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# Phuket Gazette

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## Patong to purge timeshare touts

By Atchaa Khamlo

A MULTI-AGENCY task force will be set up to investigate timeshare companies operating in Phuket, especially Patong.

Tasked with investigating the companies, their workers and any officials involved in allowing the timeshare companies to operate, the "committee" is expected to launch an investigation by October, just before the annual tourism high season begins, Vice Governor Somkiet Sangkaosutthirak announced at a meeting on Tuesday.

The committee will comprise officials from agencies including the Tourist Police, Royal Thai Police, Provincial Police, Public Prosecutor's Office, Provincial Office and Patong Municipality.

"It's a big problem. Tourists book holidays with timeshare companies, but when they arrive in Patong, the companies don't have any hotel rooms for them to stay in. That is destroying our tourism reputation," said V/Gov Somkiet.



Patong Mayor Pian Keesin called for officials to be investigated.

At the meeting, Patong Deputy Mayor Chairat Sukkaban identified three types of timeshare companies operating on the island.

"There are genuine timeshare companies that are registered and have their own offices, such as the operation run at the JW Marriott [Resort & Spa in Mai Khao]

"But there are also people who rent hotels and properties for a only a couple of years, but then offer clients use of the properties over 10 to 30 years. That's cheating," Mr Chairat said.

"Third are companies that don't

have anything at all, but they tell their clients that they have got everything for them," he added.

"Many of these operators set up companies and 'sell' anything they can, making anywhere from 100 to 500 million baht. They then close their companies and run away.

"Later they open a new timeshare company, because it is easy to open such companies in Thailand, and cheat people all over again. It is damaging our tourism," he added.

Deputy Mayor Chairat called on other government departments to help clamp down on illegal operators.

"Before issuing any work permits for such companies, the Department of Employment needs to look in detail at such operators, such as checking whether they have their own properties and offices," he said.

Supporting Patong Mayor Pian Keesin's call for the committee to also investigate officials, V/Gov

*Continued on page 2*



### 'FUND FIGHT'

Phuket Provincial Police Commander Pekat Tantipong (in blue shorts) went toe-to-toe with Thai boxing hero Somjit Jongjohor on Tuesday night to raise flood-relief funds. The 'fun fight' at Saphan Hin lasted for three rounds, with Phuket Governor Tri Augkaradacha as referee.

Somjit is best known for winning gold medals in the flyweight division at the 2003 World Amateur Boxing Championships and at the Beijing 2008 Olympics. Photo: Dean Noble

## Candidates register as campaigning gets underway

CAMPAIGNING for the July 3 national election began in earnest this week as five candidates registered to contest Phuket's two voting districts.

First to register, at 8:30am on Monday, was Bhumjaithai Party candidate Jirayus Songyos.

Mr Jirayus will contest Phuket Constituency 2, which covers more than half of the island and includes Thalang District, Kathu District and Koh Kaew and Rassada in Muang District.

Second to register was Pheu Thai Party candidate Wisit Jai-arj, who will run for Constituency 1 seat. He was followed by Pheu Thai Constituency 2 candidate Saman Keksap.

Anchalee Vanich Thepabutr and Raewat Areerob followed suit on Tuesday, regis-



Crowds gather to support candidates registering at Phuket Provincial Hall.

tering as Democrat Party candidates contesting the Phuket 1 and Phuket 2 constituencies, respectively.

To register as a candidate, an applicant must be at least 25 years old, a Thai citizen

for at least five years as of election day and a member of only one party for at least 90 days prior to election day, explained PEC Director Kitipong Thiengkunakrit.

There is no requirement for candidates to live in Phuket in order to register and there are no minimum educational qualifications, he added.

Registration costs 5,000 baht.

At the time of writing, the Democrats expected to drum up more support with the scheduled appearance of caretaker Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva at a rally at Saphan Hin on Friday.

Voters can expect much of the campaigning to involve promotion of numbers representing the order of the parties listed on the ballot in the Party List election.

Mrs Anchalee and Mr Raewat are campaigning with the number "10", representing the Democrat Party, while Mr Jirayus is promoting ballot number "16" for the Bhumjaithai Party.

Mr Wisit and Mr Saman have the luck of campaigning with the number "1" for the Pheu Thai Party.

"Under election law, the candidates can continue campaigning until 6pm on July 2," Mr Kitipong said.

"After 6pm on July 2 a ban on the sale of alcohol will come into effect until midnight on July 3."

"Foreigners are prohibited from campaigning on any candidate's behalf," Mr Kitipong added.

- Pimwara Choksakulpan

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## This Week

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Vagabonds get friendly with Roosters before the 10s.  
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# Bridge opening soon



Construction will continue after the northbound lanes heading off the island open. Photo: Atchaa Khamlo

By Atchaa Khamlo and Chutarat Plerin

THE new bridge connecting Phuket with Phang Nga will be open to traffic next week as planned, the Phuket Provincial Highways Office ( PPHO) announced.

Known as the "Sarasin Bridge 2" throughout the construction phase, the new roadway will be known officially as Srisoonthorn Bridge.

"The new bridge is about 94 per

cent complete and the construction contract ends on June 20," Arun Sanae, director of the PPHO said.

"After that, Italian-Thai Development construction company will transfer the contract to us," he said.

The new bridge will be open next week to traffic leaving Phuket. Its predecessor, the two-lane Sarasin Bridge will be used by traffic entering the island, Mr Arun said.

In the meantime, construction

will continue to complete small details such as the marking of lanes," Mr Arun added.

Temporary signs notifying drivers of the coming change will be erected near the bridges soon.

"The official opening will occur towards the end of the year. After the ceremony, the bridge will be known as Srisoonthorn Bridge, a name provided to us by the Royal Family at our request," Mr Arun said.

# Expat 'Paddy' dies in accident

A PHUKET expat was killed on Monday morning when he lost control of his 1,400cc motorcycle on a notoriously dangerous curve on Thepkrasattri Road.

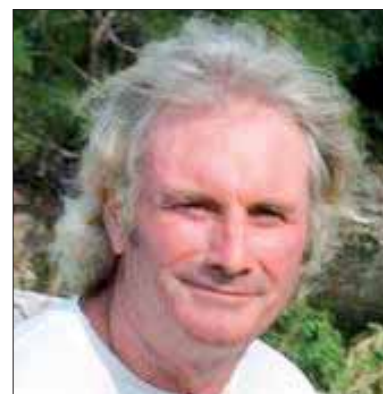
Irish national Patrick "Paddy" O'Mahony, who turned 57 on Sunday, was travelling toward the Sarasin Bridge on his red Kawasaki ZZR 1400 when he crashed near the turnoff to the JW Marriott Resort & Spa.

A funeral service will be held on Sunday, May 29.

Lt Col Watcharin Jiratthikarlwiat of Tah Chat Chai Police was notified of the accident at about 7am.

"He was riding at speed and lost control of his motorcycle near the Marriott. The area is very dangerous and accidents occur there frequently.

"I have even received reports that police have had accidents at the same location," Col Watcharin said.



Patrick 'Paddy' O'Mahony

"He was alive when we arrived at the scene, but did not survive," he added.

Paddy, as his friends knew him, was from County Cork in southwest Ireland and had been based in Phuket for about 15 years.

In addition to owning Paddy's Inn View Apartments in Patong, Mr O'Mahony was an active member of the Phuket Hash House Harriers, known as "Blarney

Rubble" among members. He also took part in races with the Ao Chalong Yacht Club.

Mr O'Mahony held vast motorcycle riding experience.

"He's an ex-Irish road racer. He's the best motorcycle rider I've ever ridden with and I've probably done 30 or 40,000km of riding with him," his friend Jock Cromie said.

"From the lack of tyre marks on the road at the scene and the disturbance of grass at the roadside, it appears that Paddy may have been forced into evasive action, slowed down considerably before leaving the road and suffering a low-speed crash," Mr Cromie said.

Irish Honorary Consul for Phuket Helene Fallon-Wood confirmed to the Gazette that Mr O'Mahony's family has been notified of his death.

- Chutarat Plerin and Michael DesPortes

# Patong timeshare touts face close investigation

From page 1

Somkiet warned that any officials found to be involved in any illegal timeshare operations will be reported to their office chief.

Also, timeshare cheats were not only affecting foreign tourists, V/Gov Somkiet added.

"Last week about 30 Thai people filed complaints at the Damrongtham Center. They said a well-known company in Thalang had cheated them of about 80,000 to 100,000 baht each.

"When they got to the hotels where they had paid to stay, there

were no rooms for them," he said.

The meeting on Tuesday was called after Patong business owners filed complaints to the Damrongtham Center.

The complaints alleged that more than 100 foreign workers were on the streets of Patong selling timeshare without work permits.

The complaints, filed with details and photographs, explained that timeshare workers continually rode motorbikes around Patong looking for potential "customers", who they stopped mid-traffic to pitch their sales.

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**HOLIDAY INN PHUKET MAI KHAO BEACH RESORT**

## Volcano blast no effect on Phuket – yet

THE eruption of the Grimsvotn volcano in Iceland has not affected flights at Phuket International Airport, the *Gazette* was told on Wednesday.

The volcano sent plumes of smoke and ash kilometers into the sky last Saturday, much as it did last year, causing havoc for air travellers across Europe and prompting many people to delay or cancel long-haul holidays.

However, Flight Officer Passakorn Surapipith, acting director at the airport, told the *Gazette*, "So far no airlines have canceled flights to or from Phuket."

"Our biggest problem is tourist safety. If our country is safe and secure, tourists will definitely continue coming to Phuket as it is a global tourist destination," he said.

The number of passengers passing through Phuket Airport from October last year through March this year has increased by 13.94%, said Mr Passakorn.

The number of flights arriving and departing the airport during the same period rose 18.91 per cent, comprising 36 airlines serving 31 scheduled ones and five charter airlines, he explained.

"The flights go to 60 cities in 23 countries," added the director.

# Don't become dispirited

## Aussie Ambassador voices support for Honorary Consuls

By Stephen Fein

AUSTRALIAN Ambassador to Thailand James Wise had one clear message for the honorary consuls present at the sixth "Honorary Consuls Meeting with Local Authorities" at Phuket Provincial Hall on Monday: Don't let the grind get you down.

Amb Wise's words followed several honorary consuls expressing diminishing enthusiasm for the meetings, mainly due to a lack of follow-up action.

Among the many issues of concern raised by Phuket-based honorary consuls was the issue of drunk driving, which was by far the most common criminal offense among foreigners.

Of 162 foreign suspects in criminal cases in Phuket in 2010, 64 were charged with driving under the influence. From the beginning of 2011 through until February 16 this year, 12 more foreigners were arrested and charged with the offence.

Australian Honorary Consul Larry Cunningham asked whether convictions for drunk driving entailed automatic deportation.

Mr Cunningham said he had received reports of foreigners be-



Honorary Consuls are feeling low about the post-meeting lack of action.

ing pulled over by police for drunk driving and being told they faced deportation if they "didn't pay".

Phuket Immigration Superintendent Panuwat Ruamrak replied that a conviction for drunk driving does not require deportation and is treated as a normal criminal case in the legal system.

Immigration police can check the background of suspects on a case-by-case basis when deciding whether to deport, he said.

Mr Cunningham also asked the representative from the Provincial Police whether there had been any arrests in the case of four young



Australian Ambassador James Wise

Australian tourists who were involved in a fight with tuk-tuk drivers in Patong in late February.

At least two of the Australians were stabbed, one reportedly requiring ICU treatment.

Mr Cunningham characterized the assault as an unprovoked attack by some 20 tuk-tuk drivers against the much smaller group.

The police representative said he was familiar with the case, but had to check to find out whether any arrests had been made.

British Honorary Consul Martin Carpenter called for the distribution of leaflets to warn foreign tourists of dangerous riptides during the monsoon season and asked for help from the local media in getting out the message in a variety of languages.

On the issue of tuk-tuks, the standard fares now reportedly in effect in Patong are to be extended to tuk-tuk operators in Kata-Karon "tomorrow", Gov Tri said.

He also called for a police crackdown on dangerous driving.

The following day Phuket Deputy Governor reportedly met with representatives of the Kata-Karon tuk-tuk and taxi association at the Phuket Land Transport Office and told the drivers they had a two-week deadline to set standard fares and improve their service.

## Rare 35kg turtle found wounded on Layan Beach

A FEMALE olive ridley sea turtle weighing 35.5 kilograms was found injured lying on its back on Layan Beach, in Cherng Talay, on Monday.

Rare for its large size, the turtle had wounds on all four flippers and was taken into the care of Ms Patcharaporn Kaewmong, a veterinarian at the Phuket Marine Biological Center.

The turtle, measuring 66cm long and 67cm wide, is estimated to be 15 years old.

Wounds to the base of the front right flipper were particularly deep, causing infection of the muscle but not disabling the animal, Ms Patcharaporn reported.

The reptile was given an injection of antibiotics, medication and



Nets were blamed for the injury.

a blood sample was taken for analysis, she said.

"Fishing nets seem to be the cause of her injuries. We estimate them to be about a month old," Ms Patcharaporn said.

"We will keep her under observation until she is well enough to be released back into the wild," she added.

## Miss Bikini hits a snag

THE highly anticipated visit to Phuket of the Miss Thailand Beach International 2011 finalists next month has been postponed.

Scheduled to stimulate the streets of Patong from June 3 to 5 with a calendar shoot, fashion show and "Save the Environment on Earth Day" event, the girls will have to wait for a later date, organizers have confirmed.

Nittaya Wangpanya, a PR officer for the Jungceylon Shopping Complex, where some of the events were to be held, assured the *Gazette* that the bikini models will "definitely come to Phuket".

"The decision to postpone [Phuket] was made because the organizers aren't prepared," she explained.

The winner, to be selected at the Millennium Hilton Hotel in Bangkok on May 27, will go on to represent Thailand against contestants from 84 other countries for the coveted title of Miss Bikini International 2011.

This will mark the first year Thailand will be represented in the annual pageant, which began in 1972.

This year's host will be the People's Republic of China.



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# Shelters for 'tourists in need' win praise

TWO temporary shelters for down-and-out tourists had already accommodated seven people since opening a week before.

The shelters are located next to the Tourist Police Headquarters in Phuket Town

Pol Capt Siramate Thanapansiri told the meeting of honorary consuls at Phuket Provincial Hall last week that two Norwegians, two Koreans and one tourist each from the UK, the US and Switzerland had taken refuge at the shelters, which opened on May 17.

The honorary consuls present were overwhelmingly in favor of the shelters.

The rooms provide tourists who fall on hard times with a free place to stay while they make arrangements to return home.

Both the Norwegian and British honorary consuls thanked the tourist police for the hospitality they had shown to their nationals



Phuket Prison chief Rapin Nichanon is looking forward to the public seeing what talents some inmates have.

who took refuge there.

Capt Siramate also invited everyone present to attend the official opening of the Tourist Police Station on June 27.

Work on the the station, which will serve as the regional Tourist Police headquarters, was completed last year.

- *Phuket Gazette*

# Prisoners break out the handmade goods

THE annual fair for inmates to sell their wares made while serving prison sentences will return to Phuket from June 3 to 12, Phuket Prison Chief Rapin Nichanon has announced.

Handmade products from 25 prisons throughout Thailand's 14 southern provinces will be on sale at Saphan Hin in Phuket Town at the 8th annual Southern Prison Products Fair.

Products, made of wicker, bamboo and wood, include everything from small decorative items to living room furniture sets, dining room tables and much more.

Prices range from 20 baht to 100,000 baht.

Half of the proceeds from sales go to the prisoners, who can use the money to cover expenses while in prison or to save for use "on the outside" after their sentences have been served.

One Phuket resident who has attended several past fairs voiced his support for the event.

"It's a good time and there are some good bargains to be had. The furniture may be a bit unfashion-



Prison Chief Rapin Nichanon

able for some people's tastes, but it is very sturdy and durable.

"There is always a lot of food, drink, entertainment and lots of things for kids to do. I go every year and always enjoy it.

"If you want to get the best bargains, just wait until the last night and see what's left.

There's no way these prison officials want to take all this stuff back with them, especially given the overcrowding in these facilities," he said.

- *MCOT / Stephen Fein*

# Body found, head nearly severed



Police and locals gather at the rubber plantation where the body of the man was found with its head nearly severed. Photos: Yodsak Jarana

THE body of an unidentified man was discovered in a Phuket rubber plantation last Friday morning with its head nearly severed.

The victim's completely severed right hand was found near the body, which was discovered on Koh Sireh in Rassada by a Burmese rubber tapper.

Phuket City Police led by Charoon Plaiduang estimated the age of the victim at 40 to 45.

There was no evidence to indicate whether the victim was Thai or Burmese.

Burmese living in the area number in the thousands, many working out of the nearby fishing port or on rubber plantations.

However, local Burmese plantation workers and Thai residents questioned so far have not been able to identify the victim.

Lt Col Charoon said he ex-



A man points to where the body was found on Koh Sireh.

pected the man was killed elsewhere and his body dumped in the remote location.

Anyone with information that might aid in identifying the victim and bringing his killer or killers to justice is encouraged to call the Phuket City Police at 076-216856.

- *Yodsak Jarana*

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# Last stop for pregnant teens

**AS MORE** children in Phuket are engaging in sexual activity, more young women are becoming pregnant. They often feel neglected, with nowhere to turn, and sometimes seek drastic measures to “solve” their problems.

The *Gazette*'s Pimwara Choksakulpan reports on a government center that provides a refuge for these troubled youth, free-of-charge.

MORE than 1,000 young women, mostly teenagers, turned up at Phuket hospitals last year with unwanted pregnancies.

Twenty-five of the girls were under 15 years old.

One girl was just 11 years old.

Yet only 24 of the young women sought – and received – assistance and counseling by the Phuket Shelter for Children and Families.

Jeranan Cheamcharoen, the director of the shelter, explained that the girls often do not tell their parents that they are pregnant. Instead, they confide in their friends.

“It was mostly teachers who brought them to the shelter after discovering the unwanted pregnancies through their students,” Ms Jeranan said.

“What about the rest? We don't know how many of them end up harming themselves or seeking illegal abortions,” she added.

What is more worrying for staff at the shelter are the life-changing decisions made by young pregnant women.

Ms Jeranan highlighted the importance of teaching young people to practice safe sex, but was firm in asserting that the assistance provided must take matters further.

“Once a teenager or child is pregnant, counseling and support is a key step to keeping them safe,” she said.

“The most important thing is teaching young people to practice safe sex instead of teaching them to not have sex at all.

“I don't advocate such young people having sex, but we have to accept that there is no way of knowing what our children do when they are out of sight,” she added.

The next step is to teach them that there are options other than abortion.

“They can continue their schooling and after giving birth, the child can be taken into the care of government organizations until the mother or parents are able to raise the child on their own. If this is not possible, there is also the option of entering the child into the adoption process,” Ms Jeranan explained.

Among those at the shelter is “Kate”.

Kate comes from a poor background and suffered abuse at the hands of her stepfather.

She married when she was 15 years old and had a child with her husband.

They later divorced and Kate recently became pregnant again with a new boyfriend, who refused to support her and her unborn child.

The feelings of isolation and helplessness struck deep.

“I wanted to kill myself. When I told him I was pregnant, he told



**HELPING HAND:** Jeranan Cheamcharoen (inset) is head of the Phuket Shelter for Children and Families in Koh Sireh, which operates under the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security.

me to get an abortion and refused to look after me and the baby,” she told the *Gazette*.

“I felt very depressed. There was no one to rely on mentally or physically.

“I did not want to tell my mother because she suffers enough from her husband's behavior,” Kate said.

But she did eventually reach out for help.

“In the end I decided that every problem has a solution and called the government hotline number 1300 that I saw advertised on television,” she said.

Youths who call the hotline are offered support and accommodation to help them get back on their feet. In the case of Kate, staff at the shelter helped calm

her so she could make a better decision, said Ms Jeranan.

Kate is now five months pregnant and happy with her decision to give birth.

She told the *Gazette* that after the child is born, she will leave the child with the shelter until she has built a suitable life that will support both of them, and she will tell her mother and family about her newborn.

Ms Jeranan stressed it was important for parents to keep an open mind and teach their children about caution when it comes to sex.

“If a child falls pregnant, finding a solution is better than blaming and criticizing them,” she said.

“I don't support having sex when one is unready, but when pregnancy does happen, you need to find someone you can trust with your problem,” Ms Jeranan said.

“If there is no one to help you, the Phuket Shelter for Children and Families is open to everyone.

You can call our 24-hour hotline at 1300 or my mobile at 081-8911643,” she added.

**‘When I told him I was pregnant, he told me to get an abortion and refused to look after me and the baby’**

– Kate, who became a mother at age 15

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# Tourists 'beaten, cheated, cursed'

By Atchaa Khamlo

TOURISTS being beaten, cheated and cursed were among the top problems plaguing the island's critical tourism industry, Interior Ministry Deputy Permanent Secretary Pranai Suwannarat heard from industry experts on May 19.

Mr Pranai chaired a meeting at Provincial Hall attended by Vice Governor Niwit Arunrat and about 20 other officials from provinces along the Andaman coast.

The meeting was called to discuss what action to take about tourists being cheated while on holiday.

Terayout Prasertphol, who recently took up the position of director at the Phuket Land Transport Office, told Mr Pranai, "I worked in Phuket as a chief of the Academic Division in the Phuket Land Transportation Office five years ago.

"At that time, I tried to solve the problem of tuk-tuk drivers leaving tourists stranded at their destination.

"The drivers didn't bring them back because they had a deal with other drivers who would go and pick them up.

"Sometimes the drivers offering the return trip left the tourists little choice but to pay more than they paid the driver who took them there," he said.

"This problem is still going on," he added.

Bhuritt Maswongsa, a Vice President of the Phuket Tourism Association, relayed to Mr Pranai reports of a dire scenario many tourists face.



Tuk-tuks line the beach road in Patong. Tuk-tuk drivers bore the brunt of much heavy criticism at the meeting. Photo: Pimwara Choksakulpan



Pranai Suwannarat

"We have heard many reports that illegal workers in Phuket, such as Nepalese, Pakistani, Bur-

mese and Sri Lankan people working in tailor shops, coerce tourists.

"They are rude and sometimes they beat tourists if they don't buy anything from their shops," he said.

Other figures at the meeting told Mr Pranai that illegal tour guides were still a problem.

Koreans and Russians were named as the main culprits working illegally as guides, an occupation reserved for Thais.

Deputy Pranai told the meeting that he will compile a report of the abuses and hand it to Permanent Secretary Vichean Chavalit next week.

# Boy mangled by shrimp farm rotor

A SEVEN-year-old boy was killed last Saturday after becoming stuck in an aerator drive shaft at a shrimp farm.

Chonnakan "Thua Lek" (small child) Sae-lao suffered multiple broken bones, including a broken neck, when his clothing was snagged by the rotating drive shaft.

Chonnakan's parents, Sommai Pengpaitoon, 37, and Piraphong Sae-lao, 41, are fruit vendors and had gone out to work for the day, leaving the youngster to play with his 10-year-old sister and nine-year-old brother at the shrimp farm, near Phuket Villa 3 in Wichit.

About midday, Mrs Sommai returned home to feed her children and left again to visit her husband, who was selling fruit in a nearby residential estate.

When she left, her kids were playing with two other children in the neighborhood, as they had on many other days.

Just as she arrived to meet her husband, Mrs Sommai received a phone call from a neighbor telling her that her son had been involved in an accident.

She rushed home to find her son's battered body stuck in the drive shaft.

She said that her son had been sitting on the rotating shaft, playing, as it gradually moved him toward a joint, which caught his clothing.

His sister, Ploy, told the *Gazette* that she and the other kids were playing when she saw Chonnakan's body spinning in the machine. She ran to the neighbors for help.

The neighbors rushed to stop the machine, but knew it was too late. Young Chonnakan was already dead.



Sommai Sae-lao holds a photo of her late son, Chonnakan, who was nicknamed 'Thua Lek', meaning 'small child'. Photo: Atchaa Khamlo

"I feel horrible. We have lived here for four years and nothing happened, and then three days ago the farmer moved that machine to where it is now – only 10 meters from where it was before. It must have been his time to go," Mrs Sommai said.

Capt Virat Thanthong of Phuket City Police said that after the funeral he will ask them if they want to seek compensation from the farmer.

However, the boy's father, Piraphong, said, "It's our fault. My son went onto their land and played on the machine, so it's not the responsibility of the farmer. The farmer and the landowner gave us 50,000 baht to help with his funeral."

"He was our dear son. He was a good boy and easy to take care of.

"I'm still in pain and I think we will stop working for a while to console ourselves," Mr Piraphong said.

– Atchaa Khamlo

## PPAO Hospital set to open next month

THE Phuket Provincial Administration (OrBorJor) Hospital is set to open on a trial basis next month.

The hospital, located on Sri Sena Road in Phuket Town, will begin offering limited services from June 1, said Hospital Director Yee Yitathasiri.

A grand opening ceremony is scheduled for May 31 to mark the considerable accomplishment.

The building, originally built by the Phyathai Hospital group, was abandoned for over a decade after that facility went out of business in 2000.

The ceremony, to be presided over by OrBorJor President Paiboon Upatising, will start off with a blessing ceremony.

Also featured will be exhibitions explaining the hospital's services, advice about care for the elderly, and public health care law.

