

# URBAN AFFAIRS

B A N G K O K

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## The Bank of Thailand Learning Center *Thai Currency Through the Ages*

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on the Chao Phraya banks

### **Flying Light**

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for your summer holidays

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## Editor's Letter

**W**hy is life so complicated? I've tried to minimize my exposure to news feeds online, but to no avail. I can't help peeking from time to time at what's going on in the world. The news remains the same: daily bomb attacks in the Middle East with children dying from either the blasts or hunger, another US school mass shooting followed by mouth-bashing from both sides about gun controls and madmen (and they were mostly men). At home, there's news about a famous business tycoon caught red-handed while apparently on a poaching spree in a national park, and about two Bangkok women axe-bashing a shopper's pickup truck that was blocking their driveway.

The fact that I'm numbed by all of this and said "the news remains the same" with a casual indifference, is sad enough. But it saddens me even more that, whenever I am reading the comments below each news item, I would be totally baffled by the kind of divisiveness and senseless keyboard-pounding that is going on out there. If they are really writing their mind and expressing their true opinions, I think we're headed for a very scary future.

Do we really have to disagree, take sides, and comment on every issue all the time? Can't we just see things the way they are anymore? That war is bad, gun controls badly needed, wildlife poaching absolutely illegal, and that pulling up in front of someone else's entryway is a complete no-no? I may be oversimplifying things, but don't we have so many other things to worry about already? Should we spend more time taking stock of what we have done with our lives? Have we spent enough time with our loved ones? Have we made our lives meaningful so that people can remember us after we leave this world?

I remember listening to that mid-afternoon phone-in radio program by famous host Veera Teerapat in which people call in to talk on all kinds of issues. When he was in a good mood, the discussions would be very educational and entertaining (to say the very least). But if he was grumpy and people called in to voice their opinions about political issues or any headline news, he would listen quietly, and then ask, "What do you do for a living?" The answers would be quite broad: fresh market vendors, taxi drivers, retired grandmas, etc. (well, who else's listening to the radio at 3:30 pm these days?). He'll then ask if the business is going well (to which the answer is usually "No") and he'll cut to the chase saying that rather than wasting time ranting, wouldn't the caller be better off thinking of ways to make more money or improve their own lives? This would usually be followed by a short silence and a quick "thank you" from the caller before hanging up. That until the next caller dials in wanting to discuss about another big story in the news. And the loop continues, just like life itself. *C'est la vie.*

- VT

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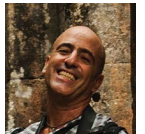
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Born and raised in Bangkok, **J. Pakchuen** studied English and translation at Chulalongkorn University. Currently, she lives in Washington, D.C. where she works as a translator, interpreter, writer, and tour guide.



Based in Bangkok, **Ploylada Sirachadapong** started her writing career as a food critic, and after eight years of visiting restaurants around Bangkok she now expands her writing genre to include travel, fashion and architecture.



**Pekky The Angel** is a fashion, beauty and lifestyle expert and blogger. Visit her page at [www.facebook.com/pekkytheangel/](http://www.facebook.com/pekkytheangel/) or [www.pekkytheangel.com](http://www.pekkytheangel.com).



Born and based in Bangkok, **Naam Sombatanantakorn** is one of the co-founders of Viajente, a travel agency that offers various natural and cultural travel programs. She is a lifelong learner and loves to travel.



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English-born **Christopher Scott Dixon**, based in Bangkok, is an experienced writer and ex-BBC radio reporter/presenter. He has contributed many features to a variety of publications in Thailand and in the UK. He has also written 17 books across different genres and is a qualified teacher.



**Swisa Ariyaprachya** was born in Switzerland and spent her childhood growing up in Belgium, Poland, Thailand and the USA. She is multilingual and speaks four languages. Apart from her work as a central banker, she began her lifestyle blog *Having "Me" Time* in 2010 and has since continued to write in her spare time. She is also co-founder of Booster Education Co., Ltd. and Booster Analytics Co., Ltd.



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# The Birthplace of Thai Currency

BY NAAM SOMBATANANTAKORN



PHOTOGRAPHS: NAAM SOMBATANANTAKORN

1

If you happen to cross the Chao Phraya River via Rama VIII Bridge, you will notice two gigantic buildings: a chateau and a modern, curved concrete-roof building. Both of them are now under the supervision of the Bank of Thailand (BOT). As we know the main mission of the BOT as the central bank of Thailand is to conduct monetary policy to ensure economic stability for relentless growth. The BOT has another significant role: sharing knowledge

about the history of Thailand's currency and economics. Located at Bangkhunprom Palace, a former residence of Prince Paribatra Sukhumbhand, the BOT is welcoming visitors to its new facility: **The Bank of Thailand Learning Center** that houses the Bank of Thailand Museum, a hi-tech library, and a co-working space. The Learning Center occupies a building that was once the sole banknote-printing house of Thailand from 1969 to 2006.



