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siem reap supplement

2009
ISSUE01

BEYOND ANGKOR

Siem Reap Inside Out



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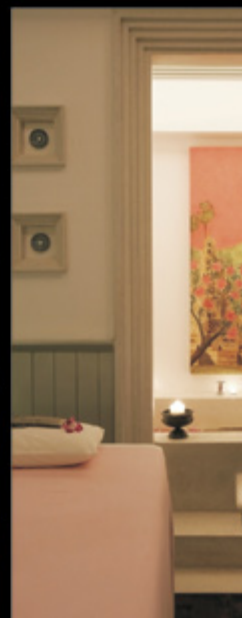
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contents

coverstory

6

food corner

10

map

14

bar stool

16

kaleidoscope

18

leisure & wellness

20

unplugged

25

- 12 Best Kept Secret
- 13 Restaurant Guide
- 17 Bar Guide
- 19 Culture Guide
- 22 Leisure & Wellness Guide
- 23 Shopping Guide
- 24 Hotel Guide
- 26 Quiz



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TAKEN FOR A RIDE

Visitors to Siem Reap often find themselves enamoured with the surprisingly cosmopolitan town and its excellent bars and restaurants. However, there is a perceived void in finding things to do during the daytime. **AsiaLIFE** took some time to delve into the various activities on offer around Siem Reap. **Jed Byrom** focused on things you can ride.

FIVE OR SIX YEARS AGO IT WAS odd to see any vehicle other than a moto in Siem Reap. Over time cars began to appear and tuk tuks began to ply their trade delivering locals on errands and tourists to the temples. Two years ago a French expat opened a business using quad bikes to help tourists access the lovely country just outside of town. Their office is a short jaunt over the river from the Old Market, and is easily reached by following signs for Quad Adventure Cambodia.

As we arrived, four bikes rolled in bearing a tourist each. One of the advantages of the quads

is that anyone can ride them regardless of skill, age or girth. The less intrepid members of our group breathed a sigh of relief as the possibly septuagenarian riders dismounted.

All adventures begin with a brief introduction to the bikes delivered by Herve Nicole, the owner of Quad Adventure Cambodia on the idiosyncrasies of Quads as a species and the potential errors riders might make. There are not too many things to worry about. "But hit a bump and boom, you're in the river," Herve says. "Funny for the children, but not funny for you."



1955 100632

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The Polaris bikes are imported from America. At 250cc they represent the lower end of the power spectrum, but are more than enough for the sort of tours on offer. They appear quite sturdy and seldom break down – a blessing as the nearest parts store is somewhere in the USA.

The tours are full-service and no prior experience is necessary. Herve starts the bikes and puts them in gear for each rider. Once the bikes are rolling, the speed is controlled by a Quad Adventure Cambodia guide who takes the lead position on a dirt bike. At least one other guide splits time between riding at the rear of the pack and moving among the riders, ensuring that everyone moves along without problems.

The sunset tour departs the office at around 4.30pm. The route takes you along the outskirts of town. Children run out to greet the quads at each house passed, providing a bit of atmosphere. It's also a bit nerve-wracking as any one who has driven a vehicle of any sort here knows. The quads easily slot into Cambodian traffic laws – size alone matters – falling between large motorbikes and small cars in terms of right-of-way.

After four or five kilometres the route turns off onto a dirt track leading through verdant paddy fields.



Up, up and away - by balloon...

The sunset area lies about a kilometre further along, with a profile of Phnom Krom in the distance. All visitors to Cambodia should experience a countryside sunset at least once – the light is quite unique.

The pause for pictures at sunset is brief as the return ride is best done before total darkness. The guides again start the bikes, put them in gear and turn on the headlights for the ride home through the approaching night. The ride back is notable for the multitude of dusk-loving insects that assault riders as they drive. Keep your mouth shut to avoid consuming said insects or buy a mouth mask in town before you set off. The route back to town winds

through village and countryside, and then through Wat Damnak just before reaching the office. Driving through the Wat as night

fell was picturesque, but seemed invasive, as temples are not usually places for growling gas engines.

Quad Adventure Cambodia offers people a chance to access the countryside without requiring fitness, a motorbike, a driver, or any prior skill. There are a variety of different rides on offer. If you're looking to get out and see a bit of Cambodia you would otherwise miss, it is a great choice. If you're a thrill-seeker, looking to see how fast or how high it can go, get on a dirt bike instead.

■ THE HOUSE OF ELEPHANTS

Most tourists in the Angkor Complex come across the elephants of Angkor at some point in their trip, whether it is at the sunset temple of Phnom Bakheng or around the citadel of Angkor Thom. Far fewer tourists discover that it is possible to visit the elephants at their home.

English expat Gavin Bouchier has been living in Siem Reap since 2001. Gavin is one of the very few true experts on elephants in the world, and for those curious about elephants he represents a treasure trove of information. The cost of a visit to Gavin and the information he gave was an extracted promise not to put the location of the Elephant House in this article. It's not that Gavin doesn't want visitors – he just wants the right sort of visitors.

"I don't mind people coming out here," he says. "But I want them to be the sort of people who are willing to work to get here. If you ask the right questions around town, you'll find your way here." If you can find directions, 3pm is a good time to arrive.

The elephant house is a large round structure somewhere in the Angkor temple complex. Constructed of wood and other local building materials, according to Gavin the elephants actually helped build the place by lifting the log pillars into place. The centre of the building is open to the sky. It is here the elephants are given their showers between their morning



Get off-road



...and by helicopter

and evening work shifts. The mahouts climb aboard and around them, hose in hand, washing away the dust and grime. The elephants appear to revel in the attention.

By 4.15pm, all the elephant on the sunset shift are fitted-out in their uniforms and on their way to work. "The elephants are never late," says Gavin. If the mahouts are late the elephants depart without them, forcing their 'keepers' to catch up with them further down the trail to work.

The domestic elephants of Cambodia, are aging. Domestic elephants are not traditionally bred in Cambodia. Habitat loss is a problem to both domestic and wild elephants. There are no real avenues to replace Cambodia's elephants. Most of the domestic elephants outside Phnom Tamao near Phnom Penh and the elephants of Angkor are kept for transport by minority tribes in Mondulakiri and Rattanakiri provinces. Like youth everywhere, the children of the elephant keepers mostly want to own motos, televisions and cellphones – not pachyderms.

"The elephant culture is dying out in Cambodia," says Gavin. "People want to see the picturesque grass huts and working elephants they imagine, but the descendants of Cambodia's traditional elephant owners would rather have the girl in the karaoke video. They aren't getting her riding on an elephant."

Gavin's programme does not seek to buy new elephants, but they are occasionally sought out by owners looking to sell. While they are not averse to adding a new elephant this way, the long-term prospects of elephants at Angkor Wat are not strong. As elephants age they are susceptible to all of the maladies which plague humans. Senility, cancer, digestive problems and arthritis all regularly occur in any ageing elephant population. Gavin retires the elephants from work as they become unable to keep up. The retired elephants look quite happy, ambling about the place. In ten years or so, virtually all of the elephants here now will need to be retired. Then the

programme will focus on elderly care rather than tourist rides.

It is hard to see how the pensioners can possibly be replaced. Gavin predicts that within fifteen years there will be only a handful of elephants working in the temple complex.

■ CAMBODIAN COWBOYS

The Happy Ranch is closer than you think. A five-minute tuk tuk ride from town puts you in a setting straight out of the American West. Horses graze in the pastures surrounding the stable, a fenced riding ring offers a place for lessons, and the owner may well sidle out to meet you in his cowboy hat. The Happy Ranch is clearly a going concern.

The horses are nearly all 100 percent Cambodian, bought from around the country and trained by the staff at the ranch. They can accommodate most skill levels. For those just learning to ride, or for small children, ring rides can be arranged on a lead rope. Those staying longer can have a lesson with qualified teachers.

All the equipment is in good shape. Though saddles can never really be called comfortable they are no more painful than a saddle in the United States. If comfort is a main concern, giving the cart rides a try is a good idea, as the carts are brimming with cushions, ride smoothly, and allow for shifts in position as needed. Helmets are provided and the ranch requires you to wear them at all times.

The best part of a ride with the Happy Ranch is the chance to move quietly through the mayhem of a rural Cambodian scene. They deliver on their promise to get you out into countryside and village life. Some of the rides stop at Wat Atvea, a very popular temple with expats because it is rarely crowded and is a beautiful reminder of what it was like to see the temples ten years ago, before the entrance of buses and flag-waving tour guides.

Happy Ranch is a wonderful addition to the tourist options here, and a much better choice for the equine-inclined than any of the other horse-cart options around. Prices range

from a low of US\$18 per person for a cart ride (2 person minimum) to a high of US\$64 per person for a four-hour 'Completely Cambodian' adventure with a number of affordable choices in between.

Don't worry about the health of the animals. An equine veterinarian upon visiting the Ranch told me that half of the horses she sees in her practice in the United States are not as well looked after as the Happy Ranch horses, and in a country where such care for animals is rare, it's nice to see someone setting as high a standard for their animals as they do for the tourists.

Quad Adventure Cambodia, Tel: 092 787 216

The Happy Ranch, Tel: 012 920 002,
www.thehappyranch.com

■ TIPS FROM THE TOP

1) Up, up and away! A balloon ride offers a great aerial view of the temples – one which you otherwise won't find unless you shell out for a helicopter ride. Tel: 012 520 810

2) Shell out on a helicopter ride. Two companies, Sokha Helicopters (24 Sivatha Street, Tel: 063 966 072) and Helicopters Cambodia (658 Hup Quan Street, Tel: 063 963 316) have rides ranging from US\$90.

3) Take a punt. Go to the lake, but away from Chong Khneas were the tours head – Kompong Pluk is great.

4) Make a splash. Spend US\$5 on a pool and gym pass for the day at the Prince D'Angkor Hotel & Spa, Sivatha Street, Tel: 063 963 333. Use this day to recover from an evening spent sampling our nightlife.

5) Tommy Girl or Rambo? There's a paint-balling course out on route 6, towards Phnom Penh heading out of town, run by the Pyramid Mega Entertainment Club, Tel: 063 967 778-9. Avoid the three-story VIP karaoke bar and shoot at each other instead. ■



A happy day in the saddle

food corner

Food Review: Knowing me Knowing You ...

AHA opened last April with a grand gala event attended by all of Siem Reap's high society and more than a few of the hoi polloi. With the backing of the Hotel De La Paix, a beautiful space and an excellent chef in Joannes Riviere it was seen as a venture that would inevitably succeed. **AsiaLIFE** paid a visit in mid-November to check to see if it had lived up to its promise.



Dine in elegance with great cuisine

THE AMBIENCE IN AHA IS unique for Siem Reap. Renowned architectural firm ASMA have lived up to their reputation as the top architects in town by creating a quiet, soothing space only steps from the old market. The front of the house showcases an extensive wine collection. A cascade of hanging parasols that dangle over the stairs leading up to the Linga Spa are a definite highlight of the interior decor. The kitchen is a semi-open affair, caravan-style so that the curious or cautious diner can see their food being prepared. The chefs seemed happy enough to let me peer into their space, and I could see why. I've rarely seen a cleaner, more sanitary kitchen in Siem Reap, or elsewhere for that matter.

