

Thailand 2010

1 Night in Bangkok well four actually

Saturday

We arrived tired and hot at the Siam@Siam hotel in Bangkok at approximately 4.30pm our room overlooks the National stadium so we have a great view of the football match, after a quick shower and change its out into the hustle and bustle of this sprawling city of twelve million people.

The sheer size of the shopping malls is amazing although strange to travel half way across the world only to find good old M&S.

Well now time to eat but what and where well Barb's not too sure about the street food although it is available in vast abundance. So we go for the safe option of the Hard Rock, after a few drinks and food we feel ready to explore more of this fascinating city.

We walked through the streets taking in the sights, sounds and interesting aromas. 11pm tired and a little foot sore we return to our hotel decide to have a nightcap before retiring to bed. Oh no a live band playing in the bar 3 hours and a large bill later we make it to bed.

Sunday

After a well-deserved lie in we make our way to the restaurant for breakfast as most of you will know I will try most types of food but Thai chili chicken with spicy rice for breakfast I don't think so but I do have Sui mi mad but I am sure that I will get used to it.

Now time for a trip a bit further from the hotel to the chatachuck weekend market, we are staying by the National stadium and there is a sky train station about 200 yds from the hotel (very handy to get to most places) So we purchase two day tickets for 120bht less than £3 for as many trips as you like, how cheap is that. Arrive at chatachuck market at mid-day not a great idea (the stuff mad dogs and Englishmen are made of) it is stinking hot and very very humid. The size of this market immense and you can buy anything really you can buy ANYTHING! Although we managed not to make a single purchase apart from water.

After a few hours meandering around this amazing place we make our way tired and hot back to the Siam@Siam. After a shower and a short nap and a g&t it's time to venture out into the intoxicating mayhem again, we make our way to the Pat Pong night market more shops, street vendors, street food and offers of massages in varying degrees of decency oh and lots of establishments offering sex again in varying degrees of decency. Well time to eat but where?

After checking out and dismissing a number of eateries I spot a place down a small side street called "Richards" so in we go, a table is offered and accepted we order drinks and you guessed it, it's a gay restaurant. The beer is cheap the food is superb, both staff and diners are great fun, we met an English guy who is the general manager of the Bangkok branch of a well known hotel chain (no not the Hilton) what a great guy he has lived everywhere in the world worked in some of the best hotels in the world, but calls Bangkok home. We end up chatting about F1 and cars, eat and drink our fill for less than £20 say our farewells and off into the hustle and bustle once more. We wander around soaking up the atmosphere with no, well not a lot of pressure from the street vendors to purchase their wares (unlike Egypt) after an hour or so we sky train

our way back to the Siam@Siam. Oh well just a quick nightcap if we must Mrs Wembley.

Monday

We had decided to go to the Grand Palace under our own steam rather than with an organised trip, so route planned off we go two sky train tickets purchased and on we get no need to change as this line takes us to the river to catch the ferry to the Palace. Day ferry ticket 150bht get on and off as often as you like cheap as chips as some orange chap says.

We board the ferry and off we go the river is a great way around no traffic to get in the way and also great for sightseeing.

We get off at the stop for the Palace and are harassed from the moment we touch dry land, vendors selling wares you don't want, guides you don't want, new found friends telling you that you don't want to go to the palace you need to go here or there and offering directions after telling you about their favorite British football team all pretty convincing at first but a bit trying after a while.

After fending off a large number of our new found friends we finally get to the Palace entrance only to find that you both have to wear long trousers, they will of course lend them to you but god knows who's sweat you would be wearing. In frustration we decide not to bother and that we would go back the next day in the correct attire. On to the ferry again for the next part of the days planned event. Chinatown here we come, after only a few stops we arrive at Chinatown this place is about as busy as it gets, it's insane more stuff to buy although we cannot understand why or who would want to buy it. Next adventure buy lunch not as easy as one may imagine if you don't fancy street food and Barb does not fancy it one bit. Restaurants seem few and far between possibly due to vast array of street food available, we find a small cafe in a shopping mall in the entrance to a large hotel (weird) but a number of Thai are eating there so in we go, great spring rolls, Thai fishcakes, chicken cashew nuts and Tad Phai all for 400bht including drinks, we leave content and refreshed, after more sightseeing it's back to the ferry then the sky train and then to the Siam@Siam for a rest a shower and a quick g&t before the night time adventures commence.

