

EXCLUSIVE: Outgoing Korean Ambassador: What Thailand can learn from Korea

BigChilli

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Seafood & Bakery

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High & Dry in Bangsaray

A photo is often worth a thousand words, especially when you know the back story. In this case, the photo here is of Bangsaray, a small traditional fishing village some 30kms south of Pattaya that the government's Marine Department in its wisdom wishes to upgrade and turn into a major tourist destination by building a marina and extending the beach. Now, as every local can tell you, Bangsaray frequently experiences low tides. So low, in fact, that boats are often left high and dry on the sand for many hours – even those anchored several hundred metres from the beach. Nevertheless, government boffins (maybe supported by major

investors) think that this pleasant coastal resort is perfectly suited as a marina for yachts and keel boats that need deep waters. And that's clearly not the situation here, as the photo illustrates beautifully.

Bangkok at bursting point?

If you think Bangkok is badly congested and can't get any worse, think again. Three massive projects due to open in the next few months are going to put even more pressure on the city's infrastructure: One Bangkok on the corner of Wireless and Rama 4 roads; Dusit Central on Silom; and Emsphere on Sukhumvit. Didn't the city planners see this coming?

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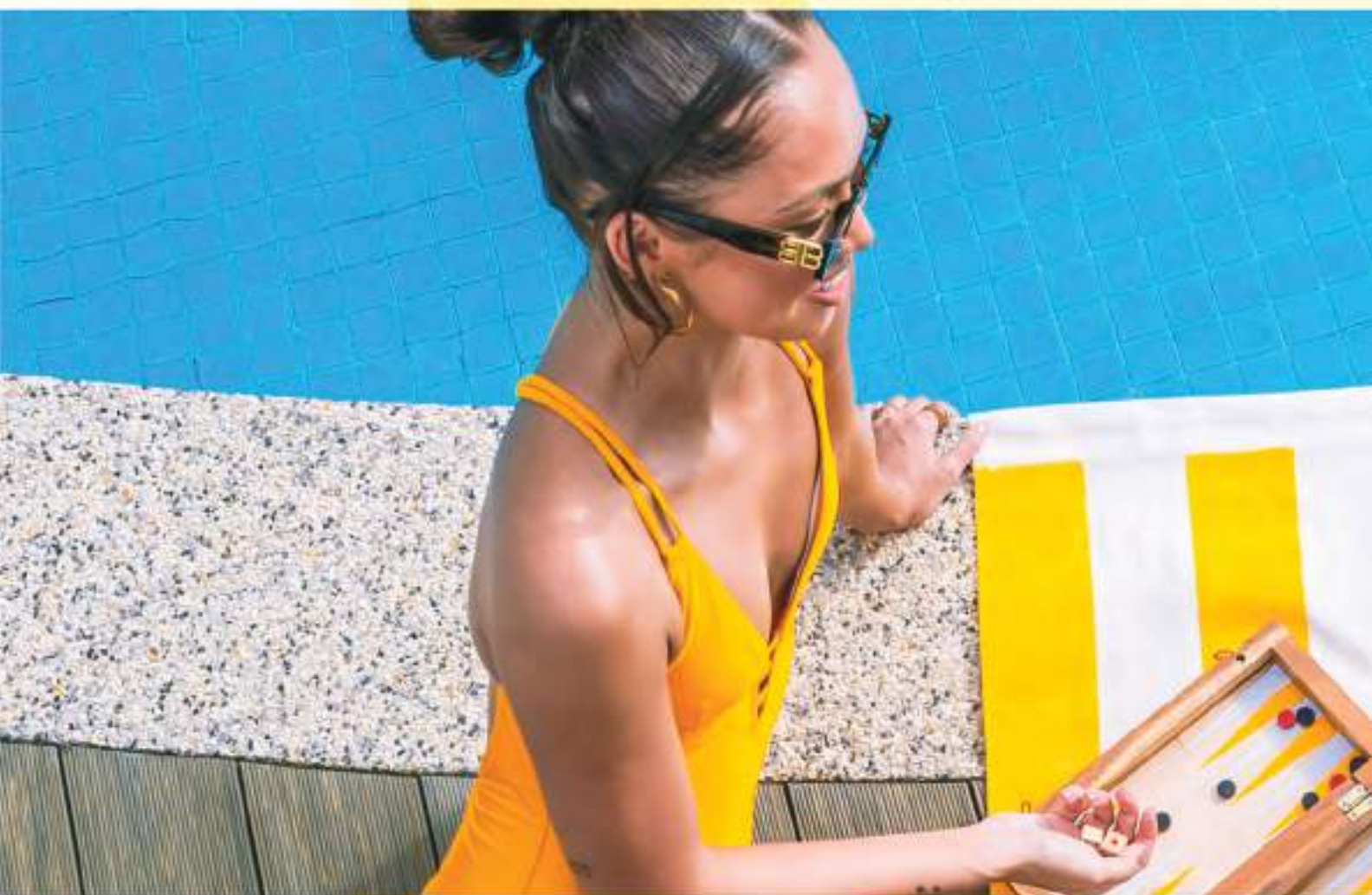


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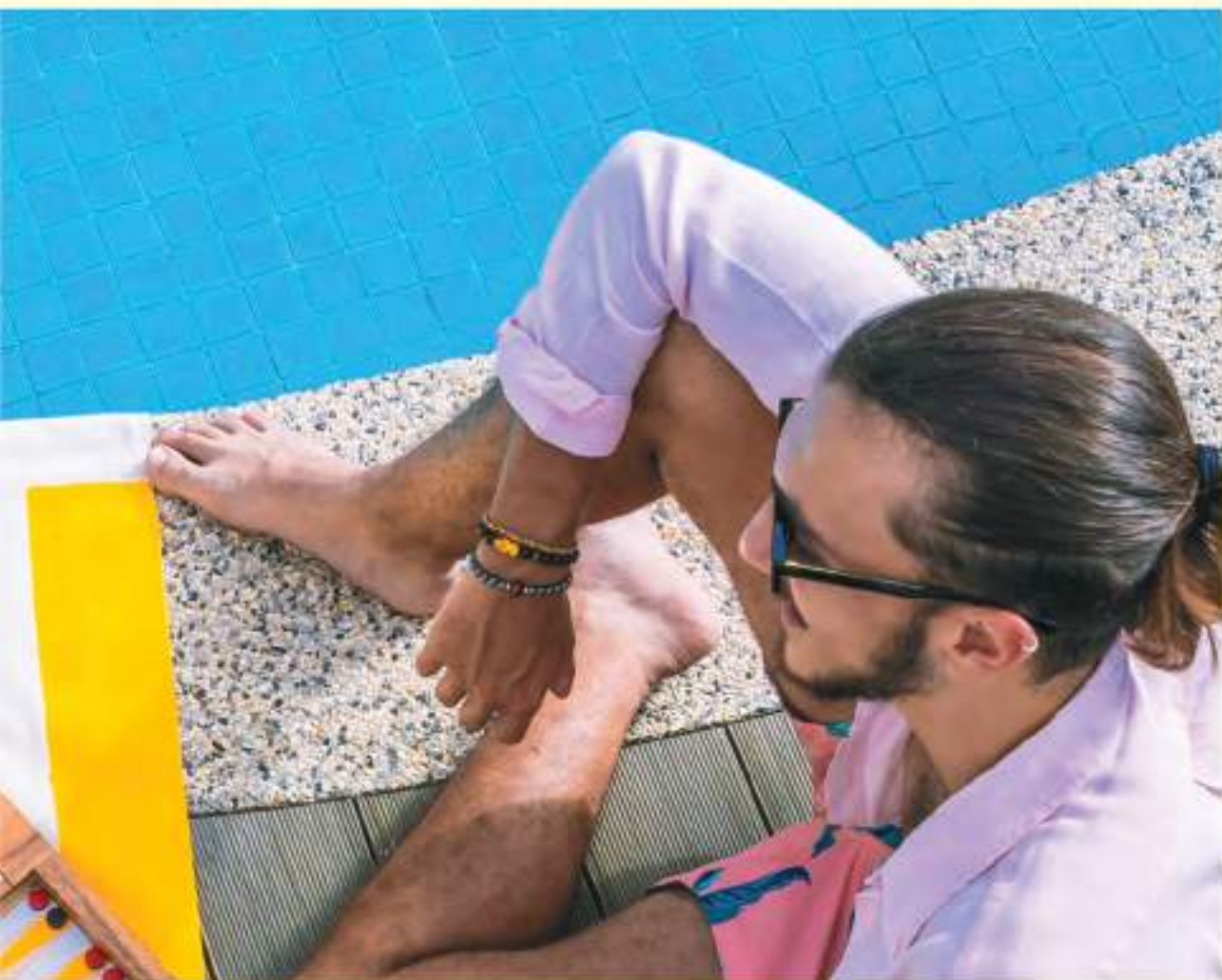
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AUSSIE DEAN IS AHEAD OF THE BIG MANUFACTURERS WITH HIS AMAZING *Black Bull EV* MOTORCYCLES

Overcoming Thai bureaucracy to make his vehicles road legal was the hardest thing he's ever had to do

With Thailand accounting for almost 79% of all Electric Vehicles sold in Southeast Asia in the first quarter of this year, the country is clearly adapting very quickly to this new and rapidly growing business sector.

Here in Bangkok, Australian Dean Bourke is in near-pole position with his recently launched Black Bull range of EV motorcycles in the race to capture a slice of the local market before the major manufacturers stake their claim.

Each of his bikes is not only eye-catching, environmentally friendly and modified for extra performance, they are also road legal, a status that took him a year and considerable funds to achieve. Dealing with Thai bureaucracy, says this industrious 55-year-old, was the "hardest thing I've ever had to do in my life."

In the first month following official approval, Dean sold 16 bikes from his showroom in Pattanakarn Road in Bangkok. Since then, with impressive modifications and improvements, his Black Bull bikes are now in high demand.

Dean's personal journey in Thailand is marked by success in very





divergent fields. He moved here in 2006 and purchased the Boxing brand EVERLAST as the Thailand agent. After building the business, he sold it and then joined FBT Sports to design and market a range of Muay Thai products for export.

From 2017-2020, Dean worked as Director of Recreations at Ambassador Hotel Bangkok and Jomtien, promoting and arranging over 50 Muay Thai, Cage Fights and Boxing Fights for professional fighters.

"In 2020, I was going to retire just as Covid started. I decided to purchase an electric motorcycle online, just for my personal use, knowing that it could never be road registered but just planned to use it around my housing compound. It was a large scooter, like a Honda Forza, and I fell in love with it. Everywhere I rode it people would stop and ask me about it. People were always trying to buy it from me but I just wanted it for myself.

"I kept running into the same Thai man at 7 Eleven near my house. He pestered me to buy it. I told him a stupid price of more than double what I had paid for the scooter so he would leave me alone. But, to cut a long story short, he bought it.

"I then had to re-order another motorcycle for myself. It was an

"ON TOP OF THAT, EACH MOTORCYCLE HAD TO UNDERGO AN INDEPENDENT TEST AT 'THAILAND AUTOMOTIVE.'

identical vehicle and the same thing happened with another Thai man after having it for less than three months. I then thought to myself - this could be a nice little business.

"I knew nothing about importing motorcycles and went into it quite blindly. After deciding on a name - Black Bull Thailand - I registered the company name and trademarked the logo. I chose six models to import, from small scooters to large and fast big motorcycles.

"I imported them legally, paid the duty and thought it would be an easy process to get them road legal. Wow, what a mistake that was - the hardest thing I've ever had to do in my life. The red tape was incredible and generated an enormous amount of paperwork needed from the factory that manufactured the motorcycles.

"On top of that, each motorcycle had to undergo an independent test at 'Thailand Automotive.' Then the Department of Land Transport Engineers had to test and pass each model.

"It took over one year to

pass and cost over a million baht in independent tests, approved certification, mountains of paperwork and detailed blueprints covering all aspects of each model.

"Finally, I was approved www.blackbullthailand.com and the company was created."

Dean modified the motorcycles to be the very best they could be with large, long range and removable batteries, fast speed,





BLACK BULL THAILAND



DEAN MODIFIED THE MOTORCYCLES TO BE THE VERY BEST THEY COULD BE WITH LARGE, LONG RANGE AND REMOVABLE BATTERIES, FAST SPEED, ABS BRAKES, GPS AND A FAST RECHARGE OF ABOUT 1-2 HOURS.

ABS brakes, GPS and a fast recharge of about 1-2 hours. All are made to a European Standard and get a two-year warranty on both the motorcycle and the lithium battery.

"On my larger motorcycles - Panther, Jett, Storm and BWC models - we are the only company currently approved to sell such fast EV motorcycles. This will change in the future, but as I changed the mold to build the motorcycle, all have removable batteries plus a super-fast recharge time. Even when new players come into the market, we really have some top quality motorcycles to compete."





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A close-up, low-angle shot of an airplane's wing and tail section, viewed from the passenger's perspective. The wing is white with grey panels, and the tail is red with the 'Air Asia' logo in white script. The background is a clear blue sky with some light clouds near the horizon.

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The Air Asia logo, consisting of the words 'Air Asia' in a white, stylized script font, set against a solid red circular background.

Air Asia

'Dan ABOUT Thailand'



British vlogger talks about his Facebook channel, why Pattaya has become more family friendly, and how heavyweight boxing champion Tyson Fury endeared himself to his Bangkok fans

British vlogger talks about his popular TV channel, why Pattaya has become more family friendly, and how heavyweight boxing champion Tyson Fury endeared himself to his Bangkok fans

With his TV and Facebook channel 'Dan About Thailand,' Briton Dan Cheeseman has established himself as one of Thailand's best known expat vloggers – a term used

to describe a freelance social media reporter who talks mostly into the camera.

Tell us a little about yourself.

I was born in the UK and have a business management degree, which I got whilst working with Coca-Cola Enterprises – that was also my first job. I worked for Coke for 10 years in various sales, marketing and strategic roles.





What you do here?

I am part owner of ASEAN NOW (formerly Thaivisa) and acting MD, CEO for Siam Royal View, which includes two villages in Pattaya and Koh Chang. Koh Chang is a 300-rai beachfront project that includes a residential village built around a golf course and along two kms of sandy coastline, two hotels, a marina and restaurant. Actually, I am more well known for my 'passion project / hobby' – 'Dan about Thailand' vlogging channel.

When did you first come to Thailand, and why?

I came to Thailand in 2006. My Dad died in 1995 at only 43 years old and when my Mum then also sadly died

at 52 in 2005, I wanted to start a new chapter in my life. It was a reminder of how short life can be and the need to take control and do what makes you happy and content.

I had a senior role as a Business Proposition Manager for the Post Office at 29 years old and was flying at work. I was responsible for developing new ways of doing business with the 14,000 agents who had a Post Office back then, and was somewhat of a young buck really moving and shaking the industry that was pretty much managed by a more aging management team. Still, I knew I had to take control and try something radically different. I chose Thailand initially as a stop gap until I was clear of what direction I wanted to take, but never left.