The menu is an eclectic mix of modern Asian and updated Khmer dishes with a tapas section, a choice of wok-fried vegetables and meats with an assortment of Khmer and Khmer-inspired flavours. Our party of three chose to focus on the tapas leaving us room for the trio of cheeses as a finale.

■ THE MEAL

Wine in hand, we perused the menu eventually choosing to

sample a papaya salad with dried snake, fried nem (spring rolls) with coconut, skewered beef with Khmer pickles, a cauliflower mousse, braised mushrooms in a marinara sauce, and sticky rice dumplings with pork. Our choices arrived promptly, and presentation of the dishes was exemplary. There's a clear emphasis on the importance of serving food that is appealing to the eye as well as the taste buds.

The papaya salad was an excellent representation of a traditional Southeast Asian snack. The snake was a pleasant addition though more exotic in concept than in actual taste. The spring rolls were cooked to perfection and the coconut added a twist to a dish that at its worst can be an uninspiring clichéd taste of Asia but at its best – as here – can be a wonderful complement to any meal. The braised mushrooms had a pleasant taste and texture, but did not distinguish themselves as innovative or particularly inspired. The skewered beef was good, well flavoured and tender, with the pickles providing a pleasant contrast in both texture and taste. Texture proved problematic for us with the final two

tapas, however. I'd jumped at the chance to add cauliflower to my diet here as I don't find it in the markets here regularly, but the mousse was overly grainy, though flavourful and interesting. The glutinous rice dumplings also had a wonderful flavour, but even as seasoned consumers of glutinous rice products we found there to be too much sticky rice surrounding the savoury meat morsels.

■ DOWN TO THE CHEESE

At the midpoint of our meal our opinions hung in the balance. Happy enough but not enthralled with our selections so far, we eagerly ordered our cheese plates. You should know at this point that the three of us hail from the United States and we all live in Vermont. While there may be a Wisconsinite here or there who'll contest it, Vermont is home to the finest cheeses in our country. Wisconsin may have us beaten on quantity, but for artisanal dairy products Vermont is king. As proud Vermonters we judge dairy harshly.

There are restaurants here that I will attend more regularly than AHA. There are places I have had a better experience overall. There

is nowhere, however, where I have found better representations of cheese in Cambodia. I will grant you that the only cheese most Cambodians are interested in eating is fish cheese (prahok), but Siem Reap hosts a pantheon of restaurants offering cheese in various forms, and none of them can touch this.

■ THE GOAT CHEESE, BRIE, BLUE?

I've had my cheese rant. Some of the dishes we had at AHA can be found in similar form at many of the smaller Khmer market restaurants, and those with strong stomachs could probably be happy trying them there. For those interested in trying some local flavours but not interested in finding out if their stomachs can cope with food from the local restaurants I would highly recommend AHA. The excellent ambience, the extremely hygienic kitchen, and the quality of the Khmer-inspired food we had made it an excellent choice. Our meal for three with a glass wine each was also surprisingly affordable at US\$28.50.

A Ha, The Passage, Tel: 063 965 501 ■

Food Talk: Paradise Lost

Jed Byrom shares a few home secrets about the best Little Italian in – or rather just outside of – town. **AsiaLIFE** takes no responsibility for the views expressed in this article, although the editor-in-chief agrees whole heartedly.

I'VE MET A FEW TRAVEL writers while on my own journeys, and I can tell you with some authority that at least some of them have favourite places they refuse to write about for fear their Eden will become spoiled and overrun by all and sundry. I feel a bit that way about writing of L'Oasi Italiana, because since its opening this has been an escape for me – a place to get away from the dusty mayhem of downtown Siem Reap and sit quietly with friends in the verdant garden setting. In the interests of journalistic integrity, I will disclose that I am dear friends with one of the owners and good friends with the other.

I've got a long history with L'Oasi. Carla Ara, who is half-owner of the restaurant, was one of the first people I met when I came here to settle down in 2001. She was an Italian guide then, one of two in town. I remember sitting in a guesthouse restaurant with her. I was dining on fried rice. Carla was having baguettes, deep-fried. "I need the kilos," she said. "Every year I lose more kilos." I told her she should open a restaurant. She invited me to lunch at her house, and we had homemade pesto and linguine. I told her, seriously now, that she should open a restaurant.

The month prior to the restaurant's opening was one of the best, food-wise, of my life. Every two days or so Carla would call and ask me to come down to the restaurant and sample prospective dishes. It was a chore, but I soldiered through, and when the restaurant finally opened I knew just what I liked – everything.

If it wasn't clear in the first paragraph, it must be by now. This isn't a traditional restaurant review. I can't write a traditional restaurant review of a place I love like this. Trust me. Go there. If you can't bring yourself to trust me, go and ask around. You'll get someone here or there with a complaint about the service, or how long it took the food to arrive. Synchronisation of servings can be an issue at times. You won't find many who complain about the food,

though, and even those who bemoan the service probably find it in their hearts to return regularly.

Here's a bone thrown to those who wonder what kind of restaurant reviewer writes this kind of tripe. You should try the beef carpaccio. Raw beef in Cambodia – I eat it all the time. My visitors eat it all the time. It hasn't made anyone ill yet. So it's safe and delicious. Try it.

The insalata Caprese is another special. Fresh mozzarella is the manna of the gods. Roberto, the head chef and the other co-owner, is incredibly picky about all his ingredients. The tomatoes burst with flavour, the cheese melts in your mouth, the basil and olive oil complement both.

You can't go wrong choosing any of the homemade pastas, particularly the gnocchi with pesto or gorgonzola and the Cappeletti Bosciaola – any of these. The lasagnas are tasty. The homemade sausage, grilled on its own or as a topping on a pizza is delectable.

Save room for the sweets at the end. The tiramisu is very sweet as far as tiramisus go, but is a great choice to share with a friend or loved one. The pannacotta is light and lovely. I'm sure the fruit salad is nice, but who orders fruit salad in the shadow of a good pannacotta or tiramisu?

L'Oasi is a bit more expensive than some places in town with mains running from US\$5 to US\$8, with the exception of the white truffle gnocchi – if available. That comes in at a cool US\$15 and is worth every riel. The restaurant can be hard to find – if you run into trouble tell the tuk-tuk driver you want to go to eat Italy food. If that doesn't work, tell them to go on the road to Rosy Guesthouse, then keep going straight for another kilometre or so. When you have just about given up ever finding the place and are about to turn around you will see a bamboo fence painted like a massive Italian flag. You've arrived at my Eden. Don't worry about spoiling it. I can always order in.

L'Oasi, 1 km along East River Road, Tel: 092 418 917



The Perfect Pizza...



...is like putty in Roberto's hands

Best Kept Secret: Turning Japanese

Tired of Khmer cuisine, too many pizzas, OD'd on curry, why not try some Japanese? Too expensive, think again. Words by Jed Byrom.



JAPANESE RESTAURANT Basho is delightful hidden gem. While it isn't easy to find, a little searching should get you there. Heading down Sivatha Boulevard from the old market area, look for Acleda Bank on the right-hand-side. Immediately following the bank, turn right onto a side street. Basho is just down this road on the left. The sign is the size of a postage stamp,

so it is easier to locate by going to either the side entrance of the Somadevi Angkor Hotel or the Star Cell office.

Basho's layout is typical of many a small restaurant in Japan. The space houses only a few tables, a smallish kitchen, and nice, muted décor. The lighting is ample and pleasant, and there are a few Japanese touches, like a curtain leading to the kitchen with a portrait

of the restaurant's namesake printed on it. The owner of the place previously ran a Japanese restaurant called Sanctuary 36 near the old market. The new space is superior in ambience and capacity.

As a former resident of Japan one of the things I miss most is proper, day-to-day Japanese food. Basho satisfies these cravings. With a wide variety of udon noodles, katsu options, down-home favourites like oyakodon, and a small but excellent choice of sushi the menu is varied enough to warrant repeat visits. We were part of a group of seven and the only drawback we found was that our party, along with a few other diners, strained the kitchen so that our food did not arrive in a timely fashion. However, once we'd tucked in any complaints we might have had melted away.

The tonkatsu – a breaded pork chop with an accompanying tangy sauce and a side of cabbage salad – was cooked perfectly, crispy on the outside yet not too dry. The miso soup was

as it should be, which is all that can really be asked of it. Coming in both half and full portions, the sushi rolls were large enough to strain the capabilities of both our chopsticks and our mouths. A Japanese chicken curry had all the right touches – plenty of spice but not hot-spicy, some sweet vegetables to counter the chicken, and plenty of sauce to soak up the accompanying rice. The udon soup was full of flavour and vegetables, and the beers were free-flowing if a tad short of ice cold.

The only real objection I could muster revolves around the rice. Most Japanese restaurants will never serve anything but Japanese rice. While I am an admirer of our own domestic rice here in Cambodia I would have liked some Japanese rice with my Japanese meal. That said, the food was excellent, the location charming, and the service friendly and competent.

Basho Restaurant, next to Star Cell office off Sivatha Boulevard (turn right after the Acleda bank). 📍




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restaurant guide

Abacus
turn right off National Road 6 by Aclea Bank, Tel: 012 644 286
 Lavish new restaurant on the way to the airport. Large terrace area for barbecue, bar and inside dining area, serves international cuisine. Fans of the previous Abacus will need no persuading to try the new one out.

AHA
The Passage, Tel: 063 965 501
 Sophisticated and beautifully designed wine bar selling a wide range of wines from around the world, tapas, great cheese and Lavazza coffee. Open from 10.30am to 10.30pm.

Alliance Café
7 Makara Street, Wat Damnak Area Tel: 017 809 010
 French restaurant established by Olivier Muzard in a beautiful building just across the river. Has an adjoining exhibition space featuring sculptures and paintings by Cambodian and international artists. Also runs cookery lessons. Open 10am to late.

Amok
The Passage, Tel: 063 965 407
 Part of a large chain that dominates Pub Street and the back alley. Amok serves up reasonable Khmer food in a pleasant terracotta terrace environment. Open 10am to 11pm.

Apsara Terrace,
Raffles Grand Hotel d'Angkor Tel: 063 963 888 (x1204)
 Cambodian dance performances every evening at an outside terrace area close to the Grand d'Angkor in pleasant gardens. Dinner and dance from 7pm for US\$32 per person.

Basho
Lane off Sivatha Blvd., next to Star Cell
 Our hidden secret, this excellent Japanese restaurant has a wide variety of udon noodles, katsu and oyakodon. A small but excellent choice of sushi and the menu is varied enough to warrant repeat visits.

Blue Pumpkin
Old Market, Tel: 012 946 227 www.tbumpkin.com
 Popular café with a great range of freshly baked breads and pastries. Serves shakes and health drinks for US\$1.75 and Bon Café coffee. Free WiFi. Also has outlets at Angkor Wat, Lucky Mall and the airport.

Burgers Without Borders
The Passage, Tel: 012 292 708
 Specialty burger bar, with good burgers made from Brazilian beef and soy shakes. The burgers range from US\$3.75 to US\$4.75. Open from 10am to 11pm.

