



Welcome to Cape Panwa's sixth edition of its Newsletter. In this issue we take you out on Cape Panwa's Panwa Princess to explore the waters south of the hotel. Celebrate New Year not once, not twice but three times in Thailand with us. Meet members of staff and guests and learn more about them; bone up on Phuket's quirky news events, read about weddings in the hotel and have an in-depth look at Thai traditional weddings. We also have an article about the Soi Dog Foundation – a worthy Phuket-based enterprise that helps dogs and cats nationwide and one which Cape Panwa supports. If you think the current situation in Bangkok is confusing have no fear – we have a perfectly logical explanation for it all – it is. Enjoy!

Sam Wilkinson - Your editor

The Icelandic Volcano

The Icelandic volcano eruption took everybody by surprise all over the world. The fallout (excuse the pun) was that, because air traffic was severely disrupted, many guests were left stranded at our hotels in Bangkok.

The owner of the Kasemkij Group felt for these guests and made a generous offer to help them. If unable to return home as per original schedule due to flight cancellations they were entitled to free accommodation and breakfast at the group's Ramkamhaeng property, Kantary House, just 15 minutes from the airport.

This offer extended from April 17th to 22nd. This was all made easier with the start of Kasemkij's Twitter account. Follow it to find out interesting developments and offers.

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Yellow shirt refers to PAD party, People's Alliance for Democracy



Red shirt is UDD, the United Front for Democracy against Dictatorship

Thailand's Colour Codes

On any given day in Phuket, Chiang Mai, Bangkok and many other major conurbations in Thailand you'll see many people (if you're up that early) going to work wearing the same colour shirts: Monday is yellow out of respect for the ruling Chakri Dynasty; Tuesday is pink, Wednesday is green and so on and so forth. But lately the symbolism of red and yellow has grown out of all proportions. Red – the colour of the (sort of) anti-establishment group that is currently demonstrating in Bangkok has been taken so seriously that a local Phuket theatre group banned their actors from wearing red during their production. Yellow, on the other hand, apart from being a cool Coldplay song, signifies allegiance to the King and the so-perceived elite. And it all got even more complicated in the last few weeks when a Bangkok-based no-colour lot, fed up with all the shenanigans in their town, came on the scene. Then, just to make it even more Kafka-esque, the Red Shirts began handing out blue shirts to their supporters. So our advice to you: Pastel brown is the way to go. Don't wear red or yellow T-shirts in Bangkok. Wear light brown polo shirts – preferably without an image of ex-prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra on the back – you know that pastel is sooo George-Clooney cool.



The Land of the Plastic Bag #2 (AKA Will this never end?)

Some sagas go on and on, never seeming to wind up, especially in Scandinavia and nowadays... Thailand. In our last issue we told you about the efforts made by major retailers to curb the use and subsequent abuse of plastic bags under what is known as the 'Green Bag Green Project'. But guess what? Apart from having a dreadful-sounding name, the project is foundering as participant after participant drops out and the only people furthering the plastic-bag environmental cause are a certain major supermarket chain whose take on it all is decidedly bizarre and Scrooge-like. Basically, you, the shopper, get awarded Green Points every time you buy 'environmentally friendly' products that include light bulbs, garbage bags, mosquito repellent, toilet cleaner and - unbelievably - paper correction fluid. But hold your horses! Before you rush out from the hotel to buy six-gallon bottles of liquid paper and 12-packs of light bulbs to save the environment you should know that you'll get recompensed something like a tenth of a tenth of a US dime for your buys. Never let it be said that major corporations are heartless manipulators. They care – they really do.

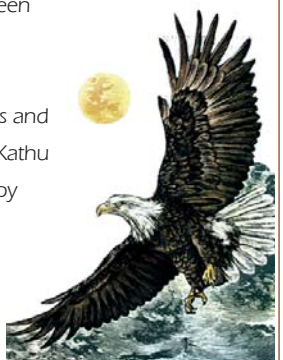


Unfortunately the iguana is still a common visitor to the bars in Patong



Animal Rights

One of the most offensive sights along Sin City's Soi Bangla of late has not been lusty ladyboys or busty bargirls but drugged animals used in paid photo opportunities. Many outraged animal lovers have lodged complaints about iguanas being forced on passersby and obviously drugged gibbons, pythons and sea eagles being touted along the main strip and in its bars. Now, the new Kathu Police Superintendent, Arayapan Pukbuakhao, has put his foot firmly down by arresting the iguana handlers and turning over the reptiles to a government wildlife conservation agency. And good for him.





