



Best friend
It's still a hard choice for owners wanting to take dogs on vacation
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horizons

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Maligne Lake
The world's second largest glacial lake is a paradise for nature lovers
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FRONT LEFT: Chan's Antiques and Art located on Tesco-Lotus junction has one of the largest collections of antiques in Southeast Asia; (third from left) intricate original Thai style painting on a piece of cloth; and a painting depicting the near extinct Sakai people of southern Thailand.

You've come to paradise on Phuket surely for the crystal azure waters and some of the best silky sand seen anywhere. Regardless of the time of year, Phuket's scenery is breathtaking, however during the months of April to October, the southwest monsoon winds are prevalent and with them come some overcast days and rain, not always conducive to sunbathing. But fear not, off the beach in Phuket offers a rich cultural history and intriguing walks.

Treasure hunting on foot, exploring historical architecture and shops filled with beautifully crafted Thai products and the personalities behind them are all within walking distance in Phuket town. Take a cultural walk one that encompasses treasures easily missed from the back seat of a taxi and that isn't overly strenuous.

Start at Phuket Hemlinder, on the north side of Rasada Road, near the corner of Phuker Road. Owner Pat Tiengthong has seen many changes in Phuket over the past 18 years of operation. It's nice not fancy, but then neither are the prices. The selection includes varieties of chopsticks, coconut cutlery and scarves. Both her new and antique hand-woven textiles are among the most reasonably priced in the city, and Pat can tell you the history of most. Sign up for Pat's Home Thai Cooking Classes. She has taught the secrets of authentic Thai cuisine to amateurs and professional chefs alike.

Walking on the same side of the road, heading west from Pat's go out the door and turn right towards Yaowarat Road. You will find Soul of Asia, Master Paintings & Antique Gallery in the next block. Billed as almost a museum, Eric Smulders renovated two aging Chinese shophouses into a magnificent gallery. Combining his love of Phuket, with his long Dutch family tradition of fine art collecting, he offers a truly distinctive collection. Asian art, Chinese furniture and hill tribe jewelry complement the original Chagall, Dali and Picasso assemblage.

Supaporn Tannapai, said, my father promised me that one day, with my degree in fine arts from Chulalongkorn University, I could eventually pursue my love of textiles with my own shop. Hatsada Souvenir and Hand Made is housed two shops further on. Her shop includes a large array of old and new textiles from Thailand, Laos, Cambodia and Indonesia, diminutive spiritual figurines and numerous other collectables.

Continuing on, turn right just before the roundabout onto Yaowarat Road. But before you reach the corner, if you are feeling a bit peckish, you will want to detour into one of the best eateries on the island. Salvatore's, voted the Best Italian Restaurant in Thailand 2003 by *Thailand Taster* publication, is a perfect lunch or dinner stop. Meet Salvatore and his family who will personally prepare something special for you.

Leaving the restaurant and directly across the street are two more finds. Azur specialises in fabulous bedcovers, cushions and table accessories. Designed by Sophie and constructed in her Phuket workshop, the signature pieces in Thai

Discover Thailand

Other side of Phuket

Antique galleries, paintings and distinctive collection of Asian art and silver offer a fitting diversion

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silk and natural fabrics can be bought by the piece or exported in quantity. Find Tavachoon nest door, specialising in carved wooden decor items and furniture.

Onto Yaowarat Road, a thoroughfare that is constantly changing, with fascinating owners and funky merchandise. Before venturing far, however, divert onto Phang Nga Road, the first main street to the right. As a suggestion, walk down the right side of the street. You will pass a few trinket shops. In the third block find Antique Arts.

Established in 1980, this Phuket family-run business features historical curios and Chinese furniture.

The father and son display their intricate traditional Thai style paintings. These special treasures are painted on animal bone or handmade paper. Continue down towards the cross street, Phuket Road. Make a U-turn and come back up the other side of Phang Nga Road.

Just a half block from the corner find Sarasil Art Gallery simple but holding an array of original work by five Thai artists. Some paintings are based on the near extinct Sakai people of the deep southern provinces.

Proceed walking up the street. Look carefully on this, north side within the last block of Phang Nga Road, near the T-junction at Yaowarat Road. You should

spot a small archway indicating a Chinese temple (some Thais have lived here all their lives and missed this treasure). Walk up the narrow soi (alley) and behold the Shrine of Serene Light, believed to be about 120 years old. The garden in front provides a calm sanctuary from the hustle and bustle in the street.

When leaving the small soi, turn right en route again to Yaowarat Road. At the junction, cross the street to the west side of Yaowarat Road and walk right, just a few doors further on from here is China House, or Bani Ieen in Thai, revamped by Ms Sapat Promchan and enhanced with Chinese and Thai accents. Vintage Asian and contemporary items and original clothing are displayed on two levels.

