

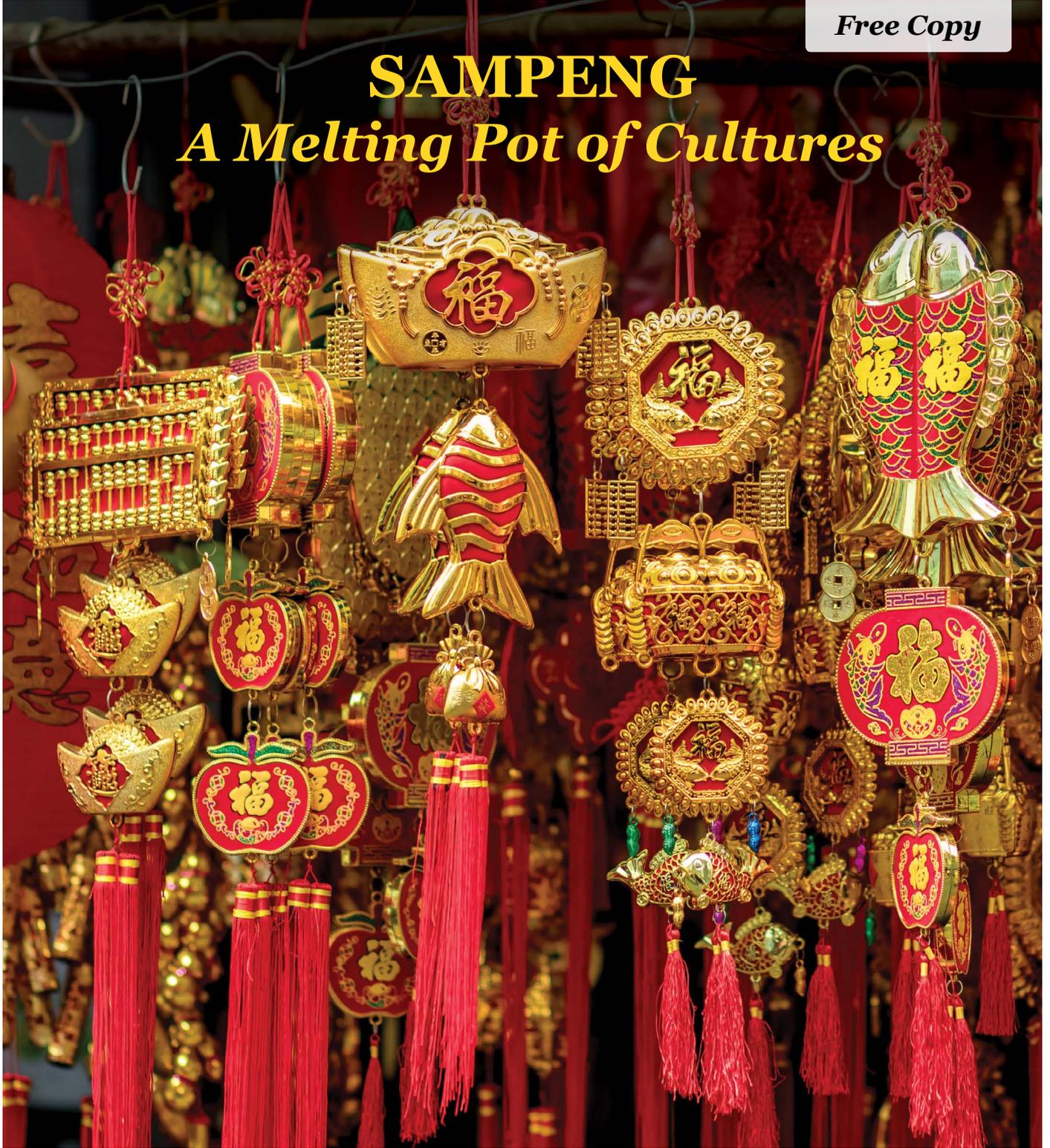
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Editor's Letter

The year is just speeding away with one month gone in the blink of an eye. February is now upon us, and, suddenly, whichever way we look, we see redness, love, and all things Chinese. We started off the month with a Super Blue Blood Moon, which is more red than blue. Although the sky was a bit cloudy, Bangkokians got a glimpse of the rare red moon eclipse.

Next is Valentine's Day (Feb 14) when the world goes red with roses, hearts and romantic candlelit dinners. Although the day is generally considered a Western celebration of love, Thai teenagers have been taking the occasion quite seriously for decades (myself included, in my younger days, at least).

Then Feb 16 marks the start of the Lunar New Year, aka Chinese New Year. Over 10 million people of Thai-Chinese descent – the largest overseas Chinese population in the world – are planning to celebrate their second New Year of 2018 with the color red, the ultimate symbol of good luck, fortune and happiness.

Probably by sheer coincidence, this year 'round, the song of the season is "Koisuru Fortune Cookie" by girl group BNK48. The song – about a coterie of girlfriends using fortune cookies to determine their destinies of love – seems to blast out everywhere, all day long.

So, to meet the occasion, for this issue, we'll bring you over to Sampeng, Bangkok's very own Chinatown and take you on a journey back in time. Then we'll explore love in the age of Artificial Intelligence – when computers mimic human's most complex emotion. Then our relationship guru is on hand to dole out advice on how to forget the past and start your love life anew in the month of love. Well, a new life with the perfect eyebrows isn't a bad idea, especially if you're going on a date. So, turn to our beauty page and learn where to get an expert to work on yours.

Finding a place to hang out with your special someone? Then, look no further than Asiatique for a romantic walk along the river or a fun ride on the giant Ferris wheel. Better yet, go for a sumptuous dinner at The House on Sathorn or keep your date sated with Japanese food, which is comprehensively explored in this issue.

Back to the real world, this issue concludes with useful tips on how to manage your finances if you're just beginning to climb the corporate ladder, plus tips in finding the right place to live in the City of Angels.

Enjoy and wish you a month full of love, wealth and happiness!

– VT

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1

1 Sampeng offers something for everyone
2 Shops selling auspicious items for the
upcoming Lunar New Year

CHINATOWN

BY NAAM SOMBATANANTAKORN



2

This coming February 16 is Lunar New Year, aka Chinese New Year. Being of Thai-Chinese descent, I've been observing my parents' activities during the Chinese New Year for decades. When this festival approaches, it means a whole day's shopping spree in Chinatown for my family and myself. I always wonder why they shop there, and especially, how the early Chinese immigrants first settled in Thailand.