On that day, medical checkups,



The new hospital building on the lower-east side of Phuket Town.

including cancer screening for the first 300 applicants, will be available at discounted rates.

Pending a successful trial month, the hospital will begin offering its full range of inpatient and outpatient services by July.

Services offered in June will be limited to outpatient treatment in order to assess and improve quality. Service hours in June will be Monday to Friday, from 8am to 5pm.

## Postal vote farce avoided

PHUKET Election Commission Director Kitipong Thiengkunakrit has confirmed that Thais who cast ballots by post in the general election four years ago will not have to return to their home provinces to cast regular ballots in the July 3 general election.

"People can cancel the 'request' to cast postal votes by visiting their local district office or municipality before June 2. They must do this in person or have a person with a power of attorney act on their behalf," he said.

He reminded Thais that they must always have their ID card and at least a copy of their house registration document (*tabien baan*) with them when dealing with local authorities.

Early voting will be held on June 26, with polls open from 8am to 3pm, said Mr Kitipong.

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# Polls show Pheu Thai Party ahead of the rest

OPINION polls are showing the Pheu Thai Party as more popular than the ruling Democrat Party with six weeks to go until Thailand's next general election on July 3.

A Suan Dusit poll of 3,584 voters released on May 22 showed 41.2 per cent of voters favoring Pheu Thai against 37 per cent preferring the Democrats.

No other party was supported by more than 4 per cent of voters, with 6.5 per cent saying they remained undecided on who to vote for.

Meanwhile, an ABAC poll of 2,300 people in 17 provinces showed that while voters

rated Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva's leadership skills as superior to those of Pheu Thai prime ministerial candidate Yingluck Shinawatra, the gap was closing.

Of the total, 59 per cent wanted to see a debate between Mr Abhisit and Mrs Yingluck so they could have more information on which to make their decision.

Mr Abhisit has challenged Mrs Yingluck to a televised debate, though the Pheu Thai candidate has so far refused to accept the proposal.

The results followed the drawing of political parties' ballot numbers on the first

day of party-list candidate registration on May 19.

The Pheu Thai Party drew number one, while the Democrat Party got number ten.

Lifting a single digit to the media, Mrs Yingluck said she was glad to get the number as it reflected victory.

The Democrats' chief advisor Chuan Leekpai said Pheu Thai was lucky to get number one as it was easy for voters to remember.

"But it does not reveal the size of vote you will get, the size might be as small as the number," he said.



LOOKING GOOD: Mrs Yingluck on her way to register for the elections. Photo: The Nation

# Reds gather one year after Gov't crackdown

## AROUND THE nation

THOUSANDS of anti-government red shirt supporters gathered at Bangkok's central shopping district of Ratchaprasong on May 19 for the anniversary of the violent government crackdown that ended 10 weeks of protests last year.

One year on, the authorities have failed to show who was responsible for at least 91 deaths during the demonstrations, leaving grieving relatives in the dark.

In a report that criticized both the government and the protest organizers, New York-based Human Rights Watch recently pointed out that no government official had been charged in connection with the violence.

It also noted the presence among the protesters of well-armed men wearing black clothes who staged deadly attacks on police and soldiers.

On May 19 this year, many of the relatives of those killed returned to the protest site to demand answers.

Among them was Phayao Akkahad, the mother of a nurse who was shot while tending to a patient in the grounds of Wat Pathum Wanaram.

In a press conference the day before the anniversary, Mrs Phayao announced she would file a civil lawsuit against the government.

"I have only half of an autopsy report on my daughter and I will use it as evidence to file the lawsuit before the court to get justice for my daughter," she said.

Also unsolved is the burning of 39 buildings on the final day of the protests, including Central World, the country's largest shopping mall.

The fires are generally suspected to be the work of the red shirts, though the United Front for Democracy Against Dictatorship (UDD) has claimed the army set the fires



PAY IT FORWARD: Red shirts gathered at Ratchaprasong intersection on May 19 joined a merit-making ceremony for those who died in the protests. Photo: The Nation

to discredit the red shirt movement.

The burnings resulted in a number of red shirt leaders being charged with terrorism following the protests. Many of those leaders have now secured places as party list candidates for the opposition Pheu Thai Party in the general elections on July 3, a move they hope will bring them immunity from prosecution.

The red shirts have continued to hold sporadic rallies since last year.

The Democracy Without Infringement Network, a group of affected businesses in Ratchaprasong, is considering filing a lawsuit against the government and the UDD for more than 10 billion baht for losses suffered by businesses due to the protests.

A spokesman for the network said the most recent rally on May 19 cost local businesses seven million baht alone.

## Cops nab tiger-trader 'kingpin'

POLICE in Udon Thani last week arrested a man suspected of being a key player in one of Thailand's largest tiger trafficking rings.

Sudjai Chanthawong, 49, was nabbed after his bank account was allegedly used to receive payment for the sale of a live tiger cub last year.

The cub – now a 220lb Bengal tiger – was put on display behind Mr Sudjai during a police news conference to announce his arrest.

Steve Galster, director of FREELAND Foundation anti-trafficking group, said Mr Sudjai's gang had traded an estimated 1,000 big cats in recent years.

"Thai police are to be congratulated for following the money and finding one of the kingpins involved in cross-border wildlife trafficking," he said.

The number of tigers in Asia has plummeted in recent years due to habitat encroachment and poaching.

Thailand is believed to be a hub for the illegal trade in big cats. Most of the creatures find their way to China, where their body parts are used to feed a booming trade in medicine and souvenirs.

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## Got the runner's bug

Re: Gazette online, Aussie 'marathon centurion' to run Laguna Phuket, May 21

There is a difference between staying fit and having an obsession.

Running 10 marathons in 10 consecutive weekends is an obsession.

Running two marathons a year is enough for me.

Sam  
Gazette forum

## Honor amid tragedy

Re: Gazette online, Phuket youngster killed in shrimp farm machinery, May 23

Very sad. My thoughts go out to Mrs Sommai and Mr Piraphong. Hopefully they can take a rest for a bit to process this tragedy.

If this were to happen in my home country, the parents would sue the landowner, the farmer and anyone else they could find.

I respect very much the fact that they know this was just an accident and not the farmer's fault.

tonglen  
Gazette forum

## Tuk-tuk driver round-up

I propose a "Soi tuk-tuk Driver Foundation", much like the island's beloved Soi Dog Foundation, to take care of all the stray, unwanted tuk-tuk drivers in Phuket.

We could round them up, ship them off to a "kennel" at a central location on Phuket where

# Consuls' meetings need to continue

THE latest meeting of honorary consuls with Phuket authorities was rather unremarkable, but as the gatherings remain the only official forum for tourists and expatriate residents of the island to have their views and concerns presented directly to the people in charge, they need to continue.

Australian Ambassador James Wise, who attended the sixth meeting on Monday, was correct to instruct the consuls not to get too discouraged over the lack of progress in tackling the many issues raised.

Unfortunately, some of the most serious issues, such as collusion in the public transport sector, are deeply entrenched, endemic problems that are not going to disappear overnight.

That taxi and tuk-tuk drivers, registered or otherwise, will stand up for their self-proclaimed "right" to overcharge for services is not a matter of dispute. As many have pointed out in the past, these collectives are keeping the tourism industry, the proverbial goose that lays the golden eggs, in a sustained choke hold.

Their actions cripple an industry that otherwise operates on free-market principles and offers a wide variety of good-value-for-money services – if tourists can afford to get to them.

The *Phuket Gazette* would like to know of another tourist destination anywhere in the world where a half-hour ride in a cramped, non-air-conditioned contraption like the Phuket tuk-tuk costs more than the price of a night's stay in a clean,

## Phuket Gazette

comfortable guest house – and three times the cost of renting a new motorbike for a whole day.

Authorities are quick to encourage the public not to drink and drive, but the situation here actually encourages it in the worst possible way: by pricing people who are drunk out of the public transport option and forcing them to climb onto motorbikes.

A watershed moment in this narrative came over a decade ago when a newly-launched *songthaew* (pickup modified to serve as a passenger transport vehicle) service linking Patong and Karon lasted only a few days before the driver was pulled from the cab and beaten senseless by a group of you-know-whos.

Ever since, the concession for the route has remained available for any party willing to take it. Not surprisingly, none have.

Given this fact and the particular circumstances that apply in Phuket, we believe it is time a state agency such as the Tourist Police launches such a service and provides undercover security in the initial stages.

Ideas like this, and others like it, need to be presented to the authorities who could actually implement them. As this is the case, there is still no better forum for doing so than the consuls' meetings.

Another is the way the Burmese [fellow ASEAN members] can only find work similar to slave labor, allowing the rich to get richer. Do the authorities in Phuket feel neither shame nor compassion?

Logic  
Gazette forum

## Serious issues need serious people

Re: Gazette online, Honorary Consuls tackle Phuket tourism's Big Bad Four, May 24

Trying to redirect the blame, denying any wrongdoing and certain authorities not even showing up for the meeting... Well, it's business as usual, isn't it?

Let's be honest, they need to attack these very real and very serious issues or expect Phuket to fall apart when it comes to quality tourists.

Bill the Fish  
Gazette forum

## There is hope

Last week the *Phuket Gazette* featured a letter regarding the third-rate service one frequently encounters in Thailand.

I could not agree more but feel the need to speak out for some organizations that are setting a fine standard for others to follow.

A prime example is one of the major Thai banks. The customer service at every branch I have visited has been impeccable and the same goes for their credit card telephone support.

It is always nice to see that some companies truly value their customers here.

Jim  
Cherng Talay

they would be looked after until someone wanted to take care of them.

Other taxi drivers could be allowed "freedom" as long as their owners took responsibility for them by training them, keeping them clean and on a leash.

That way, they would be

safe, our streets would be safe and we could all take a stroll without the hassle of a stubborn, yapping creature nipping at our heels.

I guess most people would call such a place for stray humans a "prison".

Simon Wargel  
Phuket Town

## Equality, not pity

Re: Gazette online, Phuket poor get food, scholarships, May 21

It is especially sad to see the sea gypsies practically reduced to beggars with virtually no rights as previously reported by the *Phuket Gazette*. This is one of Phuket's blights.

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## Issues & Answers...

### Three's a crowd

Do children not need to wear helmets when riding on a motorbike? What is the maximum number of people allowed on a motorbike?

Tourist  
Kata

### Pol Sgt Teerapong Sangsoon of Chalong Traffic Police replies:

The driver and passenger both must wear helmets. There are no exceptions.

If passengers aren't wearing helmets, the police will fine them 500 baht per person not wearing one.

According to the Road Traffic Act 2522 [1979 CE] Title 7, there are no more than two people allowed on a motorbike.

We distributed a questionnaire to people living in Kata asking them why they travel on motorbikes with more than two people.

The answers were mostly that they went out to buy things at nearby shops, usually within 100 to 300 meters of their homes.

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

Submit your issue at

www.PhuketGazette.net/  
IssuesAnswers

In my opinion, it doesn't matter how close to home you are because an accident can happen at any time.

We are now trying to educate people who are driving unsafely that you can still be hurt travelling a short distance and that they should think about their lives.

### Are elderly required to do visa runs?

My mother-in-law has a 12-month non-immigrant O-A visa, which requires her to exit the country every 90 days.

This has not been a problem until now as she has taken advantage of the usual visa run to Ranong.

However, she is 86 and has become very frail in the past few months. We wonder if there is any dispensation given by the Phuket Immigration Department, perhaps by allowing us to take her to their offices in Patong or Phuket Town to have her passport stamped in the same way I do with my retirement visa

Ian Prior  
Bang Tao

### Panuwat Ruamrak, superintendent of Phuket Immigration, replies:

Elderly foreign residents who wish to stay long-term in Thailand are advised to apply for a non-immigrant O visa at a Royal Thai Consulate [outside Thailand].

In this particular case, the woman's relatives are welcome to discuss the issue at the Immigration Office in Phuket Town to see if the authorities can assist in any way.



# Phuket youth face a nightmarish reality

## FIRST PERSON

THE Semarak Center looks after students when they are not at school and not at home – we are like a teacher and a parent at the same time.

Even though we're authorized by law to detain children and report them to the police for breaking the law, the main purpose of the center is to help them with their education so they can have a better life and be successful.

I have never sent any children to the police.

Of course, if kids are involved in something very serious, like murder, we have to report them to the police.

There are a lot of problems with kids in Phuket. Some of them skip school, others are addicted to computer games [outside the home]. There are fights, drug problems, kids having sex at a very young age, unexpected pregnancy and even prostitution among children as young as 12 years old.

Now we are working seriously on the prostitution problem in Phuket. We've been working on it for a while and we have a lot of reliable information. So far we know that both boys and girls between the ages of 12 and 18 are acting as prostitutes – either for themselves or working for "pimps".

If you would like to see this serious problem with your own eyes, just go to Suan Luang Park at night [King Rama IX Park].



Phuket native **Charoen Tonnam** has been head of the Phuket Provincial Semarak Center since its inception in 2005. The center, under the Ministry of Education and overseen by Phuket Governor Tri Augkaradacha, helps at-risk youth stay out of trouble when they're not at school or home. Here Mr Charoen explains how the Semarak Center keeps an eye on kids by coordinating with parents, schools, hospitals and other public agencies in Phuket.

Working in this position, I see problems facing Phuket much more than other people. As a teacher and a father, this worries and frustrates me. I fear for the future of our country.

What if these were your children? The youngest mother in Phuket last year was just 11 years old. We try not to publicize these things because it could create a problem – maybe the kids would be proud of their story being in the news.

In the past, we sometimes caught children misbehaving and reported them to schools, but the schools just kicked them out.

I don't feel this is a good way to solve the problem.

These are just children that we're dealing with – they're innocent. And some of them are proud for being known as "bad kids".

Doing "bad" things can often earn respect and gain acceptance

for children among their peers. All we need to do is help them out by liaising between kids, their parents and their schools. We let parents know what their kids are up to and assist them in methods to deal with the issues.

The schools are opening up more and are also working with the center to identify problems and work through them without expelling them.

The governor also sees problems with children in Phuket as something that needs to be addressed.

We're going to try our best to help. If families or kids have problems, we want them to feel free to talk to us.

Above all, the family is the most important component in looking after children. Adults should remember to connect with their children and talk to them as friends, not as "commanders".

## WILLYWATCH: Keep it in your pants!

### Island View

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

WHEN I wrote a column for this newspaper (*Nipplewatch*, January 22, Phuket Gazette) I thought it may have gone some way to help deter displays of public nudity on Phuket.

It didn't, but the bare fact of the matter remains: nude is rude in Thailand, and private parts should be sheathed and left in the dark.

Lo and behold, a western man was spotted on Kata Beach earlier this week wearing nothing but his birthday suit – that's right, naked head-to-toe, balls-to-bones.

Let it be known to all who read these words: If you see this man strolling around willy-nilly, furrow your brow, point your finger and scold this person for being a burden to our beaches.

You have to wonder what reason this man would have for letting it all hang out.

Self-satisfaction for this exhibitionist may come in the form of exposing himself. He may revel in raunch or delight in daring drop-trouser pranks.

Perhaps he has noticed that the shock value of nudity in the West is in decline.

Our eyes have seen it all before. Nude is not rude in the West, it's a part of our daily lives.

Tacitly we condone nudity in the West. Seeing the naked human body on TV or in the press back home is as normal as blowing our nose or hugging our friends – we just do it. We are numb to nudity and have been for some time.

Thailand, and the East as a whole, has a very different stance on nudity to the West – this is a no-brainer for most of us, but not it seems, for our willy-wielding beachgoer in Kata.

Expats and tourists must acknowledge the local customs of the countries they reside and visit.

Denying our hosts the courtesy of our respect threatens our reputation as foreigners.

Intimate nooks and crannies of our bodies should be kept out of the limelight – there is no need to tan one's penis.

No one in their right mind would walk through Phuket Town with their bits swinging around, so why on the beach?

Knowing what is expected of us when traveling or living abroad is the duty of all foreigners.

A sure way to land oneself in trouble with the law here is to not take heed of travel advice and words of wisdom – no matter how below the belt they may seem.

The time for nudity is never on a beach in Thailand. It is never the done thing – I hope the man at Kata Beach takes note of this plea.

Ask not what your ( host ) country can do for you, but what you can do for your ( host ) country.



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

### Monkey litter

I went to the monkey viewpoint near Koh Sireh the other day with my husband and two children.

The children enjoy tossing bread to the monkeys and watching them eat it.

While we were there, we saw a man arrive with huge plastic bags filled with bread.

He just threw the bags to the monkeys, who know how to tear into them to get to the food.

Minutes later, I saw plastic bags all over the mangrove area at the viewpoint.

I don't think people should be allowed to do such a thing.

Where could I report this problem?

Could someone please ask whoever is responsible for this area if they could do something about it?

Sarinya Rassada

**Surathin Leunudom, Mayor of Rassada Municipality, replies:**  
Thank you for this information.



Crab-eating macaques are known to take advantage of unattended food, like this one helping itself to a snack at a Phuket restaurant.

Looking after the monkeys is one of our duties, even though the mangrove area is under the Forest Department.

We had a "cleaning day" project before, when my team and I went out and picked up trash in the area.

However, the work is endless, as trash comes in with the water.

There are many migrant workers living at the entrance to Klong Tha Cheen [canal] who just throw their trash into the water near the viewpoint.

I will have the Public Health Office and Municipal Police take care of the problems in that area.

### Grandview not so grand

I live in Srisuchart Grandview 2. The developer has abandoned their responsibility to maintain the parks built within the compound.

Unsold land plots are also being left unattended and foliage has grown so high that if one catches fire the results could be disastrous.

How do we get the owners to maintain these properties?

Robert Fisher Rassada

**A Srisuchart Grandview Co Ltd salesperson replies:**

Thai law states that property developers are required to continue maintenance of "public areas" in their developments for one year following the transfer of ownership to buyers.

After that, a panel of residents is selected to oversee the maintenance of parks and utilities within the development.

Monthly fees are then collected from all residents to support the continual upkeep of the grounds.

The lapse is due to residents not responding to our notifications and the subsequent lack of financial support for maintenance work.

Public utility oversight has been handed to the Rassada Municipality and the developer is continuing occasional maintenance on parks and empty plots.

For more information, contact Srisuchart Grandview Co Ltd sales office at 076-526097-9. Our offices are open daily from 8am to 6pm.

We will send maintenance personnel to the parks and empty plots as soon as possible.

# 10 years of island tech

By Bruce Stanley

ISLAND Technology opened their first office in Phuket 10 years ago in what was then the quiet beach community of Kamala.

"My partner and I were operating our technology company out of Singapore, but we were coming to Phuket whenever we could as we loved the island atmosphere," recalls Gay Autcharawan Pratumwan, Managing Director of Island Technology.

"We decided to move our business to the island as we could see the opportunities for our services," she continued.

Initially offering web design, hosting services, computer networks and servers to a small client base, the company quickly grew and expanded their offerings to provide the latest in internet connections and fiber optic technology systems. Requiring larger premises, by 2003 Island Technology moved to their present office in Kathu, and expanded

again last year due to company growth.

"We've developed our business as Phuket has grown, and the demand for media and communication technology has increased. Our primary business now is a one-stop service for computer networks and communication systems targeting high-end residential developments, hotels and businesses," said Mrs Gay.

"We also provide security and surveillance systems which include alarms, access control and fire detection. And recently we were proud to be appointed an authorized reseller for Apple products for the education and enterprise sectors," she added.

The company has enjoyed a successful 10 years in business and now employs nearly 50 staff.

Gay is one of Phuket's most dynamic entrepreneurs. She graduated from Ramkhamhaeng University in Bangkok with a degree in business and a major in accounting. She worked five years for a



**Gay Autcharawan Pratumwan, managing director at Island Technology.** Photo: Bruce Stanley  
multinational seafood export production company, starting as assistant to the financial controller, and becoming a factory manager before finally being promoted to the position of regional operation manager. "We are inviting our many clients and suppliers from the past ten years to join us

in celebrating our 10-year anniversary marking a decade of successful operations in Phuket. We want to thank those who have trusted us with providing the solutions so their businesses can develop. Our party will be held at the Thanyapura Sports and Leisure Club on June 4 at 7pm."

## Construction companies reel in immigrants

BUSINESSES in Phuket continue to rely heavily on alien workers from neighboring countries.

This year more than 4,800 firms in Phuket are looking to hire over 102,000 low-wage workers, according to statistics released by the Phuket Provincial Employment Office (PPEO) last month. As of last month, a total of 50,332 immigrants from Myanmar, Cambodia and Laos were legally living in Phuket, but only 31,693 of them have been issued work permits.

Construction firms are still the largest employer of alien, and low-wage workers in Phuket.

Since last year, the industry hired 16,224 alien workers, 51 per cent of the total legal permit-holding workforce in the province.

The retail sector in Phuket is also a major employer of low-wage foreign workers, with 2,725 workers registered to work in this sector.

The island's various service sectors also employ around 2,751

low-wage foreign workers, while 1,567 work in Phuket's fisheries industry.

The island's agricultural sector, which includes the rubber industry, employs 2,225 alien workers, according to the PPEO.

This month show that currently there are around 6,276 highly skilled foreign workers in Phuket. From this group, 3,417 either work in managerial positions or own companies themselves.

British citizens make up the largest group of European employees in Phuket, with 1,015 British nationals working on the island.

Data also shows 400 French, 369 Filipino and 368 American citizens living and working in Phuket, among other nationalities.

Chief of the PPEO, Noppodol Ployudee, said there is still a severe shortage of Thai workers on Phuket.

"Phuket's labor market is cyclical, with hotels recruiting lots of workers during the high sea-



**The number of immigrant workers in Phuket is on the up.** Photo: Gazette file

son months. During these months, demand for labor in Phuket is very high and we often see chronic shortages of Thai employees," Mr Noppodol said.

"We often have to recruit workers from other provinces to meet demand from local firms in Phuket. The problem is that there is no job security in Phuket be-

cause during the low season months, hotels and firms tend to lay off a lot of employees in order to cut costs," he added.

Mr Noppodol explained that the high cost of living in Phuket is a major factor discouraging Thai workers from the provinces to come and work here.

- Anand Singh

## Tourism leaders urge Thai focus on China market

TOURISM experts are urging Thailand to prepare specific strategies and products to cope with the rise of China, which appears set to become Thailand's largest market within three years.

They also urged Thailand to focus on the "RICHI" markets ( Russia, India, China and Indonesia ).

Zhang Guangrui, professor and director of the Tourism Research Center at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences ( CASS ) in Beijing, asked Thai officials and the private sector to create new products and prepare specific strategies to cope with the China market.

The China market would be the biggest contributor in terms of numbers for Thailand within the next three years, he said.

Sansern Ngaorungsri, deputy governor for Asia-Pacific at the Tourism Authority of Thailand ( TAT ), said that last year China was the second-largest market for Thailand with more than 1.2 million arrivals, behind Malaysia.

China is expected to reach the No 1 spot with 1.5 million visitors by 2015.

Speaking at a seminar entitled "Thailand Tourism Marketing: Mapping the Future", Zhang said Chinese people from different parts of the country liked to see and do different activities when abroad.

To cater to their various needs, Thailand should promote the capital or big cities to tap the upper market and use second-tier provinces to serve the rest.

- The Nation

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# Going green to Chiang Mai

By Chutharat Plerin

THE Chaipattana Transportation Chiangmai Company launched its VIP "Green Bus" service linking Phuket and Chiang Mai with a party for the press on May 20.

Managing Director Somchai Thongkumkoon said the company invested 45 million baht for a fleet of five buses, which are equipped with such amenities as television screens and massage chairs.

Seating is arranged with two reclining chairs on one side, and a single chair across the aisle.

One-way fares are 1,770 baht per passenger, including meals at selected restaurants en route and snacks on board.

Buses will leave Phuket Bus Terminal 1 on Phang Nga Road at 4pm daily, arriving Chiang Mai at 2pm to 3pm the following day.

The return leg leaves Chiang Mai at 3pm and arrives around noon the following day.

To ensure safety, four drivers based in various stopover locations will work in shifts to cover the 23-hour journey, as will two hostesses.

A total of 12 drivers and 8 host-

esses have been assigned to the route, which has stops in Phang Nga, Surat Thani, Chumphon, Prachuap Khiri Khan, Phetcha Buri, Sing Buri, Nakhon Sawan, Tak and Lampang.

The service will open for the public by the end of the month, Mr Somchai said.

Some 40 members of the Chiang Mai press took advantage of the company's offer of a free round-trip to Phuket, where a launch party featuring "north and south" cuisine and Lanna cultural performance was held at The Metropole hotel.

Phuket Deputy Governor (Palad) Chaiwat Tepee, the guest speaker, welcomed the delegation to the island.

A similar trip for the Phuket press corps is planned for September.

The Green Bus service is well known in the north, where it has been in operation for 40 years. The company also plans to open international routes in the future, Mr Somchai said.

For more information contact the ticket booth at Phuket Bus Terminal, visit [W:greenbusthailand.com](http://W:greenbusthailand.com) or T: 1141, ext. 8000.



LONG HAUL: The buses make the one-way journey from Phuket to Chiang Mai in about 23 hours.

# Outbound tours unfazed by Japan crisis

DESPITE the nuclear crisis in Japan, outbound tourism from Phuket remained largely unaffected during its peak season in March and April.

