

URBAN AFFAIRS

B A N G K O K

NO.2 VOL.11 | NOVEMBER 2018 ISSN 2586-9191 WWW.URBANAFFAIRSMAGAZINE.COM

Free Copy

Wellness Through Aqua Therapy



Or Tor Kor Market

Famed fresh-produce market sets the bar for food hygiene

Patom Organic Living

A greenhouse café that extols the virtues of organic farming

Sam Khok

History of the Mon refugees in Pathum Thani and their crafts

ALL OF YOUR
INTERNATIONAL FAVORITES



NEED MORE INFORMATION
02-779-1000
WWW.VILLAMARKET.COM

SUPER STEAK

AUSTRALIAN BEEF GRASS FED

TENDERLOIN STEAK
2,000 /KG

STRIPLOIN STEAK
2,000 /KG

RIBEYE STEAK
2,000 /KG



VILLA MARKET



@villa.supermarket



villa.supermarket

Editor's Letter

The National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB) recently reported that Thailand's unemployment rate went up to 1.2 percent from 1.1 percent in the same period last year, with 470,000 people unemployed. The trend of unemployed new graduates is still upward, from 140,000 unemployed in 2013, to 180,000 in 2016 and almost 220,000 unemployed in just the first half of this year.

That's lots of unemployed graduates "kicking the dirt." Interestingly it's not all doom and gloom as the numbers suggested. First of all, being made unemployed in this day and age is in principle not entirely their fault. Annually, our education institutions still churn out graduates with degrees that are unable to meet the market's demand. Tens of thousands of graduates in law, sociology, political science, and sadly, journalism are left stranded in the job market each year with not many relevant jobs available for them to choose from.

Private universities are quick to adapt by focusing their curricula more on business, entrepreneurship, and science and technology. To help out, some employers have scaled down prerequisites for employment for certain job vacancies by focusing on the candidate's personal qualities like their view of the world, attitude towards work and skill sets rather than their specific degrees.

Thailand's changing family structures also have a profound effect on ambivalence among new graduates in opting for 9-to-5 jobs straight from university. Thailand's growing middle class enjoy better standards of living compared to, say, a decade ago and show an unfortunate tendency to have less children (an average of just two kids per family). Parents are therefore extending their financial assistance for their child a bit longer. As a result, these graduates (from more well-to-do families) end up sharing their parents' home in their 20s and 30s and exploring non-corporate career avenues, or even trying their hand at entrepreneurship.

Talking about entrepreneurship, the number of SMEs is on the rise. Thailand has over three million SMEs that employ almost 11 million people and contribute to 36% of the country's GDP. With online retail giants setting up shop in Thailand, we can be positive that more new graduates will probably turn their backs on the drudgery of corporate life and look for alternative ways to create their own start-ups through these platforms.

The official numbers can be scary at first glance, but it's better to put things into perspective and combine the stats from different sources to get the big picture. So, unless we see more beggars or homeless teenagers on the streets, I believe the situation on the ground might not be all that bad.

- VT

Pick a copy at:

Villa Market, Mezzo Coffee, Creamery Boutique Ice Cream, Pacamara Coffee Roasters, Ceresia Roasters, Gallery Drip Coffee, The Hive Thonglor, Hubba Thailand, KliquesDesk, The Work Loft, Never Say Cutz, Bumrungrad Hospital, Bangkok Hospital, and Broccoli Revolution.

Publisher & Editor
Vasu Thirasak

Copy Editor
Manoj Tripathi

Fashion Editor
Pekky The Angel

Graphic Designer
Uyanun Punkaew

Digital Media Designer
Raquel Villena Mogado

Photographer
Teerarat Yaemngamluea

Advisor
Anyamane Chan-Oum

Circulation Director
Nithi Thirasak

Marketing Director
Sunida Thirasak

Editorial Assistant
Monthira Amornboonyakrit

Contributors

Dave Stamboulis is a travel writer and photographer based in Bangkok. In addition to working as the updating writer for *Fodor's* guidebook to Thailand, Laos, and Cambodia, he is the "Bangkok expert" for *USA Today's* 10Best website and a regular contributor for various publications throughout Southeast Asia.



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/ or 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.



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 Ariyaprichya 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.



@urbanaffairsmagazine



urbanaffairsmagazine

www.urbanaffairsmagazine.com info@urbanaffairsmagazine.com

Water Wellness

BY DAVE STAMBOULIS

Bangkok is touted around the world for its fantastic spa treatments, and both visitors and locals alike head out for relaxing massages as part of their endeavors in dealing with urban stress. However, it's not only rubdowns and Ayurvedic oils that can put you into a more chilled frame of mind. These days, Bangkok offers opportunities a la Japan to soak your city blues away, as well as the chance to experience something truly unique, succumbing to the nirvana of a float tank.

Some 30-plus years ago, floating was all the rage in North America. The 1980s film *Altered States* celebrated the floatation tank, then known as “sensory deprivation tanks,” in which the tanks were used to reach altered states of consciousness, perhaps in the same vein as meditation or counterculture hallucinogenic drug use popular at the time.

Developed by neuropsychiatrist John Lilly in the 1950s, “isolation tanks,” as they were also called, were soundproof chambers that were filled with body temperature Epsom salt water, allowing the user to float effortlessly and peacefully without disturbance, giving a meditative and relaxing experience.

Research has shown that float tank experiences combat jet lag, provide pain relief, especially for pregnant women, help with dispersion of lactic acid buildup, and also help with positive imaging (NBA star Stephen Curry regularly uses float tanks as part of his training regimen).

For the novice, today's float tank is a small comfortable pod, which has mood lighting and soft music enticing you as you strip down, get in, and make yourself comfortable in the pod. The lights then dim, the music stops, and you proceed to have only your thoughts as encumbrances.