One of the earliest official records of Chinese passing through Siam would be about the travels of Zhèng Hé during the 14th century. He was a Ming Dynasty admiral, diplomat and explorer who traveled the seas, especially to Southeast Asia and into the Indian Ocean. At one point, he sailed to Siam's capital Ayutthaya (then called Ayodhya) and after his disembarkation started trade between the two countries, triggering a flow of Chinese immigrants to Siam and their emerging communities in cities on the banks of the Chao Phraya river.

The Chinese immigrants lived in widely scattered communities in Ayutthaya and other cities. Over time several thousands migrated south in search of better opportunities and settled in several areas in and around Bangkok during the Rattanakosin era. When King Buddha Yodfa Chulaloke (Rama I) founded Bangkok in 1782, plans were afoot to build new government houses and the Grand Palace in the capital's Tha Tien neighborhood, home to a Teochew community of Han Chinese from southeastern China since the Thonburi era. Therefore, the Chinese were asked to relocate to what's now known as Sampeng, or Bangkok's Chinatown.

Located southeast of the city walls, Sampeng covers an area from a canal next to Wat Chakrawat to another canal near Wat Pathumkongka. In the early Rattanakosin period, Sampeng was one of Bangkok's main trading areas with thousands of Chinese laborers loading and unloading goods from Chinese junks docked at Ratchawong Pier.

Besides their cheap labor, the Chinese were known as trustworthy middlemen. Chinese merchants demonstrated considerable business acumen and were keen on sourcing goods from around the world to sell to people of all classes. Sampeng soon became a vibrant marketplace of imported goods: agricultural products, herbal medicine, canned food, silk, jewelry and timber. It's believed that many of these seagoing junks might have been built in Siam; however, Sampeng's alleged shipyard site has yet to be located by scholars.

Over time, trade flourished and so did Sampeng's Chinese population. Soon enough, the area grew in a somewhat haphazard fashion. The small roads and alleys became heavily congested and living conditions deteriorated with no appropriate sanitation. There was no urban planning back in the days, so these cobbled and paved alleys – roughly laid with only wooden boards – led to just about anywhere one could imagine: houses, schools, public toilets, orchards, and even livestock pens. With the roads becoming increasingly inaccessible by cars and trucks, the main mode of transportation was by boat.



3

Since people used Chinese lanterns at night, house fires in Sampeng happened frequently. The biggest fire of Sampeng broke out in 1850 at Wat Chakrawat and swept through Talad Noi market and Wat Pathumkongka, resulting in a great number of fatalities and substantial property damage. The sheer extent of the damage had to do with the fact that the narrow alleys limited the entry of fire engines and hampered the fire-fighting effort.

Anxious to improve the welfare of his subjects, King Chulalongkorn (Rama V) finally decided to build five new roads in the capital for greater mobility in parts of the city including Sampeng. The new roads – Yaowarat, Ratchawong, Anuwong, Chakrawat, and Worachak – cut through different Chinese communities and took a decade to build. Upon completion of the mega construction project, these enclaves were automatically grouped together, with each named after the road on which it was located. Since then all of them have been known accordingly.

The history of Chinese immigrants in Thailand isn't without unhappy chapters. With Bangkok's city street more congested, people living in overcrowded conditions and resources becoming scarcer, the crime rate went up and people started to gang together. In response, the Chinese formed their own groups and association in order to seek protection and security.

With the rise of communism in China following World War II, the welcome given by the Thais to the Chinese had grown chilly. The Chinese was deeply regarded with suspicion among Thais.

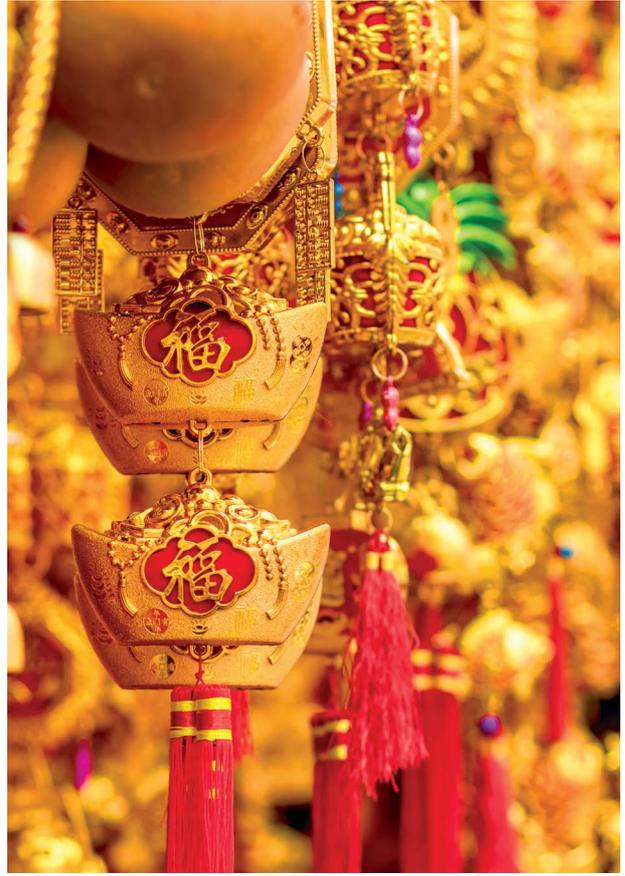
After decades of relative calm, communal tension and violence flared in Sampeng, often leading to sporadic riots. To defuse the racial tension, King Ananda Mahidol (Rama VIII) decided to personally intervene by visiting Sampeng on June 3, 1946. When news about the King's tour of Chinatown reached the Sampeng community, its dwellers started making preparations to receive the King.

When King Ananda arrived with his brother, HRH Prince Bhumibol (later Rama IX), Chinese people of all ages lined the streets to show their respects and loyalty to the young monarch. Seeing that they share the same love and loyalty to the monarchy, all disputes between the Thais and Chinese soon disappeared.

Today when we mention "Chinatown", it means the old market and the area along Yaowarat Road where people can still find retail stores, gold vendors, roasted chestnut stands, restaurants, and the famous Thai and Chinese street foods in abundance. Come and visit Sampeng to see how two different, yet beautiful cultures can blend perfectly into one.