You are in a very competitive line of work – how do you stay ahead?

The key for building an influencer channel is consistency and just being yourself. Be willing to share your soul and say it as it is, don't delude yourself or viewers. Also, and this is just personal opinion and advice for anyone else wanting to give it a try, monetize your platform as quickly as possible to keep yourself motivated and committed.

Most expat influencers operate on YouTube and specialise in longer form video. This does not interest me, I wanted from the start to make Facebook my key channel and produce three-minute short form videos. I also believe it is the easiest platform to grow due to the tools

> PROFILE: Briton Dan Cheeseman



"From the start I wanted to make Facebook my key channel and produce three-minute short form videos."

available, plus YouTube is saturated and super competitive.

I pay no attention to other influencers and just share my own accounts for living and working in Thailand as an expat family man. My life is pretty varied and I travel a lot, so producing content is fairly easy. I also ensure I vary my content so as to stop viewer boredom. One day I may do an opinion piece, followed by a travel vlog the next day, for example.

How do you choose topics for your YouTube channel?

Learning and experience with ASEAN NOW gave me a heads up to all the clues as to what expats and those with an interest in Thailand want to know about. Interestingly, my opinion pieces tend to perform much stronger than a vlog about a travel destination. I have no issues having a strong opinion on a subject even if some viewers would not agree.

I don't do this just for easy views

and to appease everyone. Viewers want to learn from a vlog and some of my experience is fairly unique, whereas other expat vloggers - my competition, you could say - tend to be retired whereas I am an active, ambitious working expat. Travel vlogs have been done to death also, so viewers want to see something a bit different.

Any topics completely out of bounds?
Absolutely, anything official like the Government, Politics and the Monarchy.

How challenging is it to remain fresh and relevant in your work?

It is a challenge but not as much as you may expect. You can rework popular vlog content that was published a year or more ago and flesh it out and redevelop it. I am always learning and seeing things in new lights.

Often it is the small things that perform really well too. I made a vlog

on a magician standing on a corner in Hua Hin recently and it got over 750k views just on Facebook alone. Two thirds of my audience is from outside Thailand and they are hungry for all kinds of updates. Things an expat takes for granted, others are very keen to see.

Do you have a team, or do you work alone?

For my vlogging I work alone. In addition to my Facebook, TikTok, YouTube channels I have a website www.danaboutthailand.com and weekly newsletter.

I know I could improve the quality of editing, but for now I like the rawness and think it is a factor in its popularity. The moment I start developing a team then 'Dan about Thailand' becomes more than a paid hobby and I am at a crossroads over whether to take that step.

Any reaction to your YouTube channel from the government or Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT)?

Yes. From time to time, I travel with them to review different travel destinations in Thailand.

While your work is clearly appreciated - looking at the viewing figures - have you faced any serious criticism from a typical viewer.

Managing ASEAN NOW made my skin much harder. I have seen articles online about me which are just not true and even discuss my family. I have received numerous hate mail over the years and have learned to cope with it now.

I get bitter and angry comments all the time on 'Dan about Thailand.' If the comment is a reasonable challenge, then I keep it, debate is healthy. But if it has malicious intent, I just block the user. It also ensures my page is a better place to get involved and comment for the majority of viewers who are very decent.

I am actually not a fan of social media, which may surprise you given

it is where most of my vlog views come from. I think it is a big reason for the issues people have with mental health. I also read that expats are more susceptible to mental health issues also.

Social media is hugely misleading where people present only the image of themselves they want people to see. When others, who are vulnerable, see others living a 'perfect' life it makes them feel inadequate.

We also spend far too much precious time looking at social media. I hope that in time we all learn how to control social media so that it adds something positive to our lives, rather than at the moment when social media controls and wastes our valuable time.

How do you monetize your work?

Do you have regular sponsors?

Facebook and YouTube have a paid partnership programme, whilst from time to time there are direct advertisers, all of which are invoiced correctly through my Thai company. I could monetize it harder, but am too busy with other work - and it could also spoil the channel if I cash in too hard! I have no issue monetizing the platform. After all, it does take my time to produce content every day.

Pattaya has always 'enjoyed' a reputation for sleaze? Is it justified - or are recent efforts by the Administration to clean up its image actually working, and what more can they do to achieve that goal?

Pattaya has developed by leaps and bounds since I first came here. The nightlife areas have become smaller and the city has become far more family friendly. The city has too much to offer, primarily due to being a beach location, near Bangkok and the international airport, to stand still. I see only a bright future ahead.

Is Pattaya a good place to live - especially for an expat family with children like yours?

I tried Hua Hin for a year and enjoyed it very much, but it was just too far



"I pay no attention to other influencers and just share my own accounts for living and working in Thailand as an expat family man. My life is pretty varied and I travel a lot, so producing content is fairly easy. I also ensure I vary my content so as to stop viewer boredom"

from Bangkok and other locations to keep me interested. Pattaya, for an expat, just has too much on offer. Great schools, shopping, beach, attractions, gyms, saunas and is an excellent gateway hub with Bangkok, nearby islands, U Tapao and Suvarnabhumi airports. It is not perfect but it is certainly a convenient place to live. Is this my final location? I hope not - life is too short not to keep mixing it up.

My wife is Russian so we both rely on visas to live here. We also have two children - Dani 9 and Frank 8 - who were born here in Thailand.

Did you meet your wife in Thailand, and get married here?

Yes, we met in Pattaya ten years ago and married shortly after. My wife works in real estate. I loved her energy and drive to get on in this world, it's why we clicked.

> PROFILE: Briton Dan Cheeseman

Do you ever visit Pattaya's infamous bars?

When I first arrived, I spent far too much time in such bars. It was a crazy period in my life which was fun, but not for me now.

Have you established a circle of good friends with similar aspirations as yourself?

Not really, not ones that I see eye to eye with. I am still fiercely ambitious and want to keep trying new things and developing as a person. There are few individuals, but not as many as I would like.

I would love a circle of like-minded friends to chew the fat and bounce ideas with; I am motivated by disruption and trying new things as opposed to just doing things the way they are always done. It is more exciting.

My wife often says I chose the wrong industry to work because of the wrong focus. I know I could have made much more money working in real estate for example, but it lacks excitement – even though over the last couple of years I have become more active in this industry with Siam Royal View. I have some ideas on how to develop the real estate sector, but to keep me interested it has to be fun and disruptive. Money comes second.

You recently organized an event in Bangkok featuring Tyson Fury, Britain's world heavyweight boxing champion. Excuse the pun but was it a thumping success?

It was very stressful, to be honest. 18-months ago I was speaking with an events team in the UK, who I had worked with when I brought Frank Bruno – also a boxer – to Hua Hin a few years ago. They were giving me names of other ex-sporting stars that could come to Thailand, but it didn't excite me. I said to them I want Tyson Fury and they said he would be very expensive. Anyway, when I got the fee, I had the target to achieve and just went for it.



"I am actually not a fan of social media, which may surprise you given it is where most of my vlog views come from. I think it is a big reason for the issues people have with mental health."

Two months before the event I lost my main sponsor but had reached the point of no return. I was up against it and felt the stress, but in a strange way enjoyed the pressure. It became a personal challenge to turn it around, which – I am pleased to say – I did. It merely reinforced my view that everything is possible when you work hard. In this case I worked too hard, I was ill for two weeks after the event.

Some of those who attended said the interview with Tyson's father was too long and thus detracted from the son's subsequent appearance. True or not?

To be honest, I did not have a chance to listen to any of the interviews as there was so much going on behind the scenes at the event. I think when the dust settles, anyone that attended the event would have thought it was pretty amazing. They had an evening with the current, active and hugely charismatic Tyson Fury. I mean, when he got everyone up and singing at the end, it would have created many special memories for people. That felt very nice to have been the one that made this happen.



Is Tyson Fury as nice and personable as his interviews certainly suggest?

Yes. He was a true gent as was his dad. The guy was training hard twice a day on the Thailand trip and always had time to crack a joke with you when he saw you. So personable and friendly throughout. I now no longer believe any of the bad press that he sometimes gets and it further fuels my distrust of most media.

You have said that you would like to organize another event involving a celebrity. What's the latest on that?

I need to get my energy back after the Fury event and still have my regular work to focus on. But if I was to do it again it would be a big name such as Mike Tyson or Ricky Gervais; I am also toying with the idea of some kind of weekend festival. Watch this space.

Do you spend much time in Bangkok, or indeed, other parts of Thailand? Any favorite destinations?

I am all over the place and spend much time in Koh Chang for work for my role with Siam Royal View. My current escape to unwind is Koh Phangan, I



love the vibe and wellness side to the island. Beautiful beaches, great places to eat well and good gyms and saunas. It is heaven for my family and I.

How much longer do you see yourself living in Thailand?

I have no immediate plans to live anywhere else, but it won't be the UK that is for sure. I looked at Australia a couple of times but I worry about the ongoing red tape that comes from living there and it is just a bit too far away from everywhere else.

If I stay in Thailand, I will still be very happy - I may give Hua Hin another chance in a few years; but it depends upon my finances.

What is your overall view of Thailand as a place to live?

It is something very special. The lifestyle my family and I get to live is amazing. But, if I could give any advice to others, it is to make sure you have a longer-term financial plan in place. I wonder if too many get caught up in the moment and find themselves compromised and in a sticky situation in the future. If you don't have a

pension, how will you be able to live when you cannot work? If I ever feel like my family is being compromised or my finances are not in check, I would immediately change my life.

As a working expat you must work hard and create options. You may be earning good money now, but what if the market changed - just look at Covid and tourism. You are on your own in Thailand and not protected if things suddenly take a turn for the worse. Make sure you and your family have good insurance and don't let your kids' education suffer by being in Thailand.

Do you think you will ever completely understand the Thai way of doing things?

Yes, I think I have a good grasp of this now. Westerners can learn a lot about a more relaxed, playful lifestyle. We always, as Westerners, think we know best but I am not so convinced anymore. Stress, hard work, rat race existence caught up in a capitalist cog - that also looks far from perfect. Taking parts of Thai and Western culture, for me, gives a more balanced

and happier life.

What do you miss about the UK?

Less and less in reality. Family and friends, the countryside, a decent English pub, going to watch my beloved Tottenham Hotspurs and Christmas holidays.

Any low points about living in Thailand?

Knowing I am merely a guest/alien to the country and the need to have a visa to live here. I love Thailand and consider it my home, but the conditions and immigration requirements always remind me that I am a guest rather than a resident. International school fees are also high.

Is Thailand a good place to retire?

That is a loaded question, isn't it? Absolutely. Year-round sunshine, the amazing places you can travel and explore, world class beaches, wonderful hospitals, shopping and the fact it already has a vibrant expat community. For value, I would struggle to suggest a viable and realistic alternative.

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Spectacular Gala Night for German- Thai Community

The German-Thai Chamber of Commerce proudly presented its popular and always spectacular GTCC 'Gala Night' for the first time after four years. It is the most exclusive annual event and networking platform of key decision makers in the German-Thai business community. Held at the Anantara Siam Bangkok Hotel, guests included German Ambassador H.E. Georg Schmidt and his spouse Madame Yuet Lin Fong. GTCC President Mr. Michael Welser thanked some 250 esteemed guests for attending the event.

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Dr Penguin's more famous than me' friends

In the last issue of the BigChilli, we featured Thailand's famous magician Dr Penguin with a promise to recount his dealings with some of history's greatest icons.

Stevie Wonder

Penguin met Stevie Wonder in Taipei in 1988. "My show partner at the time was mime artist David Ellzey, who knew Stevie Wonder's manager, Ray, who in turn invited them to meet the singer. "I waited to be last in line, and then I pulled out two big sponge balls and said, 'I wanna show you a trick!' Stevie freaked out and said, 'But... I'm blind?'"

Penguin retorted, 'Yeah, I know - that doesn't matter!'

"I was the first magician ever to perform magic for Stevie Wonder! He completely freaked out. Jumped in the air and did a circle. He wouldn't give me back the balls! And he asked me if I had more? Of course!"



"He was terrible. His accent was off, and he obviously had never learned anything about people in Asia"

- Robin Williams

Robin Williams

Penguin met Robin Williams at The Comedy Store in Hollywood around 1983. On this particular night, there was a comedian who was making fun of Pakistanis and Indians.

"He was terrible. His accent

was off, and he obviously had never learned anything about people in Asia. So I started heckling him in a Pakistani accent, asking him why he was making fun of my people. I was on fire - I made everybody laugh, which made him look really bad. He got angry: 'So you think you can do better?' And I said, 'Well, sir, I can certainly try.'

"And with that I went up on stage and told jokes about coming to America and finding out the toilets didn't work properly like Pakistani toilets, and all this toilet paper everywhere, what the hell is that for? It was very funny."

What Penguin didn't know was that Robin Williams was in the back watching all of this. "When I finished, the manager of the club came over to me and said, 'There's somebody who wants to meet you.'

"I went to The Green Room, and there was Robin Williams! He went on about how funny I was, and then asked if I would come watch his show till the very end. Of course, I said yes."






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The two new buddies ended up later on the bus bench across from the theater, which was opening his new movie 'Moscow on the Hudson' the next day. "We had an amazing conversation - it was like talking with three people at the same time. That's the way he spoke, that's the way he communicated. And I told him all about Thailand, Nepal, Bali, Singapore, India, Hong Kong, and Malaysia. He was fascinated by my stories, and I was blown away by his genius. But by 6 am, my brain couldn't take it anymore."

Sir Run Run Shaw

Another person that he met was entertainment mogul Sir Run Run Shaw. "I told him I lived in Hong Kong, and I had tried to meet him, but he was never there! He laughed and said he was living in Beverly Hills most of the time."

But it was a fortuitous meeting, because only a couple of months later, Penguin borrowed Sir Run Run Shaw's Rolls-Royce for Michael Jackson.

He and Shaw arranged for Michael to visit his favorite Chinese movie stars. "He was infatuated with one actress in particular, and spent two hours alone with her up at the studio and in a private boudoir, Michael's dream come true!"

Michael Jackson

"We could relate to each other in many different ways: We both loved magic, the Three Stooges, the Marx brothers, and roller coasters. We both were in search of our lost childhoods: he lost his when he turned five, I lost mine when I turned eight. We both had a thing for Asian women: he was obsessed about Chinese girls since the age of seven, and I was obsessed with Japanese girls since the age of eight. His parents didn't approve of this, and neither did my mother."

"Michael loved to play pranks,



"We could relate to each other in many different ways: We both loved magic, the Three Stooges, the Marx brothers, and roller coasters."

- Michael Jackson

and was always up to something funny. Whenever I walked with him down the street, he would always sing to himself. He was forever singing."

Penguin first met Michael in Hong Kong in 1987 while he was on his 'Bad' tour in Japan. Penguin was working at Duddles, an upmarket restaurant.

Penguin's friend Rick, who was the restaurant GM and a partner, invited Michael Jackson to Hong Kong and he accepted. However, he said that if there was any paparazzi or press at the airport in HK, he would immediately turn around and go back to Japan.

