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DISCOVER PATTAYA

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This Month in Discover Pattaya

Hi Everyone

I'm feeling hungry whilst writing to you about one of my favourite Pattaya restaurants. The photo of their Cold Cuts above is already making my mouth water. So if you only think of Marco's Restaurant for pizzas I really hope this issue will help you discover how Much More there is to this dining destination!

Also we review a new Lebanese restaurant that has just opened in Jomtien and look at Pattaya's Ladies Clubs that are great for women coming to this city. From personal experience I can confirm that the camaraderie and helpfulness of the members of these groups is really special, especially when you are a woman who has recently relocated here. Perhaps this is because we can all remember what it feels like to be a "Newbie"

Elsewhere we look to the Northeast of Thailand where this month they hold the "Spirits of Dan Sai" ghost festival and continue our series "What's So Great About Vietnam" with a look at the Iconic Ha Long Bay.

Enjoy!

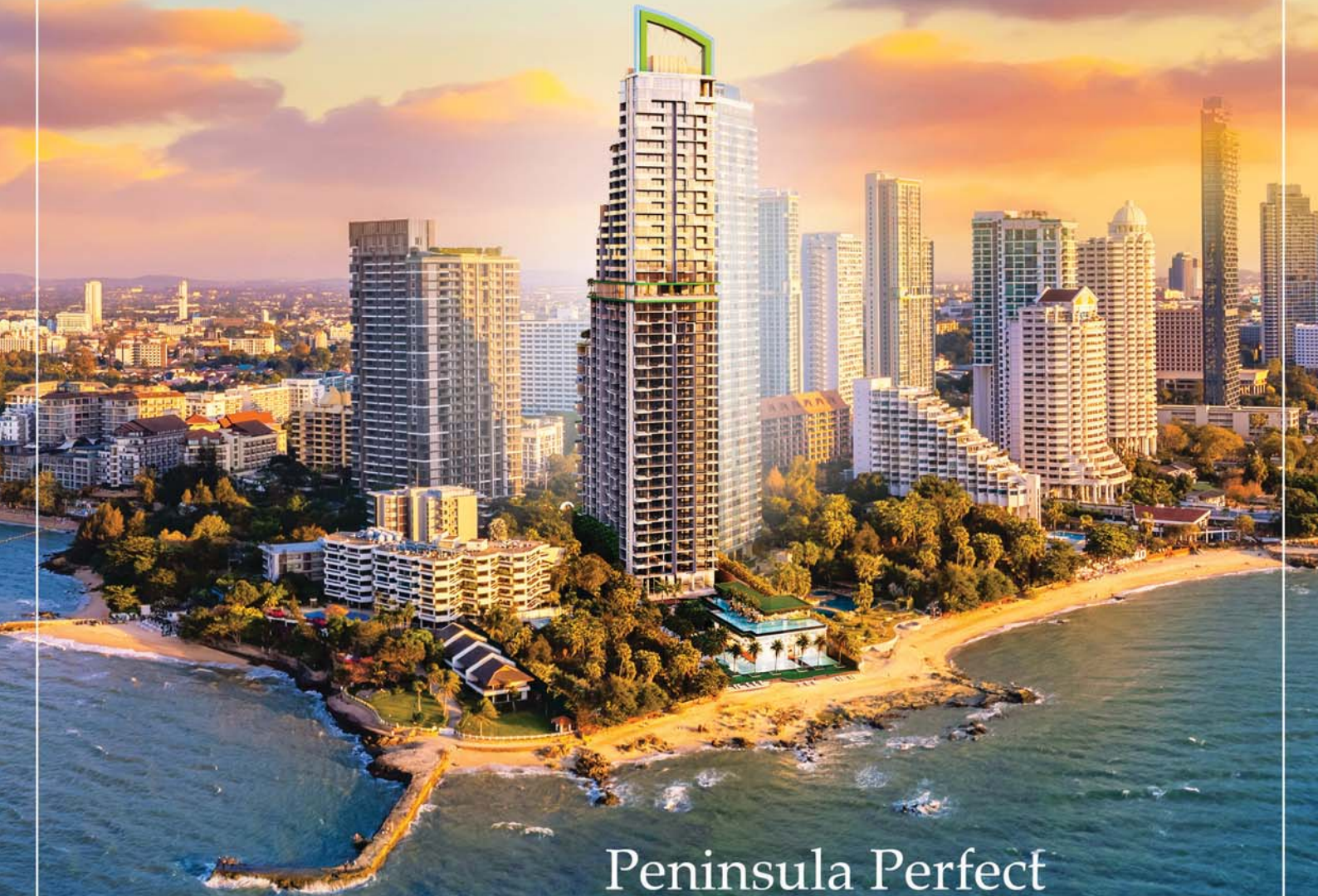
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THAPPRAYA ROAD JOMTIEN NOW HAS A NEW LEBANESE RESTAURANT

BY GLORIA JONES

I am delighted that what I consider the best “food street” in Pattaya: Thappraya Road Jomtien where there are already so many wonderful places to eat now has a restaurant offering Lebanese cuisine.

The location well it's right by the ever popular Foodmart and Bus terminal for coaches going to BKK airport and on the site of the former Trattoria. The owners cleverly spotting a gap in the market for Lebanese food.



Sure to be popular with expat and Thais, one of the best parts of Lebanese cuisine is the sharing of meals with family and friends around a table. For example I particularly like mezze, a collection of small dishes that everyone shares.

At Al Khayama their selection includes Hummus, (a smooth and creamy chickpea dip) available with pine nuts, broad beans or mushrooms and delicious. Babaghnush (eggplant dip made with olive oil, lemon and seasoning), stuffed vine leaves and Falafel (patties of friend chickpeas mixed with herbs and spices). Great to have with salad.

We tried the Greek Salad which was fresh, crunchy and generous with the feta cheese but you might also choose from Tomato, Rocket, Tuna, Coleslaw or Tabouleh, with parsley, tomatoes, mint, and lemon juice.

Lebanese food is also full of fresh flavours, delicious grilled meats like Shawarma and kebabs. marinated with garlic, lemon, and spices,

At Al Khayama the dishes were so colourful and the variety of rices alone amazing! From saffron, chilli flavour and even biryani in their signature Chicken with Biryani rice they were all extremely moreish.

Delicious side dishes of tomato and onions served alongside and with their barbecue on site as well, the chicken and lamb were succulent and really tasty.



A stand out dish for me was the Mandi Lamb where the meat was extremely tender and literally fell off the bone also a really unusual trio of mince kebab patties served in a warm yoghurt sauce, this was delicious!

The dishes to try just kept coming and coming their menu is so extensive, I have to say we couldn't do justice to them all so had to pass on dessert and take a doggy bag home!



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The Spirits of Dan Sai: Thailand's Great Ghost Awakening

Deep in the emerald valleys of Loei Province, where the mountains of Northeastern Thailand brush against the clouds, a quiet town called Dan Sai is preparing to wake the dead. From June 20 to 22, 2026, the streets will transform into a surreal kaleidoscope of color, noise, and mischievous spirits. This is Phi Ta Khon the "Ghost Festival" a celebration that feels less like a somber religious rite and more like a psychedelic carnival. While many are familiar with the neon of Bangkok, this ancient Isan tradition remains one of the Kingdom's most visually arresting secrets.

The festival's origins are a beautiful blend of Buddhist legend and animist folklore. It commemorates the homecoming of Prince Vessantara, the Buddha's penultimate incarnation. According to legend, his return from a long exile was so joyous that the forest spirits emerged from the shadows to join the celebration.



Today, the people of Dan Sai recreate this supernatural "after-party" with an infectious fervor. Local participants spend months hand-painting masks that are terrifying yet beautiful.

These aren't store-bought disguises; they are works of art fashioned from coconut tree husks and woven sticky-rice steamers, featuring long, hooked noses and vibrant patterns that seem to dance in the humid June air.



The festivities follow a strict three-day cycle. It begins before dawn on Day 1 at the Mun River, where spirit mediums wade into the water to summon Phra Upakhut, a legendary monk believed to protect the village from malevolent spirits. By mid-morning, the first masked figures appear, and the town center fills with excitement. Day 2 is the main event: the Grand Ghost Parade. Hundreds of participants in full costume flood the main road in a riot of color and noise. You will see two types of ghosts: the towering Phi Ta Khon Yai (large ghosts) made of bamboo frames, and the smaller, playful Phi Ta Khon Lek worn by the general public.



As the parade reaches its peak, the air is thick with the scent of grilled Isan sausage and the sound of mor lam music blasting from trucks. The performers, draped in patchwork shrouds, move with a frantic energy, teasing the crowds and brandishing wooden props. There is a playful edge to the chaos; these ghosts are known for their mischief, often "hunting" tourists for photos or lightheartedly pestering locals. This day also features traditional rocket launches—a symbolic plea to the heavens for the rain and thunder necessary for a bountiful rice harvest.



Beneath the masks and the revelry, Phi Ta Khon is a deeply spiritual event. It is a time for "Bun Luang," the making of great merit. On Day 3, the raucous energy shifts into a profound stillness. The colorful masks are laid aside traditionally cast into the Mun River to symbolize the removal of misfortune and the community gathers at Wat Phon Chai. Here, they listen to thirteen consecutive Buddhist sermons recounting the life of Prince Vessantara.

To witness Phi Ta Khon is to see Thailand at its most authentic: a place where ancient animism and Buddhist devotion coexist, and where even the ghosts know how to throw a party.

