



Asian Golf Travel Nation Fall 2008

Welcome to the fall 2008 edition of the "Asian Golf Travel Nation", the source for news breaking information about Thailand Golf, Vietnam Golf, and Cambodia Golf. In addition, unique golf playing tips for Indochina's tropical environment, announcements of golf travel promotions, and our latest subscription offer are all integral parts of today's newsletter.



As you well know we had quite a scare at the end of August as a result of political demonstrations in Bangkok. Fortunately, where I live and work in the heart of Bangkok everything was unaffected and I did not see any signs of political unrest other than in the newspaper. The political demonstrations took place near Government House and aside from avoiding that area everything operated normally including all golf courses, hotels and tourist sights.

The Prime Minister of Thailand, who was the main focal point of the demonstrations, did declare a State of Emergency and that was when 20 European and Asian countries issued travel warnings. However, as has happened before, things quickly settled down and the State of Emergency was lifted on September 14. In the end the Prime Minister was resigned because of his moonlighting on a Thai cooking TV show. Strange as this may sound, this is how things get done here!!!

A new Prime Minister was sworn in on September 17 and things are back to normal now. Golf in the key destinations around Thailand, such as Bangkok, Phuket, Hua Hin, Pattaya, and Chiang Mai remain unaffected.

This coming Thailand and Vietnam golf seasons are set to be the best ever! New golf courses continue to open at a rate of 1 per month. In Thailand, last month the old Gary Player designed World Trade Golf course in the outskirts of Bangkok re-emerged as Lotus Valley Golf Resort. I have not played it yet, but the new owners are the same group that owns Loch Palm and Red Mountain in Phuket; and they know what they are doing. Next up is the much talked about Banyan Golf Club in Hua Hin, which will soft-open on October 1. I had the opportunity to play a sample round last month and if you think Black Mountain is tops in Hua Hin, wait until you play Banyan. Located just south of town, no expense has been spared in constructing this totally new course out of former pineapple plantations. The low mountains around Hua Hin frame the front nine, while sea views of the off shore islands are part of the scenery of the back nine. A modern Thai clubhouse sits on a ridge overlooking both the golf course and the Gulf of Thailand and is by far the best place in Hua Hin to take in a sunset.



Alpine Golf Resort in Chiang Mai opens November 1 and on its heels is Pleasant Valley Golf Club in Pattaya on December 1. I will report more on these new venues in the next newsletter.



In Vietnam, the Montgomerie Links in Danang is getting rave reviews since the first 9 holes opened this summer. Then there is the Sea Links Golf Club in Phan Thiet, which is with out a doubt the most challenging Vietnam golf course built to date! You really have to see this course to believe the level of difficulty. In fact, maybe the Sea Links course designer used the war time bunker designs as the model for some of the green side sand traps; they make reaching the greens in regulation as hard as the penetrating those bunkers built to protect the G's. Who could have ever imagined such high level of investment in championship courses in a country just 10 years ago was communist controlled and closed to foreign tourists.

As far as course conditions go, this year's green season, with the exception of Thailand's North East appears to be less severe than those seen in the past. Rain-outs have been few, if any, and golf course conditions around Thailand and Vietnam are as good as that which is normally expected in the cooler dryer winter season. In any case, whether you choose to play early or later in the season, near perfect playing conditions can be expected.

As the winds of change bring the cooler weather for the upcoming autumn months, there is no better time than the present to plan your winter golf trip. For example you could golf at all the Thailand golf courses that are part of the "Tiger's Thailand Golf PGA Wins", or maybe you see yourself following in the footsteps of the American Army and prefer to play at the Vietnam courses that make up the historical "Ho Chi Minh Golf Trail". If you are an ancient history buff, why not check out the 2 Cambodia golf courses in Angkor Wat, one even has a 1000 year old bridge running right through it, and that is just the beginning. Are you into professional golf? How about attending either the Royal Trophy at Amata Spring Country Club including an exclusive chance to play the course under championship conditions or attend the Thailand Open at Alpine Golf Club and watch the professionals up-close and "inside the rope". Any of these trips can be yours and I even have some special packages only for subscribers of the "Asian Golf Travel Nation". Drop me an [email](#) if you are interested; you will be surprised at the possibilities.



Remember if you want to get regular updates about golf in Thailand, Vietnam, and Cambodia, then [sign-up for uninterrupted email delivery](#) of this newsletter. In addition, all persons signing up will automatically receive the latest "Thailand Golf Insider Tips" special report.

One last note, in addition to our leisure travel business, Golfasian has started a meeting and incentive travel division. We have secured some excellent group prices at famous hotels and premier golf clubs making corporate golf outing in Thailand, Vietnam, or Cambodia is one of the best values around. If your company, or you know of a company that might be interested in a corporate golf outing, please email [me](#) I would be glad to discuss the details.

Until the next newsletter, have a great fall, get in those last round before winter, and remember, think positive and YOU WILL SHOOT PAR.

Mark Siegel
Managing Director

Featured Golf Resort – Santiburi Samui Resort & Spa

The **Santiburi Samui Resort & Spa** is a superb year round treasured paradise set amidst 23 acres of meticulously nurtured tropical gardens and 300 meters of tranquil Mae Nam beach, once visited, will keep you coming back time and time again. A team of local gardeners and ground keepers keep the gardens well watered and cared for. Many of the plants are indigenous.



