

BAYON

The logo for Bayon features a central blue and white illustration of the Bayon temple's iconic faces. The word "BAYON" is written in large, white, stylized letters with a drop shadow effect, positioned above the temple illustration. Below the temple illustration, the word "Pearl" is written in a smaller, white, cursive font, followed by "nik" in a similar cursive font, completing the word "Pearl nik".

Pearl nik

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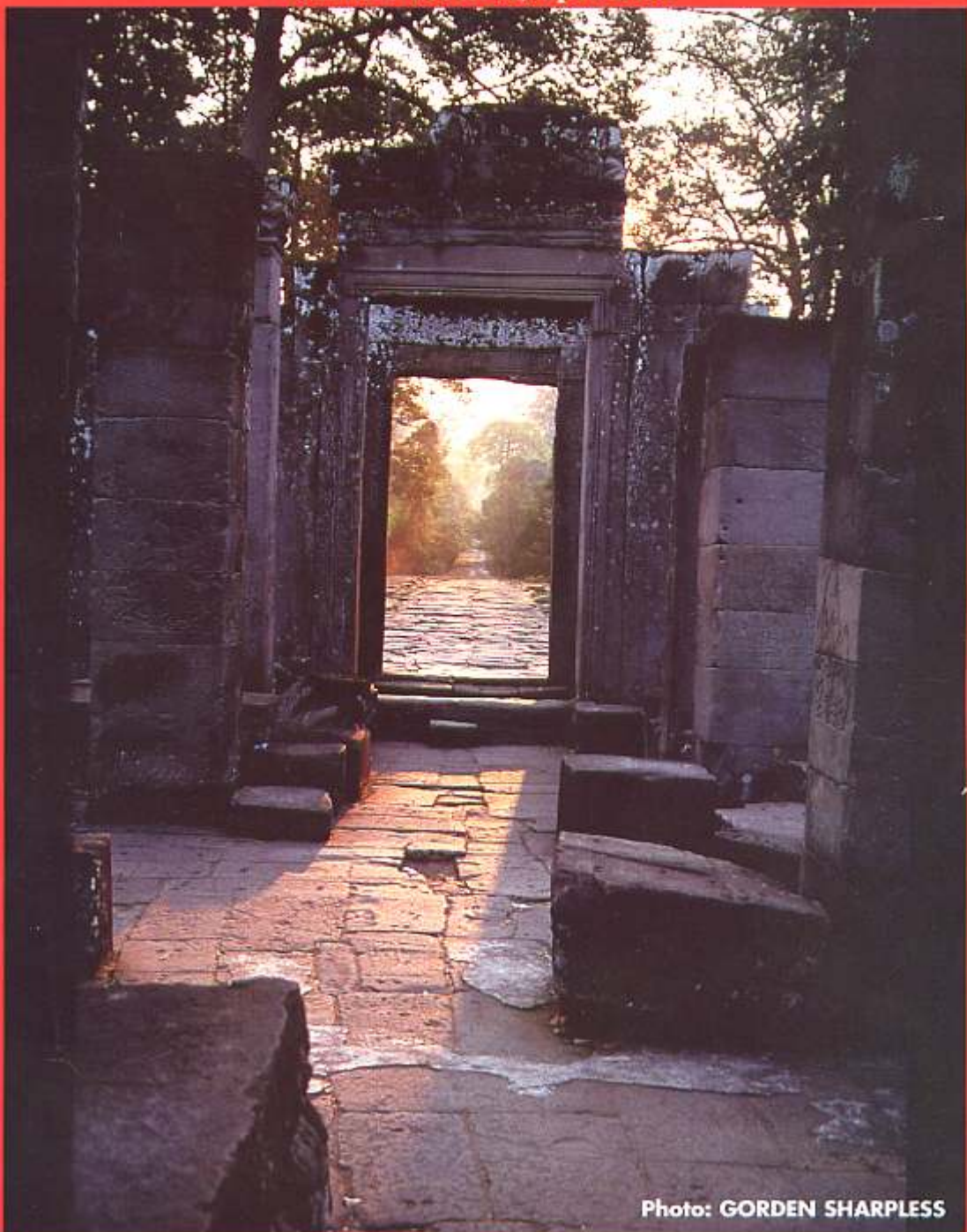


Photo: GORDEN SHARPLESS

Around Kampong Trach

The friendly people around Kampong Trach got a bad rap in October of 1994, when three foreigners were taken off a Sihanoukville-bound train during an ambush by the area's last Khmer Rouge soldiers. Nuon Paet and Chouk Rin, two of the commanders, have since been arrested and sentenced, but the sad story and its association with Kampong Trach remains, to the detriment of tourism in the area.

Surprisingly, a January 2001 visit to the town and the surrounding countryside revealed the presence of no armed soldiers or police whatsoever. On the contrary, the area today is completely sedate and eager to welcome tourists. A key development will be the formalization of the border crossing between Cambodia and Vietnam just outside Ha Tien, the seaside town on Vietnam's coastline.

A visit in December 2000 to the Vietnamese side of the Ha Tien crossing revealed that it is still not possible to cross from there into Cambodia, even with a valid Cambodian visa in your passport. On the other hand,

the friendly officials at the Vietnamese consulate in Sihanoukville insist that it is now possible to cross over to Ha Tien from the Cambodian side. In this case, the visa for Vietnam reportedly must be issued by the Vietnamese consulate in Sihanoukville only. They insert a "special stamp" with the words "Xa Xia" (the local name for the crossing) into the visa, which permits the crossing. Apparently, no other Vietnamese consulate or embassy has this "special stamp", *(but as yet we have yet to find anyone who has successfully*

crossed—ED).

It is an easy three-hour ride in a shared taxi or on a moto from Sihanoukville to Kampot, the first stop on the way to Kampong Trach. Sihanoukville's white sand beaches are most attractive, but around Kampot, the most interesting attraction is the old French colonial architecture in the center of town, and the old French hill station on top of Bokor Mountain. Coming directly from Phnom Penh, Kampot is an easy three-hour ride in a shared taxi along National Route 3.

Kampong Trach is west of Kampot along National Route 33, on the way to Cambodia's seaside town of Kep. Along the way is the interesting hilltop site at Wat Sosea. At the traffic circle about 15 km. west of Kampot, turn to the right to visit Kep, but stay to the left to go directly to Kampong Trach. The road is reasonable for about 15 km. beyond this traffic circle,

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but then deteriorates dramatically outside Chamcar Bei ("Field Three"), a new village. Beyond this point is one of the area's attractions at Wat Solee, on a hilltop about five km. outside Kampong Trach. The four resident monks are friendly and happy to point out the karst formations to the north and the views onto the islands near Kep to the south.