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Pattaya's Social Side for Women

by Gloria Jones

If you're a woman in Pattaya looking to meet ladies from all over the world, there are a couple of groups you can join that are both welcoming and tremendously enjoyable. Both offer the opportunity to make new friends and acquaintances whilst supporting the local community by raising money for worthwhile causes and charities.

Recently, I was lucky enough to enjoy afternoon tea with the Pattaya International Ladies Club and morning coffee with the Rayong-Pattaya Ladies Circle. The PILC hosts regular monthly events, at restaurants or cafés around town, while The RPLC asks members to host informal coffee mornings in their homes. I say coffee mornings but "Bubbles Brunches" might be a more accurate description, as they run from 10:30 a.m. until 1 p.m., with members contributing to the food and gifts for the raffle.

Both groups are extremely friendly, welcoming, and enjoyable. So if you'd like to find out more simply email pilcpresident@gmail.com and rayongladiescircle@gmail.com for further information.





PILC Pattaya International Ladies Club

Pattaya International Ladies Club better known as PILC, holds regular social events, including lunch and coffee mornings every first and third Tuesday of the month—or, in this instance afternoon tea! A really fun event held at Pastry Addiction Cafe on Pattaya Beach Road. If you would like more information, take a look at their Facebook or Instagram pages or write to presidentpilc@gmail.com





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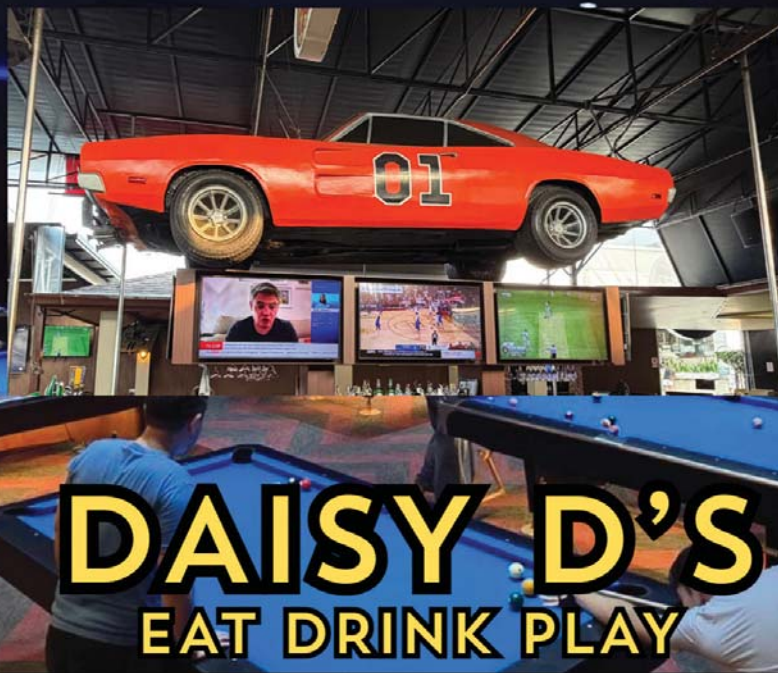
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Muay Thai

The Story of Nai Khanom Tom and the Burmese King.

Words and pictures by Tim Lee

The Burmese king stared down at the lone foreigner in the fighting pannung. Seated in the royal gallery, King Mangra looked over the well-built Thai prisoner standing in the fighting ring as hundreds of Burmese pounded bamboo fence posts and yelled for blood in the packed arena. There is something in his eyes. Something different.



Nai Khanom Tom is a national hero in Thailand who freed his countrymen from Burmese rule in 1774.



Nai Khanom Tom statue.

A ruler more ambitious than fair, King Mangra knew the power of psychological propaganda in his on-going war against Siam. He looked to make a mockery of his Thai captives, forcing them to fight against his honor guard of champions. During the 1767 Burmese invasion of the ancient capital of Ayutthaya seven years earlier, Nai Khanom Tom was one of many Thai taken prisoner. Now King Mangra had organized a seven-day, seven-night celebration in honor of the Buddhist pagoda. But he had ulterior motives. On the other hand, Tom and his people had toiled as prisoners of war. Now there was a chance to regain respect and dignity!

Tom looked down respectfully but with a humble determination. At stake were his family, his village, and his country's reputation and survival. Burmese fans chanted: *Thay! Thay!* (Die! Die!) The three Thai fighters before him had left unconscious, one with a broken neck. He saw two bloody front teeth in the dirt. He buried them with his bare right foot. Tom raised his head and eyes to the bedlam. "*Thay! Thay!*"

Tom panned the 10 champions with their hard looks and cold stares. The first one stepped out. He was stout, legs like tree logs, and eyes with a hint of dumb madness. The shouts of the crowd rattled the wooden poles: "*Thay! Thay!*" King Mangra signaled the fight to begin. All looked at Tom. So what did he do? He danced! Tom perplexed the crowd with a *Wai Kru* dance. The symbolic gesture of good will silenced the now awestruck audience but some whispered "black magic."

King Mangra sat spellbound as Tom danced. In a rush of anger, the king turned to his top general and said, "We came here to humiliate our enemy and now he dances before us." Crane and Tiger movements. Monkey steps. A twirl here. An elbow to the ribs there. Roundhouse kicks here and there. Tom danced and pummeled the shocked man into submission. One down. Nine to go. A hush fell over the arena. King Mangra looked down sternly at Tom then burst into a hardy laugh. His people laughed with him.



Nai Khanom Tom practiced Thai Maay Boran, and early form of Maay Thai

Suddenly, a shaman ran into the ring shouting, "Maunghmaw! Maunghmaw! (Black Magick!) The shaman cried out in gibberish about Tom's "black magic dance." He claimed it put a spell on the fighter and caused him to lose his mind. From now on, Tom must only fight not dance. The king shrugged. Then he waved his hand for the other fighters to continue the competition. One by one, they came out to face him. One by one, Tom knocked them out. No dancing. Mano a mano. King Mangra frowned: He thought to himself, I am losing my bet.

In a drunken rage six months earlier, King Mangra wagered gemstones against silk with a Chinese official that Burmese boxing was better than Thai Muay Boran. Filled with blind national pride and determined to prove his point, the king declared the event in celebration of Buddha despite other motives.. But he did not realize the limitations of boxing when pitted against a martial art. Each bout, he watched and lost watched and frowned. Until he realized his mistake went well beyond the fighting arena. Then he smiled to himself. So he watched them fight and lose. But he smiled. They fought Tom with traditional boxing technique limited to fist fighting. Tom understood their rigid style and used it to his advantage.



The Burmese–Siamese War of 1765–1767, also known as the war of the second fall of Ayutthaya.

Known as "The Father of Muay Thai" or "the art of the eight limbs," Tom practiced an early form of the sport known as Muay Boran so he possessed more flexibility and attack options and a freedom of movement and mobility that his opponents lacked. After six knockouts, the king said to the general, "Unless Kali comes to end the world today, I am going to lose my bet. Better to know the horse you're racing against than the one you own." Then there were none.

When the competition was over much to the amazement of the king and chagrin of the general Burmese fans ran past their fallen champions, bull-rushed Tom, and carried him around the arena cheering and shouting. They set him down before King Mangra. Tom humbly bowed then lifted his eyes. The king smiled. Speaking with great authority, the king said, "Today I learned a lesson and I am a new man. I came here to humiliate my enemy but I found out my enemy can fight ... and he can dance!" All laughed. The king waved all quiet. They all looked at the fair king.



Statue of King Mangra, the Burmese leader who sacked the Siam city of Ayutthaya in 1767.

"Yes, I learned something about life today," he continued. "I learned my enemy is not my enemy. He is the same as I am, the same as my people, and this competition has taught me it is better to fight our neighbors in the sporting ring than on the battlefield. Today I proclaim this an annual sporting event between all our neighboring nations. An event of peace and unity. And, as for you, Nai Khanom Tom, you are free to return to your country, along with all the Siam captives from the war. You are our brothers and sisters, and it is time for lasting peace among Burma and Siam. The war is over! Let there be peace!"

On March 17, 1774, Tom led his people home—a event celebrated in Thailand each year as Maui Thai Day!.



World Muaythai Day is observed globally on 6 February to commemorate King Sanphet VIII coronation in 1702.

Sports Update

For June by Steve Wade

There's plenty of major sporting events taking place in June but the big one is the football World Cup, which starts in Mexico on the 11th of the month. For the first time in its history, 48 teams are taking part and the matches are being shared between the USA, Canada and Mexico. A total of 104 matches will be played over five weeks with the final taking place on the 19th of July. In spite of the event taking place on the American continent, European teams head the betting with nothing between Spain, France and England in the pecking order, followed by the South American giants Brazil and Argentina, with the latter aiming to retain the title. The event is going to be a hard sell for a lot of fans, with sky high ticket prices, the number of matches and the extensive travelling all playing a part in making the cost of going to see your national team play very prohibitive. It's anyone's guess if prices will come down as we get closer to kickoff and the take up at the current prices is low, but let's hope the fans get a chance to get over there and give the matches some atmosphere.