"One morning in the office Rick was freaking out. He said that Michael Jackson was on the way from Japan to Kai Tak airport, and it was full of paparazzi and press!

Penguin said: "No problem, I'll take care of it."

Donning in his magician's costume, and accompanied by a Canadian girl dressed like Michael Jackson, they made it to the airport just in

time. "Much to my surprise, when the doors of the elevator opened, there in front of me was over 100 paparazzi and press waiting. I looked around and yelled: 'Quick, Michael - Run!'

"We ran to the only taxi, and were chased all the way into Central Hong Kong. Meanwhile, the real Michael Jackson arrived, and got into his Rolls-Royce, went straight to his hotel, with no press or paparazzi.

That night he came to Duddles for a dinner and show. Penguin spent the next 10 days showing Michael Jackson Hong Kong.

Penguin has also spent time with British actor Peter Ustinov and his wife at the Oriental hotel, singer Annie Lennox and Hollywood legends James Colburn, Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie:

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"We went from being one of the poorest nations to being one of the wealthiest within just a few decades. It has truly been a miracle, but done through tangible steps, and so Thailand can do it too"

Vice Minister of Unification
Seoung-hyun Moon, former
Korean Ambassador to Thailand

What Thailand can learn from Korea

By Pamela Hongsakul

Before taking up his new appointment as Vice Minister of Unification, outgoing Ambassador of the Republic of Korea in Thailand, HE Seoung-hyun Moon, spoke extensively about his nation's 'Economic Miracle', building Korean brands, and the international popularity of Korean movies and music

Riding the Hallyu wave and K Pop craze, and led by powerful global brands from electronics to autos to entertainment, the 'Korean Economic Miracle' has mesmerised Thailand. Korean residents in Thailand now number more than 40,000. At the same time, the number of Thai visitors to Korea has multiplied to unprecedented levels during the past year. This cannot be a coincidence.

The Korean Ambassador to Thailand has this summer been brought back to South Korea in a higher position, possibly as a testament to his work in solidifying Korean-Thai friendship. In his last month, we heard His Excellency's thoughts on what Thailand can learn from Korea's road to success.

Korea has experienced great economic development after launching world renowned brands.

How can Thailand do the same?

Korea was a very poor country after the civil war ended in 1953 - we were ranked lower than 60th in the world in terms of GDP. But now, Korea has transformed into the 10th largest economy in the world. In terms of military expenditure, we are ranked 9th. Our exports are 7th-8th. Our space program is 12th. We went from being one of the poorest nations to being one of the wealthiest within just a few decades.

It has truly been a miracle, but done through tangible steps, and so Thailand can do it too.

Because Korea is divided into North and South, much of our national budget is spent on defense, due to the constant threat of war. The terrain in Korea cannot compete with that of Thailand, which has large areas of fertile flat lands. In Korea, the

land is mountainous, and only a small portion is sustainable for agriculture. But despite all the challenges, we always manage to survive and flourish.

We were under military rule for decades, with authoritarian leaders, one of whom is credited with ushering in the modernisation of our country. We were 18 years under his rule and during this time, he implemented policies that grew the economy. Park Chung Hee had a personal vision based on recruiting the best possible people in the population. He was called a dictator, but is also noted as a pioneer who developed key industries. Several of Korea's global brands were birthed and nourished under his leadership, and this was the impetus for the Korean Economic Miracle.

The Government started with a variety of consumer goods, and then invested in the heavy industries. We opened our economy to foreign competition despite the fear of being dominated by others. This was so that we could compete with the world, and improve. That is the first thing I'd like to say to Thailand.

1st point: Be assertive.

Thailand is more blessed than Korea: there are no recurring natural disasters, no constant enemies. But Thailand is inward looking, instead of going outside or bringing in stimulants to the economy. You need to prove that Thailand can be the best in this and that - and then you can develop further. My advice is: Dare to be assertive.

There are many talented people here within the population of 70 million. When I talk to the upper level, they are all trained in UK, Australia, etc. They are eloquent, full of that kind of talent: Leadership plus Vision. If these qualities are

well combined, and run throughout the population, how can Thailand not benefit?

Thais need to be more aggressive in competition with others. If you look at Black Pink, Time Magazine's Entertainer of the Year in 2022 - there is Lisa, a Thai - you have that kind of talent. You should have that kind of courage. Be more open.

2nd point: Have confidence.

In the beginning, we did not have that confidence in ourselves. Instead of buying Samsung and other local products, we preferred to buy US brands, or Japanese. Now in 2023, when we go to a luxury hotel, we can see Samsung in the rooms. We finally have more trust in ourselves.

I once asked some Koreans why we did not develop our own brands, and they said: "If we produce something, nobody will buy it." That kind of mentality needs to be overcome.

Thailand is great, you just need to have more confidence in yourselves.

I talked to the Swiss Ambassador about watches with Thai components, and he informed me that if a watch is 60 percent made in Switzerland, the brand is 'Swiss made'. But that means 40 percent of that watch is made in Thailand! It's reassembled in Switzerland. There is even a jewelry brand in Denmark that is 100 % made in Thailand. In addition, Thailand is the 10th largest auto producer in the world. Thai workers are skilled.

Many Thai singers and dancers are working with K pop groups. CP Group recently signed a joint venture with a Korean entertainment group to co-produce Thai performers. Lisa made a big impact.

Thailand has quality, but needs to be more outward looking,



Korean society is organisation centered. Individuality is not that much respected, even if we are encouraging individuals.

stronger and more confident.

How did you get Koreans to believe in Korean brands?

Samsung and Hyundai: In the US, these brands were bought because they were so cheap. During my tenure in DC (1996), there was a 10-year warranty for Hyundai. We had that kind of confidence in our product - and during that time, we proved that our brand can be better. We dared to compete with the global brands.

The new CEO of Thailand's Jim Thompson brand is French, and he has great vision. We might see that their sales will double, with this vision. You have such good products in Thailand. To be a global brand, you must have confidence in your own brand.

3rd point: Creative Freedom.

To make room for the creative economy, you need to have Creative Freedom. You need to allow for freedom of speech and free expression, so that people can be energised to try what they want. Creativity can be fostered only in a free society.

Some of the most popular Korean dramas (Squid Game, Parasite, etc) describe Korean society in a negative manner. They show the super rich, and super poor, and the nature of capitalism. We are quite free to have such dramas. We allow the arts to criticise our society. This is evidence that we can be a mature society.

Korean society is sometimes organisation centered. Individuality is not that much respected, even if we are encouraging individuals. When we were young and asked: "What did you want to be?" We thought: "A doctor eats." Now, we feel free to become a firefighter, dancer, singer, or movie star. Now people can be entrepreneurs, a professor can open his own business.

Any ideas unique to Korea that could be copied around the world?

Public Private Partnership
Due to our many challenges, Korea has developed a unique history of cooperation between government policy and industry, and this has shaped our modern society. This phenomenon has been quite notable in the Arts.



In the mid-1980s, there was a Screen Quota System which controlled the import of cinematic content, and the theatres were required to reserve a certain number of days and screens for local content. But following the bilateral trade agreements with the US, there was pressure on Korea to allow more foreign content to be shown on Korean screens. The government, actors and filmmakers all resisted.

Koreans were afraid that our local movie industry would be destroyed. Even though we were opening up other industries, films were considered a core of our culture and identity, and not just another product. Fortunately, the Korean film industry developed rapidly and eventually, after 12 to 20 years, Korean movies began to dominate - even in the US market. This quota issue remains relevant today, requiring continual cooperation between government and industry.

Skills Development

In the meantime, as we navigate the balance of skills development and cultural protectionism, the incredibly popular K pop group BTS has risen to the top of the global billboard chart. From the mid-1990s to the 2000s, the Korean entertainment industry gradually became more competitive. We can now open our market by pushing the people to cope with the globe. The landscape has changed.

During the Kimchi Crisis of 1997 (also called 'Tom Yum Kung'), Korea and Thailand were the countries most directly hit. Korea used that crisis to make great opportunities. At that time, one of the iconic Korean conglomerates was allowed to collapse. The philosophy was: 'Let it die if it can't compete.' The crisis caused a painful restructuring of our own economy. We moved more into automotive and future oriented industries. Korea was no longer just making toys and clothes as we transitioned into the 21st century.

Thailand also can create global brands to compete globally. Perhaps not at #1, but you can compete. Thailand is already at #10 in producing automobiles, but with no brand of its own.

The K pop trend is linked to the progress of Korean society. We experienced a gradual democratisation during the period of 1970-2000. Previously, you never heard about any Korean dramas. These individual talents bloomed. It was because the government invested a huge amount, providing the foundation so that this industry could be prosperous. And they did this without at all controlling content.

Freedom & Fun Power

Incredibly, there was no limit for criticism. Perhaps this is because since 1981, we have imposed a one-term limit for the Presidency. Since they didn't need to worry about reelection, the leaders were free to accomplish.

I myself witnessed that K

pop can be popular around the world. When I heard Korean songs playing in the shops in the center of Madrid, I felt so proud. I met a lady who was flying in to see a concert in London by BTS. This is Korean 'Fun Power'. Everyone can enjoy the revenge in K dramas.

Following in the government's footsteps, major corporations in Korea have been making strategic investments in K-dramas, while allowing full autonomy. They believe that these dramas are touching on common values - there is a commonality that global citizens can enjoy.

Koreans are happy that our trends have spread around the world, and we wish to share future ideas. Therefore, we are putting in a bid to host the World EXPO 2030 in Busan, Korea.

World Expo

In order to meet the global challenges of today, dramatic change is called for. Thus, Busan aims to host the World EXPO 2030 with the theme of 'Transforming Our World, Navigating Toward a Better Future.'

Sub-themes address: 1) climate change; 2) downsides of the digital transformation; and 3) inequality among and within nations. They correlate with the three pillars of the UN SDGs: people, planet, and prosperity. Topics will include: AI, IoT and 6G.

Through the World EXPO 2030 Busan, Korea wishes to help build a better tomorrow for the Earth and for Humanity.

What do Koreans think of Thailand? Heroes / Friends

Thailand is one of the few countries that supported us during the war, and sent three divisions of military forces. Koreans will never forget that - we are paying back to Thailand's Korean War veterans.

We maintain a list of Thai veterans because Korean-Thai ties are important to us. We have a project of renovating the houses of Korean War veterans.

Thailand is a beautiful country. The news media are only talking about Chinese tourists in Thailand. But in 2022, Koreans were #4 for incoming visitors.

Tourism

We have seven airlines operating from Korea to Thailand.

friendly.

As the Korean Ambassador, I want to see Thailand as our strategic partner well into the future. Tourism is ok. Cooperation is ok. But more than that, I want to see Thailand as our strategic partner in this region. If you consider the Mekhong Region and Southeast Asia - Thailand is situated as the center, the springboard. We need to strengthen our cooperation with Thailand.



The K pop trend is linked to the progress of Korean society.

Jeju flies to Phuket and other cities. All airplanes are fully booked. Koreans like to be in Thailand. They used to only visit Bangkok. Now, people are traveling to Phuket and Chiangmai, and recently, Khao Yai National Park.

And now Korea is like Thailand itself. Now we can see many Thai restaurants in Korea because the food is exciting, like Thai culture. Thais are all Smiles, and look

Strategic Partners

I would like to develop our economic cooperation in future oriented industries. For example, we can create our own brand of EV (Electric Vehicles). Thailand has a great auto industry here. If we could work together, we can dominate the global market.

Thailand could also have a space port. Korea has created the world's 12th top space agency, and Thailand

offers a great location near the equator, south of Phuket.

Education

As we strive for equality in our population, for innovation and entrepreneurship, we start with education. Korean parents are so keen on their kids' education. In the olden days, there was a saying: "Even when parents are hungry, send the kids to university."

Koreans are ranked #3 of student groups in the US; it's Chinese, Indian, and then Korean. We are also sending our kids to China and Australia. Education is our priority. We encourage the kids to speak, and to be independent - to present their own views, and be creative.

It is the Korean education sector that has done the most to transform Korea, because of the mindset that they brought to the public. Because of this new way of thinking, the people began to have higher expectations of their government and of their communities.

Many Koreans were being taught in the US, Europe, Russia, Germany, Prague, Dresden. Even a former East German industrial city - I was surprised. More than two thousand Koreans went to study in a small German town. Most of them came back to Korea. And when they came back, they breathed fresh air into the whole Korean society - not just through teaching.

Korea has risen in the global standing of universities. Within the top 100 universities globally, there are ten Korean universities. But Koreans try to study abroad - they know the value of learning different languages and skills. They know the benefit of English: the fact that you can speak English means something to your career. For music, they choose to go to countries such as Germany or Italy.

Thailand should try to be global by sending more kids from every social group overseas, and by opening the economy. Dare to cope with the global community.

Friends of Korea / The Human Spirit

Any Korean citizen can apply to be a part of 'Friends of Korea' - all volunteers. These are the younger generation, students. They go abroad to learn, to help people,

are westernised. But when I look at Lisa, she seems oriental, a typical Thai who is respectful to others. She gives way to other members. Koreans might not know Thailand, but many people understand Thailand through watching Lisa. This makes her an excellent diplomat. She can sing and dance great. But also, she is a good ambassador, like an angel.

At the airport, Lisa was in a toothpaste advertisement, and



to teach the Korean language all around the world. They have the Spirit of Service.

The human spirit can go a long way to bring people closer together. We should nurture more of these personalities who can bridge different cultures, like Lisa of Black Pink.

Whenever Lisa is interviewed, she is so nice, and she speaks fluent Korean. Many Asian stars

because of that, I bought it. Even that one person can make a huge difference. In Thailand you have 10 million of that kind of people: talented, warm heart, dedicated.

Personal

I have worked for 35 years in the foreign ministry. These days, I realise that I need to do more to be at my best. I wake up at 5:30 am, and go into a small dark room to

pray and do my meditation. Then I hit the gym for 1.5 hours.

I am retiring soon, and I felt like I was losing my muscles. So I started last September to go every morning to do my fitness routine. As time goes on, I build that habit. Breaking my own limits is a great feeling of accomplishment. From 10, to 11, to 12... This is a kind of accumulation. I will push the limits until the last day of my life.

I have two kids. My son graduated Summa cum Laude from Harvard, and went on to Oxford and Yale. My daughter graduated from U Penn and finished at Johns Hopkins Medical School. She is now working as a Resident in the best children's hospital in the US as a pediatric neurologist. She works 14 hours a day, a Pure Korean!

I am one of the typical Korean parents. You've heard of the 'Tiger Mom'. That's us, all of us. Korean parents push their kids to the hilt so that they can excel on the global stage. Some can fail or collapse. But fortunately, this only serves to test the others.

We can say that the spirit of Korean parents is to Break the Limit!

Your ideal world, your dream world?

Diversity

I would like to see a world where differences can be tolerated, where different cultures are respected. In 1999, I was posted in Nigeria for two years, and I met people who were proud and thought their country was the best in the world. They opened my eyes to the differences. They have their own lives, their own families.

