

Around The Traps

By TT Hun



A large and happy crew turned out for the first anniversary of the Black Rose Motorcycle Club. An all day, all night affair, most were smiling very broadly by the time this photo was taken.

A colleague was trying to get some shuteye on Patong Beach recently and when he just about dozed off was tapped on his shoulder by a vendor asking if he wanted a drink.

A bit frustrating we know, especially if you are in that comfortable state between waking and sleeping. There is actually a name for it "hypnagogic", and apparently it sharpens the mind.

He waved the vendor away and was just dozing off again when another tap on his shoulder brought him back to reality, this time by a vendor trying to sell him some sunglasses. He politely declined the offer and was starting to get back to that comfy state when a third tap on the shoulder woke him. He was getting a little tired of these constant interruptions, but just couldn't bring himself to being angry with this third vendor as he had just what our beachgoer was looking for; a six-foot aluminium ladder! Just what every tourist needs for the beach in Thailand.

Driving through Kamala was once an easy and pleasant thing to do. Now, with the addition of not one, but two sets of traffic lights I have not been able to drive through without being caught by at least one set of them. If you get caught at the first one, you will also be caught at the second set, as they are not set up for through traffic. You will wait and wait with a multitude of cars and bikes while one motorbike dribbles through

from the side road.

Don't see the point of it really.

Unlike other countries when someone decides to throw a birthday party, most here are held in bars. Low season is a good time for parties as it is a way of getting a few extra people in when there aren't too many others around. We suspect that a few barkeeps have changed their date of birth to fit in with the fluctuating tourist trade. What usually transpires is you turn up at the bar where you buy your drinks and a free buffet is laid on for eats.

At one recent party the host had a partially hidden sign stating that the buffet was being charged at 200 baht per head. A bit rich when you made the effort to get there to celebrate the host's birthday and are paying full price for drinks. When one couple saw what was going to be served for 200 baht they decided to go and eat at a local Chinese restaurant, remarking as they left that for that money they would expect to see an ice sculpture. After the meal they went back to the party only to find a couple of young Thai guys carving out, you guessed it, an ice sculpture. Now that's got to be worth the 200 baht.

The amount of construction going on at present is quite amazing. Hopefully, most of it will be finished (in Patong at least) in a couple of months. The amount of dust and dirt in the air and the trucks charging

around is creating quite a hazard. If you live anywhere on Nanai road, you are effectively cut off from both ends now as drainage construction near the new 711 has cut off half the road, while at the other end on Sai Nam Yen road more drainage construction means you now have a fairly long detour. At least you can see parts of Patong you never thought existed before now.

Above the road level a multitude of buildings are rising at a frenetic pace. The building that houses Anton's on Sawadeerak Road wouldn't be a year old but is due for demolition this month. Just as Anton's was picking up customers by filling the restaurant with pool tables, they've said it's all coming down, as we want to start again. Anton's will rise again, but while construction is going on they have been given two bars at the front of Soi Sea Pearl, namely the Moon Bar and the one next door. "Moon", naturally enough is none too impressed with the idea, as she has to relocate back into the soi to a bar at the back. But that won't be the end of it as it is rumoured that within two years the whole lot will be gone to make way for a hotel complex.

Well, after much mucking around and probably many refusals to pay for a shoddy service, Patong finally has cable again. Unfortunately, the BBC news service has disappeared and has been replaced by FOX news (a poor imitation at best), but ABC Asia Pacific has been picked up which offers some interesting programs. I'm sure several barkeeps showing the AFL football won't be too pleased about that, as you can now watch it in the comfort of your own home. Nevertheless, with only the finals to go they won't suffer too much as a crowd is needed to create a bit of atmosphere.

Overheard at one of the many parties. A Scot was asking an Irishman how the Irish team were fairing at the Olympics. "Not so well" he replied. "We were disqualified from the Tug-of-war for pushing, then we were disqualified from the Water Polo because the ponies were drunk, and we were disqualified from the Shooting competition because the team didn't want to take off their balaclavas".

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