



At six-foot seven inches, Chad Ellard cuts a pretty imposing figure. On his way around the world he turned up on Phuket around two years ago. But not just as your average traveller, Chad was sailing his own 48ft sloop. Leaving the corporate life behind, he set out from Newport, California on June 8th 2002 with



Chad (right) using Mark, owner of the Nanai Sports Bar, as a leaning post.

friend, Richard Day, on a round the world cruise. They were in no great hurry and even now, some four and a half years later is only half completed, if that. Chad built up his sailing experience prior to and during the trip with stop offs to do some competitive racing in regattas if they happened to coincide with his stay in port.

Watch That Boom Chad!

He arrived at Langkawi just six weeks before the 2004 tsunami and decided to head back to the States for Christmas to see his family. It was there that he received a phone call saying that his boat had been last seen heading out to sea, but still attached to the dock he was tied up to at the marina in Langkawi. The dock, like many designs for marinas nowadays was a floating type that would rise and fall on the tide on fixed concrete supports buried into the sea floor. When the tsunami hit the marina, the water level rose to the point that the dock popped of the top of the supports and was then dragged out to sea with the receding waters. Luckily some

friends from Phuket rallied and headed down to Langkawi to help find the boat. When the marina owner heard Chad was heading out to retrieve his boat she asked if he could bring her 80-foot dock back as well.

As expected the boat had received extensive damage but could be salvaged and Chad was able to motor it to Phuket for a refit.

As we all know and Chad was about to find out, once in Phuket it was awfully hard to leave. The boat took 14 months to repair and refit at the Boat Lagoon and by the end of it had missed the Indian Ocean sailing season.

Chad decided to wait for the next one (now) and

filled in time by competing in the King's Cup (for the past two years, and being on the winning yacht, 'Vida', in year one, in the Premier Class) and other regattas around the

region.

But all good things must come to an end and as this years sailing season approached Chad started to get organised for the next leg of his trip. Along with Richard and new crewmate Gerry McGurk, Chad put the finishing touches on the yacht and finally decided to set sail on the 27th of January.

"It has to be one of the hardest departures I've ever made" he told us on the morning of his departure.

He wasn't going away without some memories of Thailand though. The cook at the Nanai Sports Bar in Patong had been slaving away over a hot wok for the previous two days preparing and freezing lots of goodies for the trip. With two big crates of prepared food in tow, Chad headed



off the join his crewmates at Karon Beach to head first for the Andaman Islands, then the Maldives, on through the Suez Canal and into the Mediterranean for the summer sailing season. They may even make it back to the States - one day.

Happy sailing guys - have a safe trip.

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