PHOTOGRAPH: TEERARAT YAEMNGAMLUEA

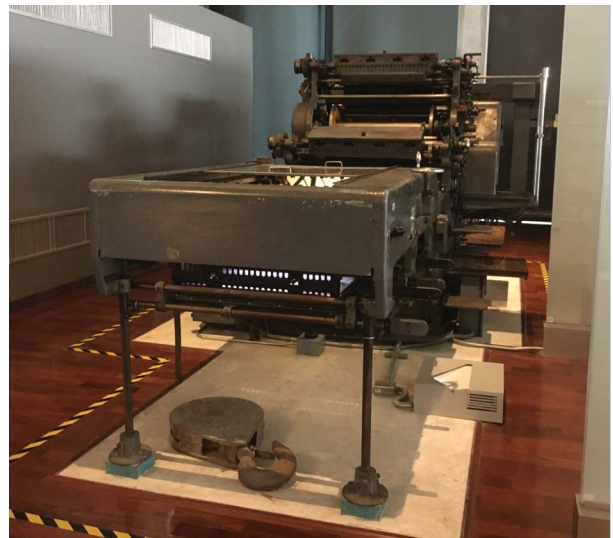


2

### Bank of Thailand Museum

Of real interest to visitors is the first room that hosts a banknote-printing exhibition with three massive printing machines on display. Don't miss the "Security Room", once regarded as the safest place in the Kingdom. The 5-story museum traces the history of the world's currencies and Thailand's money, and highlights the interesting facts about the BOT's mission and responsibilities. The exhibits are labelled in Braille for the visually impaired and in QR codes.

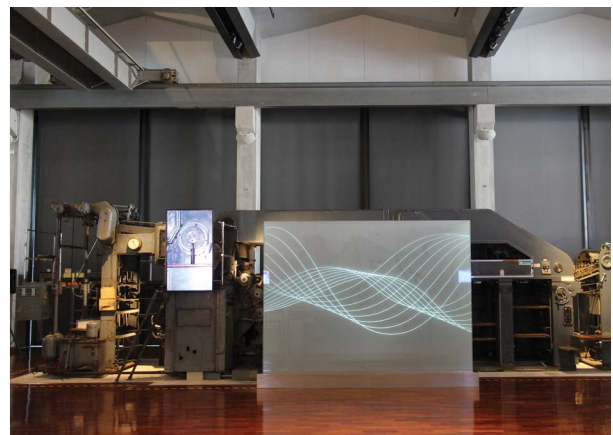
This museum is open for all to see. Entry is by advance reservation, however. Guided tours are conducted at 9:30am, 10:00am, 10:30am, 11am, 1pm, 1:30pm, and 2:30pm, Tuesday to Sunday. Each tour consists of 80 people at the maximum and takes 90 minutes.



3



5



4

1 Entrance to the Bank of Thailand Learning Center

2 - 4 Banknote-printing machines

5 The "Security Room"





6



PHOTOGRAPHS: TEERARAT YAEMNGAMLUEA

7



### Prince Vivadhanajaya Library

Besides general books, this library is well stocked with financial publications. It boasts the “E-resources Corner”, a multimedia room and a safety room (the BOT’s main archives) where all the printed banknotes, important documents and other records are kept. Furthermore, the meeting room and the auditorium are open for use by working groups.

### Public Space

There are plenty of open spaces reserved for temporary exhibitions and other events. The building is designed for leisure or working purposes. The spacious outdoor garden has spectacular river views.

The museum café serves light refreshments with the luxury of a river view. Coffee tables, working corners, power outlets are everywhere. This place would be of interest to those looking for inspiration.

Entry to the Learning Center is free until July 4 when an admission fee of THB 50 is introduced. The center charges an annual membership fee of THB 1,500.

### The Bank of Thailand Learning Center

273 Samsen Road, Watsamphraya  
02 283 5353  
www.bot.or.th



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9



PHOTOGRAPHS: TEERAT YAEMNGAMLUUEA

- 6 A scenic view of Rama III Bridge
- 7 The Prince Vivadhanajaya Library
- 8 Dok Chan money, named for their marks that look like asterisks
- 9 Limited-edition banknotes from previous special occasions
- 10 Public space in which to read and relax

10







# Praya Palazzo

## Bangkok's Most Tranquil Staycation

BY DAVE STAMBOULIS



2

**L**iving the daily grind in Bangkok, at times it can even be difficult to escape and relax. Those who are fortunate enough to be able to do so often are faced with expensive flights to Samui, Phuket (which have their own traffic and overdevelopment woes), or further afield, to spots that are time consuming to reach. Heck, sometimes even getting into the packed BTS with a suitcase can be nerveing enough to make one not want to go out. Fortunately, once you make the effort to check in at Praya Palazzo, you won't need to go anywhere, and you'll be recreating in Bangkok's most tranquil spot, enjoying a slice of Chao Phraya and old Bangkok history.

Palladian architecture, inspired by the classic temple styles of the ancient Greeks, took off in Europe in the 17th and 18th centuries. In Thailand, when King Chulalongkorn (Rama V) sought

to modernize and open up the country, foreign architecture came along with other developments, and some of Bangkok's most beautiful buildings were built in this style, in small communities on the banks of the Chao Phraya.

Praya Palazzo, first known as "Ban Bang Yee Khan," was built in 1923 by a European architect for Colonel Praya Chollabhumipanich, a Thai-Chinese nobleman who handled Far East affairs for the king. Sitting on the Thonburi side, the house was reached only via boat and gave easy access to looking out over all of Bangkok's river commerce. Chollabhumipanich died in 1938, and his family stayed in the mansion until 1946, by which in time, roads had replaced the river as the main form of transportation. The family bought another home on the Bangkok side of the Chao Phraya, and donated

the house to the Muslim Community Foundation, which opened Ban Bang Yee Khan as a school, replacing the old school in the neighborhood which had been destroyed during WWII. The school, called Rachakarun, functioned successfully until 1978, when it was forced to close due to financial difficulties.

Following this, the house was leased to a private firm which used it as a vocational school, but this too closed in 1996, and the building sat abandoned for more than a decade. Fortunately, a Thai professor and architect, Wichai Pitakvorrarat, lived across the river from the mansion, and he used to marvel over its architecture and wondered what was becoming of the historic home. Taking further interest, he and his wife teamed up to restore and renovate Ban Bang Yee Khan to its former glory.

