

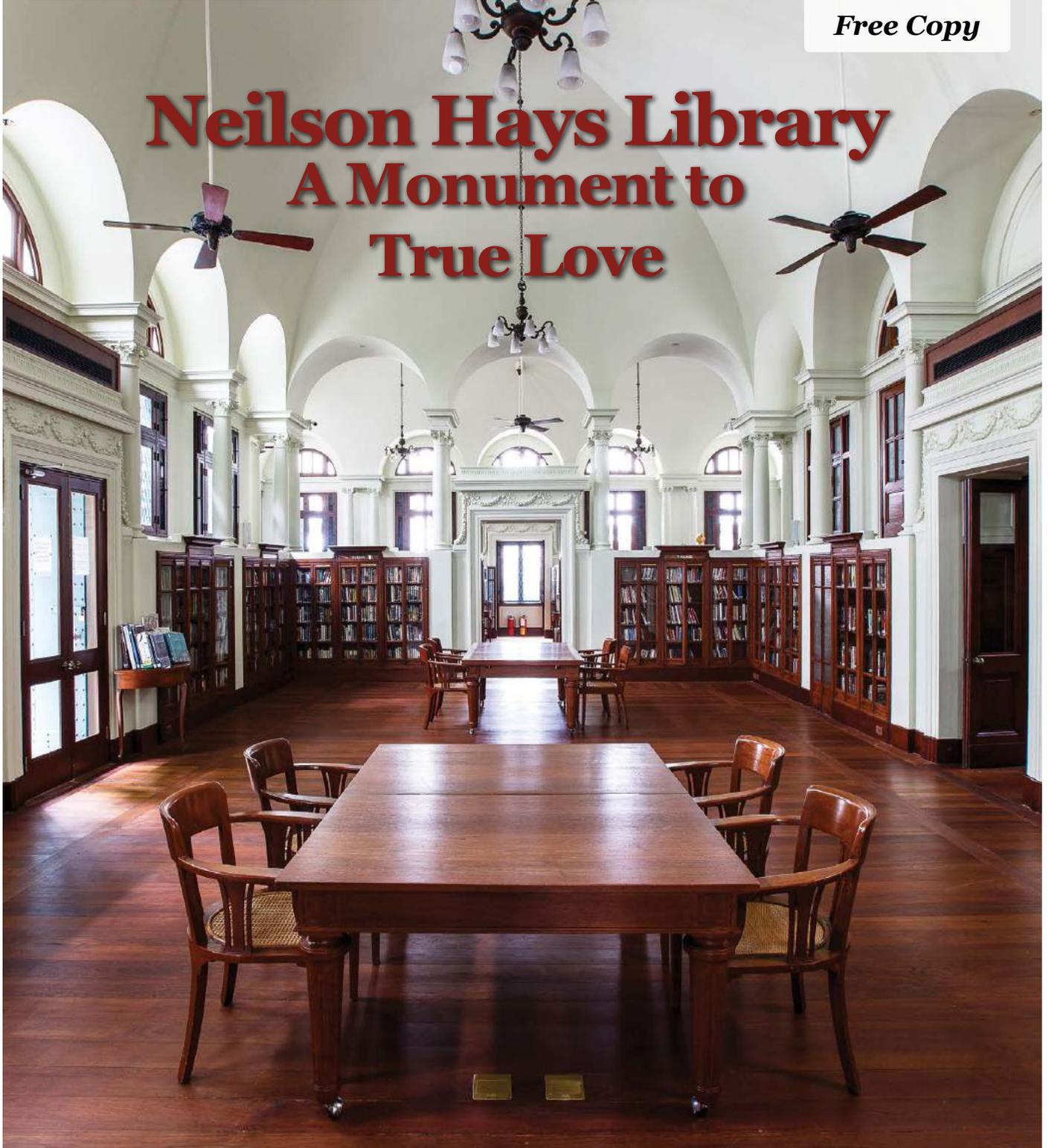
URBAN AFFAIRS

B A N G K O K

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Neilson Hays Library A Monument to True Love



An Artist's Touch

Chef Riley Sanders' gastronomic art with a star at Canvas

History of Love

How has love evolved over time

Lebua No. 3

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Editor's Letter

Worsening air pollution in Bangkok is a typical bureaucratic problem. The deteriorating air quality did not happen just yesterday, but it has been a chronic problem for a decade or so now. It has become apparent to us just these past two years that the levels of PM2.5 in Bangkok is dangerously high. Up until 2017, the Pollution Control Department (PCD) had refrained from reporting the levels of these airborne particulates in the country's Air Quality Index (AQI), stating that there were not enough PM2.5 monitoring devices installed in every monitoring station. So, they did not include the information in the report. As a result, we've been breathing in PM2.5 for years without a clue.

Discovering the problem is one thing, trying to fix it is another. No one's really sure what's causing the dense smog or whether the smog is fumes from cars, factories or burning garbage as a result of irresponsible behavior by some in the suburbs. People drive because our mass transportation is a mess. Even if all of the Skytrain lines are complete, they won't be able to catch up with the fast-growing urban sprawl. Commuters still need to hop on a motorbike or taxi on their way to a BTS station.