4



5



PHOTOGRAPHS: TEERARAT YAEMNGAMLUEA

3 A roasted chestnut stand
4 - 5 Lucky charms are in
high demand as souvenirs
for the Chinese New Year
6 Chinatown's iconic shot
during the day

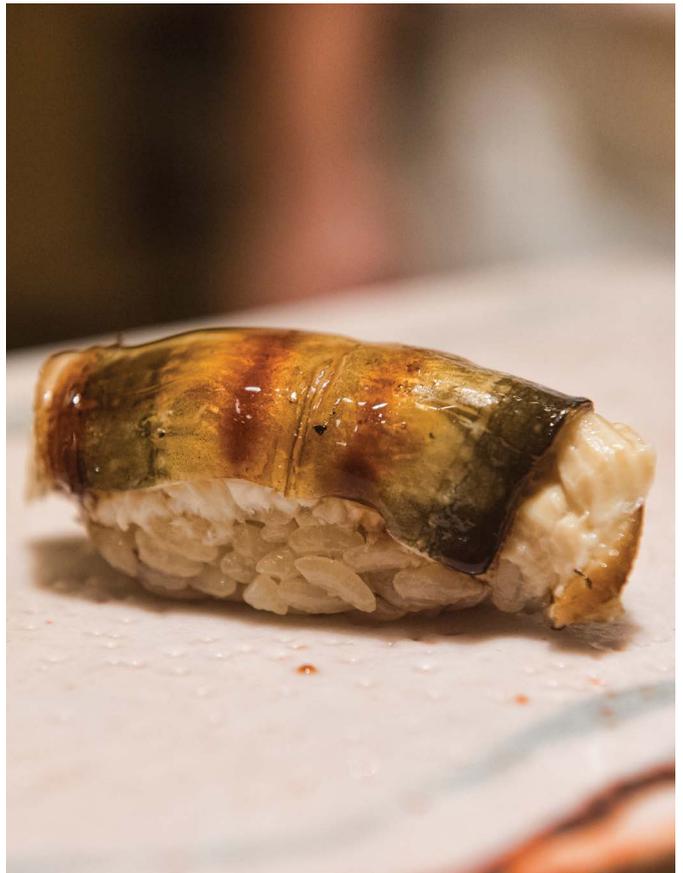
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3

- 1 Kinmedai (alfonsino) fresh sushi
- 2 The freshest cuts of akami tuna
- 3 Anago (saltwater eel), a popular specialty at Sushi Ichizu
- 4 Master sushi Chef Riku Toda, left, and his apprentices at work

Turning Japanese

BY DAVE STAMBOULIS



4

With some 80,000 Japanese living in Bangkok, the city is home to the fourth largest Japanese expatriate population in the world, trailing only New York, Los Angeles, and Shanghai. With this kind of numbers, you'd figure there would be plenty of opportunities to sample superb Japanese food, and this is indeed the case. However, it's only in the past few years that this has really come to fruition, especially now that Japan has gotten rid of visa requirements for Thais (for visits under two weeks), meaning that more Bangkokians are visiting the Land of the Rising Sun, learning about soba, udon, okonomiyaki, and sashimi, and coming back home with further appreciation and knowledge of good food, and clamoring for more. Here's a look at some of Bangkok's best *Nihon-ryori*, completely varied in type, and yet all incredibly delicious.

Sushi Ichizu

This is *omakase* sushi at its finest. *Omakase* comes from the Japanese word *makaseru*, which means "to entrust," and literally means "up to you," meaning that diners leave their dinner choice completely in the hands of the chef. This style of serving sushi has gained a huge following in Japan, spearheaded by the famous Jiro Ono, star of the documentary *Jiro Dreams of Sushi*, who ran a 3-star Michelin restaurant in Tokyo, serving 10 lucky diners per sitting a 20-course masterpiece of the tastiest

and most perfectly prepared sushi and sashimi money could buy. Jiro has since retired, but some of his protégés have taken up the void. Hachiro Mizutani worked under Jiro and also ran a 3-star Michelin place, retired, and the latest master to hit Tokyo has been Takaaki Sugita, who runs an *omakase* restaurant that is booked out at least a year in advance.

Chef Riku Toda, who trained both under Mizutani and Sugita, has brought the art of sushi perfection to Bangkok, presiding over a small intimate counter at Sushi Ichizu, where 10 diners are served twice per evening. Not only is the array of fish the absolute best you'll find in town, as the restaurant has connections to the *crème de la crème* of Japan's seafood suppliers, but Chef Toda's perfection and skill make a dining experience here more akin to a fine theatrical performance. Items like Hokkaido hairy crab or black abalone are brought out for diners to inspect and take photos of prior to being prepared, and servings of *ankimo* (monkfish liver), *uni* (sea urchin), and *shirako* (cod sperm!) will blow your mind and palate as to how something that sounds so inedible can be so amazingly good. Eating here doesn't come cheap, with tasting menus running either THB 6,000 or THB 8,000, but the *otora* fatty tuna slices and opportunity to witness a great chef in action might be your foodie nirvana experience of a lifetime.



5

Bankara Ramen

Ramen has become a popular favorite in Bangkok, with hundreds of hole in the wall joints to satisfy everyone’s noodle craving, but Bankara, the franchise chain from Tokyo, really excels. They’ve since opened up in Siam Paragon, but the original branch on Sukhumvit 39, which was the first shop to open outside of Tokyo’s Ikebukuro, is the most authentic.

You can choose from *tonkotsu* (pork belly), miso, *tsukemen* (cold noodles), or the original Bankara ramen, all of them featuring intensely rich broth and served in giant heaping bowls, ensuring you won’t be leaving hungry. The *kakuni* braised pork served here is melt-in-your-mouth delectable, and all the ramen helpings are fatty and oily, exactly how a bowl of good ramen should be. If only the temperatures in Bangkok were a bit more like Tokyo in the winter, folks would really appreciate how much this stuff warms you up.

These are just a fraction of the fine array of Japanese offerings that now grace *Krungthep*. From tiny *izakaya* pubs to *kaiseki* fine dining, the city is inundated with choice, and the fact that so many are so good is really a tribute to both chefs and owners, considering that they have to compete with fabulous Thai food. So don’t wait for that trip to Kyoto to enjoy your sushi, ramen, or splurge omakase meal, just head out locally. I would say “bon appétit,” except the Japanese don’t say that before eating. It’s “*itadakimasu*.”

- 5 Bankara Ramen
- 6 Kanuni tsukemen cold noodles
- 7 Kanuni tonkotsu ramen
- 8 Kanuni saramori, braised pork belly



6



7



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PHOTOGRAPHS: COURTESY OF BANKARA RAMEN

Isao

Isao holds the distinction of being one of the few restaurants in Bangkok that has a line outside almost every single night of the year. Hopefully, their much needed recent expansion project will alleviate some of this, but there is a reason why folks lineup outside and wait 30-plus minutes to get a seat. The owner here studied under the chef at Green Tea, a Chicago sushi institution famed for making creative maki rolls, and while it certainly isn't traditional Japanese, nobody can argue with the taste of the various creations here.

