued, one-year permits-to-stay and have paid all of their taxes.

Another stringent requirement put in place during Mr Purachai's tenure requires the male applicant to pass a Thai-language test. Few other countries, with the notable exception of the United Kingdom, impose similar requirements on visa and/or residency applicants - with good reason. Even current immigration policy in the United States, where nationalist tenancies are running high in the face of widespread illegal immigration by Spanish-speaking people from Latin America, correctly continue to put the primacy of the family unit over language concerns.

Permanent resident applicants represents the best and brightest of Thailand's expatriate community. Simply ignoring the applications of those who submitted them in good faith over the past five years is unacceptable.

If the Government wants to do away with this avenue for immigration, it should amend the Immigration Act to reflect this fact and stop wasting everybody's time.

Rothchild
Gazette forum

Safety with a second account

Re: Gazette online, Phuket ATM scams run rife, March 22

This is why I have now opened up a second account with my bank - one with an ATM card and one without.

You can do free transfers between the two accounts and I never keep more than a "write-offable" amount, say 100,000 baht, in the ATM account.

Rothchild
Gazette forum

Fixing problems with bullets

Re: Gazette online, Phuket Butti murder: Italian business partner charged, hitman still at large, March 19

It is bad enough that we are getting ripped off every day and now people from their own country are doing it and ending up dead.

Why do so many problems here have to be fixed with bullets?

It is so sad to see this type of thing happening.

Roger
Phuket

Extended visas for Japanese tourists

I recently heard that Japan is requesting tourist visas for their citizens to be extended.

This would be a great opportunity for Thailand to show compassion for the devastated nation.

H Turner
Nai Yang

Chat's off: It's 'business time'

Re: Gazette online, Phuket ATM scams run rife, March 22

My apologies to Mr Treherne, but there should be no interac-

tion with people at an ATM. None.

As far as I'm concerned, it's like being at a urinal: Don't talk to me while I do my business.

Don't talk to me about the weather or your kids; do not shake my hand; and do not

attempt any witty banter.

I'm familiar with this ATM. It's very crowded with people milling around.

Early morning when it is sunny out, there are fewer people.

Tonglen
Gazette forum

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Issues & Answers...

Reclaiming lost property in tuk-tuks

One of our guests at the resort where I work left her bag in a tuk-tuk she and her husband took from a stand near Hard Rock Cafe in Patong to Kata in the early afternoon on March 13.

In the bag were a Lumix camera, Commonwealth Bank of Australia savings card, Nokia mobile phone and a key.

Who can we contact to check if perhaps this bag has been found?

I read there is a Patong Taxi Federation. Can they be contacted for this?

If so, how?

And should something like this happen again, is there a number for inquiries about lost and found items in Kata-Karon based tuk-tuks?

Our guests would like to find their camera with all their holiday photos.

Thank you for your help.

Lisa
Kata

Send us your queries and we'll ask the right people to respond to them.

Submit your issue at

www.PhuketGazette.net/
IssuesAnswers

Prathum Yodkeaw, secretary of Tuk-tuk and Taxi of Kata and Karon KT Group, replies:

We only take care of tuk-tuks and taxis in Karon, so we do not know how tuk-tuks in Patong respond to appeals about lost property.

I suggest that your guest return to the stand where she got into the tuk-tuk and ask there.

Tuk-tuks from outside our area who drop off passengers in Kata or Karon usually return to their own pick-up areas or stands without stopping at a stand in Kata or Karon.

Any person who forgets their belongings in a tuk-tuk they got into in Kata or Karon can call me at 081-607 6629.

If we find lost property, we will return it to the hotel where the passenger is staying.

I also strongly suggest that people use tuk-tuks and taxis that operate from stands, and not hail one that happens to be driving by because it is hard for us to follow up if anything happens, especially if the tuk-tuk or taxi is from another area that we do not look after.

Setthasak Buason, president of the Patong Taxi Association, replies:

There are five to six tuk-tuk taxi stands near the Hard Rock Cafe. The stand directly in front of Hard Rock Cafe is the one under our responsibility. However, we can help by asking the other tuk-tuk drivers.

The most important things I need to know are the license plate number of the tuk-tuk the tourists got into and the time and place they got into the tuk-tuk.

Please call me at 083-107 1010 so I can help find which tuk-tuk the items were in.

Feeding a passion for hygienic restaurants

FIRST PERSON



Dr Wwat Seetamanotch, 53, has been deputy director of the Phuket Public Health Office for seven years. Concerned about the health of residents and visiting tourists alike, here he outlines The Health Office's Clean Food, Good Taste hygiene certification program, which is in place at 1,451 restaurants across the island.

ANYONE concerned about the level of hygiene at restaurants should dine at venues that have been certified by the Clean Food, Good Taste campaign.

The restaurants that carry the Clean Food, Good Taste sign have passed an initial inspection confirming the food handling practices at the venue satisfy Phuket Provincial Health Office requirements.

These venues are also randomly inspected by health officers.

In issuing these certificates and signs, we look at how the food is stored, served and the personal hygiene of all the people who handle the food.

For example, all cooking utensils must be kept clean at least 60 centimeters above the floor and there must be a sink and soap provided for customers, too.

So, if you see the Clean Food, Good Taste sign, you can be assured that the food inside that restaurant is fit for eating.

What tourists should be careful and concerned about is buying food from street vendors.

Sometimes, the raw ingredients are not kept in clean containers and even the stall itself might be serving food in the middle of an unhygienic environment.

I advise to be very careful in buying food from a street vendor to the point of avoiding it if possible. But if people really want to



Clean Food, Good Taste at Rimtang restaurant in Phuket Town.

eat food from street vendors, they should select food that has just been cooked and is still hot. This should be safe.

The weather in Thailand is hot, and food goes off very quickly here.

We often hear complaints about tourists falling ill from food. Sometimes it is nothing more than the food being too rich or too spicy for them.

But when the complaints have been genuinely related to food hygiene, it has usually been because the person ate undercooked food or food that had been cooked but left standing for a long time.

Buying food from fresh markets in Phuket should be safe, as we inspect fresh markets and overall their level of food cleanliness is okay.

That said, Phuket does not produce much fruit and vegetables.

Much of what is available at the markets has been brought in from large fresh markets in other provinces.

These large fresh markets are served by large farms, which often use chemicals to treat their crops.

Any produce bought at a fresh market should be washed thoroughly before cooking or eating.

That should make it safe for consumption.

Otherwise, buy organic produce, which is becoming increasingly popular in Phuket because they are free from agrichemicals.

Racing for safety

Island View

By Jorg Bierwolf

Do you have an opinion to voice? Email Editor@PhuketGazette.net



THE recent accident of the boy who suffered a badly burned arm in a go-kart accident (*Phuket Gazette*, Issues & Answers, March 5) plainly highlights the need for good safety practices in our industry.

We have been running the Patong Go-Kart Speedway for over 20 years. It was the first go-kart track in Phuket.

We are very proud to have a very good safety track record. We were voted in the top 5 tracks in the world in 2010.

The accident with the boy did not happen at our go-kart track but we are saddened by it – both for the boy and his parents, and for the industry.

Motorsports can be dangerous. There are accidents and injuries. However there are ways to minimize and prevent serious accidents.

That's why we at Patong Go-kart Speedway have standard operating procedures. This includes immediate medical attention and evacuation. Our staff is trained to render first aid while waiting for medical assistance to arrive.

Often customers are very excited about getting on the track with their friends, but we make sure they listen to our safety briefing regarding the use of the go-karts and the driving behavior of not bumping each other.

Our style is to make the possible consequences of unsafe driving so plain that our customers get the message. We even question them before they are allowed onto the track.

In short, we scare them into paying attention. Then when we allow them on the track, they are very aware of driving safely. Our track marshals are always present to assist and to report any unsafe

driving so the individual can be stopped immediately.

The Patong Go-kart Speedway track has many safety features. Wide run-off areas, safety barriers, track marshals and correctly positioned track cambers. This makes driving much easier and safer.

It is very important when tourists are involved. They are on holiday and the last thing they think of is being hurt while having fun. They can have big reactions to even little scratches or bruises and this would not be good publicity for Phuket tourism.

All our karts are four-stroke engine powered, with many safety features built into them. Our karts have covered chain guards, extra-wide, thick, strong rubber bumpers and this makes them much safer.

Our regular maintenance and replacement of older engines reduces the chance of a fire breakout.

Also, maintaining true safety standards means incurring ongoing costs, such as constantly maintaining the karts. Once cost cutting starts, safety is compromised.

In this industry, that cannot happen.

...asking the questions that affect you...

Serving motorbikes at gas stations

Can anyone explain to me why bike riders are made to queue for anything up to 15 minutes at one pump at most petrol stations while pump attendants stand around idly waiting for cars to arrive at the others?

Peeved bike rider Kathu

An attendant at the Shell Petrol Station on Phang Nga Rd in Phuket Town replies:

Motorcycle riders have to queue separately from other vehicles for safety reasons.

Before, when we served cars and motorbikes at the same pumps, after the car or bike had been filled, the drivers moved off but were not careful and collided with each other.

To stop this from happening we decided to have some pumps dedicated to serving motorbikes only.

Also, a lot of people come to

our gas station, but not just for petrol. Many came to buy things from our minimart too. This adds to the confusion of which vehicles are heading where inside the gas station.

When it is raining, we dedicate some of the "car pumps" to serving motorbikes so we can serve them quicker and get them out of the rain.

This is not Shell company policy, but we have explained to Shell headquarters in Bangkok that having the pumps separated makes it easier for us to work and safer for customers within the petrol station area.

The assistant manager at the Esso gas station on Chao Fa Road (near Suan Luang) in Phuket Town, replies:

In the past, when a car was about to pull up in front of a gas pump, three to four motorcycles would cut in front and switch their engines off, waiting to get fuel.

Often when a pump attendant asked the riders to wait since the car was first, the motorbike rid-



ers abused the attendant.

Some even complained that the attendant thought motorcycle riders were not as important or as rich as the car drivers, which is obviously not true.

We wanted motorcycle riders to get into a queue and understand what "first come, first served" means.

So two years ago we decided to avoid all the problems between

motorbike customers and attendants – and among customers themselves – by having separate pumps for serving cars and motorcycles.

However, sometimes, we allow motorcycles to be served at "car pumps" when they are available.

Ratsamee Rattanayan, owner of the PTT petrol station on Chao Fa East Road in Wichit, replies:

Motorbike riders have to queue not because the pump attendants are lazy, but for safety reasons. When you go to a bank, you have to wait to be served. It's the same at a gas station.

We have used separate pumps for serving cars and bikes for many years and it has become much safer – and most of our customers have come to appreciate this, too.

Before, some riders used to even cut in front of trucks or other large vehicles pulling up to a pump just so they could get in front. This was very dangerous.

Our gas station is usually packed with customers only during rush hours, from 7:30am to 9am and 4:30pm to 6 pm.

For the rest of the day, the situation is fine.

I suggest that anyone who doesn't want to wait in line for petrol to avoid the rush hours.

I understand there are many motorcycles in Phuket and that our gas station is often crowded with motorcycle riders waiting to get petrol. So we try our best to serve them as fast as possible.

Phuket tourism needs 5,000 workers now, officials say

THE Phuket tourism industry is facing a huge labor shortage, with more than 5,000 positions currently vacant on the island, the Phuket Employment Office chief has warned.

Noppadon Ployyoudee said there was strong demand for workers in Phuket, particularly at hotels and businesses connected to the tourism industry.

Among those needed are reception staff, service staff, sales people, handymen, electricians, accountants, administrators, cleaners and security guards. The Employment Office investigated the problem and found more than 5,000 vacant positions, Mr Noppadon said.

"The reason Phuket province is experiencing the problem of a large labor shortage is that today the economy in the area is at a good level," he said. "There are a lot of tourists coming in, meaning hotels and businesses connected to tourism want a lot of workers in various departments."

Mr Noppadon said the office, together with the affected businesses, were constantly arranging meetings with workers for the

convenience of people looking for employment. It is also trying to find jobs for students who want to work during the vacation over the next two months.

To fix the problem in the longer term, the office is working with schools and colleges to ensure the workers they are producing fit the needs of the labor market, he said.

Prasert Monprasit, president of Phuket Human Resources Club, said hotels needed operations staff, for example cleaners and laundry workers. Each year there is demand for 3,000 such workers, particularly in high season, which runs from October to April, he said.

"The problem has come about because there is work but no-one is interested in doing it, because the work needs people who graduate at M6 level," he said. "But most of the people looking for work have graduated at Bachelor's level, and are interested in other types of work."

Mr Prasert said the Phuket Human Resources Club was preparing to search for and train people who met the right specifications, who had graduated at M6 level and were

aged between 18 and 25.

"The target are people from Isarn [the Northeast of Thailand], because there is a huge number of kids who've studied to this level who want work here," he said. "We can take them for rapid training and have them ready for work in two months. As for compensation, they will earn more than 10,000 baht per month."

Mr Prasert said that to fix the problems the Education Ministry and the Labor Ministry had to come up with a formula to produce personnel of this type, because by 2015 Asean would implement the Asean Economic Community (AEC).

The AEC is supposed to allow the free movement of labor among its member countries, which are Thailand, Laos, Burma, Vietnam, Cambodia, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Brunei and the Philippines.

Mr Prasert said if tourist provinces did not prepare themselves, some businesses could employ Burmese workers, which would cause other problems to follow.

- Kom Chad Luek



MEETING THE DEMAND: Officials say Phuket is struggling to meet tourism demands, with an estimated 5,000 jobs needing filled. Photo: Phuket Gazette

Japan crisis won't hit Phuket tourism: PTA



THREAT: Officials say Phuket tourism will not be affected in the long term. Photo: AFP

THE Phuket Tourism Association (PTA) believes the crisis in Japan will not have serious effects on the island's economy, though it has cautioned that numbers of visitors from affected areas are likely to fall.

Somboon Jirayus, president of the PTA, said the 9.0-Richter earthquake and resulting tsunami that have devastated Japan would have psychological effects in the short term.

Numbers of tourists from towns and cities directly affected by the disaster are likely to fall, but in the longer term it will depend on how badly the Japanese economy is affected, he said.

At this time of year, the numbers of Japa-

nese tourists tend to be small anyway. Japanese tourism did drop off after the tsunami hit Phuket in December 2004, which coincided with the Japanese economic crisis, but after numbers quickly recovered, he said.

Japanese tourists come in their greatest numbers in April and May, during the school break. Somboon said people in the tourism business had not witnessed any hotel cancellations yet.

The numbers of visitors booking trips to Japan has fallen, although flights from Phuket to Japan were still leaving as normal, he said.

The PTA does not yet have a plan to hold activities in Japan to encourage tour-

ism, although the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) was already planning annual events there anyway, he said.

Mr Somboon's comments come as Japan battles to avoid nuclear meltdown at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant, 250km away from the capital Tokyo.

Tourists visiting Thailand from Japan are being scanned for radiation contamination at Suvarnabhumi Airport in Bangkok as a precautionary measure.

At Phuket International Airport, tourists travelling to Japan are being offered free potassium iodide tablets to protect them from the effects of radiation.

- The Nation

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In brief...

TAT touts B2.2bn as Songkran lucky number

THE Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) expects this year's Songkran Festival to generate an estimated 2.2 billion baht from 13 provinces nationwide.

A main reason for the spending has been accredited to an expected jump in numbers of 100,000 domestic tourists due to disruption overseas: Japan's quake, violence in the Arab world, as well as an earlier quake in New Zealand.

The TAT is confident these factors will mean more Thais will stay on home turf over the holiday period.

Last year's festival generated 1.7 billion baht from 13 key provinces.

The water festival will take place in 13 provinces such as Chiang Mai, Sukhothai, Kanchanaburi, Ubon Ratchathani, Phuket, Samui and Surat Thani (Hat Yai).

The Northeast expects to draw 500,000 visitors and the East 100,000 visitors.

Hotel occupancy rate in Chiang Mai, Sukhothai and other provinces in the North is expected to be 70 per cent during the festival, higher than 20 per cent in the same period last year. Hotels in Hat Yai are reportedly overbooked.

Thai banks move to slash ATM transfer fees

COMMERCIAL banks will be able to adjust their ATM service fees down by the end of this month as they have agreed in their meeting late last year, according to the Bank of Thailand (BoT).

BoT Deputy Governor for Financial Institutions Stability Kirik Vanikkul stated that the state-owned Krung Thai Bank has taken the lead in reducing the fees, and other commercial banks are expected to follow suit by the end of March 2011.

Under the recently agreed conditions, customers making same-bank, cross-city money transfer for the first time in each month can do so free of charge. For other transfers in the same month, ATM cardholders will be charged a flat rate of 15 baht for each transfer. Customers making same-bank, cross-city cash withdrawals will be charged a flat rate of 20 baht for each transaction.

Customers will be given free service for cross-bank, same-city cash withdrawals and balance enquiries for the first four times of each month. A 10-baht fee will be charged on the fifth time, both in Bangkok and other provinces.

Mr Kirik admitted that commercial banks might lose at least 100 million baht in income because of the fee adjustment; however, he believed they will be able to find other sources of income to compensate the loss.

- NNT

Enter the Supercar showroom

By Neil Quail

LUXURY car enthusiasts in Phuket can now visit a showroom on the bypass road to experience first-hand some of the most famous brands in this prestigious industry.

The grand opening of Autoexpress' first outlet - near Pornthip Seafood on Chalermprakiat Road (bypass road) - is scheduled for 6pm on March 31.

Luxury vehicle markets suffered greatly during the global recession with manufacturers such as BMW enduring a 25 per cent plunge in sales in the US in 2009. Americans are the biggest consumers of high-end automobiles.

It would seem an unusual time to hope for profit in an industry where most manufacturers are simply trying to break even after three years of uncertainty and financial struggles.

Autoexpress General Manager Saksri Kerdphol explained to the *Phuket Gazette* the rationale for such a venture in Phuket: "There are many very affluent Thai and foreign residents in Phuket who love their expensive cars and we aim to provide a wide selection.

"Money is not really a concern for these people. They require a distinct quality and reliability in both performance and service," she said.