Back on the sky train again this time a couple of changes required to get to the planned destination Sukhumvit Road upon arrival guess what we find, correct more shops more street vendors, more hustle bustle and atmosphere it's great but walk it's like going on an organised hike with Linda without the organisation (by the way we love them so please Linda organise another hike soon) god knows where we are it all looks the same so mission food here we go, starting point what shall we have the choice is endless.

So Italian it is but which one after looking at 127 different establishments (not really) we choose one on main road with a window seat to enable us to people watch, what a great sport that is, great news they also have happy hour they must last from 6 to 12 so a couple of drinks good food and people watching.

We pay say our thanks and goodbye's and off into the insane streets once more for yet more walking and looking at lots of things we don't buy mainly because they don't fit. Then it's sky train to the hotel and bed via the bar for a nightcap, just the one Mrs Wembley.

Tuesday

Mad breakfast on offer again prawn fried rice, hot & sour soup, char Sui bows, chili chicken with cashew nuts as well as the normal omelet, bacon and other stuff.

The original plan was to go back to the Grand Palace but for some reason of which I am not sure this did not happen so it is now on the agenda for our next visit. Instead we had a chill out morning and a swim in the infinity pool and lunch by the pool on the fourth floor.

After lunch it was a quick shower and then a short walk to Jim Thompson's house (the Thai silk king) lovely serene house down a side street just off the main road. By all accounts Jim Thomson was an American OSS agent (forerunner to the CIA) who was sent to Bangkok as During his time in Thailand he saw the opportunity for Thai silk to be sold in the USA around the world, the Thai silk industry was run down and decline as the Thai's thought that there was no requirement for it thanks to synthetic materials. Jim Thompson convinced the local

weavers to start production as cottage industries, he took the finished designs to America and showed them to the then editor of Vogue magazine, and the rest as they say is history.

On our way back to the Siam@Siam we found a very very large wholesale? jewellery shop, after being shown around and then shown numerous pairs of earrings given the usual sale pitch with special discount offers and then an extra special last customer of the day offer. We escaped without making a purchase, back to the room and after the usual shower, quick nap and a g&t we are back out again ready for Bangkok's evening performance. Barb had been doing some research in the guide book and had found a shopping mall that specialised in computer, electronic and geek stuff that she thought I might like to visit and it was not too far away. So off we go to the skylark sorry sky train only a couple of stops so the ticket is 20bht less than 50p may have said it before but it's as cheap as chips. As we leave the hotel there are a few drops of rain so I go back to our room for an umbrella we board the sky train and alight a few stops later and start walking (again) towards our destination after walking for some considerable time we realise that we should have turned right instead of left or left instead of right when we left the station whichever it was we had gone in the wrong direction. As we discussed the next plan it started to rain a little, and then a little more we headed for cover in McDonald's just as well, as we got inside it started to rain and it rained like you have never seen. We waited for half an hour thinking that it must stop soon, wrong it just rained harder. So there was nothing for it but to make a run for the sky train off we go the pavements are like rivers with gallons of water overflowing from the gutters above we make it to the sky train slightly wet who am I kidding I was drenched and laughing out loud at the experience. As this weather does not look like stopping we decide to go the Siam shopping center for our evening meal as you can get off the train and enter the mall without going outside. In we go and its Italian again cold platter starter, pasta, salad and desert 399bht and as much as you can eat sounds like a plan.

Luckily by the time we leave the rain has stopped so it's one stop on the sky train and back to the hotel, nightcap ok just the one Mrs Wembley.