Butterflies Garden Restaurant
535 Wat Bo Road, Tel: 063 761 211 www.butterfliesofangkor.com
 Garden restaurant with large netting to keep the infinite number of butterflies within the grounds. Beautiful, relaxing

setting and good clean food. Small gift shop also on the premises. Open from 8am to 10pm.

Café de la Paix
Hotel de la Paix, Sivatha Blvd, Tel: 063 966 000, www.hoteldelapaixangkor.com
 Like the adjoining Hotel de la Paix, this small café exudes contemporary chic. Excellent Lavazza coffee, bagels, salads and free WiFi dished up in air con surroundings. The sandwiches, salads and patisseries are all half-price after 8pm.

Café Indochine
44 Sivatha Blvd., Tel: 012 804 952
 Large open restaurant with downstairs air con restaurant that offers Khmer cuisine in a beautiful wooden Khmer house. Popular with tour groups. Open from 10am to 3pm.

Chez Ninie
Lane off Pub Street, Tel: 012 582 782
 Located conveniently right next to Miss Wong, this delightful small French restaurant has home-cooked cuisine with daily changing specials. Open from 11am to 2.30pm and 6pm to 10pm.

East India
Top floor Claremont Hotel, off Wat Bo Road, Tel: 016 808 012
 One of the best curry houses in town offers some of the best views from its lofty perch at the top of the Claremont Angkor Hotel. If you fancy some South Indian dosa this is place to come. Open from 7am to 11pm.

FCC Angkor
FCC Complex, Pokambor Avenue Tel: 063 760 280
 One of the finest examples of contemporary Asian architecture in Cambodia, the elegant bar and restaurant serve a mix of Asian and international cuisine, with a recently revamped menu. The complex includes shops, the McDermott Gallery, Visaya Spa, a boutique hotel and arguably the coolest pool room in Cambodia. Open from 7am, to midnight.

Ivy Tree II
Off Pokambor Ave., Tel: 012 602 930
 This restaurant-cum-guesthouse with small yard and chill-out bar upstairs is set in a quiet part of town close to Central Market. Serves snacks, international and Khmer food with the Mexican dishes highly recommended. Rooms from US\$6 to US\$15.

Kamasutra
Pub Street, Tel: 063 761 246
 Easily the most sophisticated looking Indian restaurant in Siem Reap, the open brick decor and large terrace area make this a great spot for enjoying a vegetarian thali. The lassis are recommended. Open from 11am to 11pm.

Khmer Kitchen
The Passage, Tel: 063 964 154
 The cheap and cheerful decor belies

the quality of the food. The ideal place for those on a budget to sample cheap Khmer cuisine with both amok and loc lac costing US\$3. Open from 11am to 11pm.

L'Oasi Italiana
East River Road, Tel: 092 418 917
 The best Italian restaurant in, or rather just outside of, town. The hardest part is to find this place – keep on going on the East River Road in the direction of the temples, for a couple of kilometres until you see the large Italian flag. Once there the combination of the beautiful garden and home-cooked Italian pasta and pizza makes the trip worth it. Open from 11am to 2pm and 6pm to 10pm (closed Monday lunch).

La Noria
Wat Bo Road, Tel: 063 964 242 www.lanoriaangkor.com
 Beautiful restaurant, set on a raised terrace area surrounded by trees. Serves good international and Khmer cuisine. Has traditional shadow puppet, musical and dance performances on Wednesday nights. Open 6am to 10pm.

Le Bistrot de Paris
 Old Market Area, Tel: 092 964 790
 Parisian-style bistro with heavy wood-paneled interior, solid bar and air con. Feels like a Parisian bistro and serves foie gras, croque monsieur, cheese, cold cuts and French wines. Open 7am to late.

Le Bistrot de Siem Reap, Victoria Angkor Resort
 Dine in elegance in one of the most elegant hotels in Siem Reap. This bistro serves some of the best French cuisine in Siem Reap. Open from 6.30pm to 10.30pm.

Le Grand Café, Old Market area
Tel: 012 447 316
 Brasserie set in a beautiful colonial building close to the Old Market. Offers a wonderful perch for watching the tuk tuk drivers ply their trade below from the upstairs balcony while sampling the French and Khmer cuisine. Open from 6am to 11pm.

Le Malraux
315 Sivatha Blvd., Tel: 063 965 330
 French brasserie opening out onto a terrace on the main road. Specialises in fish and meat dishes as well as having some Asian cuisine. Serves Blue Pumpkin ice cream. Open from 7am to midnight.

Le Tigre de Papier
Pub Street, Tel: 012 265 811
 The thing that differentiates this place from all the other restaurants along Pub Street is its half-day cookery classes. Friendly, helpful French management. Open from 8am to late.

Les Orientalistes
631 Wat Bo Road, Tel: 063 760 278 www.les-orientalistes.com
 Very colourful terrace restaurant set in a traditional Khmer wooden house, on the other side of the river. Serves French and Asian food, specialising in tajines and couscous. Open from 11.30am to 2pm and 6pm to 10pm.

Madame Butterfly
Airport Road, Tel: 016 909 607
 Large restaurant set in a traditional wooden house with beautiful Chinese artifacts set in a pleasant garden. Serves Thai, French and Khmer cuisine. Open from 6pm to 11pm.

Maharajah
Lane next to Pub Street, Tel: 092 506 622
 Halal restaurant offering 261 Royal Indian dishes, including a large selection of vegetarian and non-vegetarian specialties. Open from 10am to 11pm with free home delivery.

Meriç
Hotel de la Paix, Sivatha Blvd., Tel: 063 966 000 www.hoteldelapaixangkor.com
 Elegant, contemporary restaurant with classically simple yet powerful black and white décor and an open kitchen. Executive Chef Johannes Riviere has devised a daily-changing seven-course traditional Khmer set menu. Try to book one of the swings outside on the terrace.

Red Piano
Pub Street, Tel: 063 964 730, www.redpiano.com
 Bar set in a beautiful 100-year old colonial building that dominates one end of Pub Street. Lounge chairs spill out onto the street and the upstairs restaurant has great views of the méeleé down below. Open from 7am to 11.30pm.

Singing Tree Café
Wat Bo Road, Siem Reap Tel: 012 490 265
 Vegetarian alternative lifestyle garden restaurant with clusters of foliage surrounding wicker and bamboo seating. Menu includes veggie burgers, quiche, salads, sandwiches and tofu-based Khmer specialties. Also a centre for yoga, meditation and reiki healing. Open from 7.30am to 9pm.

Sugar Palm
Taphul Road, Tel: 012 818 143
 Beautiful wooden restaurant serving some of the finest Khmer cuisine in town on its spacious balcony. Open from 11am to late.

Tell Restaurant
374 Sivatha Blvd., Tel: 063 963 289
 Teutonic restaurant that serves raclette and fondue as well as steaks grilled on a lava stone. Great value afternoon snacks from 2pm to 7pm for US\$2 to US\$3.50. Open from 10am to 10.30pm.

Viroth's
Wat Bo Road, Tel: 012 826 346
 Elegant restaurant on the other side of river with excellent terrace garden. Tends to be overrun with tour groups, but is still a good place to try royal Khmer cuisine including amok and beef lok lak, although food tends to be adapted to western palettes. Open from 11am to 2pm and 7pm to late.

Viva!
Old Market area, Tel: 063 963 151
 Mexican restaurant that offers burritos, chimichanga, enchiladas and fajitas for around US\$5. Try the margaritas. Open from 11.30am to late. 📍



Two Small & Charming Places

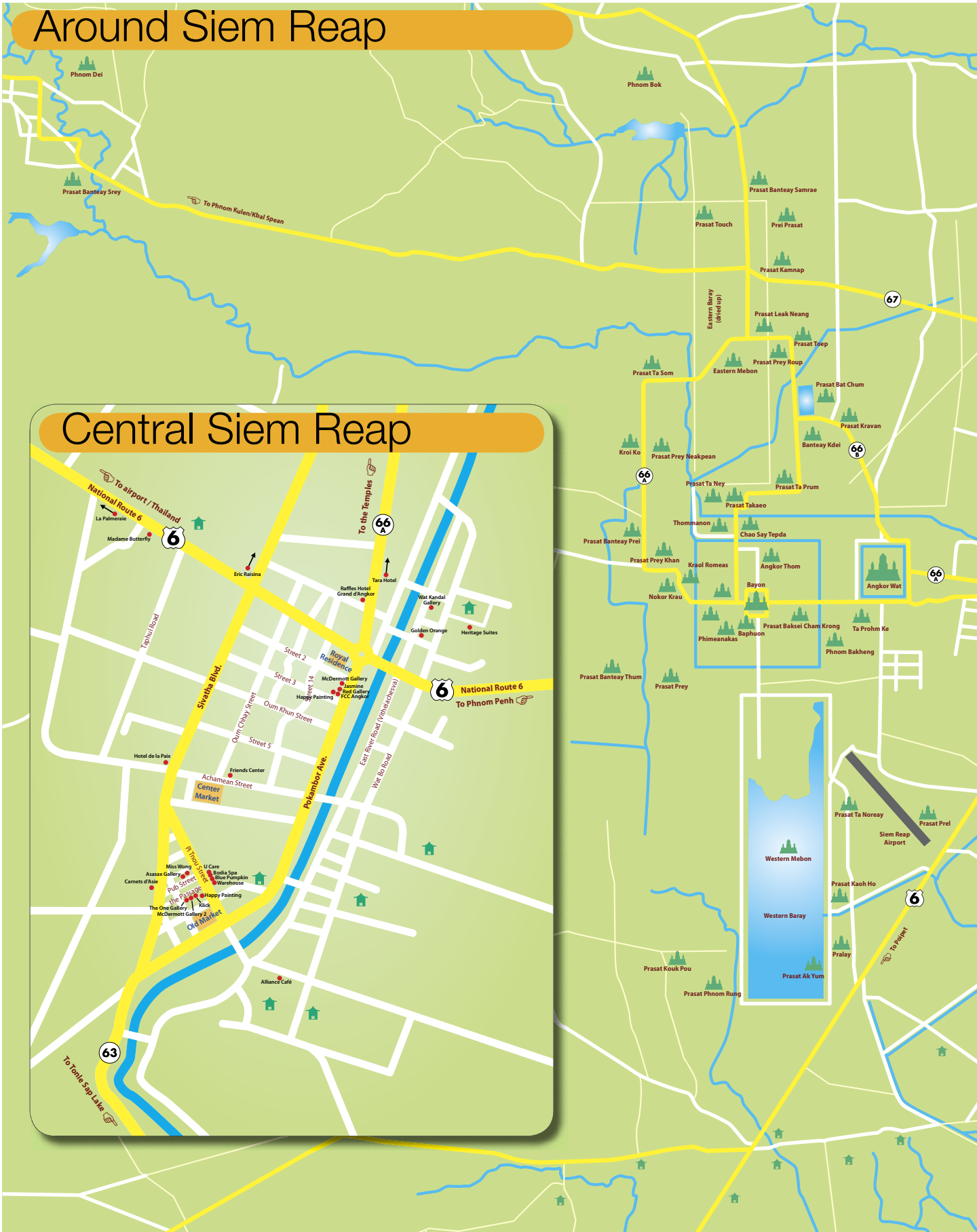


LA PALMERAIE
Boutique Hotel



N6 Airport Road, Siem Reap • Tel: 016 909 607 • Email: info@lapalmeraiiedangkor.com • www.lapalmeraiiedangkor.com

Around Siem Reap



Central Siem Reap



ella

WINE & JAZZ BAR

*Tapas
Garden Setting
Wi-Fi
Wine Room*

300 M. WEST OF HOTEL DE LA PAIX AT PANEMAN ECO TOURS
TUESDAY - SUNDAY: 5PM - 1AM
0121869386

MISS WONG



"A SIP OF OLD SHANGHAI"
Siem Reap's Late Night Cocktail Bar



6pm until Late
Behind Pub Street, Old Market Area

bar stool

The Bar Scene

It may be dubbed 'Pub Street' but not all bars are paved with gold **AsiaLIFE** gives you the low down on the best places for a sundowner ... and beyond.



warehouse

■ THE FUNKY MUNKY

A great bar in a new location, just at the end of Pub Street. This is a good place to start an evening, as they have a large and varied menu and are open seven days from around noon. Fans of English pub grub will be happy here, and their new menu also has some nice higher end options. A nice mix of tourists and residents can be found here. They play some great music tending toward classic rock and punk depending on which owner is on shift. With fantastic roast dinners on Sunday nights, and an ultra-competitive quiz night on Thursday, come and watch German Max challenge all the answers!