"Very shortly, we will open our



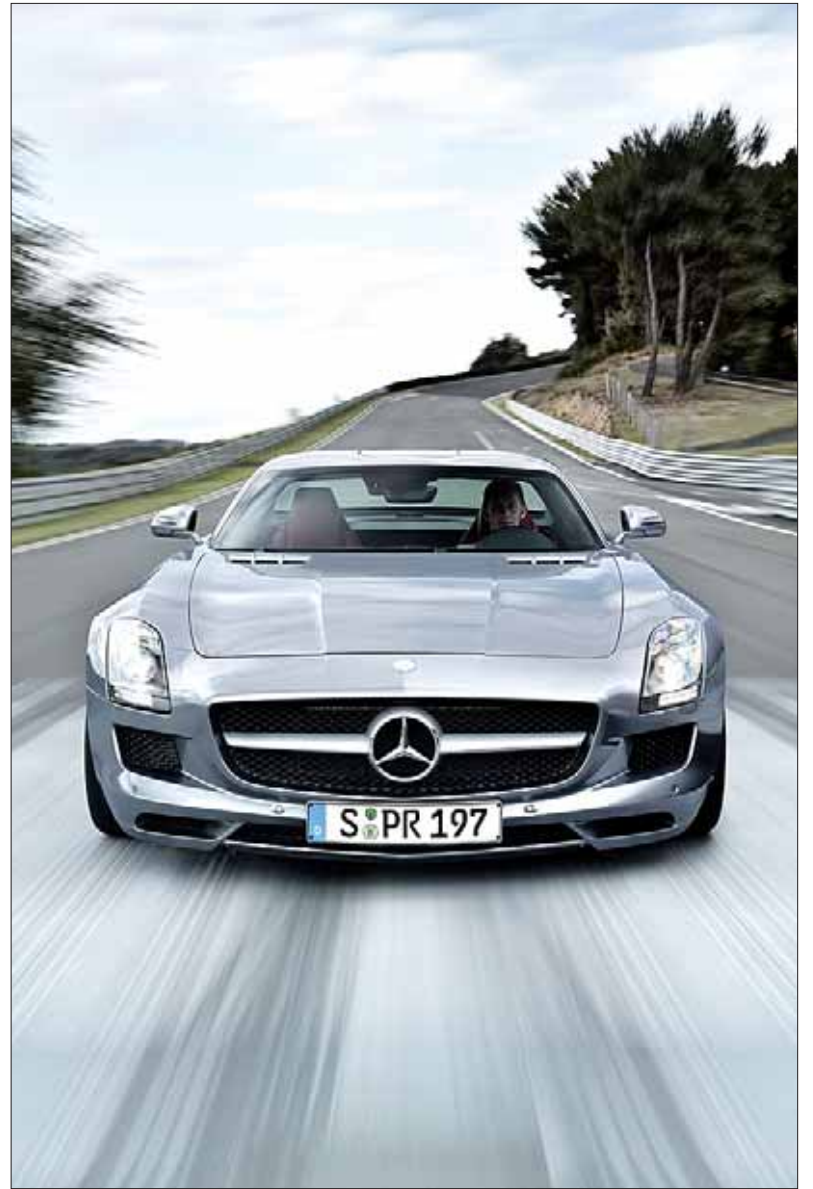
HIGH HOPES: Saksri Kerdphol, Autoexpress General Manager

on-site service center with highly trained mechanics which will also provide a further guarantee of the best after-sale care for our customers," she added.

Emerging Asian markets such as those in Russia and China are also an indicator that the predicted viability of Autoexpress Phuket is not just a pipe dream.

"We've already had many inquiries from local Thai business magnates and their foreign counterparts," Ms Kerdphol explained.

"Although 75 per cent of inter-



DRIVING FORCE: The new Mercedes Benz SLS AMG is just one of many luxury cars Autoexpress is making available on the island.

est has been from Thais, we are delighted with the feedback from our foreign clients," she said.

The Autoexpress showroom bristles with some of the best automotive technology available, including the Porsche Carrera 4S, an Audi TT Coupe, a Peugeot RCZ GT, the Lexus RX 270 and of course many types of Mercedes Benz - the ultimate in status symbol for many Thai people.

Those attending the Grand Opening of Autoexpress will be privileged to encounter the all new

2011 Rolls Royce Ghost V12 (\$US250,000). The eight-gear, entry-level Rolls is their quickest production vehicle, reaching 0-60mph in less than five seconds.

The prize car for Mercedes-loving customers will be the SLS V8 (\$US200,000). Formula 1 fans will recognize this luxury grand tourer as the safety car for the 2010 season. Even with a smaller engine, 0-60mph for the gull-winged SLS is almost a second faster than that of the Rolls Royce. The prices above are for the US only.

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On The Move



Chef Tammanoon, formerly of the Boathouse, is now Culinary Director at the Traidhos Three Generation Community for Learning in Chiang Mai founded by Mom Tri Devakul. Twice a month he will also conduct culinary workshops at Mom Tri's Villa Royale in Kata, as an extension of the Cooking Academy at the Three Generation center. He will also be a consulting chef for Mom Tri's Kitchen.



Ekapol Tharasiroj has been promoted to Managing Director of Phuket International Hospital after three years experience as an assistant to the former managing director. Mr Tharasiroj has a Bachelor's Degree in Civil Engineering, and an MS degree in Finance from Chulalongkorn University. He has worked as a financial consultant for many companies in the past 10 years.



Gregor Pfaff has joined Indigo Pearl as Executive Pastry Chef. Mr Pfaff is originally from Frankfurt, Germany, where he completed his apprenticeship as confectioner and chocolatier. During the past 15 years he has led patisseries at The Four Seasons, The Conrad and The Dome in Bangkok, The Mandarin in Singapore and The Leela Hotel in India.

No evading the US tax trap

FOR those who don't know, all United States citizens are legally required to pay taxes prescribed in the US tax code on income earned anywhere in the world. Consequently, many Americans living abroad try to avoid paying taxes to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), especially those who never intend to return as a resident.

The problem is none of the many schemes people come up with to get around this are actually legal.

The only sure way for an American citizen to *legally* remove oneself from the US tax obligations is to officially renounce one's US citizenship at a US embassy. Period.

Any other method would most likely not hold up in court.

Please note that I am not talking about *tax avoidance*, which is legal. Tax avoidance is where a tax lawyer or accountant who thoroughly knows the law can reduce or eliminate the tax bill.

I am talking about the many other ways practiced by American expats abroad which are tantamount to illegal *tax evasion*.

For many Americans the thought

of giving up US citizenship is out of the question. I have come across many ways in which people have tried to outwit the IRS, and many a small fry have never had any trouble. One needs to clearly understand that just because you get away with something doesn't mean it's legal.

It's very common for people to take income or place assets in the name of a foreign spouse. The legality of doing this is dubious, and with global divorce rates what they are, it is not recommend.

I would prefer the peace of mind in knowing that I wouldn't stand to lose all my money if things went wrong and I had signed away my legal right to it.

Using offshore trusts or companies to separate a person from their assets is popular, but this simply makes tax evasion more difficult to uncover; not legal.

IRS taxes are levied on an accrual basis, meaning you don't have to receive the gains to be liable to pay tax on them. So leaving money to pile up in a company you own would most likely be seen as a taxable event by the IRS.

Retirement Years

By David Mayes

Accrual taxation also means that if you invest in stocks during a bull market and prices appreciate, you will have to pay tax on the gains made – even if you don't sell your shares and pocket the profits.

Worse, if the share prices rise then fall, you will still have to pay tax on the price appreciation before the prices fell again.

Of course if you are a retiree, you should not be heavily invested in the stock market anyway.

The US does have double taxation agreements with many countries, but even in its absence the IRS still gives a break on foreign-earned income.

The actual wording on their website is that you "may" qualify for foreign-earned income exclusion, but I have never known anyone to have trouble claiming this.

It basically means you don't have to include the first US\$91,400 of foreign-earned income in

your taxable income base.

As a retiree, your average Joe would have to be doing amazingly well on his investments to be bringing in more than this.

If you keep investments in the US, however, then the income is not foreign earned, which is a mistake many American expats make.

You also need to have a foreign tax base, but the good news for people who have chosen Thailand for retirement is that capital gains are not taxed in this country.

Americans who are working abroad and making more than US\$91,400 do get some relief, but obviously high net worth executives and oil industry workers will still be earning enough to generate a sizeable tax bill.

One can complain that this isn't fair, but that won't do much good in court.

You always have the option, assuming you have a clean criminal background and so on, of becoming a citizen of Dominica (about US\$75,000 but you still require a visa to enter the EU) or St Kitts and Nevis, which will cost US\$200,000 but is a member of the British commonwealth and will grant you almost identical travel freedom as a US passport.

For most Americans retiring abroad however, tax issues should not be too big of a problem, despite the harsh reputation of the IRS.

David Mayes MBA provides wealth management services to expats in Asia, E:david.m@faramond.com

THE TAXMAN: Internal Revenue Service Commissioner Douglas Shulman. Photo: AFP



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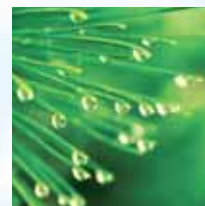
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Tata Young all in for Love Aid

By Fraser Morton

TATA Young is one of this country's most influential artists, so her support for the Love Aid concert on April 2 is a major boon for organizers.

The 30-year-old Thai pop sensation said that after seeing events in Japan, she felt lending her support and "giving her heart" to Love Aid was the right thing to do.

Although, as this newspaper went to print, a final location for the concert had yet to be decided, organizers hope to raise "several million baht" in funds to help survivors in Japan.

Entertainment Director Ricky Zen said support so far has been overwhelming – and that it was an honor to have Tata coming to perform.

"There's been a massive response. We are going to need

volunteers to help. Lots of them," he said.

Tata and her manager Myke Brown said the images of the Japan disaster reminded them of their own experiences during the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami in Phuket. Both Tata and Myke lost love ones in that tragedy.

In the aftermath of the Boxing Day wave, Tata left her home in Bangkok and travelled south to volunteer at hospitals and care for survivors.

"We both had losses in 2004 and we now want to help Japan . . . When people unite, amazing things can happen. I encourage volunteers and fellow musicians to join in," Myke said.

Tata echoed this sentiment of encouragement.

"The moment I was asked if I could help, I knew I had to do something and not just watch TV and feel sorry for Japan . . . I would like to encourage others to reach deep inside and support Love Aid Phuket, give something back," said Tata.

Tata is not only donating her time – and not taking any fee for the concert – she is also trying to "bring other well-known" celeb-

rities to Phuket for the event.

Tata's performance is scheduled for the evening, after a sunset tribute on April 2.

"I will sing my hits, but if you want to know which ones you will have to come to the show to find out," she adds.

"To all my Japanese fans . . . Now its my turn to be there for you, love you."

Tata said she will arrive in Phuket a few days before the concert to help organizers promote the event.

Hopes are high among the organizing committee that Love Aid can hit their donation target.

"Every baht of donations will go towards long-term disaster relief in Japan, which is clearly needed considering the huge scale of the disaster," said Organizing Committee Head Edgardo Tanael, of the Kata Beach Resort.

Ricky added that, "All donations will be funnelled through the Rotary Club of Patong Beach to Rotary International clubs in Japan that are already active in devastated areas."

See PhuketGazette.net or LoveAidPhuket.org for more information as it becomes available.



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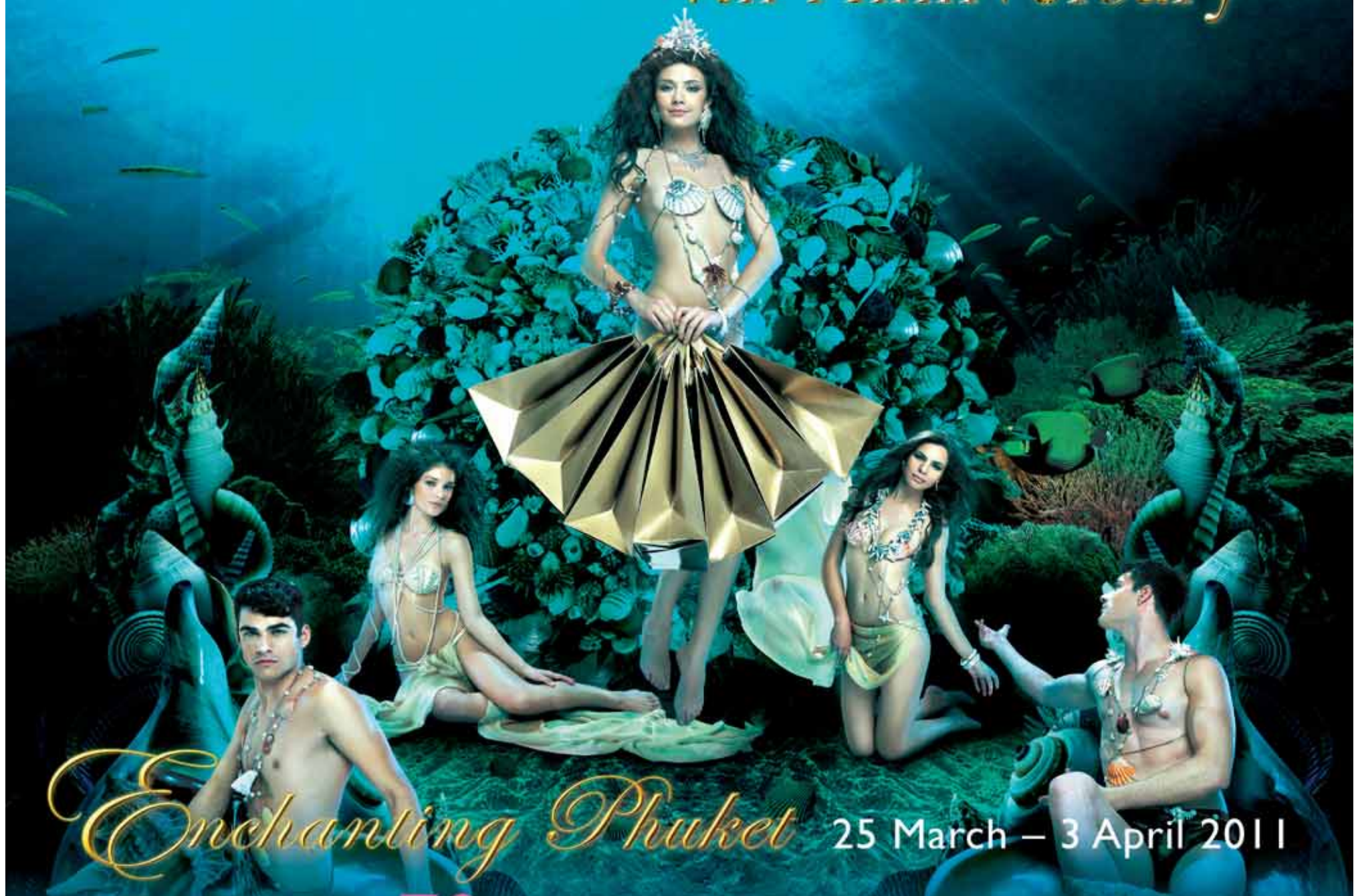
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A different view at Green Forest

Find fresh seafood served with a smile high in the hills above Phuket Town. This place not only has delectable food, but the view isn't too bad either...



HIGH TIMES: Green Forest restaurant



FRESH FARE: Green Forest specializes in seafood cuisine.

By Stephen Fein

PHUKET diners have for years enjoyed meals at restaurants on Rang Hill, while the area's largest hill, Khao Toh Sae, remained known for little other than television broadcast towers and its colony of mischievous macaques.

All that changed on December 1, when the Green Forest Restaurant opened its doors after three years of difficult construction on the hill's steep west-facing slope, which offers panoramic views of Phuket Town, Phuket Bay, Koh Sireh and the islands of Phang Nga Bay.

Green Forest specializes in fresh seafood, which it sources

almost exclusively from small-scale local fisherman operating out of Klong Tha Jeen. Bring binoculars and you might even be able to see tomorrow's catch chugging up the klong by longtail to Rassada Pier.

With a staff of 40, Green Forest has established itself as a reasonably-priced alternative to outlets on Rang Hill, which in recent years has also developed a problem with a large and growing macaque colony.

Access to Green Forest is by a narrow concrete road, where hundreds of people go every late afternoon for exercise. The road looks daunting: Will I be able to park? Where will I be able to turn around? Those who put the car in

first gear and go ahead won't be disappointed.

Surrounded by what may be the last virgin forest stand in greater Phuket Town, Green Forest is located about halfway up Khao Toh Sae, which stands slightly more than twice as high as Khao Rang.

Owner Fon Butkatunyoo, retired former head of the Phuket City Municipality Engineering Division, spent three years finding funding and overseeing construction of the ambitious project.

Obviously not one to suffer half-measures, Mr Fon laid on a seafood feast with a wide selection of dishes including a grilled shrimp basket, shrimp pan fried in tamarind sauce, soft-shelled crab with lemongrass, grouper



Engineer-turned-restaurateur Fon Butkatunyoo. Photos: Phuket Gazette

steamed in soy sauce – as well as an excellent roasted chicken basted with curry sauce for one dining companion with an aversion to seafood.

All dishes were superbly prepared and presented, along with plenty of ice-cold beer (premium label, big bottle, 100 baht).

One of the many unique dishes on the menu is the *miang pla samlee*. *Miang* is a well-known northern snack with roasted coconut shavings with peanuts mixed together with freshly diced red onions, ginger, garlic and chili.

These are covered with the sweet *miang* sauce and wrapped in the slightly bitter leave of the *chaphlu* (Piper sarmentosum) plant.

Green Forest takes this to a

new level, changing a snack to a full-fledged dish, by serving it with the tender, fried flesh of *pla samlee*, or "cotton fish". The taste of this unique fusion of northern and southern cuisine is alone worth the trip.

Another dish for seafood lovers is the *Takraa Phuket* (Phuket seafood basket, 350 baht to 550 baht, depending on weight), a selection of crab, deep fried fish, grilled squid and shrimp, with mussels and cockles and mussels steamed in herbs.

These are all served with a delicious, spicy green dipping sauce that perfectly complements them all.

Green Forest has extensive set and a la carte menus, and a wine list. House wines start at 100 baht a glass.

For those seeking an intimate meal or karaoke session, there are three small, private dining rooms on the floor below the main terrace. There is also a lower terrace as well as an air-conditioned VIP room equipped for karaoke.

Despite its lofty location, the restaurant is very sturdy and child-friendly. Now may be the best time to visit, while the venue is still relatively unknown.

The provincial administration has imminent plans to widen the road up Toh Sae Hill and develop park facilities there. When it does expect the primate population to increase many times over. Remember, we humans are primates, too.

Green Forest is open daily from 10am. The kitchen closes at 10pm, but guest can stay on to enjoy cold drinks and live football on the large-screen television until much later.

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Mike Venezuela's mad about

He has danced with Jennifer Lopez, toured with Destiny's Child, rubbed shoulders with OJ Simpson – in a Miami strip club – and talked his way into the Playboy Mansion. But why is Famous Nightclub's Michael Venezuela so obsessed with fame and bringing celebrities to Patong, and why on earth does he wear that white suit? The former MTV presenter, break dancer and model rolled up his sleeves and turned off his three phones to duke it out with *Phuket Gazette* Features Editor Fraser Morton. Here's what transpired...

Fraser Morton: You're the Social Media and Special Events Marketing Director at Famous Nightclub in Patong. Why such a long title? I think you should change it to "The Fixer" or "Social Mike", I think it's less of a mouthful.

Michael Venezuela: It describes what I do.

FM: So what does it mean?

MV: It means I entertain.

FM: And what does that entail?

MV: My job at Famous requires me to run all the social media – Facebook, Twitter – for the club, book celebrities and DJs to perform and make these people accessible to our guests at Famous.

FM: You recently hosted three Playboy bunnies at the club for a photo-shoot party. Why do you think people in Phuket think that's entertainment?

MV: It was entertainment and the guests loved it. It was an experiment and it worked. The girls frolicked around the pool all day, while hundreds of people stood around watching.

FM: Sounds a bit perverse.

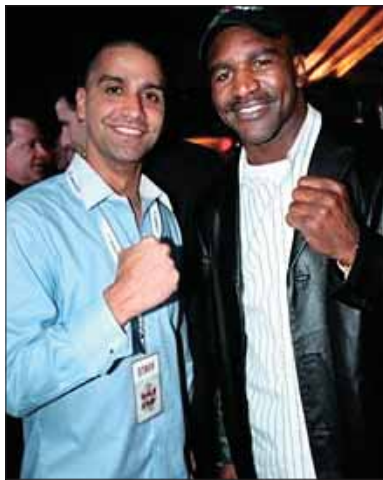
MV: We live in perverse times.