Top draws include the "Dragon", a dragon-shaped sushi roll stuffed with shrimp, avocado, tempura, and roe, and the aptly named "Volcano", a baked scallop in cream sauce served in a shell that resembles molten orange lava. The spicy tuna and salmon maki will leave you salivating, and the "Crunchy" or "Sushi Sandwich" creations, which use tempura flakes to create the roll, are on every table. Fusion sushi doesn't always go well, but at Isao not only does it deliver, but it's so good even purists will have reason to return.

Sushi Ichizu

1982 Petchaburi Rd, Tel. 065 738 9999
www.sushiichizu.com

Bankara Ramen

32/1 Sukhumvit Soi 39, Tel. 02 662 5162
www.ramen-bankara.com

Isao

5 Sukhumvit Soi 31, Tel. 02 258 0645
www.facebook.com/isaobkk

- 9 Dragon sushi roll
- 10 Chicago Crazy Spicy roll
- 11 Isao Spider sushi
- 12 Side dish veggie with sesame seeds



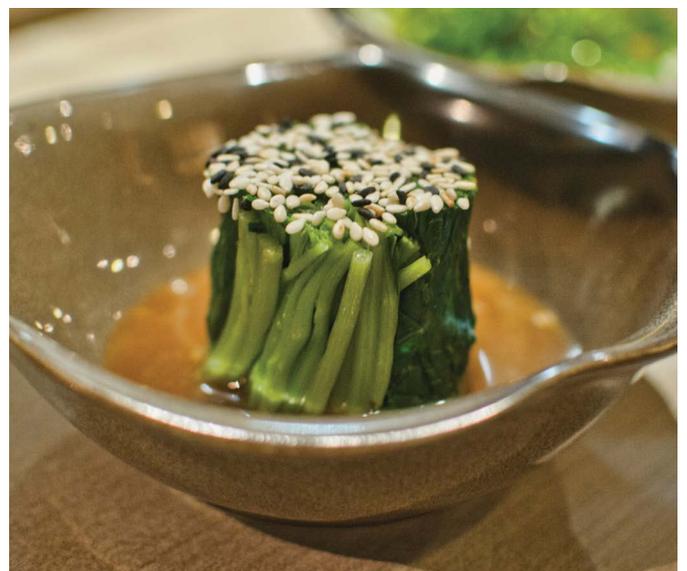
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PHOTOGRAPHS: RAQUEL VILLENA MOGADO

Love in a Time of Artificial Intelligence

BY SWISA ARIYAPRUCHYA

What is the meaning of love in a time of Artificial Intelligence (AI)? In the movie *Her*, we watched Theodore Twombly, a lonely introvert form an increasingly intimate relationship with Samantha, an intelligent computer operating system. In *Blade Runner 2049*, Agent K returns home to Joi, a holographic woman, who takes care of his emotional needs.

Inspired by advancements in AI, robots in movies have evolved from being portrayed as inhuman, unemotional adversaries of mankind into intelligent operating systems that can fulfill the emotional needs of humans.

These systems learn about love and develop with each stage. These scenes raise thought provoking discussions of whether AI love is the same kind of love as the love we receive from another human being.

What if in the future technology should evolve into an advanced stage like Samantha in the movie *Her*, or Joi in

Blade Runner 2049? These AI systems are based on learning and have the ability to grow psychologically. Through interactions with their owners, they learn that love is a two-way relationship and that to receive love in return they must reciprocate the love they receive. The more they reciprocate and learn, the more love they receive.

The first kind of love one experiences is most likely the love for our parents. Babies and toddlers learn to love through observation and through mimicking their parents or caretakers. They learn which behaviors will result in reciprocated love and which will not. Emotional bonds form with those who give them regular care and love.

As we reach adulthood, our love for our parents as babies and toddlers evolve as our relationships change. We are no longer dependent upon our parents for our survival, but the fundamental underlying feeling of love remains the same.

Through a lifetime, humans will learn to love in many different ways and in many stages. We have different kinds of love for our siblings, relatives and friends. We learn to fall in love with significant others and to sometimes fall out of love. We learn to rediscover love

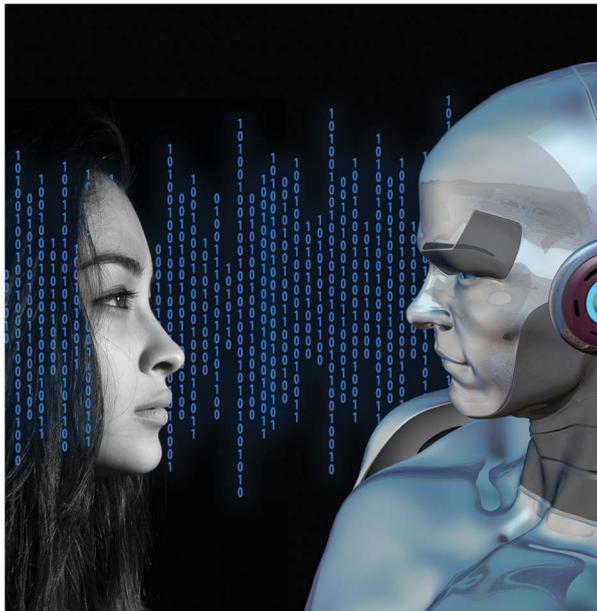
and to love ourselves. We learn that love has no boundaries. We learn what kind of love works and what does not. As humans, we will keep on making mistakes until we learn or not.

If we define love to be a learning process in which we learn from past experiences and reflection, how then is this different from the learning process undertaken by AI?

Would the learning process of AI be distinguishable from the human learning

process? If AI could learn to recognize, laugh, get sad, be excited and self-reflect, wouldn't this almost be comparable to the human conscience? Do we really know whether the AI we interact with is experiencing consciousness or is it simply programmed to mimic consciousness?

I would like to therefore leave you with this question, "Is AI love any different from human love?" If so, what is the missing element to human love and in the future would this be something that could be constructed? Would love with AI be considered love to the same degree as love between two biological human beings? I, for one, am curious to see what love in the time of AI will be like.



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The House of Regal Splendor

BY PLOYLADA SIRACHADAPONG



1

My love for vintage style is a true love. I appreciate the modern touch from time to time but whenever I see some vintage buildings or retro-style decorations, my heart will just start pounding, fast. When I first saw The House on Sathorn, I immediately fell in love with this mansion.

Currently a bar and restaurant, the converted patrician mansion itself has a long and interesting history behind it. Built in 1889 as a private residence of a Thai aristocrat, Luang Chitchamnonwanit, this neo-classic, three-story building rises in solitary splendor in the compound of the W Bangkok Hotel, housing one of the finest royal decorative ensembles.