■ MISS WONG

A new bar, tucked away on the alley past pub street going away from the river. The owner, a Kiwi named Dean, has done a nice job with the Chinese motif. Hearing rumours of excellent cocktails, we found them to be true. The cocktails here tend to be different than the ones on



x-bar

offer in other bars in town, so it really is an unique experience.

■ LINGA BAR

Along with Miss Wong and The Warehouse, the other strong cocktail bar in town. The emphasis here is on strong. Their cocktails pack a punch. The bar is Gay-friendly, but straight friendly as well, and a favourite

of many expats. The atmosphere can be anything from laid back to utterly outlandish depending on the evening. The décor is chic by Siem Reap standards, and if you've come here to be seen this is one place to do so.

■ TEMPLE CLUB

The beer is cheap and plentiful and it has become by some

accounts the most popular backpacker bar in town. Not as strong on ambience as some of the other options, but unquestionably popular with the budget crowd. Friendly hostesses will share a game of pool with you and perhaps more?

■ THE ANGKOR WHAT? BAR

The Angkor What? has veered away from the expat business it once monopolised, but is still going strong when it comes to pulling in the tourist crowds. The history of tourism in Siem Reap is literally written on their walls, and it remains a classic bar on the Southeast Asian circuit. Loud, brash, and full of flavour, buckets of booze remain popular with all comers.

■ THE LAUNDRY BAR

If we could own a bar, it'd be this one. A favourite haunt for expats of all stripes, the Laundry somehow always remains mellow even when it is packed with people. Sylvain, the owner, remains the gold standard for

bar stool guide



Funky Monkey

Siem Reap suave, and while it has a definite francophone feel to it, all are welcomed to its warm embrace. Nieng, fluent in French, English, and Khmer, is one of the outstanding bartenders in town not so much for mixology as for his social aptitude.

■ THE WAREHOUSE

The other rock star Khmer bar tender in town works at The Warehouse, just next door to the Laundry Bar. Trained in mixology by a professional from outside the country and trained in empathy by the owner of Brodie's Bar, we'd match Sony against any bartender, anywhere. He'll mix you a drink, tell you a story, or show you a magic trick all with equal aplomb. Good budget fusion food by chefs from the United States. Some of the best cocktails in town, Nintendo Wii, Pool, and table football vie with three big screen TVs for your attention. The musical range deserves an accolade, as you can encounter any genre on any given evening.

■ THE X BAR

Unquestionably the bar to end up at for a late night session. Guaranteed mayhem, an excellent menu for anyone homesick for Ameri-

can-style cuisine, cheap drinks and a devil-may-care attitude. Open from 6pm until first or second light, X Bar has a commitment to providing cutting edge entertainment for Siem Reap unlike any bar in town. They are building a half-pipe on their roof. They have a massive movie screen, pool, table football, Nintendo, etc. Not a quiet, talk to your friends sort of bar, but a great place to see the mayhem ensue.

■ ABACUS

No mention of the Siem Reap drinking or restaurant scene would be complete without a mention of Abacus. Moved to a new location a bit outside of town on a lane off the road to the airport – turn right at Aclada Bank – Abacus was due to re-open at time of going to press. In Renaud we trust. The best western bar man in town, and he has been for years. This is also one of the best and most consistent places for a higher-end meal outside of the hotels. An innovative and ever changing menu should carry over from the prior location. Perhaps the only place in town where the French and Anglo communities can both be found in droves. 🇫🇷



Abacus

AHA

The Passage.
Tel: 063 965 501
Sophisticated and beautifully designed wine bar selling a wide range of wines from around the world and tapas, as well as great cheese and Lavazza coffee. Open from 10.30am to 10.30pm.

Angkor What?

Pub Street.
Tel: 012 490 755
"Promoting irresponsible drinking since 1998," this graffiti-laden bar is the mainstay of Pub Street. A healthy mix of loud rock, punk and grunge, buckets of vodka and red bull and a pool table ensures that you will never feel alone. Open from 5pm to late.

Arts Lounge

Hotel de la Paix, Sivatha Blvd.,
Tel: 063 966 000
www.hoteldelapaixangkor.com
In keeping with Siem Reap's most contemporary hotel is the town's most stylish bar. Lounge around with a coffee while surfing the net or enjoy a pre-dinner cocktail. Also has revolving contemporary art exhibitions.

Banana Leaf

Old Market,
Tel: 063 964 813
Popular bar on Pub Street with wide-screen TV, making it a great spot for al fresco Premier League games, although it is really more of a cocktail bar. Buy-one-get-one-free happy hour on selected drinks until 5pm. Open 9am to late.

Chilli Si-dang

East River Road,
Tel: 092 671 918
Restaurant bar serving Thai food and a wide range of wines, with a cool design, pool table and good sound system. Open from 9am to 11pm.

ELLA Wine & Jazz Bar

Trajan Pro, 300m west of Hotel de la Paix
Tel: 092 410 200
Set in an old Khmer house, with a large garden with platform beds, ELLA opened late 2008. It has an extensive wine list, international cocktails and tapas. The music is pure jazz and there is a separate wine room. Open Tuesday through Sunday 5pm to 1am.

Funky Munky

Pub Street,
Tel: 011 481 303
The former riverside bar has moved to the corner of Pub Street. Good mix of music, excellent film posters and pool table compete with the pub grub for your attention. Try the Sunday lunch or build your own burger. Alternatively compete in the most competitive 'charity' quiz on a Thursday. Open 9am to late.

Giddy Gecko Bar

Lane off Pub Street,
Tel: 092 857 400
Late night drinking den with a wide range of cocktails. Good bet for those wanting to get away from the hordes on Pub Street.

In Touch

Pub Street,
Tel: 063 965 006
First-floor bar with stylish light-shades and welcoming bar. Serves Thai food and has live music from 9pm. Open 11am to late.

Island Bar

Night Market (off Sivatha Blvd.)
Balinese-style bar ideally located for late night shoppers in the Night Market. Open from 4pm to midnight.

Laundry Bar

Old Market,
Tel: 016 962 026
www.laundry-bar.com
Extremely chilled music bar just off Pub Street with great mellow decor and extremely cool t-shirts. Its multi-page music

catalogue makes for the perfect respite from the Cambodian obsession with hip hop. Open 6pm to late.

Linga Bar

Alley behind Pub Street,
Tel: 012 246 912
www.lingabar.com
Laid back, gay-friendly bar with extremely chilled Buddha Bar tunes and some amazing light boxes. Unsurprisingly serves a great range of cocktails. Free WiFi. Open from 5pm to late.

Martini Lounge

La Residence d'Angkor Hotel, East River Road
Recently restyled elegant cocktail bar with new subdued lighting set in one of Siem Reap's finest hotels. The 6pm to 7.30pm happy hour includes complementary canapés and champagne by the glass.

Miss Wong

Lane off Pub Street,
Tel: 092 428 332
Imagine yourself in Shanghai at the turn of the last century and you won't go much wrong here. Extremely welcome addition to the same-old Siem Reap bar scene, serves excellent and original cocktails and dim sum. Open 5pm to late.

Molly Malone's

Pub Street,
Tel: 063 963 533
www.mollymalonescambodia.com
Obligatory Irish Pub with lots of wood panelling and Irish memorabilia. The Guinness either comes in a cold can or alongside some steak in a pie. Also has a small guest house upstairs with air con rooms. Open from 7am to midnight.

Sok San Palace

Sok San Road (off Sivatha Blvd.),
Tel: 063 964 710
Late night alternative for those who like their music pumping hip hop and their girls scantily-clad on a stage. All others best avoid. Open from 8pm to late.

Sports Bar

The Passage
Claiming to be the town's only sports bar, live Premier League games are shown in an air con environment. Open from 4.30pm to late.

Temple Club

Pub Street,
Tel: 015 999 909
Lively bar on Pub Street, with live DJ every night. Three pool tables, large screen and free classical dance performances upstairs from 7.30pm to 9.30pm and all-day buy-one-get-one-free cocktails. Open from 7am to late.

The Warehouse

Old Market,
Tel: 063 965 204
www.thewarehousesiemreap.com
Popular expat bar opposite the old market that plays great music and dishes up decent international cuisine. Upstairs is a pool table and Playstation station. Top floor has recently been converted into a barbecue terrace with good views of the Old Market. A great place to hide from the hordes along Pub Street. Open from 10am to 3am.

The White House

Lane off Pub Street,
Tel: 063 966 245
Does what it says on the tin, albeit with a pink glow. Cocktails for US\$3 and Fashion TV on in the background. Open from 6pm to 3am.

X Bar

Sivatha Street & Pub Street,
Tel: 092 207 842
The last option for continuing the night - just one for the road. Open from 4pm to very late. Supersize TV screen, table football and pool tables provide a number of options for staying up later. 🇫🇷

kaleidoscope

Siem Reap's Growing Arts Scene

A personal journey through Siem Reap's art galleries by **Narisara Murray**, co-owner of the McDermott galleries and the Red Gallery and wife of photographer John McDermott.



McDermott Gallery I (FCC Complex)



Klick

AS LATE AS 2001, SIEM REAP had no formal art galleries to speak of. A visitor looking for contemporary art would have to comb the Old Market, looking past kramas and opium pipes. Now, Siem Reap boasts at least a dozen galleries that showcase the work of artists based in Siem Reap and throughout Cambodia, as well as around the world. The town is beginning to acquire an international reputation as a place to find striking original art.

■ THE PHOTOGRAPHY NEXUS

As one of the most photographed sites in the world, Angkor seems a natural home for photographers and photographic exhibitions. In 2004, John McDermott and myself opened the doors of McDermott Gallery 1 at the FCC, exhibiting his iconic sepia-toned images of the temples as well as the platinum prints of internationally renowned photographer Kenro Izu.