There's no one organization that's responsible for fixing these problems. The PCD, Bangkok Mass Transit Authority, and the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration are doing what they can to ameliorate the situation, but it's clearly not enough. This is where urgent implementation of the relevant policies should've kicked in years ago so that state agencies could've started making a concerted effort to solve the problem before it snowballed into a crisis it is now. A wide range of measures are open to the government: increasing usage of electric or hybrid cars, stricter enforcement of environmental laws and regulations on garbage disposal and toxic waste mismanagement, better mass transportation management/planning, imposing curbs on air pollutants from factories and vehicles, etc.

Not that policies haven't worked in the past. Airborne lead from vehicles was a serious threat to health in the 1980s. Between 1991 to 1995, the government launched a series of initiatives – lowering unleaded gasoline prices, assisting oil companies to distribute unleaded gasoline nationwide, revising environmental regulations, and educating the public about the dangers of airborne lead – to shift from leaded to unleaded gasoline consumption, and resulted in a significant decrease in the amount of lead in the air. But given the current state of affairs, we'll probably have to wait until after the election to see any long-term approach to deal with the air pollution. So, for now, please put on your masks and stay indoors until then.

-VT

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PHOTOGRAPHS: COURTESY OF THE NELSON HAYS LIBRARY



Out of True Love

BY PLOYLADA SIRACHADAPONG

February is always one of the most memorable months for me. Besides Valentine's day, it is also my birth month. So, I always consider February as a month of love and new beginning. Given the occasion, it'd be a shame not to mention one of Bangkok's monuments to love – the Neilson Hays Library.

Founded in 1869, the library has been a much-loved downtown institution for book lovers for decades. It has one of the largest English language book collections in Bangkok with over 17,000 books. The Neilson Hays Library – right in the heart of Silom and only a 15-minute walk from Chong Nonsi or Surasuk BTS stations – is set in an elegant neo-classic building shaded by tall trees.

Back in the 18th century, getting a bit homesick, expats turned to books for solace. English books were rare and considered luxury items back in those days. In 1869, a group of 13 British and American women established the Bangkok Ladies' Library Association in Bangkok. The association over time evolved into a fully operational library in 1897.

Around this time Jennie Neilson, the wife of Dr Thomas Hayward Hays (the chief physician of Royal Thai Navy Hospital), was one of the most active board members of the library. She served as president of the library for three terms and was the mainstay of the organization for 20 years until she passed away in 1920.

Overwhelmed with the love for his wife, Dr Hays decided to honor her by commissioning the construction of a new library in her memory and the result was a magnificent neo-classic building that stands to this day.

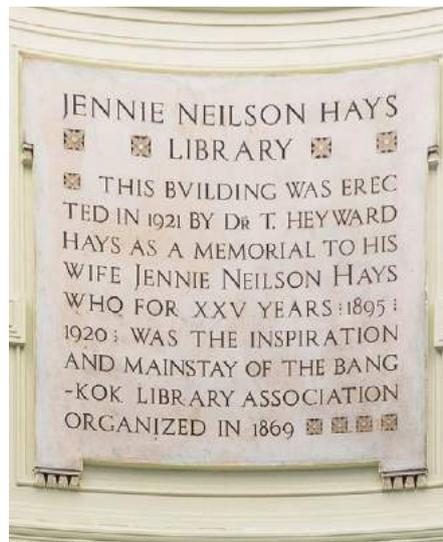
The library was designed by Italian architect Mario Tamagno, who was also responsible for design of the Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall. Tamagno ensured that Jennie's

love of reading was wisely portrayed in every square inch of the building. He came up with a design of a symmetrical building which featured practical double-layered walls to keep the library dry and well-ventilated.

The exterior is adorned with a beautiful Italianate dome, giving the place an air of luxury. Upon entering the teakwood-floor foyer, guests are astounded by the imposing entrance that serves as a unique art gallery hosting an art exhibition on a rotational basis. The dome's skylight allows natural light to enter, which complements the warm touch of the wooden furnishings in the interior.

The building's classical architecture is impressive with stucco reliefs, columns, and Victorian-style furniture that lends the building its vintage feel.

The stuccoed archway and neo-classic columns at the entrance create a sense of grandness. Plush wooden furniture and a collection of small chandeliers add to the interior's warm and cozy atmosphere enhanced by perfect lighting that is conducive to reading.



Providing the library with a laid-back atmosphere is a contemporary-style café situated just outside. The café is decorated with floor-to-ceiling windowpanes to let natural sunlight flood in. Near the café is a small English garden that is the perfect setting for a wedding and other private events.

Turning 100 years in 2022, the Neilson Hays Library will continue as a testament to Dr Hays' true love for his wife Jennie, and poised to serve the book-loving community in Thailand for many more years to come.

Neilson Hays Library

195 Surawong Rd., Suriyawongse, Bangrak

Tel. 02 233 1731

<https://neilsonhayslibrary.org>

PHOTOGRAPHS: COURTESY OF WIMONWAN SANTICHAROENLERT



A Taste of Sweet Success

BY CHRISTOPHER SCOTT DIXON

For many, the dream to turn a hobby into a small business remains just that, a dream. However, those who do take the bold step to transform that desire into reality can find much pleasure and satisfaction. Wimonwan Santicharoenlert is one such woman. She currently works as a legal officer for a property and asset management company in the city, but in her spare time learns how to bake cakes to perfection.

Around ten years ago she decided to expand her pleasure for baking to venture into a cake-making business she called “The Friendship Bakery.”