When my son studied at Harvard, he went to a gay club. I asked him: "Why would you want to go there?" My son said: "They are just different. We shouldn't be critical of them." Many elders feel like they can keep distant



Any Korean citizen can apply to be a part of 'Friends of Korea' - what they are doing is volunteering. These are the younger generation, students.

from people who are different. But these kids, they do not have such prejudices. I really respect my kids in that regard.

In my dream world, we can find the way of harmony.

Legacy

After my retirement, I plan on remaining active. I have at least 20 more years to go, and so I keep exercising to maintain my strength. I want to be involved. I want to contribute to society.

Being an ambassador is great, because I can travel to many countries. But I want to make something happen. I want to leave behind a legacy. I am trying first to

invite Thais to travel to Korea.

Korea can implement ideas. To make an idea reality, lots of things are involved. Korea is committed to 'make it happen'.

We try to do our best.

Ambassador Moon is a member of NUMENI, the platform for leaders to share their art, energy, knowledge and wisdom.

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"Try Something Nude"

By Colin Hastings



Resort owners Gregers and his wife Dao - both committed naturists



The solid double door entrance to Bangkok's most unusual and occasionally misunderstood resort opened slowly, revealing as it did a sixty-year-old man, naked from head to toe. This is Gregers Moller, Danish owner and mastermind of Barefeet Naturist Resort, one of a handful of hotels in Thailand that legally promote consensual nudity as a leisure time activity.

Now, I've known Gregers for many years and was told more or less what to expect when visiting his resort for the first time. But actually confronting someone you've known for decades on a professional basis,



Gregers is totally at ease. Unabashed and confident. He's a lifetime advocate of nudity (in the right circumstances, naturally) and does his best to make newcomers feel comfortable.

and who is otherwise always fully clothed, seeing him stark naked is slightly disconcerting. To say the least.

For his part, Gregers is totally at ease. Unabashed and confident. He's a lifetime advocate of nudity (in the right circumstances, naturally) and does his best to make newcomers feel comfortable. The usual friendly bro-hug is out of the question, of course. My colleague, a farang lady called Agneta, and I take it in turns to shake hands with Gregers and together exchange pleasantries about the weather, or whatever comes to mind. Agneta seems much

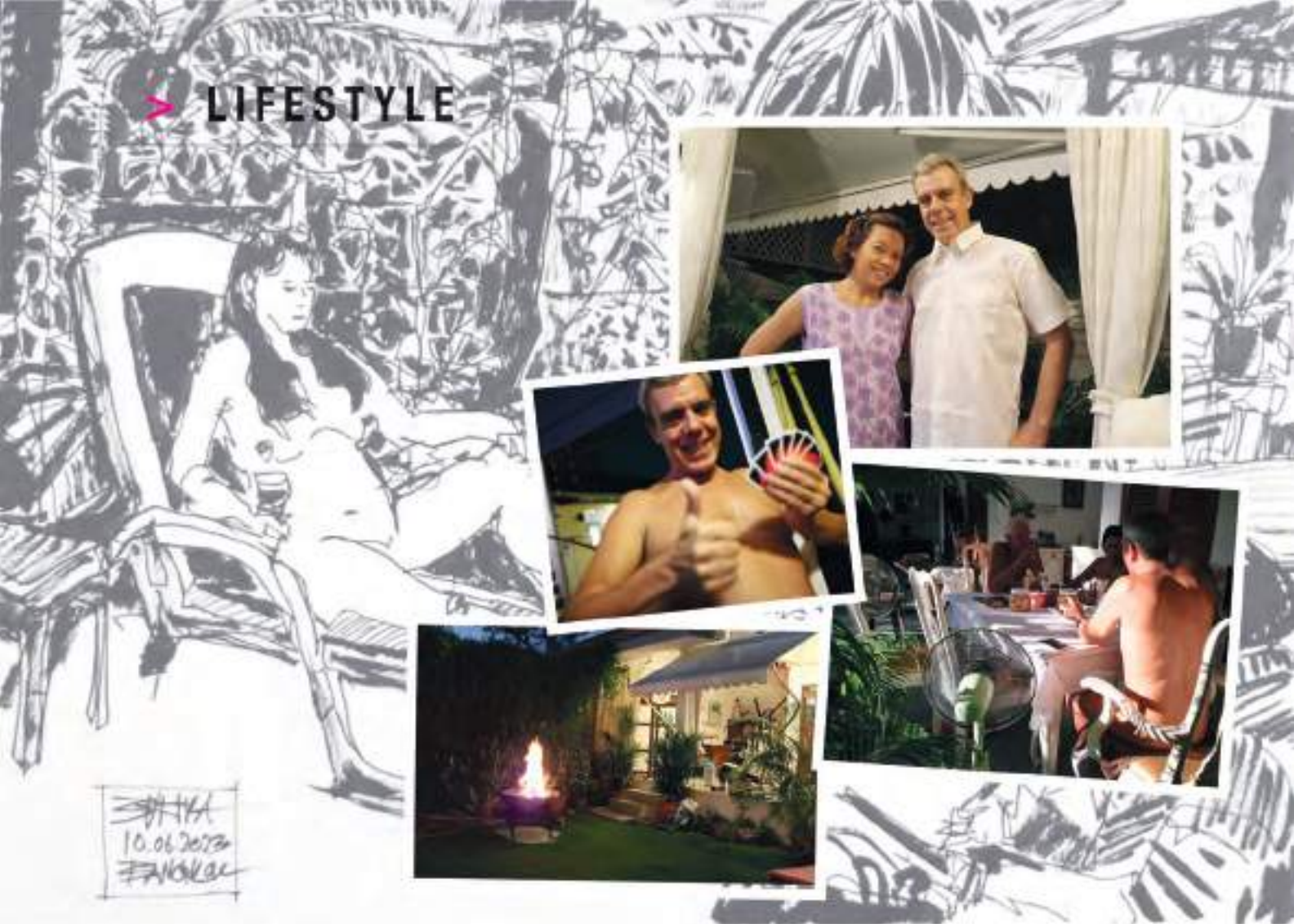
more relaxed than me, but that's perhaps because she's Swedish! So far, so good.

Now here's the tricky bit, for me at least: do I allow my eyes to go off track, so to speak, and cast an inquisitive peek at parts of his body I had never seen (or wanted to see) before? Yes, of course, but only after a few more polite exchanges and an invitation from Gregers to exchange my clothes for a towel, presumably as the first step towards my own total nudity.

"No, I'm fine as I am," I reply. Gregers is happy with that. Agneta declines as well. A lady receptionist is sitting behind a desk, completely naked but partially covered by her computer and large table lamp. It's all very natural and normal.



> LIFESTYLE



And I'm getting used to all this bare flesh. At 69, Gregers is in good shape, I can confirm!

Next, we get a conducted tour of Barefeet Naturist Resort, a simple yet remarkably relaxed six-room independent hotel set over two plots of adjoining land, complete with swimming pool, restaurant and sauna. The resort buildings and recreational areas are all single story and, fortunately, not overlooked by any high-rise neighbours.

Its mantra is 'Naturism means nude without sexual thoughts.' Initially, there are no other guests. Just we three. Later an elderly farang couple go for a dip in the pool. He needs assistance to get in and out of his wheelchair. Another couple, Thais probably in their thirties, sit on loungers. A man reads a book. Everybody is naked except Agneta and me.

We sit down opposite Gregers

in what is Bangkok's 'only nude lunch or dinner restaurant' as he gives a potted history of his life as a naturist and his career as a journalist-turned-publisher.

"I grew up in Denmark in a naturist environment," he says, downing the first of two cans of beer. "My parents were naturists – mum was a concert pianist, dad a career army officer. At home, we were naked whenever practical. And we went on holidays as naturists."

"I never thought we were different from anyone else. That is, until my school friend told me his mum was never naked."

Gregers' association with Thailand goes back to the early 80s when he met a Thai lady who was working for an airline in Denmark. They married and later relocated to Thailand. His first job here was as a correspondent for a Danish newspaper. The posting

was initially for two years, with a possible extension for another two years. His 'beat' included other countries in Asia, so when the demonstrations in China at Tiananmen Square caught the world's attention in 1989, he was dispatched there to cover the news.

"I was a golden opportunity for me to be visible – my stories appeared on the first and second pages of my Danish newspaper." His various travels away from his wife took its toll on their relationship, however, and they inevitably split when he could no longer accept "three in our marriage."

Gregers decided to stay on in Thailand and worked initially as a freelance journalist. Later his set up an agency for freelancers focusing mostly on trade publications. This eventually transformed into the media company he runs today, Scandmedia.

He met his present wife K Disaporn, or 'Dao', a graphic designer, more than 20 years ago and she soon became acquainted with his propensity for nudity. "She also knew that it didn't mean anything when I walked around naked."

During a trip to Denmark, Gregers suggested the couple spend two nights in a nudist camp. "Dao wasn't into it until we arrived at the camp, checked in and met a very tall naked man in the reception. She told me later that she didn't know whether to look up or down."

"In 2010 we visited Chan Resort in Pattaya and saw the quality of the product and the naturists staying there. Some of the guests even had their babies with them."

Like her husband, Dao soon became a committed naturist and was instrumental in encouraging Gregers to open Barefeet Naturist Resort in 2015 on land they owned in the outer suburbs of Bangkok. It was the third resort of its kind in Thailand and came with the strong message that it was not in any way sexual.

"We're 100 per cent above board with proper registration as the Naturist Association Thailand. We pay VAT and are completely legal," explains Gregers. "And we're not about sex. We have to emphasise that message again and again."

"We do everything here with respect and responsibility towards our neighbours – we don't want to provoke anybody. As a result, we've never had any problems," says Gregers.

Gregers acknowledges that in the past some 'nude' resorts in Thailand strayed from their original purpose and began hinting at sex as an attraction. "If something indecent or immoral is happening inside the resort, it's justification for police raid."

He recalls one resort that deliberately tried to attract swinging



"We're 100 per cent above board with proper registration as the Naturist Association Thailand. We pay VAT and are completely legal," explains Gregers.

couples, while another had stayed clean until some members started a Twitter group that attracted "explicit material." Both were closed down.

He recognizes that some people "misunderstand" the concept of a naturist resort. "We had two guests from India who clearly hadn't read our website. They thought that girls would be sitting around waiting for them. I told them: 'You will never find what you're looking for here'." In his constant quest to debunk the image some people have of naturist resorts, Gregers organizes regular 'Open House' days when anybody can visit and explore the resort. Visitors are required to wear a towel until 2pm, but after that they have to go nude or go home.

The resort has a long list of rules which guests are expected to follow. Taking photos, making video recordings or even selfies at the resort is not allowed without permission. That rule was ignored some years ago by a small airplane that hovered above the resort with obvious intentions.

Guests are encouraged to become members of the Naturist Association of Thailand, which offers extra benefits and privileges, including access to the other resorts and





members in the TNA group. About half the guests at Barefeet Naturist Resort are Thais. The other half comprises, in terms of numbers, Australian, Europeans and Americans along with small groups of Indian and Chinese naturists. There's a small but steady flow from the Philippines, mostly because resorts of this nature are not allowed in their country.

Rooms start from 1,800 baht for a single occupancy, 2,200 baht for a double. Most guests come as couples and usually stay 2-3 days. The resort also welcomes day visitors - at 80 baht an hour. Most day visitors are apparently single males.

In his constant quest to debunk the image some people have of naturist resorts, Gregers organizes regular 'Open House' days when anybody can visit and explore the resort. Visitors are required to

wear a towel until 2pm, but after that they have to go nude or go home.

Meanwhile, overnight guests must accept the rules of the naturist lifestyle, which means

they are expected to be naked inside the resort. "Outside the resort we respect the choice of other people and dress up properly."

There's also plenty of advice for newcomers. "Try in your mind to disconnect being naked from any sexual thought. It is a very liberating feeling," states the website. "Wearing a towel reduces the pleasure of this experience - but if you are a couple and your partner is new to naturism, we do understand if he or she may wish to wear a towel in the beginning."

"Everyone is naked here. Downstairs around the big dining table, you will meet more guests and also visiting day guests. Nude, of course. Or chill out and chat around the plunge pool in the garden. But if you insist you may of course choose to stay in bed all day!"

The resort offers all kinds of special deals, including a Naked Family Package for mums, dads and kids, and the Naturist Sauna for up to six people - "probably the only naked sauna Bangkok has to offer that is not about sex," claims the resort website.

Also offered are the Thai

Oil Massage, as well as Waxing, Trimming, Shaving of Body Hair, and the Couple Massage by two uniformed therapists, which is described as "a nice and romantic activity." Guests can purchase an added sensual genital massage at 1,600 baht.

Once a month, the Barefeet Café's Chef Nui, himself a naturist, arranges a nude gourmet dinner with wine for up to 10 naked dinner guests.

Rules and Manners

The resort says it strives hard to offer a genuine naturist experience for the increasing number of Thai naturists as well as visiting international naturists. It adds: "Please help us protect our resort from contamination by sex-focused individuals and safeguard our contribution to a healthy body and mind development. House rules include the following:

Nudity

Naturists are comfortable not wearing any clothes but guests who are not yet ready may in the beginning wear a towel. You will also need a towel to sit on anywhere you go.

Sex

No sexual activity is allowed anywhere except in your room. This includes intimate touching that you would not do in a public place outside the resort.

Photos

Taking photos or making video recordings is not allowed without permission. Please ask each time that you want to take a selfie with your mobile phone. See more below about taking selfies and photos.

Visitors

Friends are welcome to visit you while staying at the resort. <https://www.barefeetnaturistresort.com/>





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A black and white photograph of a chef's hands cooking seafood in a pan. The chef is wearing a white chef's hat and a watch. The pan is filled with large prawns and other seafood, and steam is rising from it. The background is slightly blurred, showing a kitchen setting.

Seafood

Thailand has some of the world's best seafood, fished locally and imported from sustainable sources. The following are seafood restaurants recommended by readers of the BigChilli



The District Grill Room & Bar Bangkok Marriott Hotel Sukhumvit

Seafood highlights include Lobster Salad; The District Hokkaido Scallops; Pan-Fried Snow Fish; and Grilled or Chilled District Ocean Tower.

Sukhumvit 57, Bangkok

Tel. 02 797 0013

www.marriottapartmentshonglor.com





am'Bar - Four Points by Sheraton Bangkok

Seafood menu includes Grilled Salmon Steak, Tuna Tartare, Yum
Khana Goong and Crispy Tuna Salmon.
Sukhumvit 15, Bangkok
Tel 02 309 3000





Scalini Mediterranean Restaurant Hilton Sukhumvit Bangkok

Recommended dishes: Ras El Hanout Red Snapper, Moroccan style; Homard Thermidor; Mediterranean Lobster; Oualidia Oysters; and Ensalada de Pulpo, featuring Galician octopus, smoked paprika potatoes and Idiazabal cheese.
Sukhumvit 24, Bangkok.
Tel. 02 620 6666.