Setting up the gallery was both challenging and fun, and

we wanted to expand on that initial vision. We renovated a larger space near the Old Market, which eventually turned into McDermott Gallery 2, so that we would have the ability to show a mixture of emerging and established artists doing first-rate photography of Asia.

"I want to create a world class photography gallery, said John. "People don't expect to find one here and when visitors walk in and recognise what we're doing, they react with surprise and awe that we can actually do something like this here."

John curates all the exhibitions, which have combined international names like Peter Steinhauer and Dominic Rouse with emerging photographers beginning to make a reputation in Cambodia and throughout Asia.

A gallery devoted to photography is an unusual entity in Southeast Asia. Now Siem Reap is home to three of them with the official opening of the Friends Centre

in November 2008. The Friends Center, which supports the Angkor Children's Hospital founded by Kenro Izu, opened with a show of Asian color photography by legendary National Geographic photographer Steve McCurry. Upcoming shows will be curated by Brenda Edelson, a private dealer in Sante Fe who has a great interest in Asian photography. She is hoping to bring in such names as Marc Riboud, a world famous French photographer who shot Angkor in the late 1960s.

An important force for photography in Siem Reap, the Angkor Photography Festival began in 2005 and just completed its fourth annual festival in November. Founded by Christophe Loviny, Gary Knight and Jean Yves Navel, and continued by a large board of regional and international photographers, each year the festival brings hundreds of talented photographers from around the world to exhibit their work in venues throughout Siem Reap.

Some of the visitors have stayed, contributing to the growing artistic community. French haute couturiers Marie Fabre and Frédéric Escudier came to Siem Reap to volunteer for the festival, and later established the Wa Gallery, a gallery and concept store that brings together original artwork, handcrafted items, high design fashion by Siem Reap-based designer Eric Raisina, and other unique objects into a multifaceted mélange. "The gallery is named 'Wa' after the key concept of Confucius," Marie explains. "The idea is to put contrary forces together so that they are not in conflict but instead act in harmony."

■ THE GROWTH OF CURATED GALLERIES

Over the last few years, Siem Reap has seen a growing number of curated galleries, where the vision of the curator shapes rotating exhibitions of artists from Cambodia and around the world.



Arts Lounge - Hotel de la Paix

Hotel de la Paix, home of the Arts Lounge, made a conscious decision to support the art community when they invested in creating the Arts Lounge and hired Filipino artist and fashion designer Don Protasio to curate their exhibitions.

“The goal of the gallery is to promote contemporary Cambodian artists,” says Don. “We are actively looking for Cambodian artists who are either reinterpreting traditional art forms or who are creating Cambodian art in a contemporary way. Beyond that we don’t have specific guidelines. I’m looking for something creative, original, exciting – something I haven’t seen before.” Their latest show is a festive exhibition of acrylic paintings of impressionistic flowers by Khmer artist Phav Savann, who is currently working in France. Don draws on artists throughout Cambodia, including Phnom Penh and Battambang, as well as from abroad.

Restaurateur Olivier Muzard became involved in the arts through collaboration with sculptor Sasha Constable, who was promoting the work of several Cambodian artists. He began hosting exhibitions at an annexe to his beautiful French restaurant Alliance Café. Olivier is enthusiastic about reaching new artists, travelling to Battambang several times to reach emerging artists in the community there. He is currently exhibiting the architectural drawings and figure studies of Battambang artist Mao Soviet.

The Red Gallery at the FCC is a collaboration between John McDermott and myself, and we

jointly curate the artwork on display. The gallery is dedicated to contemporary artists working in Cambodia, including Cambodian artists as well as British, French, Czech and Filipino based in the country. It’s an intimate space with a constantly evolving mix of artists and artwork that ranges from bronze sculpture to lacquer, oil paintings, abstract rattan, photography and mixed media.

Heritage Suites Hotel has hosted a number of exhibitions in their airy and spacious lobby continuously over the last few years. While they don’t have an in-house curator, they have invited respected figures such as artist Sasha Constable and Angkor Photography Festival coordinator Francoise Callier as guest curators of their shows.

■ ARTIST/ENTREPRENEURS

Artists have always been entrepreneurs of a creative sort – making a living by art is often a tricky business. Siem Reap resident Loven Ramos, an artist from the Philippines, collaborates with his wife Faith and their long-time friend Don Protasio to shape the One Gallery into an eclectic space bearing the stamp of their playful personalities.

“The gallery is really an extension of our living room,” says Loven. “It’s a way of bringing our home into the public eye – our style as a couple, as a family, as friends. The philosophy of the gallery is that there really is only one of each thing – when it is sold, we have to let go of it, kiss it goodbye, and move on creatively.” The gallery combines Loven’s mixed media artwork

with objects and jewellery accumulated through Faith and Loven’s travels and Don’s fashion and accessories.

French painter Jean-Pierre Obriot opened the doors of his Wat Kandal Gallery in November. Tucked away by the river, and nestled under rambling shade trees, the gallery/studio shows Jean-Pierre’s tranquil contemporary paintings of monks and Buddha images, as well as his collection of antiques.

One of the first galleries to open in Siem Reap, Asasax Art Gallery features the work of Khmer painter Asasax, including his work in acrylic, oils and mixed media. Based in Phnom Penh, Asasax first opened his gallery near the National Museum, but maintains a second gallery in Siem Reap near the Old Market. Located nearby, Happy Painting Gallery features the exuberant paintings of Stephane Delapree. And just around the corner, Klick Gallery was opened by long-time Cambodia resident Pierre Poretti to show his hand-tinted photographs of Angkor and Cambodia, as well as his work of Bali, Burma, Vietnam and Laos.

Directly or indirectly, the source of inspiration for growing creativity and expression that we see in these galleries and in the artwork on display is Cambodia itself, in all of its complicated facets: the richness of the culture, the texture and quality of life here, and the awe inspiring example of Angkor, which seems to transcend its human origins.

See map on page 14 for locations of galleries. ■

Alliance Café
7 Makara Street, Wat Damnak Area
Tel: 017 809 010

Small gallery established by Olivier Muzard adjoining his beautiful French restaurant features sculptures and paintings by Cambodian and international artists.

Arts Lounge
Hotel de la Paix, Sivatha Blvd.
Tel: 063 966 000

www.hoteldelepaixangkor.com
Large space in the ground floor of the hotel that showcases the works of Cambodian and international artists. All pieces focus on Cambodian subjects.

French Cultural Centre (CCF)

Off East River Road
Arts centre with small exhibition space and frequent films. Also has a cafe at the back (open from 7.30am to 7.30pm) with staff trained at the Paul Dubrule School.

Friends Centre
Achamean Street, next to the Angkor Children’s Hospital.

Tel: 063 963 409 (x7015)
International photography gallery curated by Brenda Edelson set in the Friends Centre. All proceeds go to the Angkor Children’s Hospital.

Happy Painting
FCC, Old Market, Domestic Airport
Tel: 012 623 945, www.happypainting.net
Three shops selling the extremely colourful and positive work of iconic artist Stef. Accepts credit cards. Open 5.30am to 11pm.

Klick
The Passage, Old Market area,
Tel: 063 761 084

Commercial fine art gallery dedicated to the work of Swiss photographer Pier Poretti. Black and white photographs are given a face-lift using hand-tinted water colours.

McDermott Gallery I & II
FCC Complex, Pokambor Avenue,
Tel: 012 274 274

The Passage behind Pub Street,
Tel: 092 668 181
www.mcdermottgallery.com
Two galleries devoted to photographic works. The main gallery has a semi-permanent exhibition of the mesmerising photographs of Angkor taken by John McDermott and Kenro Izu. Second gallery features ongoing exhibitions of other their photographers. Open 10am to 10pm.

The One Gallery
The Passage, Old Market area
Tel: 015 378 088

Eclectic, contemporary gallery that combines Loven Ramos’ mixed media artwork and objects and jewellery accumulated through his travels, with Don Protasio’s fashion and accessories. Open 11am – midnight.

The Red Gallery
FCC, Pokambor Avenue
Tel: 092 822 323

A contemporary art space representing a select group of artists based in Cambodia. The Gallery exhibits sculptures, oil paintings, photography and mixed media. Open from 10am to 10pm.

The Wa Gallery
333 Sivatha Blvd.
Tel: 016 746 701

Gallery that mixes original artwork, handcrafted items, high design fashion by Siem Reap-based designer Eric Raisina, and other unique objects into a multifaceted mélange. Open 10am – midnight.

Wat Kandal Gallery
East River Road, near Wat Kandal
Tel: 092 521 801

Tucked away by the river, and nestled under rambling shade trees, the gallery/studio shows Jean-Pierre Obriot’s paintings of monks and Buddha images, as well as his collection of antiques. ■

leisure & wellness

Pampered in Angkor

Cambodia is evolving into a spa centre for Southeast Asia. In addition to the major hotels, most of which have their own spa facilities, there are now a number of high quality non-hotel spas in town. **AsiaLIFE** twisted our intrepid reporter's arm and sent him out to a sampling of local spas to have his flesh kneaded.



PHOTO COURTESY BODIA SPA

Treat yourself at Bodia Spa

■ BUDGET

Massage parlours (have sprung up all over Siem Reap. As expected the quality can vary greatly. Both the Be V.I.P. and Dr Feet have fairly consistent quality. If you're living here and on a budget, the best solution is to find a masseuse you like at one of these places and ask for them by name when you go for a US\$6 massage. Both these places offer powder and oil massage and are "clean" massage places – no extras. The powder massage is recommended over the oil, as the oils tend to keep you slippery for ages. A fairly straightforward massage begins with a foot wash in a plastic bucket in the foot massage section of the place, followed by a jaunt upstairs to a multi-mattress room. Typically massages here are far less violent than Thai-style, though the masseuses are often not as professional as you might find in higher end venues. There can be chatter during your massage and

the proximity of other patrons bothers some people.

■ MID-RANGE

Bodytune, on the riverfront near the Old Market, is a reliable option just above the budget level. A branch of a Thailand chain, the masseuses are trained to a higher standard than the ones who work in the shops around the Old Market. Prices vary depending on style and duration, but you can get an excellent hour-long, full-body massage for US\$14. The price drops to US\$12 with a free massage every ten visits and a free massage on your birthday for members. The setting here is also more serene than in the cheaper spots – your feet are washed in a stone basin, the rooms are air-con and slightly more private, and the music is tasteful. Following your massage you are given a glass of pleasant tea.

Frangiapani is perhaps the most popular spa in town with

expats. They have opened a second branch near the Central Market to accommodate the overflow from their successful place in The Passage. The massage starts with a foot wash, but with a warm cloth rather than cold water. A cold and soothing drink is also provided. For most massages you choose your oil at this point. Not your budget massage oil, these oils are light and pleasant, just choose your preferred scent or follow the advice given by the masseuse. Private rooms or rooms for couples are the norm here, with proper hole-for-your-face massage tables. The masseuses are well trained and it shows in their work. Those who want a strong, deep tissue massage should go for the sports massage (US\$25 for 60 minutes), while those looking for a lighter touch should opt for the aromatherapy massage (US\$22 for 60 minutes). The worst part of a massage at the

Frangiapani is that it is so pleasant a return to the world outside jars your senses.