PHOTOGRAPHS: DAVE STAMBOULIS

- 1 Praya Palazzo's entrance
- 2 One of the most tranquil spots overlooking the Chao Phraya river



PHOTOGRAPH: DAVE STAMBOULIS



3

PHOTOGRAPH: COURTESY OF PRAYA PALAZZO



4

3 Praya Palazzo's in-house restaurant  
4 Junior Suite 5 The outdoor swimming pool



PHOTOGRAPH: COURTESY OF PRAYA PALAZZO



5

The building had been damaged by floods and not taken care of for ages, and additionally, it was extremely expensive to do restorations, as all construction materials had to be transported by boat due to the lack of road access, not to mention many of the materials and original construction styles were often hard to find or replicate. However, in 2009 the mansion was reborn as a hotel named Praya Palazzo, and today has become one of Bangkok's most idyllic escapes.

While just a stone's throw from trendy Phra Athit Road, the river separates Praya Palazzo from all of Bangkok's chaos. The hotel has a private barge which runs day and night, and guests are given a cell phone to use throughout their stay, so they can call for a journey any time they want to go out or come home, so one never feels inconvenienced. Those looking for a staycation will never want to leave though, as being car and road-free here, it feels like one is staying on a remote island somewhere, far from the city lights.

There are only 17 rooms at the boutique hotel, furnished with hand-made antiques, along with modern features like DVD players, flat-screen TVs, free Wi-Fi, and bathrooms feature large tubs to soak away the evening in. The property itself is intimate, with a grassy courtyard as well as a 15-meter freshwater lap pool set right by the river, with sun loungers to nap on. If you get bored, there is a library with books to read (along with a small art gallery) and the retro-colonial

dining room offers afternoon tea complimented by traditional Thai sweets for those who want to stay out of the sun.

The in-house restaurant also squelches any need to set out across the river as well, serving up sublime hard-to-find Thai recipes handed down by the Royal Palace. *Tom jiew*, a spicy herbal soup that dates back to the courts of Rama V, isn't found on most menus in Bangkok, and heads a list of great authentic Thai offerings. The *pla kapong jian nam makaam*, fried sea bass with tamarind sauce is divine, with the thick hearty flavor of the tamarind sauce adding a real kick to the delicious fish, and the various Thai meat salads, such as the *yam nuea* spicy grilled beef features abundant slices of imported beef cuts that are topped with a lime, shallot, chilies, herbs, and fish sauce dressing. Guests can opt for dinner in the cool retro restaurant, or else sit out right next to the river.

On a recent stay here, I kept being reminded that I really wasn't far from home, actually just a short ferry and BTS ride away, and yet the complete stillness, absence of noise, and disappearance of all signs of my normal Bangkok-busy-ness made me realize what an excellent escape this was, the type of staycation I could most definitely use more of.

#### **Praya Palazzo**

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# Know Your Carbon Footprint

BY SWISA ARIYAPRUCHYA

The other day I accidentally overheard a few United Nations staff happily discussing their shopping experience at a local market near my office. One lady excitedly told her friends that a vendor at the market mentioned how she could distinguish UN staff from those from other organizations by the fact that UN staff usually refused plastic bags. I turned around and looked. Indeed, the group of UN staffers were all carrying their own personal shopping bags. As one of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals is it to take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts, it is wonderful that UN staffers are taking the environmental cause to heart and implementing the policies. It triggered my environmental conscience and pushed me to be more conscious of my own carbon footprint.

According to the *Merriam Webster* dictionary, carbon footprint is defined as “the amount of greenhouse gases and specifically carbon dioxide emitted by something (such as a person’s activities or a product’s manufacture and transport) during a given period.” When we drive our cars or cool our house, we create a certain amount of carbon dioxide, commonly known as “CO<sub>2</sub>”. Looking at the World Bank data on Thailand’s CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (metric tons per capita), we are ranked quite well globally, but the data shows an increasing trend.

I was curious to understand my own carbon footprint and through available online tools I learnt that my way of life in cosmopolitan Bangkok resulted in a yearly carbon emissions significantly higher than the world’s average. You can use online tools made available by organizations such as the US Environmental Protection Agency or the World Wide Fund for Nature to see how much carbon your household emits yearly. Travel was a big share of the culprit as I take multiple flights per year as well as my daily commute to work.

Another category in which I was high in was the carbon footprint in my home and in the food I ate. I did not use enough energy saving tools and when I buy food and snacks, they are put in separate plastic bags and containers. I am provided with plastic utensils and have hot drinks in plastic lined paper cups. I eat meat and do not always buy locally sourced products.

I had always thought I was on the low side on the carbon emission scale as I reuse plastic bags, bring my own shopping bags to the supermarket (when I don’t forget), and try to drink coffee in-store to avoid using paper cups. I clearly wasn’t doing enough. Reading up, I was surprised to learn that even the kind of foods we eat affect the carbon footprint we create.

What are some recommended ways to reduce our carbon footprint?

Firstly, the *National Geographic* recommend making our homes energy efficient. Use energy saving light sources such as LED light bulbs which consume up to 80% less energy than traditional incandescent light bulbs. Keep your house at an average temperature, not too cool in winter or too warm in winter. Replace old appliances with more energy efficient ones.

Secondly, when you travel try to use public or shared transportation. Electric and hybrid cars consume less energy and if you keep your tires inflated, your car would consume even less energy. Also don’t carry extra weight than is necessary. Is there something in the trunk you could remove?

