

This feeling has all but disappeared on Phuket and for that matter Koh Samui too.

We snaked our way along the single lane road that circumnavigates the island, stopping once to help an elderly man who was carrying a wooden beam that by weight ratio would make an ant proud. We left the main road and drove as far as we could along a bush track that ended at a rice paddy. I still hadn't seen any beach but that was soon to change as soon as we crossed the rice fields we walked through a small coconut grove and onto a pristine white sandy beach. The beach was one thing, the view was completely another. We were facing east or thereabouts and this meant we were looking across the bay towards the islands off Krabi, a truly stunning site.



Radt's grandfather had migrated to this area during the second world war from the south east coast of Malaysia to escape the Japanese invasion forces. He chose well, this place is about as idyllic as you can get. Untouched at present by mass tourism yet close enough to be in touch.

Radt and partner Jade have built a set of seven bungalows on a piece of land set back but fronting the beach. They used to run another set of bungalows a bay or two further around the island until they bought this land and built from scratch. They should be open for business on 20th November now they are all completed and for this season expect to charge about 750 baht per night for a stay. There is no TV or internet here nor do you feel as if you are missing anything. After a refreshing swim we sat and ate a tasty seafood lunch prepared by Radt and decided to have a look around the island.

There is about half a dozen bungalow style resorts on the island of which only one could be called a five-star, judging from the prices anyway. The rest are family concerns and all are right on the beach. There is also a Buddhist retreat on the island where devotees come for a weekend of meditation. Just being here is healing enough in my book. There is also a natural mineral spring on the west side of the island that is only evident at low tide. We didn't make it there as the tide was in, but hundreds apparently journey from Bangkok to heal whatever ails them. Radt agrees with the spring's healing powers, saying his grandfather was feeling his age and arthritis was

slowly making it harder for him to do the daily chores when he went and bathed in the spring. The next day according to Radt, he was as sprightly as a man half his age with no arthritis pain. This is something I must check out on my next visit as my fingers are starting to cramp



up just writing this story. We bid Radt and Jade goodbye and caught the ferry back to Phuket Island. It was late afternoon and we now knew that Koh Yao Noi was only 40 minutes away and when the hustle and bustle of Phuket gets a little too much we can be back at one of those earthly paradises I used to dream about in that dingy apartment.

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As you enter Rydges Beach Resort Phuket all tensions melt away. The architecture of this newly refurbished resort blends perfectly with its natural surrounds. Set amongst established gardens and coconut palms, the hotels stylish open plan lobby welcomes guests and creates a distinctly Thai ambience. Step outside your room and onto the white sand of Bang Tao Beach and into the clear waters of the Andaman Sea. With two large pools and absolute beach frontage, water activities at this resort are endless.



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