"The crisis did not affect Phuket's outbound tourism because Japan is not a large market for outbound tourists from the South," explained Sirikorn Boonyasiri, owner of Phuket Sweetland Tour and president of the Thai Travel Agents Association (TTAA) Upper Southern Chapter.

"We often have groups of tourists from Phuket traveling to Japan but the numbers are relatively few.

"They have to merge with larger tour groups in Bangkok," she said.

"After the crisis, most customers who had booked tours to Japan canceled their plans outright.

"Some who had spent money on visa fees postponed their plans in order to wait and see," Mrs Sirikorn said.

Narongchai Chairaksa, outbound tour manager for Phuket Jet Tour agrees that Japan is not a big outbound tourism market in Phuket.

This is partly because there is no direct flight connecting Japan and Phuket.

Outbound tourists in the upper southern region of the country use Phuket as their main aviation hub, so the most popular outbound destinations are often defined by the number of direct links with Phuket.

"South Korea on the other hand is a much more popular destination for tourists from Phuket.

"It is perceived as a cheaper alternative to Japan, with a similarly cool climate.

"Even though distances to both countries are similar, there are many direct flights a week from Phuket to South Korea," Mr Narongchai said.

"As a result of the crisis in

Japan, it is likely that many outbound tourists from Phuket will switch their tour plans to places like South Korea and Europe.

"Tourists who originally intended to go to Japan during this period might choose South Korea instead to see the famous Sakura flower, which happens to bloom in South Korea as well [as Japan]," Mr Narongchai added.

The Sakura flower usually

blooms for a short time around February or March.

Thai operators have already lost five billion baht as a result of the crisis in Japan, said Charoen Wangananont, president of the TTAA.

The TTAA, in co-operation with a variety of Japanese agencies, is gearing up to launch promotions offering Japan tour packages discounted by up to 30 per cent.

It is hoped that such campaigns will give a much needed boost to the country's tourism.

Over the past few years Japan has grown to become one of the most popular tourist destinations for Thais.

According to Mr Charoen, last year over 300,000 Thais visited Japan. This year the figure is expected to drop to about 200,000.

- Anand Singh

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# Still dreaming about 3G

THE easiest way to get 3G service in Phuket involves a trek to the True office in Phuket Town, in the little building in front of Robinson, Ocean Plaza. There you will find several people who understand 3G ( believe me, that's quite an accomplishment! ), and they'll set you up with 3G service.

If you already have a True SIM card, and a dongle, 3G iPad or 3G capable smartphone, you only need to enable the 3G service from True. You can keep your old phone number. 3G will run about 800 baht per month, in addition to your regular phone charges. But you'll be limited to three gigabytes in total data transmission during any particular month. If you go over the allotment, True automatically drops you back to plain old everyday GPRS service, which is painfully slow. Three gig is enough for moderate web surfing and email work, but won't even scratch the surface if you download torrents or movies.

If you don't have a True SIM card or dongle, the folks at the True office will sell you what you need to get going. It's best to bring your computer, iPad or smartphone, to make sure they get it right. iPads require a half-height SIM card, but the people at the True office have sharp scissors. Bring your passport and your work permit, if you have one. If you don't have a work permit, and you aren't Thai, bring a Thai national with you so they can sign as guarantor on the account.

I'm amazed – stunned – that so many

people buy 3G iPads and don't realize that they need to go to True in order to get the 3G part to work. In my experience, most 3G iPad owners don't realize that 3G only works on the extreme west coast of the island ( although it works all over Bangkok ) . The same comment applies to people with 3G phones, including the iPhone.

To reinforce the point: 3G is a waste of money unless you're on the west coast of Phuket, or you travel a lot to Bangkok – or outside of Thailand, where 3G is readily available, almost everywhere.

## WHY I HATE THE TERM '3G'

I use the term "3G" in this column because it's the common term. But it's very misleading. In fact, the technology is called "HSPA." The 3G iPad, iPhone, 3G smart phones, 3G dongles – all of them support HSPA.

There's a phone company on the island that insists on calling its service "3G" even though the service won't work with 3G iPads, iPhones, 3G smart phones, or 3G dongles. That company is CAT. The powers-that-be at CAT insist upon advertising their CDMA/EV-DO service as "3G." It isn't. If you buy a CAT "3G" SIM card ( and they have them available now ) , it won't work in a 3G iPad, won't work in a 3G iPhone, won't work in a 3G smartphone, and it won't work in most 3G dongles.

Why? Because the CAT "3G" is CDMA/EV-DO, it isn't HSPA. They're completely

different technologies. Different networks. You can call a *salaeng* a Bugatti, if you like, but that doesn't make it roar.

So the next time you see an ad for CAT "3G" in a newspaper or on the side of a tuk-tuk, you have my permission to shake your finger at the offensive copy and wonder how many people have wasted their money on something that doesn't – indeed, can't – work.

## FOUR YEARS OF CLINICS

Are you interested in this kind of information? Wondering how to avoid wasting your money on technology that doesn't work? We talk about mobile phones, iPads, Internet access, TVs, and even some PC and Windows stuff, every week at the FREE Computer Clinics.

Hard to believe, but we're coming up on the fourth anniversary. On June 5 we'll have a Computer Clinic at the Sandwich Shoppe in Patong, opposite Patong Language School.

June 19 marks our fourth anniversary, and we're planning a whole bunch of very special stuff at Sandwich Shoppe Chalong.

Computer Clinics run on Sundays from 10am to noon. They're free, sponsored by the *Phuket Gazette* and Khun Woody's Sandwich Shoppes.

Everybody's welcome, even if you can just barely spell "PC". Bring your questions and don't be bashful!

*Live Wire* is *Phuket Gazette* columnist Woody Leonhard's weekly snapshot of all things internet in Phuket. Follow him on Twitter: @PhuketPC or visit his free computer clinics at Woody's Sandwich Shoppes.



**Live Wire**  
By Woody Leonhard



**3G PHONE HOME:** You can get 3G on Phuket for your smartphone, but only on the west coast. Photo: Wikimedia

# Why Americans should be investing due North

LEX LUTHOR spoke the words "North, miss Teschmacher. Due north," in *Superman II*. However, he was aiming for somewhere more northern than I am. But he did, like me, want to find somewhere he could secure his future and make him rich. While I can't

promise either of these, it may be worth having a quick look at the country north of the United States that many people seem to forget – Canada.

Many Americans are either too loyal to Uncle Sam, too mistrusting of anything non-US or just too



**Island Investor**  
By Graham Macdonald

myopic to realize there is actually a world outside of their country's boundaries. If Americans do not want to risk anything over the water or in a country which does not speak the same language, then Canada may be the option – yes, I know an unfortunate few speak French but it is not their fault! Let's face it, even Warren Buffet is looking abroad these days and if it is good enough for the Sage of Omaha then it should be okay for the rest of us mere mortals.

Let's face it, the S&P500 has only returned just over 11 per cent in the last decade and this is, in reality, only due to the incredible growth between April 2009 and April 2010 ( see graph ) .

More importantly, diversification away from anything to do with the US dollar is vital. As many people know, I am a great believer in not being greedy but always trying to beat the bank. Never before has this been so true. By looking at the multi-manager, multi-asset strategy you should be able to achieve this goal. Personally, I would advocate placing money all over the place – both sectorally and geo-politically. The more fingers you have in as many pies as possible the better.

Despite this, I do understand people's reticence at investing in



Year-on-year growth from the S&P500.

places they do not understand and have the potential to be a lot more volatile than areas closer to home. Canada would seem to be a good solution as it has a different currency, favours wealth preservation and has an economy that is not shot to pieces. I know Canada has just had an election, but at least they do not have generals appearing in the national media denying the possibility of a military coup – not yet anyway.

As David Rosenberg, the Chief Economist and Strategist at Canada's Gluskin Sheff & Associates states, "In my three decades in the forecasting business. I don't remember a time when the upside potential and downside risk to investing in Canada vis-a-vis the USA – from an economic, financial and political standpoint – was as compelling as it is today." There are many reasons for this statement but Rosenberg points to a few salient facts to support his argument: Canada is a net oil exporter; the US is the world's largest oil importer. Canadian employment growth is booming; US employment growth is moribund.

Canadian government finances are fairly solid; US government finances are spiraling out of control. Canadian inflation is tame; US inflation is resurgent.

Americans are not the only people looking to invest in Canada. Last year, almost CA\$ 120 billion came in from abroad and, in January alone, over CA\$ 13bn was invested from overseas.

Rosenberg continues, "The Canadian economy remained strong in the opening months of 2011. It looks like the Canadian economy could outperform the US economy for the second quarter in a row...Canadian manufacturing shipments jumped 4.5 per cent month-over-month in January, the best monthly showing in over a year and a half. The economy has created 84,000 jobs in total in January and February ( adjusted for population, this would be equivalent to about 800,000 US jobs! ) ."

Graham Macdonald, MD of MBMG Group. E: graham@mbmg-international.com. MBMG Group will not accept any liability for errors or omissions in above article

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Apple pie with custard and ice cream



Carlton Club Lamb Chops served with herb mashed potatoes and mushroom wine sauce



One of Namfon's ceramic sculptures



MULTI-TALENTED: Namfon Kanjanasaya designed and operates Ceramic Kitchen.

# Hearty British grub and ceramics

By Bruce Stanley

CERAMIC Kitchen is the latest creative venture by Namfon Kanjanasaya, who directs operations at the family-owned Ceramics of Phuket factory in Cherng Talay. Situated exactly three kilometers from the Heroines' Monument, Namfon decided to open a restaurant with a British-themed menu as part of her sculpture park and ceramics showroom.

"I studied for an advanced degree in electrical engineering in England for four years and really enjoyed English food. I love to cook and developed recipes based on traditional UK cuisine that I offer at Ceramic Kitchen," she said.

The restaurant is set around a tropical garden that displays Namfon's large ceramic sculptures of women. The central pond has a traditional Thai boat she brought from Nakon Pathom with her figures of dancing

women at play accompanying.

Her menu is a delightful surprise for those expecting strict British fare. Snacks include Jamie Oliver's onions, which is a baked onion wrapped in bacon and stuffed with cheddar cheese and herbs ( 160 baht ), and a pate fromage; a home-made cheese delight made from cream cheese, garlic and herbs served with freshly baked brown bread, pickle and salad ( 130 baht ).

All servings at Ceramic Kitchen are generous, especially the England's glory burger with imported tenderloin beef topped with fried bacon, egg and cheddar cheese, served with chips and coleslaw ( 190 baht ).

Namfon has created The tastes found on the menu herself. The Ceramic Kitchen Royal Game Soup features the goodness of venison, lamb, beef, bacon and mushroom in a gravy style broth ( 130 baht ). The Brick Lane fish curry is served with a relish platter, poppadum

and mint yoghurt ( 240 baht ).

There's a full selection of steaks prepared to taste, including an Irish beef roast ( 260 baht ) and a Birmingham beef curry ( 240 baht ). A house specialty is the lamb shanks simmered in olive oil and tomato based jus served with cheese mash and salad ( 395 baht ).

Namfon offers a Thai menu for those who want to sample her local food.

"I'm working on a project on Koh Yao Yai island and I pick up fresh prawns from the local fish-

ermen which I serve grilled or wrapped in thin rice noodles and fried. Our Thai menu has the best of our family's recipes."

The wine list has over 60 mid-range labels, each chosen by Namfon based on what she thinks best matches her menu, with an emphasis on New World wines.

Leave room for dessert as the chocolate pot is said to be the best on Phuket and the fresh apple pie is served with both vanilla ice cream and warm custard.

Every Sunday, Ceramic Kitchen offers an all day special of roast meats, Yorkshire puddings and full English fare for just 250 baht.

"I want families to have an enjoyable place where they can come with their children and enjoy a full English meal on their day off," she said.

When Namfon is not busy creating new recipes for Ceramic Kitchen, she is busy in her studio making new designs for her large ceramic pots and charming sculptures.

## Northern delight in July

IF YOU'RE hungry for northern delights, then don't miss the North Phuket Resorts next offering on the menu coming in July.

Over four nights, four wine dinners hosted by some of the world's best-known winemakers will be held at the JW Marriot Phuket Resort & Spa, SALA Phuket Resort and Spa, Anantara Phuket Villas and the Renaissance Phuket Resort & Spa.

From July 13 to 16, world-renowned winemakers Peter Kelly ( Peter Lehmann, Australia ), Erika Ribaldi ( Marchesi di Frescobaldi Italy ), Peter Lynn ( Majella, Australia ) and Kathy-Lee Bird ( S Valley, New Zealand ), will converge on Mai Khao Beach to showcase their award-winning labels.

Limited tickets are available from 2,200 baht net per person for each private winemaker's dinner, or attend all four evenings for 8,500 baht net per person.

For further information please contact [events@northphuket.com](mailto:events@northphuket.com) or view the website [NorthPhuket.com](http://NorthPhuket.com).

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# Back to school, but which one?

By Steven Layne

IF PHUKET is to become the ASEAN capital of tourism by 2015, we can expect standards – and prices – in all sectors to increase, including education.

As Phuket already boasts one of the highest costs of living in the country, many parents are starting to question whether excellent internationalization will be sustainable. Recently the *Phuket Gazette* reported that during back-to-school season last month, government-run pawnshops made record high profits, as parents hawked their gold to meet rising school costs.

A few months from now, Phuket's handful of international schools will also begin session after summer vacations. As the economic noose appears to be tightening across all tiers of society, one can only wonder what kind of sacrifices the island's more well-off parents will be making this time around.

Whether one's household income is 30,000 baht or three million baht per month, most parents seem to agree that failure is not an option.

From one perspective, our children will embrace the internationalized utopia laid out before them. The richness of cultural diversity will manifest throughout the economy providing an ideal environment to nourish the kind of world view that most parents could only hope for.

Yet on the other side of the coin, many of the heirs of this "promise land" will fall short, without the tools and resources necessary to benefit from such privileges of an international society.

For parents with children in school, or coming of school age,



IN LINE: Deciding which school to send your child in Phuket is no easy task.



STAIRWAY TO LEARNING: There are many options for your child's education.

School	BIS	QSI	PIA	HIS	RPIS	KJ		DS	SS	
Program	UK		US	IB	UK	Montessori	International Program		English Program	
Curriculum	UK		US	IB	UK	Montessori	UK	Thailand	Thailand	Thailand – Singapore
Location	Koh Kaew	Kathu	Thalang	Phuket Town	Rawai	Kathu	Kathu	Phuket Town	Phuket Town	Phuket Town
Y1 / KG3	366000		330000	280000	192000	150100	210000	80000	78800	69700
Y2-4 / G1-3	366000 – 407000		330000	360000	210000	175500	219000	100000	80300	69700
Y5-7 / G4-6	407000 – 427000		330000	410000 – 460000	228000	190500	225000	94000	90900	pending certification
Max class size	24		15-17 – 20	16 – 18			20	25	30	20
Max Grade *	G12/Y13	G12/Y13	G8/Y9	G9/Y10	G6/Y7	G6/Y7	G11/Y12	G6/Y7	G3/Y4	

SCHOOL TABLES: The following schools follow the international academic trimester calendar, tuition covers three terms: BIS, QSI, PIA, HIS, RPIS and KJ (international program). The other schools listed above (KJ, DS and SS English Program) follow the Thai two-term academic system.

the options on the table this year are varied. Here is some insight to what's in store for this Phuket school year.

### GOING PUBLIC

While Thai public schools are the most affordable option, the high student-teacher ratios coupled with the fact that English language communication is a supplemental subject offered several hours a week at best, many parents will not even consider the public route.

Parents who do consider a Thai public school ( or else have no

other option) should be aware of the homeroom system.

A common practice in Thai public schools is for each grade to have one or two "smart" homerooms. The homeroom your child ends up in will typically be the same every year after.

This usually only benefits those who are fortunate to be placed in the smart homeroom who if not physically, certainly psychologically, are set up to succeed in the public school system.

In a system where merit has little to do with a child's abilities, to gain preference over hundreds of other eager parents queuing their child up to benefit from limited public resources, "tea money" is a norm.

### PRIVATE PRIORITIES

With student-centered, English-language instruction in higher demand than ever, the ideal student-to-teacher ratios in private schools provide a better alternative for those who can afford it.

There are a handful of private schools in Phuket which can be classified into three brackets as follows.

### HIGH-END

Fully-fledged international schools based on western curriculums guarantee small classroom sizes led by certified native English-speaking subject teachers. Thai language is typically taught as a

supplementary foreign language as most of the students' first language is not Thai.

These schools run on an international trimester system, with the first term beginning in August, second in January, and a shortened summer term.

Not only are the tuition fees unfeasible by most locals, be prepared to pay extra for VIP lunches, materials, uniforms and transport. Some, but not all, even ask for endowment and/or entrance fees to secure enrollment. This is not much different from the concept of tea money.

### THE MIDDLE PATH

Many Phuket parents simply cannot afford international tuitions, yet still hold language education at the top of their priorities.

To meet such growing demand, many Thai-managed private schools offer "English programs". Typically, this means the curriculum is an English translation of the Thai version.

Core subjects such as English, Science and Math are taught by English speakers, while subjects like Thai, Art and Social Studies are taught in Thai.

As you can see from the table above, Phuket is in no short supply of primary education options to accommodate residents seeking an affordable option. While tuition fees are not a sole indicator of quality, the principles governing a

### Key to schools

- British International School (BIS)
- Quality Schools International Phuket (QSI)
- Phuket International Academy (PIA)
- HeadStart International School (HIS)
- Rawai Progressive International School (RPIS)
- Kajonkietsuksa (KJ)
- Darasamuth Phuket School (DS)
- Sunrays School (SS)

competitive market tend to suggest you will get what you pay for.

### ALTERNATIVES

For parents who can't afford the international or English programs, but who don't want to settle for a Thai program, many public and private schools offer semi-English or mixed-English programs, including: Darasamuth, Kajonkiet, Anuban Phuket, and Wittaya Sathid School.

Subjects taught in English typically include Math and English, while other subjects will be in Thai.

### BRINGING IT HOME

While equal education opportunities may not be abundant in Phuket ( are they anywhere? ) , all parents must be careful not to downplay the importance of the "first school".

Whether one is scraping *satang* or piling up wads of cash to pay for schooling, the foundations of our children's world views ( or lack thereof) start at home, and all the money in the world won't change the fact.

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# Playing the name game

Giving the class register a quick scan can be a confusing experience for native English teachers in Thailand. Here are a few things you need to know about Thai names

GETTING to know your Thai students' nicknames can often lead to better lessons. From nailing the correct pronunciation to understanding the English translation, students will be impressed by their teacher's understanding of Thai language and culture. Accurate pronunciation will also reduce confusion and distraction in your classroom.

The most obvious – and often amusing – meanings of many Thai nicknames are those borrowed from the English language. Names like “Benz, Google, Santa, God, Pepsi, and Pizza” might make us chuckle, but at least we can pronounce them correctly.

The next time your student tells you she likes “Pancake”, she’s probably telling you she likes the superstar Thai actress – not the super-tasty western dessert.

Other sources of potential amusement are Thai nicknames that sound like words we would only utter in certain company – “Porn” being the ultimate example. Although the name conjures up images we won’t mention, “Porn” is a traditional Thai word meaning blessing. The names “Poo” and “Wee” might also have us in stitches, but we should know that “Poo” is an unfortunate transliteration of “Crab” and that “Wee” is the shortened form of many formal names.

And remember that your student named “Fak” (pronounced much more like that famous four-letter word), is named after a common vegetable, not after the English slur.

Veteran teachers in Thailand know all too well that getting a student’s name wrong will be met with giggles from the class.

“Ple” is a name any new teacher in Thailand dreads. On its own, it seems like nonsense, but if you know the name is derived from the English noun, “apple”, as well as Thai pronunciation rules, you’ll correctly pronounce it “Pbeun”.

Spellings such as “Kung” for “Goong”, “Bum” for “Boom” and “Oil” for “Oi” seem crazy, but we

## In the Classroom

By Eric Haeg

can’t go around changing the way names are spelled.

And whatever you do, don’t call “Anus”, “Anus”. The poor little guy’s name hasn’t been transliterated properly and certainly isn’t pronounced as you think it would be. It should be spelled, “Anut”, and this stems from the unique characteristics of the Thai letter *saw seua*. Normally represented by an “s”, it should be represented by a “t” when it’s the final sound in a consonant.

Seemingly simple names create problems due to using the wrong tone. “Yaa” seems like a simple name, but the teacher must ensure “Medicine” isn’t getting called “Grandmother” and that “Mai” isn’t being called “Wood” because his name is “New”.

**Sources of potential amusement are Thai nicknames that sound like words we would only utter in certain company – ‘Porn’ being the ultimate example.**

And remember: Jim is a girl’s nickname as well as slang for part of the female anatomy and the same tone is used for both. If that seems odd, just picture a Thai student learning the nickname for Richard!

A Thai person’s nickname is often an indicator of certain circumstances at birth. “Deuan” is a good indication the person was born under a full moon.

The girls’ name “Maem” is short for “madam” and suggests she looked slightly western at birth. “Ae” (A) or “Neung” (One) will commonly be the first child and sometimes have a twin respectively named “Bee” (B) or “Sawng” (Two).

Other names indicate ethnicity such as “Dtee” and “Mhuay” (common terms for Chinese boys and girls, respectively) or origin, as in “Aeung” (Northern) or “Nien” (Issan). Thai-Muslims will often shorten their Muslim name, but not always.

Even weather conditions at the time of birth can play a role. “Phayu” suggests there was a

strong storm blowing, whereas “Faa” (sky) and “Dao” (star) might indicate clear skies.

It’s important to pronounce a student’s name correctly and the best way to do that is to always ask students to say their names first.

Never assume what you see on paper is how the name should be pronounced.

It can be terribly distracting to everyone when the teacher has no clue how to say a child’s name.



**KNOW YOUR STUDENTS:** Taking the register can be interesting, amusing, or full of potentially insulting cultural faux pas. Photo: Suchart Changate

Take a bit of time and show that you are a considerate and competent teacher who cares about your students and their culture.

But it goes both ways – teachers must make sure that their pupils can pronounce English names properly as well.

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# It's a Patong kinda magic

Looking for a night out in Patong to make you gasp? Here's one place where you can find wonderment and amusement at the same time

By Marc Mulloy

ELEPHANTS are disappearing in Patong, but it has nothing to do with a crack-down, global warming or animal smuggling. It does however have something to do with magic.

When Joe Conrad, billed as Asia's premier magic spectacular, was booked for New Year's Eve 2009-2010 at the Millennium Resort, tickets sold out in just 24 hours, demonstrating the appeal of an international act of his calibre. Joe has over 30 years experience and graduated from the acclaimed Chavez College of Magic.

Given that the nearby Jungceylon Shopping Destination sees up to 25,000 people passing through in a single day, Joe made a decision to relocate his show there on a permanent basis. The custom-built theater, housing US\$ 1.5 million of equipment, is nearing completion on the third floor and will comfortably seat 701 people – although how they get the elephant up there remains a mystery.

The 75-minute family-friendly show opened last weekend and was a huge success. It will be



Phuket's Coco the clown

performed on a daily basis at 6:30pm and 8:30pm. Although primarily aimed at tourists, with prices set at 900 baht for adults and 600 baht for children under the age of 12, Phuket residents will have the opportunity to see the illusionist at a special local rate.

"We're embracing the local community too and will give a 30 per cent discount to locals and expats who can provide some proof that they live or work here," said Mr Conrad.

"At the other end of the scale we also have a VIP option where, for a 250 baht supplement, those in the first five rows center stage will get a VIP kit, be able to meet me back-stage and have a photo opportunity with the animals" he added.

Apart from the baby elephant, Joe's menagerie includes macaws ( that transform into women ), ducks, doves, parakeets and other exotic birds.

The show also features birds of a different feather with five exotic dancers, one of whom is sawn in half every night with a huge chainsaw and presumably put back together again for the next show.

Another assistant takes part in the highest levitation act



MAGICAL: Joe Conrad is winning hearts and minds in Patong with his magic show.

anywhere in the world – rising to a height of five meters with no wires or cables of any kind!

"There are altogether about 70 people involved in the show which is also good for the local community as it creates jobs," said Mr Conrad.

"My team and I will also be involved in local community work and aim to put on shows for local schools and charities," he added.

Another first for Phuket is Joe Conrad's "Magic Box", a magic store that sells everything from classic magic kits and biodegradable balloons to LED encrusted umbrellas and T-shirts.

In charge of the store is Phuket's own Coco the magical clown, who is excited at being able to pass on a few tricks to the public.

"We have something for every budget and now magicians don't have to go to Bangkok to buy their gear. We also have a lot of 'bling bling' that should prove popular with the Patong crowd as we have LED and fiber optic belt buckles, umbrellas and T-shirts," enthused Coco.



QUACKERS: Ducking out for a quick snuggle.

All in all it now looks as though a magical holiday in Phuket can now be achieved whether it is raining or not and even more people will get to see a real Asian elephant... until it disappears that is.



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HOLDING TALENT: Joe Conrad and his assistant. Photos: Joe Conrad and Marc Mulloy

# Martin Holmes

MARTIN Holmes is General Manager of Lee Marine, said to be Thailand's largest marine brokerage, with headquarters at Phuket's Boat Lagoon marina. He has been working with Josh Lee, founder of the company, since they launched it in 1997.

