

# FILM IN THAILAND

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## What's News?

### Creative Economy Industrial Estate Planned

The following information is abstracted from the Bangkok Post, August 14, 2010:



Mr. Alongkorn Ponlaboot  
Deputy Minister of Commerce

Deputy Commerce Minister Alongkorn Ponlaboot announced plans to move ahead with a "creative economy industrial estate" that the private sector can invest in and manage.

The new industrial estate is expected to be located in Phetchaburi province.

The new industrial estate would feature 15 areas of the creative economy. These would cover Thailand's cultural heritage such as food and handicrafts, arts including visual arts, media including movie production, printing, broadcasting and music, and "functional creation" such as design, software, fashion, advertising and architecture.

Deputy Minister Ponlaboot said the current system of financial assistance for the entertainment industry or content providers was not clear enough, making it tough for operations run mostly by artists, actors or other independent operators to secure support.

Deputy Minister Ponlaboot indicated the government is also committed to working more closely with operators of existing movie studios such as Kantana Movie Town in Nakhon Pathom, MC Chatrichalerm in Kanchanaburi, Toranong Srichua in Phetchaburi and ChiangmaiWood in Chiang Mai to promote Thailand as an international film production centre.

According to the Thai Government Public Relations Department, the creative economy is an evolving concept based on the potential of "creative assets" to generate socio-economic growth and development.

The Creative Economy Report 2008, issued by UNCTAD, recognizes that creativity and human talent are fast becoming powerful engines for economic growth and development. Over the period 2000-2005, international trade in creative goods and services increased at an annual rate of 8.7 percent. Creative services, in particular, experienced fast export growth of 9.1 percent annually between 1996 and 2005.

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# Who is saying what?

## Morio Amagi, producer "Oba the Last Samurai"

For several months, Thailand production services company, Alpha Beta Films has been working with Japanese production company Cine Bazar to recreate WWII Saipan for the feature film "Oba the Last Samurai".

Film in Thailand (FIT) was fortunate to be able to talk with Cine Bazar producer Morio Amagi about filming this epic movie in Thailand.



photograph of Morio Amagi courtesy of Mr. Amagi

**FIT:** Thank you for taking time to speak with us. Please tell us something about the story of Oba the Last Samurai.

**Morio Amagi (MA):** The story takes place on Saipan Island which is situated in the Pacific Ocean (near Guam). It is the story of Captain Sakae Oba, who was an officer of the Imperial Japanese Army during World War II stationed on the island of Saipan. He was a very brave man who struggled to save many civilians and was praised by the American forces as a "fox".



production stills courtesy of Alpha Beta Film

**(FIT adds):** In July 1944, after 28 days of bloody battle, the island of Saipan was declared secured. All Japanese troops were assumed dead and all resistance ended. As in most Pacific battles, a number of enemy troops escaped to hide in the hills and jungle.

Captain Sakae Oba, one of the Japanese soldiers on Saipan, a former high school geography teacher, organized a party of some 300 soldiers and civilians. He fed, clothed, and sheltered them in jungle villages and caves. Oba carried on a guerrilla campaign against the American garrison and refused to surrender until he personally received instructions from the Imperial General Staff.



**FIT:** When do you expect the movie to be released in theaters?

**MA:** February 13, 2011

**FIT:** How many cast and crew did you bring to Thailand from Japan?

**MA:** Approximately 50 crew and 50 actors

**FIT:** Are you using any additional crew from around Asia?

**MA:** We only used Japanese and American actors as well as Thai extras for the movie.



**FIT:** Why did you choose to shoot this movie in Thailand?

**MA:** Actually, Saipan was not so convenient a location for filming so we decided to shoot in Asia and we scout for locations that had landscape similar to Saipan. We narrowed our search down to the Philippines and Thailand. We finally chose Thailand because of the abundance of equipment available here and the capability of production staff.

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**FiT:** Is this your first time shooting in Thailand?

**MA:** No, we also shot "Little Sunshine" and "20 Century Boy" in Thailand.

**FiT:** Where did the shoot for "Oba" take place?

**MA:** In Chonburi (Wat YanSang, BaiSi, Court Beach, Yau Beach, Phala Beach), and Rayong (Rayong naval bases, Khao-wong, Klong-Plu, Klong-Plakang)



**FiT:** Did you encounter any problems shooting in Thailand?

**MA:** We did not have any problems. If I can say so, during our shoot the demonstrations in Bangkok took place. We were not bothered by these demonstrations

however we do hope that situations like this do not happen soon again.

**FiT:** What did you find best in your experience filming in Thailand?

**MA:** Working with Thai extras



**FiT:** Is there any correlation between filming a movie in Japan and in Thailand (for example, the way crews operate, craft services operate, etc)?

**MA:** Production services are quite international in Thailand – they are a

good mix between the Hollywood system and Thai style – this is easy for Japanese crews to work within. Thai crews are adept at their jobs and don't waste time. I think it is excellent. Thai craft services perform at a very high quality, probably the best in all of Asia.

**FiT:** Would you like to add anything else?

**MA:** I think in order to attract more filming to Thailand you need to establish incentives for example a refund on VAT (value added tax). Incentives would surely attract more foreign crews.