“The main reason I use this name is because friends are my inspiration, whether they be teachers, colleagues, or anyone who supports and encourages me in what I do,” says Wimonwan.

Even in this cynical, fast paced, hi-tech commercial world where companies will spend tens of millions in any currency to promote, market and hype their products and services, the most powerful form of advertising – word of mouth – helped Wimonwan grow her business.

“I was surprised, but very happy to discover that whoever ate my cakes asked me to bake for them again and again, so I thought why not develop what I was doing further and share my pastime with more people,” she explains.

For many modestly-sized enterprises there can be problems in trying to establish a customer base and penetrating a crowded or new market. This was not the case with Wimonwan. She feels she was fortunate as friends sampled her cakes, enjoyed them and passed on the comments to others, and orders came in without her having to do much active marketing herself.

As a wife and a working mother of two children, Wimonwan manages her time in a methodical fashion as you might expect from a lawyer. “I define baking as a hobby, so I have to do my duties as a full-time mom, wife and focus my work first, as those are the priorities. Only then do I go into the kitchen and start to think about my baking.”

Wimonwan makes a wide range of cakes and cup cakes in a variety of styles and flavors, including chocolate, coconut, blueberry, and strawberry. Some of her best-selling items are Orange and Thai Milk Tea cakes. Using online or cookbook recipes, she also adds her own twist to the cakes with extra ingredients. Preparation time is around two hours and all the products are delivered personally by Wimonwan to ensure they arrive safely.

Her passion for what she does is clear. “I love every single moment of what I do with the cakes, and when thinking about how my customers will enjoy them. I don’t have a particular target market, I just make them for everyone,” she adds.

There can be much competition among online businesses, but the feeling for Wimonwan is she is simply baking for a wide group of friends rather than seeking to lure people away from similar small cake or confectionery operators. When asked about the selling points for her products, Wimonwan feels they are a combination of the ingredients, taste and reasonable prices.

With the valuable experience of some ten years in baking and trading behind her, the advice Wimonwan has for

those budding entrepreneurs who might be contemplating setting up their own small business is this: “It might sound strange after such a long time, but I still don’t regard what I do as a business. It’s my hobby that has made me some money. So, I would advise anyone who would like to grow their hobby that they should start from love. To share the thing that you enjoy with others.”

As for the future, Wimonwan hopes that after retirement she will open a small shop to sell her wares. She is generous as well as modest. “I will give anyone who doesn’t have money a cake for free. To me a customer’s happiness is priceless, not the profit you make.”



The Friendship Bakery

Tel. 086 354 9836

Canvas

Food for the Palette

BY DAVE STAMBOULIS

Perhaps there is a reason why “palate” and “palette” sound the same. At the recently Michelin star-awarded Canvas, an artist’s touch is on display, and your taste buds are certain to be stimulated on all fronts. Chef Riley Sanders is the driving force behind the restaurant, which received one star from Michelin in their second edition of the Bangkok guide, and it offers one of Bangkok’s most creative and innovative takes on Thai cuisine, serving up six and nine-course tasting menus that ought to have visiting and local foodies lining up for months to come.

Sanders, 29, rose to the helm of Canvas rather suddenly, but his arrival here seems to fit all of his unique and impressive forays into the unknown. Graduating from the Texas Culinary Academy, Sanders then did stints at the Japanese fusion eatery Uchiko in Austin and later under the tutelage of 3-star Michelin chef Laurent Gras at L20 in Chicago, honing his skills in gastronomic fine dining. However, rather than going on to other openings or becoming a head sous chef, he thought about how he could combine his two passions, cooking and travelling, in a way to create a sustainable lifestyle. Answering an ad for cooking on private boats, Sanders hit the jackpot, ending up on a yacht owned by a wealthy retired couple who gave him free creative rein and an unlimited budget to experiment with in the kitchen while out at sea.

Not only did Sanders get to perfect his craft, but his schedule and

savings from the yacht afforded him time to travel the world, and he embarked on several years of world wandering, giving him the opportunity to explore markets, street food, fine dining establishments, and a plethora of different global cuisines.



He came to Bangkok several times during his travels, and it always struck him as a very vibrant and livable city, and most certainly one where food was king. He got involved with the people running the Rabbit Hole bar, started making tapas bar snacks for them, and evidently shared some common visions, as he got a team of investors interested in backing the opening of Canvas.

Sanders has focused on locally sourced Thai ingredients, highlighting the ones that have surprised him the most and turning them into sublime creations of Thai favorites that have been given an international twist using progressive culinary methods. Take his toasted rice bread, made with organic rice from Surin province and served with a brown butter and yellow chili emulsion, topped with salted egg yolk and toasted sticky rice. Light, flavor-packed, and so balanced in tastes, you’d wish you had a loaf to take home. Chef Riley says the idea behind it was to offer the Thai staple, rice, in a Western staple form, bread.

This *mélange* of food cultures comes out best in the next dish served, soy-smoked king mackerel prepared *sous vide* and served with an orgasmic paste made of ant eggs, dill, and horseradish. Sanders was inspired by Western “surf n’ turf” menus, only here turning the mackerel into the sea combined with one of Thailand’s unique inland ingredients, the ant eggs.

Interestingly enough, the staff at Canvas come to you prior to serving to ask if you have any allergies or if you don’t want to try certain things (ant eggs being one that many foreigners might have a few trepidations about). I asked Sanders about this and if some of the stranger Thai ingredients being served in a Michelin-starred restaurant might be a problem, but he merely shrugged and said, “I like to have a few things on the menu that are a bit challenging and push the boundaries a little.”