A few shops further on is Bari Botan Textiles. Specialising in ready-made, hand-woven cotton clothing, jewellery and bags, the owner frequently travels searching for special, hard-to-find items for his collection.

At the crossroad, turn right onto Thalang Road. You will be walking on the south side in the opposite direction to the one-way traffic.

This entire area shows fabulous examples of Sino-Portuguese architecture, dating back more than 150 years.



♦ Continued on page 8 Entrance to the Shrine of the Serene Light believed to be 120 years old.

Art & Culture
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home travel



Phra Pitak Chinpracha Mansion on Krabi Road, a sketch from Architectural Society in Bangkok.

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Rich blend of food, cultures

As you pass, take a moment to appreciate the flavour of old Phuket.

Although the readily known Thai culture is generally associated with the north, one must not overlook ancient history of the south. As historian Ping Amranand suggests in his recently released book, *Andaman Style*, more than five centuries before the foundation of Sukhothai, travellers and traders were already romanticising in literature and journeying in quest of a fabled Golden Peninsula that is believed to have been southern Thailand and Malaya.

Within the first few shops you will see or perhaps sniff Gagan Choon Tong, a Chinese herbal medicine shop. For the past 70 years the same family has been skillfully combining natural remedies to treat a wide range of ailments.

A private journey into Phuket's past begins with a walk down Thalang Road. It was here at the turn of the century that the Chinese merchants pursued their business before withdrawing into their ornate homes for the evening.

Over 200 years ago Hokkien Chinese immigrants began arriving in Phuket. Most were following new opportunities. Tin mining was the business in Penang Malaysia and Phuket that attracted these hard working people. Phuket was an important trade centre for Indian, Malay, Arab and European traders who exchanged goods from the rest of the world for tin and rubber.

The British colonialist, Francis Light, in the 1700s made Penang the first of the British Straits Settlement. He married a local Thai girl and tried unsuccessfully to bring Phuket into the colonial fold.

Land leases were granted to many of the Chinese in Phuket and fortunes were made. It is estimated that by the early 1900s over 30,000 Chinese were working in the Phuket mines and as merchants.

To display their newfound wealth, large mansions were built blending Chinese and European architectural styles. They are commonly known under the misnomer, Sino-Portuguese style, as the Portuguese were amongst the first successful European traders in the region.

All the houses are typically long and narrow. Carved teak louvers on the windows and wooden inlaid doors marking Chinese characteristics are combined with European designs of Corinthian columns or Doric decoration. In the centre of the expansive narrow homes an open-air garden, which adds natural light and beauty, also circulates a cooling breeze. A further glimpse at this middle class lifestyle of bygone days can be seen on nearby Krabi or Dibuk roads and along Soi Romance.



Rare Phuket pieces including stoneware water jugs at China House.



Brass serving sets and other utensils at China House.



Salvatore's was voted the Best Restaurant in Thailand in 2003 by Thailand Tatler.

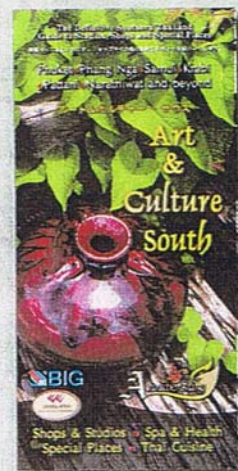
Phuket has over 150 Sino-Portuguese buildings listed for preservation by the Fine Arts Department. Although this history has all but disappeared from the island, a walk in Old Phuket town reflects the rich and diverse past of its multicultural heritage.

There are many areas for touring Phuket's history or simply experiencing the culture, people, shops and places of fascination. Travel by car from Phuket town along the Bypass Road to the Boat Lagoon. Enroute, stop in Kathu, at Ceramics of Phuket, the only stoneware

studio in Phuket, left at the Tesco-Lotus junction.

Retracting to the junction, continue north and see on your left, Phuket Creative Furniture for all your home decor needs and Chan's Antiques and Art for one of the largest selections of antiques on the island. Find your way to the Boat Lagoon (all the way up to T-junction, bear left and take your first right U-turn look for the boat at the entrance).

Relish the Australian fusion food and good music at the stylish Watermark while enjoying



Book captures southern craft

For those who are interested in discovering Phuket's art and cultural attractions Serendipity Designs Co Ltd has published an easy to carry and very helpful guide book titled *Art & Culture South*. A definitive southern Thailand guide to studios, shops and special places in Phuket, Phangnga, Samui, Krabi, Pattani, Narathiwat and beyond, the guide offers the viewer a glimpse of ancient traditions in crafts and art that continue today in similar styles as well as places to go for Thai cuisine and spas.

Moreover, the company also publishes *Art & Culture Lanna* and *Art & Culture Bangkok* which is coming out soon.

The Art & Culture team work in Thailand treasure hunting for the best shops, studios and special places for your enjoyment and cultural awareness.

