



Koh Yao Noi

When I was back in my home country of Australia hunched over my computer in a dingy little apartment, I used to dream of paradises on earth while listening to inspiring songs like Lenny Kravitz's "Fly Away". With lines like "I want to get away, I want to fly awaaaay Yeah", it allowed me to keep my sanity rather than having to think of the following day, going to the same old job and doing the same old thing.

A phone call changed all that. It came from a close friend of over 25 years whom I had not heard from for at least two years. He had moved to the other side of Australia some 18 years earlier and we spoke on the phone at least twice each year saying things like we must get together and who was going to make the effort to do the travelling. Well that never eventuated because 24 hours later I received another phone call, not from my mate Bob, but from his partner. She said she was sorry to inform me that

Bob had passed away the previous night due to a massive heart attack. This must have happened just hours after he had spoken to me for the first time in two years.

Well that does it, I thought, considering Bob had lost my phone number and had taken some time to track me down, I felt I should make the effort. The next day I handed in my resignation, sold up as much stuff as I could and headed for Phuket. This was another of those fanciful dreams that we used to discuss, you see Bob was well travelled but not outside of Australia. As neither of us wanted to make the effort to travel to the other side of the country, it was the thought that we both make the effort and go somewhere else. And Phuket was that destination.

That was nearly two years ago now and it was the best decision I have ever made. I have been to Phuket many times in the past but since actually staying here, I realise how much the place has to offer.

Just before the rainy season set

in a friend from Bangkok suggested I join him on a trip to one of islands near Phuket called Kao Yao Noi. Literally meaning Little Long Island, and yes there is a Big Long Island too, it is set right in the middle of Phang Nga Bay and one of those earthly paradises I used to dream about in that dingy apartment.

We were met at the jetty after a 50 baht ferry ride from Bang Rong pier on the north east coast of Phuket, by Radt, a local sea gypsy who piled us into the back of his black open top jeep and off we went to see his latest venture. The first thing I noticed was how much it reminded me of Koh Samui some 20 or so years ago, not because of any similarity in looks, but just a feeling of peaceful serenity and undeveloped lifestyle.

Continued Page 13