We have another golf major to look forward to when the best players line up at Shinnecock Hills in New York from the 18th until the 21st of the month for the US Open. Congratulations are in order for Aaron Rai, who became the first Englishman since 1919 to win the second major of the season, the USPGA Championship in May and he will continue to be a force when the majors are set up as difficult as the Aronimink Club was this year. After the drama of Rory McIlroy completing the golfing grand slam at Augusta last year we now have the opportunity to see another player attempting the same thing only a year later as Scottie Scheffler attempts to add his national open to his major trophy collection and complete the set. It's entirely possible as the current world number one is the favourite to lift the trophy and the setup of the course is bound to suit him. Whatever happens it seems inevitable that Scheffler will join the pantheon of greats eventually.



It's a busy month in F1 with three races taking place, including the iconic Monaco Grand Prix on the 7th. This is followed by the Spanish version on the 14th and the Austrian on the 28th. Mercedes are still at the top of both the drivers and constructors tables but both McLaren and Ferrari are making a decent job of keeping them honest and with 17 heats still to come from June until the end of the season, things at the top could still change.



In horse racing, Royal Ascot runs from the 16th until the 20th of the month and marks the official opening of the summer sporting season in the UK, which will continue with the tennis at Wimbledon, where the first matches will be played on the 29th and which we'll cover more extensively in later issues along with the concluding matches in the World Cup. There's some great sporting events coming up through the summer and Discover Pattaya will be keeping you up to date with all the times and places you need to know so you won't miss a thing. Happy viewing everyone.



ASSETWISE

Vitala

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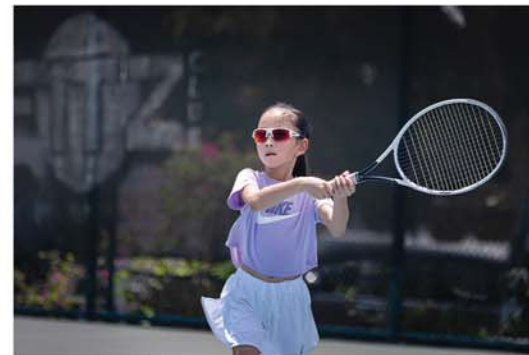


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Why Making a Will Is One of the Most Important Things You Can Do

by Anthony Justice

I wanted to take a moment to remind people why having a last will and testament matters—why it's not just a legal requirement, but something that could have a significant effect on the people you care about.

Let's be honest—most of us don't want to think about the end of life, especially our own. But here's the thing: while we can't control when or how we go, we can control what happens afterward—especially when it comes to the assets and belongings that we've worked hard for all our lives.

For their loved ones, losing a loved one is already a trying and emotional time. There is sadness, grief, and frequently a great deal of confusion. However, many people are unaware that, in addition to the emotional effect, death also has an administrative and legal component that can be extremely stressful for the bereaved family.

This is where a will becomes absolutely essential.

A legally binding will relieves a great deal of that burden. You specify exactly what should happen to your assets, including real estate, money, and personal belongings. You get to choose who inherits what and you decide how your estate should be divided. It serves as your last word, ensuring your wishes are respected.

Things can quickly get messy if you don't have a will. The law will decide who gets what, and that may not reflect your true intentions. For example, you might want your partner to inherit your home, or your niece to inherit a priceless heirloom. But if it's not written down in a legal will, it might not happen. Your family could end up in disputes, assets might be frozen for months—or even years—and your loved ones could be left struggling with paperwork and uncertainty.

That's why I always say: making a will is one of the most thoughtful, responsible things you can do for your family. It's not just about dividing things up—it's about providing peace of mind and clarity when they need it most.

At Magna Carta Law Firm, we have personally witnessed the difference a will can make. We've also sadly seen the complications and conflicts that can arise when someone dies without one. That's why we've made the process of creating a will as simple, affordable, and stress-free as possible.

It usually takes just four to five working days to prepare everything. Once it's done, you don't need to think about it again—unless, of course, something in your life changes, like a new marriage, a child, or a change in assets. And if that happens, no problem—you can come back anytime, and we'll update your will for you.

What's included in the will?

All the essential details: your personal information, a list of your assets, and the names of the people or charities you want to inherit from you. You can specify who gets what, and even name someone to be in charge of carrying out your wishes (this person is known as the "executor" of the will). It's clear, binding, and most importantly—it gives you and your loved ones' certainty.

It's just a few pages of paper, but it's easily one of the most important documents you'll ever sign. It speaks on your behalf when you no longer can.

So, if you haven't made a will yet, please—take this as your gentle reminder to start thinking about it. Whether you're a long-time resident of Thailand, own property here, or simply want to make sure your affairs are in order, this is something worth doing now, not later.

Come and see us at Magna Carta. We'll walk you through everything step by step, no pressure, no stress. You'll leave knowing your wishes are protected—and that your family will be spared a lot of unnecessary heartache in the future.

Together, we can ensure that your legacy is carried on as you intended.



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- ⊗ NOTARY
- ⊗ LEGAL CONTRACTS



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- ⊗ US TREATY OF AMITY COMPANY REGISTRATION
- ⊗ BOI COMPANY REGISTRATION
- ⊗ BUSINESS LICENSES
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- ⊗ BALANCE SHEET
- ⊗ TAX PLANNING
- ⊗ ACCOUNTING SYSTEM



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- ⊗ BUILDING PERMIT



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The New Era of International Students: Why Global Academic Talent is Turning to Thailand

For decades, the global map of higher education followed a highly predictable blueprint. Hundreds of thousands of ambitious young minds packed their bags every year with their sights set on a familiar cluster of Western destinations, predominantly the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia.

These nations formed an elite, unchallenged cartel of academic prestige, offering what many assumed was the only golden ticket to international career success. Yet almost overnight, the geopolitical and economic tectonic plates have shifted. The traditional heavyweights are tightening their borders, implementing strict visa caps, and overhauling immigration policies, effectively signaling that the welcome mat has been pulled back. In response, a massive, unprecedented migration of intellectual talent is underway, and countries in Southeast Asia, with Thailand leading the charge, are rapidly becoming the new hubs of choice.

This sudden exodus from Western education is not driven by a lack of student ambition, but by a stark new reality of policy restrictions and soaring costs. Facing internal political pressures and severe housing shortages, countries like Canada and Australia have drastically reduced their international student intakes, leaving prospective applicants stranded mid-process.

Meanwhile, the staggering rise in living costs across major Western metropolitan hubs has turned what was once a steep financial investment into an impossible gamble.

The modern international student is highly pragmatic, acting less like a hopeful academic and more like a strategic investor evaluating long-term returns. When the West presents too many regulatory hurdles and financial risks, the global student market naturally pivots to destinations offering high value, stability, and genuine welcome.



This is precisely where Thailand has stepped into the spotlight, transforming from a regional alternative into a premier global destination for higher education. Long celebrated for its rich culture and hospitality, the Kingdom has quietly built a sophisticated academic ecosystem designed to meet the demands of a changing world.

Major Thai universities and international colleges have aggressively expanded their portfolios of English-taught degree programs, securing prestigious global accreditations and forging direct partnerships with top-tier international industries.

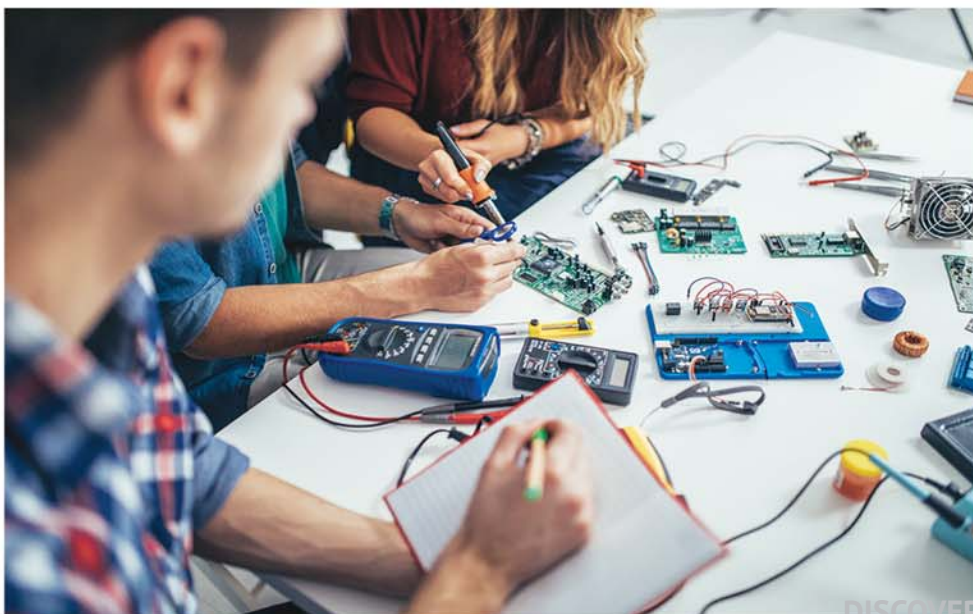


For a growing number of students from across Asia, Europe, and Africa, Thailand represents a perfect intersection of world-class instruction and practical career readiness without the prohibitive price tag of Western tuition. Beyond the classroom, the economic and lifestyle arguments for studying in Thailand are becoming impossible for international families to ignore. The country offers a world-class standard of living, modern infrastructure, and cutting-edge technology at a fraction of the cost found in traditional student capitals.

This financial breathing room allows students to focus entirely on their studies and networking, rather than surviving the grueling grind of part-time work just to cover basic rent. Furthermore, Thailand's strategic position at the heart of the ASEAN economic bloc provides students with immediate, localized access to some of the fastest-growing job markets and entrepreneurial ecosystems on the planet.