FM: And what about you Mike – you were also a model. So you're comfortable taking your clothes off for money?

MV: At a younger age, sure. I charge more now though.

FM: How did you get into modeling?

MV: It was 1996. I was 19. I had the chance to take a football (American) scholarship at Florida State University, or take a US\$50,000 modeling contract in New York for Bloomingdales. I



Mike with Evander Holyfield

went with the money.

FM: So it was purely for monetary reasons?

MV: No, I wanted to be on TV and modeling seemed like a good route to go. It was a tough choice.

FM: Why do you care about fame so much?

MV: Always been that way. It's a lifestyle that appeals to the youth of America.

FM: So I hear you've worked with some pretty well-known US celebrities. Care to share?

MV: Sure. I was a backing dancer in the late 90s (98,99) for Jennifer Lopez. I was in the "If you have my love" and "Waiting for tonight" music videos. After that I went on a three-month tour with Destiny's Child across the US.

FM: So what's J-Lo like?

MV: Uh, she's basically a Puerto Rican (Michael's nationality) chick with a lot of "ass-itude".

FM: What does that mean?

MV: "Ass-itude", it means she has a lot of attitude and carries a big

ass to back it up (Laughs) – sorry Jennifer.

FM: It's okay, I don't think she reads the *Phuket Gazette*.

You've been a TV entertainment reporter for MTV, E! and more, who is the most interesting person you've interviewed?

MV: OJ Simpson in 2000 is one for sure. The funny thing was, I caught him at a strip club in South Beach, Miami. I was making a documentary about a porn star. I couldn't believe he was there. We went up to him with the cameras rolling and started asking him questions...He's such a nice guy, but man, does he have a big head, literally. Such a big head.

FM: Anyone else?

MV: Michael Jackson in Beverly Hills. I collapsed. I don't usually get star struck, but he's always been a hero of mine. This was when I was a DJ for MTV. We were working with Black Eyed Peas and Michael Jackson came into the room when we were doing an interview. I was 21 at the time. When he walked into the room, my knees gave out. I was picked up by the security guards and Michael asked me if I was okay. It's the biggest interview I never got (laughs).

FM: So you've been inside the Playboy Mansion in Beverly Hills, care to share?

MV: (Laughs) I've been there twice. The first time we snuck in. It was a Halloween party. I was 21 years old. I was with one of my friends who looks exactly like Brett Favre (one of the National Football League's most famous quarterbacks) and two other

friends. My friend Todd (the Favre look-a-like) dressed up like a straw man, and the rest of us were dressed as Umpa Lumpas (think Charlie and the Chocolate Factory). My buddy said he was Bret Favre, and the security guards let us in. We had the time of our lives.

FM: I don't believe you. Did this happen?

MV: (Laughs) It's true, but I can't say any more. I have to draw a line in the sand. I don't want to be that guy that gets blacklisted for talking too much. Let's just say the Umpa Lumpas had fun that night.

FM: What about your family? Are they concerned with fame?

MV: No, not at all. They're conservative republicans. Both very organized and business-minded (Mike's fiddling with his Blackberry while he answers this question).

FM: Hmmm, I notice you have three phones. Looks like the organizational skills passed over to you.

Or is it the opposite?

Why three phones?

MV: I have an iPhone, a Blackberry and a regular standard phone – I take in about 150 calls a day.

FM: Why so many? All work?

MV: Yup, to do with entertainment. Whether it's to do with Famous (Nightclub) or clubs in Singapore – just constantly networking.

FM: Former Vice President of NBC Network, Peter Andrews, once said you were "one of the

future's leading eyes for nightlife entertainment". Sounds like you gave up a promising future in the US. So why the move here?

MV: Well, I've been in the business for 14 years, and to be honest, Asia seems like the place to be. I was working in Las Vegas last year at Wet Republic (nightclub at the MGM Grand). I've managed to gain a large database of contacts in the US entertainment industry and I thought I could use them here.

THINKING BIG: Mike Venezuela on Phuket.



Photo: Suchart Changate

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fame, and bringing it here...

FM: Since opening in December, Famous Nightclub has hosted DJs Roger Sanchez, Bob Sinclar and more. Is this all your doing?

MV: No, those two were already in motion before I came on board. Nothing gets done without Chris (Cole, owner) and Tal (Derhy, General Manager at Famous). Chris is not scared to spend the money to get big names to come here. We're in the entertainment business and Famous' goal is to provide a level of entertainment service for Phuket that everyone is happy with.

FM: So what's coming up next at Famous?

MV: There's plenty to look forward to. Dirty Vegas will be here on April 7. Also, on April 13 we have Seb Fontaine and Phil Drummond playing. On April 23 we have Anthony Nero from the US coming.

FM: I heard you were trying to get singer "Apple" from the Black Eyed Peas to come play at the club. Is this true?

MV: Yes, that was true. We were trying to get him to come, but it looks like that will fall through. It's such short notice, and our line-up now is booked.

FM: So why do you always wear that white suit? Every time I

see you out, you have it on?

MV: I like a little flair. I design my own clothes.

FM: Is Michael Venezuela your real name?

MV: Everyone asks me that. Is it my stage name? My stripper name? No, the history of my name goes back to my great, great,



Mike with OJ Simpson in 2000

great, great-grandmother (Puerto Rican) who hooked up with Captain Venezuela - she was a...err...a working girl. You could say I'm fourth generation son of a whore (laughs).

FM: Is giving people what they want and what they want to hear part of your job?

MV: Very much so. And it's one of those things that you can't teach. I went to school for broadcasting, journalism and marketing, but you can't learn charisma.

A lot of people in the entertainment industry think they know what a market wants, but they don't.

FM: Ever intend to get married?
MV: I did want to, but there's something you should know about me. I'm a true believer that about 80 per cent of the world will be extinct by December 21, 2012. (He's talking about the Mayan prophecy of evolution which comprises a range of beliefs that there will be cataclysmic events on Earth on this date).

FM: You honestly believe the world is going to end next year?

MV: Yes, I really believe it. It's fact. The planets are going to align and there's going to be some kind of gravitational pull that's going to cause a huge shift.

FM: But it's not a fact the world is going to end, Mike.

MV: Okay, it's not fact, but something is going to happen. There's a good chance I may not be around. Everyone has their beliefs.

FM: I was going to ask where you plan to be in five years, but I think we can close the book on that one. I was also going to ask how Famous will be doing in five years, but I guess you've answered that too.

MV: Well, if I'm wrong, then Famous will still be going strong.



IN VEGAS: Mike with Jennifer Frost from the TV show 'America's Top Model' on the red carpet at Jet Nightclub, Las Vegas, in February last year.



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Harley Hotel: Born to be pampered

Somnuek 'Nicky' Phonkaew has opened the island's first motorcycle-themed hotel. The *Phuket Gazette* takes a walk on the wild side with the man behind this design odyssey...



HANDLEBAR HOTEL: Somnuek 'Nicky' Phonkaew (top) has created a hotel in the heart of Patong that is a design odyssey on the island. Photos: Christian Mouchet

By Marc Mulloy

BIKERS love brand names, and iconic biker logos such as Harley Davidson have graced everything from belt buckles to tattoos.

But now in the heart of Patong, a unique hotel has taken form. A hotel that is not only built especially for motorcycle enthusiasts – both locals and tourists – but has been designed with motorcycle parts integrated into the rooms and decor.

For those who love motorcycles, Nicky's Handlebar Hotel is a must see.

The mastermind behind the hotel is Somnuek "Nicky" Phonkaew who has been passionate about motorcycles ever since he "borrowed" his brother's bike at age 11.

The hotel is located behind Nicky's Handlebar – Phuket's first and arguably most well-known biker bar and restaurant, which opened 10 years ago – on Rat-

U-Thit 200 Pee Road in Patong.

Nicky opened the Handlebar because he said he felt Phuket bikers needed a place to hang out, and he was right. For the past decade the bar – which is covered in biker memorabilia – has grown in popularity.

Nicky's Harley Davidson tours from Phuket to Phang Nga and Krabi have also seen a surge in demand.

Nicky, who has worked in the hospitality industry for more than 20 years, realized that his guests not only needed a place to hang out, but also a place to sleep, so he embarked on the hotel project a few years ago.

The hotel opened for guests on October 27 last year, and since then it has gone from strength to strength.

Nicky said he has been inundated with bookings, some months in advance.

We have families from all over the world booking online, and many Swiss, French, German and

Aussies have also booked to come on biker holidays months in advance," said Nicky.

Nicky said that he expects the hotel to do well due to the number of bookings he is currently getting for his motorcycle tours.

For those who love motorcycles, Nicky's Handlebar Hotel is a must see.

He hopes his new hotel will appeal the same customers.

Stepping inside one of the hotel rooms is a captivating experience. The juxtaposition of raw materials: concrete, metal, leather and wood shows that an artist has been hard at work here.

Australian designer John Underwood, who created the award-winning industrial design found at the Indigo Pearl resort in Nai Yang, and who more recently designed the new Brush restaurant in Kalim, is the man who helped Nicky with the interior design at the Handlebar Hotel.

From the spark-plug door fittings to the "motorcycle handlebar shower" and flame mosaic swimming pool, the quirky Nicky-Underwood design signature is

everywhere in this hotel.

And for guests staying in the hotel, they will be within touching distance of Nicky's repair shop and showroom located just behind the bar near the road.

Inside the repair shop is a sight to behold.

"I have 22 Harleys now, and some beautiful cars too, including a Pontiac GTO 1964; a 1969 Corvette Stingray convertible and of course my red Ferrari 360 Spider; and yellow LP560 Lamborghini," he says.

For those who prefer his cars, he offers a "once in a lifetime experience" in his "Ferrari taxi service" that he started back in 2009.

Guests can get picked up from Phuket International Airport in one of Nicky's Ferraris for a cool 15,000 baht (with the luggage following in a Mercedes Benz) or have a tour of Patong for a smooth 3,000 baht.

There is one snag: Nicky or his younger brother Kai are the only ones allowed to drive.

So what does Phuket's high-flying motorcycle entrepreneur dream of next?

Maybe a private jet," Nicky says with a smile.

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Starr Farish

STARR Farish has developed the Friendship Beach Waterfront Resort into one of the south island's most popular boutique properties, where both visitors and residents meet to enjoy the views, live local music and the culinary talents of Chef Charlie Maurer. It is also home to the Atmanjai Wellness Center.

"I first came to Phuket in 1992 for a month's holiday and was intrigued by the Thais. I also enjoyed the weather and loved living by the sea. I returned and stayed for three months each winter for the following six years until I retired in 1998 and decided to move permanently to the island."

Starr is no stranger to operating successful resorts. He re-developed a historic hotel built in 1888, the Outlook Inn, on Orcas Island in Washington State's San Juan Islands. He started with a small, run-down building with just 12 rooms and turned it into a thriving waterfront property with 45 rooms and a restaurant overlooking Eastsound Bay.

He does not have a master plan or work with architects when he builds or restores a property. He follows his intuition and allows a project to unfold naturally, adding structures and elements that fit with the surroundings. This has been his development philosophy with his popular Friendship Beach.

EXPAT

gallery

By Bruce Stanley

"After I retired to Phuket, I got restless. I visited Friendship Beach when they were operating one of the island's first computer clinics. I could immediately see the potential for this great piece of land. I helped the owner, part time, in developing what was here."

Two years later, Starr had the property on his own and began a gradual redevelopment which has seen all the original structures removed. There's now a large swimming pool surrounded by 32 rooms tastefully tucked away into a variety of buildings that blend with the landscaping.

"I've tried to create an atmosphere at Friendship Beach where people can relax and experience an uplifting, positive change of life."

Starr was born in the Pacific Northwest of the United States and graduated with a Bachelor's Degree from Whitman College.

"I had a struggle in college because I knew I would never use the degree. However, I was always very interested in the metaphysical world and by 1964 I had read ev-

ery book on spirituality that I could find. My aunt had a session with Edgar Cayce, the well-known American psychic, and I had an affinity for learning about the world of the spirit."

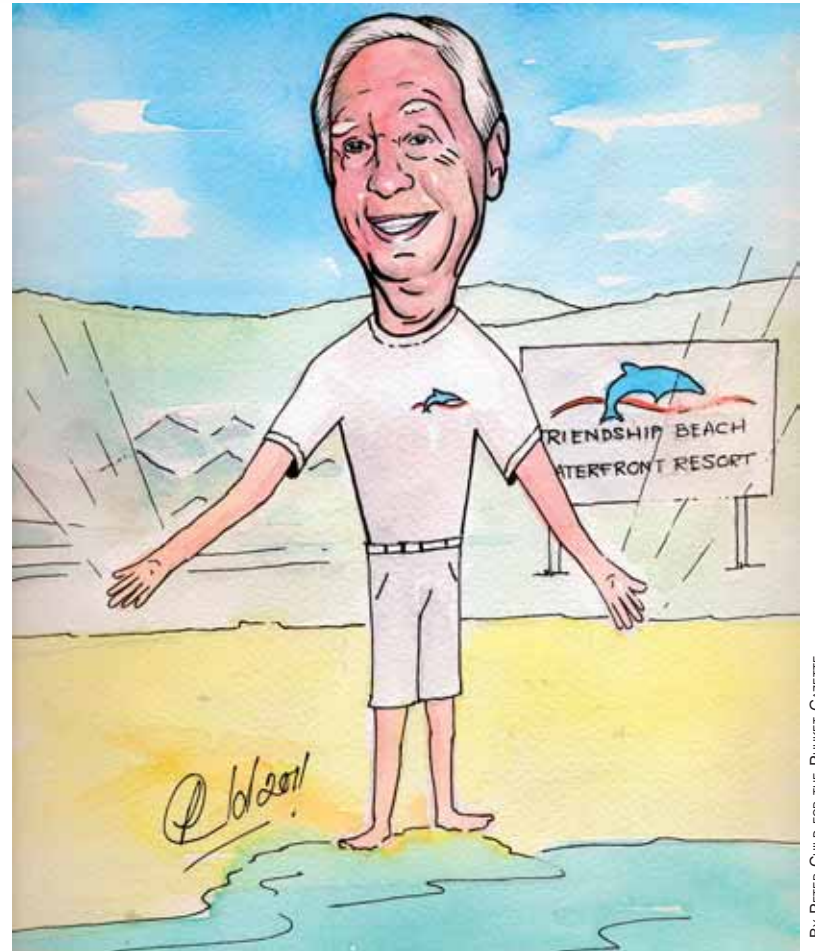
After college graduation, Starr spent a couple of years waiting for his vocation to be revealed. One day he was directed to obtain a real estate license. He sold property for a couple of years until he was invited to Orcas Island in 1967 and met a spiritual teacher named Louis.

"Louis was very well respected in what was becoming the motivational speaking circuit. He had an audience with the Dalai Lama. From our first meeting, I knew that my life would be involved in supporting Louis' work."

Starr spent the next 30 years developing his Outlook Inn as a hub for spiritual retreats and as the center for the Louis Foundation.

In addition to selling and developing properties on Orcas Island, he co-ordinated lecture tours and seminars around the United States, the focus of which was the expansion of consciousness.

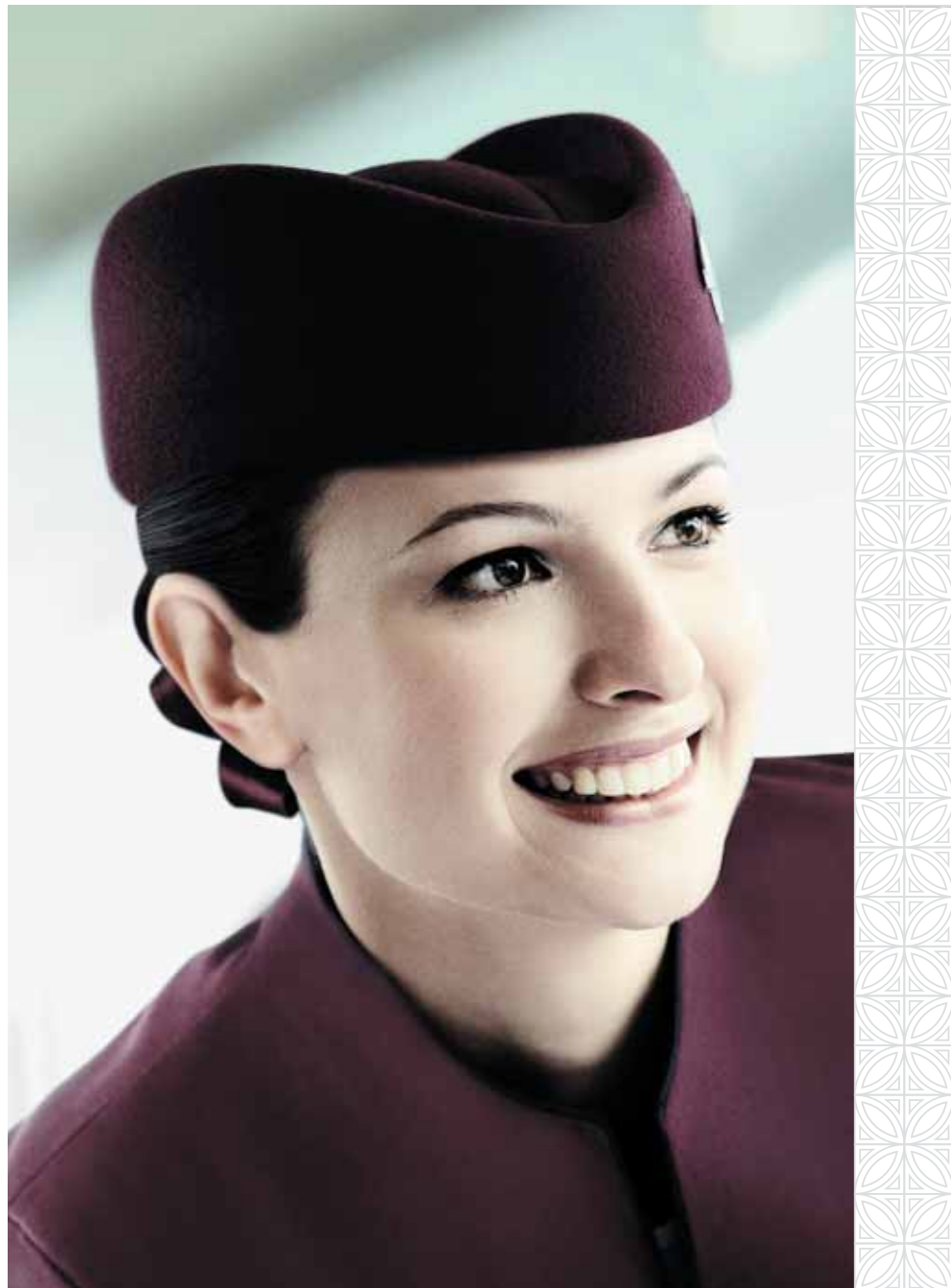
The tours included many of the world's foremost thinkers and teachers of metaphysics who were committed to helping people get in tune with Nature and the realities of the universe.