Located just above U-Care Pharmacy near the Old Market, Bodia Spa compares favourably with the other massages listed here. The couples' package – consisting of a bath in their massive tub, a coating of some sort of oatmeal-like substance, and a really pleasant massage – is a great indulgence. The entire experience is serene and pleasant. For quality it is on a par with Frangiapani, and the sweeping design, created by ASMA architects, creates an even more special atmosphere. Slightly more expensive than Frangiapani (Aromatherapy massage is US\$26), this is worth a splurge.

■ TOP-END

With so many luxury hotels offering spa packages, sometimes it is difficult to choose which one to opt for. A good bet is to visit one of the boutique hotels for your

five-star pampering. Spa Indochine in the Hotel de la Paix has seven rooms offering oil and Thai massages (from US\$45). They can also arrange a blind massage with the NGO Krousar Thmey. A welcoming lemongrass drink gets you into the right relaxed mood. The receptionist inquires whether you prefer your massage gentle, medium or strong, while checking whether you have any medical complaints. The rooms themselves are beautiful and calming, with a bowl of lotus buds placed beneath your face. The professional masseuses ask whether the massage is to your liking as their smooth strokes allow you to drift off. Best of all is the steam room afterwards. Infused with mint, the jets of steam are guaranteed to wash away any cobwebs you may have. Follow this with an al fresco jungle shower under the stars. The whole experience concludes with a camomile tea.

Part of the FCC complex, Visaya Spa is another top-end option. The standout feature in the lavish, yet petite, reception area is the fountain of running water for the window. A sweet tamarind juice accompanies the consultation while the usual questions

are asked. The chief selling point in Visaya's massages are the hot stones placed on your back, chest and hands during the massage. These stimulate the blood flow while the masseuse, with her choice of three massage oils, soothes your tired body. Body massages range from US\$45 and include an invigorating session in the steam room.

Be V.I.P., next to Blue Pumpkin (Old Market), Tel: 063 760 841, open 10am to midnight

Dr Feet, Old Market, Tel: 063 965 034, open 10am to late

Bodytune, 293 Pokambor Ave., Tel: 063 764 141, open 10am to 10pm

Frangipani, 615/617 Hup Guan Street, Tel: 012 982 062, open 10am to 10pm

Bodia Spa, behind U-Care Pharmacy (Old Market), Tel: 063 761 593, open 10am to midnight

Spa Indochine, Sivatha Blvd., Tel: 063 966 000, open 10am to 10pm

Visaya Spa, FCC Angkor, Tel: 063 760 814, open 10am to 10pm



PHOTO COURTESY FRANGIPANI

Frangipani: expats' favourite

"My Favorite
Spa in Siem Reap"

D. Lignière, ASIA SPA MAGAZINE



bodia spa

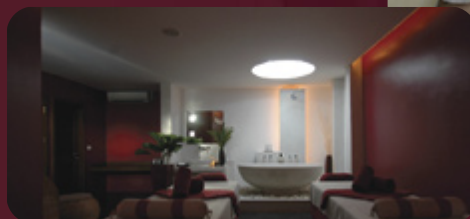
CAMBODIAN COCOON

open everyday
from 10 am to 12 pm
T.063 76 15 93

Old market area
above U-Care pharmacy

Heritage Suites Hotel

behind Wat Polanka
Tel : (855)63 969 100
www.heritage.com.kh



www.bodia-spa.com

leisure & wellness

Angkor Golf Resort

Turn left off road to airport
Tel: 063 392 288

www.angkor-golf.com
Designed by legendary British golfer Nick Faldo, this is one of the two truly international quality golf courses close to Siem Reap. Is slightly closer to town than the Phokeethra course.

Angkor National Museum

Road to Angkor
Tel: 063 966 601

Recently opened museum to reveal the glory of Angkor. Impressive building with lots of space for one of the largest selections of Buddha statues anywhere. Has received remarkably good reviews. Open from 9am to 8pm.

Apsara Terrace

Raffles Grand Hotel d'Angkor
Tel: 063 963 888 (x1204)

Cambodian dance performances every evening at an outside terrace area close to the Grand d'Angkor in pleasant gardens. Dinner and dance from 7pm for US\$32 per person.

Balloon Rides

Off Airport Road, Tel: 012 520 810
View Angkor from above for a bargain basement price. Rides from 6am to 5pm.

Be Vi.P

Old Market area, Tel: 063 760 841
Centrally located and reliable massage parlour with both oil and powder massage for US\$6.

Bodia Spa

Old Market area (above U-Care pharmacy), Tel: 063 761 593
www.bodia-spa.com

Beautifully designed spa offering the full range of massage and beauty packages in a very sophisticated environment. Open from 10am to midnight.

Body Tune

293-296 Pokambor Ave.
www.bodytune.co.th

Heavy grey stone Thai-run spa with selection of massages and facials. All masseuses are professionally trained. Part of a chain in Thailand.

Concerts by Beatocello

Jayavarman VII Hospital, road to Angkor
www.beatocello.com
Cello concerts by Dr. Beat Richner at 7.15pm on Saturdays, donations are welcomed.

Cookery Classes

Alliance Cafe (017 809 010) runs a four-hour, three-course customised cookery course including a market visit for US\$27 as well as two shorter courses for US\$14 and US\$9, while Le Tigre de Papier (012 659 770) also has a four-hour course including a visit to the

market for US\$11. On all courses you eat your food at the end.

Dr Feet

Old Market area, Tel: 063 965 034
Reliable budget massage parlour with massages from US\$6 offering foot and body massage.

Elephant Rides

Near Bayon Temple
Rides around the temple complex cost US\$10 per half hour.

Frangipani

Alley behind Pub Street,
615-617 Hup Guan Street
Tel: 063 964 391

Relaxing three-room beauty spa in the heart of town that's popular with expats. Now has a more lavish and private second outlet in the modern complex close to the Central Market. Frequented by those expats in the know. Body massage from US\$22.

Happy Ranch

1.5km west of town, Tel: 012 920 002
www.thehappyranch.com
It might be a long way from Montana, but riding a horse through the Cambodian countryside is an unforgettable experience. Rides from sunrise to sunset.

Harley Tours Cambodia

Tel: 012 948 529
Ride around the temples on your chopper. Customised tours around Siem Reap and beyond from 1 to 5 days are available.

Helicopters Cambodia

658 Hup Guan Street, Tel: 063 963 316
Professionally run company that has flights over the temples and beyond in modern, safe helicopters.

Phokeethra Country Club

Sof tel Royal Angkor Resort & Spa,
Vithei Charles de Gaulle,
Tel: 056 396 4600,
golf@sof-tel-royal-angkor.com
International standard 18-hole, 72-par golf course managed by the Sofitel Royal Angkor Golf and Spa Resort. Situated 16km outside of Siem Reap.

Quad Adventure Tours

Tel: 092 787 216
Travel around the Siem Reap countryside with your faithful four-wheeled friend. Trips from 45 minutes to one day.

Singing Tree Centre

Wat Bo Road, Tel: 092 635 500
Yoga and meditation courses are available as well as volunteering on community projects. Also has a meat-free restaurant.

Sokha Helicopters

24 Sivatha Blvd., Tel: 012 184 8891,
www.sokhahelicopters.com
Company flies modern French-built



Traditional Apsara dancing at Raffles Grand Hotel d'Angkor

helicopters out of Phnom Penh and over Angkor. Licensed to fly helicopters anywhere in Cambodia.

Spa Indochine

Hotel de la Paix, Sivatha Blvd.,
Tel: 063 966 000
www.hoteldelapaixangkor.com
Beautiful and totally self-indulgent spa set in the town's most contemporary five-star hotel. Has the full range of beauty treatment and spa packages with a 10 percent discount up to the end of February 2009.

Tara River Boat

Airport Road (behind Vietnam Airlines
off ce), Tel: 092 957 765
www.taraboat.com
Company arranges boat trips on the Tonle Sap in a large river boat. Trips include half-day tours to the floating village

(US\$23) and sunset cruises (US\$33). Also arranges trips to the Kampong Phluk and Flooded Forest as well as overnight trips to Prek Toal biosphere reserve.

Terre Cambodge

Hup Quan Street, Tel: 063 964 557
Locally-based tour company arranges cycling tours, treks, homestays and bird-watching trips on the Tonle Sap, among other activities.

Visaya Spa

FCC Angkor, Pokambor Ave.,
Tel: 063 760 814
www.fccambodia.com
Balance your energy and spirit in this most elegant of spas in the grounds of the FCC complex. The Hot Stones Harmony Massage is a great afternoon antidote for a hard morning's traipsing across the temples. **F**

Fine French Cambodian Cuisine. Personalized Cooking Classes.
Pagoda Catering Discoveries. Art Lodge Space. Free Wi-Fi.

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Tel: (855 63) 964 940 Fax: (855 63) 964 990 www.alliancecafe.com / alliancecafe@online.com.kh



Bloom

shopping

Angkor Candles

Old Market area, Tel: 063 760 778
Small shop selling a variety of candles including some quite ornate Apsaras, or scenes from Angkor mythology – it even has candle price tags. Also sells scarves and bags – that is if you can't find the one you want in any of the 1,000 other shops in town selling them. Open 10am to 9.30pm.

Angkor Night Market

Off Sivatha Blvd.
Despite its out-of-the-way location, the night market has already become quite a throbbing place for those people who prefer to spend the day lazing by the pool than shopping. Lots of stalls offering quite a few bargains. Open from 4pm to midnight.

Artisans d'Angkor

*Old Market area & National Route 6
Tel: 063 963 330, 063 380 375
www.artisansdangkor.com*
The best selection of silk work, stone and wood carvings in Cambodia. One workshop and a store is close to the Old Market while another larger centre is just beyond the turn off to the airport on National Road 6 – well worth the visit. Open from 7.30am to 6.30pm (Old Market) and 8am to 5pm (National Silk Centre).

Bloom Boutique

*Old Market area, Tel: 092 601 328
www.bloomcambodia.com*
Small shop next to The Warehouse that sells bags and skirts including very hip bags made from recycled Vietnamese fish sacks. Open from 10am to 10pm.

Boom Boom Room

Old Market
Boasts a 176-page catalogue of tracks that can be burned either onto CDs or mp3 discs. Also sells its designer t-shirts and hoodies as well as the Zico fashion label for women. Same chain as in Sihanoukville.

Carnets d'Asie

333 Sivatha Blvd., Tel: 016 746 701
Set in an arcade, this gallery-cum-bookshop has an extensive selection of photographs and books on Cambodia, including some black and white prints from the early 20th Century. Open 6am to 11pm.

Chocolate Shop

Lucky Mall, Sivatha Blvd., Tel: 012 872 840
The best chocolate in Cambodia. Authentic Belgian chocolate made in a small shop in Phnom Penh by Belgians with Belgian ingredients. This is an indulgence. Open from 9am to 9pm.

Eric Raisina

*53 Veal Village
Tel: 012 965 207 / 063 963 207*
Accessories, home decorations, textiles and clothing created by Madagascan-born and French-trained designer. His amazingly vibrant designs have collected quite a following throughout the fashion world. Viewing by appointment only.

Happy Painting

*FCC, Old Market, Domestic Airport
Tel: 012 623 945, www.happypainting.net*
Three shops selling the extremely

colourful and positive work of iconic artist Stef. Accepts credit cards. Open 5.30am to 11pm.