Kampong Trach is a one-street town, so it is easy to find the White Mountain Hotel, just near

Wat Otum and the market. Huge double rooms go for only 15,000 riels (under four dollars). Plan to eat dinner early however, because the town's "late night" restaurant closes at about eight p.m. Across the street from the hotel is the road to the newly-restored Wat Kirisan. The friendly monks will gladly show visitors around in exchange for impromptu English language conversation. Wat Kirisan is the gateway for exploration of the many karst formations in the area north of Kampong Trach.

In the opposite direction, just a bit beyond the White Mountain Hotel, is the deeply potholed road which leads to the border crossing outside Ha Tien. All of the moto-taxi drivers in front of Wat Otum in the center of town are willing to deliver a



foreigner to or from the border crossing. Plan on at least an hour and a half in either direction. The road passes through a small village called Lok, about five kilometers from the border. When passing through town, stay to the left when on the way to Ha Tien, or to the right when coming from Ha Tien.

Also in the area is another hilltop complex called Wat Kom Bow. Though it takes extra time and a knowledgeable moto driver to find the place, a visit is well worth the effort. The hilltop offers full views onto the surrounding countryside and border area. The estuary and radio towers in Ha Tien town itself can be seen from the top of Wat Kom Bow. There is a small path just below the hill, but it is quite obviously not possible to simply walk across the border

at this point.

To the west of Kampong Trach is another border crossing with Vietnam, called Don Ton, which is open to local traffic but not to foreigners. About ten kilometers outside Kampong Trach, on the way to Don Ton, is the road to Tuk Meas, to the north. This road generally follows the rail line and offers highly picturesque views of the karst formations to the west.

Because it is off the beaten path, Tuk Meas does not see many visitors. Possible this explains why the local people are so friendly and pleased to see foreigners. There is one guesthouse in town, a villa abandoned by a Korean phosphate company in 1997. All the local townspeople will point to it if asked. There is no sign. Tuk Meas is another Cambodia town which closes down very early, so be sure to eat dinner before 6 p.m.

Tuk Meas is also a crossroad town, with an old French colonial bridge still standing. A rail bridge is in the distance. To the northeast is the road to Kirivong and National Route 2, between Takeo and the border crossing with Vietnam at

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ROBBERY - HAPPY NEW YEAR

THE NIGHTTIME STREETS of Phnom Penh are full of idiots. Some have money in their pockets, and are looking for a good time. Others have guns in their pockets and are looking for the first type.

It usually takes money to have a good time, and the more money one has, the better times one will have—both types of idiots share this philosophy.

Late-night robberies at gunpoint are a usual occurrence the year round, but in the weeks leading up to Khmer New Year, local folks work a little harder to finance their good times, and that includes the folks who want to rob you.

Getting robbed is a drag, but staying home every night out of fear of the possibility of getting robbed can be a drag, too. While there isn't a 100-percent-sure way of spending a trouble-free night out on the town anywhere on the planet, a common-sense approach and a few precautions can increase your chances of seeing that your money is spent by you, and not some other idiot who doesn't deserve it. Herewith, we present a few suggestions tailored to the local security conditions.

There are many things one can do before and during a night out to reduce the risk of robbery. The first thing to keep in mind is, *carry nothing which would be difficult to replace or you can't live without*—that includes credit cards, airline tickets, your grandmother's heirloom mood ring, and so forth. Most of this stuff is useless in bars and cafes here anyway. Better to trust such valuables to your hotel management if that's where you're staying.

Leave the bag at home—if you're carrying a backpack or purse at night, you must have something valuable in it, right? Maybe not, but the possibility makes you a more attractive target.

Dress down—you know, watch, shoes, clothing ... Sure, you want to look impressive, but consider the phrase "looking like a million bucks" again ...

Don't carry large amounts of cash—It is truly amazing, as the rumor mill grinds, to hear how much money people have on them in this town. The only robbery stories

which make the rounds as quick as the ones in which someone is shot, are ones in which the victim lost hundreds, or even thousands of dollars. Carry only as much as you're willing to spend or lose.

It's also wise to keep larger notes under wraps—paying a moto driver or another small tab out of a wad of tens and twenties, or in plain sight of other bystanders, and word may get around that you're a mark worth waiting for. Keep your larger reserve notes in separate pockets, or better yet, your shoes. The bad guys have been checking waistbands for money belts lately, we hear.

Choose your transportation wisely—if you go by moto-taxi, pick a driver you know and can recognize easily. Consider hiring the guy for the night—a few dollars to insure you've got a driver on standby is an affordable luxury, and preferable to picking one at random from the jostling horde which crowds the door of the watering hole you're leaving.

It's usually safer to travel in groups—hopping from place to place on several motos *en mass* is discouraging to robbers, who'd rather deal with one isolated vehicle.

Avoid cyclos, as the slower you move, the easier it will be for someone to stop you. And forget about walking—a stroll down a quiet street in this town *anytime* after dark is asking for trouble. Just ask the current US ambassador. Also consider getting a taxi, especially if crossing long distances. Use one of the services that advertises.

Once home, make sure you have a way to get inside quickly—if gaining entrance to your abode involves standing out on the sidewalk waiting for someone to get up and unlock the door from the inside, maybe it's time you found another place.

Don't carry a weapon—If a robber's got one, he'll likely have it trained on you before you even know what's going on. At best, it'll probably be taken from you—at worst, it'll be used on you.

Now despite all your prudence and precautions, there is still a chance you'll get

snagged. While you may lose your goodies, you can still use some common sense, and avoid losing anything else. You've seen it in the movies: "All right, reach for the sky! Make one false move and I'll blast you!" This is good advice. If you are robbed, be cooperative. Do not resist. Putting your hands in the air, slowly, is a good idea. Avoid making eye contact, because most robbers don't want to be identified. Turning your head to the sky may be your best bet; that way your robber knows you're not getting an eyeful of him, but you can keep your eyes open and avoid losing your balance. This is important: making any sudden movement, intentional or not, may provoke an unpleasant reaction. Your robbers may be hopped up on speed or some other chemical, drunk, or just plain nervous. Keep your mouth shut, and politely let them do what they planned to do. Chances are, they just want your valuables.

If you are robbed, by all means report it, both to the local police and to your embassy. Victims commonly don't bother to go to the police because they feel they are unconcerned, incompetent, corrupt or in cahoots with the bad guys. This is no place to debate the veracity of such impressions. Consider one result of *not* getting it written up—if robberies of tourists and expatriates go unreported, local authorities will have cause to crow about the "falling crime rate", or the "small number" of such crimes, while the grapevine continues to buzz with rumors. And notifying your embassy may help to improve the security situation overall—repeated complaints of robberies may lead to diplomatic pressure on local authorities to take more action.