By PETER CHILD FOR THE PHUKET GAZETTE

About Expat Gallery

The individuals profiled in "Expat Gallery" are chosen on the basis of their contributions to Phuket, and for having made those contributions in successful partnerships with Thais. For many, the contributions have entailed significant investment, often in the mid-80s and 90s when the rules of business were, ahh, not always clear. Some are not in business at all, but all have one thing in common: if there were a *Who's Who in Phuket*, they'd be in it.



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SPOILER ALERT

Boathouse competition a write off this year

BOATHOUSE'S annual writing contest will not be held this year. This is because the Three Dolphins Group, who bought the Kata restaurant and resort earlier this year, want to complete renovations before hosting the contest again, Boathouse Public Relations Manager Lisa Sol explains.

"But the competition will return next year. I will probably announce it in mid-October this year, and then set the deadline for the 2012 February competition," Ms Sol added.

The competition receives about 30 entries each year from around the world, with many repeat local entrants.

When asked what the competition means to Phuket's art community, Ms Sol replied:

"I think it's a fun challenge for local writers and aspiring writers everywhere. It has changed the lives of at least two contestants in the past two years."

Ms Sol explained that the new date in February for next year's competition would encourage more entries from students.

Previously, the competition was held in the busy month of April, around the time of Songkran festival and the school holidays.

—Alexandra Andersson

One to forget in a hurry

Books

THE worst kind of poker hand is the second best. The worst kind of novel is the mediocre. A bad novel you can toss away after the first chapter, or the first page except if you're assigned the book as a reviewer and have to slog your way through it in order to trash it.

But a mediocre novel is just good enough to get you hooked.

Such is the case with *The Finkler Question* (Bloomsbury Publishing, London, 2010, 307pp). The author, Howard Jacobson, has written 10 previous novels.

The setting is contemporary London and the plot revolves around three characters: Julian Treslove, Sam Finkler and Libor Sevcik. Both 48, Treslove and Finkler were schoolboys together, while Sevcik was their eccentric teacher, a Czech exile. Finkler and Sevcik are Jewish, Treslove is not but spend a lot of time thinking about what it means to be Jewish. Thus, the *Finkler Question*, or the *Jewish Question*.

Finkler and Sevcik are both widowers. Sevcik's wife was devoted to him; Finkler's indifferent. In fact, when Finkler would slink off on a liaison, his wife would

bed down with Treslove, who has never married because all his girlfriends would eventually leave him because he was such a nonentity.

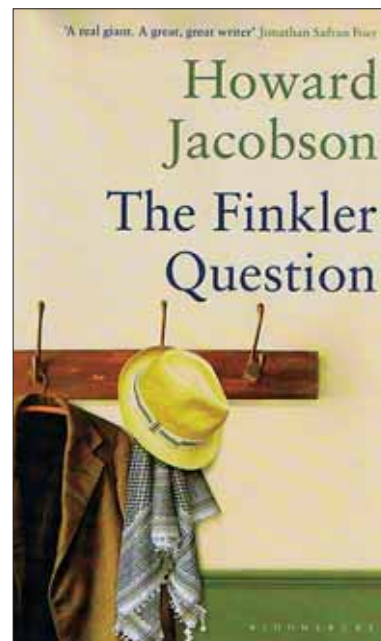
The three friends inhabit a world of academia, BCC, journalism and book publishing, though Treslove is in general unsuccessful.

One night after a tipsy dinner with Sevcik and Finkler, Treslove goes for a walk and is mugged from behind by a woman who slams his head into a shopfront window and steals his wallet, watch, mobile phone and fountain pen. She has one word to say to him. Was it "You, Jules" as he is commonly called? Or "You, Ju", meaning "You, Jew"?

As simple a trick as this is enough to hook the reader. Who is the woman? Why did she attack him? What's the motive behind "Jew"?

Wave after wave of feckless interior monologues and boring blather among the trio about being Jewish is then launched upon the reader.

Meanwhile, a subplot develops.



YAWN: One to avoid at all costs

While a teenager on vacation in Spain, Treslove went to a Gypsy fortune teller who said he was destined to meet and fall in love with a woman named Juno. Now Treslove meets a grand-niece of Sevcik, a hefty middle-aged woman, twice divorced, named Hephzibah Weizenbaum.

Her nickname is Juno. Treslove is in love.

To his credit, Jacobson is capable of writing funny, snappy dialogue, though sometimes over-labored like in a Vaudeville skit. He can also turn a deft descriptive phrase.

Finding he likes the idea of being Jewish, Treslove even tries to convince himself that he can become one. Not by conversion, but by immersing himself in a Yiddish dictionary and the works of 12th century Jewish philosopher Moses Maimonides.

In contrast, his friend Finkler hates Israel for its treatment of the Palestinians. He finds a group called ASHamed Jews who denounce the rise of militant settlers and religious fanatics in Israel.

Thus the novel takes on the form of an extended screed on all the usual Jewish stereotypes, plus the contrasting horrors of the Holocaust and the siege of Gaza. The book turns wordy, boring and pedantic. And still the question lingers: who was the woman who mugged Treslove?

I'll tell you right now: we never find out. I wasted hours of my life on this book. Don't waste yours.

'Three Sisters' wins Man Prize



THE MAN: Award winner Bi Feiyu

CHINESE writer Bi Feiyu was announced the winner of the Man Asian Literary Prize (MALP) for his novel *Three Sisters* last week.

"I am extremely honored to receive the Man Asian Literary Prize tonight.

"Although this is a young prize, I now believe that in a very short time it will become a very important prize in Asia. I expect that it will be taken very

seriously by all serious writers in Asia," Mr Feiyu said.

The prize has had three Chinese and one Filipino winner in its four year history.

Man Group supports many awards, charities and initiatives around the world, including sponsorship of the Man Booker literary prizes and MALP.

Mr Feiyu was awarded US\$30,000 at the ceremony, held at the Peninsula Hotel in Hong Kong.

His entry was rated first among 45 works submitted from all over Asia, the runners-up included submissions from India and Japan.

Commenting on *Three Sisters*,

the judges said the novel was, "A moving exploration of Chinese family and village life during the Cultural Revolution, that moves seamlessly between the epic and the intimate, the heroic and the petty, illuminating not only individual lives but an entire society, within a gripping tale of familial conflict and love".

Prof David Parker, chair of MALP's board of directors, said, "In its understanding of women trapped by the petty cruelties of provincial life, *Three Sisters* reaches the heights of the great Russian play its title echoes".

—Alexandra Andersson

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Just a hop across the bay

THE BEST THINGS IN LIFE ARE FREE: Koh Yao Noi still has much of the low-key charm it did 20 years ago, and is the perfect place for a cheap weekend break from Phuket. Photo: Sarah Wales

By Alexandra Andersson

WITH traffic, construction and tourist arrivals all on the rise here in Phuket, its island paradise factor is easily lost amid the flurry of commerce.

But Phuket is located in one of the most scenic regions on Earth, and little pieces of paradise do remain within very reasonable price – and boat – range.

One such gem is Koh Yao Noi,



Cheap and cheerful transport

touted as “Phuket 20 years ago”. An overnight stay on this rustic getaway can cost you less than 1,000 baht per person.

First you fill up the tank of your motorbike (100 baht) and drive to Bang Rong Pier in Pa Khlok.

From there you catch something that resembles an oversized longtail boat, which leaves hourly between 9am and 4pm, for 120 baht per person.

The deck hands haul your mo-



Idyllic scenery Photos: Kerry Lahana

torbike onto the bow for an extra 150 baht. They secure it with a sturdy bit of rope, so no worries there about your transport ending up on the bottom of Phang Nga Bay. Speedboats also leave on a regular basis, but have a “no motorbike” policy.

Then off you putter for about an hour. You can swelter with the locals in the covered area or lounge among the motorbikes up front – either seat is a true travel experience not to be missed.

The boat glides past endless mangroves, azure waters and limestone cliff islands, reminding you that paradise really does lie at your fingertips here.

First stop is the larger and even more undeveloped Koh Yao Yai. Stay on board to reach Koh Yao Noi about 10 minutes later.

The two islands lie in the middle of Phang Nga Bay, and both are home to small, extremely friendly Muslim villages. Koh Yao Noi has 4,000 inhabitants, two schools and a hospital – and one 7-Eleven. No Tesco, no Big C and almost no cars.

It takes about 35 minutes to drive



A STEAL: Inexpensive accommodation is a major lure of Koh Yao Noi.

the ring road covering the southern part of the island, during which time you pass three long beaches with panoramic views of the limestone archipelago in the distance, undisturbed by sun loungers, umbrellas or bikini-bottoms.

You will also pass through scores of palm trees, rubber plantations and villages lined with flowering bushes and busy with locals going about their daily lives.

Drive slow, as numerous chickens and a monitor lizard or two will be sure to cross your path.

Many places offer accommodation, particularly along the beaches. Sabai Corner is a quaint little place at the bottom of Pa Sai Beach with cottages for rent. Get the two-story cottage that sleeps seven with a bunch of mates and

you’ll be laughing – the nightly rate is 1,500 baht, which split seven ways is 215 baht each a night.

Included in the room rate is your own kitted-out kitchen, three balconies and a trickling river below.

Spend the days reading books, sunning, swimming or soaking up the stunning scenery (0 baht). Or if you’re the active type, rent a bike from a shop opposite the hospital (200 baht) and venture to the north end of the island which has terrain perfect for climbers (0 baht).

You’re spoiled for choice with local Thai food, and a slap-up meal won’t cost over 100 baht.

With all this so close and affordable, there really is no excuse. Let’s just hope Koh Yao Noi is able to maintain its undeveloped charm well past 20 years from now.



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WHAT'S ON in Phuket

March 26. Wine tasting @ Wine Lovers Phuket

Try six different wines and a tapas buffet. Price is 499 baht per person. Please call 086-6919121 for your reservation. Special discounts on selected wines during the wine tasting. From 6:30pm to 9:30pm in Rawai, 200 meters after the small Tesco Lotus outlet. Contact: Gumrai at T:076-384663 E:info@wineloversphuket.com or visit W:wineloversphuket.com

March 26. St Patrick's Ball 2011

The Life Home Project will host Phuket's second St Patrick's Ball at M evenpick Resort and Spa Karon Beach on March 26. Welcome cocktails will be at 6.30pm, dinner at 8pm, and the ball will continue until midnight. Tickets are 4,000 baht each and include a scrumptious international buffet dinner, wine and quality champagne. Wear a national costume or black tie. Tickets are available at all three Bake outlets in Chalong, Cherg Talay and BIS. Contact: Joojee at T:081-3979809 E:joojee88@yahoo.com or visit W:lifehomeproject.org

March 26-27. Mind Science

The Thanyapura Mind Centre is pleased to present world-renowned scholar Robert A. F. Thurman. A recognized authority on religion and spirituality, Asian history, philosophy, Tibetan Buddhism, and His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, Robert Thurman is an eloquent advocate of the relevance of Eastern ideas to our daily lives. Regardless of one's world view or religious affiliation, Robert Thurman promises to inspire and

April 6-12. Salsa at RPM Health Club



Royal Phuket Marina's Salsa Class will be held every Wednesday, starting April 6 at 7:30 pm to 8:15 pm for beginners and 8:15pm to 9pm for intermediates at RPM Health Club. Private lessons and all dances possible. Contact Mr Murat at T:081-7973364 or contact teachers Anna and Didier at T:084-3062016 (French, English) or T:084-0517455 (Thai & English) E:bastien.didier.uxo@gmail.com E:dance@phuketdance.com or visit to W:phuketdance.com.

Photo: Jessi Cotterill

engage his audience. Introductory Talk: March 26 from 5pm to 7pm, reception afterwards. Retreat: March 27 at 10am to 3 pm. Contact: Alex or Nantawan at T: 076-336030, or E:mtc@thanyapura.co.th or visit W:thanyapura.com

March 26-27. Phuket Youth Sailing Squadron Island Regatta

The Phuket Youth Sailing Squadron will be hosting the Interclub Island Trophy Regatta. Thirty Optimist sailors from Phuket and Koh Samui have already entered. Sailors from Pattaya, Songkhla, and Sattahip are also welcome. We are also open to other classes: Laser, Topper and Byte. Racing will be held over two days and boats are available for charter. From 8am to 5pm at Ao Yon, Cape Panwa. Contact: Katy Gooch at T:085-2159185, E:phuketyouthsailing@gmail.com or visit W:phuketouthsailing.org

March 26-31. Bacon and Stone visual arts exhibition

You are invited to attend the public viewing of Bacon and Stone, the Year 13 IB Visual Arts Exhibition at Brush, kalim beach from 11:30am to 11:30pm daily from March 26 to April 25. The BIS Phuket senior art students' exhibition draws a lot of attention every year. This year is no different. Enjoy with the great atmosphere at Brush restaurant & lounge and see this unique exhibition. Contact: Claire Lester at T:076-238711, or E:clester@bisphuket.ac.th or visit W:bisphuket.ac.th

April 1. Curry Friday

We present Curry Fridays on alternate Fridays, 7pm to 11:30pm at Navrang Mahal, Karon Sea Sands Resort & Spa. Here is your chance to enjoy an authentic and lavish Indian curry buffet. Selections include all-time favorites chicken tikka masala, very hot mutton vindaloo, juicy kebabs, Goan fish curry, chickpea curry and more served with nan bread and basmati rice. All you can eat for only 449 baht nett. Draught beer by the glass, 50 baht nett. Special discount on beverages. Contact: Seemant Raju at T:076-286464 ext 4 or 081-6295063 E:sm@karonseasand.com or visit W:karonseasand.com

April 2. Mariner Madness with live music at RPM

Crazy Fool's Kitchen presents yet

another night of live music. Let your hair down while listening to some legendary tunes from the Glenn and Max Wailin Band, live at Marina Boardwalk from 6:30pm onwards. Free entry. Crazy Fool's Kitchen is the home of cold beer, cracking banter and great live music and raffle prizes – all proceeds to go to the charity 100 friends.org. Contact: Mr Prim at T:085-6917250 or Mr Murat at T:081-7973364 E:muratc@royalphuketmarina.com or visit W:royalphuketmarina.com

April 2-3. Kids Sailing Weekends – Topper Sail Phuket

Set sail on an adventure with Topper Sail Phuket Optimist and Topper Sailing Pathway courses. Come and join one of our introductory courses on April 2 to 3 or April 9 to 10. Once you have mastered the basics, join our junior club sessions most weekends, 2 to 4:30pm. Kids sailing courses are also offered during the school holidays April 11 to

15 and April 18 to 22. Topper is the number one dinghy sailing school on Phuket. In our fleet, we have optimists, toppers, topaz dinghies with spinnaker, lasers, hobie cat and topaz omega with spinnaker and trapeze. Contact Katy Gooch at T: 085-2159185 E:toppersailphuket@gmail.com or visit W: topper sailphuket.com

April 3. British International School tennis tourney

Social singles skill-level-based tennis tournament from 8am to 6.30pm at BIS. Level 1 to 3 make registration at 8am, start at 8:30am. Level 3.5 to 5 make registration at 1:30pm, start at 2pm. Finals start at 5pm. Entry is 500 baht per player. Entries close on March 27 at 5pm. Contact Dianne Browning at T:089-4698100, E:didee51@yahoo.com.au

April 6. Chakri Memorial Day – public holiday

Chakri Day commemorates the origins of the Chakri dynasty, founded by Rama I, who established Bangkok as the nation's capital. HM King Bhumibol Adulyadej is the 9th monarch of the Chakri dynasty.

April 7. Stock Market Investing for beginners (FREE)

Course includes: The essentials of investing in the US and global financial markets; four ways to protect your money from the most common scams directed at expats; how to invest in growth technology stocks and emerging market economies such as Thailand, Vietnam and China; stocks on the move and when to buy Google, Apple or Microsoft etc. Join Don Freeman, President of Freeman Capital Management, and learn to find the best stocks at the right time and when to sell to protect profits. Sponsored by Woody's. Contact Don Freeman at T:089-9705795 E:freeman capital@gmail.com or visit W:freemancapital.net.

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April 3 – Patong

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Just married down south

HUNDREDS of people from Phuket's Mon community gathered at a private residence at Friendship Beach in Rawai on Sunday, March 13 to celebrate the marriage of Muang 'Wan' Lay and his lovely bride Pui.

The celebrations began the day before, on Saturday, with many of the happy couple's family traveling huge distances to make it in time for the special day. The *Phuket Gazette* would like to wish Wan and Pui the very best as they embark on this new chapter of their lives. Congratulations!

Photo: Fraser Morton



IN THE CLUB: The Phuket International Women's Club (PIWC) held their Annual General Meeting at Le Meridien last week, at which the new committee was elected. Seated from left are Carol Fryer, Secretary; Wipa Tanmanatragul, President; Carole Dux, Vice President; and Sue Arnulphy, Treasurer.



CENTARA CUISINE: The Centara Grand Beach Resort Phuket hosted a San Patrignano wine dinner earlier this week with Italian Head Chef Fabrizio Crocetta (right) of the resort's Mare restaurant serving a sumptuous meal for guests.

Also pictured from left are Gian Carlo De Cesare, ITALASIA Group; Denis Thouvard, General Manager of Centara Grand Beach Resort Phuket; Alexandra Andersson, *Phuket Gazette* Desk Editor with her partner Brandon Zigler; Federico Rainero, Export Manager of San Patrignano wines; and Christophe Gestin, Director of Food & Beverage.



READY TO ROLL: The Mitsubishi Sapam dealership in Koh Keaw held its grand opening celebration on March 21.

YOUR Phuket



Belly dancers Natalia Stoltman (left) and Melissa Kelman (right) with Murat Can Sakarya, Events and Group Manager at Royal Phuket Marina, following another successful belly dancing show last weekend.



ST PATRICK'S DAY FUN: Candice Caalsen (top and above) , Roxy Hignens, Lindy Gordon-Bennet and Rebecca Tooley.



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It's salsa time at Les Angeles



NEARLY 100 salsa enthusiasts turned up at Royal Phuket Marina earlier this month for a sizzling evening of salsa dancing, food and entertainment. The Salsa and Latin Club of Phuket was established four months ago and since then has proved massively popular with Phuket locals. Here's a glimpse of who turned up on the night...