Red Sky Restaurant Centara Grand & Bangkok Convention Centre at CentralWorld



Luca Russo as Chef De Cuisine recommends the following dishes on the restaurant's new seafood menu: Red Mazara prawn, lemon mayonnaise and black truffle; Pan Seared Hokkaido Scallops, avocado, sour cream and oscietra caviar; Tagliolini with red prawn and burrata sauce and Salicornia; and Grilled octopus, broccoli and spiev n'duja chips.
Rama 1 Road, Pathumwan, Bangkok 10330
Tel. 02-100-6255 www.bangkokredsky.com/

Ariake Le Meridien Phuket Beach Resort

Serving sushi and authentic Japanese food, freshly prepared Japanese cuisine. Also featured is a teppanyaki table, sushi bar and two tatami rooms.

076 370 100 or 076 292 666

restaurant.phuketbeach@lemeridien.com





Bangkok 78' Sinthorn Midtown Hotel Bangkok

Bangkok 78' serves variety of dishes such as betel leaves curry with crab meat and prawn, steamed fluffy egg with prawn, squid and minced pork, and stir-fried New Zealand mussels, prawns, squids with finger root, and sweet basil.

Other seafood dishes include batter-fried squids, stir-fried squids with curry powder, stir-fried squids with salted egg yolk, batter-fried prawns with tamarind sauce, and many more.

Soi Langsuan, Bangkok

Tel. 02-796-8888



Trattoria@22 Eastin Grand Hotel Phayathai

Trattoria@22, a new Mediterranean poolside restaurant on the 22nd floor, offers the following menu highlights:

Fish Crudo - Raw, sliced yellowtail fish served with thinly sliced fennel; Lobster Pasta; and Whole Baked Sole served with samphire, fried oysters and sauteed tomatoes.

Tel. 02-483-2899

www.eastingrandhotelphayathai.com





Long Dtai Restaurant Cape Fahn Hotel, Koh Samui



Created by Chef David Thompson, the line-up features fresh seafood grilled on an outdoor fire-pit such as Grilled Squid Gorlae, Skate Curry with Wild Mangosteen Leaves, and Spicy stir-fried local scallop with wild ginger and green pepper and holy

Tel: +66 (0)77 602 301-2,
www.longdtai.com



Flow Millennium Hilton Bangkok

Flow's Theatrical Dinner Buffet features a bounty of fresh seafood, including oysters, prawns and crabs, with live cooking stations so guests can witness the preparation of their seafood creations.

Charoen Nakhon Road,
Tel. 02 442 2036.





Baan Dum *Oceanfront Seafood* Mövenpick Asara Resort & Spa Hua Hin

Menu highlights traditional Thai flavors and uses seasonal, fresh ingredients from the local area, especially seafood. Try Chaplu, coconut curry with crab meat and wild betel leaves; and Goong Phad Prirk Glua, fried shrimp with salty chilli. Tel. 032-520-777.

Bistrot De La Mer Sindhorn Kempinski Hotel Bangkok

Serving French Mediterranean cuisine including fresh oysters, lobsters, prawns, and imported fish. Menu highlights include Bouillabaisse; Baked Turbot on The Bone; and The Royale Seafood Tower featuring a half Maine lobster, three Gillardeau and three Tsarskaya oysters, four tiger prawns, scallop cerviche, and marinated razor clams. Soi Lang Suan, Bangkok. Tel. 02 095 9999





Ministry of Crab, Bangkok

Top choices include Sri Lanka's legendary mud crab and king prawn, widely considered some of the world's best seafood dishes, along with Spicy Thai Basil, Crab Liver Paste, and Kraphao Crab.

Sukhumvit 31, Bangkok.

Tel. 098-598-6554

www.ministryofcrab.com/bangkok



Brezza Beach Bar & Restaurant Avani+ Hua Hin Resort

Menu highlights: Seafood Platter - Baked seabass, grilled squid, grilled mussels, grilled tiger prawns; and Seafood Bucket

Tel. 032 898 989





Nómada Seafood & Beach Club

Dusit Thani Hua Hin

Every Saturday, a BBQ buffet featuring freshly caught local fish, river prawns, tiger prawns and oysters, plus live music, entertainment and DJs.

Tel. +66 (0)3252 0009.





Viu Restaurant The St. Regis Bangkok

Enjoy panoramic views of the Bangkok skyline and the following seafood menu highlights: Grilled Whole Boston Lobster; Seared wild-caught Norwegian Salmon; and Seared US scallops served with fettuccini cream sauce
Tel. 02 207 7777

www.stregisbangkokdining.com or link

Khao Jaan-Prod Centralworld

Thai Seafood Platter features grilled large shrimp, steamed blue crab with tender meat, and mussels. Try Spicy Mango Salad with Blue Crab, and Baked New Zealand Mussels with Cheese.
CentralwOrld, Beacon Zone.

Tel. 097 917 7777





River Café & Terrace The Peninsula Bangkok

Thursdays are 'Seafood Paradise' nights, offering delicacies like paprika-braised octopus, steamed salmon with ponzu sauce; and grilled scallops with garlic-parsley butter. Plus sushi and seafood on ice.
Tel. 02 020 6969



China Palace Prince Palace Hotel

Among the signature dishes at this legendary hotel in old Bangkok: 'Wonderful Crab' - wok-fried fresh sea crab with 'Chaiya' salty egg yolk; and 'Pla Ka Pong' - whole pla ka pong fish seasoned with aromatic Thai fish sauce.
Tel 02 628 1111 or 084 435 4345



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- 1-year Sheraton Fitness membership for 4 persons

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(5 prizes)

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- New Year's Eve gala dinner for 2 persons
- 1-year Sheraton Fitness membership for 2 persons

3rd Prize

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- 1-year Sheraton Fitness membership for 2 persons

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Horizon Rooftop Restaurant and Bar Hilton Pattaya

The two-level Seafood Tower features Fin de Claire oysters, Sashimi selection including Hamachi, tuna, salmon, and salmon; Lobster grilled with butter and garlic; and a trio of sea bass, squid, and fried scallops. Other seafood dishes include Lobster Thermidor; and Crispy Skin Salmon.

Tel. 038 253 000



Antito Eastin Grand Hotel Sathorn

Serving a wide selection of delectable seafood dishes created by 1-Star Michelin Chef Amerigo Tito Sesti, including antipasti favourite 'Kampachi & Tomato Carpaccio', and main courses such as 'Poached Sea Bass with Saffron-Baked Fennel and Fresh Herb & Tomato Salsa' and 'Braised Calamari Puttanesca'.

Tel. 02 210 8100

www.eastingrandsathorn.com



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John Gray's Sea Canoe, located in Phuket, provides spectacular trips around Phang Nga Bay National Park for both individual and group tours, either for a day trip or an overnight trip; an impressive canoe experience. Offering eco-tourism activities, John Gray's Sea Canoe educates tourists about the ecosystem, the formation of approximately 250 million-year-old islands and limestone caves of Phang Nga Bay, caused by the erosion of the limestone sea floor which was pushed upwards, creating many natural wonders including the lagoons.

John Gray's Sea Canoe offers sustainable tour packages with environmental conservation in mind, such as "Hong by Starlight", priced at 3,950 Baht net per person (Children 12 and under are charged at 1,975 Baht/Person; Children 6 and under are Free!). This full day trip explores marine caves and lagoons with your personal guide (paddler), leisure activities and games. The day culminates in a seafood dinner and a traditional Loy



Kratong ceremony at night where guests are taught to construct their own "kratongs" or mini floating garlands to be offered as a tribute to the sea and the caves. A highlight is the bioluminescent plankton that emerges to astound everyone. The "James Bond Island" trip is priced at 3,590 Baht net per person (Children 12 and under are charged at 1,750 Baht/Person; Children 6 and under are Free!). This package takes you to explore the beauty of Phang Nga Bay, its caves and islands including Khao Tapu (James Bond Island), a highlight from the world-famous movie, 'The Man with the Golden Gun', along with a visit to Lawa Yai Island. There, you can swim, paddle boat or enjoy beach activities on the island. The packages include privileges such as VIP lounges, food



service on board, fun activities, complimentary round-trip pickup (from hotels in Phuket - John Gray's Sea Canoe), WI-FI on board, etc.

*The company reserves the right to make any relevant changes to this promotion which will be announced in advance via the company's communication channel.

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> FEATURE

Birding in Thailand

Claudine Kohler – By Ruth Gerson

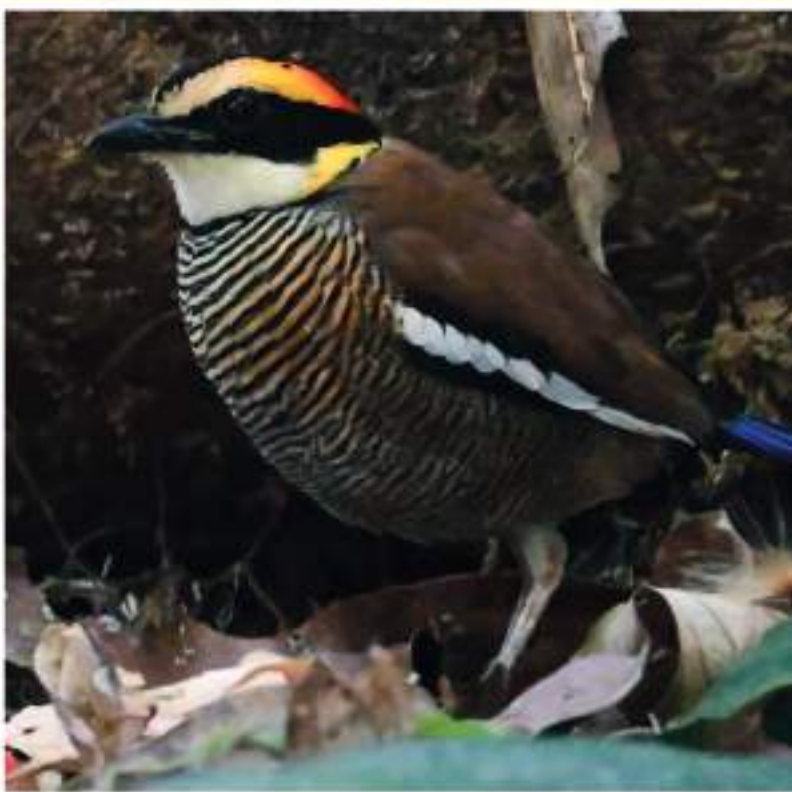


Hobbies are enriching activities in which people engage in their free time. A unique hobby is birdwatching.





Living in Bangkok, one does not associate this activity with its surroundings. This is however a greatly misleading notion, as there are birds all around us in Thailand, common and exotic, you just have to find them! To spot the birds in their natural habitat is not easy, and a novice would be wise to be mentored by an experienced bird watcher or 'birder' as birdwatchers are lovingly called. Claudine was fortunate to have such a mentor, an American friend called Kai, who had lived in Thailand for several years.



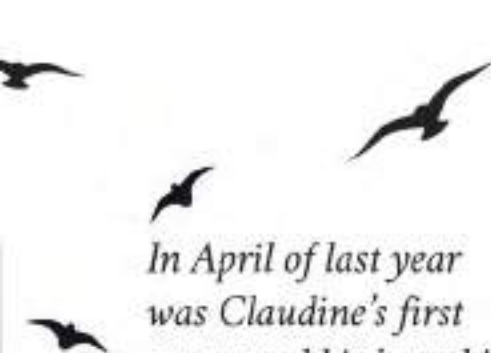


In April of last year was Claudine's first structured birdwatching activity. She has always loved to look at birds, but it had not yet become a hobby, although she did some amateur birdwatching in Switzerland, France and Canada. She did not know at the time what was waiting for her. When Kai let Claudine look at some birds through her quality binoculars "she was blown away," according to her words. Furthermore, Claudine was amazed at the number of birds and varieties that are in one place, something she did not expect. To learn to appreciate birding, Kai suggested they take a week at Kaeng

Krachan National Park in Phetchaburi Province to find out more about birdwatching. After that excursion Claudine was hooked!

Since then, Claudine has taken three birdwatching trips, visiting various regions in Thailand, including Doi Inthanon outside of Chiang Mai in the North, and Khao Sok National Park near Krabi in the South. Claudine's first trip was on rainy days that required extra protection against the leeches that were present in the forest. Long tightly woven cotton socks that go up to the thighs did the job. Next, she had to get a good pair of binoculars, the main 'tool' in

birdwatching. Even with this quality equipment it takes a long time until one can spot birds easily on trees and in the air. Newcomers to this hobby can initially identify birds when they fly off. Birds at rest are much more difficult for them to spot. Claudine feels that she has acquired some of that skill, but it will take a while until she masters it. In today's digital age there are some birding aids. Two useful apps are Merlin Bird that helps identify birds by either sound or photograph, and E-Bird that records the sightings of the birds. Workshops are available on line for those who want to learn more about the subject.



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Traveling alone or with company? Claudine says that going with someone is not only more pleasant, but two pairs of eyes are definitely better than one to catch sight of birds and other wildlife. Taking a guide into the jungle is advisable, as he knows where the birds congregate, and is able to distinguish them from the foliage in which they often hide. As for birding, Claudine expresses her liking the experiences that takes her places she would not ordinarily go. Another advantage is the interaction with other birders, meeting new people and sharing information and experiences.

Inquiring about some of the logistics of birding, Claudine explains that cabins are available for rent outside most parks, and a few inside some of the parks. There are also camping facilities available. People generally stick to the path that birdwatchers take where there are toilets along the way, a comforting knowledge, as are places for snacks and drinks at rangers' stations that are enroute. When asking about the best time of day and the duration of birdwatching, Claudine says that early mornings are the best time, when the birds are active before the heat of the

day. Most days she stays out from six in the morning until around five in the afternoon, a satisfying but tiring day. Night visits are also available, with a guide, exposing the sightseer to the wildlife of the jungle after dark. Additionally, an area called a 'hide' is set up, a tent where people hide and from where they observe the birds' movements undisturbed, training their cameras and binoculars on the unsuspecting feathered visitors.

Wondering if many people go birdwatching in Thailand, surprisingly, the answer is yes. Besides local residents, Thai and expats, there are numerous foreign tour companies that organize special tours to Thailand for birdwatching, generally from a week to two-weeks tours. Some of their participants expressed how fortunate the birdwatchers who live in Thailand are, with the ability of visiting many national parks and enjoy the variety they encounter there.

The species of birds that can be seen in the Thai national parks are numerous, and Claudine was lucky to spot some rare birds that are not often there, many of them stopping for a short time while on migration from China. Claudine feels fortunate to have caught sight of these very

elusive birds. Impressive are the enormous Asian Hornbills, of which there are several varieties, with biggest so large that its laboring wings in flight above the trees can be heard way before it actually appears. Other animals encountered in the parks are gibbons, langurs, macaques and colugo, the latter native to Southeast Asia, is known as the most capable gliding mammal in nature that moves smoothly from tree to tree. A special treat for Claudine was to see a gaur (Indian bison) known to be the largest bovine in the world. This creature loomed impressively at almost two-meters in height.