Finally, it’s the food you eat and what you buy at the store. If you buy locally sourced products that are seasonal, it would have required less energy to produce. Don’t buy more food than necessary. Each year wasted food accounts for a large part of carbon dioxide emissions. Try to minimize packaging or buy in bulk. To reduce usage of plastic bottles, refill water bottles. The UK earlier this year came out with a scheme to allow plastic bottles to be filled with water for free at local pubs and restaurants in an effort to reduce waste. UK MPs are also calling for ways to reduce the use of paper cups with plastic linings. Did you know that those cups are extremely difficult to recycle because it is difficult to remove the plastic lining? I had always thought they were environmentally friendly.

I now realize how little I know with regards to what creates carbon footprint. It’s a work in progress and I have much to learn. For the meantime, let’s take action where we can. Let’s track our own carbon footprint and minimize it where we can. Let’s increase environmental conscience and make it fashionable.





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PHOTOGRAPHS: COURTESY OF GAYSORN VILLAGE



# Gayson Village

## Rejuvenating Your Work-Life Balance

BY PLOYLADA SIRACHADAPONG

**M**any people have no choice but to spend most of their time working in the office or co-working spaces, making the urge to get out and about irresistible. As a person always on the lookout for new places, Gayson Village definitely catches my attention following its extravagant renovations.

Touted as the first “Lifestyle Urban Village” in Thailand, Gayson Village echoes dynamism of urban living and working life at the heart of Ratchaprasong. The Gayson Property Group espouses its contextual “Work-Live-Play-Grow” concept by combining its three properties and iconic destinations: Gayson Shopping Centre, Gayson Tower, and Amarin Plaza.

Gayson Village – designed by JERD Partnership, a visionary architecture and urban planning firm – is a mixed-use property that aims to enhance overall lifestyle experiences with its architectural magnificence for every visitor, shopper, and office worker in Bangkok. Incorporating “Chang Sip Moo” (ten classic crafts) into its timeless design, this project creates a visual narrative of harmonious connections between arts and culture and diverse lifestyles.

The highlight of this urban district is the recently launched Gayson Tower, the most innovative office building designed by Landscape Architects 49. The architects weave together the various elements – efficient workplaces, sustainable amenities and an inspirational environment – to create stunning exterior and interior designs. Refined with simplistic and elegant lines, the tower balances geometric structures with curved facades with the use of the finest materials such as glass, iron, and wood, all aligned with color combinations of champagne, light brown, and bronze. The result is an air of subtle luxury.

In charge of the property’s seamless interior design, CL3, a Hong Kong-based innovative architecture and interior design firm, demonstrates its mastery of superb craftsmanship by using grand, high-quality materials such as marble, iron and glass plus an assortment of ornamental plants, all selected to enhance the overall atmosphere. Upon entering the lobby, visitors are warmly welcomed to the various natural shades of brown from the vertically placed wooden laths that match the brown marbled floor against a combination of greens from the refreshing plants.

Connecting the luxurious shopping center with the lively office tower on the second floor, Gayson Cocoon, an architectural masterpiece inspired by a silkworm cocoon, symbolizes creativity and birth awaiting guests to witness a metamorphosis of nouveau urban lives. Modeled after a cocoon using layers of oak wood and a variety of plants, this location makes interactions come to life through the incremental change in natural light that filters in through the openings.

Designated as the landmark of the building, Gayson Urban Resort, spanning two levels (19 and 20), takes its cue from a relaxing tropical resort that gives the place a strong holiday vibe. What takes this venue to the next level is the Gayson Crystal Box, a multi-functional venue under the concept of “collaboration” ideal for business and private events.

Like the jewel in the tower’s crown, the Crystal Box features glass walls overlooking the city skyline and providing a seamless 270-degree panoramic view of the City of Angels. The urban outdoor Sky Terrace adds a cherry on top of the whole setting. The Crystal Box – quite a spectacle in its own right with concrete softened by patches of refreshing greenery – allows you to think outside the box and restore your energy with nature.

Embracing the power of nature, Landscape Architects 49 endows the property with the greenery aesthetics – from perennial trees to shrubs – that makes the landscape’s visual atmosphere powerful. Celebrators of city life have a lot to enjoy from both indoor space and the outdoor garden, especially the Reflective Pool, a veritable urban oasis, where it’s tempting to re-energize whether you are drained by the daily grind.

The breathtaking architectural aesthetics aside, the Gayson Tower excels in other areas too. The project embraces an innovative, environmentally friendly, and sustainable design that has not only attained LEED Gold certification, but allows you to breathe cooler, fresher air and improve your work-life balance, as well.

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[www.gaysornvillage.com](http://www.gaysornvillage.com)



# Flying Light, Flying Right

BY J. PAKCHUEN

**M**y first overseas trip was many years ago, and Tokyo was my destination. That cool spring breeze that touched my skin when I landed ensured me that that would not be my last trip abroad. That first trip happened to be during Songkran holidays when the ticket prices skyrocketed and we couldn't get the tickets to come home on Sunday before starting work on Monday. Years later, and after a great deal of traveling on an airplane, I have learned some tips and tricks to book good and reasonably priced air tickets during a long holiday.

## 1. Check often

Timing is everything. Book at least a month or more in advance (planning for Songkran? Book now!). The price gets higher closer to the departure date. Air ticket prices change all the time, sometimes several times a week. When I browse the different websites, the price tends to be higher on weekends, and cheaper on slow days like Monday or Wednesday especially at night time. The possible cheapest day to book a flight is Monday and the most expensive day to book is Saturday. You should also try browsing for the air tickets at different times of the day and different days of the week. You may be surprised to find out how dramatically the price can change from one day to another.