Photos: Jessi Cotterill



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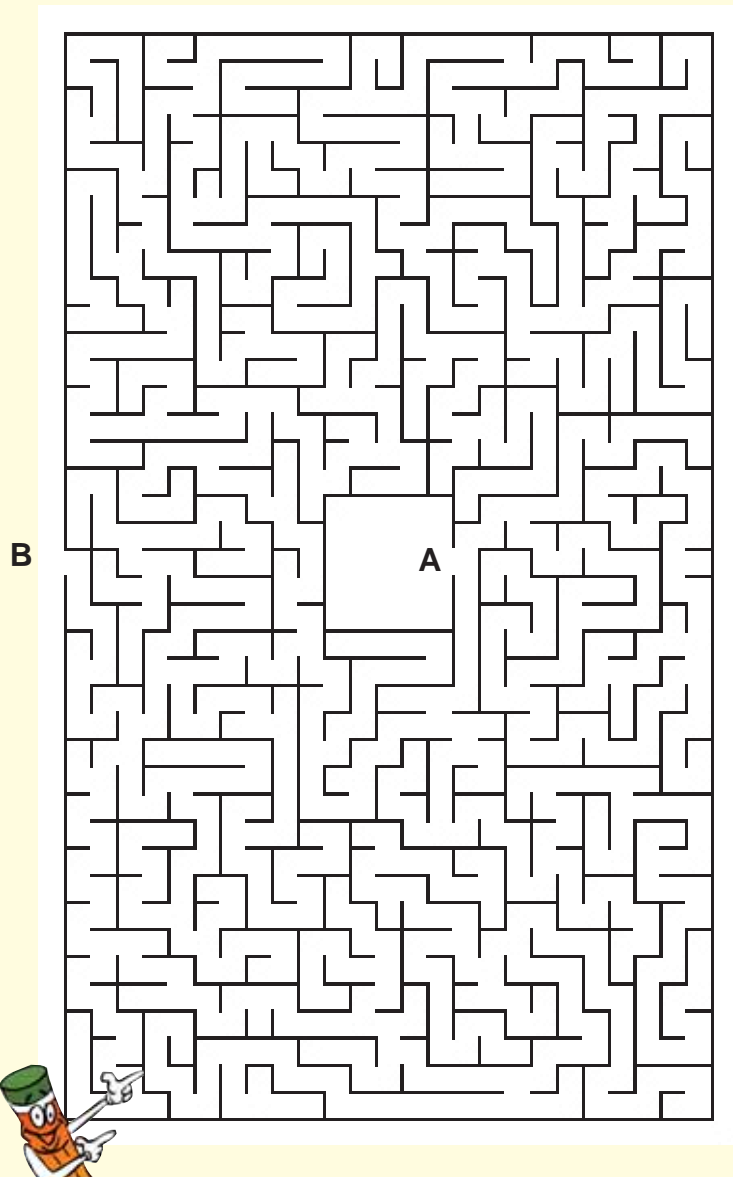


Volvo. for life





A *Gazette* staff member completed this maze in 10 seconds. Can you beat their time? Make your way out of the maze.

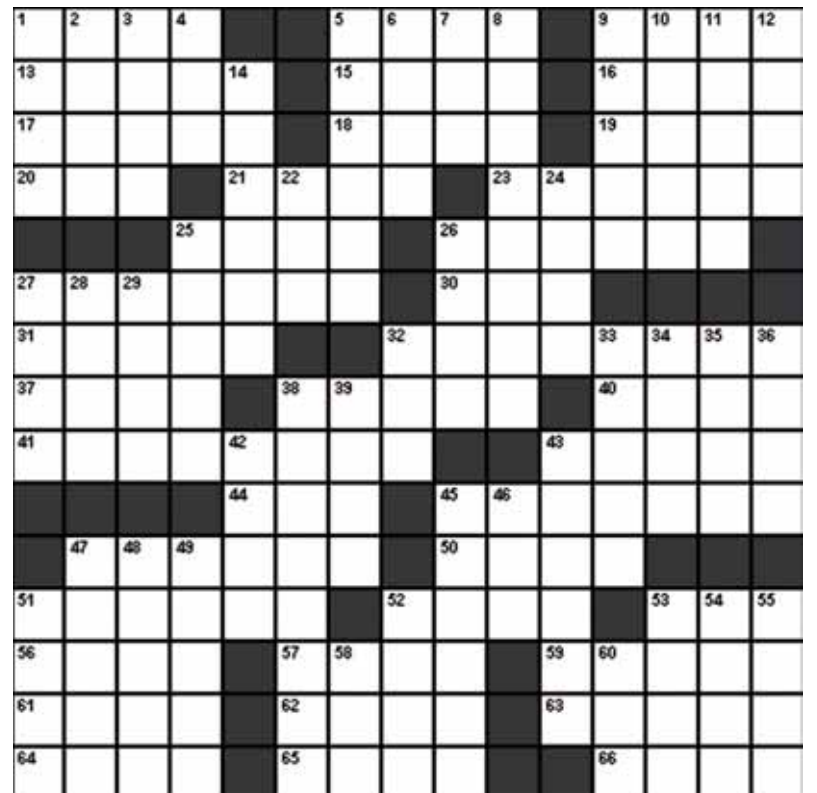


Across

1. Aha!
5. Coarse file
9. Tabula_ _ _
13. Belonging to the common people
15. Zeno's home
16. Archer of myth
17. Farewell
18. Ace, e.g.
19. Nada
20. _ kwon do
21. Skater Michelle
23. Muse of astronomy
25. New Mexico art colony
26. Irish tongue
27. Four singers
30. Acid
31. Heart chambers
32. Like some ulcers
37. Big name in PCs
38. Covered in goo
40. Hungarian sheepdog
41. Insular
43. Bunkum
44. Song syllable
45. Professoriate
47. Coarse sieve
50. Grease (up)
51. Sequence
52. Gilpin of "Frasier"
53. Candle count
56. Ancient Athens's Temple of _ _
57. Scorch
59. Pull on
61. Pulitzer winner James
62. Drop
63. Issue forth with force
64. Workout count
65. Fishing gear
66. Memo heading

Down

1. _ first you don't...
2. Fizzy drink
3. *Night* author Wiesel
4. Barely make, with "out"
5. Overhaul
6. King of comedy
7. Sun. talk
8. Corded silk fabric



9. Kidney-related
10. Rice_ _ _
11. Super speedy hedgehog
12. Between ports
14. Japanese dressing gown
22. Grievous distress
24. Comic Foxx
25. Run of bird-song
26. Dejected
27. Muslim judge
28. Salt Lake City hoopsters
29. He sang about Alice
32. Accomplished
33. Form of lyrical poem
34. Dangerous weapon

35. Grad
36. Corona fruit
38. Job change or marriage, psychologically speaking
39. Incline
42. To_ (perfectly)
43. Characteristic actions
45. Warns
46. Cad or heel
47. Suit fabric
48. Crawl
49. Ascends
51. River to the Moselle
52. Discharged a debt
53. Stravinsky ballet
54. Massive wild ox
55. Kitchen addition
58. Comedian Philips
60. News letters

Provided by BestCrosswords.com. Used with permission. Puzzle solutions on page 39


ARIES (March 21-April 20):

 Flying off the handle for no valid reason is highlighted to be a problem for Arians this week. Your short fuse could be caused by frustration at work, but the astral atmosphere will calm down once April commences. If your birthday is due in the week ahead, the stars predict an increase in your financial luck during the coming year. A romantic relationship can be spiced up by a creative gesture this weekend.

TAURUS (April 21-May 21):


 Streamlining your goals is advisable as there are signs that Taureans have their fingers in too many pies at present. The last days of March are a favorable time to focus on projects that have the most chance of success. Money matters are well-starred, but purchasing an expensive item should not be rushed. Avoid emotional dramas by keeping your distance from a water sign. The number eight brings good luck this week.

GEMINI (May 22-June 21):


 A fire sign's criticism could come as a shock early next week. However, Geminis should be able to turn this around to become helpful feed-

back. Those who have been considering relocation will learn something to their advantage this week-end. Where romance is concerned, there are signs that your ego could disturb the peace in a relationship.

CANCER (June 22-July 23):


 Expecting your life to run like clockwork will result in frustration this week. The stars predict an unsettled time, with last minute cancellation of appointments highlighted midweek. Those born under the sign of Cancer who could use some help with a personal problem should speak to an earth sign. Lucky days for finances are Wednesday and Thursday. Romance brings happy moments on Sunday— another water sign is forecast to say the words you want to hear.

LEO (July 24-August 22):


 The stars advise that your cash flow situation calls for attention this week. Leos could discover that they had forgotten about a debt that still needs to be repaid. Making changes in your attitude towards money is probably overdue, but has the stars' backing during April. A family matter is best discussed with everyone concerned this weekend.




VIRGO (August 23-September 23):

 Others don't dance to your tune so readily this week, but that doesn't mean that they won't come around to your way of thinking. Virgoans are advised to take life at a slower pace until April has got underway. This also applies to affairs of the heart as the stars suggest that someone is feeling under pressure to make a casual relationship more serious. The number nine looks lucky mid-week.

LIBRA (September 24-October 23):

 A clash of personalities is forecast to make your working week somewhat stressful. If a fire sign is involved in the situation, you could find that a serious talk will clear the air. Tuesday is the most auspicious day for this. Those who are self-employed will see competition heating up. Wear the color cinnamon brown to help increase your confidence.


SCORPIO (October 24-November 22):

 The stars advise Scorpios not to push their luck where new work projects are concerned. There are signs that if you ask for too much, agreements could fall through. In the realm of romance, allowing a partner to take more initiative will be appreciated more than you realize. Where finances are concerned, there are hints that mistakes made last month will finally be rectified this week. The number seven brings good fortune this weekend.

SAGITTARIUS (November 23-December 21):


 Where business is concerned, some Sagittarians could find themselves stuck between a rock and a hard place at the end of March. The stars advise that taking advice from an earth sign could prompt you to find a solution. In the realm of romance, there is no point in trying to make an earth sign change their mind. Those involved with another fire sign are surprised when a secret is divulged this weekend.

CAPRICORN (December 22-January 20):


 Many of those born under the sign of Capricorn will be shifting focus during the final

days of March. Gaining knowledge where you least expect to find it is highlighted this weekend. The stars suggest that paying more attention to your dreams could pave the way towards resolution of a problem involving a business partner. An existing romantic relationship can be enhanced by paying more attention to your partner's needs.

AQUARIUS (January 21-February 19):

 Aquarians should have the power to make their lives less of a whirlwind during the last week of March. In the world of work, concentrate on doing the right things for the right reasons. A stranger is forecast to lend a helping hand this weekend and this could result in a worthwhile friendship.

PISCES (February 20-March 20):

 Where work is concerned, your confident attitude opens doors this week and Pisceans are predicted to start the month of April on a positive footing. Finances should also begin to look rosier, with emphasis on your earning power becoming greater. In the realm of romance, drawing closer to an air sign is forecast to lead to a happy conclusion.

PROPERTY Gazette

News | Construction | Gardening | For sale | For rent | Classifieds

Bluepoint to keep Patong's southern charm

Impact a 'key concern' for new project

By Neil Quail

A SUNSET groundbreaking ceremony on the southern headland of Patong on March 17 launched the construction of an award-winning development designed by internationally acclaimed architect Paul Raff.

From the ground up, Bluepoint Condominiums aims to reduce its environmental impact by embracing a range of ecologically sustainable plans.

Developed by Bluepoint Developments Co Ltd and with the development managed by

Abode Developments Co Ltd, the Bluepoint development comprises 20 freehold and leasehold condominiums of one, two and three bedrooms.

Norwegian owners Kjetil Horgen iseth and Arnfinn Engeset were joined by a host of their Phuket support team, friends and media to witness the structural launch of their vision.

"We have had setbacks, including both economic and environmental disasters; but we are grateful that we have made it through," said Mr iseth.



NOT AFRAID OF HARD WORK: Kjetil Horgen iseth, one of Bluepoint Condominium's owners, pours the first shovel of cement at the site at a ground breaking ceremony last week.

Mr Raff then proudly highlighted the design innovations that will become signature features of the development.

"The design of the louvered facades preserves sea views whilst providing visual privacy, but they also shade the sun. This significantly reduces energy consumption and carbon footprint," Mr Raff said.

The design won Paul Raff Studios the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada's "Excellence Innovations In Architecture" award for 2009.

The low-rise boutique develop-

ment will be set in three buildings, each with three levels.

Among the unit designs available are one to three-bedroom homes ranging from 107sqm to 240sqm with a choice of floor plans.

Along with three sea view homes, Bluepoint has nine landscaped rooftop garden penthouses and eight plunge pool garden homes.

Mr Raff explained why the rooftops are landscaped. "Near the equator, the greatest energy consumption and carbon footprint arises trying to keep

buildings cool. If you have local indigenous species on your roof, not only are you supporting local flora and fauna, you also shade the building creating an effective building envelope and improve climatic control," he said.

Further ecological considerations are made by Bluepoint's development by not being constructed on a virgin site and by not destroying mature trees.

Construction and operational aspects will also be sourced locally to help reduce environmental impact.

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Luxury's got a sweet spot



Property Watch

By Bill Barnett

MOST Phuket property developers these days have swapped their heart-stopping guzzling of Red Bull for chakra-inspired slow sipping of green tea.

Mystical chants aimed at revealing the elusive "sweet spot" in the luxury property market continue to leave even die-hard devotees gasping at thin air, like a down-on-his-luck big game fisherman.

Indeed, it's often the tale of the one that got away.

Landing the big one remains nothing more than wishful thinking for many developers. Yet thrust into the harsh daylight, the face of raging bulls last year accounted for 2.84 billion baht trading volume in top-end ultra villas in Phuket.

Despite uncertainties arising from political upheaval, a strong luxury market in Phuket still drew strategic investors interested in the long-term prospects of real estate on the island.

As a slave to the bean – the coffee bean, that is – I am in no state to continue writing this without a calming influence. I need the inside numbers.

Just in the nick of time my new-age analyst arrives fresh from a yoga session.

Crunching the numbers, it's

hard to not make comparisons with 2009, when Phuket's real estate market hit rock bottom with a thud that resembled a meteorite crashing into a Toyota Vios.

Last year things started picking up again, though this time resales grew to account for 68 per cent of trading volume.

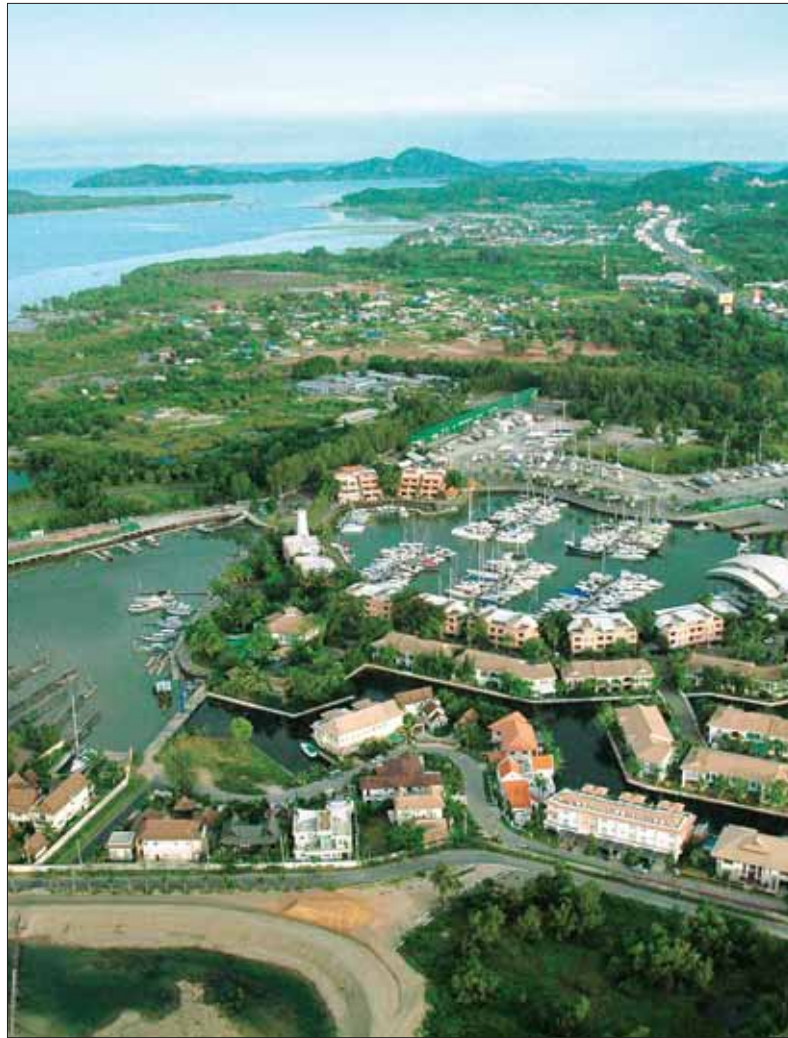
As despicable and misunderstood as any split personality, the dreaded word "luxury" in our office is defined as villa properties priced at 65 million baht and above.

While I often pine over a lovely lost pet gecko named "Mike", many property brokers continue to cry into their beers waiting for the return of the euro and pound buyers. To me, purgatory can wait.

The number guru lights up, seeing that – just as in tourism – Phuket's property market is experiencing a change of characters; something akin to a recast of Charlie Sheen's role in *Two and a Half Men*. I have to say, though, Charlie would like Phuket if he'd give it half a chance.

Three top new geographical source markets for upscale property are Russia, China and India. A direct correlation between high growth tourism and property markets appears evident. Strange bedfellows? Yes, but trends are trends.

Our office mate continues to spew out more facts and figures. Oceanview, oceanfront and high-profile developers are now



LAY OF THE LAND: High-end properties, mainly oceanfront, are still high on the 'must have' wish lists for many buyers. Photo: Gazette file

dominating the score card. Hotel-managed projects and those on Phuket's west coast remain the top achievers.

While the existing stock of new units in the sector numbers only 72, supply and demand figures predict that the luxury property segment in Phuket will remain healthy.

I may prefer nurses to doctors, but the check-up results produced by the guru has calmed my nerves, at least for the moment.

What's in store in 2011? We are already nearly a quarter into the year and halftime is not yet in sight. Players are currently hitting the Gatorade and sweating like amped-up madmen.

At least two high-profile estate

developers – one on the east coast, another on the west – look set to introduce new projects this year.

Phang Nga remains plagued by the new zoning regulations kick to the head last year, and most ink is being spilled over domestic low-end condos in the burgeoning metropolis of Patong.

One thing is for sure, though: The air is thin at the top of the mountain, and that's the way buyers like it.

Expect the walls of property offices to be making room for some trophy fish this year.

Bill Barnett is Managing Director of C9 Hotelworks and can be contacted through www.c9hotelworks.com.

In brief...

The Village targets fractional market

THE Village Coconut Island, has appointed the Absolute World Group as its premier sales and marketing agent for the second phase of development of their two-bedroom private pool villas and Jacuzzi suites.

The Village Coconut Island is off the east coast of Phuket. This new phase will comprise a total of 192 luxurious Jacuzzi suites and pool villas, complementing the existing 44 phase one villas, 39 of which are now sold.

A range of pool villas and Jacuzzi Suites are available for sale, both foreign free-hold ownership and through Absolute's fractional ownership initiative, where a five-week share starts at 1.25 million baht. This includes benefits such as the use of a fully crewed, five-berth luxury sailing yacht, access to a fleet of luxury speedboats and private vehicles, use of Callaway golf clubs and membership with a leading international resort exchange company.

Thailand's Minor Group in Australian resort takeover

THAILAND'S listed Minor International Group is waging a takeover bid through a subsidiary for Australia's hospitality firm Oaks Hotels and Resorts.

In a notification earlier this week to the Stock Exchange of Thailand (SET), Minor announced they completed the acquisition of 14.96 per cent on March 18 and agreed on the sale of a further 5 per cent for a combined 19.96 per cent stake.

The Oaks portfolio includes 33 properties in Australia, four in New Zealand and one in Dubai.

According to reports in the Australian financial press, Minor has subsequently made an off-market offer of 35 cents for all the remaining shares in Oaks, who's share price has surged 30 per cent.

The offer is valued at AUD61 million, or an enterprise worth of roughly AUD129 mn.

Oaks has been plagued by insolvency problems and interactions with liquidators of two major shareholders.

