

FILM IN THAILAND

Volume 1 Issue 3 June 2009



CONTENTS ▶

What's News ?

Another Good Year at Cannes



Film Commission, we strongly promote our location "brand" in a very competitive industry," said Ms. Morakul. "This year for example, we had several international filmmakers visit our booth and commit to film in Thailand."



Thailand Film Office staff Ms. Ubolwan Sucharitakul chats with client

Now that the 2009 Cannes International Film Festival and Market are over, the entire Thai team is looking forward to the 2010 Festival.

Over the past 62 years, the Cannes International Film Festival (May 13-24, 2009) has been able to evolve while exuding passion for motion pictures, discovery of new talents, and enthusiasm of festival-goers and professionals from around the world, all contributing to the rebirth and distribution of films.

The Festival has always been the reflection of its era: a centre for all cultures and hopes, where ambitious and different projects allow budding filmmakers to emerge. A showcase of talents with respect of all tastes.

Within the Festival, the Film Market contributes to the dynamism of the world's cinema industry. It offers opportunities which allow professionals to meet and exchange ideas and for the various film commissions of the world to meet, compare notes and promote their respective services and locations.

The Film Market is an equalizing force, small film nation/company vs. large, rich vs. poor, an open house for film makers from around the world to pick-and-choose.

For the past five years, the Thailand Film Office has participated in the Cannes Market according to Ms. Wanasiri Morakul, director of the Office.

"The Cannes International Film Festival and Market are the largest and most prestigious film evens in the world. Not only are we able to provide information about filming in Thailand to a qualified audience of international film makers but as Thailand's official

Kazakh Film Studios Visits Thailand Film Office, Office of Tourism Development

Dr. Seksan Narkwong, Director General of the Office of Tourism Development and Ms. Wanasiri Marakul, Director of Thailand film office on June 22nd 2009 met with representatives of Kazakh Film Studios Ltd. to discuss mutual cooperative film related ventures between Kazakhstan and the Thai government. The Republic of Kazakhstan is a key stakeholder in Kazakh Film Studios Ltd.



Front row - l to r: Ms. Wanasiri Morakul, director Thailand Film Office; Ms. Sasisupa Sungvaribud, president of Foreign Production Services Association; Dr. Seksan Narkwong, Director General, Office of Tourism Development; Mr. Yermek Amanshayev, president Kazakh Film Studios Ltd. Photo courtesy Thailand Film Office

◀ *continued from page 1*

Heading up the Kazakh delegation was Mr. Yermek Amanshayev, president of the film studio. The Studio annually invests US\$ 30 - 50 million into film production.

Kazakh Studios' delegation was in Thailand to shoot scenes for their movie in production "Florist" and to explore post production services in Thailand.

Representatives from the Office of Tourism Development and the Kazakh delegation agreed that Thailand offers many opportunities for co-productions and has a production services sector that operates to international standards. Both sides will seek avenues for future cooperation.

■ ■ ■

What They Are Saying

A big THANK YOU! to US President Barack Obama. In a whimsical speech to the Radio and Television Correspondents Association in Washington D.C. on June 19, 2009, President Obama said, "...This dinner conflicts with my date night. I was supposed to be going out with Michelle for Thai food – in Bangkok!" *(source: wire reports)*



Chinese director Zhimin Sheng (Fu sheng, "Bliss" 2006) at the Shanghai International Film Festival in a Film Roundtable on Commerce and Standpoint, June 19, 2009 said when talking about

Zhiman Sheng's photo courtesy of **AMW International**

making commercial films, "If I'm making a thriller, for example, I'll shoot in Thailand, not China, in order to cut costs." *(source: AMW International News Bureau)*

Academy Award winning director Danny Boyle ("Slumdog Millionaire", "The Beach") admitted having an "imperialistic" mentality when he filmed "The Beach" in Thailand in 2000. "We were an army of 200 very politically correct (western) crew. We really did not get to know local culture, Mr. Boyle said during a forum 'Make Simple Films' at the Shanghai International Film Festival on June 18, 2009.



Danny Boyle's photo courtesy of **AMW International**

"But we loved working with the Thai people," Mr. Boyle added. *(source: AMW International News Bureau)*

■ ■ ■

Countries and Number of Foreign Productions Filming in Thailand 2003 – Jun. 09 2009

Year	Japan	Europe	U.S.A.	Australia	China	Korea	Hong Kong	Taipei	India	Others	Total	Change in Percentage
2003	154	67	15	13	12	23	17	6	31	50	388	-19.33%
2004	147	85	21	16	12	13	28	9	36	74	441	+13.66%
2005	165	95	22	20	5	26	24	6	44	85	492	+11.56%
2006	142	75	21	27	21	42	21	1	72	69	491	-0.20%
2007	154	102	22	18	8	39	25	6	92	57	523	+6.52%
2008	134	106	25	10	8	26	23	3	123	68	526	+0.57%
2009	44	55	12	5	6	15	14	3	56	26	236	-

Source: Thailand Film Office, Office of Tourism Development as of 26 / 06 / 2009

Meet Our Staff

Ms. Worateera Suvarnsorn



FIT: You are in charge of the Film Business Promotion Section – is that correct? What exactly is that Section tasked to do?