## 2. Go technical

Ticket-booking websites usually depend on a good technology to help them control the price when catering products to different types of customers. The cookies stored in your browser can make the flight prices increase if a particular route is repeatedly searched. Therefore, you should always clear your cookies every time you do a search so that the old search history, including prices and routes, is deleted. This helps make the price stable each time you search.

To do so, go to the setting tab of your browser, open the history tab and clear all the cookies or clear search history. Even more simply, you can also use the "Incognito" mode (you can search for

instructions on how to set up this mode in different browsers or devices). This allows you to be "no one" when searching for an air ticket. And every time you enter this mode anew, all the cookies are already cleared for you, thus saving your time.

I have also talked with an IT expert and he said the price could go up or down depending on the device you are using, too. To explain, if you're using a MacBook, the price may be higher than when you're using a Dell PC. So, you may want to book the ticket via a proxy server. Besides, location can determine the price of your ticket as well. For example, if you book a flight from a home country of that airline, the price can be a bit cheaper.



## 3. Pick the right date and destination

If you pick the specific popular dates to fly to your dream destination on a long holiday, please be aware that the air tickets can be pricey. However, you can also save some money by flying to the destination one day earlier or flying back home one day later against those popular dates. I have opted for this solution a few times.

Choosing where to go also matters. Try booking to a lesser-popular destination during a specific time of the year to avoid the crowds and to make the most of your fund.

## 4. Don't fall for inexpensive traps

Most flights shown in the top results of the search are the cheapest, but a lot of times there are many reasons behind it. Usually, these are flights managed by budget airlines and/or flights with at least one layover or even red-eye flights.

There is nothing wrong with flying on these flights if you are flying to destinations that are not too far away or if you have a few extra days for stopovers or connecting flights. Make sure you travel light, because they will charge baggage fees.

## 5. Go an extra mile

It doesn't hurt to try different ticketing websites and do some research on the price and airline options before buying. Every time you fly, try comparing the prices offered by at least two agencies. I am a frequent user of Kayak.com. This is because I like to add multi-cities as my destinations just like some other websites, such as Expedia or Skyscanner.

However, Kayak.com allows you to pick different flight classes for the same itinerary since I like to fly economy for a short haul flight and premium economy on a long haul flight. It also shows you the possible dates that the price can be the cheapest, and sometimes it will even mix and match different flights offered by different airlines in order to give you the best deal possible.

If my itinerary is simple, I tend to use Google Flight. This website is very user-friendly and the different prices will be shown right there under different dates of your travel. Google Flight will, however, takes you directly to the airline's websites in order to book with the airline.

As much as I am thrilled to set foot on a new destination each time, I am even more excited if I can save some money from booking a good deal. Try the tips above. It may be a good time for you to go to the ticketing websites now and start researching some good destinations for your upcoming Songkran holidays.





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# The Great Speakeasies

BY DAVE STAMBOULIS

While the word “speakeasy” is synonymous with the days of Prohibition in the United States, the term itself actually predates the Great Depression, from 1929-1933, when speakeasies became popular. In the 1890s throughout the eastern states, there were unlicensed saloons which were called “speak-easies”, due to the fact that one was supposed to speak quietly when ordering alcohol, so as not to alert the neighbors.

Speakeasies were set up to get around the prohibition against alcohol, or prior to this, to evade taxes and other punitive anti-drinking measures, but they morphed into something far greater because of this. Seen as hidden hole-in-the-walls, tough to find and enter, they were an excellent source to find a drink during times when it was tough to, and furthered the notion that anyone who had a few chairs and some bottles of moonshine could run their own happy hour business.

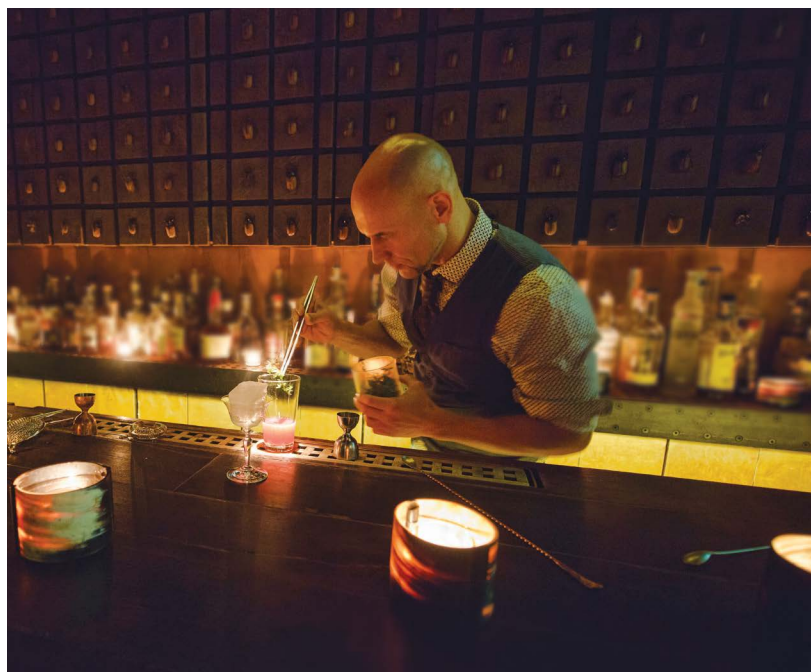
## J Boroski

This is ground zero when it comes to the definition of a speakeasy. There is no address, and the best we can do is to tell you that the bar is in an unnamed soi on Thonglor. Send them a message on Facebook to get directions or do a bit of internet searching and you might get lucky (management here is not interested in promoting the bar or making it a popular stopover on a cocktail crawl).

