

THAILAND & INDOCHINA

traveller

August/September 2000
HEALTH HOLIDAYS

WIN
HOLIDAY IN SAMUI

PAMPERED IN PARADISE

GOING DOWN
IN LAOS

NEW
CAMBODIA
DISCOVERY

SYDNEY FEASTS

EXOTIC
SINGAPORE
BY NIGHT

ISSN 0859-7243



Thailand B120 • Singapore S\$6.90 • Hong Kong HK\$40 • Malaysia R9.90 • Japan ¥1,500
Vietnam D95,000 • Euro 10 • USA \$10 • Laos US\$8 • Cambodia US\$5.90 • Myanmar \$6

contributors



Harold Stephens

A long standing writer and novelist living in Thailand, Harold has written more books, had more adventures and seen more things than most of the great European explorers. A one-time Guinness Book record holder for the longest overland journey on the planet, he sums up his off-road travels across the heights of Koh Samui, Thailand.

Jim Goodman

'Akha Jim' has lived in Chiangmai, Thailand since 1988 and regularly explores the region, particularly Yunnan, China. He is the author of *Meet the Akhas*, *The Akha - Guardians of the Forest* and *Children of the Jade Dragon*, on Yunnan's Naxi and Yi minorities. This issue he talks about foggy Sapa, a Vietnam resort town experiencing a rebirth.



Anthony Paul

Australia-based writer and editor Anthony has been contributing to Asia-Pacific and North American magazines for the past 30 years. He currently covers the Asian region for *Fortune* magazine. In *Asiaphile*, he recounts the early 70's in Laos' capital city, Vientiane, and its sights today.



Gordon Sharpless

In Bangkok since 1997, American-born freelance writer Gordon regularly shirks his day job to explore the region, preferably on two wheels or four legs. In this issue he explores one of Cambodia's newly opened ruin sites, Bang Melea.



Tom Cockrem

Australian photo journalist Tom specialises in travel with his work appearing in various in-flight and travel magazines throughout Asia, the UK and South Africa as well as the *South China Morning Post* and the *Singapore Straits Times*. In this issue he takes a break at Yunnan's traveller's respite, the city of Dali.



TRAVEL

FOOTBALLER JOLTS TEMPLE

David Beckham is causing dissent at one Bangkok temple. The famous footballer now has a place as a deity in Bangkok's Wat Pariwas, courtesy of sculptor Thongruang Haemhood, a serious fan. The 0.3 meter statue of the Manchester United mid-fielder is now one of 100 other statues of minor deities placed at the foot of the temple's main Buddha image. Religious officials are divided, but many see it as blasphemous

"It is not suitable to create divergant styles of Buddha images because it is the most sacred thing for Thais and it's the national religion," said one.

Meanwhile, pending an official inspection, Beckham's image, covered in gold leaf and depicting him before his serious - and expensive - Beck and Sides haircut, is there to stay.



GIFTS TO ENEMIES

Here's your chance to take home a reminder of Thailand's prehistoric past. Khun Boonman's on New Road has petrified dinosaur droppings on sale at just under 20US cents a gram.

Verified genuine by the Thai government and several eminent scientists

(a certificate from the Utrecht Laboratory of Palaeobotany hangs close by) these 65 to 190 million-year-old dung balls come from Mukdahan, Thailand. It is here that Khun Boonman found his first prehistoric "item"

back in 1980. To this day, local villagers collect them and sell them to Boonman who then passes on the joy to you from his shop.

Suffice to say, collectors of these ancient treasures say that they have not been discovered near fossilised eggs or bones, which has led scientists to believe that even dinosaurs liked to keep a tidy home.

Completely odourless, by far the best value are those from herbivores as they left lighter leftovers than their carnivore brothers.

