

Fortunately, surf conditions improved, although the miserable weather continued. Once again, the strong Club spirit and great interest in competitive surfing kept the beach crowded. The presentation party was also a great success, with the Club and Patong's VIP Bar jointly sponsoring free drinks and food while dozens more prizes were presented to members.

from localism, petty infighting and aggression in the water, Phuket is fortunate to have avoided the negatives often associated with overcrowded breaks and rampant commercialism in other countries. Indeed, the founders' respect for Thai culture and appreciation of "sanuk" has underpinned the Phuket Boardriders Club's success.



The Lobster

Surfing a local reef break last month, an orange and red contraption looking like two laundry baskets tied together floated into the line up. One of the guys paddled up to it and exclaimed "f*****k - there's the biggest lobster I've ever seen in this thing!". Within seconds, two of the local Thai surfers had paddled up, eyes gleaming and dragged it to shore. A crowd quickly gathered along the shoreline, but the lobster and home-made trap were rapidly spirited away. 15 minutes later the guys reappeared, each with a fistful of baht and new pack of cigarettes. They'd sold the live lobster for a thousand baht per kilo. It weighted in at 2.2 kilos - not a bad afternoon earn for a local!

member mentioned how he had found a similar trap the day before containing a huge fish and small mudcrab, both of which he gave to a woman out of pity for her obvious poverty. A smile broke out on the face of the restaurateur's son, who was with us and exclaimed "I ate that fish last night!". Apparently the woman had sold it to the very restaurant we frequent. We never did find out who ate the monster lobster, though.

From humble beginnings with admirable spirit, Phuket Boardriders Club has successfully achieved its aim of strengthening local surfing and friendships. Motorbikes with surfboards strapped alongside are a common sight anywhere between Kamala, Kalim, Patong and Kata beaches these days, as are the now symbolic Phuket Boardriders Club T-Shirts worn with pride by so many.

Whereas many surfing communities suffer

Recalling the story that night at a local restaurant, another



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