Don't pay the police charge to do a report as it should be free ED

SEA Backpacker's Credo and Motto

I shall eschew the ways of the tourist and have an authentic Asian experience rather than the shallow, contrived vacation of the package tourist.

I shall wear as big a backpack as possible to bear proud witness of my creed.

I will spend my travels on the quest for the Backpacker's holy grail - for the 'Unspoiled Place' - a place undiscovered by tourists, where happy, welcoming, generous natives tend vast fields of ganja along a deserted, previously unknown tropical beach, and that has Internet access.

I shall begin my quest on Khao San Road.

I shall not leave Khao San Road without a Lonely Planet guide.

I shall never admit to using a Lonely Planet guide.

I shall follow 'Wheeler's Way', a mystical school of thought which both eschews and embraces Khao San Road - a way of finding the Unspoiled Place without ever leaving the path.

(Editors note: 'Wheeler's Way' is a school of thought posited as a possible answer to the decades old conundrum known as the 'Sang Thip Paradox': If it is in Lonely Planet then I can find it, but it won't be the Unspoiled Place. If it is not in Lonely Planet, it might be the Unspoiled Place, but I won't be able to find it.)

I shall wear the traditional international backpacker's uniform and don at least one piece of local clothing (e.g. a conical hat in Vietnam, a krama in Cambodia, etc.) to show my oneness with the Asian people.

I shall not clean the local soils and aromas from my uniform for I wish to always carry a piece of where I have been.

I shall never wear a souvenir tee shirt while in the tee-shirt's country of origin.

I shall eat banana pancakes on a regular basis, for it is the quintessential Asian food.

I shall eat in the cheapest restaurants. Hygiene is for package tourists.

I shall travel by the least comfortable means. Cushioned seats are also for

package tourists.

I shall stay in the cheapest guesthouse. More money for beer.

I shall drink the local beer, for I shall always endeavor to be in tune with the local culture. And because it is the cheapest.

I shall not allocate more than 75% of my daily budget to alcohol. Moderation in all things.

I shall make a pilgrimage to a Full Moon Party on Had Rin at least once in my life. For it is Mecca.

I shall revel in food and mosquito-borne diseases for these are the badges of the true Asian traveler.

I shall not leave Thailand without having my hair colored, dreadlocked, corn-rolled or shaved off.

I shall model my travels on "On the Road" by Jack Kerouac

I shall read "The Beach" before entering Thailand so that I understand the goal of quest.

I shall read "Off the Rails in Phnom Penh" before entering Cambodia so that I understand the dangers of the quest.

I shall read "The Quite American" while travelling through Vietnam because everybody else is.

I shall bargain without mercy and hone my skills to a sharp edge, so that I can proudly proclaim our sacred motto:

"I get it for less than the locals"

Backpacker's Mantra

In times of trial, tribulation and doubt - as I lose all feeling in my legs in the 14th hour of an 8-hour local bus ride...when I can't sleep for the noise of a thousand rats scurrying through the ceiling and floor of my \$2/night room...as vomit and diarrhea spew simultaneously from my salmonella saturated body - I will repeat this mantra unto myself...

"I am not a tourist. I am not a tourist. I am not a tourist. I am not a tourist. I am not a tourist."

I am not a tourist

Koh Kong ready for a Boom.

Want to go to Thailand on the cheap.

Your choices are Poipet (the road from hell) or Koh Kong. With a new boat service Koh Kong has got cheaper and faster so let's try it out. Hop in a cab (9000 riel) at 7.30am and head to Sre Ambel not Sihanoukville. The Sre Ambel turnoff is about an hour before Sihanoukville. Once there go to the Paun Marina boat the ticket is only 300 baht not the 500 other boats charge. Its basically a speed boat which is great if the breeze is no more than a waft don't take it if it is breezy as three hours of slamming up and down is not fun and painful. The boat leaves at 10.30 (all others at 12) this allows you to arrive with plenty of time to cross the border and travel onward. When

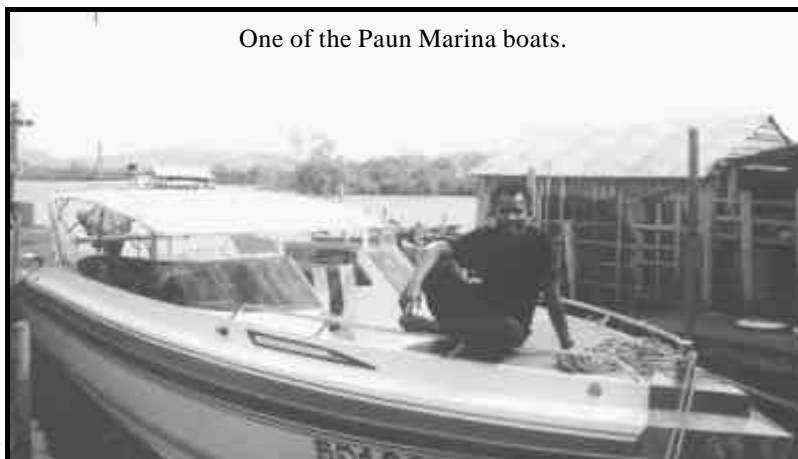
the boat moors up you have to cross the estuary by dingy 30 baht no more. Taxi from the other side to the border is 30 – 50 baht depending on how

destinations Bangkok and Pattaya. You can be in BKK about thirteen hours after leaving P.P. for approximately \$18!! Koh Kong is worth a stopoff its

What is a little weird is that the Thai Army is constructing the road and bridge. On top of this the Koh Kong casino is paying for the estuary bridge and has already paid for the sealed highway from the estuary to the border. When its all completed next year according to the Thais coaches from P.P. to BKK should be on the cards.

Koh Kong has plenty of hotels and guesthouses the only Western run one at the moment is Otto's Guesthouse about one hundred meters from the express boat pier. They do great food and are an excellent source of

information. Otto also does tours to the waterfalls (when there is water flowing) or boat tours upriver into the jungle, which is a great experience. Right on the border crossing is



One of the Paun Marina boats.

many people. These prices are the norm. Two girls coming the other way were charged \$10 from the border to the estuary a five-minute journey!! At the border minibuses are waiting,

going to change fast next year when a new road through to Sre Ambel is completed along with a bridge across the Koh Kong estuary doing away with the need for boats completely.

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an hour of so he paid his companion and she left.

She went home changed her dress and did her hair then returned to the same bar.

Who should walk (wobble) in ten minutes later but the same guy. Orders a drink and wanders over to the same girl. Much to the girls surprise he asks her name and why he hadn't spotted her earlier as she was so beautiful blah, blah, blah...

