

EPTAS #13 – This is Pattaya?

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Welcome to “Every Picture Tells a Story”; a weekly post about living in Thailand. Each week we’ll post a picture that illustrates some of the best parts about living in Thailand.

Everybody knows what Pattaya is famous for. And, when I say everybody ... I mean Thai people too.

Foreigners who only know about the past history of Pattaya think coming here is like getting a magic time machine and going back to the 1970s. They expect to see American troops coming back from the front lines whooping it up in go-go bars and stumbling down Walking Street. (To be honest, I still know a few places like that)



Thai people also spit on the ground when they say the name “Pattaya”. No Thai parents hope their children grow up and get a job ... of any kind ... in Pattaya. My former mother-in-law from the Northeast said it best ... “Pattaya ... have bad people”.

Nobody on either side of the oceans talks about modern Pattaya, with its high-rise condos and waterfront shopping malls. Nobody is talking about the lush golf courses. Nobody is showing friends pictures from the polo matches held in Pattaya.

Last week an old friend called me. She is a Thai lady from Chiang Mai who was in town for business and asked me to come “protect her” while in Pattaya. That’s just how she said it ... “protect me”. She was holed-up in her hotel room, afraid to go outside because of all the “bad people” she’d heard about.

It may sound odd, but I took offense to this attitude. I’ve lived in Pattaya for over 7 years ...

I can count on one hand the number of times I’ve been on Walking Street. That’s not all there is! What “bad people”? I was incensed, so I picked up the “Proud to be a Pattayan” banner and took this frightened Thai lady on a tour of “My Pattaya”.

Late on a Sunday afternoon, we ended up in Bang Saray, a few kilometers south of town. She must have posed for a dozen pictures in front of the big temple complex; shooting a smile and a peace-sign in the foreground.

When the sun started to sink and our appetites to rise, we headed for the Ban Amphur Seafood District. The old fishing village at Ban Amphur has always been my favorite spot. We sat outside on the beach, sipping white wine and working our way through the menu at one of the many waterfront restaurants.

Gazing dreamily at the sun painting the sky orange and the boats gentling bobbing in the water my friend took a deep breath and sighed, "I can't believe this is Pattaya".

And that's the story this picture tells. Some people associate Pattaya with neon lights and girls swinging on a chrome pole.

For some of us it's catamarans at sunset.

The Pattaya you find is usually the one you go looking for.

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