Jasmine Boutique

*FCC Angkor, Pokambor Ave.,
Tel: 063 760 610*
Same sophisticated, stylish boutique as on Street 240 in Phnom Penh with designer clothes made from Cambodian silk. The perfect place to come for the ball gown you forgot to bring with you. Prices are significantly lower than in the West. Open from 9am to 10pm.

Klick Photo Gallery

The Passage, Tel: 063 761 084
Commercial fine art gallery dedicated to the work of Swiss photographer Pier Poretti. Black and white photographs are given a face-lift using hand-tinted water colours. Open from 9am to 10pm.

Kookoon

Old Market area, Tel: 063 963 830
Scarves from Takeo, soap, massage oils, jewellery and bags from Smateria are available from this shop that is linked with Senteurs d'Angkor. Open from 7am to 9.30pm.

Lucky Mall

Sivatha Blvd.
The town's first shopping mall has a Lucky supermarket and a range of shops including Red Apron, Monument Toys, Blue Pumpkin and the Chocolate Shop. Worth a visit if only for the air-conditioning. Open from 8am to 10pm.

Monument Toys

Lucky Mall, Sivatha Blvd., Tel: 063 966 450
Impressive range of western toys for those looking for a present for the little 'un. Also has a branch in Phnom Penh. Open from 8am to 9pm.

NYEMO Shop

Angkor Night Market, Tel: 012 789 180
The NGO has a stall in the night market, where a range of silk goods, accessories and jewellery are available.

Rajana

*Old Market area, Tel: 063 964 744
www.rajanaacrafts.org*
Small shop next to Le Malraux restaurant that sells a range of bags, wall hangings, skirts, scarves and Kampot spices. Goods are fair trade. Open from 8am to 10pm.

Red Apron

Lucky Mall, Sivatha Blvd.
Siem Reap branch of the Phnom Penh wine shop. Sells top quality international wines at reasonable prices.

Samatoa

*Old Market area, Tel: 063 965 310
www.samatoa.com*
Elegant, small boutique clothes shop that sells women's clothes made from fair trade, Cambodian silk. Dresses from around US\$100 and blouses from US\$75. Tailor-made clothes can be produced within 48 hours. Open from 8am to 11pm.

Senteurs d'Angkor

*Old Market area, Tel: 063 964 860
www.senteursdangkor.com*
Scarves, silk goods, soap, spices and jewellery are on sale at this small shop close to the Old Market. Silk is sold by the metre upstairs. Open from 7am to 10pm.

U-Care Pharmacy

*Next to Old Market,
Tel: 063 965 396*
Reliable western-style pharmacist and drugstore that also has branches in Phnom Penh. Sells health and beauty products. Open 8am to 12am. 🇰🇷

Jasmine Boutique



Kingdom of Cambodia www.jasmineboutique.net

#73, Street 240, Phnom Penh, t: +855 (0)23 223 103
FCC Angkor, Pokambor Ave, Siem Reap, t: +855 (0)63 760 610
e: jasmineboutique@online.com.kh

hotels

Amansara

Pokambor Ave., Tel: 063 760 333
www.amansaresorts.com
 The ultimate in Siem Reap's chic hotels. The limited number of rooms and high-walled perimeter make this the ideal refuge from the paparazzi for the global Angkor-bound jet set. You'll only be able to get a room if Mr & Mrs Smith are not on a flying visit.

Bopha Angkor Hotel

East River Road, Tel: 063 964 928
www.bopha-angkor.com
 Beautiful boutique hotel set in luscious gardens around a swimming pool. Rooms with air con start from US\$50. Also has a good restaurant serving Khmer food.

Claremont Angkor

17 Phum Wat Bo, Tel: 063 966 898
www.claremontangkor.com
 Boutique hotel with postage stamp swimming pool, gym, large outside terrace area and WiFi in reception. Large, air-con rooms with safety box and TV are from US\$50. Excellent Indian restaurant on the top floor.

Encore Angkor

Sok San Road, Tel: 063 969 4000
 Up-market budget hotel with air-conditioned rooms with TV and security box from US\$15 to US\$40. Small swimming pool at the rear and WiFi in the reception area.

FCC Angkor

Pokambor Avenue, Tel: 023 992 284
www.fcccambodia.com
 Boutique hotel with 31 contemporary Asian-designed rooms spread around the garden and swimming pool. Free WiFi for guests both in rooms and around the pool.

Golden Orange

Off East River Road, Tel: 063 965 389
www.goldenorangehotel.com
 Mini-hotel with good sized air con rooms

that tends to have customers when others are empty. Nice outside bar makes for a good place to sit and have a few beers. Rooms from US\$30.

Heart of Angkor

Sok San Road, Tel: 063 760 475
 Budget hotel next to X Bar. Simple, clean rooms with hot water start at US\$6 for fan or US\$12 for air con. Has WiFi and security lockers in reception. A mine of information on trips around Siem Reap, especially to the lake.

Hotel Be

The Passage, Tel: 063 965 321
www.theonehotelcollection.com
 Gorgeous boutique hotel between McDermott Gallery II and AHA, run by same owner as Linga Bar and the One Hotel. Colour-themed rooms have original works of art produced by local photographers and artists John McDermott, Sophie Pich and Loven Ramos. Rooms from US\$95. Also has a men-only spa.

Hotel de la Paix

Sivatha Blvd., Tel: 063 966 000
www.hoteldelapaixangkor.com
 With stoneware bathtubs in the rooms, mini-iPods upon request, flexible reading flashlights above the decadently lavish beds and inset photographic galleries along all the corridors, de la Paix is simply a modern design classic. The Arts Lounge downstairs is a great place to chill and has free WiFi.

La Noria

East River Road, Tel: 063 964 242
 Beautiful boutique hotel with individual bungalows set in luscious gardens around a swimming pool. Rooms with air con and private terrace start for US\$41+. Has WiFi and each Wednesday there are shadow theatre and puppet



La Residence d'Angkor

performances by children from Krousar Thmey from 7.30pm.

La Palmeraie

N6 Airport Road, Tel: 092 952 113
www.lapalmeraiedangkor.com
 Boutique hotel set in gardens with beautiful palm trees off the road to the airport. Separate villa with its own pool can be hired out on an exclusive basis for US\$450. Four more villas share a second pool. Idyllic spot to get away from it all. Rooms from US\$120.

La Residence d'Angkor

East River Road, Tel: 063 963 390
www.residencedangkor.com
 Boutique, low-rise resort located across the river from the centre of town. Stylish wooden décor. Good pool and lush garden setting. Both upstairs Martini Lounge and downstairs bar have recently been revamped. Great place to splash out. Rooms from US\$262.

Le Meridien

Road to Angkor, Tel: 063 963 900
 Part of the Starwood hotel group, this five-star hotel has a great location close to the temples. Beautiful swimming pool and reception area, the hotel is targeted mainly at Japanese tourists.

Ombrell & Kimono

557 Wat Bo Road, Tel: 092 365 501
www.ombrelle-et-kimono.com
 Totally unique hotel with four bedrooms individually crafted by the owners from US\$80, including breakfast and pick-up. Tacky or colourful, we leave it to you to decide. Prepare to be shocked.

One Hotel

The Passage, Tel: 063 965 321
www.theonehotelcollection.com
 One hotel, one room, one price – US\$250. Couldn't be simpler. Ideal choice for couples looking to be pampered. Same owner as Linga Bar, Hotel Be and Spa for Men.

Passaggio Hotel

Wat Damnak Village (across the bridge from the Old Market), Tel: 063 964 732
www.passaggio-hotel.com
 Excellent value hotel with outdoor terrace, nice but small pool and small restaurant-cum-bar. Rooms with WiFi, hot water and air con are from US\$36 (including breakfast).

Raffles Grand Hotel D'Angkor

1 Charles de Gaulle, Tel: 063 963 888
 Elegant hotel with opulent gardens and a spectacular swimming pool in its grounds. Has frequent art exhibitions and Apsara dancing on nearby terrace. Although not as grandiose as the one in Phnom Penh, the Elephant Bar is a good place for a pre-dinner drink. Ask for one of the old rooms at the front.

Sof tel Royal Angkor Resort

Road to Angkor, Tel: 063 964 660
 Large five-star resort conveniently close to the temples. The rooms are spread around an enormous lake and large, sprawling swimming pool. Also runs the Phokeethra Golf Resort.

Sokha Angkor

Cnr Sivatha Rd and National Rd 6
Tel: 063 969 999, www.sokhahotels.com
 Huge 5-star resort, sister property to Sihanoukville's Sokha Beach Resort. Located just

back from the centre of town, it has a large pool, Irish pub and Japanese restaurant.

Soria Moria

Wat Bo Road, Tel: 063 964 768
www.thesoriamonia.com
 Boutique hotel with rooftop tapas bar, sun deck, jacuzzi and small spa. Well-appointed rooms.

Tara Angkor Hotel

Road to Angkor, Tel: 063 966 661
 Elegant, boutique hotel with attractive swimming pool and rooms at competitive rates. Good option for those looking for quality accommodation at an affordable price.

Victoria Angkor

Near Royal Gardens, Tel: 063 760 428
www.victoriahotels.asia
 Beautiful hotel with the most luxurious swimming pool and garden. Worth popping in and paying a visit if just to see the Siamese crocodiles in reception.

Viroth's Hotel

Off East River Road, Tel: 063 761 720
 Extremely stylish boutique hotel with a few individually designed rooms with air con, safety box, private terrace area and hard stone bathrooms for US\$80. Also has a spa with massages from US\$12. ■



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CAMBODIA * LAOS * THAILAND * VIETNAM

1 A – 1907 2 Andre Mal-
 reaux 3 Chinese Historian
 Chou Ta Kuan 4 Surya-
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 Defeated 6 C – US\$20 7)
 The East Baray 8 Phnom
 Krom 9 West Mebon 10)
 Geoff Ryman 11 Not the
 Lonely Planet – Dawn
 Rooney 12 B – Ta Prohm
 13 Gary and Vivian 14 B –
 Martini 15 A – Pickle 16 C –
 18 B – The Funky Munky
 19 Stalter and Waldorf 20)
 Centre Cultural Francais
 (French Cultural Centre)
 The Royal Guest Quarters of
 Siem Reap 22 A – Cello 23)
 Wat Bo 24 C – Grand Hotel
 D'Angkor 25 Thursday 26)
 Phokeethra Country Club
 and Angkor Golf Resort
 27 B – Johnnie Walker 28)
 C – Four 29) Chong Khneas
 and Kompong Pluk 30) Any
 number between 222 and
 242 – there are 232 arrivals.

Pub Quiz
 Answers

Jed Byrom: Return to the F

Love at second bite

YOU'RE READING THIS, indirectly, because of fresh whole coconuts. I wasn't going to review the FCC Angkor restaurant. Hell, I wasn't ever going to eat there again. We had a Christmas dinner there last year. It wasn't the worst restaurant Christmas meal I've ever had. It was the worst restaurant meal I've ever had. Bar none. I am prone to exaggeration, but when guilty I'll admit it.