**FiT:** Amagi san, thank you very much.

**MA:** You're welcome.



photo courtesy of Morio Amagi

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# What's Up Private Sector?

## "Survivors Ready!!"



In July and August 2010, De Warrenne Pictures Co. Ltd. teamed up with GMA Network (Manila) Inc. and Castaway Television Productions Ltd. for the filming of "Survivor Philippines: Celebrity Showdown".

Executives at the TV network chose Thailand again after a successful collaboration with De Warrenne's team on the first season, which was filmed on Ko Tarutao in 2008. This time, the new location discovered by Thai producer Tom Waller and chosen by GMA execs was Laem Son National Park in Amphur Kapoe, Ranong province, near the border with Myanmar.

Mr. Waller said: "The islands in the Koh Kam archipelago are pristine and some of the most beautiful in Thailand".



photos courtesy De Warrenne Pictures Co. Ltd.

Hard hit by the Tsunami in 2004, the surrounding area is an off-the-beaten-track destination for tourists, thereby making it easy to control as a location for filming the show. More than 150 local boat crews, drivers and carpenters were hired for the project,

with construction taking place at Had Bang Ben, where the "Tribal Council" set was built in the forest. More than 100 Filipino crew stayed at accommodations in the National Park, and at surrounding Andaman Peace and Wassana resorts.

Shooting in the rainy season proved to be a challenge for both the foreign and local crew, with extreme weather conditions taking its toll on the 18 Pinoy celebrity castaways, who were recruited from the modeling and entertainment industries to battle the elements for 36 days in order to become the sole Survivor. However, Production Supervisor Oscar Kahar remarked: "It was a pleasure to welcome GMA back for another season, and both Thai and Filipino crews worked very smoothly together this second time around."



Oscar's "Too Kup Kao" handled the catering for the 6 week shoot. Doungkamol Lighting and Lek Hilight 2008 Co. Ltd. provided lighting/grip equipment and crews. An EC-130 helicopter used for the opening episode was provided by Advance Aviation Co. Ltd. based in Phuket.

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# Film Me

## Rayong Province

Although it has over 100 kilometers of coastline, some great beaches, waterfalls and a host of other natural attractions, Rayong province has for a long time been in the shadows of its successful Chonburi neighbor and as a result only recently emerged as a tourist destination in its own right.



Rayong province is located on the Gulf of Thailand approximately 200 kilometers from Bangkok. The area is a major agricultural province known for fruit production, particularly pineapple and durian – Thailand's bad smelling but great tasting national fruit. Despite its agricultural prowess, the province is also an industrial hub housing major developments like oil refineries and industrial plants.

The province spreads beyond the mainland to encompass a string of islands that include the world-famous Koh Samet – part of the Leam Ya/Koh Samet National Park. Although the mainland features mountains and flat plains, both the islands and mainland have some absolutely stunning white sandy beaches. The area is also home to a number of dive sites with excellent underwater ridges and masses of marine life.

During the late Ayutthaya period, when the former capital was being razed to the ground by the invading Burmese, Phaya Tak led a troop of patriots, broke through the cordon of besieging troops and marched to Rayong in order to build up his navy before proceeding on to Chanthaburi. Because of his courage and bravery, the soldiers and local population anointed him as "King" in Rayong. Once he had built up sufficient troop strength, Phaya Tak who later became King Taksin of the Kingdom of Thonburi returned to Ayutthaya, routed the Burmese and set up a new capital in Thonburi (Bangkok).

## **Khao Chamao – Khao Wong National Park**

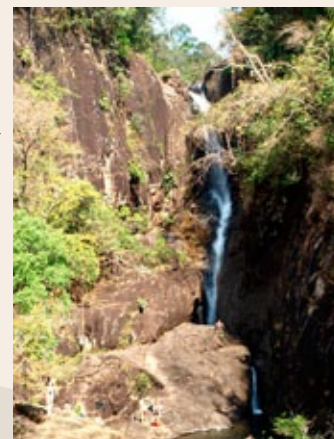
The last piece of virgin forest in Rayong, the park is located in Klaeng District, 71 kilometers from the city. Declared as a National Park in December 31, 1975, Khao Chamao – Khao Wong covers an area of 83.6 square meters, which is home to tigers, wild elephants and bears. The park is famous for its limestone mountains, caves, high cliffs, verdant forests and waterfalls.



## **Klong-Plu Waterfall**

Klong Plu Waterfall is one of the best known and most popular waterfalls due to its close proximity from the favoured beaches of Klong Prao and Kai Bae.

The 20 minutes, 400 meters hike along the stream to the waterfall is a fascinating experience. On the way are countless species of vegetation, birds and giant trees.



Klong Plu Waterfall is a large fall of 3 levels. It has been an important water source to the Koh Chang dwellers for a long time. Klong Plu derived its name from the Phu Pha Mek Sawan Mountain where King Chulalongkorn The Great (Rama V) used to rest. Most visitors stay at the first level only as the 10-meter fall here is already a breathtaking sight.

**Now you know so come to Thailand and Film it!**

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