"I first came to work on Phuket with Sunsail in the summer of 1997, but I really didn't like living so far away from Europe and the Mediterranean. I resigned after a few months and planned to find work back in the Med, but Josh approached me and offered me the opportunity to work with him in setting up the business. I was intrigued at the prospects as Phuket was becoming more recognized in the international yachting community as a great destination. So I stayed, and 14 years later I have a very nice life on the island."

Martin spent his first 16 years in Birmingham in Central England. His family then moved to Norfolk on England's largest inland waterway. He started working at boatyards during his school holidays.

"I was fascinated by sailing. One day when I was still 16 I was invited to join the crew of a three-masted tall ship which belonged to the Sail Training Association. The boat carried 60 people to Amsterdam, Scotland and back to London over two weeks. I recall it was cold, foggy and miserable, but I loved the experience."

He was invited back as a watch

**EXPAT**  
gallery  
By Bruce Stanley

leader on a second trip and his love of sailing was established.

After finishing school, he spent the next couple of years traveling around Southeast Asia and Australia. He volunteered for six months in Sydney on the HMS Bounty, which gave tours of the harbor, before returning to Portsmouth, England where he obtained a Royal Yachting Association certificate which allowed him to captain boats up to 24 meters.

"I really wanted to see the world so I applied to the world's largest sailing holiday company, Sunsail, who hired me to work in the South of France rigging boats that were going to sail around the Mediterranean."

Martin stayed with Sunsail for the next few years. He worked as a cruising instructor on the Greek island of Paxos and was later promoted to flotilla captain and reassigned to Marmaris, Turkey.

"I had a fantastic couple years in the Eastern Med. I was on the lead boat of a flotilla of 10 and we led one and two week sailing holidays around the islands. We had to deal with every problem you can imagine, from engine breakdowns to sick sailors."

By 1997, he was ready for a home on land. He wanted a car, a bathtub and a wardrobe. Sunsail sent him to Thailand to prepare boats for charter.

"When I joined Josh at Lee Marine in 1997, we started with a fax machine and a laptop where we could list boats for sale. It was a steep learning curve. We only sold four or five boats that first year but soon the numbers doubled.

"Even though we were facing import taxes of over 200 per cent, we sold our first new boat in 1998 as the market was beginning to discover Phuket.

"Over the past fourteen years, we've grown dramatically and introduced new brands of power yachts to the local market. We started with the Riviera and each year we have brought a new brand to our inventory to give a full spectrum of what is available."

Martin travels to shipyards in Australia, Italy and Germany to inspect construction of boats ordered by his customers and represents Lee Marine at the major boat shows in the Mediterranean.

"There is a busy market for those wanting to sell their yachts and for those wanting to buy. So business is good now."

He married Oraphan in 2008 and spends much of his time enjoying their young son Mason. And on weekends you'll often find him sailing at the Ao Chalong Yacht Club.



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, ah, 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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# Pirates cruise on stale tides

RECENTLY released *Pirates of the Caribbean: On Stranger Tides* could have easily earned the subtitle *On Stale Tides*, because it's all "been there, done that" regurgitated Hollywood fodder. Even Johnny Depp confessed he's tired of playing the now iconic role of Jack Sparrow.

Audiences, however, are signaling that stale pirates are better than no pirates. Not only did *On Stranger Tides* have the best opening of any film so far this year, its international debut was the best in history, raking in US\$ 256 million in its opening weekend.

This will undoubtedly give Disney more than enough reasons to go ahead with a fifth installment. But considering that much of the production on the Pirates films now begin before a script even exists, there's no reason to expect anything more than the mediocrity provided by the latest installment.

There's nothing in *On Stranger Tides* that fans have not already seen. It begins with intense music and an action scene, then lines up similar scenes like dominoes. They fall one-by-one as a story desperately tries to fit itself in, but it feels like any character development in the film was a nuisance to the filmmakers.

## Film

By Scott Phillips

### Pirates of the Caribbean: On Stranger Tides

**Director:** Rob Marshall

**Starring:** Johnny Depp, Penelope Cruz, Geoffrey Rush, Ian McShane

**Genre:** Action/Adventure

**Gazette Rating:** 2.5/5

The story is a search for the fountain of youth. The King of England wants it, the Spanish monarchy wants it, and pirates want it. Jack Sparrow, true to his insouciant nature, is kind of indifferent to the fountain, but is at the center of the search for it anyway. So is Barbossa ( Rush ), who has been commissioned by King George to lead a ship to find the fountain first.

Two new additions are the legendary pirate Blackbeard ( McShane ) and the mysterious Angelica ( Cruz ), who provides a sub-plot in the form of a past with Sparrow. Depp and Cruz have a bit more chemistry than they did as the cocaine kingpin and his



**IN DEPP WATERS:** Johnny Depp returns as Jack Sparrow alongside new addition to the 'Pirates' franchise, Penelope Cruz.

anorexic wife in 2001's *Blow*, and it adds a splash of fun dialogue. But don't expect too much romance to come from Sparrow, with his excessive eyeliner and super-feminine stride.

The two romantic heroes – Will Turner and Elizabeth Swan – are gone. They've been replaced by a cheap romance between a minister and a mermaid. It's a forbidden

romance, of course, because mermaids in this movie are actually vicious bloodsuckers that lure in sailors with their lustful glances. They don't really want romance – they want to eat the men. What a clever twist.

The mermaid is necessary to the story. In order for the fountain of youth to work, its water needs to be mixed with a mermaid's tear.

Leave it to Disney to come up with a plot that requires characters to extract a tear from something trying to eat them.

Last but not least, there's the 3D aspect. Suffice to say there are a few too many scenes that a character pokes his or her sword at the camera. I didn't feel like I was "inside" the action, about to get stabbed. I felt like there was a fly in my face that needed to be swatted.

Is all this puff what audiences want? The numbers from the opening weekend scream "yes", and it seems 18<sup>th</sup> century comedy-action involving pirates is a shoe-in for box office success.

Loyal fans, however, are typically the first to admit the original Pirates was fun because of the camaraderie. It was similar, though inferior, to the characters in the original *Star Wars*, bringing together an unlikely bunch of characters – all with their own amiable traits – to create a fun and entertaining dynamic as they embarked on out-of-this-world adventures.

That fun has been missing from the Pirates series since the first film. Sure, two, three and now four, have proven to be successful sequels, but they won't hold the admiration of fans the way the first one did.

## US director 'Cannes' the Palme d'Or gong

US-BORN director Terrence Malick won the highly coveted Palme d'Or award for best film last Sunday at the 2011 Cannes Film Festival for a movie about a Midwestern family in the 1950s.

*The Tree Of Life*, starring Brad Pitt and Sean Penn, was one of 20 films vying for the Palme d'Or, one of the most prestigious awards in cinema.

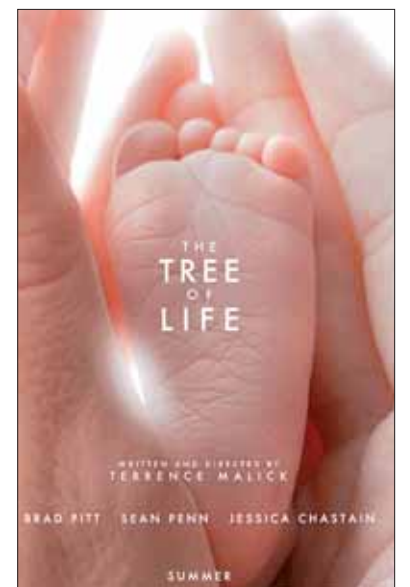
"We felt that the size, the importance and the intention [of the film] served to fit the prize," said actor Robert De Niro, who headed up the nine-person jury.

But the reclusive 67-year-old director was not on hand to accept the prize. Malick has rarely given a press interview over a movie career spanning more than four decades. He has directed, among other films, *The Thin Red Line* and *Badlands*.

The last US film to win the coveted Palme d'Or was Michael Moore's satirical documentary *Fahrenheit 9/11* in 2004.

Korean filmmaker Kim Ki-Duk and German director Andreas Dresen shared the top prize in one of the festival's main sections.

While Kim Ki-Duk won the main prize in the Un Certain Regard sidebar for his movie's self portrait *Arirang*, Dresen was awarded the honor for *Halt Auf Frei* ( Stopped on Track ) about a



**BIG WINNER:** 'The Tree of Life'

man suffering from cancer who is coming to terms with the prospect of death.

The festival's Un Certain Regard is aimed at promoting new and emerging filmmakers.

Headed by Serbian director Emir Kusturica, the Un Certain Regard jury gave a special jury prize to Russia's Andrey Zvyagintsev for *Elena* and honored imprisoned Iranian director Mohammad Rasoulof with a best director award for *Au Revoir* ( Good Bye ) . Rasoulof's wife accepted the award on his behalf.

– The Nation



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### May 26-31. ICC Megasale

ICC International Company Limited, has a new men's apparel collection comprised of many leading brands for you at the megasale, which will be held May 26 to June 8, on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor Grand Hall, Central Festival Phuket from 10:30am to 10pm. Contact Siromanee at T:076-291111 E:KoSiromanee@central.co.th or visit W:centralfestival.co.th.

### May 28 & June 4. Saturday brunch at Two Chefs Kata

Every Saturday Two Chefs proudly presents their brunch with a Scandinavian touch from noon to 3pm. Eat all you can for only 395 baht. Add only another 300 baht and you can drink as much as you want from the wide choice of free-flowing beverages. During each brunch, MJ & Megan provide the enter-

## June 2-4. Primary FOBISSEA Games at BIS



As a member of the Federation of British International Schools in South East Asia (FOBISSEA), BIS Phuket is proud to host this year's primary FOBISSEA games from June 2 to 4, from 7:30am to 5pm. About 288 primary school athletes from Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia are expected to attend the games to compete in four disciplines: swimming, track & field, t-ball and football.

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tainment with their lovely voices. Contact Two Chefs in Kata at T: 076-330065 E:katacenter@twochefs.com or visit W:twochefs.com.

### May 28 - June 3. Kalim Kinetic Art Fair

The Kalim Kinetic Art Fair will be held from May 28 to June 3, from 4pm to 1am, and will showcase the talent in Phuket to promote the creativity, imagination and inventive skills of children and adults alike. Brush Restaurant along with the Underwood Factory has asked schools and companies to design their own kinetic

art sculpture to be displayed at Brush from June 1-25. Anyone who cannot produce their own piece can submit their design by the end of May to have it produced by the Underwood Factory. Then, on June 25, a finale event will unfold at Brush to display all finished pieces along with a performance by Panatta Design. Contact Able Wanamakok at T:076-340348 E:info@awpr-phuket.com or visit W:facebook.com/brushphuket.

### May 28. Top DJ at IndoChine Surin Beach Club: Stereolab

From 9.30pm to 2.30am at Indochine Beach Club, Surin Beach. DJ Frank Richards from Las Vegas will take to the decks. He has been a mainstay of house music in his hometown since 1992 and a major force in Vegas nightlife. DJ Frank has played around the world, including Bangkok's Q Bar. Contact Giuseppe Viva at T:076-380800 E:pepe@indochinephuket.com or visit W:indochine-group.com.

### May 30. Ctes du Rhne Wine Dinner

Walk along the Rhne Valley Wine Dinner at Mom Tri's Kitchen at Villa Royale, in Kata Noi. There will be a five-course dinner on offer, accompanied by five differ-

ent wines. Main course is: coffee & herb crusted rack of lamb, sweet potato dauphinoise, sauteed chanterelle and local mushrooms. Price: 1,800 baht ++ per guest (exclusive of tax and service charge). From 7pm to 10:30pm. Contact Sylvie Y at T:076-333569 E:pr@villaroyalephuket.com or visit W:villaroyalephuket.com/cr.

### June 3 and 17. Curry Fridays

Curry Friday is held every fortnight. Here is your chance to enjoy a lavish Indian curry buffet. Selections include all-time favorites chicken tikka masala, very hot mutton vindaloo, juicy kebabs, goan fish curry, chickpea curry and much more. Served with nan bread and basmati rice. All you can eat for only 449 baht nett. Draught by the glass just 50 baht nett. Spe-

cial discount on beverages. Venue: Navrang Mahal India Restaurant at Karon Sea Sands Resort & Spa. Time: 7pm to 11:30pm. Reservations call: 076-286464 ext 4.

### June 8. Tex Mex Wednesday at Two Chefs in Karon

Welcome to Tex Mex at Two Chefs Karon. For only 495 baht you can enjoy however much you want from our big Tex Mex buffet, which is probably the biggest Tex Mex buffet in Phuket, from 6pm to 2am. We also have live music and good prices on drinks. Yes, that's right, only 495 baht. Contact Two Chefs in Karon at T: 076-286479 E:karon@twochefs.com or visit W:twochefs.com.

### June 12. Laguna Phuket International Marathon

Have some friendly fun in the sun! The marathon course is set along to the beautiful coast of Phuket. It runs from 4:30am to 12pm, and takes in a typical Thai village market, a rubber plantation, beach and sea views as well as stretching along buffalo-plowed rice fields - before finishing in the resort of Laguna Phuket in the North West of the Island. Contact Roman Floesser at T:02-2362931 E:info1@phuketmarathon.com or visit W:phuketmarathon.com.

### June 17. Phuket Property Dot Com Pro Am Invitational

Phuket's first charity pro am golf event was launched last year and following the success of the inaugural event, it will take place again this year at the Laguna Phuket Golf Club from 8.30am to 11am. This is your chance to play with the pros. Up to 30 touring pros from the Asian Tour and OneAsia tours will be taking part. A great day of golf followed by a gala dinner at B-Lay Tong Resort. Contact Graham Haslam at T: 087-2791230 E:golf@phukethasbeengoodtous.org or visit W:ProAm-Phuket.com.

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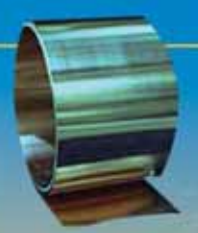
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# For the love of Soi Dog

THE SOI Dog Foundation's event at the Evason last Sunday enjoyed near perfect coastal conditions for their drive to raise awareness and funds in the hope of continuing their work on Phuket.

Land that is currently being rented and used by the foundation will be sold unless five million baht can be raised to purchase the plot.

John and Jill Dalley, founders of the foundation, were very pleased with Sunday's turn out and hope that efforts will now increase to save the foundation.

"It's been a fantastic day and we hope to keep the ball rolling for the foundation and our operations on the island," John said.

"It would be a terrible shame to have to leave Phuket, but if the land can't be bought then we have no other option," he said.

Stephen Bridges, the former British Ambassador to Cambodia, was there to offer support for the event.

"The foundation is a fantastic organization. I'm a big fan of their work. My hope is that people who love dogs will help with this situation. Everyone should appreciate the work they do and the sacrifices John and Jill make," said Mr Bridges.

Those who attended the event thoroughly enjoyed a wide selection of buffet dishes with free-flow drinks. Entertainment was provided by several DJs and a trio of acrobats from the theater restaurant of Palazzo in Kathu.

For more information on how to support the Soi Dog Foundation and their work in Phuket, visit [W:soidog.org](http://W:soidog.org).



Soi Dog Foundation founders John and Jill Dalley



Photos: Dean Noble

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Phuket is attracting some of the world's superstar DJs. Adam Matson got the crowd moving last Saturday at Patong's Seduction nightclub. DJ Adam grew up in Mallorca near the Caf del Mar scene and added dance music he picked up on his travels around the Caribbean, North Africa and the Americas. On Koh Samui, he's based at the Ark Bar Beach Party on Chaweng Beach and is also a resident DJ at Beach Republic at Lamai Beach. But he loves flying over to Phuket to make the scene for special occasions.



# On top of Kee Resort

The new 1.2 billion baht Kee Resort & Spa recently hosted the "Absolut Kee Sunset Party" to officially launch its hotel, shopping and entertainment complex. Guests partied at the resort's Sky Lounge, and enjoyed traditional dance performances, fashion shows and live music performances.



## Visiting the Vijitt

The Vijitt Resort in Rawai welcomed the Meier's hotel inspection group earlier this month. A few days earlier, hotel manager Peerawut Kunchorn, also hosted a Cathay Pacific 'fam trip'.

**YOUR  
Phuket**



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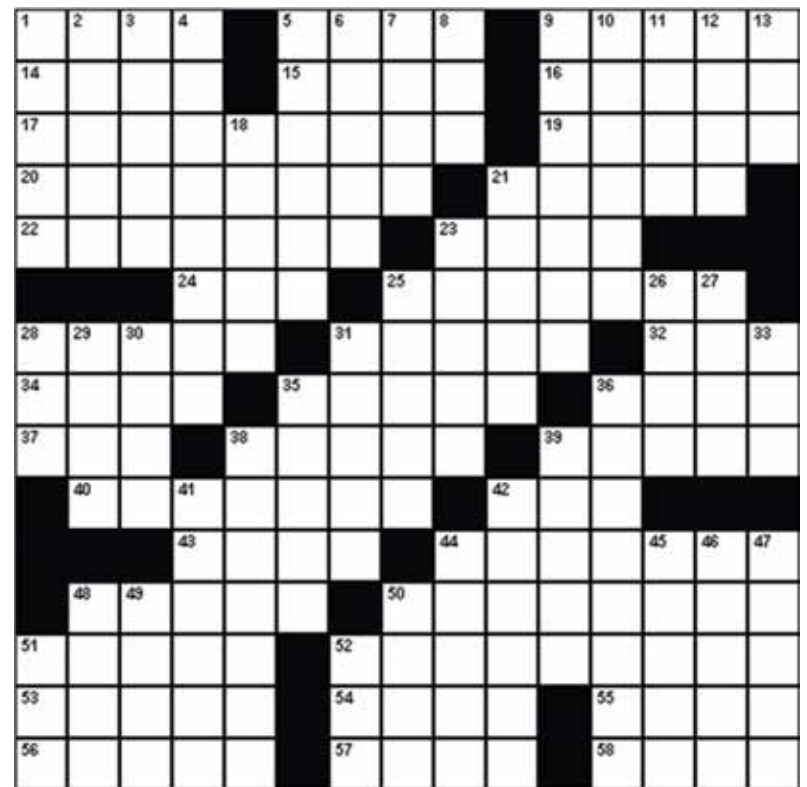
# The Impossibly Possible Quiz

1. Carl and the Passions changed their band name to what?
2. How many rings are on the Olympic flag?
3. What color is vermilion a shade of?
4. King Zog ruled which country?
5. What color is Spock's blood?
6. Where on your body is your patella?
7. Where can you find London Bridge today?
8. What is mixed with ginger beer in a Moscow Mule?
9. Who was the first man in space?
10. What would you do with a Yashmak?
11. Who betrayed Jesus to the Romans?
12. Which mammal lays eggs?
13. In a popular television show, what was Flipper?
14. Who was the lead singer of band The Quarrymen?
15. What was the name of the most successful Grand National horse?
16. Who starred as the Six Million Dollar Man?

Quiz answers on page 39

- Across**
1. Folk singer Phil
  5. American space agency
  9. "Barnaby Jones" star
  14. Cat's nail
  15. Keats creations
  16. First prime minister of India
  17. Bullfighters
  19. Moan
  20. Eland
  21. Forest make-up
  22. Most profound
  23. Bark of a dog
  24. Anger
  25. Malformed animal
  28. Hard stone
  31. Goddess of tillage
  32. Fly catcher
  34. "Consarn it!"
  35. Negates
  36. Actress Rowlands
  37. Cabinet department
  38. Paddled
  39. Mike Meyer's friend in Wayne's World
  40. Fawning
  42. Darlin'
  43. Ethereal
  44. Gangplank
  48. Capital of Ghana
  50. Body of airplane
  51. Benefit
  52. Continent SE of Asia
  53. Brainy bunch
  54. Network of nerves
  55. Devices for fishing
  56. Rascal
  57. Co-founder of PayPal \_ \_ \_ Musk
  58. "Darn!"

- Down**
1. Group of eight
  2. Doppelganger
  3. Poker Flat chronicler
  4. Decisive
  5. Jointed or knobby at intervals
  6. Take as one's own
  7. Shrivelled, without moisture
  8. Donkey
  9. Absorb




10. Deprived
11. Foot covering
12. Ages
13. Convent dweller
18. Attentive, warning of danger
21. Shades
23. Earth
25. Donnybrook
26. Large jug or pitcher
27. 1996 Tony-winning musical
28. Rx watchdog
29. Falls behind
30. As to
31. Like Shirley Temple's hair

33. Exclamation of contempt
35. Currency unit in Nigeria
36. Criminal underworld
38. Imbricate
39. Dead duck
41. Intolerance
42. Hurry
44. Relish
45. Strong Australian horse
46. Heartburn
47. Brewer's need
48. Opposite of sans
49. Injectable diazepam, in military lingo
50. Combustible matter
51. Early hrs.
52. 100 square meters


Provided by BestCrosswords.com. Used with permission.

Crossword answers on page 39


**GEMINI (May 22-June 21):**

 Some Geminis will have to work harder this week as a business rival is forecast to move into the fast lane. The stars predict that you will know the right moment to take risks and the month of May is forecast to end on a productive note. Those with a birthday in the week ahead will enjoy calmer romantic relationships in the coming year.

**CANCER (June 22-July 23):**

 Problems with communication at work can best be solved by a brainstorming session. The stars suggest that Cancerians will find the right words to say on Wednesday or Thursday. Your luck with money is affected by uncertain astral conditions; mistakes are highlighted to be made on Monday. Love is in the air mid-week when an earth sign is predicted to appreciate your flirtation.

**LEO (July 24-August 22):**


 Erratic energy could put those born under the sign of Leo at a disadvantage this week. The stars advise to concentrate on what you know you can do well and leaving more challenging tasks

until you feel more organized. Another fire sign friend's personal problems will affect you if you allow them to. Monday is an auspicious day for an honest discussion about this situation.

**VIRGO (August 23-September 23):**


 Extra creativity gives those born under the sign of Virgo the edge this week. Achieving goals is highlighted to help you end the month of May in good spirits. The stars suggest that keeping feelings to yourself could cause ripples in a romantic relationship. There are signs that a partner is ready to meet you halfway – make compromise your main aim.

**LIBRA (September 24-October 23):**

 Adjusting to changing circumstances is forecast to be an issue during the month of June. A water sign is forecast to suggest a way for Librans to capitalize on their skills this week and you may consider a radical change of career. Cupid is on your side when trying to make a romantic impression on a fire sign. Those already in a committed relationship could find their partner's enthusiasm for travel plans overwhelming.

**YOUR horoscope**  
By Isla Star

**SCORPIO (October 24-November 22):**

 Too much worrying could cramp Scorpios' style this week. The stars predict that unresolved issues may take a little longer to be sorted out. In the meantime, your skills can be put to good use by trying something different in the world of work. Another water sign is ready to give useful pointers this weekend. Your chances of romance with a fire sign could be affected by the reappearance of an old flame.

**SAGITTARIUS (November 23-December 21):**

 Taking action brings respect for Sagittarians in the world of work. The stars suggest that your innovative approach to solving problems will result in a happy conclusion. As the month of June commences your financial outlook benefits from a clearer astral atmosphere. However, sharing your secrets of success too freely is not recommended. In the realm of romance, Capricorn is

ready for more commitment, but a water sign is easily distracted.


**CAPRICORN (December 22-January 20):**

 A work colleague's inability to take matters seriously could be frustrating for many Capricorns. The most auspicious days to get to grips with this matter are Wednesday and Thursday. Another earth sign is ready to support your efforts to improve this situation. Those who are unsure about where a romance is going will take heart from information received this weekend.

**AQUARIUS (January 21-February 19):**


 The stars predict that Aquarians will be making new friends during June, some of whom could become very important in their lives. Business opportunities are forecast to expand and life will be more rewarding than it has been in May. Opening up your heart too early in a relationship could cause an air sign to take distance this week. Aquarians are advised to play it cool until the romantic picture becomes clearer.

**PISCES (February 20-March 20):**

 It appears that someone close to you is on the verge of moving

to distant shores. Pisceans who are finding this difficult to accept are forecast to find consolation in a busier social scene during June. Where your earning capacity is concerned, the stars advise that fresh potential is coming closer. An earth sign should be able to give worthwhile advice this weekend.

**ARIES (March 21-April 20):**

 Arians who got hold of the wrong end of the stick last week could still be busy putting things right. The stars suggest that the month of June will bring clearer understanding and smoother progress at work. Take time out this weekend to enjoy nature and simple pleasures. Those who are single could find that another fire sign has similar interests.

**TAURUS (April 21-May 21):**

 A low-key start to June could lead Taureans to believe that this will be a non-eventful month. The stars suggest otherwise, with emphasis on unexpected progress in the world of work. Your creative talents are highlighted to be in demand and an approach made this week will set the scene for future success. Cupid keeps the wheels spinning for a romance with a water sign, but chasing after Sagittarius will be playing with fire.



# PROPERTY Gazette

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## Korean investors bid for light rail transport system

The latest update in the light rail project

By Pimwara Choksakulpan

PHUKET Governor Tri Augkaradacha received yet another delegation expressing interest in developing a light rail system on the island earlier this month.

Kwang Sik Chun, Chairman & CEO of Korean firm Jung Yong Development Corp ( JYDC ) , said his company would like to invest in the project, starting with a pre-feasibility study on the two proposed routes: from Chalong Circle to Phuket Airport, and from the airport to

the International Convention and Exhibition Center ( ICEC ) in Mai Khao.

