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Clever chinese: Homosexuality not an illness

China's psychiatric association is removing homosexuality from its list of mental illnesses in a new diagnostic manual due out this year.

The 8,000-member Chinese Psychiatric Association has concluded that homosexuality is not a perversion, said Dr. Chen Yanfang, the group's vice president.

"Many homosexuals lead perfectly normal lives," he said Wednesday.

The step adds to growing tolerance of gays and lesbians in China, where an underground culture of gay bars, Web sites and sports clubs is flourishing.

Homosexuals have benefited from loosening social restrictions over the past two decades. Gay couples live together discreetly, and in major cities such as Shanghai, some musicians and artists are openly gay.

Still, many homosexuals endure harassment. At least 37 gay men were detained in the southern province of Guangdong in July, in what police called China's biggest crackdown to date on homosexuality.

The psychiatric guide should be released before May, Chen said. The new "Chinese Classification and Diagnostic Criteria of Mental Disorders" replaces a 1989 edition that defines homosexuality as a "psychiatric disorder of sexuality."

The new Chinese guide is aimed at fostering a more "tolerant and understanding attitude" toward homosexual patients, Chen said. He said it brings China closer to WHO policies and the American psychiatric group.

Chen stressed that the manual is meant as a professional tool and has nothing to do with legal or social issues.

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Tell Me Another One

You are, I'm sure, familiar with the Chaos Theory - somewhere on the other side of the world a butterfly flaps its wings and then, through a seemingly bizarre set of unrelated but connected incidents too complex to fathom, a man falls off his bicycle in Manchester. Apply that theory to the bar boys of Thailand. Somewhere in America a Farang gets on an aeroplane and mysteriously a few days later the contents of his bank account are being enjoyed by a family he will never meet in Udon Thani.

We've all heard that some of the boys who work in bars can be... well how can we put it politely, a little economical with the truth sometimes. These strangers to veracity are as inventive as any best selling novelist but the aim is usually the same. Invariably its concerned with relieving some hapless farang of the contents of his wallet or with making up some story for his employer so that he won't get sacked. Undoubtedly there are several genuine hard luck stories, but so many whoppers seem to have been going around over the years that one might think that the entire population of Thailand was accident-prone. Clearly this is not the case. The favourites are the stories of, "it's for my brother's school fees/mother's operation" or, "I have to pay to get out of the Army" and anyone falling for those hardy perennials really deserves what's coming to them.

There is a bar owner I know who claims to have heard them all in one form or another but is willing to give absoluted for creativity and amusement.

Bar owner: "But you were seen playing volleyball on Jomtien Beach".

Waiter: "I know, the doctor said I should take more exercise".

And, of course, some of the most implausible stories turn out to be true: "I have to take time off because my grandmother was bitten by a cobra whilst she was in bed with my nephew". And from the same lad only a few weeks later: "They are building a new road through my mother's house and I have to help her move." Again true, proving only that truth can be stranger than fiction.

Certainly there are a number of stories that take some working out. In December
and January there was a spate of requests from visiting 'boyfriends' for large 'loans' for amounts in the region of Baht 23,000. Whatever the reason, be it family emergencies or vital repairs to the moto-ky after a hit and run accident, it's a strange sum one might think. But think on, Farang. Most of you will go out on the town with at least Baht 3,000 in your wallets and guess what - your ATM card can get you the other Baht 20,000 in one daily withdrawal so... well for your loved one (you sap) you'll have a quiet night at home for just one night of your holiday, won't you.

Regrettably, people do get sick and for the comfortable Farang with his Blue Cross insurance a small hand-out to cure your loved one's loved one is a minor price. But invented medical emergencies up-country often take their toll on Farang wallets with family members on the brink of demise unless an urgent 'cash injection' can save mother, father, aunt-who-looked-after-me-as-a-child, grandmother, sister with a sick baby who's Farang boyfriend is a bad man and has left her all alone etc. etc. And so for the cynical Farang who's heard a lot of these and may be on the verge of refusal there's, 'The buffalo has to go to the vet'. Who could resist rewarding such inventiveness and who knows, it may even be true!

And then there are the stories of ‘Help me to get away from this life of sin and make an honest lad out of me – I want to open a duck farm / become a motorcycle messenger / open a beauty salon, etc.”. Then after the appearance of the money the lad disappears. Photos are sent of smiling boy with a duck / moto-ky / hair dryer a few weeks later. And then... give it another week or so and an email is sent: ‘I need money for the vet or all the ducks will die; I've had an accident and the insurance is no good; the electric curlers caught fire.” What is Farang to do? Write off his investment and send the boy back to that hellhole bar with all the other Farang just waiting to ‘Off’ his boy. Of course, cash is wired and a day or so later a Hotmail thank you is sent. Meanwhile, what has really been going on? The boy just moved to another bar, perhaps in another city, so that his Farang's friends could not find him, the emails were sent from the Malaysia Hotel after his latest ‘Off’ and gullible Farang is smugly and innocently happy knowing that he has saved the soul of the one he loves.

And of course another Farang in distress would not be the source of a fib, would he? Would he ever! Some of the most catastrophic and expensive stories seem to involve dealings between Farangs. There's a bar I once considered buying and so I had it checked out by my lawyer. It turned out that the place I wanted had not paid any company tax since opening and as such, I as the new owner might be liable for the tax of the past ten years! So if you've come here on holiday and you've set your heart on retirement in Thailand with your nest egg then perhaps it's better to keep the money in the nest. That bar which would keep you busy in your twilight years could become the bane of your life.

So why is it that in Thailand we fall for stories that we would laugh at in our own countries? You could end up thinking that it's safer not to trust anyone except your own mother and to wonder about her sometimes. But there are, as I've said, lots of genuine stories and many small handouts have made a significant difference to the lives of many Thai boys and their families. So maybe it's just a case of trusting to your own judgement and hope that you don't get conned too much. Maybe?
Chakran: The newest (cute) kid on the block

By Suzy Size

It is easy accessible and easy to find: From Skytrain station Aree you just walk into Phaholyotin 7 or Soi Aree as if you would like to go to the V-Club, which is located at the right hand side shortly before the curve. On my first visit to the new Sauna I asked for directions and a good looking guy named Mix, who had already caught my attention on the Skytrain, pointed out where I had to go. Needless to say—Mix would follow me to Chakran Sauna in case nobody should come on to me there and an emergency telephone call or distress signal would be sent out to him or the other accommodating guys at V-Club for their famous home-delivery service. Since this was planned strictly as a working visit I did not believe it or not require the services of the obliging Khun Mix after all.

Chakran Sauna is located in Soi Aree 4, the last soi on your left before you reach V-Club. Even if you don’t know V-Club, a sign at the mouth of the soi shows the way. You pass the Jesuit Refugee Service on your right and Chakran is located on the same side of the road, just a little bit

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“Like a party every night - locals and visitors enjoying themselves"
more lamented my doleful destiny as a 
rapoteur only. The beautiful stone 
bench in front of the Jacuzzi has a weight of 
3,000 Kilos and had to be leveled in by a 
special crane before the building around it 
could be finished—this being just one 
example of how much attention was paid 
to the design of the place. The massive 
wooden bar stools at the Snack Bar consist 
of four joined trunks.