In case you aren't familiar with Joseph Boroski, he's the guy who has designed most of the creative drink menus at all the swank hotel bars around town. He calls himself a “mixsultant,” and the New York cocktail guru runs a Bar and Hospitality School that trains the best in the business, and when he isn't here or at his Hong Kong speakeasy, he's out trotting the globe plying his drink trade. There is no menu at J Boroski. You let the bartenders know what kind of drinks you tend to favor (sour or sweet), and they go ahead and get creative. It's dark and rather mysterious in here, exactly as you'd imagine a speakeasy should be.

As “classic” cocktails usually featured well-known alcohol brands, speakeasies mostly served fairly unpalatable moonshine. Thus, new drinks were created which covered up some of the moonshine's shortcomings. While these original recipes didn't always succeed, they did lead to an explosion in the cocktail industry, with bartenders finding new concoctions, and adding creativity to their repertoire.

Speakeasies have made a resurgence here in Bangkok, with a slew of atmospheric small bars striking up across the city, serving mean drinks made by knowledgeable bartenders. The bartending and creative cocktail boom has fuelled the rise of new discoveries and plenty of new techniques and know-how. Bartenders from around the world have flocked here, giving plenty of diversity, new recipes, and a real sense of competition around town, which has been great for all these new spots. Here's a look at some of the best of them.



## J Boroski

Sukhumvit Soi 55 (near Thonglor Soi 7)

Tel. 02 712 6025

[www.facebook.com/jboroskibangkok](http://www.facebook.com/jboroskibangkok)



### Q & A Bar

Hidden down a nondescript alley, your only clue to knowing that you've arrived at Q & A is the question mark symbol that's up on the green door. Make it through here and you'll be treated to a dapper interior that resembles a 1920s American railway car, with a row of plush leather bar seats for you to plunk down on and watch the amazing mixology team create drinks.

The menu here features a wide array of classics, 52 to be precise, laid out on the menu to correspond to a deck of cards, and you can even get a "drink passport" here to stamp that goes hand in hand with a set of collectible cards showcasing all of the drinks (which range from a Cuba Libre and Pisco Sour to a Tequila Sunrise and Old Fashioned). There is also a set of more hard hitting drinks known as "Questions," while "Answers" feature sweeter concoctions that are a bit easier on the palate.

#### Q & A Bar

235/13 Sukhumvit Soi 21  
Tel. 02 664 1445  
[www.qnabar.com](http://www.qnabar.com)



PHOTOGRAPH: DAVE STAMBOULIS

### Rabbit Hole

Named after *Alice's Adventure in Wonderland's* proverbial drug induced nirvana, you disappear down this rabbit hole by finding a sliding door next to the Ainu Japanese bar outside. You're right in the heart of Thonglor, but inside it's a complete escape.

Lots of local mixologists make this their bar of choice on nights off, and there are constantly new rounds of craft cocktails being created each week. The Casa Nostra resembles an Old Fashioned, yet with the taste of smoked cigar wafting right out of it, and there are plenty of other novel creations. So put on your trench coat and top hat, and disappear into Bangkok's hidden cocktail world.

#### Rabbit Hole

125 Sukhumvit Soi 55  
Tel. 098 969 1335  
[www.facebook.com/rabbitholebkk](http://www.facebook.com/rabbitholebkk)



PHOTOGRAPH: COURTESY OF RABBIT HOLE



# Extravagant Extras

BY CHRISTOPHER SCOTT DIXON

Amenities almost sounds too proletarian a description for the dazzling array of facilities five-star accommodation experts provide, where exemplary customer service here is not just a concept, but a way of life. The notion of nothing is too much trouble for the guests is again not just a catchy slogan, but a reality.

The actual definition of what is a luxury hotel has changed over the past few years. There is a trend toward more hi-tech, upgraded lobbies, substantial emphasis on wellness and a wider range of food and beverage options. In addition, there is a myriad of extras from daily ice cream boy visits to soap concierges, 24 hour personal concierges,

and pet buddies. All are planned and designed to match the ever changing diversity of promotional packages, often seasonal, or themed, as for example, Valentine's Day, or Christmas.

Some are unique Thai offerings as it is a country which recognizes the high cultural value of providing excellent customer service, others reflect the evolving global trends and yet more are additional flourishes which each hotel applies to enhance the stay experience of their ever demanding guests. These might be tourists, locals treating themselves to a few days of escape from their normal world or business people from here and abroad.



Here are a sample of extravagant amenities and services offered at Bangkok's top hotels:

Guests at the world-renowned **Mandarin Oriental, Bangkok**, established in 1876, have the chance to participate in authentic Thai cooking classes in the hotel's own culinary school and in a range of Thai cultural programs.

Aside from its globally ranked spa and breadth of superb dining venues, the personal touch is high on the agenda with a private butler service and individually tailored yoga lessons to name but a few.



PHOTOGRAPHS: COURTESY OF MANDARIN ORIENTAL





Back in the city and located just off Sathorn Road is an oasis better known as **The Sukhothai Bangkok**. Walk in and around the six acres of exquisite lotus ponds and gardens and there is an instant feeling of tranquility. The ambience is more like a temple grounds than a commercial living space.

The rooms are a tangible recalling of the ancient capital of Sukhothai with traditional Thai décor, teak floored bathrooms and interiors and even a pillow “menu” ensuring you the perfect night’s sleep. There is also a fleet of Mercedes limousines for pick-ups and drop offs at the airport and around the city.