The Epsom salts render the tank water equivalent to that of the Dead Sea, meaning you can't sink or drown, and your body just floats effortlessly above the surface. Air and water temperature are regulated the same as skin temperature, meaning your sense of touch is diminished, as is hearing, as your ears are just slightly submerged.

For those not wanting to relax in the dark, perhaps a Japanese onsen soak will help bliss you out. Meaning “hot spring” in Japanese, onsen are found all over Japan, as the country is home to plenty of volcanic activity and geothermal water. The idea at an onsen is to strip down to your birthday suit, wash off at a tap or shower, and then sit and soak in the hot water, which normally is around 39–42°C.

The whole onsen experience is a very Zen meditative one, closing one's eyes while the hot water and steam soaks into every pore. Benefits from the hot spring water include alleviating muscle pain and neuralgia, reducing chronic fatigue and stress, and helping with skin problems, as well as reducing the pains of arthritis and lowering blood pressure.



Bangkok Float Center

These days, if you can bear to let go of your mobile phone for an hour or more, you can have a floating experience at the Bangkok Float Center in the Show DC Entertainment Mall, Bangkok. The pods have plenty of headroom, so it is pretty tough to feel claustrophobic, and as you can't see, you're pretty much just enjoying the experience of being alone and at peace. Occasionally your body drifts against one of the sides of the tank, but most users don't even notice this, as they either fall asleep or else drift into a very relaxed state of consciousness.

Upon finishing, most users feel a state of wellbeing, as well as usually craving more time (sessions tend to be 60 or 90 minutes), and I've found that the more one floats, the more beneficial it feels (I somewhat equate floating with Vipassana meditation, where beginners have a hard time getting their "monkey mind" to settle down, whereas one lets go of thoughts and the overstimulated brain much more easily over time). Ideally, once in the tank for a while, one enters a "Theta state," where right and left brain synchronize in a deep meditative experience.



Bangkok Float Center

99/6-9 Show DC, 4th Floor, Bangkok
Tel. 098 628 9599
www.bangkokfloatcenter.com

PHOTOGRAPHS: COURTESY OF BANGKOK FLOAT CENTER



Yunomori Onsen

The Japanese also believe that the nude communal bathing (although it is gender separated) breaks down barriers between folks (workers certainly feel a bit more equal to their superiors when neither one has a stitch on!).

In Bangkok, the first authentic onsen to open up was Yunomori Onsen where the owner sourced water from Wat Wang Khanai hot spring in Kanchanaburi. Here you will find hot and cold pools, bamboo and wooden tubs (even a teak bucket tub in the garden!), a jet whirlpool bath, and another one containing a carbonated soda water generator from Japan which mixes soda with water and promotes circulation and rejuvenation. There is also a steam room, sauna and massage facilities as well to complete the overall treatment.

Yunomori Onsen

A-Square 120/5 Sukhumvit 26, Khlongtoey

Tel. 02 259 5778

www.yunomorionsen.com/bangkok



PHOTOGRAPHS: COURTESY OF YUNOMORI ONSEN



PHOTOGRAPHS: COURTESY OF PANPURI WELLNESS

Pañpuri Wellness

For something really pampering, check out Bangkok's latest ode to Japanese bathing, Pañpuri Wellness, located up on the 12th floor of the swank Gaysorn Tower from where you can look out over the city while you let the stress drip away. Pañpuri features a pool with water sourced from one of Japan's most famed onsen, Kusatsu (noted for 40 - 41°C water that has to be stirred by attendants to keep folks from burning!), as well as a soda pool, plus several other mineral laden soaking options.

Pañpuri Wellness also has organic spa treatments, where you can get skin scrubs, wraps and other wellness treatments. You can also book a private onsen room all to yourself as well, so you might want to think about Christmas gifts early.

The negative ions associated with water have long been held beneficial to the human body, mind, and spirit, so the next time you're in the mood for some Bangkok detox, consider these alternative aqua options.

Pañpuri Wellness

12th Floor, Gaysorn Tower, Ploenchit Rd.

Tel. 02 253 8899

<https://www.panpuriwellness.com>



PHOTOGRAPHS: COURTESY OF PATOM ORGANIC LIVING

Patom Organic Living

An Organic Approach to Life

BY PLOYLADA SIRACHADAPONG



Despite the array of fancy restaurants and extravagant hotels that have mushroomed in Bangkok lately, sometimes it's hard to resist the temptation of simple-yet-intriguing architectural designs that bring us closer to nature.

Patom Organic Living, tucked away in the bustling neighborhood of Thonglor, is a greenhouse-themed café owned by the Navaraj family that operates Sampran Riverside Hotel. The café doubles as a shop offering a range of quality organic products from its own Patom organic farm in Nakhon Pathom. The farm is a popular destination for visitors interested in buying organic rice, shampoo, coconut hair serum, handmade soaps, and lip balms.

In collaboration with the Sookjai Foundation, Patom Organic Farm has rolled out a collection of high-quality organic raw materials under the concept of "organic living." Three percent of the sales go to the foundation

in support of organic agriculture in Nakhon Pathom and nearby provinces.

Patom Organic Living reflects its environmental consciousness through its architecture that has been brought in alignment with its goal of raising environmental awareness among the public thanks to design firm Nitaprow. The result is a café design that's full of charm and character.

Set in the midst of verdant grass, ferns and tall trees, Patom Organic Living has an area of 110 square meters. The café's exterior is eye-catching with floor-to-ceiling transparent glass panes in wooden frames, making it resemble a greenhouse in the backyard. The glass allows the sunlight to flood in, brightening up the interior and creating a relaxing ambience. Passers-by can spot a scene of jubilation from the outside as customers feast their eyes on the garden view from the inside.

The café is set in a large room with a high ceiling. For added ambience, the café has floor-to-ceiling curtains and a rattan spiral staircase in the middle of the place leading up to the curved mezzanine, a good vantage point for observing the activity below and the surrounding garden outside.

