

Patong Beat

By TT Hun

Had a chance to look around recently at some nightspots. They are getting a lot busier as we zone in on New Year. One of the things I am always impressed about in Phuket and Thailand in general for that matter, is the lack of violence. I should qualify that of course, violence between individuals goes on as it does in any country, but if you are a tourist or traveller here, you are as safe as you can be anywhere in the world. Only in Singapore did I notice a more heightened sense of calm. And that is because you are less likely to be cleaned up by errant drivers.

I mention this because I actually saw a skirmish for the first time in a year a couple of weeks ago in Soi Sea Dragon. The protagonists were a rather drunken Scandinavian gentleman and a young Thai guy. It didn't last long and friends on both sides quickly stepped in to separate the two. Within two minutes everything was back to normal as if nothing happened. All it did was highlight what a rare event it actually was.



A lot can be said for sitting on a rooftop with a few drinks. A few of the crew did just that at the Hilltop Hotel opening night

Apparently the two front bars on the right hand side of Soi Katoey have been sold off at a premium price. No big deal as they do a roaring turnover, but why sell them if that is the case. We noticed a newly build catwalk further down the soi. Could some changes be afoot in there?

Soi Sea Dragon is another soi undergoing a few changes. Octopus live music club popped up out of nowhere a few months back and now further along that side of the soi another club Jammin has opened. Steve formerly of Margaritas manages the bar there. On the two nights we dropped in there, one being the official opening, the place was rocking. The first night, not the opening night for some strange reason, featured a Bangkok band called "SYNC'LISM". Their energy and tight playing style, particularly the drumming has to be seen to be believed. Steve informs us that they will be down this way for about



'Ming' (left) from the Andaman Sea Bar and Restaurant with Pol. Capt. Arom Jaiwong (centre) of the Patong Tourist Police on opening night.

four months. They will be interchanging with the "Jammin" band from the club's namesake in Phuket Town. If you are up to a night of good honest loud rock, then this is a venue to put on your list.

One of the more tastefully appointed guesthouses, roomwise, we've ever seen added another feature this month. The

Andaman Sea Guesthouse in southern Patong has done some major renovations to its lobby area and incorporated a bar and restaurant. Run by 'Ming', the place sorely needed something like this in what was just empty space. It now completes the premises, and being fully booked into late February, the Andaman Sea seems to have

hit the right formula.

How to clear a restaurant in 20 minutes! Put in a karaoke machine. Most karaoke bars are enclosed behind thick glass. There is a good reason for that, karaoke is woeful. Actually we're pretty sure that's why showers were invented, the running water drowns out the singing. There is an increasing number of professional musicians around at the moment, so if you feel a need to squeal your lungs out, do us all a favour and do it in the shower or behind toughened glass at a purpose built karaoke bar.