January - New Year Celebrations



February - Chinese New Year



April - Song Kran (Thai New Year)

Three New Year's Celebrations

Thais – never a people to shy away from a paaarty – manage to fit in not one, not two, but three New Year's celebrations into their busy schedules: The first New Year's bash is the western December 31/Jan 1 libations which are celebrated here with as much gusto as elsewhere around the world. The second is the Chinese New Year, which is also known as the Lunar New Year, and this

falls on the first day of the first month on the Chinese-style lunar calendar in February. Some people call the Chinese New Year's Day 'The Spring Festival' – although why this should be is anyone's guess... The third of Thailand's New Year festivals is called Songkran – which is Sanskrit for 'New Beginning'. Songkran falls at the end of the dry season in April at a time when the coun-

try is seriously in need of rain to replenish the nation's wells, rivers and reservoirs. So what happens? The whole country loads up water cannons, guns and missiles to bombard each other and passersby with the much-needed H2O. Logical? Of course not! This is Thailand, after all. Fun? Lots and lots of it. At Cape Panwa we celebrated in style...



Mr. Claude Sauter, our GM with the directors of SDF

Soi Dog Foundation

SDF is a non-profit, legally registered charitable organization which helps the homeless, neglected and abused dogs and cats of Thailand.

SDF is made up of financial supporters, field or shelter volunteers, fundraisers – all with a common goal of helping neglected and abused dogs and cats. Neutering has been proven to be the most effective way to combat the problem of strays, neglected and un-

wanted puppies and kittens. Up to the end of March 2010 SDF has sterilized a grand total of 27,566 dogs and cats. In the month of March 2010 SDF neutered more dogs and cats than in any prior month (612 dogs & cats).

SDF is currently raising money to purchase the remainder of the land on which its shelter is located and appealing to supporters to help by 'purchasing' one or more square metres of the intended land.

SDF has also helped many people throughout the world to transport dogs back to their own country. They do not charge any fees for people wanting to take former stray dogs overseas. Nor do they charge for keeping the dogs, expenses in taking either the dog or for laboratory samples, other vets, fees at the livestock department (for export license), nor for airport fees. To the best of our knowledge, they are the only rescue organization in the world that operates this policy.

Cape Panwa is proud to help SDF. When the hotel learned that dogs and cats need to be wrapped up in towels immediately after being operated on to protect and insulate them, Claude, the GM donated 1,200 beach towels and tablecloths to replace the very expensive gauze otherwise used. www.soidog.org





Thai Traditional Marriage

A traditional Thai wedding is a thing of beauty, poise and elegance. Quite a few traditional Thai weddings take place following centuries-old traditions. The ceremony is usually held in the home of the bride or – finances permitting – a hall, restaurant or, in Cape Panwa’s case, the hotel’s beach – weather permitting. A number of monks – anywhere from three to nine – attend, with a senior monk leading the chants that bless the union. This takes place in the morning, allowing the monks (who are forbidden to eat after midday) to partake of an offered meal at the end of the ceremony. All are seated on the floor or a platform, and the setting is adorned with a Buddha image, an altar, fragrant flowers, candles and incense. The chants are followed by application of powdered incense to the foreheads of the bride and groom, a symbolic presentation of coiled string, and finally the pouring of water over the couple’s hands, first by the village elder and then one by one, by all of the guests.

Those who attend the ceremony are also invited to the party afterwards, where during the meal the bride and groom go from table to table to pay their respects to their guests. Traditionally, they present each with a small souvenir and at this time gifts of cash in envelopes are placed on a tray carried by the couple. Other gifts such as useful household items may also be presented to the couple at this time. Perhaps it’s best not to present the married couple with an Ikea heavy wood table-and-chairs garden set if they’re planning on flying home as this may present difficulties at customs and slight cooling off of relations between you and the newly-espoused couple.

If you should wish to celebrate a traditional Thai wedding, complete with an elephant no less, at Cape Panwa please go to www.capepanwa.com/wedding to learn more.