Do you have any breaking news about Phuket property? Email property@phuketgazette.net

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Resorts turning to solar power to slash costs

By Neil Quail

PHUKET hotels and resorts moving to capture a larger slice of the eco-friendly tourist market are finding that installing green technologies are also helping to reduce operating costs.

Cruiser Island Resort on Koh Lone installed a battery of hot water panels sourced from Zolarasia, a subsidiary of yachting equipment provider Phuketsail in Koh Kaew, three months ago.

That move is now paying off.

"Since October we have installed 21 solar hot water units and the savings are absolutely measurable. Before the installation we were using the 250Kva generator for six to eight hours when we were at 80 per cent occupancy," said General Manager Raymond Taunton.

"At present, we have not used the 250kva unit despite having 100 per cent occupancy for many nights," he said.

"That is a difference of 2,500 baht per night. Our smaller 50kva unit can now handle the load for 75 per cent occupancy," he added.

Mr Taunton estimated the overall fuel savings ranged from 25 to 30 per cent.



SAVING MONEY: The Phuketsail water panel

"During the Chinese New Year in February, savings were around 70,000 baht. We estimate the initial cost of installation to be returned within five months at current fuel prices," he said.

Zolarasia Managing Director Julian Hill explained, "These are hot water solar panels, not electricity producing solar panels. Hot water solar panels are much cheaper than their electric counterparts.

"This results in a very fast 'payback', or the time it takes for the savings to pay



ENERGY EFFICIENT: Cruiser Island Resort on Koh Lone is using alternative energy.

off the original cost of installation... Less than a year in most household cases and even faster for hotels and resorts that use a lot of hot water," he added.

The solar hot water units sold to Cruiser Island were 100-liter units, each producing about 500 liters of useable hot shower water a day, said Mr Hill.


"The water is boiled and is then mixed with cold water for showers. The panels work fine even if it is cloudy or raining," he said.

Mr Taunton hoped that *Phuket Gazette*

readers may be able to help with another power issue and extended an invitation for suggestions.

"Another area which I would like to confront is the efficiency of our air conditioners and perhaps solar lighting. Again, this is complex, but should any *Gazette* readers have any good ideas, I would be most happy to hear from them," he said.


Raymond Taunton can be contacted at info@cruiserislandresort.com





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Going coco for palm trees



Gardening

By Patrick Campbell

ANY discussion of palm trees ought to start with the coconut palm (*cocos nucifera*). After all, it is the most famous and useful tree in South East Asia, and life without it in Thailand would be unthinkable.

Every little bit has its use: the flesh, the milk, the husk, the wood and the leaves. Most Thai curries contain coconut milk or pulp, and the juice not only makes a refreshing drink, but is the only naturally occurring liquid to have exactly the same pH level as blood plasma.

When dried, the husk (*copra*) yields commercial oils, and the fronds make durable thatching. The wood is wonderfully grained, and the fiber can be woven into mats and canopies. And what would we gardeners do without coconut husk? All in all, the coconut palm is a treasure.

Sadly this palm is too grand for



LADYLIKE: The lady palm is a small, dainty palm tree.

the average garden, reaching a height of 30 meters. But it graces many parks with distinction, and coconut groves are an attractive feature of the island's landscape. Sadly they are in rapid decline, a consequence of twin-pronged attacks from developers and beetles.

Back to the garden and manageable palms. Of all the smaller palms, the lady palm (*rhapsis*) is

the easiest to cultivate. It grows in clumps of slender trunks covered in dark and hairy fibers. Often it is seen in garden centers with its root ball wrapped in plastic, a testimony to its durability.

It is a small tree, only about one to two meters tall, but its great virtue is that it can survive in areas of deep shade where other sun-loving palms are difficult to grow. And not only is it useful for covering up those bare patches in the garden, it is also one of the few palms that can tolerate conditions indoors.

The lady palm has characteristic dark-green, fan-shaped leaves and can be propagated by rooted offshoots. Give it plenty of moisture if you want it to spread.

Less durable, but more striking, is the genus of fan palms known as *Licuala*.

There are about 100 species, and with luck, one or two of them can be found in your local plant nursery. They have huge, deeply-pleated, glossy leaves with notched edges, nearly circular in shape.

The most common is probably *L grandis*, which is recognizable by its deeply notched leaves. *L orbiculis* has more symmetrical leaves and is one of the most beautiful of all the small palms.



BIG IN PHUKET: The coconut palm is the most well-known palm on the island. At 30 meters tall, it pops up all over the place. Photos: Clyde Robinson

These will all accept some sun, but prefer filtered shade, What they cannot tolerate is an exposed position, for the fragile leaves need protection from strong winds. And though they are often pressed into service as house-plants, they will not take kindly to the experience.

Two more smaller palms deserve a mention. Unlike the lady and fan palm, both the Macarthur Palm and Livistona are more substantial trees, reaching about three meters in height.

At first glance the Macarthur palm resembles the yellow cane, as it grows in clumps of smooth, greenish-grey trunks, each with a crown of darker green leaves.

While the foliage is less elegant,

this palm does produce long panicles of white flowers which are followed by strings of yellow fruits which then turn glossy red. The seeds can be used to grow new plants.

Unlike many of its brethren, this palm will tolerate being kept in a pot, and is consequently a familiar presence on terraces and patios.

Last but not least, Livistona, a palm every gardener will be familiar with. The slender, fan-shaped leaves radiate from a solitary trunk, and droop elegantly downwards. Hence its common name of Fountain Palm. Its height of about two to three meters makes it ideal for the smaller garden, where it will accept partial shade or full sun.

So there is, indeed, a palm for every occasion.

If you have a garden that you would like to be featured on this page, please email: pcampbell45@gmail.com

Tip of the week

Dealing with rubbish

NOW we are well into the dry season, leaf drop is becoming more marked, as shrubs and trees try to conserve moisture and energy.

Every day now, the leaves of deciduous trees and shrubs litter the ground.

It is tempting to burn this material, but it is far too dangerous: in these tinder-dry conditions, sparks may start something serious, such as a forest fire.

Far better and safer to compost such litter, even if it means

more watering of the pile.

Burning household rubbish is a total no-no, since it will release many toxic substances such as hydro-carbons into the atmosphere – encourage your local garbage collectors.

They will help you to recycle plastic, glass, metal and paper. Sadly, more of Phuket is being ruined by indiscriminate fly-tipping.

There are festering piles everywhere. But at least we can do our bit by keeping our own gardens neat and tidy



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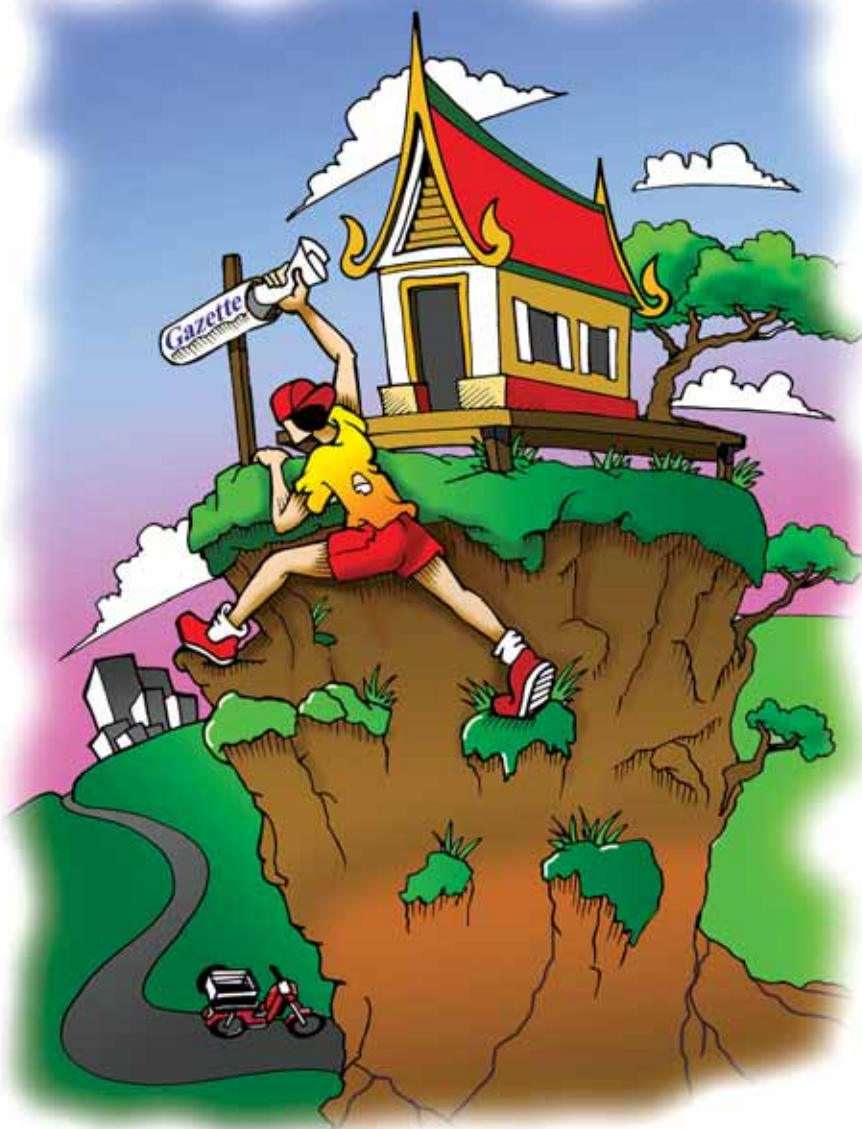


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2-bedroom condo for sale. Price: 1.6 million baht. Contact Khun Prisana for more details. Tel: 076-263717, 081-676 4849 (English & Thai), 081-737 2968 (Thai). Email: n_amonoo@yahoo.com

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MODERN VILLA NAI YANG



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3-BEDROOM HOUSE



3-bedroom house (53 sqwah) near the Two Heroines Monument. 2 bathrooms, 3 aircons, telephone & internet, curtains, kitchen and full landscape. Price: 2.95 million baht (negotiable). Contact owner. Tel: 080-520 2989. Email: pakaporns@yahoo.com

NAI HARN LUXURY CONDO



2-3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, 111sqm. From 4.5 million baht. Must see. Tel: 084-993 7308. For further details, please see our website at www.amphaiseabreeze.com

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New. 17 modern rooms. Successful opening. Tel: 081-085 6715 (English). Email: surlamer05@yahoo.com

VILLAS FOR SALE

2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms. Some have pools. Located in a secure estate in Rawai. Price: from 4.3 million baht. Tel: 083-641 9327. Email: rawaipoolvillas@hotmail.com

PATONG TOWNHOUSE

In Baan Benjamas for sale. In a corner position, with 2 bedrooms. It's neat, light and airy. Quiet, central location with garden and undercover carpark in maintained estate. Price: 6.7 million baht. Tel: 087-900 8445.

ON THE BEACH

2-bedroom apartment in north Patong. Foreign freehold, top floor, swimming pools. 9.7 million baht. Tel: 086-276 5117. Email: jihshand@gmail.com

LOVELY HOUSE



At Manik. The Valley project 2.2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms. Price: 2.7 million baht. Tel: 085-095 0599.

PATONG LAND

Very nice plot of land for sale in the hills in the north end of Patong Beach. Ready to build. Has a good water supply, underground utilities, and access road. Open to offers. Tel: 081-891 3466. Fax: 076-296160. Email: antc@phuket.ksc.co.th

RAWAI SEAVIEW

Land: 9 rai with Chanote title. All seaview. Sale: 15 million baht per rai. Tel: 081-693 9571.

LAND AT NAI HARN

1km to beach. Total of 12 rai with Chanote title. Price: 12 million baht per rai. Contact Owner. Tel: 080-528 8578.

BUNGALOW CHALONG



3-bedroom on 65sq wah, with western kitchen and bathroom. Price: 3.95million baht. Tel: 089-922 2800. Email: simonchinner@yahoo.com

BEST PRICE POOL VILLA



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3-BEDROOM HOUSE

62sq wah, 2 bathrooms, Villa Dowroong. 4.5 million baht. Contact Khun Tar. Tel: 076-377052, 089-971 1268.

PENTHOUSE FOR SALE

210 sqm in the Kamala hills. Infinity plunge pool with deck, 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, Western kitchen. Beautiful development with landscaped garden. 2 common pools with waterfall. Must see to appreciate. For urgent sale. Only 11.5 million baht. Tel: 02-158 5168, 089-137 5325 (English). Email: mbdettmann@yahoo.com

TOWNHOUSE AT KAMALA



Near Phuket Fantasea. 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, with kitchen. Price: 2.9 million baht. Tel: 081-719 1041.

SURIN BEACH

Land on Soi Haad Surin 2 for sale. 2.2 rai, 5 mins walk to Surin Beach. Email: costello@hotmail.net.au

LAND AT CHERNG TALAY

390sqw, nice flat land, quiet area, Chanote. In Pasak Soi 5 near Laguna Home. Price: 6 million baht. Tel: 089-472 9118, 086-709 2933.

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Private, spacious, walled five bedrooms in a Tropical Villa uniquely designed in contemporary style with an Asian flair. Set amidst beautiful landscaped gardens and an Olympic size swimming pool. Located in Rawai. Private Sale, directly with owner : 17.5 million Thai baht. Tel: 087-897 4421. Email: info@simply-thailand.com

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GOLF VIEWLAND IN KATHU

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Property Wanted

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Apartment for long term rent. 8,000-20,000 baht per month. Room from 600-1,500 baht per night. Tel: 076-512151, 089-290 9567. Email: info@brommathaihouse.com For further details, please see our website at www.brommathaihouse.com

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APPARTMENT LONG TERM
apartment for French speaking people. 60 square meters, big garden, swimming pool, very quiet, near Jungceylon. 16,000 baht per month for long term. Tel: 076-296312, 080-880 5086 (English). Email: bialaspatrik@yahoo.com

LOFT STYLE - KATHU
Suitable for a home or office, secure, 11,500 baht/month. Tel: 086-664 5575. Email: hkmsn@yahoo.com

LUXURY KATA APARTMENT
Central location, pool, Internet, etc. One bedroom. For rent weekly or monthly. Tel: 084-063 9223, 086-941 7733 (English). Email: eburneday@gmail.com

PATONG SEAVIEW
With kitchen and DVD/cable. Rent: 800 baht per day, or 15,000 baht per month. Tel: 089-532 7708.

APARTMENT PATONG
140sqm, fully furnished. 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, plus storage room. Spacious living / dining area with full western kitchen and large balcony. Full aircon. Includes free WiFi. UBC ready. Tel: 084-185 8536.

FREEDOM APARTMENT
Small kitchen, fridge, cooker, fully furnished, aircon, high-speed internet, cable TV, bathroom with hot and cold water. 400 baht per day. Tel: 084-845 0541.

ROOMS IN KATHU: 6,000 BAHT
Large modern rooms with their own bathroom, satellite TV and Internet connection. At a great location with mountain views, near Loch Palm Golf Club. Email: cssmyth@hotmail.com

4-BEDROOM VILLA WITH LARG POOL
in Land & Houses Park available for long or short-term resident, or for daily holiday rental. Email: william.amonoo@gmail.com

KARON CONDO FOR SALE OR RENT
2 bedroom, 2 bath condo overlooking Karon Beach. Short or long term. Condo also for sale. Reasonable rent to mature persons. Email: rj1111@yahoo.com

PATONG CONDO
Fully furnished - 700 meters from Patong Beach. Email: wintin2007@yahoo.com

LUXURY APARTMENT IN PATONG
Room for rent with swimming pool. Daily and monthly. Email: mori@phuket.ksc.co.th Website: www.nanaivilla.com

HOUSE NEAR CHALONG
Fully furnished house with 2-bedrooms, 2 bathrooms. Long-term rent (min 1 year): 15,000 baht per month. Email: cjitsomboon@hotmail.com

Accommodation Wanted

POOL VILLA IN JUNE
We are looking for a pool villa with at least 3 bedrooms. Could be almost anywhere in Phuket. We will arrive June 14 and stay til July 4. Please send me a rental price and some pictures. Email: petson993@gmail.com

AO YON OR NEARBY
Looking for long term rent of a modern, furnished 2 BR house with western kitchen and AC, ADSL and UBC. Minimum of 12 months, starting end of April or later as per agreement. Please email photo/info. Email: homeinphuket@live.com

PHUKET CITY OR NEARBY
I will be studying with my partner at ECC in Muang, Phuket City, and I am looking for a comfortable apartment/house that is close by or commutable. Dates: May 7- June 7 2011. For more details, please send email: patrickoldfield@yahoo.co.uk

1/2 BEDROOM HOUSE / APARTMENT
Looking for a 1 or 2 bedroom house or apartment. Need the following: Internet, aircon, kitchen. Long-term rental. Price about 15,000 baht a month. Email: khun.ab@hotmail.com

Household Items

SELLING FURNITURE
Moving sale of complete furniture set. Call for details. Tel: 087-270 2334.

MOVING SALE
Selling everything order list. Tel: 080-718 1686. Email: maxphuket@hotmail.de

WANTED GAS OVEN
Wanted, Gas oven with Hob. Call or email. Tel: 086-272 8094. Email: jjlock100@hotmail.com

DINING TABLE & CHAIRS
Attractive dining table & 4 chairs, 90cm x 90cm, dark wood & black colour. 4,000 baht for quick sale. Buyer to collect. Tel: 087-897 3497 (Eng), 089-646 8144 (Thai). Email: catch22phuket@gmail.com

DOUBLE BED FRAME
Leather look, king size double bed frame. New, from England. Not needed. 7,000 baht. Tel: 083-833 9950. Or send email: diving.dreams@hotmail.com

OUTDOOR UMBRELLA
Retractable umbrella with base. Covers 8.4sqm with adjustable angle. 7 months old, no longer required. Cost 21,000 baht; will sell for 17,000 baht o.n.o. Tel: 086-280 4848. Email kwanchalmers@me.com

WALL MIRRORS
Two rattan-framed, black mirrors, 140cm x 100cm in good condition. Photo available on request. Price: 2,000 baht each. Tel: 089-150 2909. Email: artandpaula@gmail.com

OUTDOOR FURNITURE
Modern dining table set with high quality materials. Set of 1 table, 4 chairs and 1 umbrella. Stylish and weather resistant! Only 12,000 baht. All still in good condition. Email: michikodeguchi@hotmail.com

MOVING SALE
I am moving and everything must go. Lots of items: Bedroom suite (6 piece), teak colour, good condition. Shelving, desk, chair, sofa, music system. Coffee table, blinds. Tel: 080-124 1245. Email: kay@phuketandamanreal estate.com

Building Products & Services

RENOVATIONS, REFURBISHMENTS
Renovations, refurbishments, painting, repairs and maintenance. High quality services for a reasonable price. English, Swedish and Thai speaking personnel. Welcome to contact us for a quote. Tel: 083-394 8337, 080-141 4577 (Eng & Thai). Email: mattias@zionproperty.com

Classified Advertisements

Please use this form to write your classified advertisement.
Then hand it to any of our agents.

_____ (heading)

Classified ads are charged per line. Each line is 120 baht, with a minimum of 4 lines (heading included) per ad. All advertising must be paid for in advance.

Deadline for April 16 issue is on Thursday 7 April before 3pm.
Deadline for April 23 issue is on Tuesday 12 April before 6pm.

All classifieds in these pages are PAID!

- your assurance that whatever's advertised here is seriously for sale.