Wednesday

Farewell Bangkok, bring on Koh Samui

Time to leave Bangkok with so much left to see and do, have to wait until next time. Usual routine for breakfast I am amazed by the amount of food that some people can get on a plate and then devour it all even when they are petit 5 foot Thai girls outstanding. Back to the room pack check out relax and wait for our car to collect us for the trip to the airport. Car arrives at 12.30 interesting trip to the airport you never want to drive in Bangkok we check in have some lunch and board the plane, just a short fifty minute flight to Koh Samui easy transfer and car collects us for the short interesting drive to the Six Senses hideaway.

We arrive at about 5pm have a complimentary (they will make up for that) drink overlooking the beautiful blue ocean and then we are shown to our villa given the guided tour and invited to the management cocktail party at 7pm so just time to half unpack shower and change of to the bar do we walk or order a buggy? Oh let's walk we get to the bar wishing that we had got a buggy how can it be so humid at 7.30pm. Few drinks at the bar and then into the restaurant for dinner and on the menu a Thai banquet and very good it was too even if a few of the items where just a touch spicy. After dinner a nightcap in the bar? oh well it would be rude not to.

Thursday

After breakfast it's time to acquaint ourselves with the hotel, so it's a walk around the pool area and the different restaurants, buggy down to the beach for a stroll and a paddle (did not think to take swimming stuff doh) sit by the bar and sip ice cold sprite then it's time for a buggy ride back to the villa and chill (apart from the fact that it's stinking hot) out for an hour or so on our sun deck. We have booked on the shuttle bus to Fisherman's village Bo Phut at 5.30 so it's time to shower and change, where does the time go. It's only a 15 minute drive so we are there just

before 6pm it does not look very big so we decide to do our usual you know how it goes look at every restaurant some of them twice and then go back to the first one we looked at, bit like shopping really. We choose a Thai restaurant and Barb decides that it is time to try some Thai food we check that the things we order are not too spicy, food arrive and it is wonderful we will be going back. After our meal we go for another walk look at some more shops and buy a couple of dvd's what to do now as we still have a couple of hours before the shuttle returns. Well can you guess yes we check out a number of bars one of which the Frog & Gecko had been frequented by Mike Jagger at some time as there is a picture and signed T-shirt displayed on a wall.

In another bar we meet some very interesting Australian's 6 or 8 of them a good bit older than us and they had obviously been out enjoying themselves for quite some time, I would guess all day and did not look like they had any intention of leaving their favorite bar any time soon, after an early flight the next morning they were going on a 7 hour overland trip to somewhere I forget where, bet that was an interesting trip as I am sure there will have been some major hangovers. We say our farewells and take a quick trip to the local 7 to 11 to purchase some tonic water as what use is a bottle of Bombay without it. While we wait for the Shuttle bus we find a small bar just by the pickup point so in we go as we have twenty minutes to wait, the guy that serves us has nails that most girls would kill for and is as camp as a row of pink tents. Four nights in Bangkok and didn't meet a Thai ladyboy we have now, onto the shuttle bus back to the hotel and back to the villa to watch a DVD (I know what you're thinking and you are wrong) and a g&t or two.

Friday

Much more of the same today, breakfast takes an hour or so then chill out by the pool bit of reading bit of iPad (barb not too happy as I am in a world of my own writing this) not much sun, overcast and fairly breezy but guess what I still manage to get sunburn oh and bitten everywhere well nearly everywhere. We have decided to eat in the hotel this evening so it's back to the villa quick nap, shower, change and a g&t.

The restaurant overlooks the ocean and a pretty little island called Koh Som and it looks like there is a party going on.

On the menu tonight is a Thai BBQ with some of the largest tiger prawns I have seen, you choose your raw items and take them to the chef and then a waiter brings them to your table. After the fish course there is a choice of meats, we have learnt that they do not do medium to well done in Thailand so we explained that we would like the meat cooked through, well done etc, the waiter agrees nods and smiles we return to our table. The platter arrives (you know the good vet story) although I have to say it was pretty good even if it did want to walk away, so if you want it well done or medium you have to ask for it burnt. After eating our fill we return to the villa to watch another DVD "The Girl with the dragon tattoo" just to keep matters straight, and a little g&t or two.