PHOTOGRAPH: DAVE STAMBOULIS



PHOTOGRAPHS: COURTESY OF CANVAS



The devotion to unique and locally sourced ingredients and the stories behind them are the essence of Canvas, and while the relaxed bistro décor might make you want to chill out at one of the hardwood tables that sit under a giant impressionist canvas, it's best to opt for a counter seat in front of the open kitchen, not only to watch Chef Sanders and his team in action, paying astute attention to the tiniest details, but also to get his detailed explanations of each dish as it arrives.

It is one thing to taste a divine piece of frog, cooked with sticky rice, finger root, and holy basil, but another to learn that the frog comes from a farm in Khao Yai, or that the edible flowers served with the dish are from a source in Samut Prakan, or that finger root (*krachai* in Thai) is related to galangal, but has a completely unique taste. It's here that Sanders' knowledge of Thai ingredients, how to use them, and how to experiment and create astounding, novel dishes with them really shines.



Make sure to save room for dessert, because the creations served here are as good as any of the predecessors. We arrived just as gooseberries came into season and were served several tart ones put over a sorbet and drizzled with stingless bee honey from Chanthaburi, probably the most aromatic and flavorful honey I have ever tasted.

At the end of the night, I felt dazzled along with being well sated. Taking a blank canvas and turning it into a gastronomic fantasy, Chef Sanders is most certainly living the life of Riley these days, and is showcasing Thai ingredients and the wonderful cuisine here like few others.

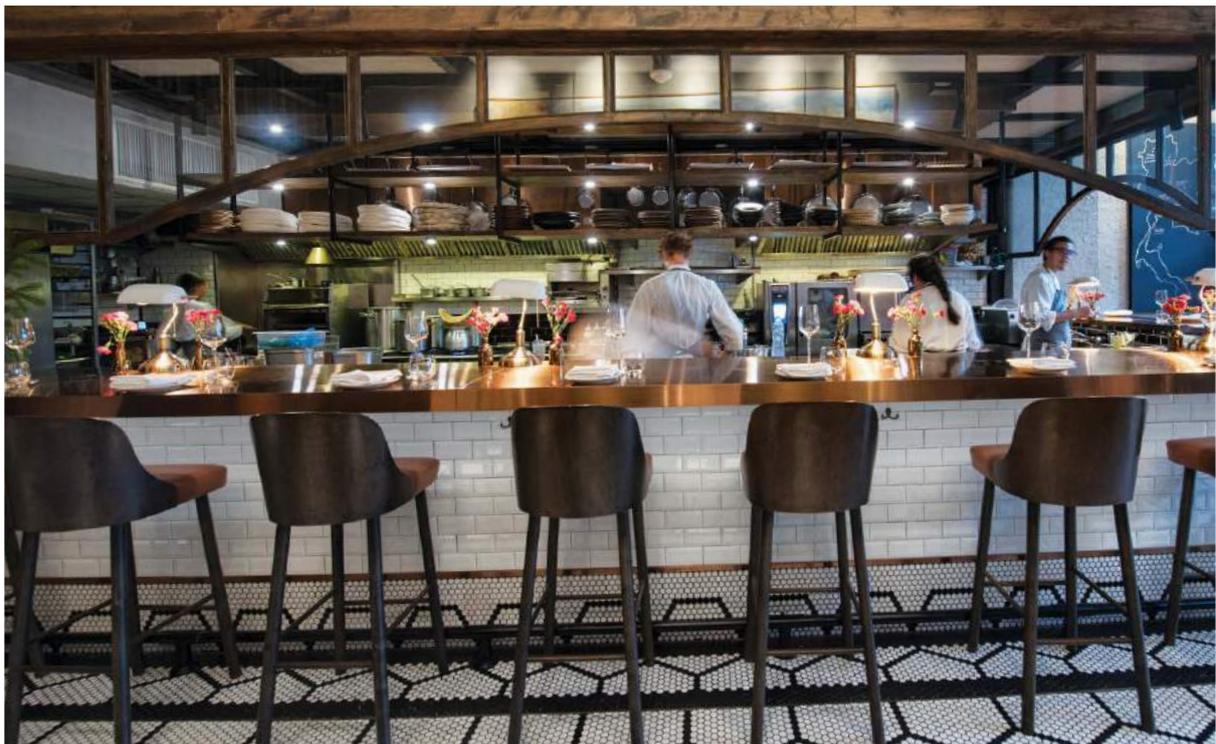
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Tea, from Past to Present

BY NAAM SOMBATANANTAKORN



1

The Chinese have been brewing tea for more than 4,000 years. Legend has it that the emperor Shennong, himself a keen herbalist, was boiling water under a tea bush when a dried tea leaf accidentally fell into the pot. He found the infusion refreshing and soon he developed a taste for it and got into the habit of adding more *cha* (tea) leaves into his boiling kettle from then onwards, thus creating one of the world's most popular hot drinks, tea.

Whether this is a folkloric tale or just a clever ploy to promote consumption of clean drinking water, tea drinking is a deep-rooted tradition that's been part of Chinese culture for millennia. It's believed that tea was first used as herbal remedies during an outbreak of cholera. Drinking water was boiled to kill germs, but people found it hard to consume plain boiled water when ill. So, they put dried tea leaves into the drink to create a satisfying aroma and taste. That is why the Chinese have a sip of hot tea throughout the day.