A co-operative venture between JYDC and an American company has earmarked a US\$ 4 billion fund for the project and is prepared to use part of it to conduct an initial project study, said Mr Kwang.

Researchers could begin the study as soon as a memorandum of understanding ( MoU ) was signed, he said.

Mr Kwang invited a Phuket

**‘JYDC wants to create a light rail system [in Phuket] with safety and the environment in mind’**

**– Kwang Sik Chun**



**DOWN TO BUSINESS:** Phuket Governor Tri Augkaradacha (left) discusses the light rail options with Kwang Sik Chun, CEO of Korean firm Jung Yong Development Corp. Photos: Pimwara Choksakulpan

delegation to visit Korea to see first-hand other projects already completed by the firm before inking any deal.

He noted that Phuket officials signing a contract with JYDC would mark his company’s first endeavor in Thailand.

It would not be the company’s first international venture, however.

JYDC has built a cement plant and developed a golf course in Vietnam, and constructed a dam in Pakse province in Laos, he said.

“Phuket has good potential for us to expand our business,” said Mr Kwang.

“JYDC wants to create a light rail system with safety and the environment in mind,” he said.



One of the Korean investment partners at the meeting earlier this month.

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# Pattaya not a dirty word



**PATTAYA PEAKS:** The property market in Pattaya is on the up. Contrary to popular opinion, Pattaya has many opportunities for investment. Photo: J Bremer

THERE was a time not long ago when just saying the “P-word”, “Pattaya”, would cause your audience to recoil like a yo-yo.

Mere mention of the word would conjure up visions of debauchery and booze-soaked nights that made Gary Glitter seem worthy of an outstanding citizen’s award.

The only thing Phuket and Pattaya seemed to have in common was that they both started with the same letter.

Now there’s nothing wrong with a bit of naughtiness, but the eastern seaboard city definitely took the prize for Asia’s capital of sleaze.

Recently, when I was qualifying a working trip to Pattaya, I found myself clearing my throat, uttering disclaimers and pleading out “Urgh, it was for business,” as eyebrows were raised by others. “No, seriously,” I added rather lamely, turning to flee the idle chat.

But truth be known, Pattaya has been evolving for quite a number of years into what could



**Property Watch**

By Bill Barnett

be the second city of Thailand.

Its roots go back to 1978, when it was created into a special administrative area similar to Bangkok. That is when it became one of only two areas in the country which enjoyed a degree of political and economic self-determination.

Of course many know the history of Pattaya as an “R&R” center during the Vietnam war. Though, as you may have noticed, the 60s and 70s are long past.

With the expressway that today connects Bangkok and Pattaya, travel time is a mere 90 minutes. From Suvarnabhumi International Airport it’s even less.

To top it off, U-Tapao International Airport in Pattaya is able to accommodate domestic, international and charter flights.

Over the past 36 months as

prices in the Bangkok property market continued to skyrocket, Pattaya’s own real estate sector has been a steady achiever.

One of the key drivers of this was the opening of the Central Festival shopping mall in 2009. As Southeast Asia’s largest ocean-front retail center, Thais from Bangkok and elsewhere began to arrive in droves.

Suddenly Pattaya was coming of age, with new branded hotels such as Sheraton, Holiday Inn, Centara and most recently Hilton, arriving.

With nearly 45,000 condominium units – according to Colliers International Thailand – and consistent absorption rates, the market has a healthy mix of domestic and foreign buyers.

Of course there is the mass market argument, with the destination receiving an estimated seven million visitors a year. While this number includes Bangkokians and certainly the new tourism darlings of the moment, Chinese and Russians, ultimately the surge still comes down to selling hotel rooms and property. Indeed the winds of change have smiled on Pattaya.

There remains much speculation about the growth of nearby industrial zones.

Some analysts are saying that this would push commercial and office markets from infancy into development mode and spur some companies to actually relocate from Bangkok to Pattaya.

Of course the bar district remains as it has been so keenly known. Driving through town at 9am in the morning I could not help but be amused by the assortment of characters seen bellying up to the bar with a beer in one hand and a coffee in the other. Old habits die hard.

As for the two “Ps”, Pattaya and Phuket, in reality they are chalk and cheese. Phuket remains far more dependent on tourism and does not have the locational advantage of being a catchment for domestic property buyers its eastern seaboard cousin does.

Though both do have similar mass-hotel issues share the classic struggle between quality versus quantity, which looks to dominate our horizon for the decade ahead. It should be quite a storyline to follow as the two P’s find their own respective pathways.

Bill Barnett is Managing Director of C9 Hotelworks and can be contacted through [www.c9hotelworks.com](http://www.c9hotelworks.com).

## In brief...

### Waterpark wars: Phuket vs Pattaya

PATTAYA’S surging tourism market is set to have a new attraction when the Ramayana Waterpark opens late next year.

The project, which is touted to be Southeast Asia’s largest water attraction, is being developed by a Russian group together with an experienced Canadian firm.

While Phuket’s Splash Jungle has received mixed reviews, the Pattaya project will benefit from a far larger catchment of tourists and its close proximity to urban Bangkok’s large population base.

### South Patong sprouts new project

THE southern headland of Patong’s entertainment district is developing as Patong continues to burst at the seams with development.

Another new residential project, the 66-unit Jade Condominium, is looking to attract both domestic and foreign buyers with splendid views of Patong Bay.

Featuring one and two bedroom units, the penthouses offer private pools.

Prices start at 6.5 million baht, and sizes range from 65 to 183 square meters.

### Patong Ocean View Condos from B3.9mn

PATONG’S low-price condo surge is continuing with The Charm Residence offering an entry price of 3.9 million baht.

Located at the north end of the beach road, the 246-unit project offers completed studio units.

A 10 per cent guaranteed return is available for the first year only. Facilities include underground parking, a swimming pool and restaurant.

### 2010 Luxury Villa Update release

C9 HOTELWORKS has released their 2010 Luxury Villa Update. It explains what spurred property resales and why there was a pivotal shift in buyer’s profile last year. To download the update visit [W:phuketinsider.com](http://W:phuketinsider.com)



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## Phuket still luxury villa hub of Southeast Asia

WEALTHY foreigners prefer Phuket over Vietnam and Bali for second-home purchases, according to a prominent international real estate consultancy.

Speaking at a seminar in Phuket recently, David Simister, Chairman of CB Richard Ellis (CBRE) Thailand chapter was optimistic about the island's recovering villa estate market.

Citing a study conducted by his firm, he said there was a substantial increase in transactions and inquires during the first quarter of 2011 compared to the previous year.

As a result of the global financial crisis, villa sales in Phuket had slowed during the period from 2008 through the third quarter of 2010. However, there was no negative impact reflected in Phuket property values, which remained steady during that period, he said.

When compared to other markets in Southeast Asia, Phuket continues to be a preferred location among foreigners seeking to buy ocean-view leisure homes, especially high-end, luxury villas, he said.

While many new developments have emerged in Vietnam, most of the sales there have been to domestic buyers, Mr Simister said.

Bali is often considered Phuket's prime contender in terms of tourism, but the volume of wealthy foreigners seeking property there does not compare, he added.

While whole-unit villa sales remain relatively low, compared to pre-crisis period, he pointed out a shift in customers' preference to buy completed "resale" units as opposed to projects which have yet to be built or are currently under construction.

Mr Simister added that projects managed and branded under reputable hotel brands have experienced the most success.

Andara villa units, for example, have grossed the highest sales in Phuket lately, he said.

Accounting this to their reputation for quality, luxury and close attention to detail and standard, he reiterated the importance of such factors for high-end buyers.

Ocean-view units on the west coast remained highest in demand, while an increasing number of buyers were seeking ocean view property north of the island in Phang Nga, he added.

- *Krungthep Thurakij*

# Absolute win

THE accolades continue for the Absolute World Group – one of Asia's leading property developers, resort and hotel operators – who were three-time winners at the recent global Perspective Magazine Awards, held at the closing Gala of the GNEX 2011 conference in the Bahamas.

The Perspective Magazine Awards are organized by Perspective magazine, the market-leading independent magazine for the global shared-ownership resorts industry.

Following a nine-month search for the best in the global shared ownership industry, the Absolute World Group were announced winners of "Best Fractional Resort" for The Beach Samui, their private residence club on the Southern shores of Thailand's Koh Samui. The resort was conceptualized by world-leading design team Yoo, now reaching over 30 per cent off plan sales. The group also won "Best Fractional Unit" – the Absolute Bangla Suites, Absolute's fractional ownership resort, located in the heart of Patong.

Charlotte Rose Melsom, the group's London-based Global Director of Brand Development, was announced winner of the "Best Marketing Professional" award for her and her team's



**ABSOLUTE WINNERS:** From left are Svetlana Kostromitina, VP of Sales; Vladimir Sucevan, COO; Charlotte Rose Melsom, Global Director of Brand Development; and Bryan Lunt, Chairman & CEO.

continued work over the past two years in refining all Absolute products and raising the company to unprecedented levels.

Absolute World Group were up against some of the leading hospitality brands in the world, with the inaugural awards

attracting over 160 entries across 20 categories. Entrants were initially voted for by their industry peers, in a unique and transparent "social media" style first round.

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# A lazy gardener's delight

The crown of thorns, or *euphorbia millii*, is a succulent plant that doesn't require much attention.

WHEN the word "succulent" is used, it is usually applied to juicy, delicious fruit such as ripe mangoes, oranges, or pineapples.

But for horticulturists, the word has very different connotations: it refers to so-called "fat plants" that store water in their leaves, stems, roots or bulbs.

These plants have an unrivaled capacity for retaining moisture, and, like the proverbial camel, can thereby survive in arid, desert-like conditions. Naturally, most of them grow in hot climates, where water shortages and dry soil conditions are the norm.

Many of them exhibit their "succulence" by possessing swollen stems, or thick, leathery leaves and outer skin.

If precipitation falls on these waxy leaves, it often stays there as drops – rather like water on a newly polished car – slowing the process of evaporation.

Half an hour after watering there can still be droplets of rainwater on the leaves of a crown of



**Gardening**  
By Patrick Campbell

thorns (*euphorbia millii*), for example.

*Euphorbias* are one of the largest genera of succulents, rivaled only by the cacti. So let's initially concentrate on them.

*Euphorbias* are often confused with cacti, especially the tropical and usually prickly varieties. All contain a

poisonous and milky sap which is typically white and sticky – very much like the latex that oozes from rubber trees.

This sap is particularly resistant to evaporation. If you cut off a section of stem, sap will exude from the wound like blood, but will as quickly coagulate and prevent further dehydration of the parent plant.

Most are armed with sharp spines, hence the occasional confusion with cacti.

These not only provide a formidable line of defense, but help retain a degree of humidity in

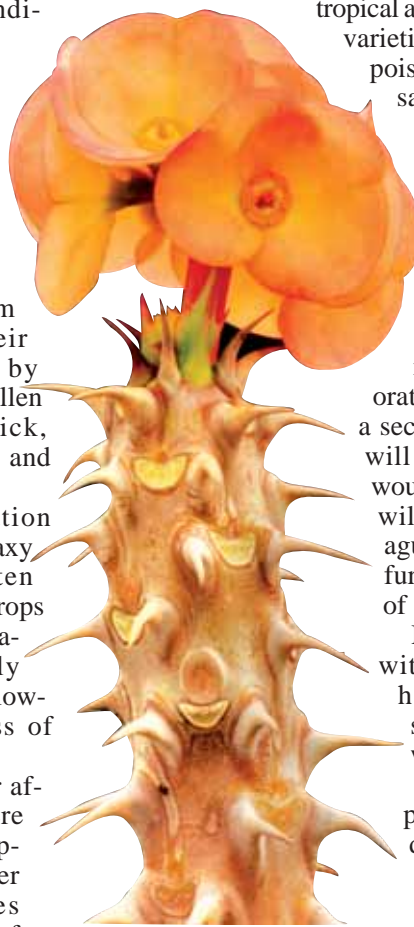


Photo: Mike Keeling



PRETTY AND PRICKLY: The *Euphorbia millii* may look innocent enough, but it packs a punch. Photo: Drew Avery

the plant's immediate surface environment.

Most *Euphorbia* are grown for their arresting and highly unusual foliage, but the crown of thorns has the added advantage of attractive red, cream, or yellow flowers.

Its praises have been sung before in these columns. Suffice to say, it is perhaps the best of all pot plants for a terrace or patio, and can be relied on to flower more or less all year round. Two specimens in containers by my pool have never been out of bloom.

And let's not forget the flowering variety, which produces masses of tiny, scarlet blooms, or the cultivar that has a crown of large leaves surmounted by a head of vivid scarlet flowers on top of a single, thick, thorny stem. This one is not easy to find, but it is worth the search.

Other *euphorbias* may be totally different in appearance. *Trigona*, for example, is a succulent shrub from Africa that occasionally puts in an appearance in nurseries here.

It has an upright habit with

dark green, triangular-sectioned branches that carry reddish spines all the way up from the base. An attractive cultivar with more pronounced red spines is called "red devil". It makes a fine house plant – if you can find it. And although it looks just like one, it ain't cactus.

The prime virtue of all these succulents – apart from their unusual appearances – is their resistance to drought.

A much larger member of the *euphorbia* family of succulents is *lactea*, sometimes referred to as the caldelabrum cactus on account of its size and shape.

As a specimen growing on a side road near Nai Harn attests, it can grow up to 15 feet high.

With its mottled green and white branches, and brownish spines, it can look truly spectacular. Moreover, it is not averse to being planted in a large pot.

The prime virtue of all these succulents – apart from their unusual appearances – is their resistance to drought. These are easy-going plants that are well worth considering if you want a minimum upkeep garden.

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

## Tip of the week

### Ginger spice



Ginger (*zingiber officinale*)

ANOTHER easy-to grow spice (besides chilli) is ginger (*zingiber officinale*). Although it grows wild in South Asia, most of us recall ginger root in Western greengrocers: a tough, fibrous and semi-dried version.

Here in Thailand where it is known as *khiang*, edible ginger is usually harvested when the rhizomes are young, and with several inches of its pink to green stem still attached to the juicy, yellow root.

A member of the *zingiber* family, ginger is rich in the volatile oils that give the root its unique flavor. It can be pickled in vinegar, or candied in sugar. This use it as a fresh ingredient in many savory dishes, sliced into thin strips, or grated or pounded to help release its unique flavor.

Ginger is an attractive plant with long, reed-like stems that grow vigorously to four or five feet and has small white or pink flowers. The leaves are dark green. It does best in moist and partially shaded conditions.

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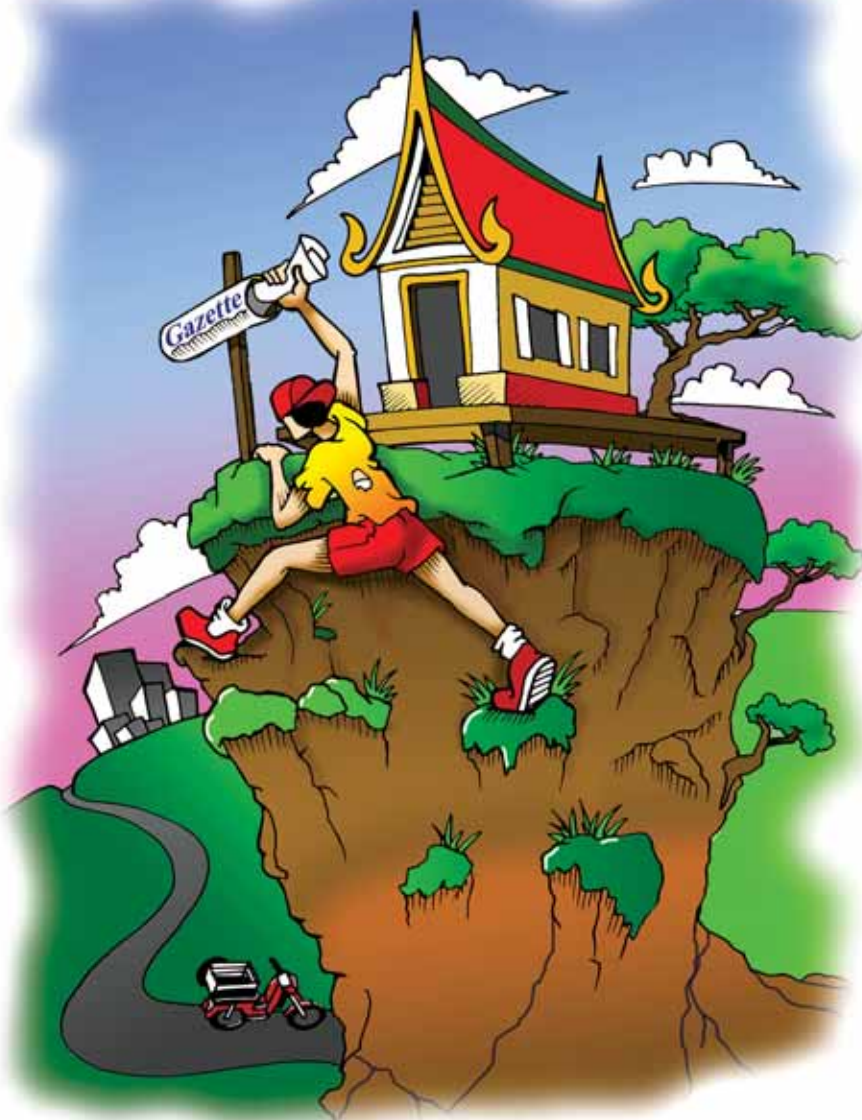


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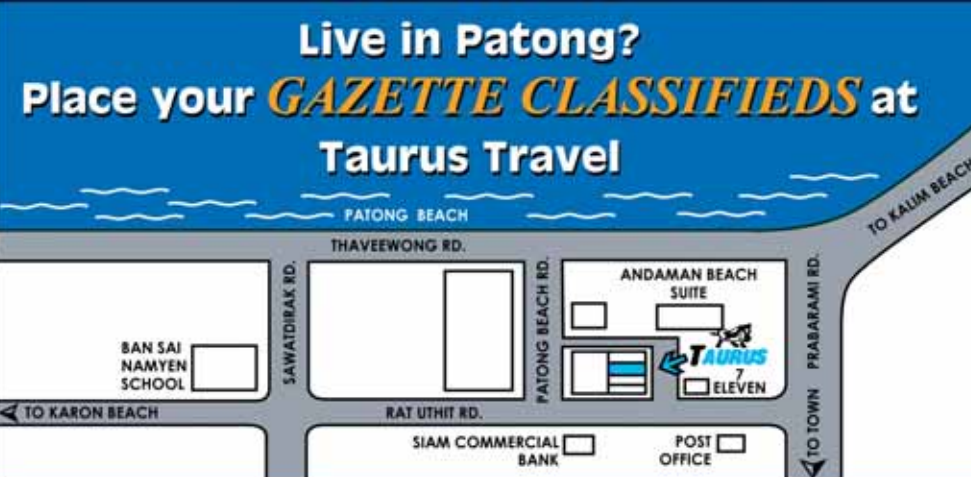


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# Roosters crow 10s warning

By Neil Quail

AS A warm-up for the 2011 Heineken Phuket International Rugby 10s tournament, last year's champions Kriel Roosters, from South Africa, took on Phuket's Vagabonds at Thanyapura Sports and Leisure Center ( TSLC) in a trio of 15-minute games.

Tuesday's game was the first to be held on TSLC's International Rugby Board ( IRB) endorsed synthetic grass pitch.

The Roosters traveled with a full team, including last year's player of the tournament Vicky Muy. While the Vagabonds had good numbers they found themselves lacking in the speed and weight departments.

Vagabonds did start well with Alex Cressard scything through a Roosters defense, still acclimatizing to the new surface, to touch down after only two minutes.

Three minutes later Vicky Muy began shortening the odds as to whether he would reclaim player of the tournament. A sharp turn of pace to cut inside the mid field left him a clear 45-meter run to score beneath the posts.

A clean take from the resulting kick-off gave the Roosters time to form a lengthy flat back line while a staggered Vagabonds defense advanced. Straight lines and accurate passes awarded the Roosters an inevitable gap which Muy exploited and charged another 40m unchallenged for his second try.

Vagabonds needed to stem the flow of tries and a soaring kick-off gave them time to chase and gather in numbers. Initial handling let the Phuket side down and the



**TRIPLE CROWN:** Rudi Koekemoer, George Grecia (TSLC) and Pat Cotter. Photo: Neil Quail

platinum-blond Johan Van der Walt soon scavenged the loose ball to score try number three in the ninth minute.

Probing phase play and solid tackling from both teams prevented further scores for the next five minutes until Vagabonds bravely attempted to run the ball from inside their 22m line. Their attack was caught just short of the 22 as the Roosters flocked to the ensuing ruck and turned over possession.

A try was eventually scored by the South Africans, but referee Pat Cotter disallowed the score for a knock on. Vagabonds penalty clearance did not make touch and the resulting counter-attack gave the Roosters a final try in the dying seconds of the game.

The second and third games followed a



**HOISTED:** Roosters claim clean line-out ball. Photo: Dean Noble

similar pattern with the Roosters running in a total of eight tries for both games.

Vagabonds performance was not as weak as the scoring suggests. Faced with considerably larger and experienced oppo-

nents their tackling was courageous and support play rarely faltered.

Organizer for the 10s Pat Cotter enjoyed the first friendly on Phuket rugby's new flagship pitch at TSLC.

"These games were good warm-ups and hopefully both teams will do well in the competition. TSLC's new synthetic rugby pitch is a great development for sports on the island and we look forward to many years of rugby at Thanyapura," Pat said.

Coaches for the Kriel Roosters, Rudi Koekemoer and Carel Schutte felt privileged to have their team play the inaugural rugby match on the modern rubber-filled surface.

"This is our third time to visit Phuket for the 10s. It's a fantastic event and we are delighted to return as champions to defend the title. The pitch and facilities at TSLC will certainly benefit rugby in the region," Carel said.

"To travel and participate in the Phuket 10s it costs [Kriel Roosters RFC] a total of 4.6 million baht which we raise ourselves. Playing in the tournament is great preparation for our domestic league in South Africa as there is a lot more running involved. It was a pleasure to play at this facility and hope we have opportunities to return here in the future," Rudi added.

The Roosters are also heavily involved with the Children's Scholarship Program, highlighted by the 10s event and help sponsor and promote the charity.

The Heineken Phuket 10s starts on Friday at Karon Stadium and will see some exciting running rugby. Entrance is free for spectators with an abundance of food, beverages and evening events to enjoy.

## Australian Thorn aims for 115<sup>th</sup> marathon at Laguna

COMPLETING one marathon is certainly on the to do list for many people, but Australian, Julia Thorn has gone 100 times better than most and will complete her 115<sup>th</sup> Pheidippides-inspired distance run at the Laguna Phuket International Marathon ( LPIM) in June.

Not content with adding another notch to her belt, the 53-year-old Melbourne native has set herself the joint-jarring task of running 10 marathons in 10 consecutive weekends. LPIM will be her fifth marathon in the sequence.

"I expect this race to be the hardest of the 10 as I will have to

cope with the heat and sudden transition from running in the Australian winter," said Julia.

Julia's tactics are very important and not just for this event, but in consideration of the next five marathons she must run.

"I'll be taking it as easy and my aim is to enjoy the atmosphere rather than run a fast time.

"I previously ran this marathon in 2006 and it has been my slowest so far.

"I suffered with the heat and humidity, but I have wonderful memories of the scenic course and the friendly support," she recalls.

Her first marathon was at

Rotorua in New Zealand 14 years ago and Julia fittingly returned there in May 2010 to gain her centurion title, the first Australian woman to achieve this accolade.

*Passion for Distance, the Story of my 100 Marathons* was published earlier this year and is the inspirational account of Julia's transformation from non-runner to marathon veteran and her experiences during that time.

Julia has also participated in longer events and has run 30 ultra marathons, including recently running 152 kilometers during a 24-hour track race and has several triathlons to her name.

Debbie Dionysius, Laguna Phuket's assistant vice president of Destination Marketing is delighted to welcome this inspirational athlete to Phuket.

"Julia has a fascinating story to tell and she will be of great interest to all our participants.

"The day before the marathon ( June 11) , Julia is scheduled to give a presentation at the LPIM marquee on mental preparations required for marathon running, and she will also autograph copies of her book," said Ms Dionysius.

- Neil Quail

For more information visit [W: phuketmarathon.com](http://www.phuketmarathon.com)



Pounding the pavement in preparation for her 115<sup>th</sup> marathon.

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# ACYC says 'Hello Moto'

By Neil Quail

RACE four of the Victron Energy Series endured erratic wind conditions last Sunday which provided a blistering pace for the lead boats, while others in the six-strong fleet experienced a more casual jaunt around Chalong Bay.

Skipper and owner of *Moto Inzi*, Roger Kingdon competing in Multihull Class put the Firefly through her paces and exploited strong winds to earn a deserved victory while Merv Owen skippered *Silk Purse* to second in the same class.

The win was somewhat historic for the Kingdon family. This was their first race of the year and they had three generations on board to help crew the catamaran, including Roger's son, Jonathan, and grandson, Harry. The older Kingdon's smooth sailing clearly rocked the boat just enough as the three-year-old lad enjoyed a nap throughout the action.