Patom Organic Living's 25-seat café serves a healthy gourmet menu tailored specifically for health-conscious diners. The café's wooden structure is made out of redwood and tabak wood recovered from the owner's abandoned, old houseboat from Sampran District in Nakhon Pathom, fulfilling the organic living concept's pledge. Even the tree trunks – props on which products are displayed – were from fallen trees in the owner's farm. The table and chair sets in the garden – from the owner's unused teak furniture collection – have been lovingly restored to their former condition.



Patom Organic Living's noble determination is to execute every inch of space to become a fine example for anyone longing for a life that combines traditional wisdom with modern methods. They only use raw ingredients from either their organically certified farm or a network of local organic farmers to produce organic body care products and traditional Thai delicacies.

If you are looking for a place to unwind and learn a few things about an organic lifestyle that gets you in the lap of nature, then Patom Organic Living won't disappoint.

Patom Organic Living
 9/2 Sukhumvit 49/6 (Soi Prompak)
 Tel. 02 084 8649
www.patom.com



SATI

IS A NONPROFIT THAT MINDFULLY
FOCUSES ON IMPROVING HEALTHCARE
AND EDUCATION FOR UNDERSERVED
CHILDREN IN THAILAND.



SatiNonprofit



Satifound



A FAST CASUAL
VEGAN RESTAURANT

Organic cold-pressed juice and Smoothie bar



1



2

1 Or Tor Kor Market's clean aisles and well-packaged products.

2 Apart from fresh fruits and vegetables, seafood can also be found in abundance here.

PHOTOGRAPHS: TEERARAT YAEMNGAMLUEA

Or Tor Kor Market

BY CHRISTOPHER SCOTT DIXON

Ranked as the world's 4th best fresh market by CNN is an attractive and upscale Bangkok-based market under the auspices of the "Marketing Organization for Farmers." However, its initials in Thai have led to the rather odd name for this fresh market: Or Tor Kor.

Located on the opposite side of Chatuchak Market, access to Or Tor Kor is easy via the MRT underground system: Take the train to Kamphaeng Phet station and use exit 3 and you will be right at the entrance to the market.

From modest beginnings as an agricultural collective, Or Tor Kor has developed into a classy outdoor food venue, so do not be surprised to see well-heeled business people among the mix of locals and tourists, and expect the prices to be slightly higher than other locations, while still considered affordable by most.

There is an eye-widening array of prepared foods, fruits, kitchen supplies and all manner of agricultural goods. The colors and range of aromas are always enticing and unlike some places, ample space is provided to browse at leisure with the carefully laid out stalls and broad aisles.

In the center of the market is a well-lit, well-organized food court with an extensive menu where you can relax before continuing your shopping. Another plus is the fact that there is no need to fuss around with exchanging money for tokens, coupons or vouchers, as is the case with many shopping mall food halls. Cash is used and the range of meals is most impressive.

The focus is on top quality produce, not only some of the best in Bangkok, but in the whole of Thailand. Many know it chiefly as a fruit market, but in truth there is much more with pre-cut meat, vegetables and beautiful flowers for sale.

Here you can take a leisurely stroll around and not have to worry about slipping on wet surfaces or dodging staff with carts and others flailing hoses. Those of a more squeamish disposition who might shudder at some of the food preparation activities at other venues need not worry here; Or Tor Kor is one of the cleanest, calmest and neatest markets you will see.

Even if you don't have a kitchen, it is a great place to simply wander, see and learn about the breathtaking variety of fresh ingredients used in Thai cooking.

You are truly spoiled for choice with so many temptingly displayed items, I have a very sweet tooth, so I recommend the delicious *kanom nam dok mai* (Jasmine Scented Sweets) in cute cup shapes. They can be found around the food court area.

One of the major reasons to come to Or Tor Kor is for the durian, regarded as the "King of Fruits". During the durian season around April to August, throughout the market you will find a number of shops selling near perfect durians piled high like pyramids, some of them pre-peeled and ready to be bought and eaten right away.

The most popular type available is *kanyao* durian which means "long stem" and is considered by many to be the best and most expensive in the country. A word of warning, if you do buy any durian, you cannot travel back with it on the MRT. Signs are posted at the entrance to the Kamphaeng Phet station, forbidding people from carrying it on the system, so make sure you have alternative transport.

More must-buys are in the cooked food section where you will discover another bewitching selection of diverse Thai food from buffet lines of colorful curries, steamed seafood and numerous dry and fresh *nam priks* (chili sauces and dips), the latter include ingredients such as dry fish, crab, salted egg, shrimp paste, and tamarind, to name only a few. These are usually eaten with rice or vegetables.

Some argue the market lacks the character of other establishments, I beg to differ and suggest it is a welcome haven of relative peace and order compared to larger and more chaotic locations.

If you want the finest quality food and other items in a pleasant environment, come and visit Or Tor Kor. Or Tor Kor is open daily from 6.00 am to 8 pm.

Asian Dumplings Dissected

BY J. PAKCHUEN

One of the most popular ethnic delicacies in Bangkok is *dim sum*, the umbrella term for a type of Chinese (Cantonese) cuisine with bite-size menu items that range from *shumai* pork and shrimp dumplings, *har gao* (big prawn wrapped in a soft thin sheet of dough), to wonton soup and *xiao long bao*, the famous BBQ pork fluffy bun. When most people hear the word “dumplings”, they usually think of Chinese *dim sum* dumplings (with meat filling). But now we have come to the realization that many parts of the world do more or less share the same idea and recipe when it comes to making their own kind of dumplings; they use slightly different ingredients and cooking methods. The following are some of the variations of dumplings found in Asian countries.

Thung Thong and Sakoo Sai Moo

You may never have thought that one of the traditional Thai snacks *thung thong* or “Golden Sachets” comes from the idea of deep-frying dumplings. The Thai appetizer is made of minced pork and shrimp stir-fried with garlic and ground coriander seeds. The mixture is seasoned with soy sauce and sugar and put inside a wonton wrap. Then tie the top part with long thin scallions and deep-fry to crispness. The soft delight is served with sweet chili sauce.