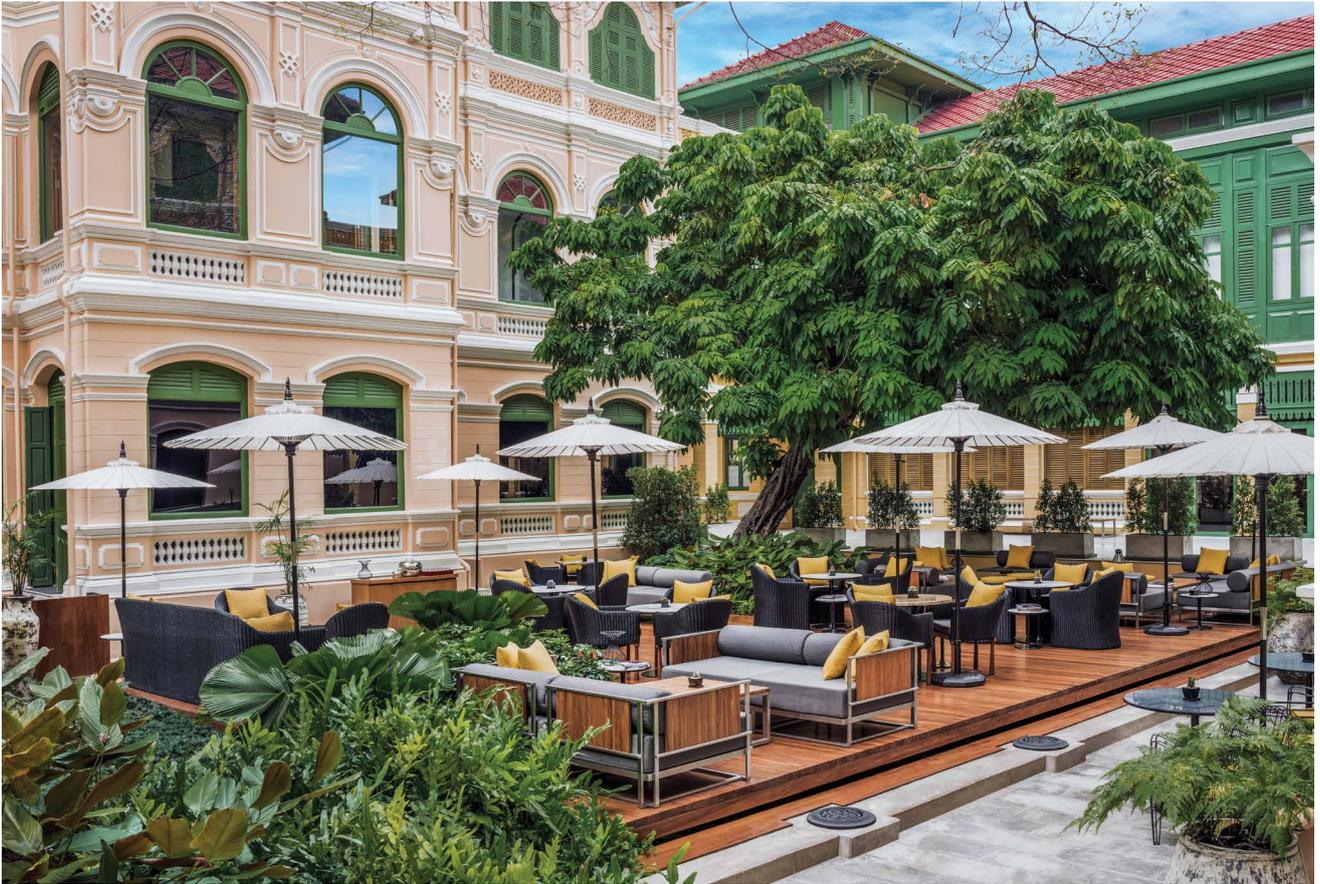
The mansion's bold choice of color and design is reflected in its solid yellow exterior and green window panes. The Celtic trefoil stucco is intertwined with a rice flower motif, supposedly the lady of the house's favorite flower, which adorns the mansion walls, the fence's decorations, and even the ground as engravings.

In the 1920s, the mansion functioned as a hotel. By mid-century, it was given a new lease on life as the original site of the Russian embassy that operated until the close of the century. Given the succession of Thai and Russian ownerships, the place has a rich history of art and design.

For a start, the stately interior is a visually stunning combination of both heritages with the unmistakable mixture of modern sensibility and historic style. Now owned and operated by the W Bangkok Hotel, the sumptuously furnished mansion is currently comprised of four separate venues: the hotel's signature restaurant The Dining Room, The Courtyard serving as an outdoor bistro, The Bar and The Conservatory for meetings and social gatherings.

AvroKO, a design and concept firm – responsible for each venue's interior design – delicately conserves the vintage touch, and yet maintains its modern vibe that smoothly permeates the entire place.

- 1 The House on Sathorn exterior
- 2 The Courtyard outdoor bistro
- 3 The Dining Room restaurant



2



PHOTOGRAPHS: COURTESY OF THE HOUSE ON SATHORN

3



4

The Dining Room welcomes guests with its open kitchen featuring pastel yellow walls, hardwood flooring and magnificent tapestries using a deconstructive Thai embroidery technique – once exclusively reserved for the fabrics of royal garments.

Thanks to its vibrant color scheme, the Emerald Room is spectacular with oversized sculptures and opulent furnishings. These beautiful fiberglass sculptures, designed by Pongsatat Uaiklang, founder of Dong Sculpture, are reminiscent of those sacred offerings vessels used in Buddhist rituals and royal ceremonies.

The tapestries are covered in custom-made sequins that create abstract images with modern twists. They go so well with the antique boar's head carved in high relief and gazing down from a lofty height as part of the lavish wall furnishings. The symbolic boar, one of the Chinese zodiac signs denoting the original owner's birth year, is in general depicted in mythical form and in flight and believed to bring prosperity and good fortune to the believer's family while watching over the House on Sathorn.

The Courtyard is an outdoor bistro with a relaxed ambiance, interspersed with black rattan chairs and tables. This is where you can enjoy a contrasting view of Thailand's tallest building, MahaNakorn, while sipping tea in the comfort of a green garden next to the 130-year-old pastel mansion.

On the second floor, it's easy to be astounded by the hallway's intricately carved ceiling and wooden wall paneling. Skillfully hidden behind the wooden wall is the Secret Room that hosts special or private events. Particularly adding to the room's sophisticated touch is a plush red leather bench right next to the bay window area. Its luxurious ambiance escalates with a marble counter and a grand chandelier that perfectly complements the carved ceiling.