The girl didn't let on and he took her back again for another session.

The next evening same bar he spots the same girl and starts chatting again. The girl said she knew him but he refused to believe it until she told him his room number and what brand of condoms he used.

Robbery season.

Beware the robbery season is upon us as the run up to Khmer New Year gets underway. So be extra careful at night as those bad guys need extra beer money.

Interesting conflict.

Cambodia seems to have a different idea about conflict of interest. When a telecoms

A different perspective.

Following his Bayon Pearnik front page picture. World famous (well in his own world) photographer "Lens cap" Lee will be holding a photo exhibition at the Rising Sun on April the 19th featuring some of his more abstract works. Free Angkor draft and cheap jugs of Sang Thip and coke from 8pm should oil the conversations nicely.

Repeat performance.

A business man visiting Phnom Penh seemed to have his sight and memory impaired by alcohol recently. He took some female company back to his hotel from one of the city's nightspots late evening. After

company pays the Minister of Telecoms two and a half grand a month to be an "advisor" this is not a conflict of interest according to the minister. So when is it a conflict of interest. Maybe he has to have an office in their building and a percentage of the profits before it becomes an issue.

As for the internet debacle with the telecoms company saying they are not an ISP, pull the other one lads what service are you providing, Pizza delivery.

Oh we forgot. What you are providing is PISS (Providing Internet Surfing Services) a completely different thing altogether!!

I'll name it in one.

Sihanoukville a sleepy seaside town renowned for more bars per expat than anywhere on the planet seems to have some new crazes.

The first is bus services. There are now five different bus companys running to and from P.P. (two are tied to guesthouses the lowest price



being free if you stay with them), this gives about twenty buses a day. Slight overkill we think.

Second craze is name that beach. First there was Serendipity beach (the North end of Ochhateal beach), now sporting some nice bars and a guesthouse. Now there is Lomherkay beach which seem to be a renaming of the South end of Hawaii beach. So get down there quick and name a beach before they all go. But what do you expect of a town with two names

Stop Press

Martinis has just informed us that they will be having a Ninth Year Anniversary Party on the 6th & 7th of April. Tiger Beer \$1.

**Live band on both nights and other surprises.
So be there.**

Bokor By Streetbike or, Forkifixion

FLUMMOXED by indigenous flummery cervically trauma'd by the whiplashing right and left and right and left every streetcrossing smogmothered banjaxed by begging guilt and moto? moto? Yes you say yes yes time for Kampot the Quiet Bokor the Lofty Kep the Couthly Quaint—Yes yes I say but I have returned I have returned to tell you all.

Seasoned traveler and done to a turn but never knew this till now: for adventure travel Catholic countries are best wait wait till I tell you, never knew myself till sweet Buddhist lady deskclerk in Kampot looked at my rented little circa-90cc streetbike and says, You go Bokor with that? Yes, yes I say and she says only Oh then three hours later and not up there yet but several whizzers-by on 250 dirtbikes probably well up now and already at their breadandwine and a little of the brown thou I seen perched on the buddyseat while I'm about the business of not dying on the little streetbike on the loose rock mounteen track and thinking Yes yes Catholic countries best because that little expressed Buddhist lady deskclerk if she'd been say Mexican or Paraguayan and I'd said Yes about that little bike and up Bokor with it she'd be making that fevered sign of the cross and muttering about the Mother of God and I'd be getting what I hadn't from that little Buddhist I mean that maybe that streetbike on that particular mounteen was some order of madness.

And no no American male cannot abandon madness until it actually kills so kept on on on the mounteen track around my circle in Dante's Hell until it spun me out 40kms later splayed and pravined at the wrecked ruined haunted French casino and I figured this was it I was in dead land now and could get off that goddam little bike, honor but not much else intact but no no casino just death in life on a high plateau gaping windows doors the sockets of eyes sunken in but still watching and the red paint on the massive ruined walls a nice design touch wait a minute you say fresh paint after all those years so you touch it AAAAAGGGHH big mistake not paint no no it's fur oh Lord it's



The Bokor
Casino.

fur growing right out of hell through those walls into our sweet little world so natcherly being American male fool you head up those high stairs into the entrance to hell and see right where it should be the hatcheck girl's coing and you thinking big tip darling big tip if I get out of here whole well except for my crucified fork I did that to my own self on the way up here then crunch on through the busted tile flooring into a vaulted ballroom maybe main gaming room with acoustics so long unused you hear your footsteps everywhere and go straight on through to a portico looking out over a precipice so convenient for ruined gamblers to jump from in the dark You know they did even without seeing as you do see the mist boiling up from thousands of feet below up up the face of the fall The dead losers' ghosts ride it all the way back up clawing for handhold on the edge for another try a salvational try just one last try at the tables long gone long gone long gone.

And them trapped incommunicado forever in their eternal whirling prison of fog it must be even worse at night they see the lights hear the music the laughing women. But sharpest of all the bored croupier's barely audible *rote rien va plus*.

— Possum

The Truman Show

Movie Review by Cletus J. "Bubba" Huckabee, Jr.

Now, if you ask me, there isn't anything better than a good video about a famous man like Harry S. Truman or Ned Kelly, or Guy Fawkes or some such person with political interest. It is with that mind that I sadly write this month's review of a new movin' picture what they call The Truman Show. Before you go warm up the big screen television and crank on the airconditioner to full blast, I'd better let you have the bad news first - it ain't about Harry S. Truman. In fact, it has absolutely nothing to do with the man what dropped the bomb on the Japs. Now I know that the new sensitive folk what are all politically correct not only don't like it when we use words like Jap, but they don't even want mention of things like the bomb.

When my Daddy was in The Big One, he took a round of Jap lead in the goodwollies and it pained him the rest of his days... so I don't feel too bad revealing the fact that we done dropped the bomb on folk what shot at a man's goodwollies. Especially when that man happens to have been my Daddy. If you have a problem with that, then maybe you'll have a problem with the rest of this review so you might ought to stop about here and go commence to do something else. Like I often say, ain't to often that a good copy of a quality picture show arrives in Cambodia but what it is scooped up by the vend-

ers at the Russian Market like a starving hen on a Spring worm. Well, the hungry hen was busy busy this week and the only thing what was left in most of the stalls was old worm out tapes we done seed, and this here Truman Show. We should have knowd.