Sakoo sai moo, or tapioca balls (sago) with pork filling, is also a Thai snack that bears the same concept as Chinese dumplings. The texture, however, is different than other types of Chinese dumplings due to the main ingredients made from sago palm plants.



Japanese Gyoza and Korean Mandoo

Gyoza is usually what comes to mind when one thinks of Japanese dumplings. Apart from minced pork as the main ingredient, there's slaw for added crunchiness. This pleated, semi-circular-shaped wonton is known as “pot stickers” in some Western countries due to the cooking method. After you deep-fry the bottom part of the *gyoza* in hot oil until golden brown, you then add water over them half-way and cover the sauce pan altogether. The *gyoza* will be steam-cooked to perfection in no time while remaining crispy at the bottom. But if cooked too long, the *gyoza* will dry out as all the water evaporates leaving the bottom part sticking to the pan, hence its Western name.

In the world of Korean dumplings, the most famous one served in almost every restaurant is known as *mandoo* or *mandu*. The ingredients are almost similar to *gyoza* but with the addition of tofu and chopped mung bean noodles in the wrapping. *Mandoo* comes in different shapes but the well-known typical style is the full-moon shape. *Mandoo* used to be served solely in the royal court, but it's now popular in Korean local markets and restaurants.



PHOTOGRAPHS: CREATIVE COMMONS: THUNG THONG / ADRYAN R. VILLANUEVA; GYOZA / TAKEAWAY; SAKOO SAI MOO / ADRYAN R. VILLANUEVA



Mongolian Buuz

Buuz is a Mongolian dumpling dish that shares a lot of similarities with Chinese dumplings. *Buuz* is bigger in size but also steamed. Inside the white plumb dough is a mixture of ground mutton or beef seasoned with salt, garlic, pepper, and chopped onions. This simple recipe of Mongolian dumpling is also easily adapted for the deep-fried version of *buuz* called *khuushuur* which is made flat in a circular pocket that is deep-fried until golden brown.

Interestingly, due to the proximity of geographical locations, *khuushuur* shares a lot in common with the popular Russian snack *chebureki*, a deep-fried flat dough folded in half in a crescent shape with a meat mixture (ground beef or lamb with garlic and chives). *Chebureki* is a popular snack in Russia, Ukraine, Turkey, and Romania.

Nepalese Momo

If you love watching mountaineering documentaries or have visited Nepal, you will have surely seen *momo* as it's one of the main sustenances in this area of high altitude. This type of South Asian dumpling is actually native to Tibet, Bhutan, Nepal, and in North Indian region. *Momo* is very similar to Korean *mandoo* and Mongolian *buuz*. The main difference is that apart from beef and lamb, you may find yak meat and local cheese as the main ingredients. Steamed *momo* come in all sizes and shapes: from a round pocket to a half-moon and crescent moon. When deep-fried, it will look very much like *gyoza*.



Indian Samosa

There are different types of Indian dumpling dishes but the most popular one is *samosa* (with spelling variations of *sambusa* or *samboksa*). Authentic Indian *samosas* are vegetarian dishes with diced potatoes, onions, peas, or lentils as the main ingredients. The mixture is spiced up with cumin, ginger, garam masala, coriander seed, red chili powder, and turmeric powder, then put it inside a soft dough that is folded into a triangular shape and deep-fried to golden brown. *Samosas* are served with fresh green chutney, yogurt or even tomato sauce. A variety of *samosas* can be found in Southeast Asia, such as in Thailand, where we call the meaty variation of it “curry puff.”

Food can be a topic of an endless conversation. Learning more about food, such as dumplings, and its origins can enable us to have a better understanding about people from different countries and how much we share in common culturally.



Hooked on Low-carb Burgers

BY PLOYLADA SIRACHADAPONG



Known as a go-to place for juicy charbroiled burgers, Carl's Jr. is a renowned burger brand from the United States' west coast that has been treating Thais to the authentic California burger for over six years now. Carl's Jr. has become a familiar name for all burger lovers in Thailand.

Carl's Jr. has just introduced a new "Low Carb" menu that makes it possible for customers to switch to a healthier option at no extra cost.

Nimesh Acharya, business manager of Carl's Jr., said that a simple switch can make a lot of difference.

"All Carl's Jr. burgers have the option to go low carb by swapping the bun for a refreshingly crisp iceberg lettuce leaf, and by doing so, each dish can reduce your carb intake by 48 grams and save 200 calories. Even with the iceberg lettuce swap, all Carl's Jr. burgers keep their juiciness and authentic taste through charbroiled premium Australian beef and original ingredients in each burger menu," he says.

The first healthy menu item is Carl's Jr. Guacamole Bacon Burger (THB 220) made with nutritious ripe avocados, aromatic garlic and fresh tomatoes, onions, coriander and lime juice. Besides over 20 different vitamins and minerals as well as loads of fiber, the guacamole burger also has rich chargrilled beef and bacon flavors that will please the palate of any meat lover.

For something a bit lighter, try Low Carb Chicken Club (THB 129), which comes with only 350 calories. The delicious chargrilled chicken breast provides a huge amount of protein at 36g, which helps keep pangs of hunger at bay a bit longer and there is a saving of 200 calories from forgoing the bun. Worth trying is Chargrilled Chicken Salad (THB 119) made from lettuce, tomatoes, cucumber, grated carrot, and cabbage to ensure all the necessary vitamins, minerals and fiber with only 280 calories but with 32g of protein.

Carl's Jr. plans to offer more choices to satisfy the lifestyle needs of health-conscious consumers while they still enjoy the authentic enriched flavors at the same price.