As the traditional Western giants grapple with the financial fallout of declining international enrollment, the global talent pool is becoming more decentralized than ever before. This redistribution of brains, culture, and revenue is creating a more balanced global academic economy, and Thailand is uniquely positioned to reap the rewards.

By offering a safe, affordable, and dynamic environment, the Kingdom is proving that a world-class education and a successful global future no longer require a plane ticket to the West. The institutions that adapt to this new era with a genuine spirit of global collaboration are poised to thrive, rewriting the future of international education right here in Southeast Asia.





Update from Take Care Kids

Approaching their 20th Anniversary

By Juergen Lusuardi Founder and Project Manager Take Care Kids Thailand Foundation
Project Manager Take Care Kids Odv



Today, I am delighted to share with you the remarkable journey we've experienced—one that truly feels miraculous. Just a year ago, we learned of a new requirement from the Thai government: adolescent boys must sleep separately from girls. Faced with this sudden challenge, we sprang into action, determined to find the resources needed to purchase land for a new boys' home.

By September, we had secured the land, and with renewed energy, we launched a fundraising campaign to construct the "boys' house." In January, thanks to the boundless generosity and unwavering support of so many, we reached our goal. The necessary funds in hand, we signed the contract to begin construction—a milestone that filled us with hope and gratitude.

Not stopping there, we initiated another fundraising effort to furnish the new home. In just two months, the outpouring of kindness from our community once again enabled us to reach our target. Now, as the photos show, construction is moving forward, and our vision is steadily taking shape.

During this period of growth and change, we've also seen poignant transitions within our family. The grandmother of our house has moved to her hometown to live with a childhood friend, and Cartoon, after four years as part of our family, has begun a new chapter in life outside our home. These personal milestones, alongside our organizational achievements, mark a truly extraordinary time—especially as we approach the twentieth anniversary of Take Care Kids.

This year promises to be unforgettable, filled with progress and new beginnings. Throughout every challenge and triumph, I remain deeply grateful to each of you for your continued trust and support. From the bottom of my heart, thank you for standing by us.

Please stay connected and follow us on our official channels, both online and offline. There's much more to come, and I look forward to sharing these moments with you.





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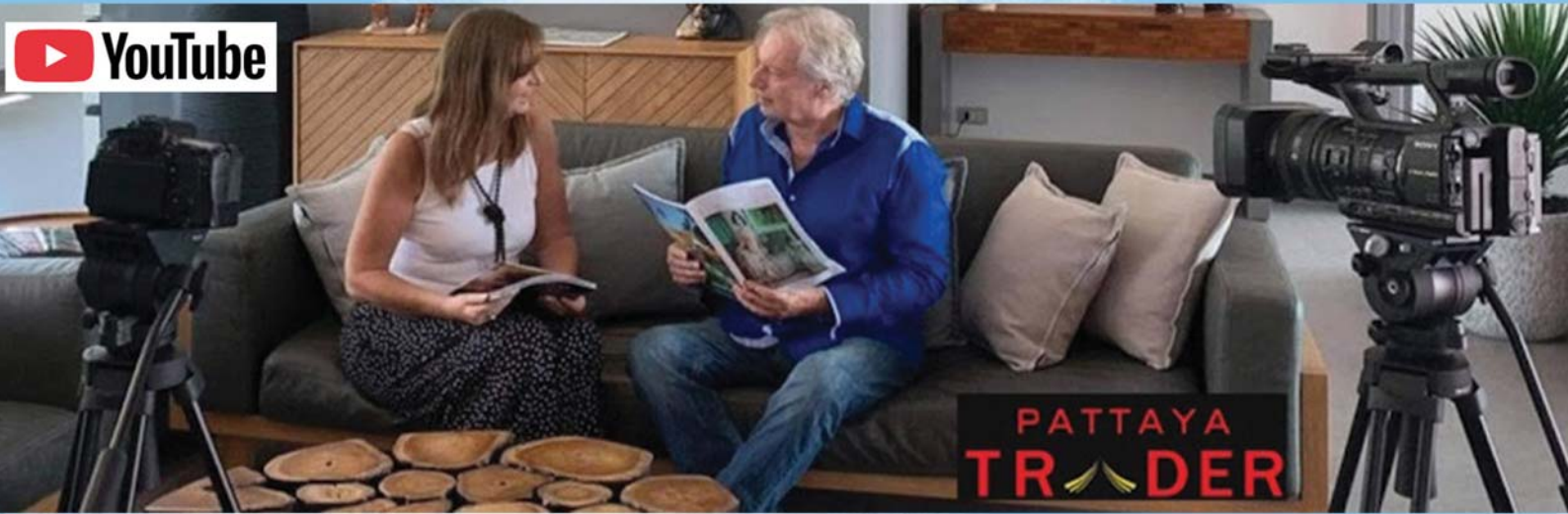
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One Sachet a Day for an Easy Meal Replacement



Herbalife is one of those brands that most of us have heard of. Either because we've seen someone carrying one of their shaker cups or spotted a logo on the shirts of sports stars such as David Beckham, Lionel Messi or most notably Cristiano Ronaldo. Ronaldo has in fact been an official Herbalife nutrition sponsor since 2013 and has even worked with them to create a sports drink: Herbalife24.

Founded in 1980 in Los Angeles the Herbalife company has now grown into a massive global business that sells nutrition and wellness products in more than 90 countries. Its focus is pretty simple: helping people manage weight, stay active, and live healthier lives through nutrition products and lifestyle coaching. What has made Herbalife really famous is its Formula 1 Nutritional Shake Mix (nothing to do with cars!). This is the company's best selling product as the shake is designed as a meal replacement, so it's supposed to give you the nutrients of a meal in a quick, convenient drink. For busy people who skip breakfast or grab unhealthy fast food during the day, the idea of blending up a shake in two minutes is pretty appealing.



I decided to give it a go after worrying that my intermittent fasting of one meal a day wasn't giving me everything I needed - especially protein. So I decided to carry on having the shake even though I was going on holiday, by taking some sachets with me. Vanilla is my favourite, although you can also choose chocolate or strawberry. Easy to carry and easy to use, the powder can be mixed with water or milk. I use cold semi skimmed milk but you could also add it to a smoothie - home made or bought - as long as you make sure there's no sugar or syrup added!

What I've found after using it for a couple of months is that these shakes suit me. I can drink them at my desk while still working and although I still skip breakfast, the shake is good for a late lunch substitute or when my morning caffeine buzz has worn off. Obviously if you already cater to all your dietary needs with all the requisite vitamins, fibre and protein you might find the idea of these shakes somewhat redundant. However, as a low calorie lunch (I reckon about 250 cals for me with the skimmed milk) it's a good alternative for those of us not as diligent in our eating routines.

With global popularity naturally comes a wide range of opinions on social media, but the enduring success stories speak for themselves. While wellness trends come and go, experts generally agree that high-quality meal replacements are incredibly efficient for busy schedules and targeted fitness goals. Incorporating one convenient shake a day alongside a balanced diet rich in vegetables, fruits, and lean proteins forms an excellent foundation for a healthy lifestyle.

What I have been less diligent about, apart from plenty of walking (well I was on holiday) is the need for regular exercise. Herbalife has built a strong image around fitness and active lifestyles. The company has sponsored athletes, like the aforementioned, and also soccer teams, and sporting events.



This marketing strategy helps the brand position itself as more than just a weight-loss company but rather as part of an overall healthy lifestyle. Therefore the benefits of topping up your protein intake should be combined with some daily exercise of which I am conscious of not yet doing - but I will.

Ultimately, Herbalife's massive global footprint comes down to community and convenience. For millions of people, it serves as a supportive wellness framework that fits seamlessly into a busy lifestyle. However, there's no question that before other protein and supplement shakes came onto the market Herbalife was already producing these types of products and some 46 years on it has become one of the most recognizable names in nutrition worldwide. So if you'd like to learn more or try these products for yourself just ask me by sending an email to gloria@pattayatrader.com. Visit Arks Nutrition and Arks Business pages on Facebook to find out more.



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Khun Yodsaenklai, a professional Muay Thai fighter.





A
AMA FASHION
Bespoke Tailor

Finding the Perfect Shirt in a World of Fast Fashion

By Gloria Jones

There is a quiet pleasure in wearing a made to order shirt. It can elevate even the simplest outfit but more than that, give you confidence that what you are wearing has been specially made for you. In a world of mass production, unethical clothing practices and cheap goods transported at a high carbon footprint, it's good to know that care and craftsmanship still matter. Also when clothing is mass produced it is designed to fit as many people as possible, so a made-to-order shirt will adapt to your body in a way "off the rack" never has.

Perhaps when you've tried to find a shirt in a department store or by ordering online, the collar may have been OK, but the sleeves too long or the body fit too narrow. A made-to-order shirt removes those frustrations, measurements are taken with intention to allow the garment to follow the shape of your body. The result is a comfortable, well-fitted shirt that sits neatly and moves with ease.

How about a favourite shirt that you've had for ages but is looking quite tired. Perhaps it is beginning to fray around the collar and really has to go? You can take it to Ama Fashion to replicate exactly as you want and with their incredible selection of shirtings why just stop at one replacement when you can have your favourite shape made in different colours? A crisp white cotton will always be useful but how about a stripe or a check. Perhaps a soft linen to give comfort on the hottest of days? You can even ask Ama to recreate your shirt shape but make a version with short sleeves as a more relaxed garment.