Claudine is full of enthusiasm of her newly found hobby. She likes spending time out in nature but so far, her favorite national parks in Thailand are Kaeng Krachan and Khao Sok. A good photographer, Claudine has produced some amazing images of birds and other animals which she has shared with her friends.

What are her plans for the future?

Perhaps a visit to some birding sites in Indonesia's rich wildlife environment.



Why the Economist's Intelligence Unit ranks New Zealand #1 Global for Food Safety

SEPTEMBER 2019 COMMODITY & AGRO



Kiwi Connections

Thailand and New Zealand have enjoyed formal diplomatic relations since March 1956. It is a relationship that has remained dynamic, and Thailand has grown to become the eighth most important trading partner of New Zealand, in global terms.

By Robin Westley Martin

The two countries' 67 years of formal diplomatic relations is wide ranging, encompassing security, bilateral, political, trade, and economic links. The relationship also includes regional issues of common interest, such as disarmament and climate change, as well as working closely together on environmental matters.

The 30th ASEAN-New Zealand Dialogue was held in Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei, on 7 June 2023. It welcomed the positive developments in the ASEAN-New Zealand Strategic Partnership, and shared a common sentiment to energise and promote their relationship.

ASEAN recognised New



Zealand's commitment to support ASEAN Centrality through active participation in ASEAN-led mechanisms including cooperation activities under the four themes stipulated in the ASEAN-New Zealand Plan of Action, namely Peace, Prosperity, People, and Planet.

The participants agreed to continue strengthening existing



ASEAN recognised New Zealand's commitment to support ASEAN Centrality through active participation in ASEAN-led mechanisms including cooperation activities under the four themes stipulated in the ASEAN-New Zealand Plan of Action, namely Peace, Prosperity, People, and Planet.

cooperation and to explore new areas for future efforts in counter-terrorism and combating trafficking in persons; cyber security; maritime cooperation; human rights; trade, investment, and digital economy; micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs); people-to-people initiatives; education; and public health.

Significant steps were taken towards finalisation of the

Regional Air Services Agreement between the ASEAN member states and New Zealand.

Recognising New Zealand's leading role in addressing climate change, the meeting reiterated the need to amplify cooperation in the areas of renewable energy; climate-smart agriculture; sustainable development, green economy; infrastructure and connectivity; and smart cities.

Chambers of Commerce have an important part to play, and the president of the Chamber always leads the way forward. Such people are usually drawn from a national of that country, but New Zealand has been innovative in that the most recent President in Thailand was a Thai.

Maya Pearson BA (Law) runs her own company, Premier Thai Lawyers, and has long had an affinity with New Zealand,

BUSINESS



and after high school I studied law at Thammasat University. After graduating I worked at one or two law firms in the city to gain a little experience, before I founded my own company, Premier Thai Lawyers, in 2006.

RWM: *How did your association with New Zealand come about?*

MP: When we first started Thai Premier Lawyers we got to know one of New Zealand's trade commissioners through my husband Mark Pearson. I was invited to participate in some of the New Zealand Society's business events. I began to do a little work on their behalf, and I was soon asked if I would like to join the committee meetings of the society as an observer, which I enjoyed. After one meeting, the then president asked me if I would like to become a member of the committee. That was back in 2016. I was so surprised at this offer, but of course I accepted, and that was the genesis of how I became friendly with so many people from New Zealand who live in Thailand.

I became an active member, attended all the meetings, and soon after joining I helped to arrange the New Zealand Ball, a highlight of the year for the Kiwis in Thailand, their friends, and their business partners. Within one year I was asked if I would join the committee of the New Zealand - Thai Chamber of Commerce (NZTCC), and the following year I was honoured to be voted in as its President. That was in 2019, a post I held until November 2022. I was the first person to hold this position who was not a native of New Zealand.

RWM: *During your tenure as president what do you consider some of your proudest achievements?*

MP: I worked to the best of my ability to bring all sectors of New



its businesses, and its people. She became President of the New Zealand - Thai Chamber in 2018, and left the Presidency (Maya is still Vice President) at the end of 2022 to take on an even more demanding and wide-reaching position. Thailand is a founder member of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), with 10 member states. In February 2023 Maya became President of the New Zealand - ASEAN Business Alliance (ABA)

The ABA is a network consisting of local chambers / associations in Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, Singapore, New Zealand, Myanmar, Philippines and Indonesia. The ABA provides

reciprocal membership rights to each partner organisation. If you are a member of the ASEAN New Zealand Business Council, then you have access to the benefits of each of all the other local organisations.

The ABA encourages increased connections between the chambers by sharing events, speakers, discussing common issues and shared learning. It creates a strong network of contacts between chambers and develops regional strategies.

The BigChilli recently talked to its President, Maya Pearson..

RWM: *Could you fill us in with a little about your background?*

MP: I am a proud Bangkokian,



Zealand interests in Thailand closer together - New Zealand alumni, the Chamber, business people, departments within the Embassy, and other private organisations so that they could all facilitate each other's work. And 2019 was also the year that the New Zealand, ASEAN Business Alliance was formed, and I felt privileged to have been a part of its inception.

I became interested in New Zealand and Maori culture. One of the most loved festivals in New Zealand is 'Matariki', which celebrates the beginning of the Maori New Year, in July. For the Maori, astronomy is interwoven into all facets of life. The relationship of the stars and planets to the moon and sun, what was happening on the land, lakes, rivers, and oceans.

For the Maori, it was long the highlight of their year, but since the beginning of the 21st century all New Zealanders embrace Matariki, as part of their national heritage. I have been instrumental in bringing this festival to Thailand. It is destined to become one of the most important (and enjoyable) events held in Thailand for all Kiwis and their friends.

RWM: Now that you are President of the New Zealand ABA, what does



your work entail?

MP: My role as president is still very new to me, but the previous president has briefed me that it is important to build a relationship with members of the Thai government; such as the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Trade and Commerce, Ministry of the Environment, directors of Thai and New Zealand companies who do business together, etc.

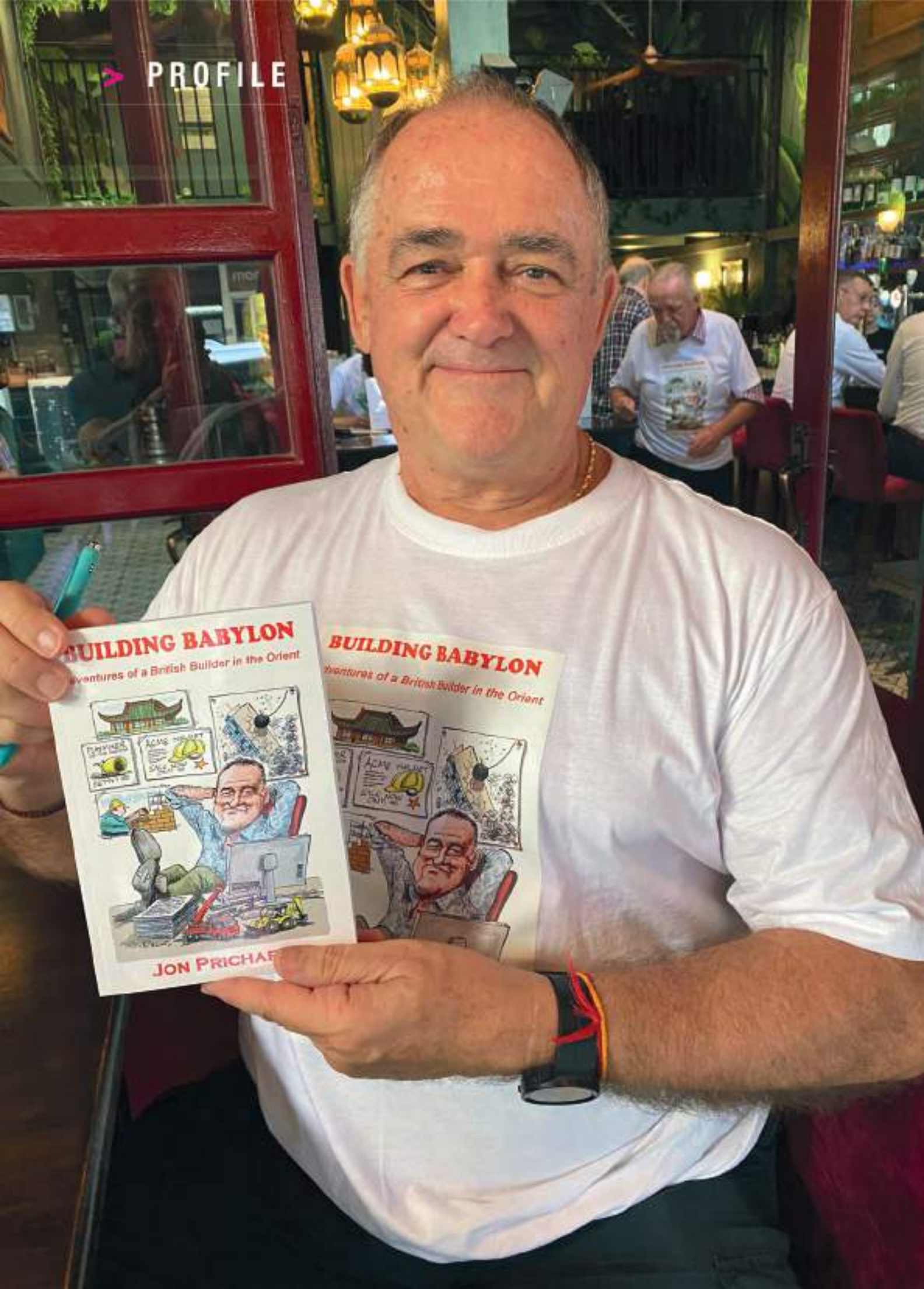
RWM: It sounds as though your new role is going to keep you pretty busy. What are your travel plans likely to be this year?

MP: I have already been to my first presidents meeting of the ABA in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, and I

will certainly be returning to New Zealand. I have not yet travelled to all ASEAN member states, but I am looking forward to help bring Myanmar closer into the orbit, and I hope the turmoil within the country can be resolved quickly and in a way that causes the least harm to their peoples. When Burma is able to return to democracy the ABA will be an important part of its recovery.

RWM: Maya, thank you so much.

MP: It has been my pleasure. I hope that you and your readers will mark a date in your diary, and join us for the Matariki celebrations and Gala Dinner in Bangkok in July 2024.



Building



Words by Jon Prichard

BABYLON

After a long and colourful career in the construction industry, mostly in Asia, prominent Bangkok expat Jon Prichard has some great yarns to tell. The following are excerpts from his latest book 'Building Babylon' which focuses on some of his more unlikely and bizarre adventures.

Jon's first book 'Taking it up the Blindside' recounts his countless exploits as a rugby player in the UK and as captain of the highly successful British Club rugby team in Thailand during the 1990s

A builder turned writer – a most unlikely combination. But that's literally how I introduce my third book because it's true. How often have you ever seen, for want of a better word, a building novel? Well, I've looked and there ain't none... and yet the building of homes, offices, hospitals, bridges, roads and railways must be the most ubiquitous topic on the planet...but we never read about it...ever.



Now I have put together some words to record and hopefully amuse readers with some of my experiences over the course of my career. Below are a few short excerpts from my book 'Building Babylon' which, of course, I optimistically anticipate people dashing to the shops or contacting Amazon to buy a copy.

Two chapters also give some insight into the various aspects of the design and building teams I had to suffer

under, deal with and eventually manage and enjoy. These chapters do give some structure to those protagonists we have in construction.

Here, without being too weighty, are some snippets from that more technical aspect...then we get to the fun stories:

'And so emerged, from the chrysalis of discontent, The Design and Build Era: a new contract form, newly trained building managers and strict whole development timelines, from inception to completion. This, in one fell swoop marginalized the Architect to an also-ran and the Project manager became to the Client's new Shogun.'

'Owners, developers and retailers all now required their investments or outlets to be completed in the shortest possible time to outdo any other competitor and also at the same time start grabbing Joe Public's money as soon as possible.

Gone now was the habitually decadent time-wasting; conceiving, thinking, deliberating and twitching for the two or three years of architectural foreplay before the pencil even touched paper in a meaningful way. Now it was 'wham-bam-thankie-Mam' time which was the almost complete reversal of time usage now that the builder (read: Project manager) had much tighter reins on the ticking of the commercial clock which was to dominate rapid project completions going forwards.'

'...the project manager could speak-the-speak of the plasterer, walk-the-walk of the scaffolder without anxiety, error or embarrassment. He could also hold his own in erudite dialogue in meetings with the experienced designers and most importantly, he could, if invited and required, happily drink the Client under the table without blinking.'

"Bugger that!!" was my mantra – just do it! Impetuous, barely-rational, uber-reactive and keen to get on with it was to drive me onwards until I too was, in time, to become wise...so...until about last week then.'

Now the hopefully amusing excerpts:
Locating Kew Garden's Palm House building... 1840s...But where to put it in the park?

No better person to ask than Royalty... the conversation may have gone something like this: Arboretum Curator: "Your Highness, the proposed new Glass House will be some three hundred feet long and one hundred wide, at



'And so emerged, from the chrysalis of discontent, The Design and Build Era: a new contract form, newly trained building managers and strict whole development timelines, from inception to completion.'

its greatest girth and about fifty feet high. It shall be cast in iron and glazed with green glass, where would your Magnificence consider it should be put?"

HRH: "Hmm that big eh, nearly as large as those dithering twits in the Commons I dare say?" Titters of sycophantic laughter all around.

AC: "Yes indeed my Lord but unlike those fellows, here we will need sturdy foundations and good ground to mount what will be a jolly heavy and delicate structure to last for far longer than a few sessions of Hansard."

HRH: "Quite so, quite so...hummm...How about's over thaar?" Pointing at a small space near some trees.

AC: "A very commendable spot I am sure your Highness but possibly HRH: "Quite so, quite so...hummm...How about's over thaar?" Pointing at a small space near some trees.

AC: "A very commendable spot I am sure your Highness but possibly a little close to those North American Sequoia hardwood trees which in time, may impinge upon the beauty and scale of the new Glass House. Another choice perhaps?"

HRH: "OK...ok...how about's...over thaar?" Pointing now at a space near the Chinese Pagoda.

AC: "Again your Magnificence a very sage and clever notion indeed...but this time maybe slightly compromising the two structures being in so juxta-a-position don't you think...another place, one which will allow a fine open vista and proclaim the majesty of the crystal dome to all who see her?"

HRH was now flustered and a little fed up with his fine and wise initial choices being so rudely rejected by a trumped-up gardener and so with an Empirical frump, he simply pointed a Royal index finger for the last time.



HRH: "There!"

AC: "I beg your pardon Highness where exactly?" His consternation was because the Royal appeared to be pointing at the middle of the huge lake.