"We are thrilled to offer a wider range of options for Thai people," said Nimesh, adding, "We want our customers from all walks of life to come to a Carl's Jr. restaurant and be able to order something of their choice from our menu. Customers will love our healthier options as we have worked hard to deliver affordable yet premium, high-quality and fresh menu items."

Carl's Jr. has plans to expand its network to 10 restaurants across Thailand within 2019. For Carl's Jr.'s special offers and promotions, visit www.facebook.com/CarlsJr.Thailand/.

PHOTOGRAPHS: COURTESY OF CARL'S JR.

The Other Side of Data-Driven Store

BY SWISA ARIYAPRUCHYA

If you've been following the online trend, you may have read about Amazon's newest 4-star concept store which recently opened in New York. This physical store stocks only items that customers have rated on average four stars or above on its online store. The entire store is designed around reviews and sales data it has gathered from the millions of daily transactions on its online store.

not too hard to imagine each Amazon store stocking different goods. Store stock and design would then depend upon the set of customer data from those who live or frequent a certain area.

Though data is more precious than gold to marketers and retailers, there is another side to the story. As with social media, there is a risk of algorithms being too narrow and

Although stores may not influence politics per se but would it mean that if you lived in a certain neighborhood, would you only be able to buy certain goods at your local physical store? For example, if you wanted to buy a certain product at the grocery store and the average population who lived in the area did not buy it, would it mean that you have to revert to the online store or go elsewhere?

Amazon's store takes the data-driven store to a whole new level. Using data to drive sales and better service the customers is not a new phenomenon and has been behind marketing campaigns for decades. Loyalty cards and membership schemes have long been designed to gather more customer information. The difference with Amazon's 4-star store though is that it has the potential to change human behavior like never before.



This may also mean that the previous branding model of supermarkets would have to change as currently supermarkets differentiate according to the types of products they stock in store and the customer segment they hope to serve. Supermarkets that are not as data-driven may thus lose out and consumers would find themselves with less choice in products offered at the local store. Those who differ may have to move neighborhoods.

At these stores, from the items stocked in-store to the placement of goods, Amazon knows which goods are now trending and what are top-rated. Data also shows that online sales have risen in areas where Amazon has a physical store due to brand awareness and recognition. This means that there will likely be many more stores opening up.

To more accurately meet customer demands at certain locations and customize service in the future, it is

exposing us to only one side of the story. If we follow and read only certain types of news, algorithms would see our behavior and adapt our news feed accordingly, thereby exposing us to only articles and information that we agree with. In recent years this has influenced politics worldwide and data-driven stores has a somewhat similar resemblance to social media.

Amazon's 4-star concept store takes the data-driven retail store to a whole new level and though exciting, it is also scary. There is much we will have to learn, especially on the impacts of data-driven stores and the exposure that may drive changes in human behavior, demographic trends, and even urbanization flows. There are always two sides to a story, and so we'll have to wait and see the other side of this data-driven trend.

PHOTOGRAPH: DAVE STAMBOULIS



Cool November Festivals

BY DAVE STAMBOULIS

November normally brings cooler temperatures to Bangkok and is the beginning of the best time of year to get outside. It's no coincidence that there are some big celebrations taking place at this time, both in Bangkok and outside of town.

Loy Krathong is the biggest festival, joined by its northern counterpart Yi Peng, and up in Isaan, the town of Surin hosts the annual Elephant Roundup, one of Thailand's most enjoyable weekend fetes. Here's a synopsis of what is coming up.

Loy Krathong

Perhaps Thailand's most traditional and magical celebration, Loy Krathong is a Brahmin festival in origin, which honors both the Buddha and also the goddess of water Phra Mae Kongka (November is traditionally the time when, post-rainy season, canals and rivers overflow their banks, and is the end of the harvest period).

On the night of the full moon, thousands of people everywhere in the country take to every river, lake, canal, and pond to float *krathongs* – small baskets traditionally made from banana stalks, but now made from bread or lotus leaves, which are formed into rafts, decorated with candles and flowers, and launched into the water, symbolizing letting go of anger, bad deeds and thoughts, and to express gratitude to the Hindu water goddess Phra Mae Kongka.

In Bangkok, the Chao Phraya river is the epicenter for the merit making, and as the candlelit krathongs floating down the river are pretty romantic, most of the hotels and restaurants here offer prime viewing spots and special dinner promotions, making this festival just as amorous as Valentine's Day! Loy Krathong will be celebrated on Nov 23 this year.

Yi Peng

In a unique northern version of Loy

Krathong, Chiang Mai plays host to Yi Peng, also celebrated on Nov 23. While a different festival, it is celebrated on the same date (which is the Lanna lunar calendar's second month, *yi* means two and *peng* means full moon), and rather than floating boats, candle lanterns (made from rice paper and wires or bamboo, to which a lit candle is affixed inside) known as *khom loi* are set sail into the night sky.

Known as the "festival of lights," Yi Peng is wildly photogenic, romantic, and is northern Thailand's most notable event. It takes a bit of planning if you want to join in the festivities, as Chiang Mai gets very crowded during this time, and you need to note that despite this being a traditional Lanna festival, there are two festivals that occur these days, one put on for tourists which is a paid event, with guaranteed seating, transportation, and dinner, and the traditional free Thai event which is very crowded and chaotic, so do plan accordingly.

PHOTOGRAPH: JENNY LE / UNSPLASH



Surin Elephant Roundup

Every year during the third weekend of November, Isaan's Surin celebrates the historical connection between elephants and their mahouts (trainers) and the role that elephants have played in Thai daily life and history. Get here prior to the weekend though, as on Friday morning the town welcomes the star attractions by serving up a huge elephant breakfast, where the elephants line the main street and sate themselves for the big weekend ahead. The festival will be held on Nov 17 - 18 this year.