In 2001, the Fine Arts Department designated the mansion as a national heritage property. So, as a Thai, I am more than happy to see that even with new skyscrapers popping up across town, the House on Sathorn stands tall in all its glory to preserve, for posterity, and retells the stories of the recent past through its timeless architecture.

The House on Sathorn, W Bangkok Hotel
 106 North Sathorn Road, Silom
 Tel. 02 344 4025
www.thehouseonsathorn.com

4 The Secret Room for special gatherings and private events

PHOTOGRAPH: COURTESY OF THE HOUSE ON SATHORN



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Asiatique

A Night Out Along the River

BY DAVE STAMBOULIS



1

Asiatique The Riverfront often gets overlooked by locals for a variety of reasons. Yeah, fighting the massive queues of Chinese tourists for a place on the free shuttle boats is not pleasant, nor are the higher than average prices for the restaurants and bars that are, face it, miles away from the average Bangkokian's Thonglor-Ekamai-Phrom Phong comfort zone. And yes, if you live on the east or north side of town, it is a darn long haul to get there. Finally, those of us who remember the Suan Lum Night Bazaar with fondness have probably never given up our allegiance to the removal of a Bangkok institution. However, it's worth putting a few of these prejudices aside and joining the tourist throngs for a night out at Asiatique. It's guaranteed to be good fun, and the market keeps evolving and has some real positives.

Asiatique is probably Bangkok's best planned night market. None of the sweaty narrow aisles without room to move like you'll find at Ratchada or up at Talad Rot Fai in Srinakarin. There are 50,000 square meters of space here, and if you drive, there are parking spots available for over 2,000 vehicles. The market combines modern times with a bit of history, as it's housed in old port hangars that were used by the East Asiatic Company at the turn of the 1900s for their plans to link Denmark with the Far East. There's even an old sawmill and WWII bomb shelter on-site here, and the shops are set in atmospheric old warehouses, which are all well marked and mapped, making it hard to get lost here, something that most certainly cannot be said for other night markets around town.

The riverfront, with its breezes, views, and lights at night is a big draw here, and some of the best restaurants and bars get front

billing. **Baan Kanitha**, noted for its longstanding traditional Thai food set in elegant surroundings has a branch here, with both indoor and outdoor seating. The menu is extensive, and while tastes have most certainly been toned down for the foreign crowd, there's still plenty to choose from.

Nearby you'll find newcomer **Osha Cafe**, a more casual version of the San Francisco - Thai molecular restaurant Osha, famed for its visionary cooking techniques, where you can combine creative cocktails with fusion presentations, and even take part in their Cooking Chronicle Studio, where master chefs will help you create your own Thai treats.

Another new spot here is **Lugang Cafe**, a popular Cantonese chain from Shanghai, where you can get juicy *xiaolongbao* dumplings and enjoy dim sum. Out by the riverfront, **Checkmate Bar & Bistro** has been around since the opening of Asiatique and succeeds both visually (with a human-sized chessboard and pieces outside), as well as with its vibe. The neon-lit bar is well stocked. There are a variety of excellent beers and well mixed cocktails, and the menu features salmon sashimi salad with wasabi dressing along with other well-crafted nibbles, plus the different live bands that play throughout the week make this place one of Asiatique's most lively spots.

In addition to the eating, drinking, and plenty of shopping, Asiatique is a great place for finding locally designed contemporary and vintage fashions at fair prices in a comfortable environment. There are also lots of entertainments here.

The **Muay Thai Live** show features a well-choreographed live performance all about Thai boxing's history, traditions, and skills, and uses professional boxers and actors, plus there is even a mellow-ish set of short live bouts after the show. Nearby, the **Calypso Cabaret** show is a hoot, with Elvis, Beyoncé, and Lady Gaga-like performances that leave the audiences in hysterics, not to mention in awe, of the onstage talent.

If you want to stay close to all the action, you've got a selection of great riverside spots. The **Anantara Riverside Bangkok Resort** sits just downriver from Asiatique on the Thonburi side of the Chao Phraya river, and features 396 well-appointed rooms and suites. It has a gorgeous riverside location, especially when you sit in the aptly named **Longtail Bar**, which gives uninterrupted river views with the Bangkok skyline in the back. Kick back to a "Bangkok Bridge" (gin and lychee cocktail) and watch the teak shuttle boats make their way across the river. There's also a huge swimming pool and collection of nine restaurants and bars to choose from here if you don't feel like leaving, not to mention an elegant dinner cruise on a converted traditional rice barge.

Just north of Asiatique, you'll find the **Chatrium Hotel Riverside Bangkok**, which often slips under the radar of the top Chao Phraya hotels, precisely because it's further south of all the main luxury properties. The balcony views from the high floor rooms here are to die for, and the hotel has its own shuttle boat to ferry you around. If you really want a bird's eye view, check out their Chinese restaurant **Silver Waves**, located up on the 36th floor and definitely offering the most panoramic Chinese meal in town.



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4



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1 Asiatique The Riverside 2 Muay Thai Live show 3 Calypso Cabaret
4 Anantara Riverside's Longtail Bar 5 Chatium Hotel's Silver Waves restaurant

Baan Kanitha
Tel. 02 108 4910-11
www.baan-khanitha.com

Osha Cafe
Tel. 02 046 9441
www.facebook.com/OSHACafeatAsiatique/

Lugang Cafe
Tel. 02 254 8379
www.facebook.com/LugangCafe.th/

Checkmate Bar & Bistro
Tel. 02 108 4704
www.checkmatebarandbistro.com

Muay Thai Live
Tel. 02 108 5999
www.muaythailive.com

Calypso Cabaret
Tel. 02 688 1415
www.calypsocabaret.com

Anantara Riverside Bangkok Resort
Tel. 02 476 0022
www.bangkok-riverside.anantara.com

Chatrium Hotel Riverside Bangkok
Tel. 02 307 8888
www.chatrium.com

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Making Yourself More Attractive

BY NIKKI ASSAVATHORN

Happy February to all of you, readers. Hope you've had a good start of the year! This month marks the month of love, it's when everyone feels like they have to be coupled-up and it's probably not the best time to be single.

Although, to me, there is nothing wrong for being single when you are not ready to NOT be one. For those who are not looking for anything serious, that's fine as well. It's necessary to meet a lot of people and go on dates – so that you know what you want (and don't want) in someone that you want to settle down with. However, make sure the person that you're dating know your intention and that you both are on the same page.

What singles sometimes get mistaken is when they actually want to be in a relationship, but they tell themselves that they are OK being single because they don't want to make any effort to do anything about it.