Saturday

We awake to what is the hottest day so far, Barb is up early and out on the sun bed sunbathing before it gets too hot, after a shower we meander slowly towards the restaurant for breakfast it is just too hot and humid to do anything quickly and it is only just past 9am. We have decided that is too hot to sit by the pool so after breakfast we return to the villa as we have the choice of sunbathing on the sun terrace or relaxing on the day beds in the shade of the villa. Barb sunbaths for about 10 minutes and then retreats to one of the day beds. We have decided to hire a car for a few days next week even though I have not brought my driving license with me but that does not seem to matter. So next week's adventures may be a bit more exciting. Having said that we are off to Chaweng this evening 5.30 pick up and by all accounts it is a bit lively to say the least, so more later.

Well what can one say about Chaweng beach lots of different restaurants, lots of shops and street traders selling guess what, correct the same tat as everywhere else,

before we eat we find an Australian bar down a side street interesting place and good fun. Time to eat we give up trying to decide on a venue and pick a Thai / international that we happen to be outside at the time, food ok but not fantastic. We need to hire a car and explore more that is a job for Monday, but for now it's time for the shuttle back to the hotel, buggy back to villa and a little g&t.

Sunday

Much more of the same today after the usual leisurely breakfast it's off to the bar area no not for drinks but to use the wifi to attempt and post this on Apple's iWork for you all to see and I do mean attempt. I will not go into the full tedious details but suffice to say that after about 2 hours I give in. Looks like the file is too big so all of the pictures will have to be resized doh! That will be getting done later as we have booked into the spa for a foot massage. As my feet are being bathed I think what a job this must be massaging feet, lovely, after a few minutes of gentle caress the young lady decides that it would be a good idea to try and push her thumb or another digit through the sole of my foot and out of the other side. If the pain from that was not sufficient she then attempted bend each and every toe at 90 degrees the wrong way as well as then trying to pull the things from their sockets. Why do we do this? After thirty minutes of masochistic pleasure we hobble back to the bar this time it is for a drink and to recover from the ordeal. Ok time for some sunbathing well we would have if it had not started rain cats and dogs, in the bar rained in, oops.

Dinner at the hotel this evening so no early shuttle to catch great that will give me time to resize all the photographs great. Barb has arranged the hire car for Monday only problem is that my driving license is at home so need to get Phil to email me a copy next problem he is in a car on his way back from London, gosh I wish I had brought it with me that would have been easier. So providing my license gets here there should be more interesting things to report when we start to explore the island.

Monday

It's 6am and I have a little headache we met a couple last night and had a drink after dinner not a late one we were back at the villa by 12.30 so not late by anyone's standards. So it's time for a shower and a wake up,

no driving license yet so we may have to put off the hire car until tomorrow.

Thailand update Monday & Tuesday & Wednesday

Monday

It's 6am and I have a little headache we met a couple last night and had little a drink after dinner not a late one we were back at the villa by 12.30 so not late by anyone's standards especially mine. So, it's time for a shower and a wake up, no driving licence yet so we will have to put off the hire car until tomorrow. There is something wonderful about having a shower outdoors especially when it's twelve feet square, in the morning you share it with the birds and their early morning calls and in the evening you can look up at the stars while the flowing water cascades over you. The only thing you have to remember is that you share it with some non-paying guests the local wildlife, ours consists of Miles, Milli and Millicent a family of millipedes and also Ged the gecko although he has been absent of late. So, you just have to watch where you stand especially at night time. I think I mentioned earlier that the sun caught me out our first day here I thought it was behind the clouds but it managed to get one side of my right calf which now feels like a third degree burn. Also when we went to the doctors for our injections the nurse enquired on our destination and checked which we required she checked on a fascinating web site and informed us that our destination was not a mosquito area, well let me tell you the bloody computer lied big time.