PHOTOGRAPHS: COURTESY OF THE SUKHOThai BANGKOK



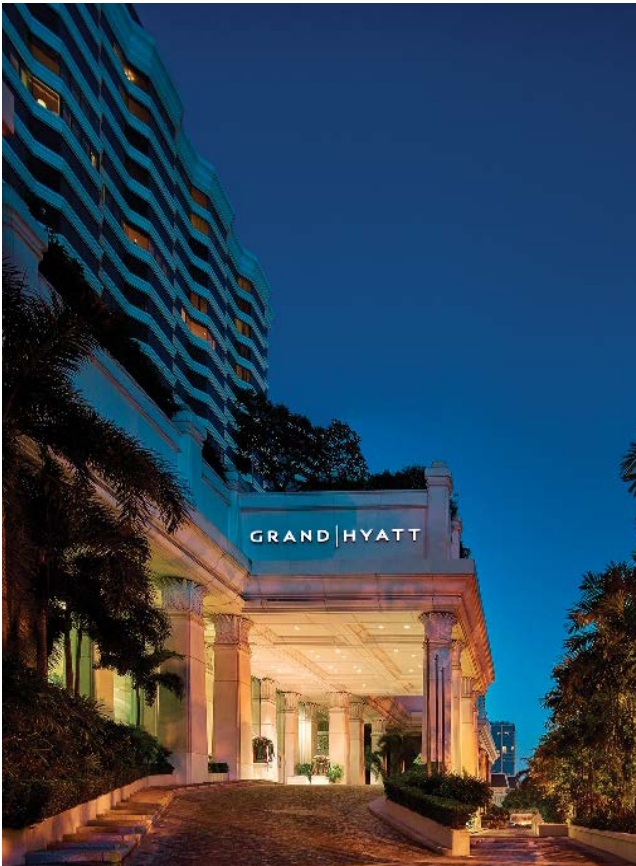
In the heart of Silom's business district you will find **Le Méridien Bangkok**, 24 stories high and defiantly different in concept and design. Features include plush interiors, etched mirrors, Thai sculptures and floor to ceiling windows in the modern style rooms and suites.

Art is integral to the hotel both in terms of the décor and through its "Unlock Art" scheme where guests can use their room keys to gain privileged access to see prestigious exhibitions and a range of innovative works by Thai artists. Le Meridien also has its own "Experience" Specialist who helps guests in discovering not only the hotel, but Bangkok too, through its food and culture.



PHOTOGRAPHS: COURTESY OF LE MERIDIEN BANGKOK





PHOTOGRAPHS: COURTESY OF GRAND HYATT ERAWAN BANGKOK



Ideally situated in the central Rachaprasong retail district is the **Grand Hyatt Erawan Bangkok**, the hotel has direct links to two BTS stations Chidlom and Siam via a sky bridge walkway. It deserves the title “Grand” as it offers an extensive range of facilities including a 25-meter swimming pool, tennis and squash courts, and fitness center. The landscaped garden and spa cottages provide a welcome sanctuary from the bustling streets outside.

The choice of only a handful of these luxury hotels is of course highly subjective as there are many more in Bangkok, each with their own particular charm, specific facilities and appeal. It could be argued that with so much visible and self-indulgent extravagance available, if Bangkok were a less exciting city, you might be tempted just to stay in the hotels!



# The Five Love Languages for Millennials

BY NIKKI ASSAVATHORN

**H**appy International Women's Day, readers! Recently, I've been thinking about what it means to find love, and to be in love, in 2018, especially for millennial men and women.

Last week, I met a friend for a coffee date. She complained to me that her boyfriend never said the words "I love you" to her. "Maybe he doesn't really love me," she said, but I was puzzled. As far as I knew, her boyfriend was the silent type, but I never got the feeling that he didn't love her. In fact, he often cooked her favorite meals for her, which I pointed out to her.

"Yes, I know he cares for me, but it bothers me that he never says that he does," my friend admitted. It then clicked in my mind that they both simply have different love languages. My friend wanted to be told "verbally" she was loved, while her boyfriend thought doing "acts of service" like cooking would be enough to show my friend that he loved her.

The ways we understand and express love do not differ much from lovers in the past, like in my friend's case. In *The 5 Love Languages*, which was written by Gary Chapman in 1995, the author theorizes that there are five ways the people use to show and receive love.

These five ways are:

- a) receiving gifts,
- b) quality time,
- c) words of affirmation,
- d) acts of service (devotion), and
- e) physical touch.

Twenty-three years after this book has been published, I still find it relevant now. In fact, it is also relevant for those who are dating! It's important to figure out what your other half's main love language is. Like in my friend's case, you may think you are showing love and interest, but the other party does not feel it.

If you are single and have met someone you'd like to get to know more, "words of affirmation" is the easiest way to indicate your

interest – tell them you are interested, and that you would like to take your relationship to the next stage! Do not assume that buying gifts and flowers will be enough.

Also, if your love language is "physical touch", do be careful of using it in the earlier stages of your dating! Your date may find it uncomfortable, and shy away from you.

In dating and relationships, it is good to keep these five love languages in mind. Of course, it would be great if you can act on all of them for your partner, but focusing on the one that your other half understands best will best convey your feelings.