Back on our way up (probably on the 
pass to heaven) we paid the inviting air-
conditioned restaurant on the first floor 
a visit. Thai and Italian cuisine is served 
here to allow you to recover your strength 
after a hard day wherever. Needless to 
say, Chakran has a well-equipped Gym (I am 
far too lazy to workout my time there or 
at any other Gym but might give it a gaze 
for younger talents) and a unique Aerobic 
Dance Area. A visit to the Moroccan 
Rooftop Garden most certainly will enable 
you to tell 1001 tales (or even of tails), 
especially if you go there at night.

Monday to Thursday Chakran is open 
from 3 pm till midnight, Friday to Sunday 
from 2 pm till 2 am.

Still awaiting the interested visitor is the 
immense "Heart 2 Heart" section, probably 
the heart and soul of Chakran. You are 
asked to leave your towel outside this 
crusy darkroom—but it is not mandatory, 
officious guards will check (but others 
will). There are 18 spacious private rooms, 
probably double the size of the usual ones 
at other venues. There is a sexy shower 
room, an orgy room, cruisy corridors and 
labyrinths. There is a movie room too—and 
all are well designed: You can find grottoes 
in the rear of the movie room and behind 
the screen. On the stairways between 
the different levels of this hearty "Heart 2 
Heart" section discover cozy corners and 
little benches for people that are not too 
shy. Most showers cubicles give people 
next door the opportunity to see or been 
seen or even to get involved in the action. 
There are very dark spots and others 
where light is not shut out but welcome. 

In a nutshell: If you do not find what 
you like in Chakran, gay saunas are not 
meant for you.

The entrance fees are very moderate: 
200 Baht during the week from Monday 
to Thursday, 230 Baht at the weekends. 
Students up to 22 years get a 50 % 
discount. But old tarts be warned: even if 
you are that young at heart and everybody 
tells you that you look so young, the guys 
at Chakran need to see your student card, 
otherwise you pay the usual fee.
Art

Through the eyes of love

Using this method limits Gerhard’s production to only about one painting per month. His artworks are planned over a long period of time and he labors hard over each of them. “A painting” says the artist “has to look cheerful and light even if its creation has been difficult and time consuming.” Gerhard possesses a marked individuality and luminescence of colors.

Gerhard held comprehensive exhibitions of his works in his hometown of Würzburg, in Düsseldorf and in Köln. London did not allow his show to be opened as it was considered to be too pornographic and the Documenta X refused his paintings on the grounds that they were too conservative. “I am very proud of both rejections,” says the artist.

From 15 March 2001 to 18 April 2001 at Dick’s Café Bangkok from noon to 5am. The Artist's reception will be held on Friday, 16 March 2001 between 7pm and 9pm. Dick’s Café Bangkok is located in Duangthawe Plaza, Soi Pratoochari, Surawong Road (opposite Thania Road). Tel: 637 0078.

Artist Gerhard Bögeholz is German, 50 years old, practices dentistry and lives with his partner of 30 years in Würzburg, Germany.

Coming from the northern part of Europe, Gerhard Bögeholz really appreciates the colors of the Mediterranean and South East Asia. Consequently, Gerhard traveled throughout the countries around the Mediterranean Sea, painting landscapes, cityscapes and male portraits.

He created numerous oil- and pastel pictures from Spain, Italy, Marokko, Tunisia and markedly Turkey. Two years ago, Gerhard’s affection swayed to Thailand, which captivated him from the first time he set foot there. The works displayed in Dick’s Café Bangkok are testimony to this affection and portray Thailand “Through the eyes of love”.

The artist creates his works applying the very elaborate classical way of oil paint.
I, Chubb and I Proud

By Fatty Carabuncle

I was a fat kid. I grew up to be poked at and pinched throughout my elephantine pubescence. Was I happy? Only when I had a Big Wopper safely encased between my ravenous jaws. Did I grow up sensitive to the fact that I was always hovering in the 120 kilo range and Chinese tailors would giggle that they didn’t have enough of that particular material in stock to make a full suit? Would I settle for a jacket only, they asked trying to encircle my girth with a tape measure? And on top of that, guess what, I turned out to be GAY!!! Talk about a double whammy.

So much for gay lib: where’s fat gay lib? I would walk into a bar in home town in Baltimore and everyone in their oh so tight tee shirts would pinch in their tiny little noses and act like a bad smell had just come into their midst. But I am a whizz with computers and have travelled the world as a result. My company didn’t care about my girth because they had constructed large dividers around my workstation to protect their reputation by hiding me from prospective clients. I guess their sensitivity was partly because their corporate handle was “StreamlineSoftware.com.” Then they decided maybe it would be a good idea to post me abroad. Someone had whispered in the ear of the chairman that folks in Asia often saw a fat man as a symbol of prosperity. Fat was good in Asia. They didn’t even have a word for fat in the Philippines. They just call you “healthy.”

So I was first posted to Japan. My God did I get a rude awakening. They even have magazines devoted to chubbies like me, lying back on a lounge stroking their bellies dressed only in a fundoshi, those funny loin cloths the Sumo guys wear to cover the naughty bits. For a while I knew what it was like to be suddenly attractive. When I went to a sauna, skinny guys would follow me drooling. But then the company said I had to open a new office in Bangkok. I visualised my new-found sex appeal sacrificed forever as I wandered through bars filled with slim brown Thai men. Once again fatty unloved.

My first weeks here were Blood, Sweat and Tears. The work was the blood. Taking a walk anywhere was mostly sweat. And the tears, I kept to myself in quiet corners of Lumpini Park after twilight. But I did like

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the idea that a lot of elephants seemed to roam the city with total impunity, and so ended up fork ing out a lot for bananas. But that didn’t lessen the load. Sure there were some young things who were willing to scale my mammouth bulk but once they’d reached the heights, the climb up seemed to produce a simultaneous climb in the price for the privilege, and a rather lacklustre climb down.

One day after work, walking close by the Malaysia Hotel on Ngam Duplace, I was in a bit of a blue funk, having broken a teak chair in the office of a client I was trying to cultivate. It was early evening and I had just had a lonely meal in the “Just One” restaurant behind the Malaysia when I heard voices raised in song, coming from a window on the second floor of the restaurant. The song they were singing in English with tremendous gusto was to the tune of “I am Woman I am Proud”. But that was the last resemblance to that anthem to feminism. I remember the words distinctly:

“I am Chubb and I am proud”
“And I’ll sing my song out loud”
“Cause I know that I am fatty but I’m free”
“Skinnies can all go right to hell.”
“Cause am Chubb and I am swell”
“And I’ll sing this song to tell the world I’m me.
“Ooh yes we are proud, we are Chubbies all around”
“And friends of fat abound, and we have our lives”
“So let’s get on with livin…” or something like that.

Then the voices swung back to the original refrain. I was mesmerized. I floated lonely like a really big cloud to a small staircase at the back of the restaurant. Greeting me was a picture of a big fat angel hovering above the entrance. I walked step-by-step up toward the sounds of the boisterous crowd above. Some stomping had started up to a particular song. The building shook ominously but I continued my ascent. I crept onto the second floor landing and peered through the windows of double doors. A beautifully decorated room greeted me with candle-lit tables and soft creamy walls. The guys! My God, I had found my chubby Heaven. There they all were, every big-bellied man I had ever dreamed of rolling around with in a sunlit meadow. The group seemed to know each other well and there was a friendly camaraderie that didn’t diminish as I tried discreetly to enter and creep into a dim corner. But the maître d’ who introduced himself as Boonchai, wouldn’t have any of it. He showed me to a table close to the front near the karaoke machine. I could feel lingering eyes being cast in my direction. I glanced about and found many moustachioed faces smiling languidly at me and nudging their corpulent companions. Eventually the microphone came around to me and I gave forth on a rendition of “One Moment in Time” which went over famously.