In Racing Class, *Babe* skippered by Mark Mizner got off to a flier and led *Minx* and *Linda* from start to finish. *Minx* skippered by Kevin Gillow and Mick Kealy paced second and *Linda* skippered by the

## Victron Energy Series Race 4 results:

Racing:		
Boat	Name	Place
Babe	Mark Mizner	1
Minx	Kevin Gillow / Mick Kealy	2
Linda	Patrick O'Mahony	3
Cruising:		
Boat	Name	Place
Chetak	Jim Kane	1
Multihull:		
Boat	Name	Place
Moto Inzi	Roger Kingdon	1
Silk Purse	Merv Owen	2

late Patrick O'Mahony came in third having hit a pocket of little wind which deflated any ambitions of a win.

*Chetak* skippered by Jim Kane breezed home to take first in Cruising Class.



GENERATION GAME: Jonathan, Harry and Roger Kingdon on 'Moto Inzi' in their Victron debut.

Members of Ao Chalong Yacht Club were saddened by the news of Patrick O'Mahony's passing as a result of injuries received from a motorbike accident ( see page 2) . Patrick skippered *Linda* on Sunday and was returning home when the accident occurred. ACYC offer their condolences to Patrick's family.

Next on the ACYC sailing calendar is Race five of the Victron Energy Series which will be held on June 5 following the Koh Samui Regatta on May 30 to June 4.

Race Officer Chandran is deservedly credited for getting the fleet around while the ACYC crew exemplified hospitality with a much needed buffet.

# BIS to host FOBISSEA games next month



ON TRACK: Primary students gearing up for FOBISSEA at BIS.

BRITISH International School ( BIS) Phuket are nearing the end of preparations for the prestigious Federation of British International Schools in Southeast Asia ( FOBISSEA) 2011 Primary Games.

Group A of the Games will be held from June 1 to 5 at the grounds of BIS and will include competitions in track and field, football, swimming and tee-ball ( a variation of softball) .

FOBISSEA is an organization of 37 British-styled international schools which offers a network of professional support for teachers and staff while students benefit from participating in the games and interacting with children from different cultures and countries.

Dubbed as "The Friendly Games", FOBISSEA competitions are a chance to celebrate the co-

operation and friendship between British Schools in different countries and include a range of activities such as sport, performing arts and community service.

"For the students, the event is not only an exciting opportunity to compete against peers from other parts of the world, but also an opportunity to make new friends. The games are played out in a friendly spirit and it is the meeting of people from other places that makes these games so special for all involved," said Christophe Espouy, Marketing and Communications Executive at BIS.

Eight schools from the region will be represented by 288 primary students at this year's games including; British International School ( Phuket) , Alice Smith School and Garden International

School in Kuala Lumpur, Tanglin Trust School in Singapore, British International School ( Jakarta) , Bangkok Patana School, Harrow International School and Shrewsbury International School in Bangkok.

A special gala dinner will be laid on for students in the school's refectory on June 4 at 5.30pm during which the final presentation of awards will be made. The students will be invited to a special celebratory student disco put on in the school's auditorium.

For parents, a special gala barbecue ( 6:30 to 8:30pm) will be catered by the Metropole Hotel.

- Neil Quail

For more information contact event co-ordinator Kate Newns at E: [knewns@bisphuket.ac.th](mailto:knewns@bisphuket.ac.th)

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# FC Phuket caught by Hares

By Steven Layne

RECOVERING from their disappointing home loss against Saraburi Warlords last week, FC Phuket traveled to Thailand's eastern region to take on Chantaburi FC for a late afternoon game last Saturday.

Drawing with Suphanburi FC 2-2 in an away game last week, 12<sup>th</sup> placed Chantaburi "Hares" were not to be taken lightly on their home turf.

A lethargic 45 minutes and several poorly missed opportunities from both FC Phuket and Chantaburi FC saw the squads retreat to their dressing rooms, undoubtedly for a dressing down after a scoreless and uneventful first half.

The scoreboard eventually flashed to life in the 50<sup>th</sup> minute to the dismay of the home crowd.

FC Phuket's Sarach Yooyen swung a dangerous free kick in from the left which caused a flap among Chantaburi's defense.

Kone Adame managed to deflect the cross into space where Sutee

Team	P	Pts
BBCU	14	36
Buriram	14	33
Chainat	14	26
BUFC	14	25
Songkhla	13	23
Saraburi	14	21
Rajapracha	14	21
Phuket	12	19
PTT Rayong	13	18
J.W. Rangsit	13	17

Sakdiwong picked up on the loose ball and drilled his header home to put FC Phuket a goal in front.

FC Phuket held their lead for only 17 minutes, when in the 67<sup>th</sup> minute, the Hares Phromphong Kransumrong outpaced Phuket defenders, latched on to a perfectly weighted pass and side-footed his effort past the overstretched Phuket goalkeeper to level the scores.



KONE ADAME: Assisted FC Phuket's goal. Photo: Apinun Saithong

While livening up the home crowd, the equalizer could not inspire victory and the score remained 1-1 until the final whistle.

With 19 points, the Southern Sea Kirin now sit in 8<sup>th</sup> place and

are preparing for a challenging match this Sunday with Buriram FC, currently in 2<sup>nd</sup> spot. The game kicks off at 6pm at Surakul Stadium.

**Other Division 1 matches played last weekend:**

- Chiang Mai 2 - 4 Songkhla
- PTT Raoyong 1 - 1 Rajapracha
- Buriram 2 - 1 Suphan Buri
- Thai Honda 3 - 3 RBAC
- Samut Prakan 0 - 1 JW Rangsit
- Bangkok FC 1 - 3 Bangkok Utd
- Saraburi 0 - 1 BBCU
- Air Force Utd 1 - 3 Chainat

## Big 4 Live Soccer Cup calls teams for registration

RASSADA Municipality have opened registration for their inaugural Big 4 Live Soccer tournament, which will start June 18 and run each weekend until July 9.

The host venue will be Laem Chan Health Station Sports Field in Wichit sub-district, and the tournament will have more than 200,000 baht prize money for finalists.

Deputy Mayor of the municipality, Amphon O-at stated the reason for organizing the event.

"We hope to raise funds for the Wichit Public Health Fund and to promote beneficial use of leisure time amongst teenagers instead of being preoccupied with allurements that lead to ruin, as well as staying away from drugs," he said.

"The tournament will also give these athletes an opportunity to show their abilities and gain experience in the advancement to the next stage of athletic excellence," he added.

Two categories make up the tournament: the first section is for the general public and will consist of 32 teams. Registration costs 6,000 baht per team.

The second section will include 16 Senior teams. Registration costs 4,000 baht per team.

The format for the tournament will be seven aside and teams can register up to 12 players plus a non-playing manager.



There will be big prizes at the Big 4 Live tournament. Photo: Norman Vogel

Cash awards will be given to top placed teams ( 100,000 baht for 1<sup>st</sup>, 50,000 baht for 2<sup>nd</sup> and 20,000 each for 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> places) and the team showing the best conduct during the tournament.

Highest goal scorer, Most Valuable Player and Best Goalkeeper awards will also be recognized with a 2,000 baht cash prize and trophies.

To register a team or for more information contact: Big Five Shop ( near Wat Thep temple) T:080-2553999; Fern Sport shop on Mae Luan Road T:089-6492198; Phuket Tourism and Sports Provincial office T:081-5372990 or Mick Sport T:081-9790477

- Steven Layne

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# Snooker stars take their cue

By Janpen Upatising

SNOOKER is back in the frame from June 6 to 11 when 19 professional players will compete for the 2011 SangSom Phuket Cup at the Royal Paradise Hotel and Spa Patong.

The tournament is part of Thailand's Ranking Circuit Snooker Championship and will include two English professionals: Stuart Bingham and Alfred Burden. Thai star Ratchapol Pu-Ob-Orm, or James Wattana as his western fans would know him, will also compete.

Burden, ranked 57 in the world, was a football talent in his youth and played in the same Arsenal junior team as Frank Lampard. However, a bad tackle resulting in a horrific injury ended any possibility of a career in football.

Bingham's career has seen him defeat the likes of Ronnie



ON THE BALL: World no. 67 Wattana

O'Sullivan, Stephen Hendry and John Higgins. He is currently ranked at 17, one place behind Hendry and six behind O'Sullivan.

Ratchapol (Wattana) has won the Thailand Open on two occasions and is ranked 67 in the world.

Thanawat Thirapongpaiboon is ranked 82 and will face Burden in

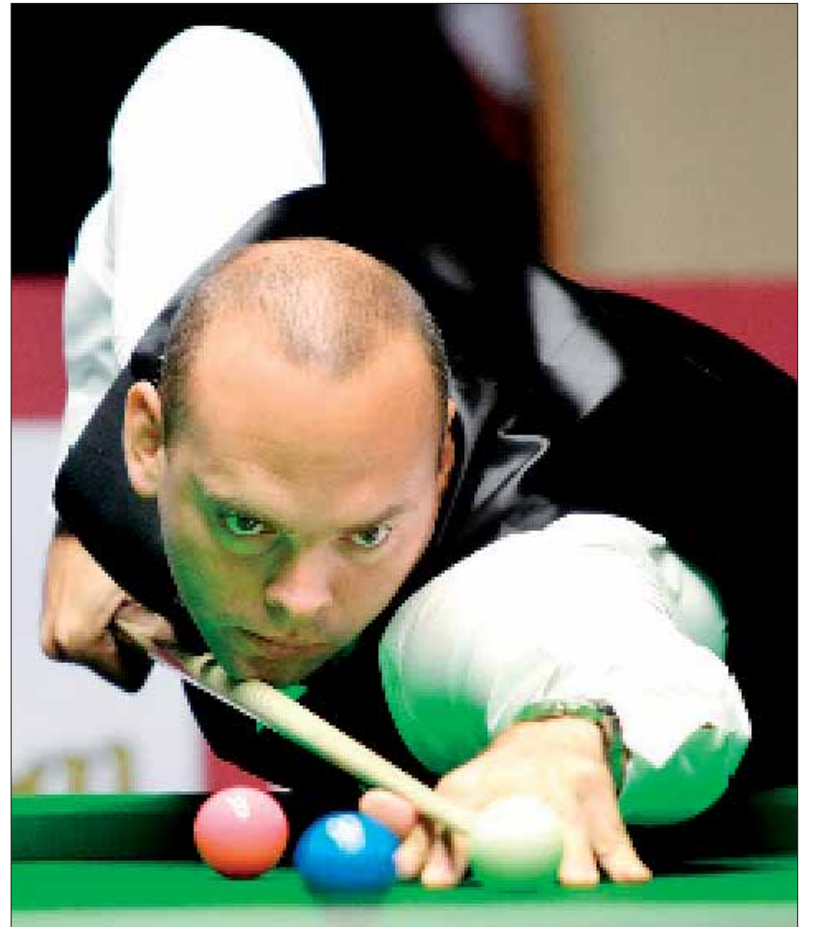
the opening match while 87-ranked Issara Kachaiwong will play the last of the second round matches.

President of the Patong Hotels Association, Dr Jirachai Amorn-pairoj, said that the competition last year was a great success as a result of wonderful support from the people of Phuket. The venue will accommodate 200 seated spectators and admission is free.

"SangSom will award prize-money of 147,000 baht to any player who achieves a maximum break of 147. The winner of the Phuket Cup competition will receive a purse of 100,000 baht," said Sakda Rattanasuban, Vice President of the Billiard Sports Association of Thailand.

Phuket Director of the Tourism Authority of Thailand Bangornrat Shinaprayoon commented on the advantages of hosting such a high profile competition.

"This event will help boost



BREAKING CONCENTRATION: World no. 17 Bingham addresses the cue ball.

tourism during the low season in Phuket.

"Admission is free so we hope this will attract many people interested in the sport. We expect to generate about 50 million baht through the event," she said.

Governor Tri Augkaradacha said he wants Phuket to have

a variety of activities to offer.

"We are hosting many sports competitions such as the National Youth Games in March 2012 and the Asian Beach Games in 2014.

"Snooker is another great competition to have marked in Phuket's event calendar," he said.

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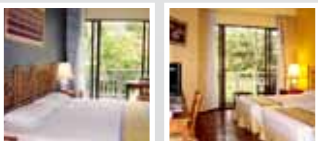
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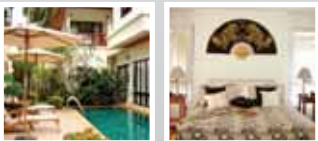
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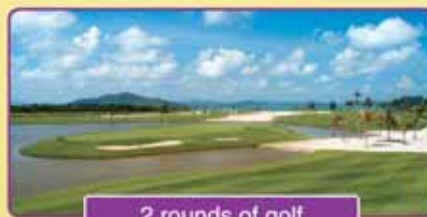
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# PHUKET PROPERTY REVIEW

May 28 - June 3, 2011

PhuketGazette.Net

## Strength in numbers

### Market resilience is proving to be a domestic-led effort



**PATONG PUSH:** Rising land prices in Patong has been one of the major success stories in the property market this past year. Photo: Phuket Gazette

By Bill Barnett

AS THE world crawls out from the shadows of the global economic crisis, and last year's political events in Thailand start to fade from memory, changing faces and places characterize Phuket's real-estate market.

Interest from the emerging tourism markets of Russia, China and India is rising as traditional European buyers continue to retract.

As the market has matured, resales have come to the forefront in the once-dominant overseas sector.

Thailand's thriving three-year domestic property surge has headed to the south of the island with a flurry of both listed developers and low-cost entry-level products enjoying the highest trading volumes.

This can be seen most clearly in two polar opposites: inland properties priced from two to four million baht and luxury villas at 65mn baht and above.

Phuket retains the crown as Asia's resort destination king with 2.84 billion baht in upscale villa sales last year.

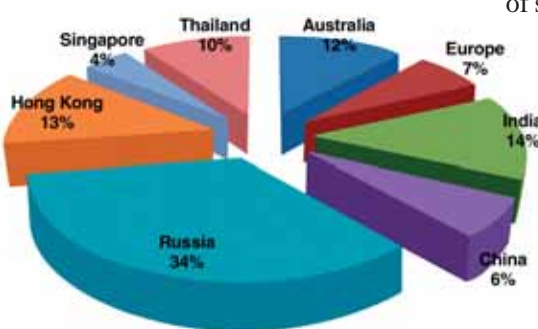
The highlight of the year was the Allan Zeman "Andara effect" cover story, twinned with a west-side slant.

Meanwhile a strong Thai baht is helping to keep many potential purchasers on the sidelines. Market conditions that favor buyers are expected to push the short-term trend towards secondary sales, where the negotiation power lies.

Another success story in the making is Patong's push toward urbanization, which has resulted in land prices pushing the 40 to 60mn baht per rai point of no return.

Meanwhile, the rush on land banking speculation has pushed into Mai Khao, Koh Sireh and up to higher elevations inland.

Increasing competition from other Asian resort destinations such as Bali and the promise of stabilized yields in developed markets such as the United Kingdom and United States is bringing increased competition for Phuket.



**PHUKET PROPERTY:** Market share breakdown by country

**INSIDE**

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- Page 2 Baht Bites Hard
- Page 3 Financing for Foreigners
- Page 11 Personality
- Pages 12 & 13 Luxury Living
- Page 14 Looking Forward

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This fabulous condominium has an incredible seaview overlooking the Andaman Sea. This two-storey penthouse suite features three bedrooms on the lower floor and a fantastic open living area on the top floor. Enjoy your private swimming pool and get the feeling that you are swimming towards the sea. The furniture is French-designed from Paris by Philippe Starck and is included in the price. All window covers, awnings and air conditioning units are controlled electronically.

**Price: 55 million baht**

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This lovely villa is located in the very heart of Nai Harn close to facilities such as restaurants, shops and more. It's only a three-minute drive to the pristine Nai Harn Beach. There is a lot of privacy when you are relaxing in this villa. It comes fully-furnished. Water supply comes from a private well. Here you can be part of a small and unique boutique development – as there are only five villas. The villa has only been used full-time by residential owners.

**Price: 15.9 million baht**



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# Strong baht can help and hinder

How the baht's rising value is affecting property investment

By Graham Macdonald

TO BUY or not to buy, that is the question. And what currency to use? From a fundamental point of view, in the short term it can be argued that the US dollar may be technically oversold and so due for a bounce. However, the long-term trend is down for the dollar and up for most Asian currencies.

There is also the chance of a financial Armageddon over the medium term. If this happens there is a good chance of a massive re-adjustment of the dollar. Should this occur then the peak for the dollar may well coincide with the trough for asset prices in Asia, resulting in the perfect buying opportunity.

People based in Thailand and remunerated in baht should focus on the local currency as the baht is expected to continue to strengthen over the long term. But, as said, there is a risk that we will see a flight to the greenback at some point in the next two years, presenting a better opportunity to sell dollar or buy baht at something like a 20 per cent lower rate against the dollar than today. However,

this is far from being a certainty. Nevertheless, over the long term the baht will get stronger against the dollar.

Hedging against a baht correction is another option, but this requires expertise in both timing and selecting the correct hedge. There are a number of products on the market that hedge in baht, the Singapore dollar and most of the major currencies.

While the strength of the baht has certainly been having some negative impact on the appetite for Thai property among foreign buyers, it is no longer a new issue and many investors have come to terms with the new level.

They have the ability to access offshore assets in baht. Also, there are covered bond funds which currently yield about seven per cent a year in baht.

By taking exposure to globally diversified portfolios in this way, baht investors are able to diversify risk across global assets without taking currency risk.

Perhaps the investors facing the toughest decision now are those who live and work locally but have their salaries, savings and investments in their national currencies. For example, in the past four years the spending power of British expats based in Thailand who are remunerated in sterling has declined by about 40 per cent. Those earning in dollars

have seen a decline of about one-third over the same period.

If you are in this boat and plan to stay in Thailand or the region for the foreseeable future, you need to take a position which gives you the best return for your baht. Holding on to Western currencies indefinitely is increasingly unlikely to deliver this. The golden rule is that your income-producing assets should be held in or hedged to your currency of expenditure. Expats planning to return to their home countries could benefit from investing in emerging market currencies now, assuming these will continue to appreciate at a faster rate than dollars or euros.

Another investment option is property. The dollar-to-baht exchange rate is about 30 at the moment. If there is a market correction of about 20 per cent then that would be a good time to bring money in to buy property. Keep it for a few years and, provided the baht has got stronger again, even if you only sell it for what you bought it for then you could make a nice profit in the base currency.

Colliers International Thailand has just announced that any concerns over an overheating condo market have been allayed as there was a drop of about 46 per cent in new launches. They also cite the Bank of Thailand's new loan-to-value curbs on mortgage lending and the steady rise in interest rates that has



EYE ON THE BAHT: Traders monitor share prices at the SET in Bangkok. Thai investors are eyeing offshore investments due to the strong baht. Photo: AFP

helped to restrain the breakneck pace of launches.

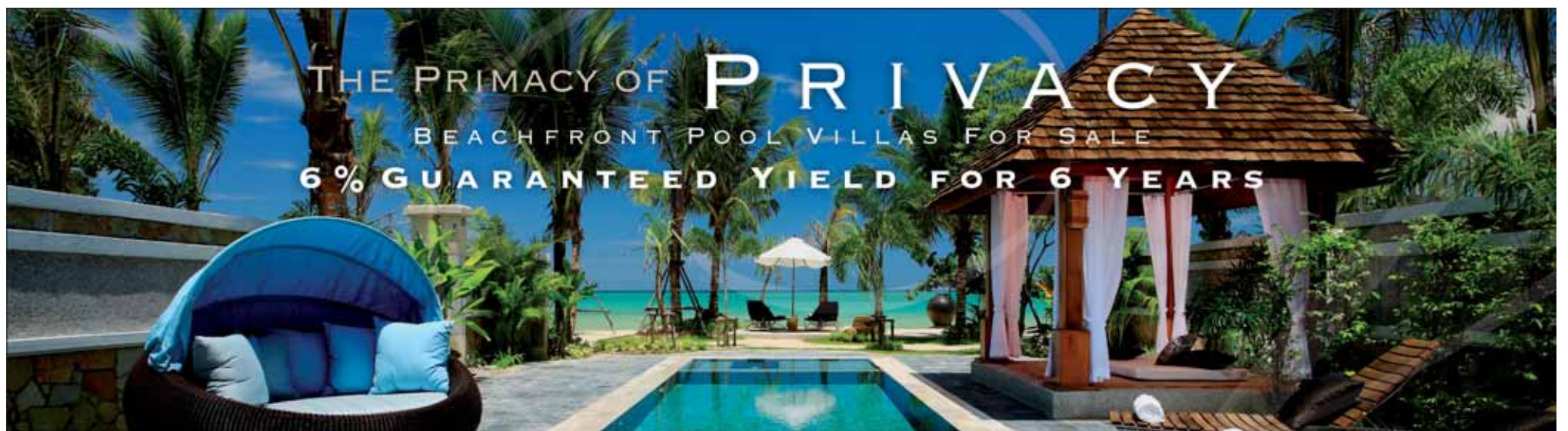
Executive chairman Simon Landy said: "While the strength of the baht has certainly been having some negative impact on the appetite for Thai property among foreign buyers, it is no longer a new issue and many investors have come to terms with the new level. As a result of this and the cooling of the political temperature since last year, there has certainly been more foreign interest in Thai property, but not back to the levels pre-2006. On the other hand, many Thai-based investors

are taking the opportunity presented by the Thai baht and the easing of offshore remittance rules by the Bank of Thailand to invest overseas. This has accelerated with increased demand for residential, commercial and hotel properties."

So, it all depends what you want to do.

A strong baht can help, but it can also hinder.

Graham Macdonald, MD of MBMG Group. E: graham@mbmginternational.com. MBMG Group will not accept any liability for errors or omissions in above article



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# Taking advice on credit

Financing for foreigners seeking to buy retirement homes in Phuket is notoriously difficult, but not impossible, to obtain. Here *Phuket Gazette* news editor Stephen Fein discusses the issue with Campbell Kane Managing Director Peter Hamilton about his firm's credit terms for foreign buyers of luxury villas at the company's The Bay project at Cape Yamu in Pa Khlok.

**Stephen Fein: What sort of finance are you able to offer foreign buyers?**

Peter Hamilton: The financing that we are able to provide is financed by the developer, which enables people to make a down payment and pay off in installments over a period of time, whether it is five or 10 years.

**SF: What percentage of the total cost is required for down payment. Is this just for properties that fall under the Condominium Law?**

PH: No. We only build stand-alone villas. We have a number of projects here. We've got The Bay at Cape Yamu, which is a joint venture with Lippo, which is a publicly-listed company out of Hong Kong. So we're building out the whole development in one go, and the villas are already under construction. For us, the ability to provide finance to the buyer through their [Lippo's] balance sheet is something that can be quite attractive to potential buyers.

**SF: What would be the price range on these properties?**

PH: The prices would start at about 45 million baht upward, into the 90s, at The Bay.

**SF: So what minimum down payment would they have to come up with to secure financing on a property like that?**

PH: The villas are half-built anyway, but the sort of payment structure we are able to work with is about 10 per cent down payment. Our preference is that the buyer make a serious commitment. So a 10 per cent down payment, then installments while the villa is completed so that 50 to 60 per cent is paid off. Then we can provide the financing for the rest, under terms which need to be tailored to meet the needs of the individual buyer.

**SF: How many foreign buyers have taken advantage of this finance option?**

PH: Out of the villas we built, three out of the 12 buyers have taken advantage. Some have wanted to pay in full upon completion, with finance through the construction period. Others have ongoing finance.

**SF: Are there any obstacles to obtaining the finance here? And if so, what are some ways to get around them?**

PH: The challenge is only in freehold land, because under Thai law foreigners can't own freehold land. But the banks would prefer to lend on freehold structures. So

that's why we think developer finance is a really important differentiating factor, because a lot of buyers are taking long-term leases. We know that foreign banks are reluctant to lend into Thailand, whereas Thai banks are reluctant to lend on leasehold premises.

We are lucky that we are backed by Lippo. They have a very strong balance sheet and large organization with businesses throughout Asia. They understand Asian property, so they understand the risk management and realize they can help, in a market where it is very difficult to get finance, to stimulate demand by creating opportunities for people who don't necessarily have the cash but who want to buy into the Phuket lifestyle.

One of the challenges the Phuket market faces is that so many international people come out to live and work here. A few decades ago, those people would have retired to their home countries. Now, these people want to retire in Asia. In many countries they would be able to buy retirement homes on a mortgage. The great thing about having Lippo as a partner in our development is that they understand the shift and can support us by enabling us to access their balance sheet to extend financing options for buyers who recognize Phuket as the great international destination it is.



Campbell Kane Managing Director Peter Hamilton



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 Web: <http://www.sai-taan-phuket.com> / visit our website for Virtual tour

# Convention Center plans inch forward

By Steven Layne

PLANS for the 2.6-billion-baht Phuket International Convention and Exhibition Center ( ICEC) to be built in Mai Khao at the northern tip of Phuket are slowly taking shape with KAED103 winning the government tender as architects for the project with their tortoise-inspired design.

The firm inked the concession contract on April 27.

They were selected as architects for the project due to their relevant experience, having already designed the Queen Sirikit Convention Centre in Bangkok and the Muang Thong Thani Convention Centre in nearby Nonthaburi.