Knowing that experienced hands have shaped your shirt transforms it from a disposable item into an object worth appreciating and preserving. In an age dominated by instant purchases and overnight shipping having a shirt made to order slows fashion down with thought out selection. Rather than buying several mediocre shirts that wear out quickly, one carefully made garment can provide years of wear. Carefully considering your choice of pattern and colour means that the garment will sit perfectly as part of your capsule wardrobe rather than be an impromptu purchase made on a whim or because of a sale reduction. Often these are the garments that get thrown out all too quickly..

Having a shirt made to order therefore makes long term economical sense as well as providing a really enjoyable experience. Ama Fashion is always a comfortable place to have that experience and that is why whenever I am asked to recommend a tailor in Pattaya I always direct my friends to Ama Fashion. They are open seven days a week and you don't need to make an appointment but can just stroll into their lovely looking shop at the corner of Pattaya 2nd Road and Pattaya Klang (towards the beach end). Relax, have a drink and take your time but know that they will be friendly, courteous and always extremely helpful. You will also be delighted with the finished garment and quality of their service. After all, having a shirt made to order is about craftsmanship and the quiet confidence that comes from owning something that has been created for you with genuine care.





A
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Bespoke Tailor



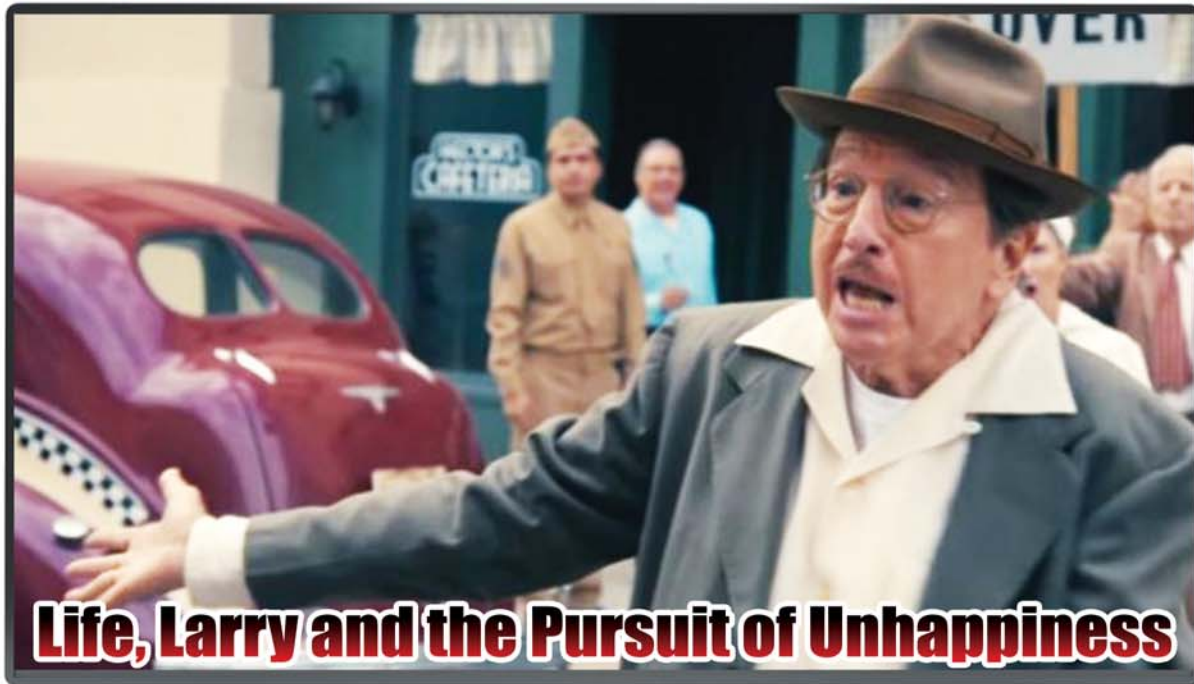
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What's on The Small Screen



Life, Larry and the Pursuit of Unhappiness

Larry David, Jon Hamm, Anna Osceola

Executive producers President and Mrs. Obama wanted to honor America's 250th anniversary and celebrate the unique history of the United States with comedy sketches exploring various historical moments, with four different sketches per episode.



Cape Fear

Amy Adams, Patrick Wilson, Javier Bardem

The life of married attorneys Anna and Tom Bowden begins to unravel when Max Cady a dangerous criminal they once helped convict is released from prison.



Every Year After

Sadie Soverall, Matt Cornett, Aurora Perrineau

Three former best friends lives quietly unraveled after a single, life-changing night at the end of high school.



The Vampire Lestat

Sam Reid, Jacob Anderson, Assad Zaman

Continuation of the Interview with the Vampire universe, the enigmatic Lestat steps fully into the spotlight, telling his own story.



House of the Dragon Season 3

Matt Smith, Emma D'Arcy, Rhys Ifans

The realm plunges deeper into the brutal civil war known as the Dance of the Dragons.

What's on The Big Screen



Emily Blunt, Colin Firth, Josh O'Connor

The story follows Margaret Fairchild, a meteorologist who begins channeling cryptic alien messages, and Daniel Kellner (Josh O'Connor), a whistleblower determined to leak the truth to the public. They face off against Noah Scanlon, a ruthless corporate fixer tasked with suppressing the secret at any cost



Masters of the Universe

Nicholas Galitzine, Jared Leto, Idris Elba

An orphan named Adam discovers he is actually a prince from a distant realm a planet called Eternia.



Supergirl

Milly Alcock, Jason Momoa, David Corenswet

The plot follows Kara as she celebrates her birthday on a remote planet, only to be recruited by a young alien girl named Ruthye for a high-stakes mission of revenge across the galaxy.



Scary Movie 6

Anna Faris, Lochlyn Munro, Damon Wayans Jr

When a series of "elevated horror" killings begins targeting a group of self-obsessed influencers, Cindy Campbell is pulled out of retirement to face a new generation of tropes.



Toy Story 5

Tom Hanks, Tim Allen, Keanu Reeves

Woody and Buzz face their most formidable rival yet: the iPad. When Bonnie's attention shifts entirely to high-tech gadgets.

WWDC 2026

June 8-12, Apple Park

Apple's New Vision for Tech Living

The month of June has long been a pivotal moment in the annual technology calendar, primarily due to Apple's Worldwide Developers Conference. This year, the focus shifts away from the frantic introduction of minor aesthetic tweaks and moves toward a more grounded, analytical approach to how we integrate technology into our daily lives. The central narrative for 2026 is one of refinement and significant underlying shifts, particularly regarding artificial intelligence and the final sunset of legacy hardware. Rather than chasing novelty, the industry is witnessing a substance over style movement that prioritizes stability and deep-layer performance over the superficial feature bloat that has characterized previous cycles.

The most anticipated announcement involves the complete overhaul of Siri, which is expected to emerge as a sophisticated AI assistant capable of true contextual awareness. This evolution represents a major strategic shift, as reports suggest a foundational integration with Google's Gemini model to provide the conversational fluidity and multi-step reasoning that users now expect. This new iteration of Siri is designed to understand exactly what is happening on a user's screen across different applications, allowing for a seamless transition from a simple query to a complex action. For those who have maintained a skeptical stance on the utility of voice assistants, this transformation marks the moment where the technology may finally match the marketing promises of the last decade.



While WWDC is traditionally a software event, the shadow of a new hardware era is looming over the June keynote in the form of the long-rumored foldable iPhone. Often referred to as the iPhone Ultra or iPhone Fold, this device is expected to make its official debut in the fall, but developers will be scanning the June beta code for Liquid UI elements designed to handle shifting aspect ratios. Current leaks suggest a book-style design that opens into a near-seamless 7.8-inch display, utilizing liquid metal hinges and specialized adhesives to eliminate the visible crease that has plagued earlier foldable tech. Even if the physical device remains under wraps until September, the software foundations laid this June will signal how Apple intends to bridge the gap between the portability of a phone and the productivity of a tablet.



The maturation of spatial computing also takes center stage with the introduction of visionOS 27. Following the massive feature updates of the previous year, this version is expected to focus on the social and collaborative aspects of the platform. The introduction of enhanced Shared Spaces will likely allow users to interact in more realistic virtual environments, moving the headset away from being a solitary tool and into a collaborative workstation. This evolution is particularly relevant for the modern home office, where the boundaries between physical and digital living continue to blur. By refining the way we coexist in virtual spaces, Apple is making a clear play for the future of remote professional and personal interaction.

In terms of mobile software, iOS 27 and iPadOS 27 are being positioned as stability releases, drawing comparisons to the legendary Snow Leopard update for the Mac. The focus is strictly on squashing long-standing bugs, cutting out legacy code that slows down performance, and significantly optimizing battery efficiency. This is a pragmatic move that acknowledges a growing consumer fatigue with constant UI changes. Instead of learning a new way to navigate their devices, users are being offered a more reliable, faster, and more efficient experience. It is a welcome change for those who rely on their devices for both professional productivity and home management, ensuring that the hardware they already own continues to perform at its peak.

The landscape for desktop computing is also reaching a definitive crossroads with the expected arrival of macOS 27. This release is rumored to be the one that finally drops support for all Intel-based Mac hardware, making the transition to Apple Silicon absolute. For owners of older machines, June 2026 serves as a clear signal that the era of hybrid support is over. While this may be a point of contention for those with perfectly functional legacy devices, it allows Apple to optimize the operating system entirely for its own architecture. This move paves the way for much deeper AI integration and more complex spatial computing features that simply aren't possible on older processors.