HRH: "There man...right there!"

AC: "My Liege that is I understand right in the middle of the lake?... are you quite sure?"

HRH smirking and still pointing, "Oh yes indeed I am quite sure... of both the clear vista location and of your ability to make it happen just as you described, with firm and long lasting foundations for such a delicate structure." ...

"And now I'm off to Hampton Court for a spot of tennis and tea, Good-day to you all."

And with that directive, Kew Gardens set about erecting the Palm House on the wettest, nastiest patch of ground south of Glasgow.

The benefits of electric heaters over gas...

He opened the door of our site cabin and because of some vagary of the gas-tap being on or only partially off in my wee space, the trapped and massively built-up gas went BANG!

This BANG wasn't a splurge of pumped concrete heading upwards but a massive, violent yellow and orange exploding ball of flame and death. The roof was blown off and lay in the car park some twenty meters away. The outside walls were all blown off and lay about like giant discarded playing cards. The whole area was

a massive pile of smoke charred and burnt paper and drawings and kit for yards in all directions. Only the middle partition wall remained bizarrely erect and alone but even more remarkably the Penthouse girly calendar was still hanging from its tiny nail on the wall but was charred and was now exposing a well-developed African beauty rather than the Caucasian one before Pat arrived.

My filing cabinets were in a similar state of abandon lying strewn about like hippies at a 60s Peace party but all locked and sealed. My desk was matchsticks and I suspected my stapler was probably in Calais judging by the degree of forceful damage.

Now Pat by this time on Monday was amazingly still alive and well (for a given value of well) in hospital and keen to get back to work. Apparently after the massive blast Pat awoke in the dust and smoke to find all of his clothes had been blown off except for a smouldering and slightly melted plastic waistline belt to his trousers!

Just in case you didn't take in that last sentence...the bang was so big – ALL HIS CLOTHES HAD BEEN BLOWN OFF!! Amazing for you must consider he was a Paddy so he would have been wearing all of the usual Mick winter (and summer) attire: underpants, two vests-one string and one woven, a shirt, a pullover, thick trousers, socks, site boots firmly laced and the ubiquitous Donkey Jacket all tied up with string,...

Repairing a coastal railway bridge in Vietnam:

Somehow we needed to get a report on the underside... Our pretty lady translator told the SRVN Rail Bosses and immediately an operative was, with halting steps, thrust forward as a 'volunteer' and two other comrades acquired some stout rope from the train cab, passed it round his chest, made a very simple, wholly inadequate Granny-Knot and simply threw him over the edge. The top end of rope was simply held by his two Commie chums and never tied off to something less fallible.

Trevor and I were stunned by the alacrity of this sacrificial

lamb and we rushed to edge to see Comrade Ngyuen swinging in huge arcs some meters below the bridge in the steep ravine...let's say he was smiling...but I'm pretty sure I heard some crying.

Trevor now shouted his instructions to me in his usual Yorkshire drivel and I spoke to Lucy in English and she in Vietnamese to another Foreman who instructed the swinging rope man.

Essentially, we needed the broken concrete (damaged by marine salts over time) over the



steel reinforcing rods (rebar) to be removed and then an estimate on the diameter of the bar and then some rusted sample of the outer surface to assess how much the main rebar had corroded. In this way we would have a good idea of the bridge's structural strength and possible longevity.

The main bars in the base of the beams must have started life as something like 35-40mm diameter bars when installed decades ago. We asked the dangling man, who had now been pulled up to the underside of the beams, where he had been swung in under us, so we couldn't actually see him, to do exactly that. Peel away fractured concrete and grab the bar and bring back a rust sample.

After some grunting, there were some shouted exchanges and tally ho, Rope Man was hauled back up and over the bridge parapet and once untied he was turned to us and opened his hand.

He didn't have a small sample of rust...HE HAD THE WHOLE BAR!

Trevor's eyes opened in shock and realization and after a moment's hesitation he screamed "Get the fookin' train off the fookin' bridge" and loped off to find a tunnel....

Summary street justice in Siam:

"Boss...boss...boss quickie come here must stop farlang jumpee-off building!"

"Wot?" was all I could gather together as I quickly translated the Ting-glish and possible content. A suicide?

"No thinkie Boss...just come quickie or big p'ompem for all worker and faw'shuwa for farlang!"

.... I was brought up to speed with the gasping explanation that THAT daft, rude and double-rude, ginger-haired, Aussie Foreman had just screamed and shouted his last discourteous evaluation of his Thai team's working merits and they were throwing him off

TreVor and I were stunned by the alacrity of this sacrificial lamb and we rushed to edge to see Comrade Ngyuen swinging in huge arcs some meters below the bridge in the steep ravine...let's say he was smiling...but I'm pretty sure I heard some crying.



the building right now.

...I arrived gasping on the dusty but clear open fifth floor and despite having no wind to speak of – I did shout.

"OYE !!! YOOT...YOOT...YOOT!! Which I hoped was my best Thai to say: stop, stop, stop.

The disgruntled Thai workers were actually on the very edge of the slab, grasping him by hands and feet like at a birthday party pool-side prank and in the very process of the final swings before departure. He of course was frothing and screaming, wriggling

and howling for all he was worth because he was now convinced, despite his earlier skepticism, that Thai street justice did in fact exist but was actually thriving in his vicinity.

The swing dropped off and they all stood there still clutching the now exhausted but hopefully reprieved antelope in their hands. They stared at me as I approached very slowly with my arms out straight and open palmed, hoping too that this was an international symbol for peace and parley and not a suggestion to simply push, rather than swing him off?!

In my best broken Thai I started, and remember your Thai teacher does not normally brief you with words associated with murder-alleviating negotiations but more along the lines of: 'how many sisters do you have...which day of the week is it today... and I have a nice new blue fridge'.

"Guys, guys, guys...we all know he is a complete arse and rude and abusive twat but this...this flying...this game...we cannot do. Someone will see you and then you are all in trouble!"

It was at this moment that I realised why they send trained coppers and psychologists to deal with these situations because I had, in their eyes, and luckily very slow working minds, implicated myself as that very witness. The end result, after they had had a chat, could well have been: 'Two daft farlans engaged in a love-tryst-suicide-jump' headlines in the next day's Bangkok Post!

Again, fortunately my Foreman was also translating and trying to repeat my garbled pleading into something that would slowly strike home, without Bruce first striking the pavement even faster. They looked at each other and still without releasing their quarry, had a brief discussion and then turned to us and confirmed.

"OK...but he go...he go away and he go back his country or faw'shuwa he go jumping off roof next week... OK?". "Oh and he must agree now...not run away and laugh...OK?"

They dumped him in the dust and stood back. Bruce was a quaking jelly of an ex-bully and I quickly explained the gist of the deal and that getting down to ground level was probably a priority.

The Editor in Chief has told me that's all the space I'm allowed and so I must wish you adieu and I will quickly add more copies of Building Babylon to the book shelves and brief Amazon that there WILL be a rush on book # ISBN 978-616-456-033-8.

Please visit my website: <http://www.Prichardpress.com> and you can also view my rather more base, rude and despicable rugby stories in Taking it up the Blindsides.... more to come.

Publisher: Danny Speight of DCO Books.

How NOT to build: Classic blunders by builders

- but not Jon Prichard



The Male Menopause

- Restoring your Testosterone Levels

By Dr Donna Robinson

Walking down Sukhumvit Road in Bangkok you might have noticed TRT offered in the shop windows of the latest clinics popping up and thought to yourself, what does it mean? TRT stands for Testosterone Replacement Therapy (TRT) and a short walk in Bangkok reveals it seems to be gaining popularity. It is important to note that it is just one of many ways I will also now tell you about that men can use to combat the Male Menopause and boost their testosterone.

What is Male Menopause?

Let's jump straight into the topic. TRT is a treatment to raise the levels of testosterone within your body. There are also lifestyle changes you can make first to ensure you are actively raising levels as well.

Testosterone in simple terms is the hormone for manliness in men. It is the primary sex hormone also responsible for many other body functions and behaviour for men - think drive, libido and strength. After the age of 30, the level of testosterone is estimated to

decrease by 1% for every year after that. This means by 50, you have approximately 20% less testosterone than you did in your prime years.

For some, this is still above the threshold your body needs but for others you might have already noticed changes with your body that you cannot explain. These hormonal changes in men result in what we know as the Male Menopause.

What causes the Male Menopause?

Your testosterone level eroding as your body clock ticks is not all that

is working against you. There are also a few other lifestyle factors you do have some control over which may accelerate the Male Menopause effect.

We are all born with differing levels of hormones, and this includes our base level of testosterone. Some men are born with more, and some less and so it reasons that each man will be impacted by Male Menopause differently. Unhealthy diet can also explain why low testosterone can be a worry for men as young as 21. Eating the wrong kind of fats

or too many carbohydrates can cause insulin to spike after eating which also reduces the testosterone levels. For the most part our diets in Thailand are healthy, but it is something to be aware of.

Lastly, in the fast-paced hustle of Bangkok we can all fall victim to stress or a lack of sleep with our busy work and social lives. Both these issues are going to upset the balance between your stress and sleep hormones (known as cortisol) and testosterone. Lack of sleep and/or too much stress and your cortisol levels are going to remain high and testosterone levels will reduce. I have written in depth about managing stress and insomnia on my Medconsult Clinic Online Blog if you want to learn more about those issues.

How do I recognize it?

If you feel you may need TRT, or are already going to start it, the first thing your doctor is going to do is give you a testosterone level test. This will ascertain how low your testosterone truly is. It will also serve as a baseline level your doctor will monitor as you progress.

However, if you want to avoid the clinic there are some good indicators of low testosterone that you can look out for already. The most obvious would be low sex drive, erectile dysfunction or other 'bedroom issues' of similar nature.

Testosterone is the primary sex hormone so this is often a good starting point. You know yourself and your body so trust what feels normal to you. Feeling fatigued as the day goes on or the need for frequent naps could also be a sign you may want to check your testosterone. A loss of muscle mass or an unexplained increase in belly fat is also a sign of low testosterone. This one is more concerning as accumulating body fat around the middle is also attributed to a few



more serious health issues such as heart disease.

Testosterone is a growth hormone and so if you find a hard time gaining muscle, or are even losing it, then making lifestyle changes or considering TRT to raise testosterone levels can help with this.

Turning back the clock: reversing Male Menopause and increase testosterone

If you are concerned you have naturally low testosterone (younger men) or are feeling the negative impacts of the male menopause as you age, do not let it get you down as you are not alone, I can assure you. Many men suffer from this, and like hair loss for men, it is one of these topics that is not widely talked about.

You can drop into a clinic and speak to a doctor to discuss your concerns about low testosterone. The first thing they will do after a discussion around your lifestyle habits and background is get you to

do a testosterone level test. With the result of this you can both observe your levels and see how they compare against normal ranges.

Some really basic things I tell my patients to try out to stimulate testosterone levels are quitting smoking, moderating their alcohol consumption, losing weight, getting more sleep and reducing stress in their life. If you decide with your doctor that TRT is a good option, it is usually delivered as an oral medication or as an intramuscular injection once a month and so is easily integrated into a routine visit to a clinic. I will leave you with this knowledge that there are many ways for men, like women, to hold onto their best years and to look and feel better about yourself.

British expat Dr Donna holds both the UK and Thai medical license and has practiced in Bangkok for over 25 years. She founded MedConsult Clinic in 2003, an multi-award winning international General Practice medical clinic, located in the Thonglor area of Central Bangkok.

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Blue by Alain Ducasse

Executive Chef Wilfrid Hocquet and Executive Pastry Chef and baker Christophe Glio are making the following delights in this Michelin-starred restaurant: Phuket pineapple, marinated with 20 years Dictador rum and topped with coconut zabaglione; and Rum baba, a signature dish from Alain Ducasse's restaurant served with lightly whipped vanilla cream. ICONSIAM Shopping Centre 299 Charoen Nakorn Road, Bangkok. Tel. 065 731 2346





Dusit Gourmet Dusit Thani Bangkok

Coffee shop specialties include Strawberry mousseline Tart, garnished with fresh strawberries; Carrot Cake, an artful blend of flavors; and Yuzu Lemon Tart, a fusion of Japanese yuzu and zesty lemon flavors, nestled in a buttery tart shell.

Sala Daeng Rd, Silom, Bangkok
Tel. 02 200 9009



Rim Klong Café Mövenpick BDMS Wellness Resort

Escape Bangkok's chaos and recharge at this charming canal side café. The menu features fresh breads, pastries, Mövenpick ice creams, Siamaya chocolates, and coffee by Sarnies. Tel. 02 666 3333





Bangkok Baking Company JW Marriott Bangkok

Executive Pastry Chef O Phensiri Chotkiao's recommendations include Mango Coconut Jasmine Rice Pudding; Dark Chocolate Mousse with Strawberry Balsamic is an absolute must-try, and his innovative twist on Apple Crème Brûlée en Chox, encased in a delicate vanilla cream. Sukhumvit 2, Bangkok.
Tel. 02 656 7700



Ventisi Pasticceria Centara Grand & Bangkok Convention Centre at CentralWorld

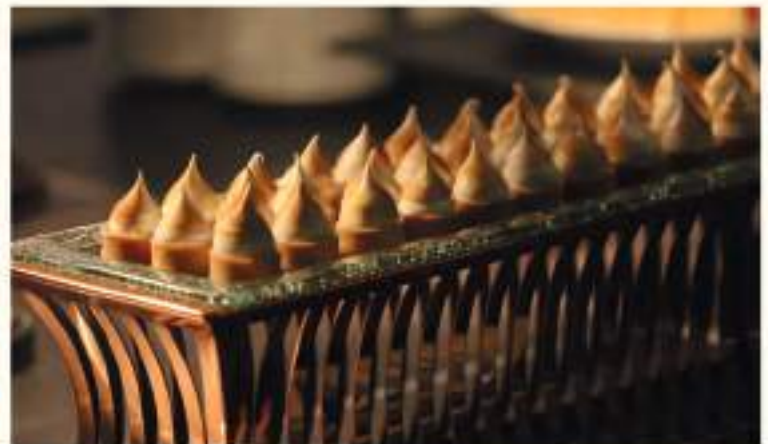
Italian-influenced Pasticceria menu offering a range of sweet delights from classic cannoli and zeppole to delicate panna cotta and torta Capres. Other popular choices include the original Italian famous bake Canoncini; Sfogliatelle Riccia; and the Grand Butter Croissant.
Tel. 02 100 6255





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Siam Tea Room Bangkok Marriott Marquis

Executive Pastry Chef Alfred Merkel offers ten flavors of croissant, including sweet and savory versions, along with his Pandan custard bread, brioche comprising 100% pandan and coconut milk and topped with coconut, and a classic French mille-feuille – crisp, sweet puff pastry filled with vanilla cream and topped with icing sugar.
Sukhumvit 22, Bangkok.
Tel. 02 059 5999
www.siamtearoom.com





Mil Toast House

Favorites of this Korean homemade bread house include Butter French Toast with Vanilla Ice Cream; Ham & Corn in brioche bread and steamed over a bamboo batter; Strawberry Toast Stick with strawberries dipped in white chocolates. Siam Square Soi 3, Central Ladprao, ICONSIAM and Terminal 21 Rama



Waan Thai

Specialising in traditional and rare Thai desserts such as Charcoal Sweet Pudding with Thai Tea Ice Cream made from freshly squeezed coconut milk and a colorful pandan sponge cake, presented in a glass jar and served with the restaurant's signature ice cream; Pandan Custard, decorated with Espuma coconut milk cream; and Ruby Water Chestnuts Topped with Coconut Milk.