Since that wonderful first evening I have been coming to I, Chubb at least twice a week. The I, Chubb gang are really welcoming and I have become a real member of the I, Chubb Club. We are chubb but we are proud, and our kind should be allowed, to have our cake and eat it merrily. And dat’s the twwoth.

Ichub, the café, Tel. & Fax: 677-6917
http://www.debusen.com/ichubb

On the second floor of the Just One Restaurant behind the Malaysia Hotel, corner of Sathorn Soi 1 and Soi Ngam Duplace.

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**Intellectual Games**

**What’s In A Name?**

There’s this computer program you can get called “Anagram Genius”. It’s meant to help crossword puzzle fanatics cheat and look good against other crossword devotees in the office. But...and this is a big BUT, like all things it can be misused.

I first came across it a few years back in the British satirical magazine “Private Eye” which had taken the names of some prominent government ministers and made amusing anagrams from them. The one that still sticks in my mind is the name of the (then) Conservative (Tory) minister “Virginia Bottomley”. This name decoded into “I’m an evil Tory bigot” (and many would say how appropriate!).

So, with the same aim in mind, what can we come up with as anagrams for some of the gay venues in Bangkok and Pattaya?

The list below is not exhaustive by any means, and in some cases they may not be grammatically perfect, but what the hell. The point is to amuse and you can judge for yourselves how appropriate the re-shuffled names are.

**NAME OF VENUE** | **ANAGRAM**
--- | ---
Albury Mens Club | Clearly Rubs Bum
Amor Restaurant | Roam Truant Arse
Babylon Sauna | Banal Anus Boy
Blue Star Sexy Circus | Cruel Racist Boys Sex
Bruno’s Restaurant | Torts Arab Nuns
Chakran Sauna | Ah! Anus Rack
Dream Boys | Body Smear
Freemans Dance Arena | Scared Fan Near Enema
Heaven Sauna | Nausea Haven
Hero Sauna and Massage | Shag Senora Ad Nauseum
ICON The Club | No Clue Bitch!
ICON The Boutique Hotel | Oh No! Bitch Toilet Queue
Sunece Plaza Bars | Urban Slaaee Spa
Telephone Pub and Restaurant | Superannuated Peta-Brothel
Thai Guys Magazine | Him Gaze It, Gay Anus
The Ambiance Hotel | Locate Him Beneath
The Balcony Pub and Restaurant | Announce The Bastard Abruptly
The Colony Sauna | Aha! Looney Cunts
The Sphinx Pub and Restaurant | Piranha Hunt Extends Up Brats
The Tamtawan Place Hotel | Threaten A Lethal Cowpat
www.utopia-tours.com | Wow, Warm Up To Coitus

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The PGF seems to be generating a lot of attention already. Waiting for the Press Conference to begin we counted a considerable number of journalists from the gay and straight media, not to mention the reps from all the venues participating all enjoying the refreshments supplied free gratis by Ian and Robbie of Le Café Royale. Did I say waiting? Well we waited, waited some more and then waited again for a bit. Finally with a muttered, “These damned lady boys!” Jimmy, the partner in Boyz Boyz Boyz et al swept irritably from the room, presumably to do a bit of chasing up. Anticipation mounted...

His return was soon followed by a fanfare and in pranced a number of cabaret artists some of whom, it could be said, would have benefited from careful stage lighting rather than the cold light of day in the Piano Bar where the conference was held. Nevertheless, a little strutting ones’ stuff never hurt anyone and, after completing their routine, they made an interesting backdrop to the serious faces of the PGF committee lined up along a table that had replaced the usual Piano and a focus for the many TV cameras and other photographers prowling about the room.

The meeting was chaired by Michael Burchall of Top Man (and previously Cockpit) fame, who gave a succinct account of the intentions of the committee with respect to PGF activities.

The gist of his introduction was that the gay business community made a very significant contribution to the economy of Pattaya and to its colourful reputation, serving a lot of gay residents and a considerable proportion of the tourists who visit the resort, not to mention the thousands who are employed in the hotels, bars, restaurants and clubs and all the peripheral business which also benefit, down, presumably, to the noodle vendors strategically placed outside all gay venues at which the ladies and lasses manqué can be seen frequently re-stocking themselves.

Michael also compared the standard of Pattaya establishments favourably with those in Bangkok, Phuket and Chiang Mai and recalled the previously successful activities of the gay community in Pattaya, such as the annual Gay Sports Day, the New Year’s Eve Street Parties in Boyz town and the Mr Boyz Town contest. He credited the initiative of the proposed annual PGF to the previously mentioned and ever active Jimmy Lumsden and emphasized that the object of the festival would be to raise funds for distribution to Heart 2000—a foundation for helping people who have contracted HIV or AIDS and the Naklua Drug Rehabilitation Centre, both of which are desperately in need of funds to continue their valuable work. All funds raised will be strictly accounted by the three committee members responsible and the accounts will be published at the end of the Festival. He was able to state that a sum of nearly Baht 250,000 had already been raised, including the contribution by John Goss of Utopia Travel of his prize of Baht 10,000 for winning the PGF logo competition.

It is intended that the Pattaya festival activities will be spread throughout the year, with excitement building up and culminating with lots of events between November 29 and December 2. There will be a colourful parade and a final party and lots of fun.

Whilst the full programme of activities is yet to be developed, the programme commenced with an opening party at Boyz Boyz Boyz on St Valentine’s Day, a dinner party at Bruno’s March 7 and other events will include various dinner parties at well known Pattaya restaurants, parties in participating clubs, as well as various contests and a number of sporting events.

It is the determination of the committee, we were told, to make the Festival an enormous success to show the gay business communities concern for community issues and to attract worldwide attention to Pattaya as a holiday destination. The Festival activities would appeal to a cross section of the community who, by their involvement, would help local charities.

Amongst the questions asked was one about the participation of Lesbian venues and the Lesbian community. Michael replied that he knew of no lesbian venue in Pattaya or of any active support society. However, he said, they would be very welcome to join in and, if they were out there, please to contact any committee member or Thai Guys. The participation of the Lion’s club and Rotary (expected) was also discussed, as was co-operation with travel agents locally and abroad—all in the pipeline we were told.

Thai Guys can confidently predict that, as has occurred with previous similar events in Thailand and abroad, whilst the staging and participants will be gay, the audiences are likely to be largely straight—and they will get as much enjoyment out of the events as will the gays. So it should be and we also predict that all, throughout the year, will have a lot of fun as the PGF activities take place.

And not only that: The dates for Pattaya Gay Festival 2002 have been set already! The main events are planned for November 14 till 17, right after the Gay Games in Sydney.
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New Hotel, New Restaurant, New Bar

By Durian Gray

The newly opened 15-room Siam Palm is the latest gay-owned, gay-friendly Patong establishment to open. The farang owner, jovial Brit, Khun Allen, has retired from running the trams in Hong Kong and is now trying his hand as an hotelier, restaurateur – “and mama-san,” he says jokingly. One might say he’s gone from trams to trannies.