As we look toward the second half of the year, the announcements made this June will set the stage for how we evaluate our personal tech ecosystems. The transition away from Intel, the embrace of powerful AI foundations, and the move toward more stable software all point toward a more mature technology market. For the discerning user, the message is clear: the focus is no longer just on what a device can do, but how reliably and intelligently it can do it. Balancing the excitement of these new capabilities with a skeptical eye on their practical daily utility will be the key to navigating the next wave of digital living.



POP

GOES THE

ALGORITHM

by

June will see the worldwide release of my new fully original album 'SHADES'. Consisting of around 14 new songs, half of which have already surfaced over the past couple of years as singles including a few that already charted, one that even spent two weeks at the number one position in a U.K. chart, it will be 'SHADES' of pop and rock, showcasing my many influences including classical crossed with other popular genres. All songs written and produced by my good self, of course, wearing SHADES. But the question lingers, is it worthwhile or pertinent to release such a collection in today's world dominated by Tik Tok, Instagram, etc..

The modern music industry is a beautiful, glittering circus where 'artists' claim to be authentic while using six songwriters, vocal tuners, and a social media manager who insists every emotional breakdown should be posted vertically with subtitles. Once upon a time, musicians such as I, spent years learning to play chords, sleeping in vans, and developing personalities. Now a teenager can upload a song called 'Sad Microwave Dreams' at 2am and wake up with twelve million streams, a sponsorship deal, and a misplaced idea that they are superstars.

When A.I. surfaced, the music industry welcomed it the way turkeys welcome December. Record executives were thrilled at first. 'Amazing!' they cried. 'An App that can write songs instantly!' Unfortunately, the machine immediately produced 400,000 tracks called 'Midnight Heartbeat Neon Love', all sounding vaguely like 'The Weeknd' or 'Taylor Swift'

Artists became nervous. Guitarists stared at laptops like medieval villagers watching a dragon land in Tesco car park. Songwriters were worried computers would replace human emotion. Meanwhile, listeners didn't seem too bothered and couldn't care less if they were listening to humanoids or robots. Still, A.I. has brought one useful thing to music, honesty. At least now, when a song sounds completely artificial, there's a genuine chance it actually is.

Not so with my stuff!

I admit have sought the help of A.I. as a songwriting partner with it throwing up ideas to stimulate my aging, but experienced, brain and helping me to find alternatives to original ideas, many times enhancing lyrics that I have generated all by myself. Plus, I have educated myself as to the help A.I. can give with musical arrangements, sometimes brilliantly. However, it has to be remembered that A.I. can only learn from what already exists, so the chances of it coming up with complete originality are reduced. I have been using A.I. in the last couple of months as a kinda 'ideas and enhancement' too



I'm very happy to say that the relationship between Barry Upton and A.I. is a happy one and hopefully long lasting. However, I'm very confident that it will in no way devour my personality and previously successful style.

So, is this album worthwhile?

After a long career in the pre A.I. music business with many international hits combined with millions of actual sales, everything I produce now is really just a bonus. However, it's the thing that I do and have outlets through my songwriting music publisher and distributor that can generate income from TV and film synchronization plus commercials.

The bottom line is that if someone, somewhere enjoys my original output and can connect, then, yes, it's all worthwhile.

Barry's songs and albums can be found at all recognized outlets worldwide and on his dedicated YouTube music channel, FAB BAZ MUSIC TV.



On-Line: RotaryPattaya.com/RotaryRadio

Rotary Radio is now operational around Pattaya on 90.75FM and online at rotarypattaya.com/rotaryradio.

The station and playlist is supervised by radio production manager Barry Upton who has come up with an original concept which will not only entertain, but inform about Rotary clubs from all over the Pattaya region and, hopefully, beyond.

The thought is that by having a one stop centre where people can learn about Rotary and it's many fund raising events, the city and individual Rotary clubs can benefit from 24 hour, 7 days a week radio exposure.

Barry's concept for the music is a contrast to Pattaya People Radio (now on 88.25FM), which is mainly fun, commercial, singalong, upbeat, pop/rock/oldies.

Rotary Radio will feature a much more 'easy listening'/'soft rock' vibe with artists such as Steely Dan, America, Fleetwood Mac, The Eagles, Chicago, James Taylor, Joni Mitchell, The Carpenters, Bread, Carole King, Cat Stevens, Enya, Jazz, Soul and Country classics with additional love song ballads from the Beatles and The Beach Boys.



The station logo ident is – Rotary Radio ... Cool Music For Cool People.

In between the wonderful relaxing music will be voice idents from Rotary members, useful information about Rotary in general plus details of upcoming events.

At the top of each hour is a worldwide news summary from FSN. The Rotary Club of Pattaya is extending a hand of friendship to all other Rotary clubs in the area and it's very much hoped that they will respond by contributing to the radio output with events, personal voice idents about themselves and any relevant issues which can educate a wider public to the benefits of Rotary and the good deeds the organization provides.

This is indeed, a project for our local community and beyond. 90.75FM & online at RotaryPattaya.com/RotaryRadio

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Traffic accidents
medical assistance 1669
Highway Police 1193

TRAVELS TO VIETNAM



PART 4 Ha Long Bay

By Gloria Jones

It seemed impossible to live this close to Vietnam and not visit. So with Da Nang just 1 hour and 40 minutes from Bangkok's Don Mueang International Airport it was time to explore and report back. If you missed our earlier articles about Da Nang and Hanoi you can still read them at pattayatrader.com

This month is about Ha Long Bay and if you are going to Vietnam you should really make every effort to visit this amazing place as it is one of Southeast Asia's most breathtaking natural wonders. Located in the north of the country it covers an area of more than 1,500 square kilometers with thousands of towering limestone islands stretching across the emerald waters of the Gulf of Tonkin. When we visited the weather was misty and overcast which only went to emphasise the magical aura this whole mystical area seemed to have.



The name "Ha Long" translates to "Descending Dragon," and is rooted in a popular Vietnamese legend. According to folklore, dragons were sent by the gods to protect the Vietnamese people from invaders and as they descended into the bay, they spat out jewels and jade, which turned into the limestone karsts and islands that now dot the landscape. These formations created a natural barrier against enemies and today when you sail amongst them you can almost imagine a dragon or some mythical creature could suddenly appear within this stunning and most dramatic seascape.

The limestone karst and islands, some rising hundreds of meters above sea level, are the result of millions of years of tropical weathering and erosion. Some have been shaped into unique forms that resemble animals, many contain hidden caves and grottoes, such as Sung Sot Cave, one of the largest and most impressive. Yes you will have to queue to gain access and yes there will be many steps to ascend and descend but the caverns at Sung Sot with many chambers of striking stalactites and stalagmites are well worth the effort.



In recognition of its exceptional natural value, Ha Long Bay was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1994, with its status extended in 2000 for geological significance. This recognition has helped protect the area while also boosting its popularity among international travellers. Today, there is little fishing or industry in the area apart from the cultivation of pearls.

The calm, mineral-rich waters of the bay create ideal conditions for oyster farming which allows local artisans to produce high-quality pearls. Visitors can see the delicate process of nurturing oysters and extracting pearls by hand. These pearls come in various shades, from classic white to soft pink and even rare black tones. Beyond their beauty, they represent an important local industry other than the obvious one of tourism.

Millions of visitors arrive each year to experience the serene beauty of Ha Long Bay, often taking overnight cruises that weave between the karst formations. Kayaking is another popular way to explore the quieter corners of the bay, allowing visitors to glide through hidden lagoons and beneath limestone arches.

Boat tours are also popular to get closer access to the dramatic natural limestone edifices with curious monkeys coming down to the water to view the curious tourists.