Fruit of the month: **Longan**



Q Just which Thai fruit captures the exact halfway taste between sweet and tart?

A A longan, (and that’s what it’s called in Thai, too.) It’s not that easy to get into these little explosions of taste as they are covered in a brown, thick peel or skin – the secret to open them is by squeezing them between your thumb and forefinger. The translucent flesh is lovely to taste but you’ll have to bite lightly as they have a hard stone in the centre.

Native to northern Thai regions, they’re seasonal fruits that appear from May to July.



Weddings at Cape Panwa

Congratulations to our Newly Weds



Olly and Zoe



Emily and Gary



David and Janjira



Sam and Jo



Naomi and Phillip



Tom and Naomi

>> [Click here for photographs of more weddings at Cape Panwa.](#)



Our Day out on Panwa Princess

Phuket is surrounded by beautiful islands and one of the most beautiful is Koh He, or Coral Island, situated a few kilometres to the south of Cape Panwa. Most people only get to see the northern side of Coral Island – comprising Banana Beach and Long Beach with its banana boats, paragliding and snack bars but lately, on a half-day trip out on Cape Panwa's 25-metre Panwa Princess we got to see the most beautiful side of the island – the south. The trip's passengers' convened at 10 in the morning at hotel reception. I'd taken along three of my grandsons, Darren, Lolo and Brendan, while our photographer Stephan had brought along his wife and his two girls, Janice and Jade. Joining us was Tim, with

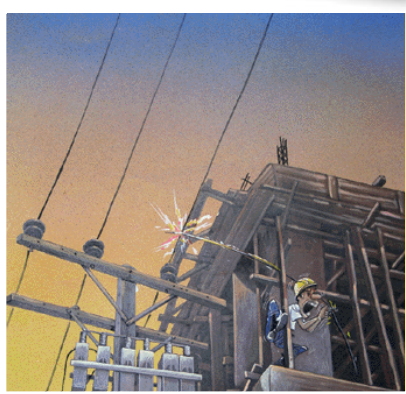
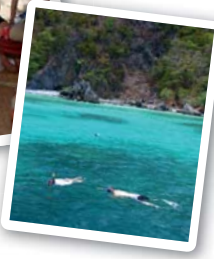
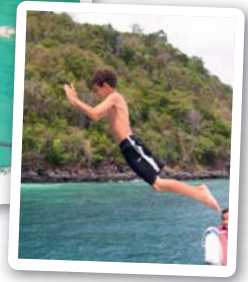
soon-to-be-married Emily and Gary Eversden along with recently-married Philippe and Karen Pooley.

We had a fine day out, slicing through the sloshy briny at a hair-ruffling ten-knots per hour, enjoying bracing winds and a stirring swell along the way. The sky was bright blue and we slapped the factor 30 on like it was going out of style. Some of us sat on the covered roof deck sipping on soft drinks and some sat downstairs in the sumptuous lounge while others had a look around the bedrooms below deck. The best thing about Phuket is it only gets better the more you explore the surroundings so when Coral Island heaves into view we only spend a few minutes on the northern side when we find out that the asking prices for banana boat rides there are well, downright silly.

A short while later we discover that the southern, less-visited side of the island is singularly spectacular. Lots of tropical fish await us as we don fins, masks and snorkels. Slipping off the Panwa Princess into the Andaman Sea is like

entering another world – an existence of shimmering, mind-boggling coral growths; squadrons of parrot fish; wave-filtered vistas that lay along the sea bed and the glimpse of an exotic tropical creature as it shyly dives down to safety.

We stay for an hour or so having lunch and taking in these spectacular sights then head back to the hotel in a shower of spray. We've been on board for just a few hours but feel as though the boat is an old friend and are all reluctant to disembark – she certainly has character. Each of us swears we'll do a full-day tour next time. Impressive? Certainly. Do it again? A must-do.



Blackouts in Panwa

If you've been staying at Cape Panwa or the Kantary Bay Hotels you'd be forgiven for not noticing a recent series of blackouts in the area as both hotels have their own backup generators. Sadly, this isn't true for many local homes – especially in the area near the Khao Khad Viewpoint (a great daytime place to visit, by the way). The reason behind the many blackouts has been discovered. A thief has been helping himself to the aluminum wire connecting streetlamps in the area and has caused an estimated 60,000 to 70,000 baht worth of damages. The value of the wire when resold? The grand total of 612 baht (around US\$ 15)! Happily enough, the police have caught and incarcerated this would-be millionaire-genius.