Then there are also singles who face many challenges in their journey of finding love and they don't know what to do.

I remember this one client who sent me this question: "The series of constant rejection had me 'predictively forecast' (for a lack of better word) subsequent attempts of courting. At times, I feel trapped between living in the present and hounded by past regrets and disappointments. What should I do?"

I sympathize with him, and I know nobody likes rejection. Ugh. When it happens often enough, you start to expect the worst and may give up entirely. Worst, you may feel insecure about yourself, and thus, would close yourself up even more because you think nobody would love you or that you're not good enough.

I always tell those who are singles that when you do the choosing, the other party does the choosing as well. In order to meet the right one, you have to be the right one yourself.

I replied to him:

"I do not know what happened in the past and what might have led to the constant rejection that you have experienced, but I believe that your mindset controls your action. If you keep telling yourself that you would get rejected, then likely it would happen. You might even sabotage your own chances without even realizing it."

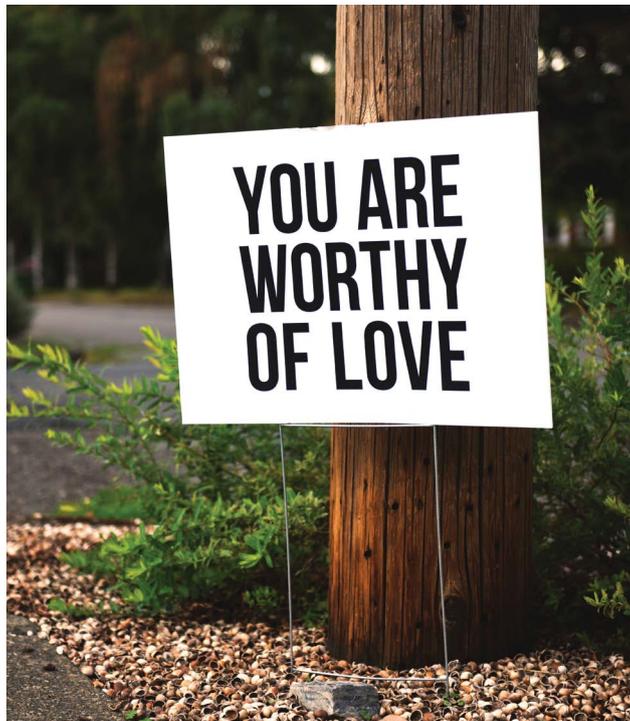
And instead of focusing on making other people be interested in you, I'm a firm believer that people are attracted to other people who are positive and passionate.

So I encourage everyone to learn from the past (but not dwell on it), and to focus on making the present better with the lessons learned. Why not pick up a sport or a hobby that improves your life skills? Try expanding your social circles by joining a gym, a marathon group, a cooking class, and so on.

When you are happy with your life, other people will see it too, and that is attractive. Ultimately, YOU come first. If you can't make yourself happy – you can't make others happy.

Rejection is a part of life. Let's not let it cripple us – instead, use it as something to propel us to be better, because at least that's something you can control.

You can also try seeking professional advice from a date coach to help you get over your past, or create a plan that you can stick to, to be the best version of yourself while actively meeting new people to increase your chances of finding the Right One.



An Employee's Route From Rags to Riches

BY J. PAKCHUEN

Bangkok is known as a city of opportunities, with a very high employment rate compared to other capitals. But we cannot deny the fact that the cost of living here is also high, too. A lot of salaried staff struggle to make ends meet. Fortunately many investors and financial advisers suggest being a salaried employee doesn't mean you have to be penniless until you reach your senior years; neither do you have to work as an employee for the rest of your life. Below are some of the key pieces of advice that can guide you to your version of "financial freedom".

Budgeting

If you're planning a budget, you should know exactly where all the money will go each month before the month begins. Each month can be different; however, you should try to stick to your budget plan. After paying the fixed/necessary expenses such as food, rent or mortgage, transportation, tuition fees, etc., set a small budget for your additional spending, such as clothes, social gatherings, gifts for friends or coworkers, etc.

Now this is the important part: Try to put aside around 30% of your salary each month. Put 15% in an emergency fund, also called a "rainy day fund". We all need an emergency fund in case of a real emergency, such as an accident, unexpected medical visit, job loss, a leak in the roof, etc.

Famous financial adviser Dave Ramsey advises that if you are a co-earner of the family, you should have an emergency fund available to stay afloat for at least three months without working, but if you are the sole breadwinner of the family, then you should have at least six months' worth of savings. Open a separate checking or savings account where you can easily withdraw when needed, but make a promise to yourself not to withdraw unless it is, well, an emergency.

Make Money Grow

With 15% of your income left, make that money grow so that you can have more

money toward your retirement. Suze Orman, another successful financial adviser, suggests that we should start saving toward retirement at a very young age to help you reach your financial goals sooner. One investment option is to put your money in a fixed deposit account that offers a higher interest rate for longer-term savings.

Investment in stocks is another option, but it will require a lot of research, experience and courage, plus much discretion. If you are not interested in the bull and bear markets, you can opt for the calmer and more secure options of mutual funds and long-term retirement funds, such as Retirement Mutual Funds (RMFs) and Long-Term



Equity Funds (LTFs). With RMFs and LTFs, you will also receive a tax-deduction incentive at the end of the year, which is a plus. Keep in mind that by investing in these funds, you're taking the high-risk, high-return route, therefore be aware of the risks. Many financial institutions and banks offer such funds, so research well before buying.

Stay Debt-free

Some say living a free life is living debt-free, so if you are in debt, repay it as soon as you can. If you've been missing a lot of credit card payments, you will find yourself inundated with interests and late fee charges. So, use a credit card only when you know you can pay the debt the next month. You will be

surprised how much money you will save toward your retirement if you don't have to pay such fees.

Find Extra Income

What would happen if you lost your job today? It's a good idea to have another side job that can serve as a soft cushion if something unexpected happens. We all have special skills outside our main employment. But if you think you don't, find something you like and learn more about how to enhance your skills, and of course, earn some income. Side jobs or freelance jobs can become a secondary source of income and you can do it while you're being employed full-time.

If you are a language person, you can find translation gigs or become a writer for your own blog, contributing to magazines, or if you have a good story to tell, write your own novel. You can also start a small online business. These days you can pretty much sell anything on big marketplaces like Amazon or EBay, or on social networks, such as Facebook, Instagram or Line. But if you are good at art and technology altogether, being a part-time programmer, software engineer or graphic designer can pay really well.