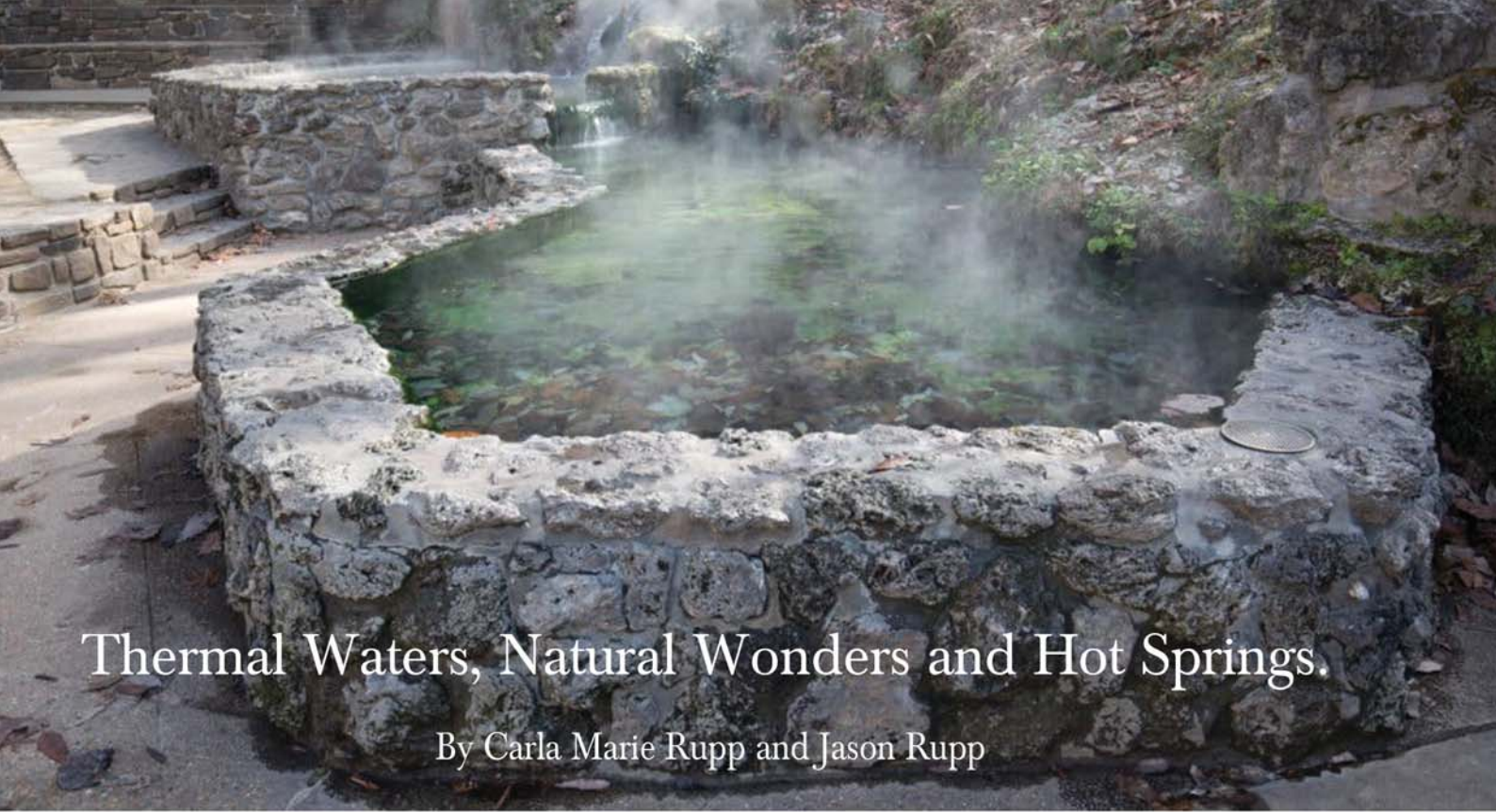
However, despite its beauty, Ha Long Bay faces environmental challenges due to the increasing tourism and pollution this brings. Efforts have been made by the Vietnamese government and international organizations to manage waste, regulate boat traffic, and preserve the bay's delicate ecosystem.

Sustainable tourism practices are increasingly encouraged to ensure that future generations can continue to enjoy this remarkable landscape.



For ultimately, Ha Long Bay is more than just a scenic destination, it is a place where natural history, cultural heritage, and myth intertwine. Sailing between its towering limestone islands, with misty horizons, and quiet waters creates an almost otherworldly experience. It was certainly unforgettable and one of the highlights of my trip to Vietnam.





Thermal Waters, Natural Wonders and Hot Springs.

By Carla Marie Rupp and Jason Rupp

The whole town of Hot Springs National Park, Arkansas, is lively and historic, full of attractions and so much to do. It is the only U.S. national park centered around an historic downtown, featuring preserved bathhouses and natural thermal springs. They call it “America’s First Resort” because of its early history of the world-famous springs. It’s also been called a “magical mystery” because of how the town evolved from the springs. We recommend coming here, since we love healing thermal baths and Hot Springs is one of the most unique spa destinations in the world.

Hot Springs would be perfect to include on a road trip - there’s even a small airport in town that connects with Dallas, Texas. Embassy Suites is a comfortable place to stay. The front desk can give out a lot of tips. For example, Anna says to shop at Bathhouse Soapery. Nyla says not to miss the Tower Overlook, and a ghost tour where you might learn that the current Colonial Candy Corner used to be a drive-in morgue! Jo says not to miss going to the 421 Beer Garden and Billy says to go on a mural hunt, have dessert at Frosty Treat, and go to Ward’s Crawfish Hole. We told these friendly Embassy Suites agents we’d get the word out!

The mountain vistas are incredible here as the town is nestled in the stunning Ouachita Mountains. Visitors also love the walkable, brick streets in Historic Downtown Hot Springs, lined with vintage architecture, local shops, museums, and legendary eateries. You find musicians on the streets and in the clubs and hotels and can have breakfast at The Pancake Shop before walking all over the bustling Downtown District. Take a look at the large, vintage-style Arlington Resort Hotel across the street with its retro lobby. Notable American figures such as President Theodore Roosevelt, philanthropist Andrew Carnegie, Babe Ruth, and Al Capone are all on the hotel registry. You can even book the Capone Suite on the fourth floor.





Or start your walk on Bathhouse Row, which consists of eight bathhouses, built between 1892 and 1923. This area, along with The Grand Promenade, was made a National Historic Landmark District in 1987. Strolling here is a pleasure, admiring the historic old architecture and seeing the thermal fountains whilst drinking from the healing waters. See the visitors center film about the “Valley of Vapors” to learn how Native Americans discovered the healing waters. Quapaw Bathhouse is also a good choice for bathing as they favor pools of different temperatures rather than separate thermal water baths as traditional Buckstaff Bathhouse. You can also hike the lovely mountain trails behind the bathhouses. For others, the Superior Bathhouse Brewery features delicious beers made with the thermal water. A tour looking around the brewery is fun, and meeting the passionate female owner Rose Schweikhart and hearing how she got her start making beer. It is the only brewery in the world using natural mineral-rich, thermal spring water to make beer; and the first brewery in a US national park..



Oaklawn Racing Casino Resort is a major entertainment hub known for thoroughbred racing, year-round gaming, dining and events. It's an enormous, beautiful facility that is fun to walk around, and where we can highly recommend the Bugler restaurant for fine dining that overlooks the racetrack and gorgeous mountain views. Also, we can recommend 501 Prime Steakhouse for its quality and freshness. The menu is changed daily and seafood is flown in from Hawaii and Maine. Owner Matt Fuller changed careers after being a dive instructor. He went to culinary school and shows his dedication by being hands-on in his extraordinary restaurant. His general manager David Aldridge also told us about making a unique bourbon brand that we had fun tasting.

The Ohio Club is known for its great burgers, sandwiches, and beers. While eating lunch there, we heard the story of how Lauren's bar counter was once owned by Chicago mobster Al Capone and beer choices include “Schultz”, named after gangster Dutch Schultz. Gangster Owney Madden frequented the Ohio Club. He once owned the famous Cotton Club in New York City and there is a history of live music at the Ohio Club, even Sammy Davis Jr. frequented it. Also visit beautiful Garvan Woodland Gardens, a big highlight in nature.



The Ron Coleman Mine is another highlight we recommend, especially if you love gems and jewelry. The gift shop has amazing bargains and you can search for crystals when you sign up for digging at the mine. You get a shovel and a bag, and can keep all you find! This is a world-renowned working quartz site unique to the Ouachita Mountains. You'll love this guided crystal mining experience at one of the world's premiere quartz crystal sites, just 14 miles north of Hot Springs!

What do historic figures such as baseball great Babe Ruth, Al Capone, jazz singer Tony Bennett, and the late actress Mae West have in common? They all played in Hot Springs, Arkansas USA, and are part of history, along with many others. Hollywood actor Kevin Costner has been spotted vacationing in Hot Springs as has Billy Bob Thornton. Bill Clinton was born in Hot Springs and you can walk by his boyhood home at 1011 Park Avenue, it has a sign that shows the former U.S. President lived there.



These days, thousands come from all over the world to take in the mineral waters and baths at Hot Springs in what is called “the Natural State” of Arkansas, with miles and miles of hiking trails, nature, and adventure. You come for the bathhouses, and discover all the other things to do as well. Hot Springs has the old and new, all mixed together. Learn more at VisitHotSprings.org and nps.gov/hosp

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The Next Time you visit London - drop into Coal Drops Yard



by Gloria Jones

Back in the day Kings Cross was known as being the station where runaways and people escaping to the bright lights of London would pitch out of the trains onto the cold, hard pavements of the capital. It was not in any way gentrified or appealing as a place to hang out. Unless that was if there was an underground event or rave happening “under the arches”.



Coming back to the area this year was a revelation. The nearby Regent’s Canal behind the beautiful St Pancras station (think Harry Potter and platform 9 ½) is a feature rather than an area to be avoided. A lovely place to sit in the sun offering scenic waterside walks and connections to other parts of the city, with so many trees around...where did they all come from? There must have been a real planting initiative in the area.



Now in this revitalised King's Cross location there is a distinctive retail and cultural destination. It occupies a pair of Victorian coal storage buildings that were once used to receive and distribute coal arriving by rail from northern England. Built in the 1850s, the structures originally allowed trains to pass overhead while coal was dropped down into storage bays below—hence the name “Coal Drops Yard”.

Now it's an area that blends industrial heritage with contemporary design. The redesign was led by renowned architect Thomas Heatherwick who preserved the industrial character while introducing a modern twist. The most striking feature is a curved roof that appears to lift and fold the two buildings toward each other, creating a dramatic central space. Inside this space Coal Drops Yard is home to a curated mix of independent boutiques, global brands, cafés, and restaurants. Rather than focusing on high-street chains, it emphasizes unique and design-led businesses, making it a hub for creativity and discovery. The atmosphere is lively but relaxed, with cobbled streets, open courtyards, and frequent events such as markets, art installations, and live performances.