Khun Allen, not known for penny-pinching – I presume he prefers pinching other things – has taken over four shophouses next to Uncle Charlie’s and tastefully refitted them as an hotel, restaurant (Rim Suan) and bar (Tarzan’s) with his own private tree-house, or rather penthouse, perched above. As an alternative to the crowded Paradise Complex, the Siam Palm is just a few blocks away (although it seems like another part of the tropical island) surrounded by palm trees (hence the name), greenery and birds. And for those who like to be within cat-swinging distance of birds of another feather, there is jungle-themed Tarzan bar next door and Uncle Charlie’s go-go boys on the corner. Negotiations are underway with the condo across the street for permission for Siam Palm’s guests to use the swimming pool.

In-room facilities include Air-con, a Braun drip-brew coffee maker and spacious stall showers big enough for a village gang-bang. For size queens, there is a waist-high refrigerator and a 21-inch Samsung satellite TV with UBC connections. The friendly and competent staff are well- trained by German manager Khun Matthias, the former manager of the Bicycle Bar that used to occupy the Tarzan premises, and Matthias is training the cooks on how to prepare farang food. The Thai food at the ground-floor Rim Suan restaurant, which we sampled, was outstanding.

Room rates are reasonably priced Bt.1,000-1,800 with 40% off-season discounts. Nominal Bt.100 joiner’s fee charged for overnight visitors who must register. When we visited on March 1, the Tarzan Bar had just opened and its jungle-themed décor fits in with the vine-clad, aerial-rooted banyan trees in the backyard. Unfortunately, the opening day was marred by the inauspicious felling of a stately palm tree in front of the language school next door – but Khun Allen has vowed to replant the stately trees on the once sylvan soi, and Uncle Charlie’s has also followed suit by planting shrubs. As the Tarzan kitchen is shared with the Rim Suan next door, the food must be just as good, and all the waiters can be “offed”, although judging from the screaming from the kitchen, it seems like there are more “Janes” than Tarzans, but that might change. The off-fee is the standard Bt.200, and again a tip of Bt.500 would be standard for short-time in Phuket and 1,000 for all-night.

Siam Palm Hotel & Rim Suan Restaurant
5/13 Had Patong Road, Aroonsom Square, Patong Beach. Phuket 83150. Tel (076) 345-679. E-mail: info@siam-palm.com, www.siam-palm.com

Tarzan Bar, 5/16 Had Patong Rd., Aroonsom Square, Patong Beach. Tel. 342-927.

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Phuket

Kenya's Restaurant-Bar-Hotel

By Durian Gray

Khun Kenya, the flamboyant owner of Sea Hag restaurant on Patong is perhaps the best well-known of the gay entrepreneurs on the beach. For those who don't know him, Kenya is a Thai from Isaan and lived almost two decades in France with his late lover before returning to Thailand to open his own restaurant.

“My name Kenya,” he explains, “has nothing to do with the African country. It is my Japanese designer name, and in Japanese Kenya means ‘house of happiness’,” and Kenya personally makes sure that all his guests are as happy as he can make them. Kenya’s flair for design is obvious from the restaurant décor which looks like it belongs in the pages of Architectural Digest and his latest restaurant is indeed a house of culinary happiness. Rows of cobalt blue pin spots over the tables like a dusky blue canopy over the diners simulating a twilight zone of dining experience-powder rose walls and a dramatic centrepiece. There is also a lively bar peppered with handsome young men, some employed by Kenya’s (such as our wine-pourer) and others just cute guests. While other gay-run establishments pussy-foot and only go so far as to whisper themselves as “gay-friendly”, Kenya's...
Phuket

Blue Dolphin found in Paradise (Complex)

By Durian Gray

It took the timely Swiss to open the first sauna in Patong, and it was worth waiting for as they did it well. The Swiss-run Blue Dolphin has a sauna, steam room and small indoor swimming pool with spouting dolphins reminiscent of some decadent Roman baths (is that why their email address reads “saunabad”? By the time you read this, boys masseurs will be added to the sensuous and steamy brew. When we sampled the sauna one afternoon around dusk—a good time as the barboys and other workers still have time off before work that usually starts around 8 or 9 pm—there were three handsome twenty-somethings Muslim lads from the south working up a sweat. Although their English wasn’t so good, we chatted them up and found that they worked in a nearby karaoke lounge and that their main source of income was (surprise! surprise!) in getting “offed”—apparently mostly by rich Germans. They naturally assumed I was also German and loaded with “Geld,” as they offered their “short-time” services for only 2,000 baht each, or a bargain threesome for only 5,000! My reply: “I love you more than I can pay!”

Admission is 120 baht and Thais are half price (with no-one complaining of the double standard), however it is unlikely that one would find any Thais here other than money-boys and the karaoke boys weren’t about to play their empty music for free. However, as Blue Dolphin is just in front of the Royal Paradise Hotel, which caters to mostly Asian tourists (package unfortunately), one would hope that some of the vacationing (and horny) Japanese or Taiwanese university students with a taste for potatoes would also want to get steamed up. The locker room and shower stall is very small and cozy, so at least there is a chance of some tactile enjoyment. Otherwise, for those who prefer the vicarious enjoyment of eye-candy, one can just sit at the Blue Dolphin terrace and enjoy the cool evening breezes and views of the half-naked talent while nursing a beer. Open 2pm to after midnight.

Blue Dolphin, Royal Paradise Complex, 135/12 Kath-U-Thit Road, Patong Beach, Phuket 83150. Tel. (076) 341-611. Fax: 341-617. E-mail: saunabad@tisinfo.co.th

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Rendez Vous at Paradise
By Durian Gray

The Rendezvous is one of the poshest of the gay-owned/gay-friendly hotels in the Paradise Complex (and perhaps in all of Patong) and is run by Frenchman, Khun Patrick, who is no stranger to the soi, having run an earlier edition of Rendezvous in a rented building at the top-end of the soi for many years. Now that he owns the building, this newer version is much more deluxe than the former and is designed with bold architectural strokes—giving the feeling of staying in some old colonial-era hacienda or plantation guesthouse. The designer décor with terra-cotta tiled floors is liberally sprinkled with antique teak furniture and there is an abundance of teak and marble all around.

The 14-room boutique hotel is fitted with state-of-the-art gadgets such as sensor lighting that turns on when someone steps into the hallways, metallic key-cards and air-cons that automatically turn off when someone slides open a window on the balcony, and computerized, digital in-room safes. Smallish standard rooms start at 600 baht and there is an off-season discount from 1 March - 15 December. Reservations are essential as Rendezvous advertises in Spartacus and Thai Guys and many guests—both gay and straight couples—book through the internet. French is spoken, so they get a fair amount of French clients. The location is ideal for walking to the beach during the day and bar-hopping at night.

Rendezvous, 143/14-15 Rat-U-Thit Road, Paradise Complex. Tel: (076) 342-433, 342-032, Fax: 342-033. E-mail: boonco@loxinco.co.th

The North

The Good Charwoman of Chiang Mai or “Mrs Morris Changes Trains”
Greta X. Spandeck

‘Sorry... Happy New Year.’ Number 7 was cute enough, but smiling merely and making no sense at all. It wasn’t even Christmas yet. What was he getting at?

‘But have berth on night train on 1 January,’ he prattled on. ‘Ah, so that was it. Clerk number 7 at the Hualumpong booking office could get me to Chiang Mai on New Year’s Day on the overnight express, but not on the following morning’s day train. Well, nothing for it. The scenery was supposed to be a major attraction of the trip, but the night train it would have to be. That’s all the Royal and Imperial State Railway of Siam could offer, even at two weeks notice. I figured that I should be up and about by 7pm, even on New Year’s Day, and bought the ticket.