However, a call for the center to be made "tsunami-proof" has prompted a review of the current plans, resulting in the target completion date being pushed back from November 2013 to May 2014.

Under the current plans, approved through several public

forums and an Environmental Impact Assessment report, construction is expected to take 30 months.

The plans accepted include a world-class convention and exhibition hall as well as a 100-room accommodation facility for government officers, staff and event organizers.

This latest delay, expected to be reviewed by month's end, comes after more than two decades of indecision over whether Phuket needed such a center.

Initial plans including a hotel were scaled back with some leading figures citing there are already 60,000 rooms in Phuket in addition to 7,000 rooms available in neighboring Khao Lak.

After a decade on the drawing boards, consistently delayed and postponed by debates over potential sites and whether Phuket was equipped to handle such an international expo center, the final site, a 141-acre government-owned



**PLANS A PLENTY:** There have been numerous plans proposed for Phuket's International Conference and Exhibition Center over the past two decades.

plot bordered by mangroves in Tah Chat Chai, was confirmed in July 2008.

National government approval came in October 2009, with the Cabinet approving funding in September last year.

By the end of March, a tortoiseshell design by KAED-103 was selected. Mai Khao is renowned for leatherback and other turtles returning to lay their eggs.

While the center's design is being reviewed, momentum for the project is being maintained through constant referral with

many other major developments on the island.

When investors met with Governor Tri Aukaradecha about the building of a light rail link in Phuket from Chalong to the airport, he confirmed that he plans to include a link from ICEC to the airport as well.

After two decades of hype surrounding the ICEC, many residents on the island will no doubt welcome this latest step forward in the saga.

For updates on the ICEC, visit [PhuketGazette.net](http://PhuketGazette.net)

## North Property Listings

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THE new project currently being constructed in Ao Por called "The Sunrise Ocean Villas" is a unique and luxurious escape from the mass tourism sweeping the island.

The new Ao Por Grand Marina is growing in strength, and is projected to become the most popular port in Thailand due to its proximity to the most beautiful and untouched islands of the country. In fact, it is easy to find white sandy beaches and turquoise waters within 5 minutes by boat!

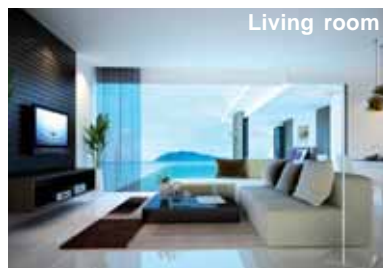
Ao Por has the slow and relaxed lifestyle of a real Thai village. One can find a true escape here as fishing remains the main source of income for the villagers. The food,

landscape, local people and their smiles show a real authenticity you can not find anywhere else in Phuket.

Being located 3 minutes away from the marina, 10 minutes from the Mission Hills golf course, 15 minutes from the airport and 20 minutes from shopping centers and hospitals, "The Sunrise Ocean Villas" is a perfect place to live.

This 10 villa development is being built on the hillside, just 60 meters from the beach, facing the Bay of Phang Nga. This project is particularly aimed at those seeking tranquility and relaxation in an environment with no traffic, no pollution and no mass tourism; in

# The new project in Ao Por: "The Sunrise Ocean Villas"



short, a truly idyllic setting.

The owner and developer, a German engineer team, with 18 years of experience in building in Europe and Asia, chose only the best materials that can be found for construction. The large window panels open fully to create a great open space on a 10m swimming pool, and on a breathtaking view. "Each villa has a living area of over 300 sqm, has 3 bedrooms, all sea views, 4 bathrooms, a 10m infinity pool, an office/library and covered 2 car-parking. The houses are specially designed to guarantee complete privacy, with an open panoramic view of the sea.

The project's "Phase 1" is the

launch of the first 5 villas at 14.9 million baht, three of them have already been sold

For those who own a boat, Ao Por offers the ability to moor your boat in its picturesque bay in front of your home at no additional cost. For those who do not have one, "The Sunrise Ocean Villas" also provides a 26 foot speed boat to all home owners so that you may have quick and easy access to Phang Nga Bay and surrounding islands. For living as well as investment, "The Sunrise Ocean Villas" is the best choice. For non-residents, the company can arrange a rental program, where a high return of investment can

be expected due to the proximity with the white sand beaches and unspoiled islands.

Come to Ao Por and visit "The Sunrise Ocean Villas", you will be wonderfully surprised by the quality of the project as well as the quality of life you can find here. Become one of the owners, and be the privileged witness of incredible sunrises in the Bay of Ao Por.

For appointment or more details, contact Khun Montha at 081 343 0777 (Thai, English & German)  
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Advertisement Feature



# North rising in stature

**Amy Koh, sales manager at Engel & Völkers, gives us the low-down on what's going on in the north of Phuket**

NORTH Phuket is probably the fastest-growing area on the island, in part because there is a constantly rising number of international and locally branded hotels concentrated in the northwest area of Mai Khao Beach. This beach is the longest pristine white-sand beach in Phuket, and is flanked by Sirinat National Park and other relatively unspoiled features.

There is a lot going on now in this area. Some major future developments include the Phuket Exhibition and Convention Center, which is scheduled to complete in 2013, and this year's expansion of Phuket International Airport, which will enable it to cater to 15 million arrivals and departures a year.

With all this in the pipeline, land prices – especially beachfront land from Mai Khao to Sarasin Bridge – have been rising steadily, with both local and foreign investors land-banking for future projects.

The northeast is home to Ao Por Grand Marina, Phuket's most

popular deep-water marina, with a berthing capacity of up to 200 vessels and on-site facilities befitting an international port-of-call. Also calling north Phuket home is Blue Canyon Country Club, one of the most prestigious golf clubs in the region. Set on 720 acres, this golf club offers 36 challenging holes as well as clubhouse and resort facilities.

All this considered, it's easy to see why north Phuket is growing so fast.

The downside appears to be a lack of housing for both the Thai and foreign markets. But that is changing, and the local Thai housing market has been active of late with big-name developers from Bangkok trying to get a slice of the pie. In the meantime, it will be interesting to see which developer makes it out there first.

*For more information about Engel & Völkers, contact their Phuket office at T: +66-76-271751 or see W:engelvoelkers.com/th*




IN THE OFFICE: Amy Koh, sales manager at Engel & Völkers Phuket.




**North**


**What's in the north:**  
 Mai Khao Beach, Sirinat National Park, the up-and-coming Phuket Exhibition and Convention Center, Phuket International Airport, Sarasin Bridge (connecting Phuket with Phang Nga), Blue Canyon Golf Course, international brand resorts flocking to the area. Much more is also underway.



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# B2.2bn Moringa rises in Patong



**CENTARA VISION:** Highlighted is the land in Patong where the Centara Grand Moringa Resort & Spa will be located. Other major resorts in the area are also highlighted.

WORK is underway on laying roads that will meander through the 100-rai at the southern end of Patong that will become the Centara Grand Moringa Resort & Spa.

“There is very little landscaping involved as the whole project aims to have minimal effect on the natural surroundings,” explained Klaus Rauter, managing director of Mai-BS, which is Owner Representative for the 2.2-billion-baht project.

The development, to comprise 65 villas and a 350-room resort, is scheduled for completion late next year, in time to open early 2013.

“At this stage the villas are not slated for sale,” said Mr Rauter, adding that they will instead form

part of the resort to target five-star guests. The name of the project is inspired by the Moringa trees found naturally flourishing at the site.

“Moringa trees are known as ‘the trees of life’. People around the world since ages past have known of the health benefits of these trees,” he said.

A top priority for the developers is to preserve as many trees as possible and leave all aged trees untouched, said Mr Rauter.

Unique features of the project include a lake covering 4,000 square meters serving as the resort’s centerpiece and the residences being built inside a man-made cave, he added.

Key to the resort’s success will be its focus on human resources and staff development.

“We will be targeting the ‘true five-star’ market. Patong has very

few actual five-star hotels. Some offer close to five-star services, but they’re branding is perceived by guests as closer to four-star.

“The owner understands this

and places great value on developing staff through human resources, which will be reflected in the quality of service at the resort,” Mr Rauter said.

## West Property Listings

**The View, Kata**  
36 apartments  
Starting from 9.5mn baht  
[www.theviewphuket.com](http://www.theviewphuket.com)

**The Charm, Patong,**  
246 apartments  
Starting from (not specified)  
[www.thecharmphuket.com](http://www.thecharmphuket.com)

**Mandala Condominiums, Bang Tao**  
24 condos  
Starting from 17 mn baht  
[www.baanmandala.com](http://www.baanmandala.com)

**Laguna Lofts, Layan**  
25 apartments  
Starting from 8.9mn baht  
[www.lagunalofts.com](http://www.lagunalofts.com)

**Anchan Villas Phase 3, Layan**  
9 villas  
Starting from 20.7 mn baht  
[www.anchanvillas.com](http://www.anchanvillas.com)

**Chic Condominium, Karon**  
122 condos  
Starting from 2.9mn baht  
[www.phuketchiccondo.com](http://www.phuketchiccondo.com)

**L’Orchidee Village Phase 2, Patong**  
10 apartments  
Starting from 14mn baht  
[www.lorchidee-village.com](http://www.lorchidee-village.com)

**Sai Taan Phase 3, Bang Tao,**  
13 villas  
Starting from 27 mn baht  
[www.sai-taan-phuket.com](http://www.sai-taan-phuket.com)

**Wings, Layan**  
14 villas  
Starting from 5.5mn baht  
[www.twovillas.com](http://www.twovillas.com)

**Malaiwana Residences, Nai Thon**  
12 apartments,  
Starting from 85mn baht  
[www.malaiwana.com](http://www.malaiwana.com)

**Sea + Sky Condominiums, Karon**  
53 condos  
Starting from 2.9mn baht  
[www.seaandskyphuket.com](http://www.seaandskyphuket.com)

**Cyan Resort, Kamala**  
18 apartments  
Starting from 8.9mn baht  
[www.cyanresorts.co.th](http://www.cyanresorts.co.th)

**Layan Tara, Layan**  
17 villas  
Starting from 6.3mn baht  
[www.layantara.com](http://www.layantara.com)

**Royal Estate Tanode Phase 3, Layan**  
8 villas,  
Starting from 17.75mn baht  
[www.erawana.com](http://www.erawana.com)

**Istana Phuket, Nai Thon**  
19 villas  
Starting from 127 mn baht  
[www.istanaphuket.com](http://www.istanaphuket.com)



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# Why west is the best

**Is the west of Phuket the best place to invest in property? Prakaipeth Meechoosarn, director of CB Richard Ellis Thailand Phuket office, thinks so...**

PHUKET'S tourism and property industries had their beginnings on the west coast. The process began in the 1980s, concentrated on the southwest coast in Patong, Kata and Karon. This was followed by the opening of Dusit Laguna Phuket in 1987 and the Sheraton Grande in 1992 at Laguna Phuket, which kicked off development in Bang Tao.

The opening of Phuket's first luxury development, Amanpuri, in 1988 helped position the Bang Tao and Surin area as a prime destination for high-end investment.

Today, Phuket's west coast remains the key area of interest for property investors, with the highest concentration of top-end properties, including five-star resorts, standalone villas and branded and non-branded villa developments. Capital appreciation of prime west-coast properties has exceeded other areas of Phuket. In some instances owners have achieved capital gains of as much as 100 per cent after reselling prime luxury villas.

Not only does the west coast

offer the best beaches in Phuket, it is also easily accessible from Phuket International Airport and the main amenities of the island including golf courses, restaurants, shopping and entertainment.

The west coast offers something for everyone, whether you prefer a quiet night out in Bang Tao, Surin or Nai Thon or the lively activities in Patong, Kata and Karon.

For this reason, the west coast continues to be preferred by property investors. It also offers variety in terms of property selection and price range – everything from good-quality condos located within reach of the island's amenities at five million baht to 15mn baht, to top-quality prime sea view villas ranging from 90mn baht to 300mn plus.

With limited prime beachfront and seawall land available for future developments along the west coast, the area is well positioned for medium-to-long-term capital appreciation if one invests in the right developments. In the past six months, we have seen a more active resale market for completed



**PROPERTY INSIDER:** Prakaipeth Meechoosarn, director of CB Richard Ellis Thailand Phuket office.

properties in the area, specifically for the luxury villa segment. We expect to see continuous development in the area with several luxury villa projects in the pipeline due to be launched later this year, all offering exclusivity and limited units.

The west coast has been and

will continue to be the most active area in terms of property sales across a broad range of property types and prices.

For more information on CB Richard Ellis Thailand, contact their Phuket office at T: + 66 076-239967 or visit W: [www.cbre.co.th](http://www.cbre.co.th)

**West coast**

**What's in the west:**  
 Kata Beach, Kata Noi Beach, Karon Beach, Patong Beach, Patong Hospital, Jungceylon Shopping Center, Kalim Beach, Kamala Beach, Surin Beach, Layan Beach, Nai Thon Beach, Laguna five-star resort complex, golf course and much more

## MANDALA CONDOMINIUMS BANG TAO BEACH




Actual photo taken September 2010

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Several apartments, including two penthouses, are still available for purchase in the gated community. Attractive financing options are available.

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# Down south is swell

**Richard Lusted, CEO of Siam Real Estate, opens his door to the *Phuket Gazette* for a rundown of the south**

FOR A long time, the property market in the south of Phuket was overshadowed by the northwest.

But this is no longer the case, and the area has become highly popular with expats.

Chalong, Rawai and Nai Harn have developed considerably, now boasting convenience shops, bakeries, bars and all sorts of restaurants.

Take Rawai Beach promenade for example, with its many fish restaurants that are far cheaper than anything you can find in the north of the island.

The south is also conveniently located, just 15 minutes from Phuket Town and close to the major shopping malls, hospitals and beautiful Nai Harn Beach.

Chalong Bay is a major marina and stepping-off point for boat trips, fishing and dive trips, with a customs office and tourist police station as well as the local yacht club.

All this makes the south a great place to live among a thriving expat community.

Major hotel chains are soon to start construction in the area, with several new large off-plan villa and condo projects already underway. Siam Real Estate has 178 properties in the area for sale,

212 long-term rentals and 96 holiday rentals, which gives you some idea of the thriving property market in the south.

Prices are better value than the north, and of the 178 properties Siam Real Estate has on sale, 149 are less than 20 million baht and 100 are less than 12mn baht, with land size and quality to match anything on the island.

The property market is most definitely bouncing back in the south. Siam Real Estate's sales are well up and property viewings have doubled over the same time last year. More visitors are taking

**'More visitors are taking a cautious approach to buying property and booking long-term rentals while they look around.'**

a cautious approach to buying property and booking long-term rentals while they look around.

We are confident that Phuket has a bright future in terms of property sales, albeit at a slower pace than a few years back.

Foreign buyers had stopped buying off-plan over the last two years due to the potential risk.

Now, they are once again prepared to buy off-plan now that the global market has settled down.

*For more information about Siam Real Estate, contact T:+66-076 288908 or see W:siamrealestate.com*



WORKING ON THE SOUTH: Richard Lusted, CEO at Siam Real Estate.

**South**

**What's in the south:**  
Chalong Pier, Nai Harn Beach, Rawai Beach, Ya Nui Beach, Ao Sane Beach, boat taxis to Coral Island, Phi Phi Islands and more. HomePro and Villa Market, great restaurants, large number of expats live in the area.

## South and Inland Property Listings

<p><b>The Scene</b> Chalong 5 villas Starting from 16.5mn baht <a href="http://www.thescene-phuket.com">www.thescene-phuket.com</a></p>	<p><b>Villoft</b> Rawai 5 apartments Starting from 6.9mn baht <a href="http://www.villoft.com">www.villoft.com</a></p>	<p><b>The Royal Place</b> Kathu 105 apartments Starting from 2mn baht <a href="http://www.theroyalplace.com">www.theroyalplace.com</a></p>
<p><b>Eva</b> Rawai 46 villas Starting from 6.9mn baht <a href="http://www.thai-evagroup.com">www.thai-evagroup.com</a></p>	<p><b>Saiyuan Estate</b> Nai Harn 21 villas Starting from 8.3mn baht <a href="http://www.twovillas.com">www.twovillas.com</a></p>	<p><b>Kathu Golf Condominiums</b> Kathu 63 apartments Starting from 4.1mn baht <a href="http://www.kathu-golf-condo-phuket.com">www.kathu-golf-condo-phuket.com</a></p>
<p><b>Villa Suksan Phase III</b> Rawai 9 villas Starting from 9.5mn baht <a href="http://www.villasuksan.com">www.villasuksan.com</a></p>	<p><b>88 Land + Houses</b> Chalong 48 villas Starting from 15mn baht <a href="http://www.lhphuket.com">www.lhphuket.com</a></p>	<p><b>Miracle</b> Kathu 165 villas and condos Starting from 5.9mn baht <a href="http://www.miraclepropertyphuket.com">www.miraclepropertyphuket.com</a></p>

# HOT PROPERTIES AT BARGAIN PRICES



This lovely three-bedroom private pool villa is located in a very quiet area with a lot of privacy. The third bedroom is a stand-alone en-suite bedroom, which is perfect for any guest visits. It's just five minutes to the pristine Nai Harn Beach. There is also easy access to many delicious international and Thai restaurants. This villa must be seen! Previous asking price: 12 million baht. The villa is fully-furnished, all included!

**New price: 9.9 million baht**

We are your Phuket real-estate agency, helping you to find a new dream holiday or residential home in Phuket. We have only the best houses, villas and condominiums to offer you. We are "in the market" every day – so we know what's going on. We represent you in the very best and secure way when you buy properties through us. We also offer to help you when renting your own private villa or holiday apartment. We have more than 200 different places to rent. Check out our "RENTALS" section.



This very nice, four-bedroom private pool villa is located in a very quiet area in Nai Harn. The villa consists of two buildings. The main building provides you with a big open living, dining and kitchen area. The master bedroom and second bedroom both have en-suite facilities. The second building has two guest bedrooms with en-suite facilities and a separate entrance. Everything is kept very private. It's just a two-minute drive to Nai Harn Beach and nearby shopping areas. The villa comes fully-furnished. Right now the price is a real bargain. The original asking price was 24 million baht and now the price is down to 19.9 million baht.

**Bargain price: 19.9 million baht**



This villa is located in a very nice and quiet area, only five minutes from both Rawai and Nai Harn beaches. The building is very high quality, built with only the best materials. 100 percent private pool area with shower. It's a two-storey villa with the upper floor containing a fantastic master bedroom with an en-suite bathroom and direct access to a big balcony with great sunbathing possibilities. Downstairs you have an open living and kitchen area. There are also two bedrooms with a shared bathroom. The water supply comes from a private well. Above the car park there is a big balcony. A lot of shops, restaurants, laundry and more, are located just around the corner.

**Bargain price: 11.6 million baht**



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# In the mix

**Nitchapak Panj amakitti, Phuket branch manager at Plus Property, explains why the “inland” property market is on the up**

WHILE Phuket is known as the “Pearl of the Andaman”, Phuket Town is gaining its own reputation as a “hidden treasure”.

The area bustles by day and can be breezy and tranquil, trendy and exciting by night. The original Sino-Portuguese architecture of Old Phuket Town is being reproduced in modern design in other areas of Phuket. The city has hilltop views and harbor access, too.

This inland location, as well as the main roads that lead to it from every direction, is known as a tourism, retail and cultural destination. It’s also well-served by hospitals, gourmet dining, Thai and foreign fast food, upscale shopping malls, local markets, golf courses, international schools and an ever-growing business and investment environment.

Many seasoned residents and guests have discovered Phuket’s inland area as an ideal location for convenient,

luxury urban living on the island.

Over the past two years, most of the real-estate transactions in Phuket have been in the Phuket Town area. According to the Phuket Land Office, last year saw around 40 billion baht in transactions, showing increased

‘Properties in the central inland area, priced from one to five million baht, are in demand. Many property developers are also focusing on the budget market and condominium units.’

demand for residential and commercial properties from both Thai and foreign buyers. The major increase was in Mu-ang district

(Phuket Town). Many of the buyers live and work in Phuket.

Local business is still moving forward. More and more gated developments are being introduced to the market this year to comply with the increased demand. Condominiums are ideally suited for residents’ modern lifestyles. Of course, hotels and businesses are also springing up in the area. Elsewhere inland, the Thalang and Kathu areas are very suitable for



**PLUS ONE:** Nitchapak Panjamakitti, Phuket branch manager at Plus Property.

local residents and foreign buyers, and have schools, golf courses and shopping.

Properties in the central inland area, priced from one to five million baht, are in demand. Many property developers are also focusing on the budget market and condominium units. Houses popular on the Phuket market are

one-and two-story single houses, semi-detached houses and townhouses.

Luxury condominiums are available, as well as smaller units. We find that the main factors that influence the sale of a property include location, price, design, the facilities and amenities included and the developer’s experience.



### What’s inland:

Great shopping, food, nightlife and many festivals held year-round in Phuket Town. Bangkok Hospital Phuket, Phuket International Hospital, Vachira Hospital, international schools, Central Shopping Center, Tesco Lotus, Big C, Bypass Road, Heroines Monument, Rassada Ferry Pier, go-karting, wakeboarding, Loch Palm Golf Course and much more.



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**SHOW UNIT OPENED**

# East coast sales boom

Wayne Graham, managing director at East West Properties, on why the east of Phuket is an attractive option for investors - and what there is to do for fun



Wayne Graham, managing director at East West Properties.

OVER the past 30 years, Phuket has developed from a relatively unknown and hidden paradise into one of the most visited international resort islands in the world. In the early years, Phuket was mainly a winter vacation spot for Europeans, eager to get away from the cold and snow. For this reason, the west coast of Phuket, with its lovely beaches and tranquil seas in the winter season, became the focus of resort development in Phuket. But over the past 10 years, Phuket has evolved into a year-round resort community.

The bay side ( east coast) of Phuket, with its calm waters and magnificent islands, has become increasingly popular. With year-round resort living and vacationing now the norm, the appeal of Phuket's east coast continues to rise dramatically.

Today, high-quality resorts line the east coast. From the northeast, there is: the Ao Por area and its islands, featuring Ao Por Grand Marina, Chandara Resort, Six Senses and Best Western; the Cape Yamu area with Cape Yamu and The Bay; and

Sapham Bay, with the renowned Boat Lagoon Marina and Royal Phuket Marina. The near-shore islands also host some fine resorts. Coconut Island, for example, has The Village at Coconut Island and Jindarin Beach Club & Resort; Rang Yai Island features Rang Yai Resort; and Sireh Island, just east of Phuket Town, boasts Westin Koh Sireh, Four Points Panwa and The Regent.

The appeal of the east coast is two fold: First, it is the gateway to the more than 3,000 magical islands of Phang Nga Bay, which include majestic escarpments jutting out of the sea, the Hong Islands, with their stunning interior lagoons, and thousands of uninhabited, exquisite little beaches. Second, the east coast has easy access to the island's international schools, international airport, Phuket Town, major shopping malls and boat marinas. These benefits make Phuket's east side well worth consideration.

If you would like to find out more about East West Properties Co Ltd, contact T: +66-0817970358



## What's in the east:

Koh Sireh, Yamu, Ao Por Grand Marina, Cape Panwa, Yacht Haven Marina, Mission Hills Golf Course, Boat Lagoon, Royal Phuket Marina, Coconut Island. The breathtaking Phang Nga Bay is also off the east coast of Phuket with hundreds of islets to visit on a day trip. There's also much more to discover.

## East Property Listings

Tawan Views, Ao Po  
24 apartments  
Starting at 18.9mn baht  
[www.tawanproperties.com](http://www.tawanproperties.com)

Baan Yamu, Cape Yamu  
68 condos and villas  
Starting from 12.8mn baht  
[www.baanyamu.com](http://www.baanyamu.com)

Alanna, Cape Yamu  
12 duplex villas  
Starting from 22mn baht  
[www.alannayamu.com](http://www.alannayamu.com)

Nchantra, Sireh Beach  
41 condos  
Starting from 15mn baht  
[www.nchantra-property.com](http://www.nchantra-property.com)

Six Senses Residences  
Ko Yao Noi  
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Starting from 36mn baht  
[www.sixsenses.com](http://www.sixsenses.com)  
[privateresidences/yao-noi](http://privateresidences/yao-noi)

## The Bay @ Cape Yamu



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Light, space and order are all interplayed with a sense of freshness and openness that is very now. Yet if you fix a martini and add some 1950s attitude, you can drink, laze and bake like Sammy, Frank & Dean living the modern dream.

KplusK Associates are the master planners and design Architects for The Bay @ Cape Yamu. They were selected for their fresh approach to contemporary tropical design and their commitment to integrated, functionality and sublime architecture. KplusK are recognized as one of the leading design groups in the production of tropical modern architecture in Asia. The Bay @ Cape Yamu is tropical freshness at its sublime best.

Connectivity is the word to describe The Bay. Inside and outside spaces are designed to maximize tropical lifestyle, with large sliding glass panels intergrating the landscape with each space. The orientation and design of the pavilions is driven by maximizing views and the interactivity with the pool and sun decks.

As a counterpoint to the simplicity of the single storey pavilions, bold architectural forms are used to create the first floor bedrooms. In the large villas, high lofted roofs are supported on timber beams to create unique, loft-like bedroom environments.

