

The Phnom Penh Post

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Siem Reap Scene...

Written by Post Staff

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GREEN BUILDING IS NO LAUGHING MATTER

The Centre for Friends Without a Border, next to Siem Reap's Angkor Hospital for Children, has now opened its new building, which, according to the organisation, "symbolises a nexus of caring for the community and ecological sustainability". The building has drawn divided opinion: some view it as bloody ugly, while others see it as edifying and edgy. Scene initially regarded it with bemusement, not understanding that the building apparently exemplifies international architectural PC Cool Cred. It was designed by Cook+Fox Architects in New York and is supposedly the first green project of its kind in Cambodia.

In May 2008, it received an Honour Award from the Boston Society of Architects/American Institute of Architects, and it was funded by Sterling Stamos Capital Management, a private investment firm practising corporate philanthropy.

The building's "environmentally sustainable," with an inverted roof that channels rainwater to an open-air reservoir in the building's heart of hipness. Shade is provided by

"sustainably-harvested" bamboo louvres and deep roof overhangs that "are tuned to the path of the sun." Also, the roof will allow future use of 20kw of renewable solar photovoltaic power. Other "sustainable [there's that word again] design" aspects include energy-efficient equipment, locally crafted fixtures and materials, and low-flow plumbing fixtures. The building will also use biofuel derived from jatropa.

A grand opening is scheduled for late November.

OTHERWORLDLY HOTEL GATHERS AFFILIATIONS

The Angkor Palace Resort and Spa has become that rarity of rarities - a dual-branded hotel. In mid-September the hotel will become part of Summit Hotels & Resorts top-tier collection, which in turn is part of the Chicago-headquartered Preferred Hotel Group.

But Angkor Palace will also continue to be a member of the World Hotels Deluxe Collection until December 31. Sokha Hotels has been widely trumpeting its new affiliation with World Hotels, and this is part of the reason Angkor Palace general manager Weng Aow moved to Summit.

The Angkor Palace, one of Siem Reap's most amazing hotels, set on acres of lush landscaping, also has another claim to putative uniqueness, as the only five-star hotel that is Khmer-owned and designed.

Chairman and owner Ly Hong is also an architect and responsible for the otherworldly setting of this stylish hotel.

The Palace has a further claim to uniqueness, being the only Cambodian hotel with its own netted golf driving range.

In other hotel news, Le Méridien Angkor has appointed Masahiro Taguchi as new director of sales and marketing, effective immediately. His previous employment includes director of business development at the Hilton Osaka, and director of sales and marketing at the Mandarin Oriental, Tokyo.

VEGETARIAN KHMER EATERY OPENS

It takes a brave man to open yet another restaurant in the



Chamkar owner Nicolas Devaux is out to prove vegetarian isn't boring. PETER OLSZEWSKI

already crowded Siem Reap marketplace, but France's Nicolas Devaux is undaunted. He closed his restaurant at a

French ski resort and moved to Siem Reap in January this year. He hired Khmer chef Deng Ratana, who supervised the Khmer menu at Hotel De La Paix, and early in July he opened Chamkar, which he claims is Siem Reap's first exclusively vegetarian Khmer cuisine restaurant.

His mission is to prove that vegetarian fare isn't boring, and he's succeeding with dishes such as coconut and mushroom dip with baguettes; braised wintermelon with palm sugar and green mango; and pounded wild eggplant with Khmer crudité.

While Siem Reap farmers can't mass produce vegetables for the big hotel market, Devaux said there are plenty of small growers who can provide first-grade vegetables and aromatic herbs.

"There's some very good produce around Siem Reap, and I have never tasted carrots like those grown here," he said.

One of his secret ingredients is old-fashioned turnips which he exclaims are a bugger to cook. "If you don't cook them right, they tend to be bitter."

BAR OWNERS LEARN WHAT'S IN A NAME

History, like radishes, has a habit of repeating, and recent Siem Reap history has just repeated itself in nearby Battambang.

About two years ago, management of the Buddha Lounge in Siem Reap's boisterous Pub Street precinct discovered that their street-smart name brought instant bad karma in the form of visits from police and terse instructions from local authorities to end the sacrilege pronto.

Hence the Buddha Lounge miraculously transformed overnight into the World Lounge, which still plies its trade on the strip.

Pity that the manager of Battambang's Ratanak resort and hotel wasn't wise to this slice of local history when he devised the name The Buddha Bar.

Over the weekend about 30 protesting monks let the man know the error of his ways,

Fixing allegation

BY PETER OLSZEWSKI AND DEAN WILLIAMS

THE inaugural Siem Reap charity pig-racing derby, Porkula 1, was marred last weekend by egregious allegations of race-fixing on a par with Cambodia's rumoured national election fixing.

Geoffrey Whitty, of Fine Star wine importers, claimed his attractive racing pig was "interfered with" underneath a pool table by a well-known Siem Reap personality who cannot be named due to pernicious press freedom restrictions.

X Rooftop Bar owners Scott Interdonato and Carlo Tarabini, renowned for creating madcap events, staged the derby on Saturday night, and ten local businesses entered racing swine with all proceeds going to charities.

Grand champion for the night was rank outsider Scooter from the Warehouse, after



Fine Star's Geoffrey Whitty's racing pig duri end's Porkula 1. P

defeating the V Sir Francis Baco

The Warehouse went AWOL after the trainer missing call because occupied at the Linga Bar's event was a favourite, I finish line in pig and a matching

and Battambang's The Buddha Bar is no more.

ARTIST REVISITS KHMER ROUGE HORRORS

Teardrops is the title of artist Em Riem's exhibition at The Arts Lounge, Hotel De La Paix, running through September.

Teardrops evolved from a 2003 exhibition of Em Riem's work in Washington, entitled Dust. Both exhibitions highlight the terror under the Khmer Rouge regime, which Em Riem experienced as a child.

The Teardrops work goes "straight to the core" of the tragedy, Riem said. "I have attempted to feature the victims of the Toul Sleng torture centre, massively, hard like steel. The faces of these beings still living are also those of the dead."

The Washington Diplomat praised Dust in October 2003, saying, "Don't miss the chance to catch the contemporary works of ... Riem, who reconnects with his cultural past while expressing its modern sensibility."

Em Riem, a graduate of the Royal University of Fine Art, is also responsible for some of the strange [and hellishly expensive] objets d'everyday use that lurk at Phnom Penh's Art Design La Galerie.

Strange rattan that are supposed bashed-in mugs & wastebaskets are livable art, although considers them a livable. Art Design these items as 'di ceramics that app decomposing, bet

RIDE YOUR BI AROUND ANG

Big changes this December 6 cycl of the 13th Angkor International Half Mick Stimpson of International, while the cycling events Angkor Wat Maral Association, said t the name 'The An Cycling Events' w there will be no ra with a fun ride, an two races, 30km a cycling events are opportunity to cycl Angkor Wat comp misty December n said. Big news is t will see a cycle ev better way than to remnant of Camb and share the wor buddy whilst enjoy sunrise over the te

 **2W BEACON SOLAR LAMP**

 **BUDDHISM UNDER THE SUN**