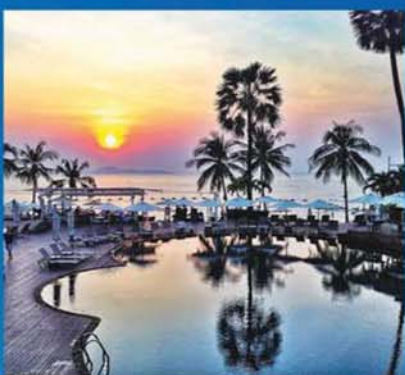


Visitors to the King's Cross/ St Pancras area can go look at Granary Square and the occasional farmers markets and art installations held in the pedestrianised areas. It is now a really interesting location to visit and Coal Drops Yard stands as a compelling example of how historic infrastructure can preserve the past while creating a vibrant space for shopping, dining, and community engagement.



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Should You Buy a Ready to Move In Villa or Build Your Own?



For many first-time property buyers in Pattaya, choosing between a ready-to-move-in villa and building a custom home from scratch can feel overwhelming. Both options offer exciting opportunities, especially in a growing market known for luxury villas, modern developments, and attractive investment potential. But which choice actually makes more sense for your lifestyle, budget, and long-term goals? Whether you're relocating to Thailand, buying a retirement property, or searching for your dream tropical home, understanding the pros and cons of both options can help you make a smarter investment.

The Appeal of Ready to Move In Villas

One of the biggest advantages of buying a completed villa is convenience; what you see is what you get. You can inspect the property, walk through the rooms, explore the neighborhood, and move in almost immediately after the purchase process is completed. For first-time buyers, this simplicity is often a major benefit. In Pattaya, many modern villa developments already come equipped with private swimming pools, landscaped gardens, security systems, furnished interiors, and smart home features, along with access to community facilities. Instead of waiting months for construction, buyers can begin enjoying their property right away.

Building a villa from the ground up can involve multiple stages, contractors, permits, architects, and unexpected delays, but a ready-built property removes much of that uncertainty. This is especially important for overseas buyers who may not be living in Thailand full-time during construction. A completed villa also allows buyers to avoid construction management headaches, predict costs more accurately, and reduce legal and planning complications. Furthermore, if the property is intended as an investment, owners can start renting it out much sooner. For many buyers, peace of mind alone makes a ready-to-move-in villa worth considering.

The Advantages of Building Your Own Villa

Of course, custom-built homes offer something that pre-built properties cannot: complete personalization. When you build your own villa, you control nearly every detail, including the layout, architecture, materials, interior design, and energy efficiency. You can also determine the outdoor space and specific room sizes. This flexibility is incredibly attractive for buyers planning to live in Pattaya long-term. You can design a villa specifically around your lifestyle, whether that includes a rooftop terrace overlooking tropical scenery, a home gym, a large entertainment area, or a dedicated office. Building from scratch gives you total creative freedom.



Custom villas can also provide excellent long-term value when designed strategically in high-demand areas. Buyers who carefully select land in desirable neighborhoods may benefit from stronger appreciation over time. Some investors also prefer building because it allows them to optimize layouts for rental income or future resale demand. However, success depends heavily on choosing the right location, contractors, and project management team.



Understanding the Real Costs and Timelines

One common misconception is that building your own villa is always cheaper. In reality, costs can vary dramatically depending on land prices, construction materials, design complexity, labor, imported finishes, permits, and unexpected delays. faster path.

While some buyers manage to save money through careful planning, others discover that custom projects can exceed their original budget surprisingly quickly. Ready-to-move-in villas often offer more predictable pricing because the full property already exists, and buyers know exactly what they are paying for from the beginning. That transparency can be valuable for first-time property investors who want to minimize financial surprises.

Many buyers also underestimate how long custom construction projects can take. Even relatively straightforward villa builds may require land preparation, architectural planning, government approvals, material sourcing, utility installation, and contractor coordination. Unexpected weather, labor shortages, or supply chain delays can easily extend these timelines. A ready-built villa removes this waiting period entirely. For buyers who plan to relocate quickly, generate rental income immediately, or simply avoid lengthy projects, purchasing an existing villa is usually the faster path.

Investment and Lifestyle Considerations

If your primary goal is investment, both choices can work well depending on your strategy. Ready-to-move-in properties are often better for immediate rental income, holiday rentals, and faster occupancy with lower short-term risk. Turnkey villas in popular Pattaya neighborhoods like East Pattaya, Huay Yai, Jomtien, Pratumnak, and Na Jomtien are highly attractive to international buyers and vacation renters. Conversely, building may suit investors looking for unique luxury properties, higher-end resale value, and long-term appreciation. However, custom projects usually require more patience and active management. Resale flexibility should also be considered, as highly customized or unfinished homes can sometimes take longer to market traditionally.



Your lifestyle goals and willingness to manage a construction process should play a major role in your decision. One often-overlooked advantage of ready-to-move-in villas is the ability to evaluate the actual living experience—such as natural lighting, noise levels, traffic conditions, construction quality, and water pressure—before buying. With custom builds, some of these elements only become fully apparent after construction is complete.

Ultimately, there is no universal “best” choice. If you value convenience, speed, and lower stress, a completed villa is often the smarter option. If you dream of designing a fully personalized tropical home and are prepared for a more involved process, building your own villa can be an exciting long-term investment. For many first-time buyers in Pattaya, starting with a ready-built property offers a smoother introduction to the local real estate market before eventually pursuing custom projects with greater confidence.

An Interview with Jo and Nee: Part 2



More Than Real Estate: The Complete Expat Support System

Since 2009, Jo has been a fixture at View Talay Villas in Jomtien, often referred to as the "Beverly Hills of the Eastern Seaboard." Managing a resort-style village with over 200 pool villas requires more than just administrative skill; it requires a level of trust that allows homeowners, many of whom live thousands of miles away, to sleep soundly at night.

When Jo and Nee founded ESP STETCO in 2011, they didn't just build a property agency; they built a comprehensive support system for the expat community. Today, operating from their modern offices in View Talay Project 1 B, the company serves as a "bridge" between foreign expectations and Thai administrative reality. The scope of their work is vast, ensuring that every aspect of a client's life in Thailand is secure, starting with property guardianship for owners who are not permanently in Thailand. This level of care extends to the "Deed of Trust," which involves the safekeeping of original property deeds and the management of complex ownership transfers for land, houses, and condominiums.

In addition to physical assets, the firm provides legal and corporate clarity by handling everything from company formation and VAT registration to annual audits and yearly balance sheets. Lifestyle security is further bolstered through a range of insurance offerings including health, life, car, and motorbikes specifically tailored for the retired expat community. To ensure complete transparency, their multi-lingual staff serves a diverse international clientele in Thai, English, German, French, and Russian.

Perhaps the most profound testament to this trust is the firm's specialized role in estate planning and execution. Many clients have appointed Jo and Nee to draft their testaments, notarized through an associated notary, and have named them to serve as legal executors after their passing. In this capacity, they take on the solemn responsibility of ensuring that a client's last will is implemented faithfully, ensuring that heirs benefit exactly as intended. This work involves managing assets of very high material value, such as luxury villas in Jomtien Park worth upwards of 25 million Baht, while maintaining control of title deeds, bank accounts, and vehicle registrations. Jo and Nee remain deeply committed to fulfilling these promises, no matter how much time the process requires, to ensure that the final wishes of their clients are honored.

Q: Jo, you manage estates where you are effectively the "key holder" for hundreds of millions of baht in property. How do you manage that weight of responsibility?

Jo: "In the hotel world, you are responsible for the safety of your guests every night. In estate management, you are responsible for their legacy. We hold original deeds and manage accounts because our clients know we apply the same 'Old School' precision I learned back in 1974. It is a weight, yes, but it is one I carry with pride because of the friendships we've built over 25 years here."

Q: Nee, how has the business evolved since you moved to the new premises in 2020?

Nee: "The move to View Talay Project 1 B allowed us to provide a more professional and welcoming environment for our legal and accounting services. We are no longer just 'property managers'; we are 'Exclusive Service Partners'. We handle the social security, the work permits, and the tax reports so our clients can actually enjoy their retirement."

Q: What is the most rewarding part of this business?

Jo: "It's the testimonials, like the one from Trevor W., who was 'blown away' by the care we gave his villa. Knowing that a client feels their home is a 'piece of paradise' because of our team's effort is why we do this. Marcus Evans mentioned our 'politeness and charm'—those are values that are becoming rare in business today."

As Jo and Nee look toward the horizon, their focus is on continuity. For a business that manages property deeds, government licenses, and long-term legal contracts, "stopping" is not an option. The estates of Pattaya require a guardian who understands that "personal touch" is not just a slogan, but a requirement for success. At Exclusive Service Partners, we don't just manage buildings; we manage the trust that makes a house a home. — Jo Stetten

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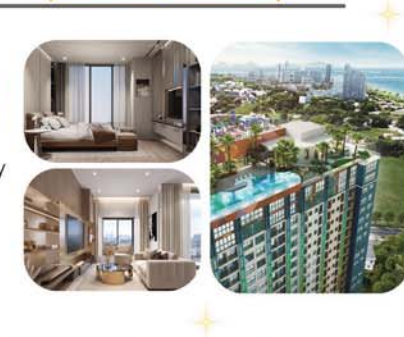
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