At the northern tip of the island within easy access of the island's scenic attractions, it is situated in between the town of Nathon, Koh Samui's commercial center and Chaweng Beach; the bustling tourist hub. The attached championship golf course, **Santiburi Samui Golf & Country Club**, plays host annually to professional golf tournaments and ranks among Thailand's finest. In spite of the vast array of places to see, and the many events to experience, spending lazy, sunny days on Mae Nam Beach is a joy that you simply must not deprive yourself of during your stay at **Santiburi Samui Resort & Spa**.

Like a superior private home, Santiburi Resort provides individual accommodation that offers the last word in luxury. Hidden among the tropical greenery, and widely spaced for optimum privacy, are 12 Equatorial suites, and 57 deluxe villas, all decorated and furnished to the highest standards of Thai decor.

Koh Samui is an ideal destination for a weekend getaway from Bangkok or Singapore. For those looking for a longer golf package a 2-center Bangkok – Samui golf package makes for an excellent holiday for those who want the best in shopping and golf (Bangkok) and exclusive beach resorts (Koh Samui). Finally, if you want to see and play on all the best golf courses of Southern Thailand a Phuket & Koh Samui Golf package is just the perfect fit. Please [email](#) me if you are interested in any golf package to this idyllic island. I have assembled some great deals with our partner resorts and golf courses and would be pleased to share them with you.

Thailand's "Elder Courses" (4 Part Series)

In Thailand, younger people are brought up to respect their elders. This article, and the next few postings, present the views of a British golfer who arrived in Thailand in the mid-70's. At that time he was already a single figure handicapper and understandably retains great affection and respect for the few golf courses which existed back then. He explains which Thailand golf courses are his favorites, why he liked them then, and loves them still today.



Just like some Thai politicians classic golf courses don't go away. With loving care they just get better providing untold pleasure for successive generations. Thirty five years ago, had I been asked to nominate my favorite 4-5 golf courses in Thailand it would have been easy - there were only 4 or 5 courses. Strangely, despite the incredible development of over 250 fine, modern courses designed by such greats as Nicklaus, Norman, Faldo, Robert Trent Jones etc., the originals are still very high on my list of favorites.

The more recently built Thai golf courses I favor are not the cosmetic contrived 'American' type layouts, which also tend to be the most expensive, but the courses which are more Thai in character and in hospitality. After all golf in Thailand is more than a rushed competitive slog to get round in 3½ hours. It's a complete Thai day out. It's supposed to be fun - and at these old favorites it really is.

Continue reading about [Thailand's Elder Courses](#) and enjoy all 344 other posts dealing exclusively with [Thailand golf](#).

Special Playing Advice

The Crucial Five-Foot Putt (Avoid the "Gimmies")

Like all struggling golfers, I have tried to work out a procedure for keeping my putting as consistent as possible, no matter where I play in Thailand. Using one standard grip, set-up, and stroke at least makes my putting as reliable as possible. Staying with these fundamentals has helped me a good deal; particularly in holing those crucial five-footers. Unless you plan to golf in Thailand by American rules and give yourself everything within this radius (never allowed under the official rules and in essence cheating) these short putts are the ones that make or break a golf round more than any other shot in the game.



As for my grip, I have a much better touch if my right hand rides high on the shaft. Besides eliminating the tendency to pull the putt, this position helps me to get a smooth stroke on the ball. As far as address goes, I find it valuable to use a slight forward press of the hands before taking the putter head back. (e.g. the shaft leans slightly towards the intended line). However, too much of a forward press can be bad because I tend to jab the ball, not stroke it. Also a slight forward press makes it easier for the left hand to go through the ball after contact and keep the blade perpendicular to the target. This gets the slow smooth speed on the ball that's so desirable for the short putts. As for my right hand, I like to feel that the right palm is: moving straight along the line of the putt to the hole, especially after I strike the ball.

Try this technique, or at least have yours down pat, and you won't have to resort to "gimmies" to score well on your next Thailand golf outing.

I would love to hear about any golf tips that any of you may have developed for getting the maximum enjoyment from golf in Thailand, and can incorporate some in future articles. Therefore if you have any golf tips or suggestions you would like to share, please let me know by dropping me an email.

Lucky Draw Winner & New Subscription Offer [Register Here!](#)

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You get our **FREE Thailand Golf Newsletter!** PLUS free access to the latest **THAILAND GOLF INSIDER TIPS, a 15 page special report**, and you will also be eligible for other great member offers from Golfasian.



Lucky Draw Winner:

The winner of the Basic Golf Polo Shirt is **Juha Heiskanen from Finland**. Congratulations Juha! Please [email](#) me to arrange delivery.



Exclusive October promotion!

For the first time ever I would like to extend an exclusive offer to the readers of the Asian Golf Travel Nation. During the month October we provide a **very special discount** on your next year winter 2009 golf package. If you are interested and would like to know more about this Exclusive October promotion drop me an [email](#).

About & Contact

Golfasian Co., Ltd.

If any reader would like to suggest a topic to be covered or better yet contribute materials, photos, or even commissions an article please contact me by [e-mail](#). I welcome the help.



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