In the smaller units, the architects have created extended timber-clad enclosures to frame views of the bay. Within the contemporary framework of each villa, the components of architecture are created using indigenous materials; natural stone, terrazzo, timber, silk & glass all integrate with the Thai landscape.

### THE SAPHAM BAY VILLAS COMPRISE OF 385-501 SQM OF INTERIOR LIVING AREA WITH A SURROUNDING POOL AND TERRACE OF 655-815 SQM.

They are set in generous land areas on western facing slopes and offer unrestricted sea views of Sapham Bay off the eastern shores of Phuket Island.

This style of villa has two distinct living areas or pavilions connected by a covered walkway. This allows for maximum exposure to beautiful views through the expansive windows. One living area contains the recreation room, study and the master bedroom that opens onto the terrace and the large infinity swimming pool. This large bedroom features an ensuite bathroom. Upstairs are two large bedrooms with balconies. One faces east and the sunrise whilst the other faces west and the sunset. Both bedrooms have ensuite bathrooms. The second pavilion contains the kitchen, breakfast bar and a dining area, which opens onto the terrace for al fresco entertaining.

The Sapham Bay Villas design artfully captures expansive views with minimum exposure to the afternoon sun.



# One-on-one with architect Gary Fell

Breaking architectural boundaries from London to Asia



PHUKET VISION: Architect Gary Fell, at his Phuket project Istana recently.

By Bruce Stanley

GARY Fell is one of Southeast Asia's most celebrated architects, having designed some of the region's most upscale villa and resort projects.

He has a distinctive formula for his work. Rather than simply copying or adapting traditional regional design concepts for his buildings, he studies the landscape and topography for each project and creates a building and landscape design to suit the natural features bringing the ultimate in environmental sustainability to his work.

He is well-known for bringing flat-roof architecture to his many projects that allows for passive solar features such as a green roof with a water element to provide insulation and cooling. Also, much of his covered building spaces are open to invite the natural elements to cool and refresh interior spaces decreasing the dependence on air conditioning.

Gary graduated and then taught at the

University College in London. He gained international recognition for his design for the Cardiff Opera House that edged out some of the world's most noted architects.

This attention opened the door for him to work as project architect in Bali at the Four Seasons Sayan before he opened his own practice, Gfab in 1999.

For the past twelve years, the focus of his design practice has been in Indonesia, Cambodia and Thailand and his work is currently expanding into projects in India and Vietnam. Gfab's design work has set a strong visual standard.

Each design deserves to be studied for the clever orientation and statement about contemporary tropical living.

He regularly visits his project on Phuket, Istana, set on the west coast of the island overlooking Nai Thon beach.

The *Phuket Gazette* sat down with Gary Fell recently to learn more about his work.

**Bruce Stanley: What have been some of the challenges you've faced designing and building at Istana?**

Gary Fell: Each villa has a specific design to fit the landscape. We started with a large and topographically varied site, with lush dense vegetation. The challenge is to create these houses and return the landscape to its former state.

I'm constantly amazed at nature's ability to regenerate and bounce back from the hand of man. As the building sites themselves are unusually large, we should be able to preserve the intrinsic qualities on this site.

**'I'm constantly amazed at nature's ability to regenerate and bounce back from the hand of man.'**

**– Gary Fell, architect**

**Are you involved in the landscape plan to fit your design?**

Certainly, the landscape is very much an extension of the villas. We are pursuing an approach of using mostly native flora which will flourish in this environment without needing constant attention. The site is essentially a jungle type setting and the houses aim to assimilate with this. We spent a long time considering how we wanted the project to look from the sea.

The last thing we wanted was to create the usual fare – insensitive impositions on the landscape completely out of sync with their sites.

Instead, we sought a series of terraces and platforms which would have a minimum visual impact when seen from afar. Within the site itself we are developing

natural pools and water courses and positioning the houses to suggest they are a natural extension of these features.

**Are you involved in the interior designs with fixtures, appliances and fittings?**

We are intimately involved in all aspects of the design of Istana. The property features the use of high-end brands such as Varena Poliform (fitted furniture) and we are working closely with the manufacturer and their local liaison A2Zen to develop the interiors.

Our design makes heavy use of fitted furniture in the production of spaces and to this extent one may think of the interior as being inextricably linked to the architecture we produce.

In past projects the quality of manufacture has let down the project and so here, we elected to bypass this problem by working with one of the world's leading brands.

This approach was taken throughout the development and extends to lighting, sanitary wares and much more. The fixtures and fittings are of the highest standards of quality and design.

Much of the bathroom fittings are from Antonio Lupi, kitchen equipment is by Gaggenau – everything has been selected for its exceptional quality, and no area has been neglected.

*For a list of projects Gary Fell has worked on and more, see [W:gfabarchitects.com](http://W:gfabarchitects.com).*



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# Six cool things to fill your

WITH an endless stream of new tech gadgets, funky and innovative furnishings and fixtures constantly hitting the market, making your new Phuket home look more sophisticated and cool only really depends on your budget.

Thailand is already a furniture hub in Southeast Asia with many of the world's hottest designers and manufacturers represented in Bangkok and Phuket. And for those that aren't, the glory of online shopping makes access to international products easier than ever.

Here are a few items that will get your neighbors asking, "Where did they get that?"

- Duane Lennie



ATMOSPHERE GLOBE:  
NEW WORLD ORDER

GREAT redesigns can invigorate even the most mundane items found in the home. A perfect example is this new globe by Italian designer Fabio Luciani. The Atmosphere Globe is made of die-cast aluminum and bright, transparent, shatter-resistant thermoplastic. The sphere diameter is 30cm and is available in four very bright colors: yellow, green, mauve and red.

Price: 6,900 baht  
fabioluciani.it



LAMONT LAMPS:  
LIGHT UP YOUR LIFE

TRADITIONAL craftsmanship is still alive in the Thai design studio Lamont. With several UNESCO awards for their support of traditional craft methods, Lamont's latest creation, the Cicada Lantern collection, are pieces of art that also function as indoor and outdoor lighting.

Made of Peking Glass, using a blown-glass process created during the Qing Dynasty, the lanterns radiate strong, exotic mood lighting. Available in two sizes; one powered by electricity the other by candle.

Price: 50,000 baht  
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**Price: 25 million baht (approximate)**  
[autoexpress.co.th](http://autoexpress.co.th)



## TEATRO: ENTERTAIN YOUR HOME

THE gang at AVC Engineering in Phuket are pretty suave. Their new Teatro home entertainment system is so slick and easy to use, local luxury villa and resort owners are lining up for demonstrations. Television, Internet, music, videos, movies, games, are all controlled by one remote control with intuitive on-screen menus.

**Price: 112,000 baht**  
[digital-lifestyles.net](http://digital-lifestyles.net)



## DEDON PLAY CHAIR: CARRYING THE WEIGHT

FROM Dedon, the leading producer of hand-woven outdoor furniture, comes the Play Chair designed by Philippe Starck. Based on a concept of interchangeable chair parts including materials and colors, Play opens the horizon to a future of specially-customized furniture and an array of possible combinations. Elastic and durable, extremely lightweight and stackable, Starck defines the Play Chair as "an idea that gives plenty of room to human intervention".

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[chanintrliving.com](http://chanintrliving.com)



## ANTONIO LUPI TUB: BATHING IN ART

PRODUCED in the Tuscany region of Italy, Antonio Lupi's products are often used for creating the world's most opulent bathrooms.

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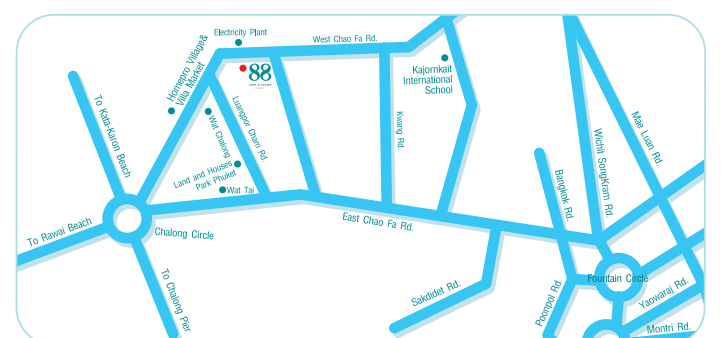


Photo of actual house with simulated environment

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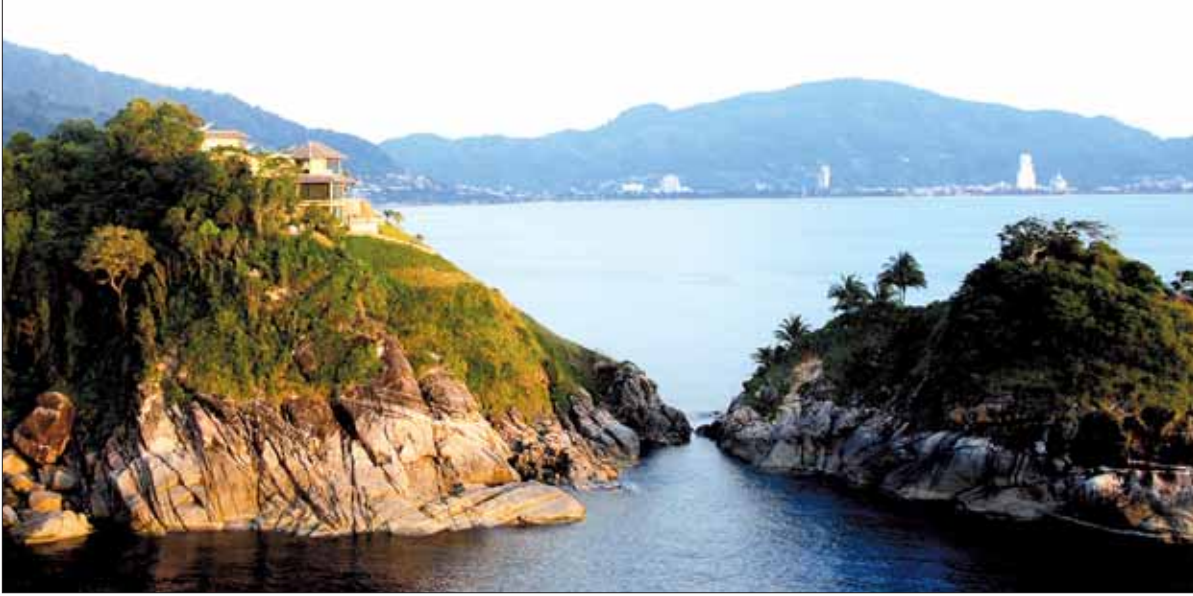
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## TROPICAL SERENITY



# Only way is up

Bill Barnett, managing director of C9 Hotelworks, looks to the future of the Phuket property market with optimism



PHUKET PEAKS: Oceanfront property on the island will remain a sought after commodity. Photo: Jim Welch

THE demons of a self-proclaimed property guru are far too many to list in this 500-word article. Throwing off the shackles of inside knowledge is more of a curse than a blessing.

In predicting what the future holds in store for Phuket, even Nostradamus would not be able to keep up.

Doom, gloom and those odd moments between when many a developer and property broker sat silent and sullen next to the "kill switch" need not be recounted.

We don't live in a communist country, so there is no need to rewrite the tales of our ghosts of past and present.

Today is indeed the rest of our lives and like Groundhog Day, could very well be filled with joy – or grief. Hope does indeed spring eternal.

Over the past three years I

can't remember the number of times someone has stumbled into my office or leaned across a board table and posed the question: "When will things return to the way they used to be?" Ah, I think silently, "just where is that 'kill switch' when I need it?" But of course I smile back and recount what Phuket real estate has got right.

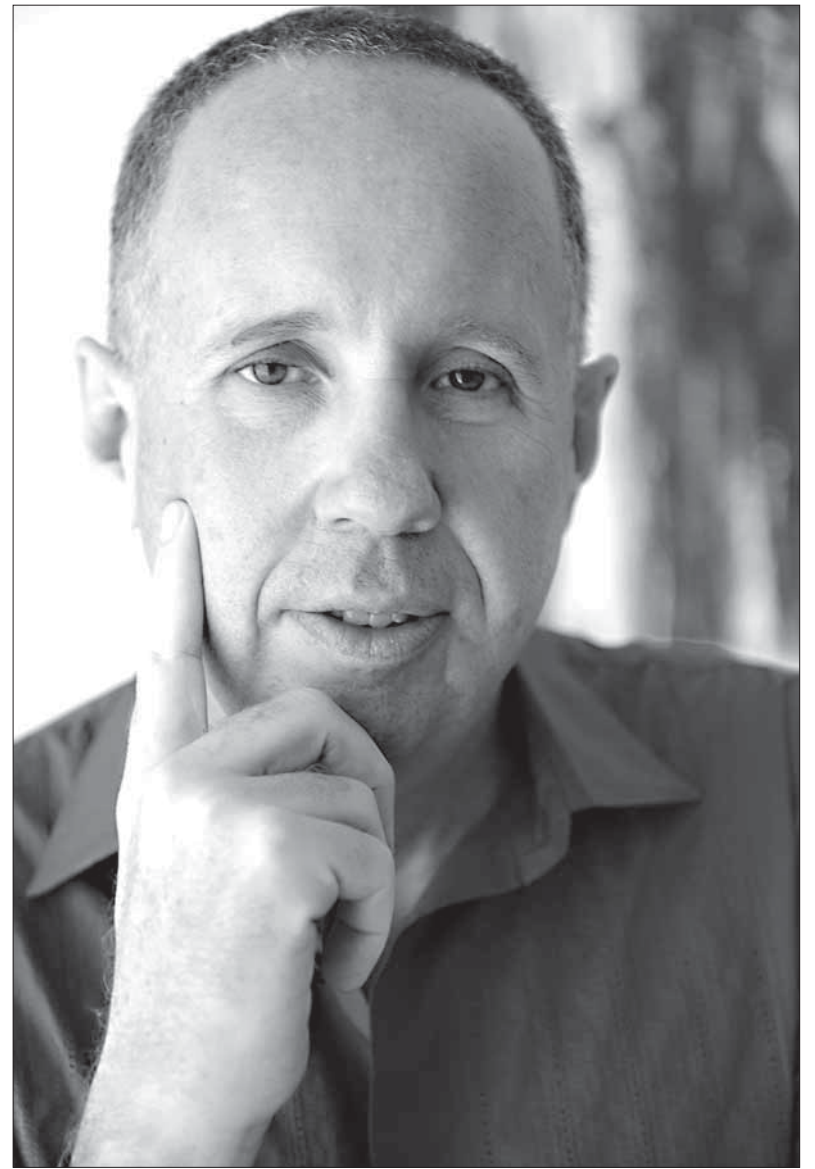
It is the birthplace of the modern hotel pool villa, home to the world-class destination resort complex Laguna, boasts enough golf courses to keep committed duffers from ever getting bored, offers hospitality and plenty of sun and sand with our diverse beaches. It's also easier to get here than ever by international direct flight, including some from destinations you may or may not care to travel to some day.

We've got a lot here, and there

is more to come. I could take the vantage point, of course. Yes, there are problems: infrastructure, the growing pains from mass tourism, traffic, environmental issues and continuing uncertainty up in a small town called Bangkok.

For property buyers in every corner of the world, stories of both success and failure are common. For all those who point fingers at the uncertainty of Thailand, I always pose the question: is it really any worse than America, Spain or Ireland?

Come on, you know the answer to that. Capital appreciation might have slowed to a snail's pace and resale listings are multiplying faster than the wrinkles around my eyes, but if you bought on strong fundamentals, real estate here remains a solid investment. We don't live in a



FORWARD THINKER: Bill Barnett has a weekly column in the Phuket Gazette.

perfect world. If someone can come up with a better place to live, raise their children, own a business, and enjoy a casual lifestyle please let me know. I've been globe-trotting for about 50 years now and for me Phuket is as good as it gets.

At the same time, I do understand that the island is changing day in and day out. It won't be the same place in 10 years as it is now, just as it is vastly different now than it was when I moved here 10 years ago.

So to answer that annoying question on whether the market


is going to go from slow to backward: it isn't going to happen.

Property is set to continue as a major industry in Phuket for a very long time. Players, places, prices and products will inevitably shift.

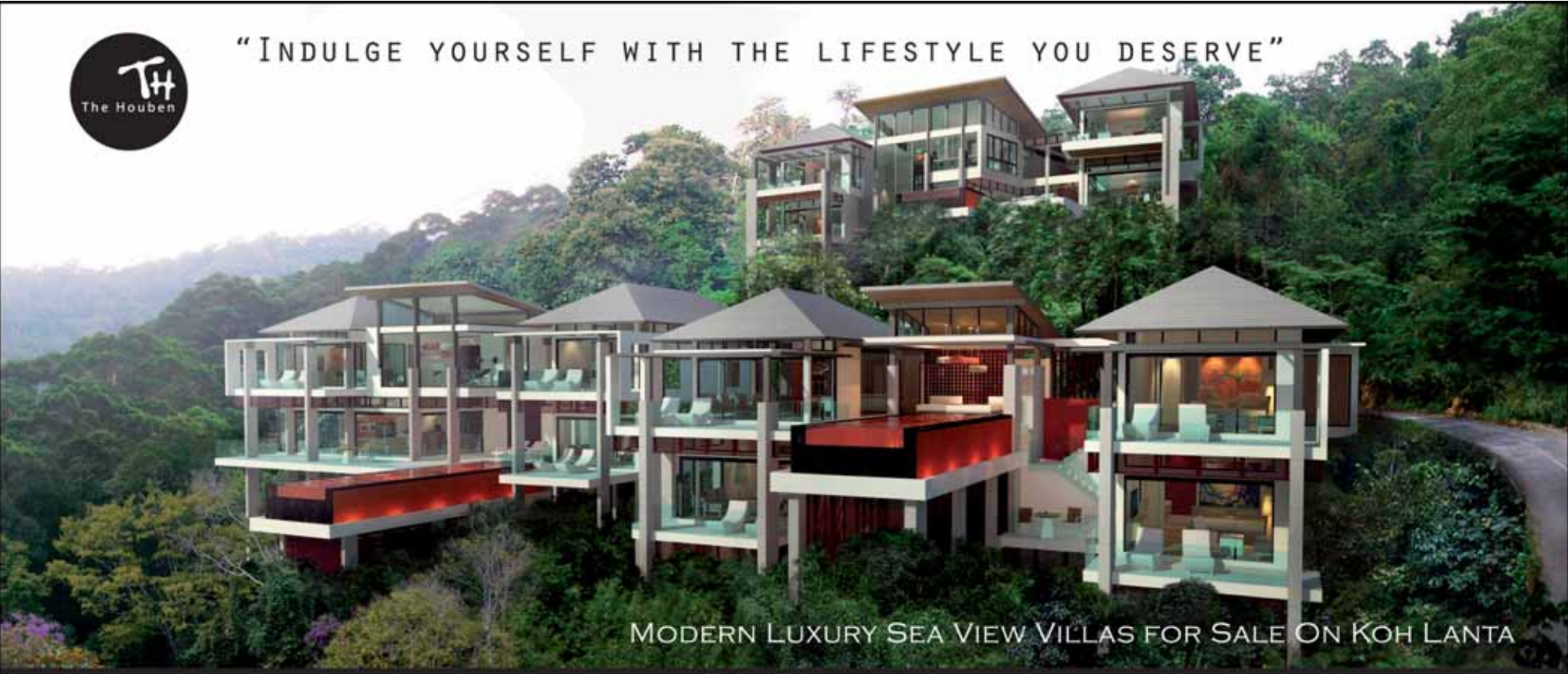
The steering wheel of the car is in the front, facing forward for a reason.

The road may have a few bumps along the way, but it's going to be ride you won't easily forget.

Bill Barnett can be contacted through [www.c9hotelworks.com](http://www.c9hotelworks.com).



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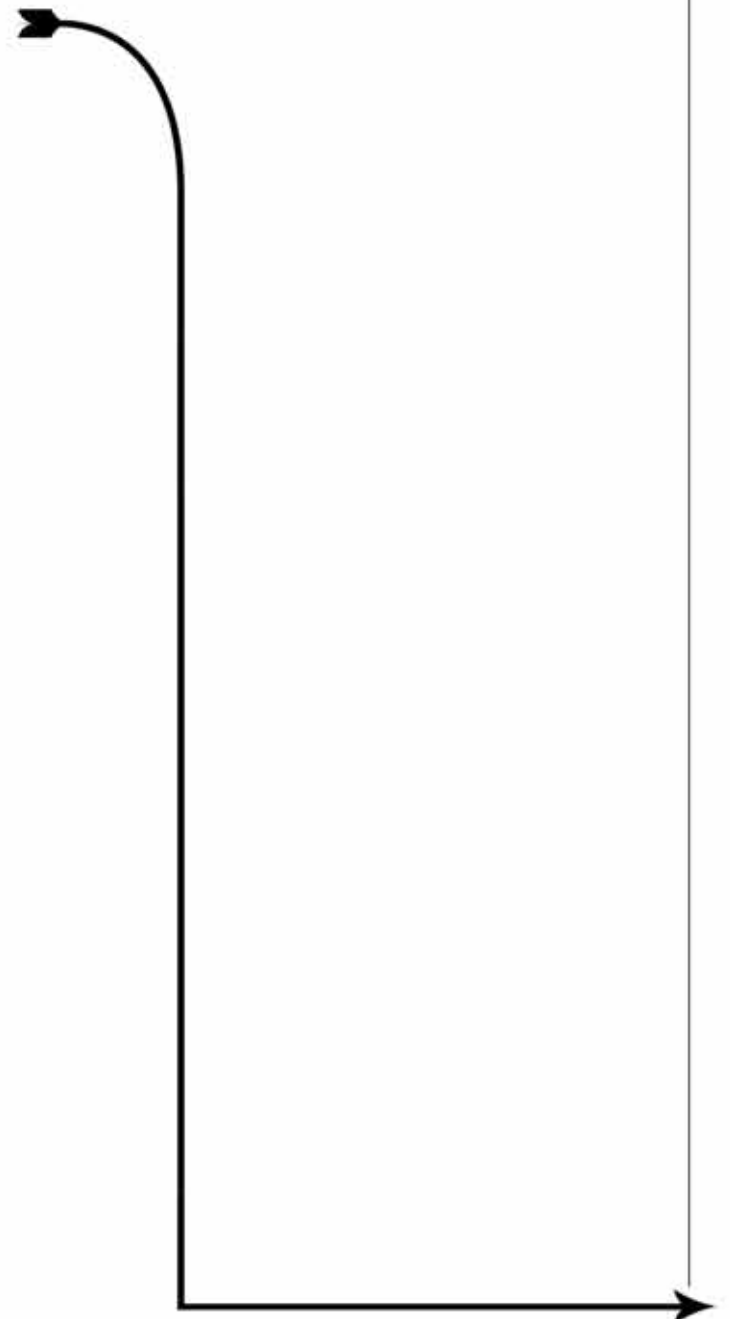
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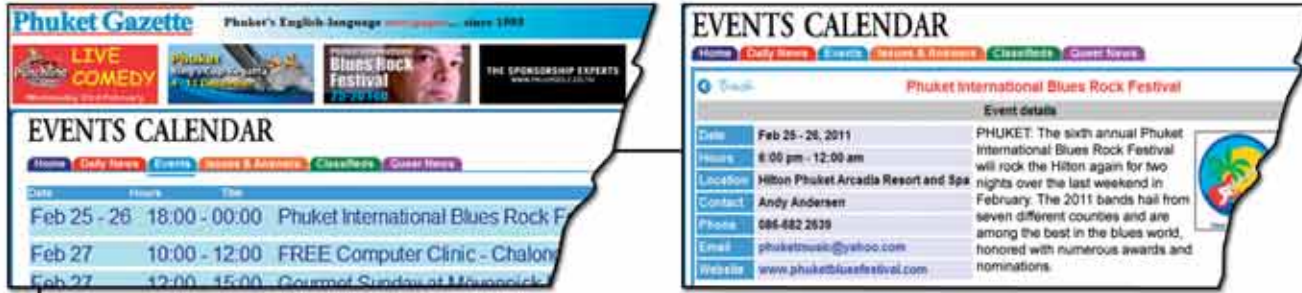


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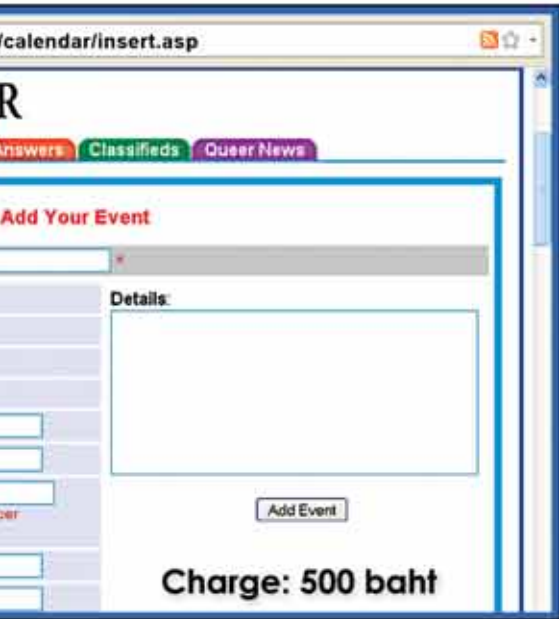
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