In the early days, tea was harvested and sun-dried for year-round consumption. Due to its benefits and popularity, tea farmers devised new ways of tea preservation. Disks or lumps of compressed dried tea leaves were produced for mainly horseback transportation. Exposed to the elements like heat and humidity and subjected to different climates of remote markets, some of the tea cargos turned bad. However, farmers found that the bad tea tasted even better, and so tea fermentation was developed to produce a range of flavors and aromas.

During the Han dynasty (206 BC - 220 AD) there were six land routes of tea exports or "Tea Roads". However, it was not until the 17th century that the West had its first taste of tea as a result of Amsterdam's tea imports from China by the Dutch East India Company. During the colonial era, the British brought commercial tea production to Assam, India in the hope of breaking China's stranglehold on the tea market.

PHOTOGRAPHS: NAAM SOMBATANANTAKORN



2

- 1 Tea should be brewed in a small pot.
- 2 A selection of compressed Chinese tea disks.

PHOTOGRAPHS: NAAM SOMBATANANTAKORN



3

- 3 Green tea contains useful antioxidants.
- 4 Matcha green tea. Matcha means powdered tea.
- 5 These snacks are central to the Chinese tea ritual.



4

It's believed that tea was introduced to Thailand sometime during the Sukhothai era when the kingdom had diplomatic relations with China. However, it was during the Ayutthaya era when tea was first mentioned in a book titled *Du Royaume de Siam* written by French diplomat and writer Simon de La Loubere. The book portrayed his observations of Siam and its people during his time in the country. At one stage, the writer described a host serving tea to welcome guests and the brewing method used to make tea.

Nowadays, there are several ways to consume tea. Tea is served cold, blended, iced, or even made into ice cream or jelly. Teas are divided into three categories: fresh tea, semi-fermented tea and fermented tea.

Fresh tea comes from fresh tea leaves that have been harvested, immediately steamed, and then dried. The process of harvesting starts best before the first light of the day and should be done quickly to retain the original flavor and the important enzymes making this type of tea perfect for being an antioxidant agent and sipping throughout the day instead of plain water. Examples of fresh tea include green tea and white tea.

Semi-fermented teas undergo 20% to 70% fermentation, which destroys the chlorophyll in the tea during the process. The tea develops a more tender green color with aromatic flower scents subjected to the condition during fermentation. The products from this procedure include polyphenols, which help relieve inflammation, and mild

caffeine that helps promote digestion and reduce fat, hence semi-fermented teas such as *oolong* are mostly served after a meal.

Fermented teas undergo 100% fermentation. Well-known fermented teas include black tea or *pu-erh* in Chinese. The color of the tea is brown-to-dark brown and the aroma is stronger, sometimes with added floral or fruity scents. The level of caffeine and polyphenols are intense (but still less than those in coffee), and can be served to help patients with diarrhea or mild stomach problems. Fermented teas are usually served during a meal.

The way tea is brewed is also important. Brew in a small pot and pour the tea out after each serving to get rid of the excess caffeine (the longer you brew the stronger the caffeine). Always keep the tea warm by pouring hot water and leave it for a few minutes before consuming. Hot tea contains catechin and theanine, which help block oxidation and relax your body. Don't leave your tea in the pot too long because besides the astringent taste, tannin in the tea would draw calcium and magnesium out of your body.

So, which tea is the best? The best tea is the tea you like. Give different types of tea a try and choose the flavor that tickles your fancy. Refrain from ready-to-drink and instant teas as they are high in sugar and caffeine. Make sure you observe how your body reacts to each type of tea. Relax and enjoy your cup of tea!





PHOTOGRAPHS: COURTESY OF LEBUA NO.3 AND DAVE STAMBOULIS



Lebua No. 3

World's Tallest Gin, Caviar, and Vodka Bar

BY DAVE STAMBOULIS



The Lebua at State Tower is already well known for its dazzling sky-high bars and restaurants. Some of Bangkok's top standout places to drink and eat are located here, hundreds of meters above the cityscape and Chao Phraya River.

Mezzaluna, winner of two Michelin stars, featuring fine French dining prepared by a Japanese chef, is here, as is the Sky Bar, whose "Hangoverini" (made with green tea liquor, Martini Rosso, green apple juice and rosemary-infused honey) became Bangkok's most talked about cocktail after it became the drink of choice of the cast filming *Hangover II* at the venue, using the high-rise bar as one of its settings. Now, the Lebua family welcomes "Lebua No. 3", officially the

world's highest gin, caviar, and vodka bar, with some exclusive drinks to go with its superlative views.

Located on the 52nd floor of the luxurious Tower Club at Lebua side of the hotel, Lebua No. 3 exudes elegance, combining three separate circular bars that each are responsible for the extravagant gin, vodka, and caviar that are being featured here. Bathed in soft blue glow with soft mood lighting on each circular bar, the city lights below get accented here, as there are jaw-dropping views on every side, an added bonus along of course with the stellar drinks and party atmosphere.

One enters the bar here via a spiral staircase that leads into a marbled entryway, where the letters

Lebua No. 3 light up over the floor, surrounded by rather surreal haloed blue light. Further in, you get the first of the circular bars, this one serving up vodka and set inside under a roof, with glossy black finish highlighting the bar and its prime position opposite the DJ zone and playstation. From here, you walk out onto the lit-up dance floor, with the caviar bar on one side of you and the gin bar just ahead.