Two weeks later, my steamer trunk and I were manhandled into the taxi. Predictably enough, the driver was one of those rough, hunky-chunky Khmer boys with three day’s growth. He affected confusion between Wat Hualumpong and Sathanai rot fa Hualumpong, but I wasn’t going to stand for any of that nonsense. ‘We’re going to Chiang Mai for a good time, not to become a monk for a long time!’ I responded in my broadest Lao. Nonplussed by my assumption of the royal plural, he sped off down Rama IV. Steamer trunk and I were soon safely deposited in a sleeping car on the Chiang Mai express.

Once on board, it became evident that the scenery inside the train more than compensated for the darkness outside. My hangover cleared just as dinner was served... and so to bed. The bunks were made up and the curtains drawn. It was all just like the train to Florida in Some like it Hot. There was no Marilyn Monroe, but eye candy there was aplenty. Daybreak came somewhere in the wilds of Khuntan National Park crossing the watershed between the Chao Phraya and the Mae Ping in dense jungle somewhere north of Lampang. So there was scenery to be seen all over, even on the night train. And, soon after trunk and I were deposited on the platform in the Rose of the North.

It’s Madagascar, silly, in the south Caribbean. Khun Chatri was lying fluently, relying confidently on the inadequacies of the Thai education system. He’d inherited this wonderful charwoman, Siti, from the Souvenir Guesthouse’s former French owners. She was so conscientious, so hard-working; he really didn’t want to lose her. But she was a little alarmed at some of the changes Chatri had wrought since he’d bought the Souvenir four months before. She’d noticed that the clientele was changing, and now this pretty striped flag looking like a...
rainbow was hanging out the front, next to all the familiar tricolours, southern crosses and so on. What did it all mean? What country was it from? Madagascar reassured her. It was a triumph for Khun Chatri’s adoption of Dr Goebbels’ maxim that, if you’re going to tell a lie, make it big and utterly implausible. Chatri didn’t feel too guilty about this. After all, it was election time, and politicians all over the kingdom, especially in his native city of Chiang Mai, were following the same principle.

Sti still had her doubts about what was going on. After all, the Souvenir was a backpackers’ guesthouse, a stopover on the trek trail. She was used to laundring dirty dungarees. Now diaphanous little tops were appearing smelling no longer of dried sweat but of (fake) Chanel pour Monsieur. Black had replaced khaki as the favoured colour. Shirts no longer had sleeves, let alone pockets.

The look of the clientele had changed too. She was used to trekkers. You know the type—beneath a misshapen green floppy hat, there’s an over-dawn face, a grubby shirt with bulging pockets, baggy dungarees, chubby hairy legs, heavy woollen socks, and huge muddy boots. Some of the men can look pretty bad too. Such types were becoming less common. Now there were elegant Thai boys in those tight black tops, and farang gentlemen with gold chains, floral shirts and too-perfect-too-tanned complexion. What was going on?

I deposited myself on the terrace and ordered a croque monsieur for breakfast. Good to see Khun Chatri had retained some of the French ambiance. Sti looked askance at my fingernails, which I’d neatly painted in rainbow colours for New Year’s Eve. (What would we do without those free tester cosmetics from Boots on the corner of Convent Road?) You from Madagascar? she asked. ‘After a fashion,’ was my ambiguous and incomprehensible reply. I never did find out what she made of my laundry.

I checked into my room, air-conditioned and a snap at 330 baht. A notice warned alarmingly that some ‘Thai people made a profession of robbing guests, and advised against bringing back anyone for the night with whom a guest has not had ‘a longer-term relationship’, whatever that is. This was obviously a relic from the previous management. I went out that night, but foolishly returned alone, only to be rebuked by my host for my singular lack of moral turpitude.

That was a first. What could I do but feign the symptoms of a cold, plead the weather as an excuse, and say that I didn’t feel up to it? After all, it was the season when the Land of Smiles becomes the Land of Sniffles. This cut no ice whatever, so I too followed the prescription of the late Dr Goebbels. I’m on a 48-hour restoration-of-virginity miracle treatment. Night one was on the train, tonight’s the second and the job is done. My reputation was restored.

The rest of my stay in Chiang Mai is a bit of a blur. Lots of wats during the days, lots of serious partying at night. Two things managed to penetrate my consciousness. First, the trade going on in the night bazaar is quite remarkable. Second, Chiang Mai tuk-tuk drivers are not naive. Ask to go the Chang Phukat bus station after 10pm and they’ll ask in return what go-go bar you want. So cheeky!

All too soon it was time to leave Khun Chatri and the Souvenir. They are a welcome addition to the scene in Chiang Mai, where gay accommodation has always been in short supply. So close to the night bazaar too. I did manage to get the Royal and Imperial State Railway of Siam’s day train back to Bangkok, and ogled at all that scenery. Unfortunately this cute little Korean railcar broke down en route. Fortunately though, it chose to do this at Lop Buri, where those ancient Thais and Khmers were considerate enough to build their monuments so conveniently close to the railway station. This made for an interesting ninety-minute delay. By way of a bonus, the fitters getting greasy repairing the railcar were anything but antiquities and well worth a second look. And I was still back in time to resume my watching brief on Siam’s TV at 10.30pm, refreshed and virginity miraculously and unequivocally restored by my winter break in the north.
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**From the Balcony Chalkboard**

VENI, VIDI, WEEMEE
WHALE OIL BEEF HOOKED (Say it faster)

I've been told most people smoke after sex... I LEAVE people smoking after sex.

I'd rather have a bottle in front of me than a frontal lobotomy!

Toilet tennis: see other wall
Breathmint anyone?

The lennings were pushed!!

Why do kamikaze pilots wear helmets?

Why were men given bigger brains than dogs????
so they wouldn't hump people's legs at cocktail parties!!

Jesus saves... but Jordan scores on the rebound

Confucius says: man who has dick in peanut butter is fucking nuts

Easter is cancelled... they found the body!

Why does President Clinton play the trumpet?
Because he lost his HOAR-MONICA

I'm old enough to know better but young enough to learn from my

Life is like a prick:
When it's soft, you can't beat it;
When it's hard, you get screwed.

Gay life is beautiful
maxnoi@hotmail.com

WE HAD NO PLAN AND WE STUCK TO IT!
**Silom comments**

**Balcony Club (4)**
Lowest price drinks and food in Silom Soi 4. Early evening and late night happy hours every day. Bar, Restaurant and Karaoke with large street terrace. Talent nights 1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month and lucky draw every Tuesday. Very popular.

**Boys of Bangkok (24)**
One of the boldest shows in town.

**Dick’s Café (20)**
Stylish bar and café with European style sandwiches and Thai snacks. Very pleasant for an afternoon coffee or a late night snack and nightlife. New management.

**Icon (22)**
The well-known Icon Club from Pattaya has taken over Rome Club more than a year ago. Fabulous shows, a real asset to Silom Soi 4.

**Sphinx (3)**
Located deep down in Soi 4. Famous and popular.

**Pharaoh’s (38)**
Popular gay Karaoke in Silom Soi 4.

**Tartawan Place Hotel (31)**
The stylish, comfortable, gay friendly hotel—not noisy although right in the heart of the action.