Bernice (that's Betty-Mae's cousin who's here staying with us while she and Billy-Ray work things out) warned me not to be expecting much out of that Canadian fellow they call Jim Carey. She claims he just ain't worth a lark's fart. He's had a string of films that didn't do much for her, so she don't take a shine to that boy no more. She says slapstick is the last resort of the humourless and, fact-a-matter, I agree. Bernice has had a general boycott of that boys movies ever since that first one, The Mask, come out and all the critics said it was funny, but only 13 year-old adolescents and Japs laughed at it. Now, I know, I know, you all are about to commence thinking I don't like the Japs because I keep referring to them as that but it's only an abbreviation of Japanese. How 'bout if I use the second half of the word as the abbreviation of choice? What if I call them "Anese"? That make you feel any better?

Clyde "Blackie" Boyle's third wife was "Anese" and she was a right fine woman. We all liked her just fine. There. That show's I ain't prejudiced again folk just because they happen to be from some par-

ticular archipelago in the Northwest Pacific inhabited by a nearly homogenous population dependant on predatory economic practices and the violation of virtually all international trade agreements to further their collective agenda and bolster the national coffers. Just because they done shot my Daddy's goodwollies don't make me look badly on the little rascals. No sir... there are plenty of other reasons to look badly on them without having to resort to goodwollie shootin'. Take for example the fact that they play Baseball to a tie. What in tar nation do they think that is supposed to accomplish? Now I know a big chunk of the reading audience here will not understand the significance, but trust me... it don't work. I asked Blackie's bent Englishman neighbour to kindly give me a similar example utilising Cricket so my non-Baseball playing brethren and cistern might could follow along and he said it would be like playing Cricket with the bails epoxide to the wicket... whatever that means. I didn't press him to hard for an explanation because he gives me the willies.

Now I know, you folk from the British Isles think that expression refers to the masculine nether regions, but it don't. That means it unsettles me to the point of dress. I ain't one of them carpet munchin' sodomites and I don't want you to get that notion... hell's bells it sure is hard to not

make out like I am some kind of narrow-minded, red-necked, epithet-spewin' neo-Nazi what thinks Cambodia is only for the write man. Believe me - I ain't.

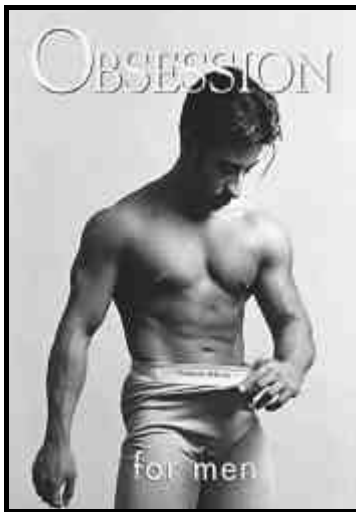
Anyway, the picture is a doosy. You keep waiting to laugh and you never do. I got so tired of that Canadian boy pulling faces and attempting to do a Charlie Chaplain routine that I eventually went out back and started working on the washing machine.

It broke down last Friday and it turned out to be a matter of replacing the flange over behind the pump casing. I had to spend about two hours tinkering around before I knowd what the situation was. I was fixin' to give up when I looked over and saw that frazlin flange hanging on by one screw. They don't make washing machines like they used to.

Anyway, by the time I went back in to the TV room I found Mama taking a nap on the sofa and Junior was by himself watching the picture show for the second time.

The Truman Show gets three thumbs up. All three are from Junior because he's the only one what seed the show. He liked it so much that he gave it three. I would have give it three thumbs down, but I had to withdraw my judgeship from this particular competition on account of I didn't actually see the entire show. I wouldn't go placing too much weight on his judgement, after all he is dumb as a sack of hammers... but don't go tellin' Mama I said that.

ADVERTS YOU DON'T SEE



In case you hadn't heard Harper's Magazine of Feb and March want Henry Kissinger tried as a War Criminal. The US Congress wants to place sanctions against Yugoslavia for not turning Malasovich over as a War Criminal. While Ariel Sharon, the Butcher of Beirut, a man who caused the cold blooded murder of 2500 unarmed old men, women and children dines at the White House.

Jim, a short middle-aged man, walks into a local bar.

Unfortunately, there's a pile of dog feces just inside the door, and he slips on it and falls over. He gets up, and walks to the bar to buy a drink. Sam, a 6ft 4in, 245-pound college football player, then enters the bar. He slips on the same pile, gets up and buys a drink.

Jim turns to an embarrassed Sam, and trying to strike up a conversation, points to the pile by the door and says, "I just did that."

"WHAT??" shouts Sam, who punches Jim in the mouth.

A frog telephoned the Psychic Hotline and was told, "You are going to meet a beautiful young woman who will want to know everything about you."

The frog said, "That's great! Will I meet her at a party, or what?"

"No," said the psychic, "Next term -- in her biology class."

Agro Vänker, Scandinavia's best-loved diesel mechanic and odd jobs man, is having a break. So Fred Twisted (evenly balanced, he has a chip on both shoulders) reads your stars.

Aries (March 21 – April 19)

Hello, getting-your-ass-back-into-place person! You have been feeling your energy slowly crawl back into you, people notice you again ... you notice people more. Try to open up and be friendly, it's safer at the distance you are keeping lately. Remember that you don't deserve to be treated like shit, and let all those around remind you of this. I hope you have more than one friend, or it's all hopeless.

Taurus (April 20 – May 20)

Settle on something good, but don't settle. What I'm saying is make your choices right this month, but know what's truly good for you. There is something in you that won't attach completely, but don't despair. We can fix you up with paste and glue for the next few months to get all those leaks plugged up.

Gemini (May 21 – June 20)

Some say love is a flower, personally I think that it's a weed. Do you ever bother to think that it's all kinda funny? I mean have you ever looked at the big picture and seen incomplete skits of comedy. Your view on things is better than most others, just remember that when it does get serious... it doesn't at the same time.

Cancer (June 21 – July 22)

Water: drink it, it's good for you. Water is the essence of life, it builds, destroys, and nurtures you. This message has been brought to you by Aquafina. You like that hidden advertising we use here at the *Pearnik*? Try to stick to the basics this month, it will keep you in-line with everything else.

Leo (July 23 – August 22)

You ever feel a bit psycho? Nah, that's another sign I'm thinking about. You have a pretty good head on your shoulders, don't do anything stupid this month to knock it off. Last thing I need to do is come over and get that thing out of the toilet. Smile, and be safe. Pressure will come in strange forms this month.

Virgo (August 23 – September 22)

Track four of Ben Folds Five's *Brick* is for you this month. Imagine a world that didn't suck so much, now stop pretending. If you really wanted it, you'd have something to do with it. Remember that you enjoy justifying your words, but your actions always tell people something different. Learn to breathe, and learn to listen.

Libra (September 23 – October 22)

Aren't you glad you're not one of those signs up there? They suck a lot so I pick on them. If you talk about Aries then I'll fuck with you too. You need to travel off and gain your own place. Separate from the everyday and fill yourself up with something that doesn't make you a sleeping retard on the side of the street. Some relaxation may pay off big time for the coming month.