The festivities then move over to the large Si Narong Stadium, where there are demonstrations of the techniques used to train elephants, and the big beasts show off their prowess engaging in elephant polo matches, playing football, and large us-versus-them tug-of-war events in which the audience are invited to come out and pull on the rope (of course the elephants always win). Following the fun and games, mahouts show off feeding and bathing rituals, as well as traditional ceremonies like *phi pakarn*, a rite used to fend off danger during roundups of wild elephants.

As elephants have traditionally been a vital part of ancient warfare in Siam, the main event of the festival is a fully recreated mock battle with large armies being led by their colorfully adorned costumed elephants, complete with cannons and plenty of smoke and fire. In addition to these activities, there is also a local beauty pageant, a parade, and plenty of rides and photo sessions available with the hundreds of elephants that come in from around the province for the event. For a glimpse into the importance of elephants in Thai culture and history, this one's a must-see.

PHOTOGRAPHS: DAVE STAMBOULIS



The Mon of Sam Khok

BY NAAM SOMBATANANTAKORN

In Thailand, villages, districts, towns and other places are named after their most noticeable geographical feature or best-known natural resource. Bangkok means an area of olives (*bang* means a place near a small river and *kok* is short for *makok* or olive). Don Mueang (*don* is elevated tract, and *mueang* is city) means a city set on a high-lying area.

Areas around Bangkok are home to ethnic “Mon” people who migrated from Burma centuries ago and made relatively peaceful Siam their new home.

The Mons are an ethnic group indigenous to Myanmar’s Mon State near the border between Thailand and Burma. During the reign of King Rama II, a war between the two kingdoms broke out and triggered waves of Mon refugees who migrated to places in Siam including Ayutthaya and Nakhon Sawan provinces, and areas around Bangkok.

Among the Mon refugees were rice farmers and highly skilled craftsmen working with earthenware including pottery and water jars. Top-quality red bricks in Thailand are generally known as *it mon* (Mon bricks) as a tribute to the Mon’s superb craftsmanship. This type of red bricks is a mixture of rice husk ash, fine soil from sources near the banks of rivers and sand.

Most of the Mon migrants who were resettled in Sam Khok district in Pathum Thani province, were from Mottama in Myanmar. Sam Khok, or “three small hills” (*sam* is three, and *khok* is a small hill), was mentioned in a French map in

the late 18th century and described by a French explorer as a small town by a cruising canal and a sanctuary for Mons who lived peacefully in their new hometown.

According to historians, the name “Sam Khok” refers to the three elevated areas of Pathum Thani that were spared from seasonal flooding during the rainy season unlike most low-lying areas of the Central Plains.

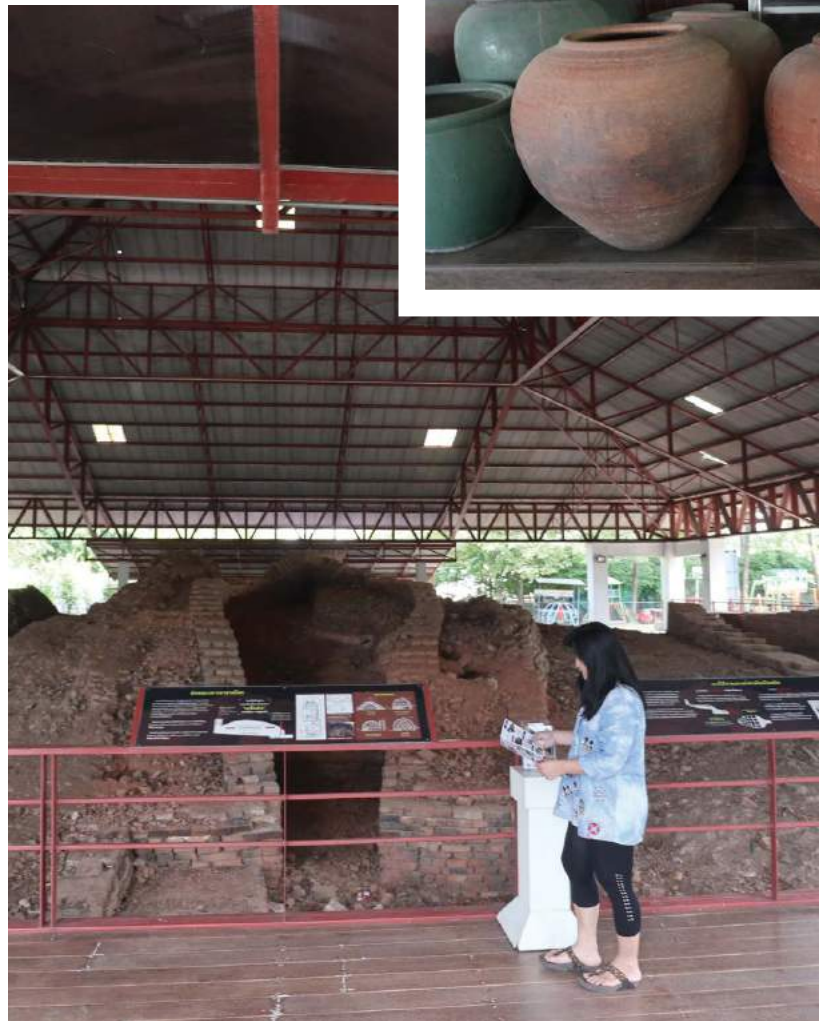
In Sam Khok, archeologists found two sites of earthenware kilns known to the older Mon generation as *tao-ong-ang* (kilns for jars and basin bowls).

The district’s most famous product is “*toom Sam Khok*” or Sam Khok water jars. Called “*toom-ee-loeng*” by the Mon, this type of water jars is used primarily to store cool rainwater (because of its thick wall) and comes in different sizes.

To keep the water cool inside the jars during the summer, locals would sink the jars halfway into the ground underneath the elevated floor of their houses (built on silts).



