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Sink or Sail 2010 Food Service in Phuket

ภูเก็ตวันนี้ลหายดี... หรือเปล่า?

พูดคุยกับประธาน SKAL International โรงแรมโนโวเทลบับ รีสอร์ท โรงแรมเคปพันวา
โรงแรมเลอเมอร์ดีเยน ร้านอาหารนิวส์เปเปอร์ ร้านหมอนตรีมีทาเจ้าส์ ร้านโคมกตา
และสัมภาษณ์พิเศษ คุณเชน Sergio Armenio แห่งร้าน
Pizza Pizza by Yanee



Cape Panwa

Paving the Way to Five-Star Hotel

Along the 200-metre beach on Panwa peninsula lies Cape Panwa Hotel, attracting middle and high-end tourists to Phuket. Thanks to the influx of high-end local and international hotel chains to Phuket, Cape Panwa couldn't just keep itself in the middle market anymore. A renovation is needed for the two-decade-old Cape Panwa.

Established 22 years ago, Cape Panwa was one of the very first hotels on the island. It's time for the change. "We're combining two rooms into one suite," says general manager **Claude Sauter** who's been living on the island for 15 years. With a smaller number of rooms, each suite becomes more spacious and better facilities and advanced technology. Starting last low season, about 100 rooms have been renovated. The renovation expects to be complete and ready to be a new five-star hotel in October 2011.

First arrived in 1994, Sauter had worked as the food and beverage manager for three years before moving back to Switzerland for one year. He later returned to Phuket to work in a hotel before making the last return to Cape Panwa in 2007.

Sauter and his property share the goal of making people happy. "Thais are easy to work with, thanks to their service mind." Being a general manager, Sauter works as a conductor of a symphony orchestra to keep everyone as a team. Thanks to its location, service and property, the hotel is good value for money. The renovation is hopefully attracting new groups of tourists from Singapore and Hong Kong, enhancing the old groups from UK, Scandinavian countries and Europe. The hotel keeps in touch with the customers through emails and postcards. "It's like family. They can always find sun, sand and sea elsewhere. But they can't find such hospitality like Thailand."

The hotel is popular among Western tourists during the high season and Asian tourists during the low season. After a new approach has been made through the internet, the hotel has recently attracted Thai tourists from Bangkok during long weekends.



After a series of attacks by tsunami, Sars, bird flu, economic recession, political unrest, and airport closure, Phuket tries to survive the recessions. There've been chartered flights to Phuket from Scandinavian countries and central Europe. "Compared to Bangkok, Singapore or Kuala Lumpur, Phuket is still charming, says Sauter.

After the recession, Sauter says, car and house are the first choices to go out of the list. Travel is the last thing to cut out of the list. However, the budget may decrease, from a stay in five-star hotel to four-star venue instead.

At the same time, Cape Panwa began to work with tour agents and airlines, resulting in higher occupancy to 80 per cent in November. The occupancy in 2010 expects to rise especially during high season. If there's no incident, the low season should be smooth, says Sauter. The only task for the team is to promote good things about a destination.

Apart from the good location, Cape Panwa offers five restaurant outlets, featuring seafood, French, Italian and Thai food. Thai food at Panwa House is cooked in the original way for Western guests who know Thai food too well. Lighthouse bar is also popular for the evening drinks. The hotel will offer wine dinner along with Thai performances like Ponglang (Northeastern style music), Ramwong (traditional Thai dance). The performances may sound simple for Thais, but they are extraordinary for the Western to learn about Thai culture.

Sauter is also vice president for SKAL International Phuket that held a gala dinner on Christmas eve at Hilton Akadia Phuket. The event was not only to raise funds for education for children after the tsunami, but also to bring the members to work together ■



Claude Sauter
the general manager
of Cape Panwa Hotel Phuket
and vice president of SKAL
International Phuket.