We have both been bitten to death I have got that many bite's that I tried to play dot to dot but the pen ran out of ink I am not kidding, so much for trusting nurses and computers.

Anyway what have we done today well after the usual hour and half breakfast Barb went for a sunbathe and I hid under a parasol, god it's hot so we have retreated to the villa Barb did some more sunbathing on the sun terrace and I have been hiding on one of the day beds writing this and reading Will Holden I will tell you more later, Barb has decided it's just too hot and has opted for the air conditioned villa and I think I will join her for a while and then we plan to go for a walk along the beach when it gets a bit cooler. Then a nap, shower and a little g&t before dinner.

The selection of presents that have been left on our bed each night.

Tuesday

We'll hire a car due this morning so before we leave the villa for breakfast we collect together all the items we need for our days adventure, looks like we are packing to go on holiday for a week. Well breakfast takes the usual hour and a half during which our butler (oh for god's sake) tells that they have received the email with my driving licence so all systems go for the hire car.

After breakfast we go to the office to collect the car, what a little beauty a Suzuki SJ413 Jeep in gold going by the name of Jimmy, the thing that I remember about these things is that they are crap and my memory has not failed me although I had forgotten just how crap they are.

Our butler has provided us with a map of the island with places of interest highlighted. She also tells us it will be easy to navigate the island as there is only one main road (famous last word). So keys in hand and paperwork signed, off we go, well we would if I could find reverse well it can only be in one of four places found it and we are off. First stop the Big Budder it's only a couple of miles from the hotel, can we find it, can we heck. Got there in the end we ask ourselves how you could miss it "its massive son"

After a hike to the top and a walk around it's into Jimmy, where is reverse again, next it's a tour around the island missing the many scooters but only just, we avoid getting out and looking at the shops and market stalls as they are all selling the usual tat. We find one of the beach restaurants that have been highlighted on our map, lunch on the beach very pleasant. Then it's onto the Namuang waterfall when we arrive we are stopped by a local and he points to a parking place wanders over to us and asks if we want to go on an elephant ride to the waterfall, we say no that we want to walk he tells us that it's 6k so we say forget it we are going, he then says ok you can drive to the waterfall. We get there, it's not a very big waterfall but the path is interesting we should have brought hiking boots not flip-flops, luckily no accidents. We then follow the coast road around the island taking in the sights, back to the hotel for a well earned rest before we venture out in Jimmy tonight in the dark that should be fun, hey did we mention that Suzuki Jeeps are crap.

So it's off to Fisherman's Village for dinner, where is reverse again, so no street lights, no road markings, scooters without lights I wonder why they have accidents. We arrive safely and after a short walk and a quick visit to the Frog & Gecko we decide on the Thai restaurant we eat in the

other day and very pleasant it was too. Then we are back in Jimmy for the drive back, who said you cannot get lost?

After a short detour we arrive back at the hotel at 10pm and it a goodnight from me and a goodnight from her. Yes that is petrol being sold in old whiskey (100 Pipers in fact) bottles.

Wednesday

After breakfast we jump into Jimmy now where is reverse off we go and the first stop is BNS a jewellery shop in Bo Phut we are shown everything in the shop offered cold drinks but no purchase. Next stop was a viewing spot lovely view but a tad too hot to say for too long. Next it's off to see a mummified Monk (not sure about the Rayban's)

After the Monk it's off to see willy rock which we found by mistake lots of people here looking a rock that looks like a dick, after a cooling drink overlooking the sea it's back into Jimmy to find reverse again.