2



1



1 Ancient kiln

2 Ee-loeng water jars

3 Buddha images at Wat Sing

4 The stupa in front of the ordination hall enshrining Phraya Krai's ashes

3



4

Sam Khok Mons and their peers in other areas sold their famous wares in Bangkok. In those days they traveled by boat to the capital city along the Chao Phraya River with their cargoes destined for different markets in Bangkok. These included Khlong Ong-Ang (now a quiet residential area on the Khlong Rop Krung in Bangkok's Rattanakosin Island) and Ee-Loeng market, which was renamed "Nang Loeng" in the 1940s by Prime Minister Field Marshal Plaek Phibunsongkram. *Ee*, as an offensive title used before women's names, was replaced by the polite honorific *nang* (Mrs). Sadly, today water jars have all but disappeared from Bangkok markets.

In 1815, King Rama II's visit to Sam Khok brought a significant change to the area. When people heard of their king's visit via the waterway, they gathered along the river banks and welcomed the monarch by offering him lotus flowers. As a result of this trip, the king gave the province a new name, "Pathum Thani" ("City of Lotus").

A typical half-day trip to Sam Khok isn't complete without a visit to the site of antique kilns in the morning. The kilns date to the Ayutthaya period. At the antique kiln site, visitors can learn about the origins of earthenware and how it was made. Opposite the kiln site is Wat Sing. The temple, especially the ordination hall and the principal

Buddha image hall, is known for its Ayutthaya-period architecture and murals. The stupa in front of the ordination hall enshrines ashes of Phraya Krai, a member of the Mon royal family who spent his twilight years in monkhood at this temple.

The principal Buddha image hall's wooden gables known for their exquisite carvings have stood the test of time for almost 200 years. The temple also exhibits antiques and artifacts found around the temple area, including Ee-Loeng water jars. Finally, the best way to end this day trip is by visiting Baan Nhuer Nham restaurant situated on the river banks and enjoy the scenic views.



5



6

5 - 6 Baan Nhuer Nham restaurant

HUAWEI

Mate 20 Series: A Higher Intelligence

BY PEKKY THE ANGEL



The smartphone industry is a very competitive one with brands launching new models with enhanced features almost every other week. Chinese smartphone giant Huawei has recently launched its new "HUAWEI Mate 20" series which is designed to become the consumers' best "mate." The series consists of three models: HUAWEI Mate 20, HUAWEI Mate 20 X and HUAWEI Mate 20 Pro.

These smartphones are designed with sophisticated processing technology including the world's first Dual NPU AI Chipset-Kirin 980, massive capacity with 40W HUAWEI SuperCharge with TÜV Safe Fast-Charge System and one of the first Wireless Reverse Charging. The smartphones come with a Leica triple camera that includes Leica's "Ultra Wide Angle Lens" which also supports macro shooting with a minimum working distance of 2.5 cm.

Available in 6.53-inch, 6.39-inch and 7.2-inch sizes, the HUAWEI Mate 20 Series prices are:

HUAWEI Mate 20: THB 24,990
 HUAWEI Mate 20 X: THB 28,990
 HUAWEI Mate 20 Pro: THB 31,990

For more information, visit consumer.huawei.com/th/.

PHOTOGRAPHS: COURTESY OF HUAWEI



mezzoX Express Beverage

D.I.Y.

迷街



Fresh Delicious Drinks: Anytime. Anywhere.

Drip Hot & Iced Coffee.

Fun, Simple, Quick.

Personalized drinks, according to your taste!

正宗的泰式鮮調古法咖啡

只需 3-4 分鐘, 不用特殊設備! 很方便的隨時隨地享受這世界聞名的飲料.



Mezzo Milk 特製奶

Product Of Thailand

泰國原產



mezzo.co



@mezzocoffee



mezzocoffee
Official Account



微信支付



Alipay

Mezzo Co., Ltd.

66 Wipawadee Rd. Soi 20, Jompon, Jatujak, Bangkok Thailand 10900

T. +66(0)-2690-7750 (-2) E-Mail: info@mezzo.co.th LINE: mezzocoffee WeChat: mezzocoffee

www.mezzo.co

Oriental Princess Collaborates with VATANIKA for a New Bag Collection

BY PEKKY THE ANGEL

Oriental Princess recently launched “Oriental Princess Veda and Vanda Signature Bags Designed by VATANIKA,” a collaboration between Oriental Princess and designer Vatanika Patamasingh na Ayudhya, a renowned Thai fashion icon and founder of the VATANIKA fashion brand.

With a design concept of “Oriental Chic,” the bag collection blends Vatanika’s chic fashion sense with Oriental Princess’ characteristic Asian beauty palette resulting in two ranges of chic bags: Veda, a satchel bag collection designed exclusively for Oriental Princess, and Vanda, a variety of bags that comes in four styles: Clutch, Crossbody Bag, and Medium and Small Cosmetic Bags.

“This year, to top up women’s world of beauty, Oriental Princess is evolving into a lifestyle brand that encourages women to keep beautiful with even greater confidence through our new offerings that will take beauty beyond skincare and make-ups. The first of this new move is our bag line, starting with the launch of ‘Oriental Princess Veda and Vanda Signature Bags Designed by VATANIKA.’ The collection is our collaboration with Vatanika “Prae” Patamasingh na Ayudhya, the internationally acclaimed Thai designer who founded the VATANIKA fashion label. Through this collaboration, she has created spectacular bag designs that truly exude the character of Oriental Princess,” said Apaiporn Srisook, Oriental Princess’s marketing director.

The Veda Satchel Signature Bag has pockets in the front and sides and can be carried as a handbag or a shoulder bag. The bag comes in two colors: Veda Rouge Satchel Signature Bag (red) and Veda Glam Satchel Signature Bag (gold) costing THB 2,255.