On the other side is a walkway leading up to an observation skywalk, which looks out at the bar on one side and the elegant Ocean 52 restaurant on the other. The city views from up here are just staggering, going from the Chao Phraya all the way across all of Bangkok, a sea of neon glowing on all sides.

PHOTOGRAPH: DAVE STAMBOULIS

Back at the bar, many of the drinks here are made with the amazing premium Sipsmith London Dry Gin, which is featured in cocktail standouts like the “Glamour”, showcasing Sipsmith, Champagne Perrier Jouët, raspberry shrub, yuzu juice, and caviar air combined into one wild drink, or the “Negroni No. 3”, one of the most outstanding versions of this unique drink you’ll ever have, using Mancino Rosso, Mancino Chinato, Campari, and a green tea ice sphere to go with the gin.

Absolut vodka has also gotten into the action at Lebua No. 3, creating “Absolut Elyx”, a vodka that is manually distilled in a copper still, and available in Thailand only at the Lebua. Try a “Daniel Craig”, made with Plymouth gin, Mancino Bianco, absinthe, and Absolut Elyx, or a “Starry Night in Thailand”, concocted with Absolut Elyx, Capucana cachaca, yuzu, ginger, and charcoal.

While caviar isn’t really my forte, a visit to Lebua No. 3 has changed all of that. The bar here has partnered up with the Caviar House of Bangkok to create

a “caviar goes casual” scene, where Lebua No. 3 aims for an “affordable luxury for all” concept. Here, you get a serving of this superb local caviar plated on a Himalayan-salt spoon, which gets paired with a shot of vodka.

I never knew this, but evidently the best way to sample caviar is to rub some onto the upper side of your hand, allowing the caviar to mix with your sweat which enhances the taste of the roe. My partner and I tried this out and were wildly impressed, and the caviar went down neither too fishy nor too salty. While traditional lovers of caviar suggest eating it right off a metal spoon, this was even one step better. And better yet, the pairing of the caviar with vodka was absolutely perfect (or should I say Absolut perfect!). I’m also not a fan of straight vodka shots, but here the vodka when drunk right after a mouthful of caviar, went down smooth and sweet, far more like a mellow wine than a shot of hard liquor.

If you’re in the mood to party here, Lebua No. 3 exceeds on all fronts. Between the bars there is a digital

retina display dance floor, which alternates between flower patterns, changing mood lighting and different colors, and a high-performance sound system that will keep the sounds of an international music play list going throughout the night. Tunes are spun by Ukrainian producer and DJ Taly Shum, who started her career as a dancer, and has since moved into the club world as a prominent international DJ, and is currently in-residence full time at Lebua.

It’s the perfect venue to party, unwind and see Bangkok at its most dazzling. Not surprisingly, the Lebua opened the bar back in December with a week of stunning parties, inviting all the Miss Universe contestants in for a night of photo-shooting out on the terrace, plus plenty of Thai celebrities, models, and a whole slew of the bespoke and be-seen crowd. Now mere mortals are the partygoers, but this remains the one best spot for that special date, celebration, or just one darn good venue to hang out with friends. Just don’t forget your camera; the dizzying shots that you’ll get from up here are not just the result of the drinks.

PHOTOGRAPH: DAVE STAMBOULIS



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Medical Tourism on the Rise

BY J. PAKCHUEN

The terms “medical tourism”, or “wellness tourism”, has been bandied about for the past decade. The lucrative sector involves people from rich countries traveling to less-developed countries to obtain medical care. They do so for a number of reasons, one of which is that they can seek better or comparable medical care while paying a lot less than they do in their own country. Thailand, for example, has been one of the top ten destinations for inexpensive medical treatment. That is something we like to brag about.

First and foremost, many patients visit developing countries for medical purposes because of the affordable price. The cost of treatment in most developed countries is very high. A short visit to a doctor in the US for a small cut can ring up a bill of over \$100, while larger procedures may cost much more.

The waiting time is also quite a hassle. I remember seeing a doctor in the US for the first time for a simple cold. I needed to make an appointment at least 2 weeks in advance. By the time I received medical attention, I’d already recovered from over-the-counter medicine. For a less-urgent appointment, the waiting time is much worse. A survey by the national physician search firm Merritt Hawkins in 15 major cities in the US has revealed that it takes patients an average of 24 days to schedule an appointment with a doctor.

Most private hospitals and small clinics in Thailand usually welcome walk-in patients and outpatients are taken care of on a first-come, first-served basis. Most hospitals here also take all forms of credit cards and can even issue an English itemized receipt so that medical tourists can reimburse them with their insurance company if it covers the care received abroad.

Also, many medical tourists can enjoy a stay in a luxury hotel or resort that has a program to support medical tourists after surgery. Many wellness tourists who come to Thailand also try health programs for alternative therapies such as Ayurveda, herbalism, detoxification, yoga, emotional balance, weight management, and stress relief sessions. After the treatments, they can indulge themselves with a holiday on the beach in the south, relax in a resort up in the northern highlands, or stay at specially designed wellness centers found throughout Bangkok.