The guide books are edited by Lori Ashton, a Canadian. Lori studied costume design and spend 13 years designing and producing sleepwear and bridal gowns winning the Award of Excellence for her work. Taking a break in Asia for 18 months, she and her husband have been here for eight years. She was working in public relations in Phuket when she recognised the need for an art and culture guide.

In Phuket, pick up your complimentary copy from many hotels and places of interest locally, nationally and internationally or contact:

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views at the water's edge amongst expensive yachts.

Along your travels, you will find numerous Thai food vendors. Try some southern signature dishes like sa-taw beans sauteed with shrimp and red chillies or masala-based, Indian-type food.

Even if you take home only a richer understanding of Phuket's fascinating culture and a few tangible treasures, you will find that Phuket has on offer, much more than just beautiful beaches.

Travel Guide

Caravan to Laos

Local Tourist Business Association and the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) are organising the 4th Friendship Thailand-Laos Caravan to Luang Prabang from December 6-9.

The caravan will leave Tha Li on the Thai side and travel to Chaiyaburi, Luang Prabang, Vang Vieng and Vientiane before returning to Nong Khai in Thailand.

During the trip, the caravan will stop at Wat Chiang Thong, National Museum, Phu Si Mountain and Ting Cave. Participants will also be visiting Plain of Jars, Nam Ngoum Dam and major landmarks in Vientiane.

The cost is 9,500 baht per person plus another 2,000 baht that will go to Laotian coffers and includes visa, insurance, three nights accommodation and meals. Petrol costs are not included. Deadline for entry is November 10.

For more details, call Local Travel at 042-832-849, Local Tourist Business Association, 042-812-812, Local Tourism Co-ordinator Centre, 042-811-405.



Music is in the air

The Thailand International Jazz Festival 2003 will be held at four venues during December 12-29.

The schedule is Dec 12-14 at Sanam Suea Pa, Bangkok; Dec 19-20 at Chiang Saen, Chon Buri; Dec 24-27 at Queen Sirikit National Convention Centre, Bangkok; and Dec 28-29 in Pattaya.

Thailand's second jazz fest will highlight both internationally-acclaimed and locally-noted jazz celebrities.

Jazz bands and celebrities from the US include Larry Carlton, Joe Sample, Lee Ritenour, Spyrogyra, Tuck & Patti, Irvin, Andy Wolf & the Riverboat Swingers and Kenny Claiborne Band. The UK will be represented by Shakatak, Japan by T-Square, while Mexico will be sending Guillermo Perrata Quartet, Herman Hecht Cuarteto X-pression, Cra' Neo de Jade, Santella Cruz Hecht and Irada Nortiega.

Thailand will be featuring Thiewan Sapsaenayakorn, Koh Mr Sasman, Bangkok Connection, Mahidol University Band, Ford Sopchai Kraiyurasan and Pom Autobahn. There will also be a performance of light opera.

Phimai Tourism Festival

Phimai Tourism Festival will run November 5-9. Phimai Historical Park in Nakhon Ratchasima features Khmer-style stone monuments. Historical

monuments will be illuminated in a light and sound presentation. Participants will be eligible to vie for a top prize of three-days/two nights package to Phuket, Ko Phi Phi plus accommodation and air tickets for two persons worth 25,000 baht.

For more details call Tourism Authority of Thailand office in Nakhon Ratchasima at 044-213-030, 213-666, 351-722.



Cha-am celebrity rally

TAT is inviting applications to enter a car rally to Cha-am November 22-23 attended by local stars and celebrities. Being held in conjunction with Phetchaburi Tourist Business Association and Muang Lakhon Co the rally will highlight visits to major tourist attractions in the province.

In charge of the rally is local celebrity Settha Srachaya. Entry cost is 4,000 baht per car. For more details, call Khan Oy or Khe at 02-248-7635-6 from Monday-Friday from 10am-5pm.

Fit & Fun trip to Krabi

Bangkok Airways together with California Fitness Centres is introducing the Fit & Fun Travelling package for its fitness members.

Members will have the opportunity to work out on the beach of Krabi at a cost of only 6,600 baht per head which includes roundtrip air ticket, airport transfer, three days/ two nights accommodation and breakfast. In addition members can enjoy kajakking surrounded by beautiful natural scenery. For more details, call 02-265-5678 or see www.bangkokair.com



Bird watch in the park

Nature Trails is organising a bird-watching trip to Kaeng Krachan National Park in Phetchaburi November 1-2. Located 176 kilometres south from Bangkok, the park is an ideal spot for observing birds and relaxing.

The trip will focus on birds in evergreen forest. The cost is 2,800-3,200 baht/person depending



Soul of Asia has an eclectic collection of Asian and Western art including Picasso originals.



A Sino-Portuguese house on Thalang Road.

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