**Tawan (32)**
Recently doubled in size in a place where size matters! Very popular.

**Telephone (1)**
Stylish, newly decorated telephone contact bar. See someone you fancy? Just dial the table number. For years one of the most popular bars in Silom Soi 4.

**Utopia Tours (42)**
The first gay travel agent in Bangkok; individual and group tours throughout Thailand and the region. Located at the Tartawan Place Hotel.

**Blue Star (25)**
Funny sexy shows. Totally renovated.

**Aqua Spa (41)**
Young at heart and age. But a real icon of Bangkok’s gay life already. Who never gave it a try has nobody to blame but himself.

**Tower Inn Hotel (39)**

**A & P Tour Travel (47)**
The friendly travel agent in a very convenient location. Check their new website: www.gasiantravel.com

**Cutie & Buty (46)**
Hair salon Cutie & Buty has finally come into its own. They have moved from Robinson’s Silom Rd. to Thanik Plaza 3rd Floor (between Silom Soi 2 and 4). The change did not stop there. It is aimed especially at the gay community and is willing to offer their clients the very best in cuts, coloring and service. To ensure this, the staff have been trained at Vidal Sassoon, Toni & Guy and the L’oreal Academy. Prices however have not gone up and now their service offers great value.

**Saana Asia (8)**
A small but cozy sauna with massage and coffee shop. Conveniently located right beside Tartawan Place hotel.

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**Travel**

**Flowers with Room Service in Sri Lanka**

By Durian Gray

The elephant teat-shaped lanterns sway disdainfully in the breeze, as a tall, dark and handsome Tamil waiter in white jacket, undisturbed by the flies, fills the sugar bowls with little white packets bearing the hotel silhouette logo and motto: GFH of 1864, “Yesterday’s Cham & Tomorrow’s Comfort” Colombo, Sri Lanka (Ceylon).

Despite the decay and benign neglect that has taken root in one of the oldest Grand Hotels of Asia, the high-ceilinged lobby is bustling with activity, like an Indian railway terminus cluttered with an odd assortment of travellers and their luggage. The Reservations Desk is covered with scribbled notations on broadsheets, as the aged gentleman behind the desk,

Continued on page 34.
Chiang Mai Map Legend

1. Darling Wine Pub
2. House of Male
3. New Connection House
4. Ba Rai Thai
5. Classic Touch Restaurant & Pub
6. J.J. Bakery & Restaurant
7. Amazing Sandwich
8. The Circle
9. Fan Club
10. Dol Boy Pub
11. My Way: Two of Us
12. Torpedo Club
13. Man Thai Massage
14. Best Time
15. Lotus Hotel
16. Adam's Apple Club
17. Cherry House
18. Spa Roma
19. The Coffee Bay
20. Bubbles Disco
21. Cruise Bar
22. Happy Happy Bar
23. Dragon Boy
24. Jungle Bar
25. Kit Cat Club
26. Soi Soi Club

Chiang Mai Comments

Adam’s Apple Club (16)
Biggest bar in town with karaoke, pub, restaurant and somewhat raunchy shows.

Night Bazaar Bars (21-26)
Great central location. A row of drinks bars frequented by freelancers and a very young clientele. A favorite with out-of-towners and resident farangs.

House of Male (2)
Popular, very friendly sauna. Centrally located in a renovated Thai mansion. Pool, garden, gym and other amenities.

Spa Roma (18)
Luxurious sauna popular with yueng professionals. The ambiance and tasteful décor of Bangkok's famed Babylon sauna. Recently opened at a new location at beyond the airport.

Fan Club (9)
Serenading host boys and ‘special’ show.

The Circle (8)
Congenial ‘off’ bar with imaginative nightly non-ladyboy shows and a friendly ambiance.

Lotus Hotel (15)
The comfortable and inexpensive Boutique hotel of the Rose of the North. Near to Adam’s Apple.
Phuket
Patong Beach

Map of Phuket Legend

Phuket Comments

Club Bamboo (33)
A very gay-friendly resort type setting 800 meters from the beach.

Rendez Vous Hotel (27)
Right in the heart Royal Paradise Complex, which is Phukets gay area. Boutique hotel with very moderate prices. Not far from the beach.

Kenya's Restaurant-Hotel-Bar (37)
The latest and newest Gay Restaurant in Patong Beach. Kenya's is infact a whole building with Restaurant, Hotel and Bar. Khun Kenya who also owns the famous Restaurant SEA HAG has the best sense for very high quality in all he does. Foods. Interior Decor and Service. As SEA HAG is mainly for Thai Cuisine Restaurant Kenya's is mainly International Dishes but the Thai food is not left out. Inspite the high quality the prices are still surprisingly low.

Siam Palm Hotel/Rim Suan Restaurant/Tarzan Bar (36)
The newly opened 15-room Siam Palm is the latest gay-owned, "gay-friendly" Patong establishment to open. Its Rim Suan Restaurant offers fine Thai cuisine and European dishes prepared by Farang-manager Matthias. Next door the new Tarzan Bar is also worth a try. All three places are under the same ownership and management.

Blue Dolphin (38)
The first and only massage place and sauna in Phuket. Beautiful indoor pool. Not only on rainy days is this the place to relax.
Pattaya comments

Ambiance (53)
The first gay hotel in Pattaya. Well decorated rooms with all necessary amenities. Conveniently located in the heart of Boyz Town.

Boyz Boyz Boyz (1)
One of the first go-go bars in “Boytown”. Still in same location and thriving. Very popular as a night cruising venue for beachboys.

Bruno’s (8)

Panorama (9)
(Formerly Coco Banana) Open-air pub with many tables to sit with friends and watch the world go by. Newly renovated, the seating highly improved, Game Room upstairs.

Royal House (31)
Stylish massage parlour with a wide variety of masseuses. Try the VIP rooms with video and music.

Le Café Royale (3)
A popular gay hotel located in the heart of Boytown. Rooms recently renovated and all fully equipped Open 24 hours. Coffee shop, restaurant and Terasse bar restaurant open 24 hours for breakfast, lunch and dinner. A wide range of European and Thai dishes available.

Piano Bar & Restaurant (3)
Piano Bar open 7.30 pm daily at Le Café Royale, with full range of drinks and food. Live entertainment with pianist to midnight, a singer and group to 4.00 am or later (exclude Sundays).

Charlie Boys (21)
Cosy, music and air conditioning at a bearable level.

Crazy Pub (44)
The first to open in Sunee Plaza. Famous for it’s shows.

Dulio’s (11)
Gay-friendly restaurant conveniently located beside Foodland on Pattaya Central Road. Pleasant ambience for outdoor (and indoor) dining. Italian food “as mamma used to make”. Reasonable prices.

Icon, The Club (24)
Stylish club with popular singer and show.

Splash (52)
The newest venue in Soi Boyz Boyz Boyz. Swimmers in a glass pool. Drop in!

Throb (2)
Go-go with style right in the heart of Boyztown. Great show.

Amor Restaurant (10)
Richards well known restaurant is located right in the heart of Boys Town. The only 100% gay restaurant in Town. But you can also bring your mother since they are hetero-friendly or at least hetero-tolerant (they pretend). Even if you are overweight already, try the desserts!

Jim’s Tailor (68)
Certainly the best looking tailor in town with an absolutely intriguing smile—but probably married... and an excellent tailor for suits and dresses. Whatever you want, girls, they can do it, clotheswise, strictly!