Sukhumvit 55, Bangkok

Tel. 094 215 3945

www.waanthai.com





Berthold Delikatessen Sindhorn Kempinski

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Soi Lang Suan, Bangkok
Tel. 02 095 9999





Metro On Wireless Hotel Indigo Bangkok Wireless Road

Serving sweet and savoury delicacies, including homemade scones with clotted cream and fruit jams; Parma ham and brie cheese sandwich; and popular Thai savoury snacks like 'Moo Klook Foon,' fried pork tossed in tangy toasted rice powder and chilli. Thai must-try desserts include mango sticky rice, Kanom Chan, a layered coconut milk treat and 'Kanom Sai Sai,' steamed coconut custard with sweet coconut filling. Wireless Road, Bangkok.
Tel. 02-207-4999





Short Cuts Crowne Plaza Bangkok Lumpini Park

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Rama 4 Road, Bangkok

Tel: 02 632 9000



BEHIND THE LENS OF Noah Dolinsky

by Robin Westley Martin



Bangkok-based photographer Noah Dolinsky was a prize winner at the Cannes World Film Festival in France late last year. This is a festival that focuses on film shorts. So, let's go behind the lens of Noah, and see what makes him tick.

What's your background?

I was born in Tel Aviv, Israel. I studied photography in Jerusalem and my main interest was in fashion shoots. After I finished my studies, I moved to Milan, Italy, as I was very much impressed with the photographic

aesthetics I found in the Italian fashion magazines that I avidly consumed. After my learning experiences in Italy I returned to live in Israel.

What prompted this move?

In 2014 I decided to make a change in my life, both personally and professionally. I felt I needed a fresh environment to inspire my creativity. I decided to go traveling in Southeast Asia, and after almost a year of being on a voyage of discovery in Thailand, Burma, Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia, I returned to Bangkok and decided to stay here.

'In 2014 I decided to make a change in my life, BOTH PERSONALLY AND PROFESSIONALLY. I needed a fresh environment to inspire my creativity. After a year of being on a voyage of discovery in Thailand, Burma, Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, I returned to Bangkok and decided to stay here'



What was it about Thailand that made it your stopping point?

I find a lot of beauty in Thailand and in Buddhist culture. Beauty and mystery, as I still don't really understand everything here, and this inspires me as a photographer. I feel as though I want to capture that beauty and mystery. I also feel very comfortable here in Bangkok in every aspect of my new life. I am even starting to become used to the heat and climate.

On the one hand it's a modern metropolis which offers anything you can imagine, yet it is also part of a

Buddhist culture, with old and authentic charm. A unique blend of all the 21st century has to offer, combined with traditional Buddhist practices. I find this fascinating. If you check out the images on my website it explains this better than I can put into words.

What was your first exhibition in Thailand?

My first exhibition in Bangkok was in 2017 at Cho Why Gallery: Goodbye Chinatown; it was a group exhibition. In 2019 I had a big exhibition at River City Bangkok together with my colleague Khan Hans.

When I first came to Thailand I was intrigued and fascinated by the unique culture, and aesthetics of everything that I encountered, that was so unusual to me, outside my experience. Since I'm mostly interested in people, pretty soon I started to document these individuals or groups that were totally different from what I was used to in Israel, my country.



What's most interesting about working here in the place you now call home?

My photography is all about people. People are my overriding passion, all kinds of people, young and old, male and female, transgender, the LGBTQ community. My pictures speak more fluently about my subjects than I am able to, especially as English is not my first language.

You now have two award-winning short films, 'My Name is Bella' and 'Fallen Angel'. How did you get interested in the LGBTQ community in Thailand?

When I first came to Thailand I was intrigued and fascinated by the unique culture, and aesthetics of everything that I encountered, that was so unusual to

me, outside my experience. Since I'm mostly interested in people, pretty soon I started to document these individuals or groups that were totally different from what I was used to in Israel, my country. This was when I started to create my photo series about Chinese opera performers, Muay Thai boxers, and also Thai trans-women, ladyboys.

In 2020 an Israeli friend of mine made a documentary film about an Israeli trans-woman and submitted it to the Tel Aviv International LGBTQ+ Film Festival. This is how I learnt about that event. When I decided to expand my portfolio into making films I immediately thought about this festival as my first attempt to gain recognition as a filmmaker. Of course, the film had to be LGBTQ related,



and that was no problem, as I had come to know a few people in the community, trans-women that I had already photographed, and Bella was one of them.

So my first foray into the world of film was a short documentary, simply introducing Bella. 'My Name is Bella' was an official selection at Tel Aviv International LGBTQ+ Film Festival 2021, and was also selected as an award winner at the 23rd season of World Film Carnival, in Singapore (WFCS) in two categories, LGBT film, and Critics' Choice Awards. That was a great start which motivated me to continue making films which are LGBTQ related.

What is it you find fascinating about the LGBTQ aspect of Thai society?

My artistic interest is most certainly not solely focused on the Thai LGBTQ community, because I'm captivated by the whole gamut of society, not only in Thailand but indeed anywhere around the globe. As I mentioned previously my passion is photographing people, particularly those whom I perceive as possessing something unique for me to portray. For example, check out the Chinese opera series on my website.

My artistic interests are not limited to Thai ladyboys. However, by now I have an entire photo series of portraits of Thai trans-women. My hope is to find a sponsor that

It was amazing to receive the email notifying me about it. It was certainly beyond my expectations, as simply being an official selection was an achievement in itself, considering

this is my first fiction film, which was completed with a total lack of funding. I'm very proud, and I would like to thank all the good people who took part in it, especially the film star Phanuwat Srirachat.



will allow me to exhibit it at a gallery sometime this year.

Were you surprised by your success at the Cannes World Film Festival?

It was amazing to receive the email notifying me about it. It was certainly beyond my expectations, as simply being an official selection was an achievement in itself, considering this is my first fiction film, which was completed with a total lack of funding. I'm very proud, and I would like to thank all the good people who took part in it, especially the film star Phanuwat Srirachat. She is not an actress but was brave enough to take this challenge. Bravo Gus!

It is still to be announced. It will take place in at Cannes during 2023, and I intend to go there for the

event. The screening in Tel Aviv, though, took place last November and was a very exciting event. It was thrilling to see my film on the big screen of a movie theatre.

What are your plans for 2023?

I have a lot of plans for 2023. I intend to continue creating portraits that capture the inner essence of my photographic subjects, and to create unique works of art. I'm also planning on making a new short fiction film, this time with a budget if I can find a sponsor for it, and to have a solo photo exhibition at an established art gallery. Yep, I have a feeling 2023 will be a great year for me, and I hope for everybody as well.



MY NAME IS BELLA



RWM: Do you have any advice for filmmakers, specifically here in Thailand?

Noah: I'm humbled by that question ... I'm a beginner filmmaker myself so I don't think I'm in the position to give advice to others. However, I can tell you what I did and how I began with my first film. I felt the drive to create something new, to experiment with telling a story in video, which involved camera motion, and a different set of tools than that I have been used to up until now, a stills camera. I wanted a new challenge. However, I see myself as a storyteller in my photographic work, so for me the move was not that difficult. In three words: Just do it!

RWM: Is there anything you would like to add that I may have missed?

Noah: It was a big decision for me to leave Israel, and to go into uncharted waters. I had never been to Southeast Asia before, and I had no idea what to expect. Looking back, now, I think it was one of the best decisions that I have made in

my life. I am very happy here in Bangkok, it's an amazing place to be in. I have made many friends and I'm enthusiastic about what is to come. It's my home, and I don't want to leave.

www.noahdolinsky.com

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> BEEFSTEAK & BURGUNDY



chesa

Happy to be back at Chesa

It's hard to beat an old favorite – something predictable, well-known, tried and true – even though it's surprisingly different every time. Such thoughts were in everyone's mind as we made our way once again to Chesa Swiss Restaurant, for what would be the Club's twenty-first visit.

We were not disappointed, as Chefs Thomas Nowak and Rene Kuhn once again outdid themselves, serving us six courses of exciting new culinary creations for our enjoyment. Our Wine Master had also excelled,

selecting five excellent wines (two white and three reds), sourced from four different countries, to accompany our meal.

The day began by gathering around the bar for an aperitif, Soho Wine Company's Sauvignon Blanc Stella 2022 (from the Wairau & Awatere Valleys in Marlborough, South Island, New Zealand), along with some assorted Italian olives and crispy puff pastry bread twists wrapped in Prosciutto.

Wine Spokesman Danny Arn said he enjoyed this wine, noting its pale-yellow color and greenish shine, spicy bouquet featuring the fresh, light aromas of stone fruits, strong minerality, and moderate acidity. It

went well with both the bar snacks and our subsequent Amuse Bouches. Once seated around the long table, we received a tasty selection of Amuse Bouches that consisted of a Spicy Oyster Shot, Salmon Tartar, and Batter-Fried Mushroom with Spicy Garlic Aioli Dip. Food Spokesman Vernon Johnson arrived on the scene a bit late, but was still in time to enjoy these savory treats (he especially liked the Spicy Oyster Shot).

That next course was a delicious Smoked Rainbow Trout Terrine, accompanied by Tomato & Cumber Vinaigrette, and Pickled Beetroot. This dish was nicely presented, being garnished with salmon roe and edible flowers. The terrine itself



retained the natural smokey flavor of the fish, and had a slightly coarse yet pleasant texture (as opposed to a creamy mousse). Vernon enjoyed the contrasting flavors and textures – especially the beetroot – and even admitted to sampling a few blossoms, which we can only assume were harvested from Chef Rene's home garden.

To accompany our starters, we were served Domain Henri Delagrangre Hautes-Côtes de Beaune Blanc 2020 (from Bourgogne Hautes-Côtes de Beaune AOC, France). This reasonably affordable Burgundy white wine is made from 100% Chardonnay grapes. Danny really enjoyed it, and commented on its golden-yellow color, aromatically complex nose with various floral notes, and marked fruity acidity (which he generally prefers, compared to the lower acidity of our first wine). Our second starter course was Pan-Fried Monk Fish Medallion Wrapped in Bacon, served on Brown Lentils Stew. Vernon liked the interesting

combination of flavors – especially the role played by lentils and bacon (what isn't made better by adding bacon?). Although he declared the Monk Fish to be very tasty, several of us thought the fish itself was slightly overcooked and thus a bit dry. Still and all, it was a great dish that went nicely with the French Chardonnay. The next course highlighted some seasonal products from Europe, White Asparagus Cream Soup, enhanced with Chanterelles and topped with Wild Bear's Garlic Pesto. Vernon said the soup was delicious, with its small chunks of asparagus and mushroom, but was puzzled about the green stuff drizzled on top. Chef Thomas explained that it was a special pesto made from Bear's Wild Garlic leaves – a spicy herb with strong garlic taste that grows wild throughout Europe, where both the leaves and bulb are used in cooking and to make medicines.

The soup was accompanied by our first red wine, Anne Sophie Dubois Fleurie Les Cocottes 2020

(from Fleurie AOC, Beaujolais, Burgundy, France). The Fleurie region is known for highly regarded red wines made from 100% Gamay grapes – the same grape is used to produce Beaujolais Nouveau. Born and raised in Champagne, winemaker Anne Sophie Dubois used to make her wines using 100% destemmed and fermented grapes in the Burgundian-style. Then, starting with the 2015 vintage, she began to employ 100% whole clusters and carbonic maceration with indigenous yeasts, followed by aging in oak barrels, and light sulfonation before bottling with little or no filtration. The result is a tart and tasty wine, with bright,





alluring aromas of summer fruit sorbet, a Fleurie's telltale minerality, and very coy tannins that make it dangerously easy to drink. Danny thought it was a very nice wine, and easy to drink.

Our main course was Australian Black Angus Rangers Valley Tomahawk Steak, served with Rosemary Roast Potatoes, Vegetables, and Red Wine Reduction. As he read the menu, Vernon thought it was an unnecessarily long name for a simple hunk of beef, but he experienced no lack of words when describing how much he liked it. Whether it's called a Côte de Boeuf, Tomahawk Steak, or Bone-In Ribeye, there are few things more pleasing to the eye (and the taste buds) than such a big thick portion of beef that is perfectly cooked (medium rare, of course), and still attached to that giant rib bone. Many others also appreciated the generous sides of roasted potatoes, broccoli, and onion rings, the last of which Vernon especially liked.

Our beef was paired with Vasse Felix Cabernet Sauvignon 2016 (from Margaret River, Western Australia). Vasse Felix was the first wine producer established in the Margaret River Valley and, like most of the region's top estates, is best known for premium wines made in the Bordeaux blend style. The 2016 vintage is produced from 86% Cabernet Sauvignon, 11% Malbec, and 3% Petit Verdot grapes, using natural fermentation and extended maceration along with traditional oxidative handling to define the intricate personality of each vineyard site before blending.

Our dessert was a Strawberry Mille-Feuille, served with White Asparagus Ice Cream. Continuing to make use of European seasonal produce, the crispy mille-feuille was filled with a creamy strawberry mousse and served along with fresh marinated strawberries, whipped cream, and a surprisingly tasty White Asparagus Ice Cream. It was neither too sweet nor too heavy, and made for an enjoyable finish to our meal. To complete our meal, we were served a third red wine, Felsina Rancia Chianti Classico Riserva 2013 (from Chianti Classico DOCG, Chianti,

Toscana, Italy). All Chianti Classico wines must be made from at least 80 percent Sangiovese grapes, but this was produced from 100% Sangiovese grapes. Harvested by hand, beginning during the first weeks of October, quality-selected grape clusters are destemmed and pressed, and the must fermented and macerated for 16 to 20 days in steel tanks at 28°C to 30°C. In March-April, the new wine goes into new French oak barrels to mature for 18-20 months. The final blend is then assembled, bottled, and aged in glass for a minimum of 6-8 months before it is sold.

Danny noted that being a 2013 vintage, this wine had plenty of time to develop its ruby red color, spicy nose, and taste with a hint of blackberries, as well as firm but simple tannins for a nice finish. Finally, along with our coffee, we were treated to a choice of either Kentucky Owl Straight Bourbon Whisky or Glenmorangie 12-Year-Old Scotch Whiskey, as a bottle of each was donated by our birthday boys Jim Morrison and Joakim Gorsberg, respectively. It was a great finish to an excellent lunch; and for some in the group, it was also a great start to a memorable (or not) evening.





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