Congratulations John and Patricia Hood

A Fun Run in Phuket

John and Patricia Hood, both avid joggers, came for a holiday at the Kantary Bay to relax, enjoy the scenery and the weather

Sandy and Jennifer, our special ladies on the beach, invited John and Patricia to a local Fun Run and they were pleased to join in.

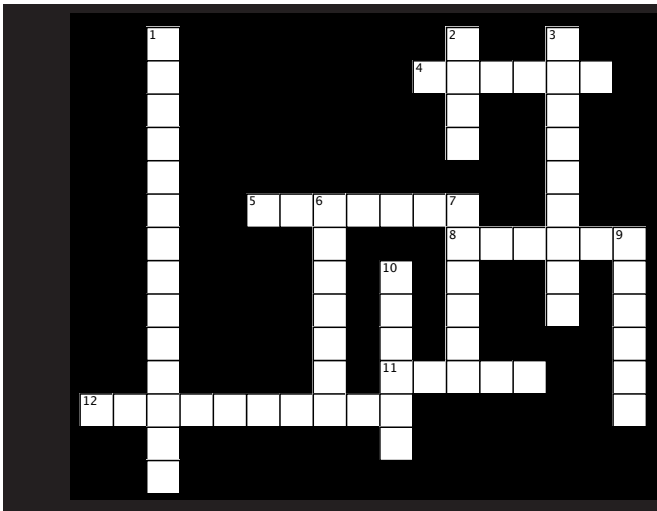
John and Patricia had a wonderful time and I think that there were no other farangs who joined in - so they were celebrities for the day.

Patricia came third and won a cup! Tim rather foolishly agreed to run with Sandy and Jennifer next year, so watch this space...



CROSSWORD & QUIZ

Thailand - little bits of knowledge



Across

- 4. The 'driver' of an elephant?
- 5. The name of a Thai whiskey AND river?
- 8. The flower of Thailand?.
- 11. The name of a Thai xylophone?
- 12. What birds' nest soup is made from? (4, 5)

Down

- 1. The name of the largest flower in the world? (9, 5)
- 2. The name of a mythical serpent in Thailand?
- 3. The name of a Province in Thailand?
- 6. Thailand's 3rd largest island? (2, 5)
- 7. What color is the triangle that links; Thailand, Burma and Laos?
- 9. The Thai name for a Sea cow?
- 10. The name of a Thai cat which brings good luck?

Inside Wat Complex



- 1) The name of a Province in Thailand?
- 2) The flower of Thailand?
- 3) The name of a mythical serpent in Thailand?
- 4) What color is the triangle that links; Thailand, Burma and Laos?
- 5) The 'driver' of an elephant?
- 6) The name of a Thai xylophone?
- 7) The name of a Thai cat which 'brings good luck'?
- 8) The name of a Thai whiskey AND a river?
- 9) Thailand's 3rd largest island?
- 10) What birds' nest soup is made from?
- 11) The name of the largest flower in the world?
- 12) The Thai name for a Sea cow?

Win & Prizes: Please post or email your answers to us and we will announce the winners in our next Otter's Tales. Prizes include T-Shirts, baseball caps and more and can be collected on your next visit or email Tim to have it posted out to you.

MEET A GUEST



“Blend” in with the locals

Paul and Sandra have stayed with us at Cape Panwa Hotel over ten times and now they're enjoying a stay at Kantary Bay.

Over the years they have become close to a great number of staff – so much so that Paul and Sandra were invited to some staff members' hometown – Pattalung in Southern Thailand.



Fancy a dip?



Traditional Thai clothing?

Q What's the most entertaining story you have from your trip?

A Well this is about the bathrooms in Thailand. For those of you who have been in the homes of Thai people [you'll know that] there is not usually a bath. The bathroom is usually a 'wet room' and you use a bowl to scoop water out of a bin full of water to shower out of. Sandra got in it!

Q How was your dining in Southern Thailand?

A It was wonderful – The Thai fruits were picked by Jo from the local farming area and delivered to us as fresh as fresh – beautiful.