Sportman (72)
Nice massage place with lots of new boys. Friendly Thai management. Give it a try!

Siam Thani Resort (73)
The only 100% gay resort in Pattaya. Colonial style building. An ideal hideaway.

THAI GUYS is online now!
www.thaiguys.org
No, no, no: .org does not stand for orgy!
proper English lady and her gentle companion who, upon closer inspection, turns out to be a very manly dyke, navigate their way through the lobby to the verandah, passing another short-haired white-haired lady in a Nehru cap, sprouting a spray of orchids. The hotel is definitely a magnet for serious and eccentric globetrotters and travellers.

From the outside the venerable Galle Face Hotel looks like a posh Palm Beach hotel but the feel of the aged grand dame is more like that of a run-down colonial property which has definitely seen better days; I'm reminded of the Continental in Tangier which suffers from similar seediness. Across the street there is a line of three-wheeler taxis or "bajajs" as they call the tuk-tuk of Sri Lanka, and there is a number of young men loitering along the promenade.

As I go out for an evening stroll, I'm dogged by pesky taxi touts offering rides to "massage parlours" or "gay bars". The Galle Face certainly has inspired the many artist/writer guests—straight and queer—who have stayed here. With its oversized swimming pool, shaded verandahs, magnificent sea views (the only hotel in Colombo that lies directly on the sea) and cooling breezes, it certainly has elements of the luxurious, and camp—the good and the bad—and did I mention the room service?

**Flowers for my love**

One hot, balmy afternoon when I was sitting in my room under a punkah reading the newspaper—I had left the door open to get more of a breeze and to see what would come in along with the flies—a rather tall, dark Tamil room boy appears at the doorway bearing a bowl of waxy, red anthuriums, stroking their fleshy appendages which were pointing salaciously upwards. The boy's tongue poked the inside of his cheek, usually a signal of...
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Beach boys abound
In Sri Lanka they generally assume that any single male traveller, if unmarried, is gay. So an ostensibly innocent "are you married," is of course a leading question. One Bajai (tuk-tuk) driver in Bentota—a beach popular with German package tourists—without missing a beat then asked, "you like boys?" indicating that he was available. And many will turn a trick for some pocket money. Language is no problem, as most Sri Lankans—unlike Thais—speak pretty good English, thanks to the erstwhile Raj.

I duly closed the door and bolted it. As I approached him I could see something hardening under his fly and it was becoming rather expansive. Complying with my suggestion that he "open his pants"; I was faced with an oversized, exotic black orchid—he wore no underwear—and got completely undressed, lying on the bed with his legs up in the air. Moaning and clearly enjoying the pleasurable act to the end, he accepted a meagre tip of fifty rupees (about 25 baht). Upon consummation, he immediately went to the bathroom for a shower, as is the native custom, and got dressed, but not before posing for a souvenir snap.

By evening word must have spread quickly amongst the other room boys, as I was accosted outside the restaurant toilets by one who promised "a large king cobra". Later I had a regular parade of room boys bearing flower arrangements ranging from innocent daisies to gilded lilies. I even got a late night phone call from the one who promised me the "cobra" and wanted to show it to me. Finally, around midnight, exhausted, I disconnected my phone and went to bed after using up half my Chapstick.
“A spot of England” is how the high hill station of Nuwara Eliya advertise. We reached Nuwara Eliya after dusk and, after becoming Temporary Members, checked into The Hill Club, a former hunting lodge and Planters Club, where everyone had told us “you must stay”.

**Anyone for...**

Strictly speaking, the Hill Club is not an hotel but a private club with an elaborate set of rules and regulations, the first of which is printed in the welcome card under the Dress Code stipulating “From 7:00 p.m. onwards Gentlemen shall wear Tie and Jacket and Ladies shall wear suitable attire when utilizing Public rooms.” After being given the meal timings and admonition to “dress for dinner”, we were shown to our rooms. Guests who are not properly attired, need not worry, in the gentlemen’s cloak room there is a supply of suitably unfashionable polyester ties and jackets that are loaned out free of charge, and I discovered that the uncharitable report of the Herald Tribune correspondent that the ties were “food encrusted”, proved unfounded.

The souvenir shop also has a selection of trousers for sale or hire for those gentlemen who may have had the poor taste to show up for dinner in shorts. “It’s too bad that other establishments don’t follow that rule”, chirped my lady companion who was recently horrified to find a man in bathing trunks loading up his plate with potato salad at one of those all-you-can-eat salad bar buffets in Bangkok that is miles from any beach. Actually, it is a refreshing change to see people dressing up for dinner, instead of slopping down, as is the usual custom these days, especially in America where casual has become a national casualty.

If the Hill Club were a set for a Hollywood movie, it wouldn’t have been one of those “Outpost of Empire” adventures or romances with the slowly revolving overhead fans and menacing natives. It is too cold here for fans at 6200 ft elevation, and its combined wackiness and snootiness factor make it more of a set for a cross between the Marx Brothers or “Carry On Up the Khyber” shenanigans and an Agatha Christie mystery. The walls are adorned with hunting and fishing trophies and hollow elephant legs serve as umbrella stands. But perhaps the quirriest wall adornment of all is the case bearing a chamber pot “withdrawn from service”, says the brass plaque, and now “retained to perpetuate a part of the history of the Club.”

**Not only billiards has balls**

There are many other plaques with strange inscriptions, and regulations such as the arcane Rules for Rangoon Snooker in the Billiards Room presided over by the handsome Billiard Marker named Sundaram, as jet black as an eight-ball himself. And yes, I almost forgot the friendly, smiling “natives”, one of which was a bored night watchman at the front gate who was happy to have me warm up his large night stick. Otherwise, to keep warm in Nuwara Eliya’s cold nights one has to resort to hot water bottles in the bed placed by the butlers.

Aside from obliging hotel staff and tuk-tuk drivers, there are some beach rent boys and even Lonely Planet reports that Negombo—the beach resort just north of the airport—although mostly Roman Catholic, “has a reputation for gay prostitution, and Sri Lankans think of it as their AIDS capital...” There are, however, no commercial gay venues on the island as, surprisingly, male homosexuality is still illegal in Sri Lanka. As in other conservative South Asian societies, the subject is generally taboo. Strangely too, there is no law against lesbianism. One activist named Sherman who promotes health education in the gay community, is lobbying the government to change its outdated Victorian laws. TG readers planning to visit Sri Lanka may contact Companions on a Journey for information, email: sherman@sri.lanka.net.

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**White Night Buffet Bar**

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European & Thai Food
Outside Catering
There’s Something Uncanny About Siam Thani

By Emile Nitrate

I was in my tub for a good soak (cucumber slices on my eyes to relieve the puffiness from the night before) and to soak out the pain from a bruised hip I had suffered in an ugly tuss-up in Talaad Nam. Did the dragons have a fight over that one. Then the phone rang. It was Dareel. At least that’s how she pronounces it. He had just returned from his ‘Getting to Know Your Anus’ group forum and was feeling feisty.

“How’s Frisco,” I intoned as one of my cucumber slices slipped off into the bubble bath.

‘Same bars and stars’ he yawned. ‘But I just heard about this fab timeshare place over the Internet, Siam Thani in Pattaya, and since I need to get out of town, I sent them an e-mail and they invited me to stay for a week. Free dahling. Free! Dareel is an heiress, having a large pine plantations in Alabama so I replaced my “sanctum” Martha. In the middle of the courtyard is a black tiled pool, surrounded by Thai-style pavilions and pretty plantings. Could I have fun in that, I thought.