For millennials who are used to expressing themselves online, there are many ways which we can now express our love and interest thanks to modern advancements. I thought of five different fun examples to show your love language in this digital age. What do you think of your love language and your partner's?

a) If you always want to surprise your partner with flowers delivery on Valentine's Day, chocolates or other gifts to express your love (and posting them online?), or you love receiving them from your partner, then this gift giving is definitely your love language!

b) Do you always want to text, snapchat, skype or face-time with your partner all day long? This is the way for millennials to spend quality time with their other half, especially in this era when everyone's busy and always traveling!

c) Declaring your love toward your partner on Facebook or Instagram, complete with romantic hashtags like #soulmate or #OTP (yes, that's One True Pair, not One Time Password). This can also mean liking and commenting on each other's photos and statuses on social media frequently through words of affirmation.

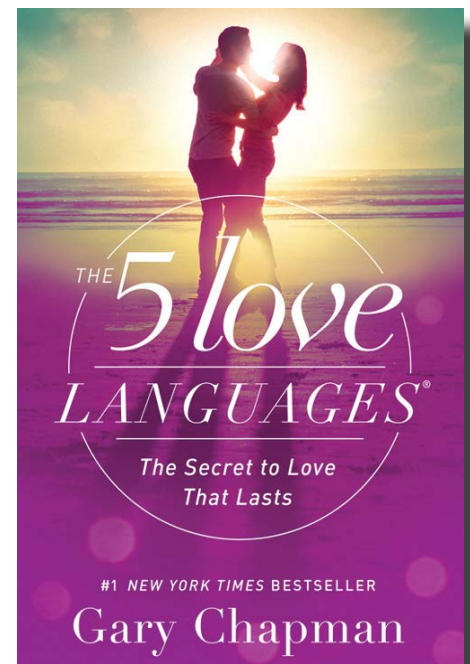
d) Perhaps you like to order food and deliver them to your partner's house or office as you

know they are working overtime and have not had time to have a proper meal. Here's an act of service that's hard to do even a decade ago, but so thoughtful to express your love and care!

e) If you like doing things like wearing matching couple tees, taking couples photos or doing PDA (public display of affection), physical touch is probably your love language! You express love by constantly being close to your partner and showing the world that you are a couple.

For millennial singles looking for love, I would like to encourage you to figure out your main love language, and to best utilize them in the pursuit of love. This way, you will be able to understand what you want in love, and hopefully, find someone who will be able to show they love you in the way you know best (and vice-versa, of course).

Happy dating!



*The 5 Love Languages*

By Gary Chapman

Available at Asia Books, Kinokuniya and leading bookstores.



# Pepsi

## Generations

### A Throwback to the Past

BY PEKKY THE ANGEL

To celebrate its 120-year history in pop culture, Pepsi recently organized a 3-day event in Bangkok to highlight the official launch of “Pepsi Generations” highlighting the limited-edition retro packaging designs from the 1940s, 1950s, 1980s, 1990s, and 2010s. The exhibit chronicled Pepsi’s cultural milestones and how the brand connected with consumers over the years.

Visitors also got a sneak peek of the “Pepsi x Greyhound” vintage fashion collection inspired by Pepsi’s iconic heritage combined with Greyhound’s contemporary street style.

PHOTOGRAPHS: COURTESY OF PEPSI



BY PEKKY THE ANGEL

# Sugar Pie

## New Foundation Powder Worthy of a Princess

“Sugar Pie”, Thailand’s newest cosmetic brand, has just launched its first product for the Thai market: “Sugar Pie White Rose Signature Compact Powder”. The facial powder comes with cute princess-themed packaging and a smooth powder texture that acts as a foundation for flawless facial coverage.

Formulated in Japan with a white rose ingredient, the color matches most Asian skin tones with three shades to choose from. The powder offers full protection, covering fine lines and wrinkles, and absorbs excess shine with sheer application and a radiant finish, perfect for the hot and humid climate of the Land of Smiles. No smears or color drop during the day, leaving you flawlessly unblemished and shine-free all day, guaranteed!

PHOTOGRAPH: COURTESY OF SUGAR PIE





# March



## Thailand Coffee Fest 2018

The biggest coffee festival in Southeast Asia, “Thailand Coffee Fest” is a gathering of coffee lovers, including farmers, roasters, exporters, baristas, café owners, equipment suppliers, and many more. The festival runs from **March 8 - 11** at the Queen Sirikit National Convention Center (QSNCC). For more info, visit [www.thailandcoffeefest.org](http://www.thailandcoffeefest.org).



## Thaibreak Festival 2018 @ Koh Mak

The Thaibreak Festival, an electronic music fest, is back with a celebration to mark its 20th anniversary from **March 22 - 26** on the beautiful island of Koh Mak. The festival promises to knock everyone's socks off with more than 500 electronic music fans and revelers from around the world expected to turn up. Find out more at [www.thaibreak-festival.com](http://www.thaibreak-festival.com).



## John Legend live in bangkok

Grammy Award winning American singer John Legend is making his Bangkok debut with a live concert as part of the “John Legend Darkness and Light Tour” on **March 23** at BITEC Bangna. Tickets are available at [www.thaiticketmajor.com](http://www.thaiticketmajor.com).



## Koh Samui Midnight Run 2018

Calling all sprinters! The 6th charity Midnight Run – being organized by the Thai Hotels Association (THA) and the Tourism Association of Koh Samui (TAKS) – kicks off on **March 24** at Chaweng Beach on the holiday island of Koh Samui. The event is divided into two categories: 5-km and 10-km runs along the buzzy streets of Chaweng Beach. All are welcome. For further details, visit [www.gotorace.com/event/samui-midnight-run-2018](http://www.gotorace.com/event/samui-midnight-run-2018).

\*Submit news, updates and press releases to: [info@urbanaffairsmagazine.com](mailto:info@urbanaffairsmagazine.com).





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