Getting a specific medical treatment in many developing countries, however inexpensive, doesn’t mean you have to compromise the quality of care. The Joint Commission International (JCI), an international body that provides certification to hospitals worldwide ensuring quality of medical treatment, has accredited hospitals and clinics in different countries, including over 60 in Thailand. Thailand was actually the first Asian country to achieve Joint Commission International (JCI) accreditation in 2002.

Some of the hospitals provide different kinds of medical services that may not be legal or widely available in the patient’s home country. Thailand is well known for providing many of these challenging treatments such as fertility treatment, open-heart surgery and gender reassignment surgery.

Notwithstanding some language barriers, the dietary, cultural and weather issues, or the risk of flying back home during recovery period, there are still more pros than cons when it comes to obtaining medical care in Thailand. That’s why foreign tourists will continue to visit Thailand as a medical hub.



PHOTOGRAPH: RAWPIXEL / UNSPLASH



PHOTOGRAPH: JONAS VINCENT / UNSPLASH

In Search of the History of Love

BY SWISA ARIYAPRUCHYA

It is not easy writing about “love” and yet, it is a topic that prevails everywhere and expressed through every medium. Songs aim to depict all sorts of emotions related to love as do love stories, movies and poems. Art and literature expresses love and its intricacies for it’s a topic that resonates with all and is very much a part of our lives. In a conversation with my husband, we discussed the history of love and thus began my research on the topic. What I found overwhelmed me and led me through a journey of time and love.

First of all, I discovered that googling “history of love” gave me around 5.8 billion results in 1.41 seconds and that the first three pages was almost entirely dedicated to a book-turned-movie called *The History of Love* by Nicole Krauss. I admit I have not read nor seen the movie, but it intrigues me for it even won the 2008 William Saroyan International Prize for Writing and the movie seems to have an acceptable rating. When something finally unrelated to the book or movie came up in Google, it was an article on BBC Earth entitled “The Sinister Reason Why People Fall in Love.”

According to the article, love has its origins in death and violence. The

journey began since the beginning of time when organisms first used sex to pass on genes to the next generation and brains started to develop over many millions of years. Brains are an essential part to “love” and through evolution, it became increasingly bigger, and therefore, babies are born earlier before their heads become too big to pass through the birth canal. Having a child entirely dependent upon the parent after birth over a long period of time resulted in new risks for the parent. Until this day, many primates do not mate until the infant is weaned. As a result, infanticide occurs in order for males to get access to the female primate.

Researchers suggest that to prevent this behavior of infanticide, monogamy may have evolved. For over 20 million years it “consistently preceded monogamy in evolution.” Some disagree and believe that monogamy was a result of “mate guarding” to ensure that no one else mates with the female. An alternative view is that “love” developed from the strong mother-child bond and eventually transformed into romantic love. There currently seems to be no consensus on how “love” evolved but there is an agreement on how important our limbic system is at each stage of how we love and how chemically influenced we are.

In search of a more historical context, I next tried searching for when love first appeared in literature and was taken back to the time of Greek philosophers Plato and Socrates. In Plato’s dialogue, *The Symposium*, he talks about love and explained that there are two types of love: earthly love and divine love. Earthly love is mere physical attraction (sexual), while divine love is interpreted to mean love of a higher level of understanding that relates to philosophy and wisdom (non-sexual). This is what we now more commonly refer to as “platonic” love, a word that has its origins from Plato. There is much literature on love and many linked to ancient beliefs and mythology.

My quick search for the history of love brought me on a fascinating journey of discovery. I learned in my fact-finding mission that there is no single history of love nor a consensus on what love is. The fact is, we all write our own love stories and create our own history of love. Each experience enhanced by our limbic system which generates a mix of chemical reactions that give us all the states of emotions which we call “love.” As correctly written in Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, “Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind, and therefore is wing’d Cupid painted blind.”

NIKE AIR MAX DIA

BY PEKKY THE ANGEL

PHOTOGRAPHS: COURTESY OF NIKE



Designed exclusively for a woman's foot, Nike's new "Nike Air Max Dia" is the result of a collaboration of four female sneaker experts of the brand: a designer, product engineer, product developer, and product manager. The Nike Air Max Dia ticks all the boxes when it comes to comfort and look. The model comes with a minimal upper, a toe-box, low collar and exaggerated foam midsole for a lifted look. The four dots on the heel represent the four experts. The tooling is the shoes' true signature feature, plus the stack height and the Max Air unit that provides underfoot cushioning.

Priced at **THB 4,200**, the Nike Air Max Dia is available at ATMOS, Carnival Store, SEEK, VAC, JD Sports, Nike Stores, Central Department Stores, and The Mall.

POMELO

combines tradition and modernity

BY PEKKY THE ANGEL



PHOTOGRAPHS: COURTESY OF POMELO

The online fashion brand Pomelo welcomes Chinese New Year with a dominant color scheme of red and gold, intricate embroideries and fine Asian-inspired prints for its Chinese New Year collection, which captures the refreshing essence of modernism while giving a respectful nod to tradition.

Composed of over a hundred diverse pieces ranging from dresses and bodysuits to accessories and everything in between, the collection is designed for fashion-forward

women celebrating the auspicious festival, but its appeal extends beyond this occasion. The collection includes the "Chinese Frog Cami Jumpsuit" with its modern touch; the "Mini Satin Classic Print Dress" that's steeped in tradition; and the "Midi Side Slit Classic Print Skirt" that's just a great complement to a sumptuous feast.