The Vanda Bag comes in four different types. Clutch (THB 1,195), with a detachable strap, can be used as a shoulder bag or a clutch. The Crossbody Bag (THB 1,195) will delight active women for its versatile and on-the-go usability, thanks to an adjustable strap. The Medium Cosmetic Bag (THB 855) and Small Cosmetic Bag (THB 455) are great as cosmetic bags and organizers for small items. The four bags are available in two colors: Vanda Charming Fuchsia and Vanda Chic Coral. The former has striking patterns in red with complementing details in white, blue, purple and orange. The latter comes with two shades of pink along with white accents.

“Oriental Princess Veda and Vanda Signature Bags Designed by VATANIKA” is available as a limited-edition collection via the Oriental Princess online shop and at all 285 Oriental Princess outlets nationwide.

For more information, visit www.orientalprincess.com.

Accorhotels' La Collection launches E-boutique Shopping Platform

BY PEKKY THE ANGEL

La Collection by Le Club AccorHotels has launched an e-boutique shopping platform to better accommodate its loyalty members. Members residing in Australia, China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, India, Japan, Macau, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines, South Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand and Vietnam will now have the opportunity to earn and redeem their loyalty points on the e-commerce platform.

The online marketplace has more than 800 products covering a variety of categories such as tech gadgets, homewares, beauty products, fashion accessories, travel goods, and more. Members can choose to purchase with points, cash plus points and can also earn and accumulate points. The e-boutique will soon include various hotel items and amenities such as bedding by Sofitel, toiletries and in-room care products.

Visit <https://lacollectionbyleclubaccorhotels.com> for more information.



Celebrate Father's Day at Le Meridien Bangkok

BY PEKKY THE ANGEL



For this upcoming Father's Day on Dec 5, Le Meridien's Latest Recipe specialty restaurant offers a "Father's Day Brunch" buffet special at THB 1,700 net per person where all father's dishes are complimentary for a family of four persons or more. There's abundant European and Asian culinary persuasion for all ages and preferences, and kids are invited to try their clever hands at a pizza or cupcake workshop.

For more information, please contact 02 232 8888 or dining.lmbkk@lemeridien.com.

November

Berlin Philharmonic to perform at MU

The College of Music, Mahidol University, continues to bring world-class musical talent to the Kingdom of Thailand with a one-off performance by the Berlin Philharmonic under the baton of charismatic young conductor Gustavo Dudamel on **Nov 9** at the Prince Mahidol Hall, Mahidol University. Known for its beautiful tone, creative colors and commitment to high standards of artistry, the Berlin Philharmonic will perform one of the world's most beloved symphonic works: Gustav Mahler's "Symphony No. 5." Tickets start at THB 3,000 and are available at www.thaiticketmajor.com.



Music with modern art at 'Urban Jungle'

Chang Carnival's The Green World "Urban Jungle" is the ultimate lifestyle festival that celebrates music, modern art and dance under a green concept. Festivalgoers will enjoy a range of music styles including Future House, Hardstyle, Bass House, and Electro House. The Green World "Urban Jungle" festival takes place on **Nov 9 and 10** at Live Park Rama 9. For more information, visit www.thegreenworld.com.

'Little Shop of Horrors' at M Theatre

Selladoor Asia Pacific is staging Little Shop of Horrors, one of the best-selling classic Broadway musical comedies, from **Nov 9 to 18** at M Theatre. Presented in Thai, the licensed production tells the story of Seymour, the assistant at Mushnik's Flower Shop, who becomes an overnight sensation when he discovers a strange and exotic plant with a mind of its own. To book a ticket, visit www.ticketmelon.com/selladoor/littleshopofhorrors.



MELANIE C Asia Tour 2018: Live in Bangkok

Melanie C, one of the Spice Girls' original members, is coming to Bangkok for her debut concert titled "MELANIE C Asia Tour 2018: Live in Bangkok" on **Nov 11** at CentralWorld's GMM Live House. Fans will enjoy this rare live performance featuring a huge selection of infectious hits from the outfit's glory days of the 1990s. Tickets start from THB 1,500 and are available at www.thaiticketmajor.com.

'Maho Rasop' hosting psychedelic rock, art pop and indie

Maho Rasop is the first ever international independent music festival in Bangkok that is a collaboration between top concert promoters: "Have You Heard?", "Seen Scene Space" and "Fungjai." To be held on **Nov 17** at Live Park Rama 9, the festival features the best selection of international and local artists including The Vaccines, Slowdive, Washed Out, DEAN, PREP, Miami Horror, and Sunflower Bean. Festivalgoers will also be delighted by cultural activities and great tasting food. *Maho Rasop* means "fun fair" or "celebration", which not only perfectly describes the vibes of the festival, but also brings out Bangkok's character as a city full of happiness and excitement and awash with history. Find out more at www.mahorasop.com.



BDMS Bangkok Marathon with magnificent views

BDMS Bangkok Marathon 2018, one of the biggest international marathon programs in Bangkok, will be held on **Nov 18** with runners lining up at the start at the Grand Palace. The route runs through the city's numerous attractions of scenic beauty. The event is divided into four categories: Marathon (42 km), Half Marathon (21 km), Mini Marathon (10 km), and Micro Marathon (5 km). Online registration ends on Nov 11. For further details, check out www.bkkmarathon.com/race-info-EN.php.

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

KHU MUNNORK

PRIVATE ISLAND

*Cast away on your
private island*

A haven of peace and relaxation off the coast of Rayong, only three and a half hours from Bangkok. Accessible only by our private boat, our resort is the only one on the island surrounded by untouched forest and pristine white sand beaches. An idyllic setting that is endlessly peaceful, this island is all about you and the sea.

The islanders are waiting!



GS Grand Seiko



Provoking a New Sense of Aesthetics

GS SPRING DRIVE Grand Seiko

Seiko Since 1881

grand-seiko.com

SEIKO (Thailand) Co., Ltd.

Tel. 02-255-1245 E-mail : contact@seiko.co.th
www.seiko.co.th