Scorpio (October 23 – November 21)

Thanks for blowing bubbles, you are the master at making it simple. It always seems complex in your head, but you dish out the practicality to all others. Learn to use this trait and make a few more people feel relieved. Inside it makes you realize, bit by bit, that it's better and better to be in your shoes. A smile is contagious, so show it off.

Sagittarius (November 22 – December 21)

The weather finally agrees with you, and it emphasizes the best aspects of who you are. Enjoy this month, and keep working hard to achieve that goal of yours. Your head starts planning multiple activities in the next few months. Make a note to handle it better this year, and stress yourself less.

Capricorn (December 22 – January 19)

She's so high, high above me. High? Say what? Not you. But maybe the other he or she. Try to lower someone that's near you closer to the ground. Keep eye level sacred, and be ready to become an important friend when needed. These are important things, kinda like "Must-see TV".

Aquarius (January 20 – February 18)

"Son," she said, "I got a little story for you." It's about time you made a tale for yourself. This may not have to include lies, it can be something entertaining. If your life isn't that fantastic, then create some memories this month to look back on, maybe even take some photos so that you'll remember how screwed up you were that night.

Pisces (February 19 – March 20)

Bait. You need to incise those around you to thinking that you are a better person than anyone else. Cocky as it may sound, it may be the only chance of you getting laid anytime soon. Take control of others people's lives and use them a bit. Karma tends to roll around later, so be prepared to pay the IRS in back taxes.

FITNESS TO FLY



PART 1—THE PASSENGER

by Dr Gavin Scott

Many of us take flying for granted, but up to fifteen percent of the population that can afford to fly never do because of a fear of doing so. For the rest of us who do fly there will be times when a medical condition prevents us from flying out of Phnom Penh. The two main factors affecting our bodies while flying are the reduction in oxygen and the reduction in pressure.

Flying at 6000 feet reduces the oxygen in the blood by three percent—not a problem for most of us—but for those with lung disease the reduction can be harmful. In general breathlessness at rest is a contraindication (CI) to flying, and anyone breathless after walking 50 metres requires further assessment. Common-sense actions such as the use of a wheelchair and avoidance of smoking areas will help. Persons, however fit to fly, who produce large quantities of offensive sputum may be refused permission to fly by the airline because of the disturbance to other passengers.

Anaemia with a blood level of haemoglobin below 7.5g% is a relative CI, and persons with sickle cell disease such as Africans may get into trouble. Those with severe heart failure should not fly, but if you can walk 80 metres and climb ten stairs without symptoms, then you can fly. The first two weeks after a heart attack is a CI to flying. Interestingly, most heart attacks occur on the ground in the airport and not up in the air. Lower oxygen levels mean that three weeks must elapse after someone

has had a stroke before flying. Poorly controlled epileptics are advised to increase their medication 24 hours before flight. Persons who tend to become confused at night are likely to develop similar symptoms during flight, and would need to be accompanied on board. The effects of lowered oxygen in our blood is made worse by alcohol and cigarettes.

When we ascend to 6000 feet the gas inside our body cavities increases volume by 30 percent due to pressure changes. We are given sweets to suck before takeoff (American lawyers note—possibility of suing airline for increased dental-cavity risk?) so that the air in our middle ears can equalise with the cabin pressure; acute ear and sinus infections cause the drainage tubes to be blocked, and the increase in pressure of the trapped air can be very painful. If you have had recent bowel surgery (e.g. appendectomy) you may not fly for ten days, otherwise the wound would literally blow up in front of you, and persons with colostomies need extra bags! Incredibly, there are still expat stupidos who ride around on motorbikes without a helmet (Khmers can plead poverty but increasing numbers are wearing helmets as evidenced by a secondhand market of stolen helmets); if they come off their motorbike and sustain a skull fracture, and that fracture extends into a sinus or middle ear, then they can not fly out on a US\$100 commercial flight for medical treat-

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APRIL 2001

Koh Kong

Continued

Koh Kong Casino with two hotels a huge duty free shop, restaurants and a beach resort. Its totally out of place here with its manicured gardens, street lighting and a completely Thai look to it, but it does employ a lot of locals. Check it out if you fancy a flutter.

When you get a boat from Koh Kong to Sre Ambel or Sihanoukville be warned the prices are higher (600 baht or 400 for the Paun Marina) and they all leave early morning. Otto will give you a free breakfast if you book the ticket through him. Which is a bit of a deal.

Exploring mangrove swamps.



Koh Kong Casino area. A little bit of Thailand.

On the return journey as luck would have it the Orient Express boat was running that day. It's the largest express boat, having two decks and is definitely the most comfortable. The others are OK if the waves are no more than a couple of feet they are nicknamed the "Floating Coffins" for some reason. Get the Orient if you can but it only runs every three days.

You will be asked for your passport at Sihanoukville, Sre Ambel and Koh Kong why is still a mystery, as you have to produce it at the border anyway.

As I wasn't leaving the country I deliberately left my passport behind. This caused a small problem at Sre Ambel until they realized that if I flew to Koh Kong from Pochentong no passport was required so why did they need it.

Have a look around Koh Kong for a day don't just pass through it won't be the same once the road goes through.

Female Guinness Book of Records

Car Parking

The smallest kerbside space successfully reversed into by a woman was one of 19.36m (63ft 2ins), equivalent to three standard parking spaces, by Mrs. Elizabeth Simpkins, driving an unmodified Vauxhall Nova 'Swing' on 12th October 1993. She started the manoeuvre at 11.15am in Ropergate, Pontefract, and successfully parked within three feet of the pavement 8 hours 14 minutes later. There was slight damage to the bumpers and wings of her own and two adjoining cars, as well as a shop frontage and two lamp posts.

Incorrect Driving

The longest journey completed with the handbrake on was one of 504 km, (313 miles) from Stranraer to Holyhead by Dr. Julie Thorn (GB) at the wheel of a Saab 900 on the 2nd April 1987. Dr. Thorn smelled burning two miles into her journey at Aird but pressed on to Holyhead with smoke billowing from the rear wheels. This journey also holds the records for the longest completed journey with the choke fully out and the right indicator flashing.

Shop Dithering

The longest time spent dithering in a shop was 12 days between 21st

August and 2nd September 1995 by Mrs. Sandra Wilks (GB) in the Birmingham branch of Dorothy Perkins. Entering the shop on a Saturday morning, Mrs. Wilks could not choose between two near identical dresses, which were both in the sale. After one hour, her husband, sitting on a chair by the changing room with his head in his hands, told her to buy both. Mrs. Wilks eventually bought one for 12.99, only to return the next day and exchange it for the other one.