The Chinese New Year Collection is now available on the brand's e-commerce platform at PomeloFashion.com and via its iOS and Android online shopping applications.





AVEDA'S *new Invati Advanced Solutions collection*

BY PEKKY THE ANGEL



Hair loss is a universal problem, not only for middle-aged men. Women are prone to the condition, too, as they're constantly worried about their appearances. If it's not genetic, then it always comes down to your lifestyle, what you eat, and the haircare products you're using.

Aveda, a global franchise that specializes in haircare products, has launched the new "Invati Advanced Solutions" collection to tackle thinning hair. Comprised of an "Exfoliating Shampoo" (THB 1,300), "Thickening Conditioner" (THB 1,300) and "Scalp Revitalizer" (THB 3,600), the products are 98% naturally derived and features an invigorating blend of Ayurveda herbs.

Visit any branch of the Aveda Experience Center near you – Siam Paragon, Central Department Stores, The EmQuartier and The Emporium, and MEGA Bangna.

PHOTOGRAPHS: COURTESY OF AVEDA

Valentine's treats at Mandarin Oriental



BY PEKKY THE ANGEL

Looking for a special treat for your loved ones during the month of love? Come and check out what the Mandarin Oriental Bangkok's pastry team has crafted for their all-new Valentine's-inspired delicacy selection, including "Red Rose Vanilla and Wild Berries Tart", "Kiss Me Cake", "Heart Chocolate Lollipops", "Heart-Shaped Macaroons", and "Shortbread-Dipped Chocolates." They look good and taste even better!

These special treats can be found during Feb 1 - 14 at all branches of the Mandarin Oriental Shop, including in Siam Paragon, Central Chidlom, The Emporium, Gaysorn Village, and the hotel's Lobby Corner.



For more information,
contact 02 659 9000 Ext. 7311 or
www.mandarinoriental.com/bangkok .



PHOTOGRAPHS: COURTESY OF MANDARIN ORIENTAL

February

Getaway deals galore at Thai International Travel Fair

The Thai Travel Agents Association (TTAA) is organizing “Thai International Travel Fair 2019” from **Feb 13 to 17** at the Queen Sirikit National Convention Center. The fair aims to promote Thailand’s tourism industry and introduce a great selection of domestic and outbound tour programs to fairgoers and tourists. Tour operators, hotels and resorts, airlines and other tourism-related companies are represented in the fair. All are welcome. For more information, call 02 214 6175 or visit www.titf-ttaa.com.



Singha x Bangkok Bar Crawl presents Love Island

Singha x Bangkok Bar Crawl's first event of the year, "LOVE ISLAND", is scheduled to take place on **Feb 15** at Gypsy Bar Sukhumvit 29. Come and celebrate the month of love, post-Valentine's Day, with new friends, singles, married folks and those recently jilted in a classic “bkkbarcrawl” setting. The highlight is the speed dating session! The venue has a seating capacity of 50, so book early. Tickets at THB 700 and available via www.ticketmelon.com/bkkbarcrawl/loveisland.

Peppa Pig to wow Bangkok fans

Peppa Pig is on her way to Thailand! Peppa and other favorite cartoon characters from the Peppa Pig family are coming together for “Peppa Pig Live Celebration 2019 in Bangkok” that’s being held for the first time in Thailand from **Feb 15 to 17** at GMM Live House. The family-friendly show is presented in English, so it’s a great opportunity for children to learn English while having lots of fun. For more information and to book tickets, visit www.thaiticketmajor.com/performance/peppa-pig-live-celebration-201-en.html.



RMHC Mini Marathon Run for Kids 2019

The RMHC Mini Marathon for Kids is back! Participants can either run for a good cause or enjoy a family funfair together on **Feb 17** at Lumpini Park. The registration fees are THB 500 for the 10.5 km-run and THB 400 for the 3 km-run. The proceeds after deductions will go to the Ronald McDonald House Charities Thailand Foundation that helps sick children and their families. Visit amazingfield.net for more information.

Siam Sinfonietta to play Mahler’s Fourth

Thailand’s acclaimed youth orchestra, the Siam Sinfonietta, will perform The Symphony No. 4 in G major by Gustav Mahler under the baton of Somtow Sucharitkul on **Feb 17** at Thailand Cultural Center. Operatic singer Barbara Zion (soprano) will take the stage. The Siam Sinfonietta is well known around the world, having won five international main awards including three at festivals in Carnegie Hall. The ensemble’s particularly known for its interpretations of Mahler symphonies, having performed them at prestigious venues such as the Berlin Konzerthaus, Musikverein Vienna, Prinz Regenten Theater Munich as well as on numerous occasions at Thailand Cultural Center. Tickets are THB 200 and THB 500 and can be booked through www.ticketmelon.com/operasiam/mahler.



‘Kodaline’ to headline Mangosteen Music Festival

The wait is finally over as Kodaline, one of the world’s most successful rock bands of our times, is set to make their Thailand debut on **Feb 22** at BITEC Bangna’s Hall 106 as part of “Singha Corporation presents Mangosteen Music Festival: Detour”. The Irish rock band is the creator of such hits as “All I Want”, “High Hopes”, “Love Will Set You Free”, and “The One”. Other artists joining the music fest include Polycat and Phum Viphurit who will be performing their smash hits. Tickets start at THB 2,800 and can be booked via www.ticketmelon.com/mangosteenfest/detour.

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

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