Q And your worst experience?

A I remember there was one occasion when I was presented with a bowl of funny looking deep-fried creatures and I had to refuse them – and our Thai friends laughed at us – but they didn't like them either.

Q The strangest experience?

A This has to be the breakfast we were given one morning consisting of a piece of bread which had been toasted with a blow-torch and an egg... I have no idea how it was cooked.

Q What's the biggest lesson learned from your trip?

A That we are so lucky in the UK – Thai people

have so much less to share but they share more – wonderful people.

Q What has this made you think of for your next trip?

A Well, next year we are certainly staying at Kantary Bay again for a long period at around the same time and we will try to explore more of Thailand again.

Q Where?

A As we mentioned previously we have visited Southern Thailand but we also went to Chiang Mai and stayed at Kantary Hills – we would do something similar next year. Where are you opening up a new hotel next year? We would like to visit them all. (Hua Hin & Khao Lak)

Q Is there anywhere specific you would like to visit next time?

A Yes – we would like to visit Khun Rochidee, an ex-member of staff at Cape Panwa. He is now the General Manager at Kameo House in Rayong, one of our sister properties.

Q What would you like to take home with you?

A Some of the staff and the weather!

MEET A MEMBER OF STAFF



Hello with a grin and always a laugh

Chaovarit- Home and Away

Chaovarit is our Assistant Front Office Manager. He has a busy job here and when asked what he does on his days off he told us that he likes to visit temples – specifically Wat Chalong and following that he likes to go fishing in Rawai. The girls at the front desk giggled and then told me to ask him what he does in the evening... but that's for another newsletter.

THE WINNER OF C & Q



Thanks Paul - See you next year

Crossword puzzle winner:

Paul Easton receives a prize from Khun Somjai, the General Manager of the Kantary Bay for his correct answers to our Newsletter online puzzle. Well done Paul.



uestions



with Srisuda
THE HEART OF THE BEACH

Srisuda has been working for us for now for six months and it is always a pleasure for Tim when she makes him a coffee during the day – purely to check the quality, you see...

Q Where do you like to go in Phuket?

Anywhere that I can see the sunset and the sea at the same time – Cape Phromthep is a good location but you can't go swimming there.

Q Where did you learn to swim?

Oh – I can't swim I just like to go in the water and wear a lifejacket AND I always wear a one-piece swimming costume.

Q Where do you go?

Maya Bay in Phi Phi is the most beautiful place to float in the sea.

Q Where can I find you on your day off if I can't find you in the sea?

Easy – shopping!! Tesco, Big C and Central – I don't buy anything but I like to go and have a look.

Q Do you have a boyfriend?

Maybe – but you already have a wife!

Q Where would you like to be taken?

Shopping!!

Q Where do you like to eat in Phuket?

The best Thai food is in my home.

Q And where is the best Farang food in Phuket?

Easy. My house – black spaghetti – I have some from where I used to work.

Q Why did you choose to work at Cape Panwa Hotel?

I read so much about it and it seemed like a relaxed atmosphere.

PRIVILEGES

C A R D

Private Trip on Panwa Princess

Did you know that if you have stayed 10 times at Cape Panwa you can have a free private cruise on Panwa Princess Yacht, a beautiful new state-of-the-art yacht featuring unparalleled levels of luxury and comfort combined with first class service and sumptuous food and drink? Discover the surrounding paradisiacal islands in style on an unforgettable tropical cruise.



Cape Panwa ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Get to know the very latest happenings at Cape Panwa, check these out:

Blogger >> Happenings at Cape Panwa

facebook >> Share photos, ask questions, share experiences and find old friends..

twitter >> Be the first one to know about our offers.

photobucket >> Check out Photos taken by You & Tim around Cape Panwa.

YouTube >> Watch Videos of Cape Panwa

Up & COMING

- >> **Cape Panwa Happenings** - The small world
- >> **Hotel Happenings** - We dare you to try...
- >> **What's on in Phuket** - Odd stories from Phuket ; if he is a she
- >> **Thai Traditions** - 'Smile, darn you, Smile' - Why Thailand is called the Land of Smiles.

You can contribute too! Please send us your holiday photos and we'll post them in **Otter's Tales**. Please post to am@capepanwa.com