If you love nature, traveling or have artistic eyes, take on photography to earn extra money selling pictures on many stock photo websites. If you have special skills or knowledge in accounting, business or foreign languages, you can become an in-person or online consultant or tutor. You can easily continue doing this after you retire from your full-time job.

Financial planning is good for people of every age but it is better to start early. Being a salaried professional doesn't mean you have to be stuck in the vicious cycle of not making ends meet. A good retirement will come early if you know how to manage what you earn. So be smart with your finances, and find that peace of mind to live life however you want to.

Home from Home

BY CHRISTOPHER SCOTT DIXON



For those looking to work, live or visit Bangkok, finding the right place to stay can sometimes be a hassle. Major factors to consider are lifestyle, location and budget. Here are some basic tips to help you with your search for the right rental apartment in the City of Angels:

Lifestyle

If you are going to be a party animal, then head for tourist areas such as Nana or Thonglor where prices will be higher for apartments than in other quieter areas with the same living essentials.

It's worth booking into a hotel for a few nights and walk around some of the various districts just to get a feel of the neighborhood. You often see adverts for apartments pinned to telegraph poles or on walls with a number and brief details of the accommodation, and you can pick up some good deals like this.

Go to the apartment building you want in the day and also in the evening. Are there lots of children, barking dogs or loud noise from a nearby beer bar? If that's not for you, then search for something quieter.

Look at the stairways, lifts and rooms. Are they clean, working properly and well lit? How do they dispose of rubbish, are there attentive security staff, a CCTV system, key cards, etc.?

Some apartment complexes charge extra for use of the car park and fitness center, so make sure you ask about this before you put pen to paper. Check out if there are any mini-marts and convenience stores, or larger supermarkets within walking distance. These are lifelines to non-cooks and domestically inept singles.

Location

The most affluent neighborhoods are Sukhumvit, Silom, Sathorn, Thonglor and Ekamai. The less expensive to medium priced localities in the inner city are, among others, mainly in the area of Phaholyothin, Ari, Ladprao, and Phaya Thai.

The rule of thumb is, the closer you are to a BTS or MRT line, the more expensive the accommodation will be. Living further out from the city center can be cheaper, but you have to consider the extra traveling expenses

to get around, so ultimately there might not be much of a difference.

Budget

Rental costs can vary widely from top-end THB 70,000 or more per month for two-three bedroom spacious flats, to mid-range of about THB 15-20,000 and down to THB 8-9,000 for studios and one-bedroom flats.

You don't always have to sign a contract as a number of apartments offer daily or weekly rentals. Most are furnished with a bed, fridge, TV, wardrobe, and possibly a chair or table. If staying short term, free Wi-Fi is usually available.

For longer arrangements, contracts are either six months or one-year with a two to three-month deposit. Metered electricity and water are charged separately then added to the monthly bill.

Whatever you choose, do your research, keep your focus, have a plan of exactly what you are looking for, and seek as much advice as you can to make sure that your stay in this great city is a happy one!

For the Benefit of Your Brows

BY PEKKY THE ANGEL

Today I want to take you out to a recent product launch event held by Benefit, a world-famous cosmetic brand from San Francisco. Benefit has expanded their counters in almost every department store in Thailand and have recently entered EVEANDBOY's SQ1 store with a brand-new stylish look that will amaze their fans and showcase their top products to shoppers.



benefit
SAN FRANCISCO



I can easily say Benefit is one of the leading brands when it comes to eyebrow products, and it's what Benefit is well-known for. If it's anything that's got to do with your brows, Benefit has got them all. They have a wide variety of eyebrow products which are very user-friendly, even for novices.

Having said that, working your brows can be a challenge for some, especially those who touch up their brows once every blue moon. This is why it is worth to visit Benefit's counter which offers a "Brow Bar" beauty service that can literally transform your brows. The service includes designing, tinting and waxing your brows to perfection. After that, maintaining them yourself will be a piece of cake.

Another leading Benefit product that's been a bestseller among the ladies is "The POREfessional" face primer that minimizes the appearance of pores and fine lines and keeps your face oil-free.

Their newest primer is the pinkish The POREfessional: Pearl Primer. This facial primer has the same oil-free, lightweight texture as the original, but with a hint of soft pearly pink that helps the skin look brighter and boosted. All I have to say that with this primer, all you need is a bit of powder touch up and you're good to go!

So schedule a visit to the nearest Benefit counter and give your brows a real makeover. Trust me, you won't regret it!

Benefit Cosmetics
www.benefitcosmetics.com



PHOTOGRAPHS: TEERARAT YAEMNGAMLUEA

February



Run2gether Super-Mini Marathon

Krungthai-AXA Life (KTAXA) in conjunction with Klong Din Sor is organizing a charity run entitled “Run2gether Super-Mini Marathon”, the only guide-assisted disability marathon in Thailand, on Feb 25 at the National Stadium (Supachalasai Stadium). Over 1,000 participants are expected to take part in the event. The distances include 2km, 6km and 10km. “Run2gether” is not about winning or losing, but about coming together to promote equal opportunities for all and to highlight the incredible accomplishments we can achieve when we work together.

For more information and registration, visit their Facebook page: @run2gether or call 086 069 5652.



Tussling tuskers at Anantara Polo

The King's Cup Elephant Polo Tournament is celebrating its 16th annual tournament at the Anantara Riverside Bangkok, hosting spectators, media members and players from across the world to join in celebrating Thailand's national animal from March 8 to 11. The tournament has become one of the biggest charitable events in Southeast Asia with over THB 46 million raised and donated to projects geared toward bettering the lives of Thailand's wild and domesticated pachyderm population. Some of the projects include: the world's first Thai Elephant Assisted Autistic Therapy Project, mahout community development initiatives, and wild elephant conservation.

Visit www.anantaraelephantpolo.com for further details.



Get in the groove at TNT Music Fest

Singha Corporation, in collaboration with TNT Music Evolution, presents “TNT Music Festival 2018”, a music festival featuring artists from a variety of genres from R&B and Hip Hop to EDM, on Feb 17 at BITEC Bangna. The lineup includes American hip hop artist-turned-DJ Lil Jon, Korean DJ Soda, and Thailand's top hip hop act Thaitanium.

Tickets are available at www.thaiticketmajor.com.



Black Valentine at Oasis Garden, Show DC

Show DC is hosting a “Black Valentine” concert on Feb 24, 5pm to 11pm, at its Oasis Garden. The lineup features a string of famous Thai singers including Burin Boonvisut, Stamp Apinart, Win Squeez Animal, and Ink Warantorn. Tickets are THB 500.

Tickets can be booked via www.ticketmelon.com/event/blackvalentine.

*Submit news, updates and press releases to: info@urbanaffairsmagazine.com.



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