Worateera Suvarnsorn (WS): Our job is to develop overall plans and measures to support related film services business in order to generate national income as well as to promote tourism, culture and arts in Thailand.

We also are tasked with promoting Thailand as a filming location by identifying and participating in international film festivals and “markets” where we are able to interact with film makers and others who are responsible for location shoots in order to inform and persuade them to shoot in Thailand.

FIT: Please tell us something about yourself

WS: I've worked in the government sector for 7 years, attached to the Thailand Film Office for 2 years.

I love to travel and when I have free time, (which I hardly ever have), I travel around Thailand or go overseas. Besides that, I watch movies, read and spend time on Internet.

FIT: What are some of the common problems foreign film makers have when they come to Thailand to film? What suggestions do you have for them to make their filming experience easier?

WS: Most of the difficulties foreign film makers have are following the steps necessary to film in Thailand. For example, foreign productions must hire a local coordinator (company or individual) who is officially registered with the Thailand Film Office, Office of Tourism Development. This coordinator understands the bureaucracy and represents the foreign filmmaker going through the film making process.

The coordinator is also responsible for representing the film company in any matter arising both during and after the completion of shooting in Thailand. The coordinator helps to compile and file necessary documents for the shoot to take place in Thailand. They act on the foreign film makers behalf.

Crews in Thailand are friendly, helpful and skilled. These experienced and knowledgeable local crew should be hired for the smooth running of one's production. As in other countries, there are levels of experience/standards, so it is good to shop around.

Film makers and foreign production companies should contact the Thailand Film Office and coordinators that are experienced in foreign production support. If unsure of certain scenes in scripts, it is wise to hand the script into the Thailand Film Office for a reading and comments – a rejection does not necessarily mean that it is not possible to revise and resubmit.

FIT: What aspects about film making in Thailand do you find film makers enjoy most?

WS: Most of them enjoy working with Thai crews because Thai people are friendly, helpful and skilled.

FIT: What does Thailand have to offer film makers that other foreign locations do not have?

WS: Thailand has been providing production services for foreign film makers for over 30 years, and offers a wealth of experienced crew and cost effective budget options. With the number of foreign film makers that come to Thailand, our production support crews have become adaptable in handling different cultural film maker demands.

For those who are not familiar with Thailand, in terms of locations, we cover a range of beautiful sceneries from wonderful beaches and islands, mountains, green forests and jungles to magnificent waterfalls and rivers. And of course cityscapes can also be found in Bangkok, together with Sino-Portuguese back drops in Phuket. But our “look” does not stop there, sets have been created to look like every imaginable location.

We have back lots to build large sets and experienced art teams to create the sets. For example “Shanghai 2008” was built on the back lot of Moonstar Studios, one of the newest and largest studios in Bangkok.

Location fees vary as much as the locations. Location agreements should be kept short and concise as Thai people tend to feel uneasy when anything is in writing, especially when you are dealing with private places such as peoples' homes and property. For, businesses and bigger institutions a slightly more detailed document maybe used.

Like in other countries, rules and restrictions for shooting in national parks and historic sites can be a bit more complicated and time consuming. Affect on the environment has now become a serious issue. Temples and ancient ruins, royal and government buildings and areas should be given due respect.

All in all, Thailand offers a very versatile selection of locations, those well known, those to be found and those created. The quality and craftsmanship of the crew and facilities here can be gauged from the many, many films that have been shot here. All this combined with renowned Thai hospitality and enthusiasm, to be enjoyed by old friends and new friends alike

Fit: Thank you once again.

WS: Thank you for the opportunity to chat with you.



What's Up Private Sector ?

Limca Underwater Love



PHQ Asia just shot a lime soft drink commercial called "Underwater Love" for the Coca Cola company India.

The take of the commercial is "freshness." The story is shot in a beautiful loft style apartment where you see a young man sitting and surfing channels on the television and his wife is sitting glancing through magazines. The husband notices his wife seems bored and decides to brighten her day by giving her a Limca. She smiles and takes a sip of the drink. As soon as she takes a sip the picture transforms and you see the entire apartment is



now underwater. Furniture floats around the room while the couple romances in between the various objects floating around. The film ends with them back in the dry apartment except they are both soaking wet.

25% of the TVC was shot on set in a studio and 75% was shot on the same set which was re-constructed 15 feet underwater.

Juno Malhotra (juno@phqasia.com)



The Prince and Me: First Anniversary

De Warrenne Pictures Co. Ltd. recently provided production services for Nu Image Inc. / Millennium Films' "The Prince and Me: First Anniversary" filmed entirely on location in Kanchanaburi province.