To date, she has yet to wear it. Mrs. Wilks also holds the record for window shopping longevity, when, starting September 12th 1995, she stood motionless gazing at a pair of shoes in Clinkard's window in Kidderminster for 3 weeks two days before eventually going home.

Jumble Sale Massacre

The greatest number of old ladies to perish whilst fighting at a jumble sale is 98, at a Methodist Church Hall in Castleford, West Yorkshire on February 12th 1991. When the doors opened at 10.00am, the initial scramble to get in cost 16 lives, a further 25 being killed in a crush at the first table. A seven-way skirmish then broke out over a pinafore dress costing 10p, which escalated into a full-scale melee resulting in another 18 lives being lost. A pitched battle over a headscarf then ensued and

quickly spread throughout the hall, claiming 39 old women. The jumble sale raised £5.28 for local boy scouts.

Talking about Nothing

Mrs. Mary Caterham (GB) and Mrs. Marjorie Steele (GB) sat in a kitchen in Blackburn, Lancs. and talked about nothing whatsoever for four and a half months from 1st May to 7th August 1978, pausing only for coffee, cakes and toilet visits. Throughout the whole time, no information was exchanged and neither woman gained any new knowledge whatsoever. The outdoor record for talking about nothing is held by Mrs. Vera Etherington (GB) and her neighbour Mrs. Dolly Booth (GB) of Ipswich, who between 11th November 1983 and 12th January 1984 chuntered on over their fence in an unenlightening dialogue lasting almost 62 days until Mrs. Booth remembered she'd left the bath running.

Gossiping

On February 18th 1992, Joyce Blatherwick, a close friend of Agnes Banbury popped round for a cup of tea and a chat, during the course of which she told Mrs. Banbury, in the strictest confidence, that she was having an affair with the butcher. After Mrs. Blatherwick left at 2.10pm, Mrs. Banbury immediately began to tell everyone, swearing them all to secrecy. By 2.30pm, she had told 128 people of the news. By 2.50pm it had risen to 372 and by 4.00pm that afternoon, 2774 knew of the affair, including the local Amateur dramatic Society, several knitting circles, a coach load of American tourists which she flagged down and the butchers wife. When a tired Mrs. Banbury went to bed at 11.55pm that night, Mrs. Blatherwick's affair was common knowledge to a staggering 75,338 people, enough to fill Wembley Stadium.

Group Toilet Visit

The record for the largest group of women to visit a toilet simultaneously is held by 147 workers at the Department of Social Security, Longbenton. At their annual Christ-

mas celebration at a nightclub in Newcastle-Upon-Tyne on October 12th 1994, Mrs. Beryl Crabtree got up to go to the toilet and was immediately followed by 146 other members of the party. Moving as a mass, the group entered the toilet at 9.52pm and, after waiting for everyone to finish, emerged 2 hrs 37 mins later.

Film Confusion

The greatest length of time a woman has watched a film with her husband without asking a stupid plot-related question was achieved on the 28th October 1990, when Mrs. Ethel Brunswick sat down with her husband to watch 'The Ipress File'. She watched in silence for a breathtaking 2 mins 40 secs before asking "Is he a goodie or a baddie, then, him in the glasses?", revealing a staggering level of ignorance. This broke her own record set in 1962 when she sat through 2 mins 38 secs of '633 Squadron' before asking "Is this a war film, is it?"

Single Breath Sentence

An Oxfordshire woman today became the first ever to break the thirty-minute barrier for talking without drawing breath. Mrs. Mavis Sommers, 48, of Cowley, smashed the previous record of 23 minutes when she excitedly reported an argument she'd had in the butchers to her neighbour. She ranted on for a staggering 32 minutes and 12 seconds without pausing for air, before going blue and collapsing in a heap on the ground. She was taken to Radcliff Infirmary in a wheelbarrow but was released later after check-ups.

At the peak of her mammoth motor mouth marathon, she achieved an unbelievable 680 words per minute, repeating the main points of the story an amazing 114 times whilst her neighbour, Mrs. Dolly Knowles, nodded and tutted. The last third of the sentence was delivered in a barely audible croak, the last two minutes being mouthed only, accompanied by vigorous gesticulations and indignant spasms.

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B.P. VCD & CD REVIEW

MONKEY BONE Review

I hate *Monkeybone*.

I hate the film in a profoundly upsetting way. It is the film I dislike most this year, the film I'm angriest at.

What makes *Monkeybone* unbearable is the sheer enormity of talent wasted on this non-working whoopee cushion. This broken joy-buzzer. This dribbling water-spouting flower. It is that cheap broken gag you buy from the back of Boy's Life that half assed attempt at something wonderful.

How responsible are Henry Selick, Sam Hamm and Chris Columbus?

Well, Sam wrote a great initial script with Henry. A dark surreal adult humored story that was basically a descent into a stunningly imaginative world. The internal logic of that first script was rock solid. Intelligent through and through. Calling for possibly the greatest works of stop-motion animation we'd ever see. It wasn't hokey and stupid and cheap and dumb. It wasn't loud and noisy and annoying and bad. It wasn't this movie. It was grand and noble and fun and like nothing any of us had seen before.

Step in Fox Animation and Fox with their cowardly non-committal chickenshit film production post-*Titanic* limp-dick policy of non-filmmaker support.

Budget draft after budget draft. Make it cheaper and cheaper and cheaper. Rubber suits, as little animation as possible beef up the physical comedy add more fart jokes and base humor. But by taking away so much of the tools and paints and money to make the film all they are left with is a limp film aimed directly at the urinal. So again, how responsible are Chris Columbus, Henry Selick and Sam Hamm the three primary producers and creative head honchos of this disaster?

As soon as the cuts began, they should have left.

It's time to wake up and realize when producing fantasy film and movies bigger than life that you have to follow through. All the way through. You don't micro-manage someone like Henry Selick you give him every

single tool that he needs. You don't butcher a script that is dead on right. You find a director that can bring it to life and stand behind the project without kicking it to serve your own idiotic self-interests.

Oh, I haven't mentioned this yet, but Brendan Fraser He delivers by far his worst performance I've seen to day. Hamming and overacting every moment of the film.

Waste of time. Complete waste of time. One of the biggest film disappointments of my life. Not a film worthy of the talent that made it.

VERTICAL LIMIT Review

Vertical Limit is one of the worst films I have seen all year long. *Vertical Limit* on top of having a terrible narrative, terrible dialogue, subpar acting from all and many many moments of absolute stupidity... the film was also ugly, unbearably mediocre, boring, uninventive, starch hardened stiff and painful to sit through.