The setting was fine, and as we sat down to our meal the head of our party said, and I quote "I love the F because you know it's going to be great. Never fails." It began with a choice of three starters. I forget what two of them were. You can argue I should know, given that I am about to pan their Christmas dinner menu, but I feel I should be forgiven as they'd run out of all but the squid. You'd think all those longing for a traditional Christmas at home would want to start with a nice squid salad. I think we followed with turkey, but maybe it was goose. Maybe it was cardboard. I'm really not sure. Dessert was equally painful. We left cursing, and swore never to return.

Nov. 27. Nearly a year later. None of us had been back yet. It's my wedding anniversary. A friend

told me they had new chefs. I'm not sure what they did with the chefs last Christmas, but they seem to have moved on.

So, going back to the venerable F on my wedding anniversary. Bad idea, right? But there was the friend's recommendation, and he's the rare sort of friend I actually trust with such things in this town. The Khmer food should be decent, and my wife will want Khmer, and I know they have whole coconuts to drink, and she loves those. This is my think-

ing, going in. Also I can't think of anywhere else to go, and they do have those whole coconuts. You learn about at least some of the small things that can make a difference in your spouse when you've been married for two years, and blessedly one of them is fresh whole coconuts. Pretty easy to pull off in Siem Reap.

So we ended up at the FCC, accompanied by trepidation. It was fantastic.

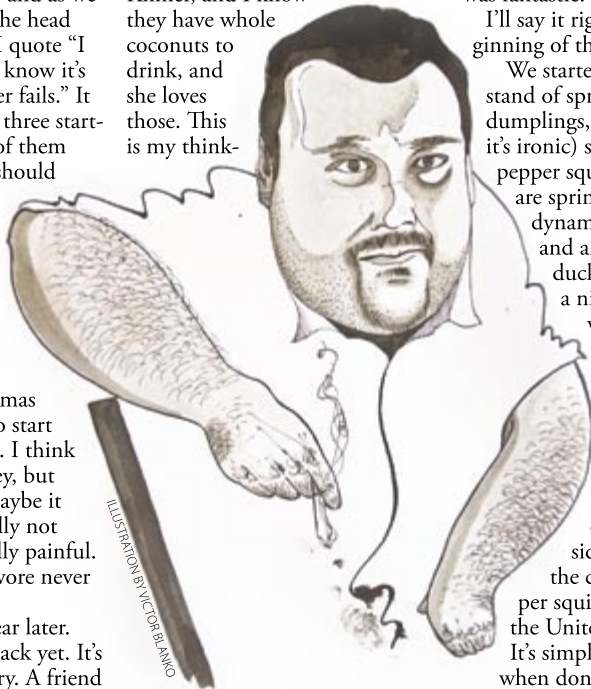
I'll say it right out, at the beginning of the review. Fantastic.

We started with a tasting stand of spring rolls, duck dumplings, and (yes, I know it's ironic) salt and Kampot pepper squid. The spring rolls are spring rolls, nothing dynamic but flavourful and ample in size. The duck dumplings have a nice savoury flavour with just a hint of sultry sweet undertones and the right dough to meat ratio. This is essential in a dumpling. The squid was fried, crispy on the outside and tender under the crust. Salt and pepper squid is a hot dish in the United States right now. It's simple, and delicious when done with the proper

ingredients. This one could have had a bit more squid to accompany the greens it was served on, but overall it was excellent.

Moving on to the main course, my wife had a fillet of sea bass with a sweet and sour sauce, and I had a lamb loin served with crushed cherry tomatoes, black olives, and butter roasted potatoes. The fish was perfect, flaky and light and complimented perfectly by the sauce. My only complaint as regards to the lamb is that the meat portion of the dish was a little skimpy. That said, I'm an American and we tend to like our meat with a couple side orders of meat, so I suspect it would be fine for most people. The only other thing remotely resembling an issue is one of semantics. My cherry tomatoes were halved, not crushed. I'm a stickler for that sort of thing, but having once eaten cardboard for Christmas at this very venue I've achieved some perspective and I don't let it impact on my enthusiasm for the dish. A passion fruit shake makes dessert, sipped slowly giving my wife time to drain her coconut. At US\$62.50 for the pair of us, it's a splurge, but this time well worth it. The FCC is back, and hopefully it will stay.

FCC Angkor, Pokambor Avenue, Tel: 063 760 280, www.fccambodia.com



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The QuizMaster

So you think you know Siem Reap or do you? Anyone who answers all the questions right gets a free beer at the Warehouse.

■ A BIT OF HISTORY

- 1) When was the last year that Angkor War was in the control of the Thais?
A - 1807, B - 1907, C - 2007.
- 2) Which Frenchman was caught trying to steal hundreds of kilograms of stone lintels from Banteay Srei Temple in 1923?
- 3) Who has left the only eyewitness account of the Angkorian Empire?
- 4) Which Angkorian King built Angkor Wat? Jayavarman VII or Suryavarman II.
- 5) What does Siem Reap mean?
- 6) What is the cost of a daily ticket to Angkor Wat?
A - US\$10, B - US\$15, C - US\$20.
- 7) Which Baray is not full of water? The West or the East.

8) What is the highest point on the perimeter of the Tonle Sap?

9) Which temple sits in the middle of the West Baray?

10) Who wrote the novel about Ancient Angkor called The King's last song?

11) Who wrote the most common temple guide specifically to the Angkor Complex? The Lonely Planet or Dawn Rooney.

12) What temple grounds did Angelina Jolie fall through in Tomb Raider? A - Bayon, B - Ta Prohm, C - Angkor Wat.

■ BAR SNACKS

13) Who were the first owners of the Angkor What? Bar (first names okay)?

14) Which notorious nightclub sat just over the river from the old market? A - Margarita, B - Martini, C - Tequila Sunset.

15) What is the name of the golden retriever at Rosy Bar?
A - Pickle, B - Mustard, C - Horseradish.

16) Which bar is planning to install a half-pipe for skateboards in the near future?
A - Linga, B - Funky Munky, C - X Bar.

17) What nationalities are the two owners of the Warehouse?

18) The former Balcony bar is now which business?
A - Linga, B - Funky Munky, C - X Bar.

19) What are the names of the two muppets on the sign at the Red Piano?

20) If the FCC is the Foreign Correspondent's Club, what is the CCF?

■ TALK OF THE TOWN

21) What was the Amansara before it became a luxury hotel?

22) What instrument does Dr. Beat Richner play? A - Cello, B - Piano, C - Violin.

23) Which is the oldest modern, still functioning pagoda in

Siem Reap Town? Wat Bo or Wat Kandal.

24) Which hotel did Charlie Chaplin stay at during his visit to Siem Reap? A - Hotel de la Paix, B - FCC Angkor, C - Grand Hotel d'Angkor.

25) On which day does the Phnom Penh Post publish its Siem Reap Scene section?

26) What are the names of the two golf courses in Siem Reap?

27) Who is the main sponsor the annual December Asian Tour Golf tournament in Siem Reap? A - Tiger, B - Johnnie Walker, C - ANZ Royal Bank.

28) How many ANZ branches are there in Siem Reap Town?
A - 2, B - 3, C - 4.

29) What are the names of the two floating villages closest to Siem Reap town?

30) Within ten, how many commercial passenger flights arrive in a week at Siem Reap International Airport?

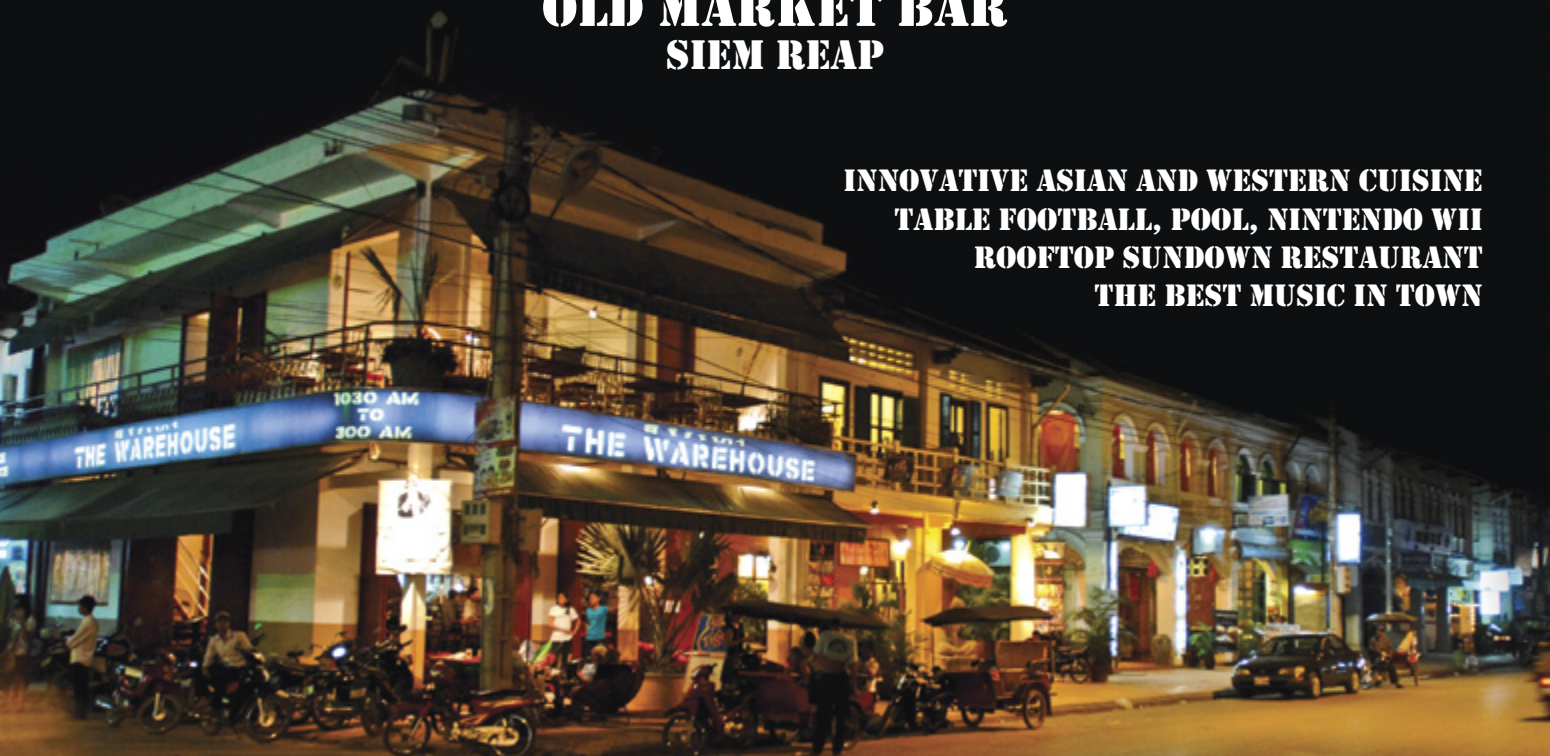
■ ANSWERS ON PAGE 24

THE WAREHOUSE

OLD MARKET BAR

SIEM REAP

**INNOVATIVE ASIAN AND WESTERN CUISINE
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ROOFTOP SUNDOWN RESTAURANT
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