

Around The Traps

By TT Hun

Is it just us or do a few of you out there get a little nervous when driving on the roads here lately. We never thought we would utter this, but the ones who are making us nervous driving around are visiting tourists.

They come here and have a look around and decide there are no rules when driving or riding around and proceed to drive that way. Well, there are road rules and on the books they are pretty much the same as anywhere else.

In practice, however, there are differences that once seen and understood makes for safer motoring. So, for the safety of tourists visiting this beautiful island and for the survival of those living here we'll highlight a few practices in Motorbike Riding 101.

1. Motorbikes are the main form of transport for most. They are cheap, convenient and practical for all short trips. The minimum legal age to acquire a license is 15 and that is why you will see children as young as 10 riding around.

2. Nobody gives way. If you do you will be confusing the heck out of everyone else on the road and thereby causing a potential accident.

3. Might is right. The biggest vehicle has the right of way. A motorcycle is not big, therefore, has no rights at all. You may dispute this all you like but being cleaned up by a tour bus or truck is not a happy experience.

4. The far left lane of a road is for traffic coming the other way. It happens, get used to it.

5. When entering a road from a left side road nobody ever looks to the right and will usually pull out to the centre of the road, probably to avoid those in no. 4.

6. Someone entering from the right will invariably swing across to the left cutting off anyone going straight. Keep that in mind.

7. Overtaking is done anywhere that would to the untrained eye appear dangerous. Blind corners, hills, etc. are all potential overtaking points. As there are not too many straight roads on the island, overtaking must be carried out somewhere.

8. Riding at night with no lights is common. The headlight on a motorbike is virtually useless anyway and most of the time you don't know whether it is on or not. The locals have brilliant night vision so having lights on is really only a courtesy anyway.

9. If you do have a near death experience just smile, the other rider will. It makes no sense to jump up and down and get angry, it happened, you lived, get over it.

10. And finally; tuk-tuks will do U-turns in front of you especially if you are riding a motorbike. If you hit them it will always be your fault, so be aware, it could be a costly otherwise.



Ying and Wood joined the celebrations at the Patong Pool League windup party.

If you end up at any of the thousands of birthday parties that go on in the bars here you can quickly identify whose party it is by looking for a jasmine garland with money stapled to it. Some of the girls end up having thousands of baht stapled to their garlands and are not backward in suggesting that you add to it if you happen to walk into the bar. Occasionally a farang owner will have a birthday and be presented with said garland with a single 20 baht note stapled to it. That's about as far as it goes too. Not the same sort of generosity there.

One such birthday recently saw quite the opposite much to the surprise of the farang

owner. The girls were all coming up and stapling money and suggesting to the customers to do the same. The owner seeing this buildup of baht really did think it was his birthday and maybe some local attitudes had changed. At the end of the night, however, it just confirmed what he thought all along, the garland was duly extracted from him and the money put into the tips jar of which he was not entitled to a single baht of.

Please don't knock. One resident staying in a large condo block here was getting a little tired of going out to all the surrounding nightlife spots and felt like a little time alone. He was finding this a little harder than he had expected. As he had been staying in the same place for quite a while and journeying out in his local area, he was becoming quite well known to the young lasses that frequented the area. Not only that, they also knew where he lived. So although he stayed in and went to bed at a more respectable and healthy time, he was being woken up in the wee hours by constant knocking on his door.

Eventually he got sick of this and put a sign on his door requesting people not to knock on the door after 10pm. Several nights later he could hear something in the hallway as he lay in his bed late at night. There seemed to be someone out there but there was no knocking on the door. He got up and walked towards the door where he heard a soft voice whispering his name. At least she heeded the sign!

The Sunday bowling league recently held an end of season charity night at Rock'n'Bowl in Patong and raised 20,000 baht for Patong Childcare.

A good effort with thanks going to Khun Chainan and Khun Tum from Rock'n'Bowl for their support and to all the bowlers from the teams that attended; Amigos, Coyote Bar, DiDi's Bar, Pink Panther, Pizzeria Hut and Tatum Mansions.

This year's season was won by Tatum Mansions with Amigos Bar winning the charity cup night.