

# Phuket Boardriders

## *A Club of Convenience*

A common belief is that “there’s no surf in Thailand”. However, surfers are known as a desperate breed seeking waves and good times with reckless abandon.

Phuket is famous for its “good times, short times and long times”, but the surf is best described as “very average short time” with the island’s west coast generally producing wind blown monsoon slop intermittently between the months of June and October.

Regardless, a motley crew of expats, regular farang visitors and local Thais formed Phuket Boardriders Club last year with the simple aim “to strengthen local surfing and friendships”. With so few waves and a

young Thai grommets paddling into waves on pieces of driftwood are actually true.

In more recent years, the generosity of several farangs plus the raw talent and sheer tenacity of budding Thai grommets has witnessed the development of several hot local surfers now shredding the waves and inspiring youngsters to become part of the local surf scene.

Over many beers in July and August last year, surfers from Patong and Kalim agreed that the island’s first official Boardriders club should aim to develop the local Thai surfing scene and strengthen friendships between Thai and farang surfers, both in and out of the water. To ensure this continues to be achieved, only Thais hold official positions and manage funds, albeit with guidance and help from some of the more experienced farang members who happily donate their time and resources for the enjoyment of all in the club.

With surfing and partying being the major priorities, a strong club spirit rapidly evolved. Phuket Boardriders first Club T-Shirt was designed by the members with the distinctive cartoon caricature and Club logo written in both Thai and English making the shirt an outstanding success locally and overseas. Club spirit and pride in wearing the T-Shirt propelled this “club of convenience” from an initial membership of a dozen members last year to over 90 in the current 2003 season. Not bad considering the inconsistent surf and that the club is inactive between October and June when there is no surf at all.

Historically, very few Thais surfed until six or eight years ago. Stories abound of keen locals spearing themselves into the bottom on borrowed or discarded boards. Tales of

The Club’s first Fun Contest was held 20 July this year at Sabai Beach in Patong, attended by nearly 100 competitors and spectators. Aiming



to teach all members how to compete in and judge surfing contests, the rules were kept simple, spirits were high and everyone had fun, despite the often miserable weather conditions. The Presentation Party was also a complete success, with the club sponsoring free drinks and food while dozens of legropes, deck pads and blocks of wax were presented to members, thanks to some very generous sponsors.

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The Club’s second contest was held 3 August at Kata beach this year and again was an outstanding success. With pouring rain and howling wind, organizers almost postponed the event. However the arrival of 20 new members from Kamala in their own bus prompted the club to brave the monsoon and “go for it”.

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