Anyway, the welcoming manager gave us a write up on this interesting concept which apparently is the FIRST EXCLUSIVELY GAY TIMESHARE IN THE WORLD. Siam Thani was conceived, designed and built by René Chandre from France and his long time Thai partner Yuttana Infasan. Without realizing it they had created the WORLDS FIRST TOTALLY EXCLUSIVE GAY MALE TIMESHARE RESORT. Zounds!! A chance meeting between Ian Doust and Nicholas Deighton, two British entreprenurs, made the proposal to René that Siam Thani should be put to Timeshare use and specifically to the Gay Male Market. This idea was then built on and the Siam Thani Concept...
was born. That concept involves creating an interrelated group of resorts in various parts of Asia that are only for the Gay Male. Resorts which are PRIVATE, INTIMATE, and SECURE. With someone like Dareel in tow, I can very much appreciate the concept. She is a screamer.

The Siam Thani Resort in Pattaya is the first to be up and running with ten units around the pool. Our visit proved their promotional line wherever the Siam Thani name appears it will be on a Resort that is small, (maximum 15 units to retain intimacy and privacy). They will be built in the local style of the host country: Thailand, Thai style: Bali, open plan Balinese; and, in Queensland Colonial. Everywhere a Siam Thani Member stays within the group of resorts, he will enjoy a taste of the past with some of the luxuries of the present. Furnishings and ornaments will be, wherever possible, antiques reflecting the local crafts and traditions. But I was particularly interested in finding some of the younger examples of local crafts and traditions populating Jomtien Beach so I scampered out in a gorgeous sarong from Bali and headed to the beach as Dareel toured the premises. ‘Bring me a fruit basket on your way back,’ I heard her screech. God do we know our codes.

I thought about the Siam Thani as I kept my knees snuggly together under my sarong in the songthaew to Jomtien. It definitely does get the hormones pumping. Tres romantique. In order to increase the feeling of security and privacy, they have created only one way in and one way out. Like so much in our lives! When you approach the front door you are met by a ‘Welcoming Presence’, an old statue with palms together in a ‘wai’. But it’s up to you to find someone in the flesh to really impregnate you with that real Thai hospitality. And that was what I was bound and determined to do.

I got to my designated chair after dislodging a large sleeping walrus who did not know that some of us residents have pride of place. My cha-cha heels kicking up a sandstorm got her out, toute de suite and attracted enormous applause from an eclectic audience.
we were now going to swim *au naturel*. He didn’t bat an eye, since it was now dark and the only lights were being provided by the diadem of Heaven overhead. Needless to say the entire week was a dream. In spite of them going on about everything being totally authentic and in Sukhothai style (which is true), each unit is air conditioned, with ceiling fans, cable TV, fridge and facilities for making tea and coffee, just like they had in Sukhothai in ancient times. The sleeping areas are built on lofts above the main living area, which provides ample space to relax and unwind after a hard day beating off lady boys on the beach. Even the names of the Pavilions evoke the sites of Thailand: Chiang Rai (where Dr. Kay stayed), Lanna, Lampang, Sukhothai, Phitsanulok, Pimai, Uthai Thani, Mae Sot and Mae Sai. Somchai objected that none of the units were from any Isan province. But I assured him their next plan for Pattaya will have all the units named after Isan provinces. Gawd, do I lie.

Each unit is different. Siam Thani is, indeed, a unique option for gay men who want to reserve their own share of time in this part of the world: Midnight in the Garden of Good and Plenty and the feeling that you are really are, Home Sweet Home.

For further information, you can contact me at: Nick at e-mail

Dareel was in bliss. ‘I love Siam Thani,’ he gushed on our entrance. But I could tell she also loved my choice of *diversion sexuel*.

Each of us went to our appointed suites to freshen up. I informed Somchai that if I were we would be going to swim *au naturel*.
Spa Roma: A Bit of Bali on The Mae Ping

Early May saw Chiang Mai invaded by the Asian Development Bank, holding its 33rd Annual Meeting. Once predictably dull affairs (sorry bankers), these are now spiced with ritual protests from howling mobs of those heavily on the take or wanting to be, and those not even close to the trough. Early June saw Chiang Mai annexed to Bali. Whoa—not really. Of course, Thais are fiercely nationalistic, and the elephant gun would have been quickly loaded for anyone attempting such a coup. But in moving from its former northeastern location to the opposite end of town on the banks of the slow-moving Mae Ping River, Spa Roma has just about brought it off.

The sauna's brand-new digs out-Babylon The Babylon in its heyday both for elegance and a sense of luxury. Seasoned travellers ('Oi been to Bali, too, mate,' as the Aussies say) will recognize the Balinese influence in the use of setting and in various details. The entrance is the approach to a Balinese temple complex: passing an exquisite water garden you mount a staircase to the framed entryway. Two terracotta lions—a Thai temple motif—snarlingly defend the gods lying beyond. If you're bold and lusty enough, they may deign to smile on you, but, as momma used to say, patience is a virtue, and there's more ascending and some descending before any smiling happens.
You've now entered their abode and can wander at will. The downward staircase leads to the changing rooms, the sauna, and the steam room, and the glassed-in full gym where you can muscle up to your heart's delight. On the other hand, you could walk outside to the exquisite exterior pool, surrounded by terraces and sporting a Balinese-style retiring pavilion. Steps to an upper terrace take you to a candlelit spot to nurse a drink while you watch the Mae Ping meander lazily by or beam in on the pools side activities.

If the first climb tired you, remaining on the entrance level floor was, after all, an option. You could have stayed there to lounge on a thickly padded sofa or to take in the oversize TV. Other options include watching some X-rated flicks in the dedicated flick-room or karaoke, a new misery to plague human existence or a form of entertainment, depending on your viewpoint.

Even if unfatigued, you certainly have been bewildered by choice at this point. But choices aplenty still await you. As in all myths, the gods dwell in the upper world, and a staircase to the third floor takes you to their home turf: the very soul of Spa Roma at last. Having braved the fierce guard doggies—oops, lions—and the cashier's killer smile, having been tempted by various pools side delights, and having climbed ever upward you now approach tastefully lit areas for the activities of your heart's desire. Good taste being the watchword, a veil or at least sensitive lighting must be cast over the mysteries. Suffice to say that the areas show the thoughtful design concepts displayed elsewhere. Fresh cut flowers grace the washroom, and some cubicles have TVs showing "inspirational" action flicks.

Spotlessly clean, almost ruthlessly elegant, the whole complex breathes a sense of casual ease as a temple to self-indulgent relaxation or gamy sporting. What better way to pamper yourself? Like its namesake, Spa Roma wasn't built in a day and won its professional and upper-crust clientele of Thai gents at its former location. They've willingly made the move across town with it. Farang hordes, gird your loins for a northward assault, and if you think you've landed in Denpasar when you arrive, you're at the right spot.

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Why don't you make a non-committal appointment with manager John Wood, who himself has been staying at the village for six years and who will gladly take you around. Tel.: 01-810 8555, (038) 435 739

Directions: drive along Sukhumvit Road towards Sattahip, past the entrance to Nong Nooch Garden, about 5 km further at km 166 you will see the sign “Baan Buraran” showing the way to the village only 1 km away.

P.S.: all photos have been taken at the village