Gazette Classads - they work!

...because they're real.

Household Services

DWF HOME SERVICES
Built-in bars, counters, pools, kitchens, ponds, etc.
Tel: 081-606 5746. Email: DWF_homeservices@hotmail.com

Looking for land to buy?
See more classified ads at www.phuketgazette.net

THAILAND'S LEADING BROKERAGE & NEW YACHT DEALERSHIP

LEE MARINE

International Marine Brokerage

Please visit our website for more listings

Bertram 50 (1999)

- Incredible value
- Onan 18 kW genset
- 2 x Hino 380hp
- Cruiseair AC
- Autopilot
- Tender and Yamaha OB
- Fishing Chair
- Bowthruster

\$199,000 USD

Jeanneau 52.2 (2002)

\$365,000 USD

Moody 422 (1987)

\$131,000 USD

Jeanneau Leader 545 (2006)

850,000 THB

Maritimo 46 (2007)

\$1,090,000 USD

leemarine.com

Dealership Office
The Boat Lagoon Marina Phuket
Contact: Martin Holmes
Tel: 076 238 803
Fax: 076 273 319
Email: info@leemarine.com

Brokerage Office
The Boat Lagoon Marina Phuket
Contact: Andrew de Bruin / Marcus Overman
Mobile: 081 894 1530 / 081 988 1437
Tel/Fax: 076 239 729
Email: andrew@leemarine.com

Yacht Haven Marina Office
The Yacht Haven Marina Phuket
Contact: Jim Poulsen
Mobile: 081 891 3237
Tel/Fax: 076 206 260
Email: jim@leemarine.com

Pattaya Office
Ocean Marina Jomtien Beach
Contact: Mark Heath
Mobile: 081 787 9408
Tel: 038 235 081 Fax: 038 235 082
Email: mark@leemarine.com

Boatshedphuket.com
INTERNATIONAL YACHT BROKERS

SELLING YOUR BOAT?
We can meet you on board, take up to 80 photos and full details. We will accompany all viewings and provide non exclusive brokerage on a "no sale, no fee" basis.

Boat of the moment

Ref 70155

Bond Yachts MC30 Power Cat Stable & economical, Low hours Euro 75,000

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M: +66 84 8426146
boats@boatshedphuket.com

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50% BOATSHARE

Riviera 48 and 34 ft speed boat, both fully equipped for fishing and diving. Approx Investment: US\$ 275,000. FULL MANAGEMENT AND FULLY CREWED.



Tel: 081-895 1724 or
Email: smulderson@hotmail.com

SAILING KAYAK
Hobby Adventure Island. New hull and crossbeams. In mint condition with many new spares. Price: 100,000 baht. Call Philip. Tel: 087-886 7854.

18FT DORY
18ft dory style boat with bimini, trailer, life jackets etc. Very low hour 60Hp Mercury + 6 Hp Mercury. Thai registered. Tel: 089-290 6925 (English). Email: rayb100@hotmail.co.uk

ANGLER 2,600 CC SPORTFISHING
Nice 26ft American sportfishing boat 2x225 4-stroke outboards. Tel: 085-691 1837 (English). Email: mangelsson@hotmail.com

6M SPEEDBOAT
85hp and 15hp engines. Includes mooring, trailer and fish-finder/plotter. Only 365,000 baht. Tel: 087-466 1943. Email: frankricharddevans@yahoo.com

SPEEDBOAT FOR SALE
With 2 company work permits. Building B&B. Boat length: 27'. Year: 2007. GPR Fiberglass capacity: 35 knots. Engine: Honda 225MP. Price: 960,000 baht. Negotiable. Tel: 087-518 1347.

55-FOOT CATAMARAN
6 double cabins, 105sqm. Sails, in composite. Ready to sail! Price: 1.5 million baht. Contact for more details. Tel: 087-461 8089.

BAYLINER CIERA 285 FOR SALE
2005, 9 meters, good condition, engine mercruiser, 5.7 liter mpi FWC, sleeps 6 people, Gen Honda 2Kva, dinghy + 6hp. Suzuki 4str engine, trailer and many more. Used only 1 season. Price 2.4 million baht negotiable. Tel: 086-076 0141 (English). Email: kirill_tar@mail.ru

SPEEDBOAT FOR SALE
19 Rib with 4-stroke engine built for coastal waters. Excellent for snorkeling, fishing and family outings. Safe and economical. Comes with a trailer and many extras. Price: 595,000 baht. Tel: 082-814 9912. Email: alistair@aimdb.net

BARGAIN CUDDY
2007 built 25ft cuddy cruiser with 175 Suzuki o'brd (approx 200 hours only). Forward berth with toilet and sink. Ideal for day trips and occasional overnight. This boat will not be bettered for price and includes a Thai built trailer. Price: 650,000 baht. Tel: 076-621200, 080-141 8292 (English), 085-789 5092 (English & Thai). Email: davestacey16@hotmail.com

POWER CAT FOR SALE
Brand-new, 35 feet, fiberglass with fly bridge. Email: jgkg24@hotmail.com

5.8 RIGID INFLATABLE BOAT



For sale. 10-month old, 5.8m long. Cholamark RIB power by 2x60hp Evinrude engines (operating hours). Includes bimini, raymarine 57D chartplotter/depth sounder, 170 liter stainless steel fuel tank, and bilge pump. Asking price: 975,000 baht or o.n.o. (Original price: 1.3 million baht, in April 2010). Tel: 089-770 3234. Email: jeremy.ayre@awrlloyd.com

35 FOOT POWER CAT FOR SALE
Brand new fiber glass with flybridge. Email: jgkg24@hotmail.com

CHALOMARK DINGHY



40Hp and 5Hp engine. Can carry 8 persons. Like new. Price: 230,000 baht. Tel: 089-652 5664.

YAMAHA JET SKI
Cruiser VX. Safe and new, with only 14 months of use. Has warranty. In excellent condition: only owner has used it. Price: 350,000 baht. Tel: 089-819 9650. Email: pierrekojfer@yahoo.fr

VAN DE STADT 38' YACHT
Ashore at Langkawi Port, due for inspection in March. Photos and spec on request. Price: US\$ 45,000. Tel: +60-125-531 4030 (English). Email: brianralphgoodwin@yahoo.com

SWISS CATAMARAN 24 FEET
A perfect fishing boat made of fiberglass. Comes with 2 Honda 4 stroke engines, each 50 Hp. It has a hydraulic system, a Simrad navigation GPS chart plotter and electric Ankerwisch plus toilet. Phuket registration. With 4-wheel aluminium trailer. Price: 600,000 baht. Contact Khun Aree. Tel: 089-474 5168.

SOLUTIONS TO THIS WEEK'S PUZZLES

Crossword puzzle:

COFFEE break

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----|---|---|---|---|----|----|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | I | S | E | E | | 5 | R | A | S | P | | 9 | R | A | S | A | | | |
| 13 | F | O | L | K | Y | 14 | | 15 | E | L | E | A | 16 | E | R | O | S | | |
| 17 | A | D | I | E | U | 18 | | 19 | C | A | R | D | 20 | | 21 | N | O | N | E |
| 23 | T | A | E | | 24 | K | W | A | N | 25 | | 26 | U | R | A | N | I | A | |
| 27 | | | | | 28 | T | A | O | S | 29 | | 30 | G | A | E | L | I | C | |
| 31 | Q | U | A | R | T | E | T | | 32 | | 33 | L | S | D | | | | | |
| 35 | A | T | R | I | A | | | 36 | D | U | O | D | E | N | A | L | | | |
| 37 | D | E | L | L | | 38 | S | L | I | M | Y | | 40 | P | U | L | I | | |
| 41 | I | S | O | L | A | T | E | D | | 42 | | 43 | H | O | K | U | M | | |
| 45 | | | | | 46 | T | R | A | | 47 | | 48 | A | C | A | D | E | M | E |
| 49 | S | C | R | E | E | N | | 50 | L | U | B | E | | | | | | | |
| 51 | S | E | R | I | E | S | | 52 | P | E | R | I | | 53 | A | G | E | | |
| 56 | A | R | E | S | | 57 | S | E | A | R | | 58 | T | U | G | A | T | | |
| 61 | A | G | E | E | | 62 | O | M | I | T | | 63 | S | P | O | U | T | | |
| 64 | R | E | P | S | | 65 | R | O | D | S | | 66 | I | N | R | E | | | |

Live in Patong?
Place your **GAZETTE CLASSIFIEDS** at
Taurus Travel



Simply write out your ad, pay and leave it with Khun Kai (076-344321-2)

GAZETTE CLASSADS - they work because they're PAID!
Hundreds of new ads in print every week, all published simultaneously - and FREE - in the Gazette Online!

The Gazette is always on top in Google!

wine connection

Wine Connection Phuket is urgently looking for skilled and talented individuals to join our team.

• SHOP MANAGER 3 Positions

- Male / Female age 25 years old & up
- At least 2 years experience in retail business or related field
- Possess good interpersonal, teamwork, leadership and planning
- Able to communicate in English

We offer good remuneration package. Interested applicants please send resume to hrrecruitphuket@wineconnection.co.th
Or Call 076 282 411 ext 13 for further information



THE PRIVILEGE RESIDENCES • PATONG

The Privilege At BayCliff Co Ltd is an exclusive real estate company located at Prabamee Road. We are urgently looking for professional and qualified candidates to join our team in Phuket. Must have the following qualifications:

Sales Manager

- Preferably 30-40 years old
- Minimum 2-3 years experience in sales or marketing
- Good negotiation and English Communication skills
- Self-motivated and dynamic, service-minded and result-oriented
- Pro-active and well organized
- Pleasant personality
- Computer literate
- Car driving license with own car will be an advantage

Please e-mail your resume to: niramon@thebaycliff.com
or contact us at 076 342 696, Attn: Khun Niramon

OFFICE SECRETARY

We are seeking an energetic and proactive full time office secretary/administrative assistant. Candidates must have good English and computer skills. Tel: 086-004 3008. Email: angius@villasuksan.com

CUSTOMER SUPPORT WANTED

We are the leading travel agency in Phuket. We currently want to fill 2 positions for customer support. Starting salary ranging from 12,000-15,000 baht. Tel: 076-367120, 086-950 6945, 089-469 2173 (Thai). Fax: 076-367212. Email: korphong@hotmail.com

HOTEL STAFF

Receptionist/bar staff (Thai) wanted for a new hotel in Patong. Good salary. Tel: 076-349655, 088-444 7840. Email: kim_partanen@hotmail.com

TELEPHONE SERVICE

We are seeking to hire a Thai woman for our phone customer service. High salary. Send resume to vorike3@gmail.com

ENTERTAINER - CABARET SHOW

Salary 2,000 baht per show. Must have experience performing in a cabaret show and be an English speaking Thai national with knowledge of all music types. Must be able to entertain guests for a 15 minute show. Tel: 076-333222. Email: sales@ccbloomshotel.com

GRADE 1 TEACHER

International school is looking for a homeroom teacher for grade 1 (6 to 7-year-olds). Only native English speakers with appropriate degree should apply. Please send application to phuketprimary@mail.com

Phuket Gazette

The Phuket Gazette seeks to fill the following position:

SUB-EDITOR

- ▶ Fluent in English
- ▶ Able to work to strict deadlines
- ▶ A team player
- ▶ Naturally curious about the world, especially Phuket and what affects its residents
- ▶ Newspaper experience and/or layout skills, especially in PageMaker or InDesign, required.

Qualified candidates are invited to send a CV and writing sample by email to editor@phuketgazette.net

The Phuket Gazette Co Ltd

79/94 Moo 4, Thepkrasattri Rd, Koh Kaew
A. Muang, Phuket 83000
Tel: 076-273555 Fax: 076-615240

BOAT REFIT PROJECT MANAGER

Hands-on, good organizational skills, team player. Duration 2 to 3 months. Please contact for more info. Tel: 081-270 9006 (English). Email: ulrichkuhl@gmail.com

CYPRUS SEASON 2011

Sales people required for Panaretti Resorts, the largest timeshare company in Cyprus. Sales person & OPC's required, British Germans, Scandinavians, Russians. Flight and accommodation provided. Contact Sales. Tel: Jacquet 35-79 7682698. Email: a.hoefer@royalcoralbay.com or marketing@royalcoralbay.com Email: kevsw@hotmail.co.uk

OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR WANTED

Needs good admin & secretarial skills to run a small international business. Good English & ability to communicate. Some bookkeeping & cash reports knowledge is helpful to the position. Attractive salary & benefits to the right person. Tel: 076-513370. Fax: 076-513370. Send your CV to safetyservices.sms23@yahoo.com

ADMIN STAFF WANTED

Admin staff required by real estate agent in the Laguna area. Must be Thai national, female and have some experience in admin and accounts. Must also live locally. Good salary and immediate start. Tel: 076-271315, 081-895 6267 (English). Email: info@phuketlandandhomes.com

WAITER / WAITRESS

Open all year. Free food & lodging. Basic English needed. 8,000 baht / month. Good tips. Tel: 081-963 1925 (English & Thai). Email: jan@alhaeus.com

STAFF WANTED

Night secretary: 1 position. DJs: 1 position. Light technician: 1 position. Bartender: 6 positions. Cashier: 5 positions. Waitress: several positions. Qualifications: Thai nationals who are flexible, diligent, responsible and honest. English skills are a plus. If interested, please apply in person daily from 9am to 8pm. Or contact us. Tel: 076-294216. Email: nokhollywoodpatong@gmail.com

SALES / SECRETARY

Sunrise Ocean Villas looking for a motivated Thai female to work as sales representative and secretary for the second office in Ao Por. Salary + commission and bonus. Email: montha_phuket@yahoo.com

RUSSIAN SPEAKER WANTED

Food supply company is looking for a Thai national with good Russian language skills to be manager. Tel: 089-054 4176.

DRIVER

Salary - 8,000 baht per month plus service charge. Morning and afternoon shifts. Work 6 days a week. Good driving skills required, as well as knowledge of Phuket and automobile maintenance. Position available now. Must be a Thai national fluent in English. Tel: 076-333222. Email: sales@ccbloomshotel.com

British International School, Phuket

British International School, Phuket is looking candidates to fill positions in the following areas:

• HR Officer

- Thai National male/ female
- Aged not over 35 years old
- Bachelor's Degree in Human Resources, Administrative, Business Law or related fields
- Should have good knowledge of the day to day processes of HR departments and should be proficient in using computers
- Ability to read, speak and understand English
- Cooperative team member, maintain good staff relations and be a service minded person

• Teacher's Assistant

- Thai National
- Bachelor's Degree in a related field
- Teaching qualifications and experience in child care / teaching preferable
- Good command of spoken and written English
- Strong interpersonal and organizational skills
- Loves to take care of children

• PE Assistant

- Thai National
- University Degree, Physical Education Major or related fields
- Good English, positive, willing & hard working
- Knowledge of local schools or clubs to arrange fixtures
- Knowledge of local facilities & sports opportunities
- Coaching qualifications to coach teams for basketball etc.
- Be able to work a flexible day 1 pm to 6 pm and all day Saturday

Benefits : uniform, group insurance, provident fund and etc.



59 Moo 2, Thepkrasattri Road, Koh Kaew, Muang, Phuket 83200
Tel: 076 238711-20 # 2103, 2206, 1111
Fax: 076 238711-20 # 1130
Email: patcharakornrnt@bisphuket.ac.th or sirirats@bisphuket.ac.th

GENERAL HANDYMAN REQUIRED

Thai national, live-in position if needed. Must have experience, Surin area. Tel: 089-195 0578. Email: info@villachangrajang.com

VILLA SERVICES ASSISTANT

Villa Services Assistant required to support the Villa Manager on private estate. Excellent spoken & written English in addition to Thai language skills required. Must be organized and efficient. Effective communicator. Good supervisory skills. Remain calm under pressure. Ability to motivate others. Good knowledge of MS Office. Well groomed. Positive 'can do' attitude. Detail orientated. Discreet and confidential nature. Driving licence. 3-5 years experience in supervisory role within boutique resort, hotel environment or high end customer service role. Email: po@kublaistudio.com

PROPERTY SALES EXECUTIVE

Phuket real estate agency requires a Thai national sales executive. Applicants must be fluent in English, have full driving license and own a car. Good salary package plus generous commission and benefits. Tel: 076-527565. Send CV with photo to cv@phuketooceanvillas.com

MARKET RESEARCH

To carry out market survey research with English speaking tourists. Candidates should have basic English. Good package for right applicant. Tel: 084-851 7529 (English). Email: jamerward@yahoo.co.uk

GERMAN SPEAKERS

We, Intercall Service Co Ltd are seeking a German speaking person for our Call Center in Chalong. We offer a fixed salary and legal visa stuff. Tel: 089-873 9123 (English).

RELATIONS MANAGER

Sea Bees Diving is looking for Relations Manager Hotels (based in Chalong, Phuket). Qualifications:

- * English speaking; German is a plus
- * Outgoing personality
- * Enthusiastic
- * Team player
- * Structured
- * Organized
- * Result-driven
- * Independent
- * Creative
- * Driver's license

Please send your CV with a recent photo and accepted salary to marketing@sea-bees.com. For further details, please visit our website: sea-bees.com

Looking for a job?

Looking for a better candidate?

Find more Recruitment Classifieds at www.PhuketGazette.Net/



Secure, Clean & Cost Effective Self Storage

MY STORAGE – Thailand's No.1 Self Storage facility located at Jungceylon Shopping Center, Patong, Phuket – is seeking an enthusiastic, motivated and result driven Sales professional.

Sales Executive

- Bachelor's degree or related field
- Thai national 25 – 35 years old, fluent in English (written and spoken)
- Minimum of 3-5 years sales experience in the same field or position
- Computer literate with good knowledge of Microsoft Office
- Excellent administrative office skills and a good telephone manner
- Good presentation, negotiation and communication skills
- Advanced customer service skills
- Honest, proactive and well organized
- Pleasant personality and service-minded
- Positive attitude, enthusiastic and able to work under pressure
- Car driving license with own car will be advantage.
- This is a full time position which may involve some weekend work/shift and flexible hours
- Salary & benefits plus commission - great earning potential!

Submit your CV with recent photo and a covering letter in English to hr@mystorageasia.com or call 076 29 29 09 for further information.

Want to know more about MY STORAGE? Visit mystorageasia.com



One of Phuket's biggest Dive Centers has an available position in the booking department:

- ▶ The following qualifications are needed:
- ▶ Excellent skills in spoken and written Thai
- ▶ Good skills in spoken and written English
- ▶ Knowledge of the dive business
- ▶ Knowledge in working with a computer
- ▶ Presentable and flexible

Interested candidates, who fit the above profiles, please email your resume immediately. We will then call you to make an appointment for an interview.

Chalong: Phone: 076-383 052
Email: info@scandinavian-divers.com

Phuket Gazette

In connection with a major expansion in its **Classified Advertising** business due to the launch of the newspaper's Nationwide Edition, the *Phuket Gazette* seeks to add three **Classified Advertising Administrators** to its existing team of five.

Qualified candidates will be:

- ▶ Thai nationals, aged at least 26
- ▶ Service-minded with an outgoing personality
- ▶ Able to work well with large numbers of advertisers, both foreign and Thai

and should have:

- ▶ A Bachelors Degree from a recognizable university
- ▶ A good sense of organization and respect for details
- ▶ Knowledge of basic office software

Knowledge of InDesign, Pagemaker or Quark Express would be a plus.