After a bit more of a drive around we find a lovely beach with a restaurant and stop for lunch after lunch Barb pops into the sea for a swim. Then it's off to find a petrol station to get some food for Jimmy, now it's back to the hotel for bit of a rest. Barb's not feeling to good would believe it she has got a cold we are just about to leave the villa and drive into Fisherman's for dinner and it starts to rain, make that pour down so we order a buggy to go to the car park so that we do not get soaked. Driving Jimmy in the rain is even more interesting than in the dry, we eat overlooking the sea with the lucky lucky man trying to sell us his wares from the beach after dinner it's back to the villa by buggy from reception not raining this time just lazy. DVD (still not what you think) g&t and sleep.

Well just two days and a trip home left

Thursday

It looks like Thursday and Friday are going to be chill out days Jimmy has gone back from where he came did I mention that according to Jimmy's odometer he had only 7600k I think that it lies like the computer at the doctors as he drove more like something that had covered 176000k, why well no power (standard you may say) no

handbrake, loud clunking from the front suspension and steering and un-drivable at over 70kph but good fun none the less. So after breakfast yes the usual hour and a half it's time to head for the pool and a chill out on the day beds, no sun beds for us, these things just induce sleep quicker, so reading, iPad time, listen to some music and then start at the beginning and more of the same for the next few hours, bit like a cd on repeat. Then afternoon tea at 3pm not impressed they need to go and take some lessons. then it's back to the villa a DVD a little rest in the divine air conditioning, a shower and a quick g&t it's time for the stroll to dinner. What to have is the first question I have to admit I have had enough Thai food so it's a rib eye steak for me and Thai for Barb, accompanied by a bottle of vino (god they can charge for wine). Then it's a nightcap in the bar and back to the villa by 11pm goodnight all.

Friday

Well it's our last day so we better do something a bit more exciting. During breakfast yes the usual hour and a half we arrange with Teep our butler don't you know to go on a short boat trip to the island (Koh Som) that we can see from the hotel which also includes a canoeing trip

around the island, good job it's only a little island. Then it's off to the beach by buggy it's just too hot and a tad too far to walk, down the 107 steps no I did not count them someone else told me, Barb sunbathing and me hiding under the umbrella god it's hot. After three or four hours we are done so it's up all the steps this time I do count them and there is 107 back to the villa by buggy (lazy or what) to get ready for our boat trip. Then the phone rings and they tell us that the boat trip has had to be cancelled as the winds blowing in the wrong direction, sounds a bit like there is leaves on the line to me, I suspect that they did not have enough takers.

So it's back to the sunbathing on the sun deck at the villa. After packing, a little rest, shower with Miles and co and a little g&t it's food time again. We walk yes walk to the restaurant tonight it is a BBQ so you pick your king prawns and crab to the BBQ and the chef cooks them for and delivers them to your table, meat course next so it's steak and lamb chops then it's onto the sweet selection. Then into the bar for a nightcap it will not be a late one as we have to be up early in the morning. We meet up with a London couple who we have had dinner and drinks with earlier in the week they have a butchers business and judging by the places they have stayed a very very profitable one. Flown on Concord twice, fly first class all the time and have stayed at the best places to be seen at. We exchange phone numbers and addresses and order a buggy to the villa's just plain lazy, it's only 11.45

and on our way down the stairs from the bar Barb slips on the stairs luckily John catches her so she's ok, the owners of the resort are visiting on Saturday so there had been a lot of tidying and tatting up going on. What we did not know was that they had just finished varnishing the steps and the varnish was still wet which is why Barb slipped so you never know where there is blame there's a claim.

Saturday

Early start so the alarm is set for 6.45 but we are awake before the alarm does its job, last few things in the case's, shower and stuff then it's off to pay the bill (ouch) and breakfast we are being collected at 8.45 for the short trip to the airport, this flights ok its only an hour the bags are checked straight through so we do not need to worry about them at Bangkok big place that Bangkok airport more like a town. We have now been on the Heathrow flight for 8 hours and the screen in front of us says we only have another four and a half hours to go, oh joy getting a tad board now. I suppose there is not much more to say and I hope that those of you who have bothered to read all of this have enjoyed my ramblings, sleep I think so it's a good night from me and a goodnight from her.