I'm not going to waste too much energy on this film, because from the feel of it, I don't think Martin Campbell put very much in this one. He has created a very very bad bomb. Robin Tunney, Bill Paxton (who I usually love), Scott Glenn (who I usually love) and Chris O'Donnell are all acting far beneath the worst you've ever seen from them. I'm serious...

The film begins with an opening that is reminiscent of *Forrest Gump* (add more feathers) and *Star Trek V* (minus the coolness of Kirk). This group of rock climbers are climbing a big rock when some bozo above loses his backpack... there by causing everyone to die except our heroes.

Alright... for the rest of the film... the characters are all introduced like this....

Stoner Climbind Brother Dudes... superstitious about not climbing together. Krychek... biggest machismo bastard to ever scale a mountain... there is none finer.... Paxton.... Billionaire weirdo... climbed 4 years ago... everyone died... he was the only survivor. And lastly mysteriously single attractive rock climbing chick that has instant mutual attrac-

tion for Boy Blunder. Ooooooh, and Scott Glenn... who's wife led Paxton on the last ascent... died, he climbs the mountain in the wild search for her missing corpse!

Instantly we can realize... Boy Blunder, Babe and Sister will survive. Everyone else looks and feels like a red-shirt in this film. They of course try to work in the pre-requisite betrayal and backstabbing... but really... dontcha know how it'll play out? The billionaire has to be an evil bastard... he's rich. Scott Glenn has to be revenge crazy.... Stoner dudes have to be clumsy idiots. Bashir, has Yoda moments because... well he's foreign... therefore instantly filled with Chinese Fortune Cookie wisdom.

They made New Zealand look ugly and fake. This was not the work of a first time filmmaker, but a director with no instincts or verve... no sense of storytelling or involvement. A pure and utter work of tedium and tripe. Excretable.

ENEMY AT THE GATES review

Now first... if you want the best film about the battle of Stalingrad, then go check out the DVD of *Stalingrad*... that movie buries *Enemy at the Gates* with a shovel, but I really really dug this movie.

The film is ambitious as all hell in it's size and production scale. The sets and the city of Stalingrad as brought to life in this film is a surrealist's hell on earth... A complete bleak and terror filled world where bullets bring the only color to the world... bleak rosy red blood...

The film is, basically, about the battle of two men within a battle of thousands upon thousands of men and women that fought to repel the Nazis from the city of Stalingrad.

This has the best urban warfare since *Full Metal Jacket*... and if you like Sniper warfare and the idea of two

brilliant shots being pitted against one another in a grand nightmarish location... then this is your movie... except the love story might piss you off.

Speaking of which... this brings me to Rachel Weisz and the romance angle of the film. I liked the romance... I did. I loved the way Weisz played her character. I adored Joseph Fiennes' Political Officer and I really really loved Jude Law's sniper character. I believe the Romance added a nice flavor, but frankly... I don't know if what it added was enough to include it in the film. It distracted from what felt like the main story... the propaganda and war and rising to be hero in impossible circumstances... and believe me, she is lovely to behold in this movie, but it seems to give the character a release and a feeling of not being alone... which for me... For me, Jude Law being alone and distant... A man with his gun, and the fantastic game of chess with titans he plays... well, that was enough.

In the end though... if you are going to *Enemy at the Gates* wanting to see warfare and large scale combat... well that is there... but the sniper game is what I was entranced by... making every bit of open air upright walking seem insanely tense. Also not knowing all of the history involved kept the suspense going for me.

Definitely a film to catch.

Around Kampong Trach

Continued from page 3

Tinh Binh (Chau Doc). This road via Kirivong is not recommended due to its extremely poor condition. The best idea is to continue to the northwest, on the road, which parallels the rail line.

The next stop to the northwest is Tani, another railway town. The small station is about four kilometers to the north of the city center. In the center of town is Wat Prabat, interesting because of its dilapidated condition. It must be one of the few wats in Cambodia which is not presently under re-construction. Just in front is an old *prasat* (temple ruin), similar to those seen at Tonle Bati, just to the south of Phnom Penh.

From Tani, the road continues north to meet National Route

3 south of Ang Tasaom, but a much more interesting way to go is on one of the "lorries". These are small flatcars constructed by local craftsmen to haul freight and local people up and down the rail line when the train is not operating, which is most of the time. A ride, motorcycles included, can be had for a small sum. The ride terminates at the junction road between Takeo and Ang Tasaom.

From this point, it is possible to continue by road north via Ang Tasaom and National Route 3 to Phnom Penh, but there is nothing in particular to see along this route. A better idea, once off the "lorry", is to go east to Takeo, where there are many guest houses, and then north to Phnom Penh on National Route 2. This route offers a number of well known attractions, including Phnom Chisor, the zoo at Phnom Tamao and the ruins at Tonle Bati. Enjoy your trip!

—George Moore

<http://www.geocities.com/rectravel>



INTERESTING EATERIES, ETC.

TAI TAI CHINESE RESTAURANT

There is a lack of choice as far as late night food in PP, especially early morning once the munchies set in. A good recommendation is the Tai Tai, one of the most popular eateries with the Chinese community. The helpings are ample and tasty (never been sick after eating here) and the prices very reasonable. It's located on the corner of street 200 and Monivong Blvd. and is open between 5pm & 5am. Being Chinese food the menu is vast and portions can be ordered as small, medium or large, but medium is more than enough for one. Of the 25 plus soups on offer chicken and mushroom, xihu beef or seafood with bean curd are favourites and the small bowl which is as large as a bucket is plenty. Main dishes include lobster, crab, eel, squid, fish, various fried and steamed noodle dishes, vegetarian or such delicacies as steamed fresh water tortoise, braised fruit bat with spicy sauce or deep fried snake. The beers cheap, the tea free and the service fast, 3am – hungry ? Tai Tai.

BALI CAFE \$2 BUFFET

The buffet includes soup, main dishes and sweet. Indonesian and Chinese foods are the theme. Help yourself to vegetable soup, fried tofu with garlic and oyster sauce, fish with chilli sauce, beef or chicken with spices, plus more. Rice is included. This very good value lunchtime feed is between 11am - 2pm in the spacious conference hall located on the ground floor at the Bali Cafe, #379 Sisowath Quay.

REGA RESTAURANT

While dining at the Rega there will be Khmer dancing performances during the evening on the 27th of April to enjoy as well as a cuisine special, for further information contact Serge Rega on 012 830587 #33 street 75.

\$1 AN HOUR INTERNET !

About time, Mittapheap Internet is offering \$1 an hour internet if you purchase a \$2 membership card or \$1 an without membership between 6pm to midnight.. they're located at the corner of street 174 and Monivong BLVD, open at 7 30am. We don't know how they do it but make the most of it while it lasts!!