Qualified candidates are invited to send a CV to Khun Tassanee Suwannarat, Classifieds Manager, at Nee@PhuketGazette.Net

The Phuket Gazette Co Ltd
79/94 Moo 4, Thepkrasatri Rd, Koh Kaew
A. Muang, Phuket 83000
Tel: 076-273555, ext 205 Fax: 076-615240

Paradise Koh Yao

island hideaway near phuket

The Paradise Koh Yao, a contemporary 72 room Boutique Resort is located on Koh Yao Noi island, a 60 minute boat trip from Phuket. Catering to the experienced traveler looking for unspoiled nature, 'bare foot' luxury - away from the crowded tourist spots of Phuket and Krabi - NOW complimented with our Yoga and Wellbeing Center.

We are seeking a candidate with an outstanding personality to be the leader of our motivated team with commitment to personalized, superior customer service.

GENERAL MANAGER

Covering all aspects of the operations, finance, local marketing - responsibility on bottom line results. Based at the resort on Koh Yao with regular visits to the Phuket office.

- At least 3-5 years experience in 5 or 4 star Resort/Hotel in similar assignment
- Front line person, strong customer relation skills
- Leader personality, Motivator
- Results / Marketing oriented
- Previous assignment in Thailand / Asia an advantage
- Foreign or Thai National 30 - 50 years of age

Comprehensive remuneration / incentive package will be offered to the right candidate
Send your resume with recent photo, references and salary expectations to:

The Paradise Koh Yao – Boutique Beach Resort & Spa
joeraess@theparadise.biz
www.theparadise.biz



BE W. WE'RE INTERESTED IN YOU.

POSITION: Property Sales Manager

RESPONSIBILITIES: Manage all aspects of the on-site property sales operation and customer service. Report directly to the Managing Director.

QUALIFICATIONS:

- Successful track record of selling residential property or luxury products.
- Very good presentation, negotiation and communications skills.
- Highly motivated and able to work under pressure.
- Excellent command of the English language.

Interested candidates are invited to submit their resume, a covering letter, (including details of current and expected salary and commission, and reasons for applying) and recent photograph before 15 March 2011.

W RESIDENCES - KOH SAMUI
4/1 Moo 1, Tambol Maenam, Koh Samui, Surat Thani 84330 Thailand
T +66 (0) 77 915999 F +66 (0) 77 915998 Email auditions@whotels.com
www.kohsamuiresidences.com

FRONT DESK & BOOKEEPER
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PHUKET GAZETTE EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

Roger Huerta: When tough ain't enough – try acting

By Neil Quail

HE'S an Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) star, mixed martial arts (MMA) expert, the first MMA fighter to appear on the cover of *Sports Illustrated* and Hollywood action movie actor – this is Roger “El Matador” Huerta and he’s only 27 years of age.

Speaking exclusively to the *Phuket Gazette* at Tiger Muay Thai and MMA Training Camp near Chalong, Huerta talks candidly about his life, career and Phuket’s influence on both.

Any number of expressions or idioms can describe Huerta’s life in a “rags to riches” style, but he’s more than just a boy who survived abandonment to become one of the most respected athletes in the fastest-growing sport in the world.

Here is a man with principles, a soulful character and a role model for children. Any parent should be proud to see Huerta’s image plastered across their kid’s bedroom walls.

When Huerta speaks, you sense a placid determination – an old head on powerful, young shoulders. Many ask when he will publish his autobiography and his answer reflects his humility and maturity.

“I’ve been offered a lot for my story, but I’m still experiencing life. Never did I think I’d be in Thailand, training with great people at a great camp,” Huerta said.

David Beckham and his PR circus please take note.

“I’m sure the book will come in the future, but right now life is a blessing and I want to enjoy every moment,” he said.

This is Huerta’s third visit to Phuket and he explains there are several reasons for his now frequent returns.

“Last year my manager [Jeff Clark] and mentor [Dave Menne,



The steel-jawed Huerta in action

former UFC middleweight champion] contacted Will Elliott, Manager of Tiger Muay Thai and arranged a month’s training here,” Huerta said.

“I fell in love with the place, not just the training which is exceptional, but the people, the culture and their way of life,” he said. “Being Hispanic, I compare Phuket to where I lived in Mexico. The average person doesn’t make much money in either place and what they do make is given back to their families – something I really respect,” Huerta said.

Huerta’s Thai fan base will be excited to learn that polishing his muay thai skills is a main training focus while at Tiger Camp.

“Now that I’ve been out here for a longer period, I really want to showcase the muay thai skills I’ve been developing. It’s certainly a tool I’ve been missing in MMA fights,” Huerta said.

His appearance on the cover of *Sports Illustrated* magazine in 2007 as part of an article to promote the growing sport was only the beginning of his celebrity outside

the realms of MMA.

Recently expressing an interest in trying his hand as an actor, Huerta received an unexpected telephone call from a Hollywood legend.

“Mickey Rourke called me and offered to help. He was aware of a particular role he coached me for and has become my acting mentor and a great friend,” Huerta said.

If anyone can understand the physical demands placed on an actor for action roles, Rourke certainly is ideal for Huerta, referring to his award-winning performance in *The Wrestler*.

Huerta is cast in *Tekken*, a film adaptation of the popular combat video game, as Miguel Caballero Rojo, a character seeking vengeance for the brutal murder of his sister.

“I have a huge respect for actors now. Getting scenes right takes a long time. It was exhausting, shooting from different angles, over and over,” Huerta said.

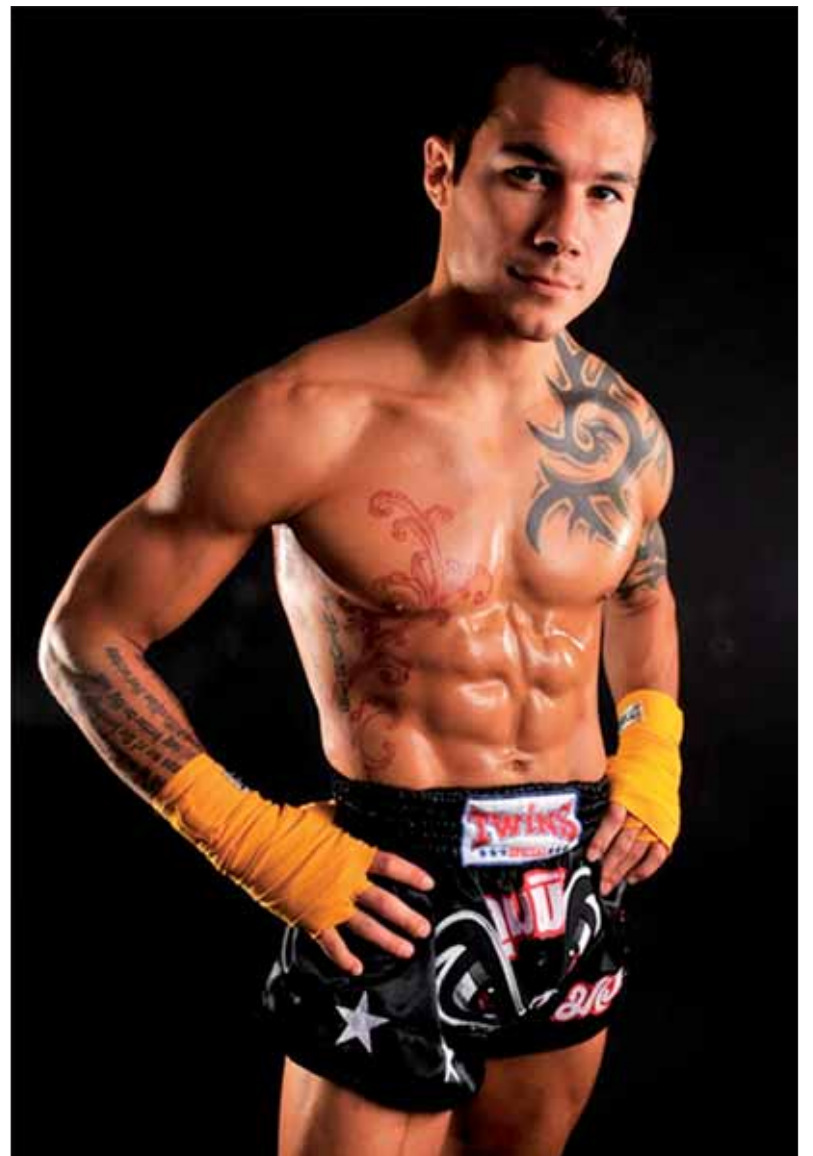
The film is due for release in the US this year, but has already been released in Japan and the Philippines to mixed reviews.

Huerta last fought in October, 2010 against the Bellator Lightweight Champion, Eddie Alvarez.

“I still have a bad taste in my mouth after that fight,” he said. “I could have done a lot more in terms of preparation, which is another reason for my extended stay in Phuket – to recover from the orbital bone damage I received in that fight,” Huerta added.

Huerta indicates to a Phoenix tattoo on his left arm which is being completed in Phuket.

“That fight made me consider many things. The Phoenix rising from the ashes is representative of where my career and life are right now. I intend to return not just to win a belt, but to prove my strength of character,” Huerta said.



MMA LEGEND: Roger ‘El Matador’ Huerta is currently on Phuket.

While concentrating on his training at Tiger, Huerta is also taking time out to do some coaching and is always on hand to offer advice or answer questions.

“I enjoy coaching and believe it is a possible career path. I still have one class to finish for my Business Management degree, which I will do soon – if only for my [adoptive] mother who has supported me in everything I

achieve,” Huerta said proudly.

Tiger Camp General Manager Will Elliott wishes to invite *Gazette* readers and fans of MMA to their BBQ Beatdown Party this Saturday.

Tickets for the event – held once a month – are 350 baht or 500 baht at the door.

For more information on upcoming events visit tigermuaythai.com or Ray Elbe’s blog at magicalray.com.

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Sport

London's calling for Thai volleyball star

Thailand's premier volleyballer is hoping to get to the 2012 Olympics, training tirelessly on Karon Beach in preparation.

By Neil Quail

LONDON'S Olympic 2012 beach volleyball courts will not have the same appeal as the near perfect sands of Phuket, where Yupa Phukrongploy stretches the limits of her abilities, hoping to qualify for the biggest event of her career.

Under the tutelage of Bob Selznick while in Phuket, Yupa, Thailand's number one female beach volleyball player, regularly hits Karon beach to go through grueling drills in the searing heat before grabbing her surfboard for an active cool down.

Yupa loves playing and training in Phuket. "Karon beach is definitely one of my favorite places to compete and prepare," she said.

"The deep, natural sand is ideal for strength and conditioning training," Yupa said. "I train for two hours in the morning then another two-hour session in the afternoon."

"Being able to cool off in the

ocean after a tough workout is another advantage to training in Phuket – something I miss when in Bangkok," she said.

Yupa has been Thailand's number one beach volleyball player for eight years and is a current Southeast Asian Games gold medal holder, this being the second time that she has been crowned champion at the games.

The FIVB World Tour tournament last year on Karon beach saw Yupa and her playing partner, Kamoltip Kulna, defeat Belgium who were seeded fourth, en route to Thailand's best ever finish in the competition. A ninth-place finish beckoned, but a thrilling third set saw Canada push Thailand into 17th out of the 80 teams entered.

Since her career began, Yupa has accumulated over 20 wins on the Asian tour. This year's tour has an extra edge as it will also lead to qualification for the Olympics in 2012.

Bob Selznick is a coach with

some serious pedigree. His Father, Gene Selznick, was 15 years at world number one for both indoor and beach volleyball.

Bob's brother Dane also held the world number one spot, while also coaching both men's and women's American volleyball teams through four Olympics.

Volleyball is a sport for all ages and Bob is tirelessly promoting the game around Phuket and Asia.

"Phuket International Academy is building two world-class, FIVB-approved beach volleyball courts, where I'll be coaching and helping to develop their volleyball program," Bob said.

"Yupa's Asian tour begins on April 7 with three tournaments in southern Thailand. She will also be helping me with coaching in Phuket tour stops," Bob added.

With talented people like Bob and Yupa at the helm of Phuket's volleyball program, more gold medals are surely on the way.



GIVING IT HER ALL: Yupa trains four hours a day on Karon Beach.

Patong CC win puts cricket league final in sight

IN A must-win match last Sunday, Patong CC put in an all-round performance to defeat unbeaten Island CC to keep their hopes alive of a place in this season's Island Furniture T20 final on April 24.

Another win against Laguna CC should secure Patong CC the cov-

eted berth in the final.

Patong skipper S.Raju won the toss and decided to bat first. Openers D.Watson and R.Desmond put on a 52-run partnership before Desmond was caught for nine runs off the bowling of Sumit.

Watson followed four balls later

nickling one behind wicketkeeper D.Mehra for a total of 40.

R.Folds and A.Van Blerk kept the run rate up by putting together a solid 27 runs. Folds then tried to hit Sumit out of the park once too often and found his middle stump removed for 21 runs.

A.Rawat joined VanBlerk and between them posted 34 runs. Rawat was clean bowled by Yatin for 15 after dispatching two previous deliveries to the boundary. Patong were now on 127/ 4 after 14 overs.

New arrival J.Whetton and Van

Blerk were soon involved in a mix-up, resulting in VanBlerk being run out for 33.

Whetton went on to make 21 runs from 12 balls before being caught at mid-off. The remaining batsmen chipped in to push the score to a healthy 171/ 8 off their 20 overs with Raju reaching 11 and P.Cotter scoring eight.

Patong CC went into the lunch break confident of defending the 172 runs Island CC needed to win.

Island CC openers Mehra and A.Chand (captain) survived some early nerves, but five overs later Patong CC were back in charge.

Mehra, Chand and Ibrahim added 30 runs to the scoreboard. After Mehra's dismissal, Ibrahim was clean bowled by Raju for 13. Surrender scored just one run, leaving Island CC at 33/ 3.

However, through steady batting and smart rotation of the strike Chand and Virender increased the run rate, getting to 69/ 3.

When the breakthrough came off Folds' bowling in the 14th over, ICC were 117/ 3.

Chand went after a good innings of 48, combining with Virender to put on a match-changing 84 runs.

Fizal and Virender were caught on the boundary by R.Sadarangani within two balls in exactly the same spot. The next over saw Island CC lose two more wickets to find themselves at 124/ 8.

The win finally came in the last ball of a Sadarangani over when M.Khan was stumped for five.

Island CC were all out for 132 in 16 overs.



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|------|--------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|-----|
| 1 | BBCU FC | 4 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 6 | 2 | 4 | 10 |
| 2 | FC Phuket | 4 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 7 | 3 | 4 | 8 |
| 3 | Air Force United | 4 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 7 | 5 | 2 | 7 |
| 4 | Bangkok United | 4 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 6 | 5 | 1 | 7 |
| 5 | Cash Today Chanthaburi | 4 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 7 |
| 6 | Buriram FC | 4 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 6 |
| 7 | Samutprakarn Customs Utd | 4 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 5 | 3 | 2 | 6 |
| 8 | Saraburi FC | 4 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 6 |
| 9 | Chainat FC | 4 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 5 | 5 | 0 | 6 |
| 10 | Rajpracha Thailand FC | 4 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 6 | 7 | -1 | 6 |
| 11 | Suphanburi FC | 4 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 6 | 3 | 3 | 5 |
| 12 | PTT Rayong | 4 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 5 |
| 13 | Chiangmai FC | 4 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 5 | -1 | 5 |
| 14 | Songkhla FC | 4 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 4 | -1 | 5 |
| 15 | Thai-Honda FC | 4 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 5 | 6 | -1 | 3 |
| 16 | Bangkok FC | 4 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 8 | -5 | 3 |
| 17 | JW Rangsit FC | 4 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 5 | 8 | -3 | 2 |
| 18 | RBAC FC | 4 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 9 | -9 | 0 |



GAINING MOMENTUM: FC Phuket are racing up the table after being promoted to Division 1 this season.

By Stephen Fein

EXCELLENT teamwork led FC Phuket to a 3-1 win over JW Rangsit FC in rainy conditions at Surakul Stadium last Saturday and lifted the club into second place after four weeks of play in Thai League Division 1 football.

FC Phuket dominated a first half played in a driving rainstorm that started just minutes into the game, forcing many fans on the uncovered far side of the stadium to scramble for cover.

Great goals by Niran Phantong and Ivory Coast player Nenebi Sylvestre at nine and 20 minutes respectively gave FC Phuket a well-deserved 2-0 lead at halftime. It could have been much worse. FC Phuket totally dominated play, keeping the ball in the JW Rangsit end throughout the half and narrowly missing on several other excellent chances.

After both coaches fielded the same sides for the start of the second half, the 2,000-strong FC Phuket "The Hulk" supporters expected the one-sided play to continue into the second half.

A defensive blunder silenced The Hulk supporters at 61 minutes, however.

JW Rangsit captain Thana

Poonprakhone cleared the defensive wall with a free kick from 22 yards and FC Phuket keeper Theerawat Pinpradup was unable to field it cleanly.

JW Rangsit's Amnat Songrum drilled home the deflection to pull back his side to within 2-1.

Rather than shift the momentum of the game, the goal only served to rally the Southern Sea Kirin.

A great individual effort by winger Thawil Butrsombat saw him shake off a JW Rangsit defender deep in the Rangsit far-left corner then skirt along the byline to set up Sarach Yooyen.

Sarach made no mistake, striking a perfect volley from the top of the penalty area that JW Rangsit keeper Thawatchi Bootdee could only watch as it sailed past into the net.

The goal sealed a 3-1 win for FC Phuket and won the teenager Sarach the honor of "man of the match".

FC Phuket Coach Surachai Jirasirichote told reporters after the match: "I am pleased we won in such fine fashion. I felt pressure when they came back to make it 2-1, but our players just kept their concentration and raised their game even higher to secure the victory".

JW Rangsit coach Kawin "Tuy" Khachaindecha accepted the defeat gracefully, admitting his side did not play their best.

"But we were without six starters. If they are all healthy for the rematch that will be played on our home field, I am sure we will give a much stronger performance," he said.

Saturday's match was originally scheduled to be played at JW Rangsit's home pitch at Rangsit University, near Don Meuang Airport in Bangkok, where they typically draw crowds of up to 50,000 - mostly university students.

It was agreed to play the first match in Phuket after it became clear the pitch at Rangsit was in unsuitable condition.

To the contrary, the turf at

Surakul Stadium held up well despite the heavy rain on Saturday and the groundskeepers deserve credit.

The Southern Sea Kirin's proven ability in wet conditions will likely serve them well as the monsoon conditions strengthen across the southern region.

Apart from Songkhla FC, the Southern Sea Dragons are the only southern region team in the 18-team Division 1 of the Thai League.

Now in second place in the 18-team Division 1, FC Phuket will be looking to bag another three points when they play at home again on Sunday against last-place RBAC FC, who have yet to collect a single point after four matches and have a dreadful minus-nine goal difference.

Other fixtures this weekend:

Saturday:

- Rajpracha v Samut Prakarn Customs
- Saraburi v Thai Honda
- CCFC v Bangkok FC
- Air Force United v PTT Rayong

Sunday:

- Chainat v Songkhla
- Buriram v Chiang Mai
- Suphanburi v Bangkok Utd
- BBCU v Rangsit

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