

# LETTER FROM PATTAYA

By Hybrid Harry.

*We always welcome comments and topics to cover in articles such as this. If you neglect to tell us what interests you, we shall continue to indulge in what we fancy might be of interest... We remind our readers to send any such constructive (or irrelevant) comments to [pattayatrader@pattayatrader.com](mailto:pattayatrader@pattayatrader.com).*

## Big Bashes

The recent Grand Opening of the Fairtex Sport Club & Resort was a grand affair that lasted most of a recent Sunday. Those attending were lucky to see famed Thai-American singer Tata Young strut her stuff, as well as other musicians, gala performers and ethnic dancers. Apparently, Tata's recording management were not happy with her appearance, but she was there anyway, with her boyfriend being the one of Fairtex's owning family. Another star was ex-boy Nong Toom who joined several other top Muay Thai fighters in the evening matches. Despite having lost a pound or two through "sexual realignment" surgery, she managed to out-elbow her Japanese opponent. Earlier, I caught up with long-time Thailand broadcasting and media personality Patrick Cusick who was there at the Press Conference. During a lull in proceedings, Patrick filled me in with the growth in Muay Thai - from his lofty position as Secretary General of the World Boxing Council, Muaythai. Little did I realise how big the sport is worldwide and how strong Fairtex are in this field. Two world champions train and coach right here at Fairtex Pattaya and right now, both the current British champion and an American champ are here as the facilities are world-class. And all this is available to Fairtex Members - should they fancy to hone up their bodies in this contact sport. However, Fairtex offers much more than just Thai boxing - as former Mr. Universe and Executive General Manager Bart Van Dermolen pointed out. Bart stressed that Fairtex is a sports club rather than just a fitness centre or boxing club. Very much family-orientated with a large professional staff on hand, the Club aims to be a "home from home" for all Members. There was a

huge press turn-out to view Fairtex's opulent facilities. It is a far cry from the old days. I remember once, many years ago, joining a running club in England that worked out of a semi-abandoned cricket pavilion. After joining, the secretary-coach said "Right-ho lad, off you go on a training run." "Where to?", I asked. "Anywhere you bloody want, but remember that the hot water in the showers gets turned-off in 60 minutes and we lock-up half an hour after that." Bang went the long, slow distance run planned.

Other recent big bashes included the Pattaya Carnival (not quite as big as the Rio Carnival or the Sydney Gay Parade), the grog-free Pattaya Music Festival (not many big names this year), the Korean Grand Opera bash and the Koh Larn Classic (a combined running/sailing event by the Royal Varuna Club and the Bangkok Hash House Harriers). One unusual event was the recently-held Vaseline Full Sun Fun Fair on Jomtien Beach. Several good-looking boys from Dongtan Beach turned up to see what it was all about, but soon slipped away. More sailing, golf and cycling events (and more) are coming up - don't forget to drink lots of water as we enter the dry (and extremely hot) season.

## Smaller Bashes

Sitting on Jomtien Beach the other day after a shopping trip (finding yet another computer power adapter after yet another power surge burnt its innards) whilst enjoying the breeze, I noticed some unusual activity from the army of tray carriers. These cheerful vendors have a selection of tray-laden steamed prawns, fish, crab and squid on offer to the deckchair brigade (normally Russians and Scandinavians midweek,

Thai at weekends). For some reason they were taking flight at regular intervals - away from the beach across the road and then creeping back beachside. The reason soon became apparent - a small troop of Tourist Police on motorbikes were working their way down the beach. Backed-up by regular police, a pick-up truck was starting to fill with many confiscated trays and charcoal-burning clay pots. Seemingly, this type of hawking is just not acceptable along the beach to the powers-that-be. But where should the deckchair occupants get their snacks? Surely a simple system of central cooking outlets could be created, put the "waiters and waitresses" in uniform, license the whole operation and set standard charges (providing the opportunity to monitor food standards). All we have now, is some bemused tray-less Thais wondering why they ever left Esarn, whilst the "boys in blue" get a free feast every few days - leaving nibble-less tourists and visitors wandering where the food has gone. Funnily enough, these raids just never seem to happen at weekends and holidays - one wonders why?

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