Producer Tom Waller engaged more than 100 local production crew and up to 400 extras for the 5 week shoot which took place at Promittr Studio, Erawan Falls and the Tarn Rod Caves. The movie was the latest installment in this popular US franchise starring Kam Heskin, Chris Geere and Jonathan Firth. Thai actor Way

Prinya (lead singer from Thaitanium) and Singapore actress Ase Wang were cast in supporting roles.

Tom Waller (tom@dewarrenne.com)



L to R: Actress Viapavee Charoenpura, UPM Oscar Kahar, Prince Chattrichalerm Yukol of Promittr Studio, director Catherine Cyran and Producer Tom Waller.



"American Gangster" and "Eagle Path" Film Thailand

Film Forum Thailand Co. Ltd., which provides steadicam, camera crew and camera equipment assisted Ridley Scott's American Gangster's seven day shoot in Chiang Mai Thailand in November 2006.

They also worked with Jean-Claude Van Damme's crew on Eagle Path ("Full Love") which was shot over 3 months in Bangkok, Pattaya and Pathum Thani

manitanon@hotmail.com



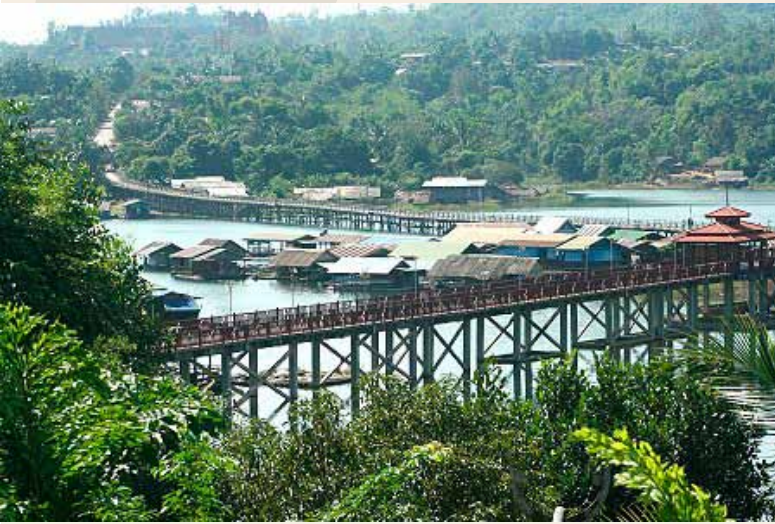
American Gangster



Eagle Path



Film Me



Sangkhlaburi is a sleepy town, population 15,000 located 340 km northwest of Bangkok in Kanchanaburi Province. Its location at Khao Laem Lake (Reservoir) and the surrounding National Parks and Thung Yai Wildlife Sanctuary make Sangkhlaburi one of the most scenic districts in Thailand seldom visited by foreigners.

Located close to the Myanmar border, Sangkhlaburi's population is a mixture of many ethnic groups including the Mon, Karen, Burmese, Lao and even Burmese Muslims from Arakan state in western Myanmar. Sangkhlaburi is a good example of a peaceful multi-ethnic environment.

Thailand's (perhaps East Asia's) longest Wooden Bridge spans across the Reservoir lake in Sangkhlaburi. It is 400 meters long and was constructed by the Mon to create a shortcut between their settlement Wang Kha and the town of Sangkhlaburi.

Beside its natural and historic heritage, Sangkhlaburi offers interesting markets, stunning lakeside views and a variety of cultural artifacts.



Wooden Bridge



Sangkhlaburi floating houses



Know someone that would like to receive this monthly e-newsmagazine? Have them send us an email at thailandfilmoffice@gmail.com

Want to be taken off our mailing list (we'll be sorry to see you go) – send us an email with Unsubscribe in the subject line.



Pitch It to Me

If you have ever heard of or seen “Tears of the Black Tiger” (“Fah talai jone”, 2000) by Wisit Sasanatieng, you will know that westerns, yes, westerns can be filmed in Thailand.

As a matter of fact, A. O. Scott in a New York Times Movie Review, January 12, 2007 said of the movie, “ Many of Mr. Sasanatieng's images are borrowed from westerns, spaghetti and otherwise, and his unbridled appetite for histrionics serves as a reminder that those oaters were not called horse operas for nothing.”

Our point being, you don't have to shoot in the Andalusia region of Spain or Sardinia, because they resemble the American Southwest, where the early “Spaghetti Westerns” were filmed, you can shoot them right here in Thailand.

About 159 kilometers from Bangkok you will find *the Chockchai Farm* which can serve as a good backdrop for western scenes. From the cattle “roaming the range” to the horse-drawn carriages driven by cowboys, The wild west lives in Thailand.



photos courtesy Chockchai Farm

Now you know so write the script and come to Thailand to Film It!

