

SEP 2022

ScandAsia



BUSINESS:

Danish Crown Prince Couple to lead Vietnam delegation

COMMUNITY:

Nordic Christmas Bazaar is back in Bangkok

INTERNATIONAL:

Also Finland will close down Confucius Institutes

Nordic Harvest: Danish-Taiwanese indoor farming



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KNEE REPLACEMENT SURGERY LESS PAINFUL, QUICK RECOVERY, WALK WITHIN 24 HOURS.

Have you ever experienced these symptoms: knee ache, swollen knee, knee inflammation, crackling sound when walking, cannot extend your leg straight, including difficulties walking up and down the stairs? If so, these are warning signs for knee arthritis. Some risk factors are being middle-age or older, female, overweight, repeated trauma to the knees, previous knee injury, and genetics factors. If the knee surface suffered ample damage from inflammation or injuries, patients may feel pain when walking or using the stairs. If the damage is more severe, patients may feel aches and pains when they are sitting or sleeping.

What Can Cause Knee Pain?

The most common causes of knee pain are arthritis or chronic knee inflammation, such as rheumatoid arthritis, and knee injury.

- Osteoarthritis usually occurs in patients who are 50 years old or older. It is caused by wear and tear of the cartilage, leading to the hard, rugged bones rubbing against each other. Patients will hear crackling sound during movement, which may be accompanied by pain and stiffness.
- Inflammatory arthritis, such as rheumatoid arthritis, causes the thickening of the synovium and more synovial fluid is produced in the joint, leading to swelling. If the inflammation is chronic, it can destroy the joints.
- Knee trauma or injury can destroy the cartilage from excessive force or cause fracture in the bone and cartilage.

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Patients who receive total knee replacement surgery will feel less pain and can regain their quality of life. The patient will be admitted to morning or the night before surgery. The anesthesiologist will assess and recommend the method of pain management suitable for individual patient. Methods include a systemic sedation or a spinal block. Total knee replacement surgery lasts approximately 1 – 2 hours. The damaged surface is surgically removed and prosthetic joint made of either metal or a composite is inserted to absorb the impact. After surgery, the patient will be observed in the recovery room for another 1 – 2 hours. Once the patient has gained consciousness, they will be moved to inpatient care ward. Most will stay in the hospital for 4 – 5 days. A physical therapist will begin rehabilitation immediately after surgery and subsequently help the patient to self-ambulate until they can be discharged and return to normal activities.

For more information, please contact

Hip and Knee Center

1st Floor, South wing (S1) Bangkok International Hospital Building

(+66) 2310 3731 +66) 2310 3732)



Reference :

Dr. Wallob Samranvedhya

Orthopedic Surgeon (specialized in hip and knee)
Hip and Knee Center, Bangkok International Hospital

Why Choose The Hip And Knee Center, Bangkok International Hospital?

The Hip and Knee Center at Bangkok International Hospital is one of the pioneers of total knee replacement surgery using digital template program to plan the surgical position together with pain intervention technique, such as adductor canal block, and ultrasound waves (alternative supplement for pain management). Such combination minimizes pain and injury to surrounding tissues. Complications after surgery is also reduced, resulting in quicker recovery and patients can walk again within 24 hours as well as return to their daily routine quicker.

- A team of medical specialists highly experienced in knee replacement surgery along with multidisciplinary team of medical professionals, including anesthesiologist, physical therapist, and internist work together to ensure comprehensive care for the patient.
- World-class standard certification for total knee replacement program by JCI in the USA.
- High technology (digital template / pre-operative planning program) is used to plan precise procedure to decrease injury to the surrounding tissues as well as indicate the size and position of the prosthetic to lengthen its lifetime of use.
- Pain management techniques, such as adductor canal block and radiofrequency ablation (radiofrequency ablation is an additional option), are used to minimize pain.
- Standard and premium prosthetic joints last at least 15 – 20 years.
- Low risk of complications, such as nerve damages, infections, or blood clots.
- Enhanced Recovery After Surgery (ERAS) Program help quick recover with a team of experienced physical therapists. Patients can walk within 24 hours after surgery and return to their normal routines.

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Thailand's new Long Term Resident Visa

Thailand is introducing a new visa called "Long-Term Resident (LTR Visa)" which is a program that provides a 10 year visa and a range of tax and non-tax benefits. This new visa program is expected to attract new foreign residents, technologies and talents contributing to domestic spending and investment while supporting economic growth.

LTR visas will be offered to four categories of foreigners: Wealthy Global Citizens, Wealthy Pensioners, Work-from-Thailand Professionals, and Highly-Skilled Professionals. Spouses and dependents of LTR visa holders will also qualify for the same visas.

To qualify as a "Wealthy Global Citizen" you must

- Have at least USD 1 million (36 mill THB) in assets
- Have earned 2.9 mill. THB per year for the last 2 years
- Have invested 18 mill. THB in Thai government bonds, foreign direct investment, or Thai property.

If you are a "Wealthy Global Pensioner", you must

- Have an annual income of 2.9 mill. THB at the time of application

or

- If you 'only' had 1.5 mill. THB in annual income you can still qualify if you invest 9 mill. THB in Thai government bonds, foreign direct investment, or Thai property.

The 'digital nomad' category in this LTR scheme is called "Work From Thailand Professional". To qualify as a digital nomad you must:

- Have an annual income of minimum 2.9 mill. THB.

- Be employed by a Public Company Limited listed on the Stock exchange or by a minimum three year old company with a minimum of 5.4 Bill. THB in revenue for the past three years

- Have at least 5 years of work experience in the relevant fields of the current employment over the past 10 years

or

- If you have 'only' 1.5 mill. THB in annual income you must also have a Master Degree. Plus the rest.

If you are a self employed digital nomad, called "Highly-Skilled Professional", the qualifications are in essence similar to the above.

The Thai government hopes that there will be one million qualifying people who will take this offer and move from wherever they created this wealth to live in Thailand. To help make up their mind, if they qualify, they only have to do 90 days reporting once a year.



Gregers Moller
Editor in Chief

ScandAsia

ScandAsia is a printed magazine and online media covering the people and businesses of Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland living and working in China, Hong Kong, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Philippines, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar.

Who should subscribe:

ScandAsia subscribers are typically Nordic expats and companies from the Nordic countries living in and active in Asia. Another group of subscribers are Nordic people living in the Nordic countries who subscribe to ScandAsia for personal or business reasons. We also have many Asian subscribers, who for a wide range of reasons are following the activities of the Nordic expats and companies via a subscription to ScandAsia.

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Publisher :
Scandinavian Publishing Co., Ltd.
211 Soi Prasert Manukitch 29
Prasert Manukitch Road
Bangkok 10230, Thailand
Tel. +66 2 943 7166-8
Fax: +66 2 943 7169
E-mail: news@scandasia.com

Editor-in-Chief :
Gregers A.W. Møller
gregers@scandmedia.com

Advertising :
Finn Balslev
finn@scandmedia.com
MB: +66 81 866 2577

Graphic Designer :
Peerapol Meesuwan
Peerapol@scandmedia.com

Production Manager:
Sopida Yatprom

Printing :
Thanathorn Print and
Packaging Part., Ltd.

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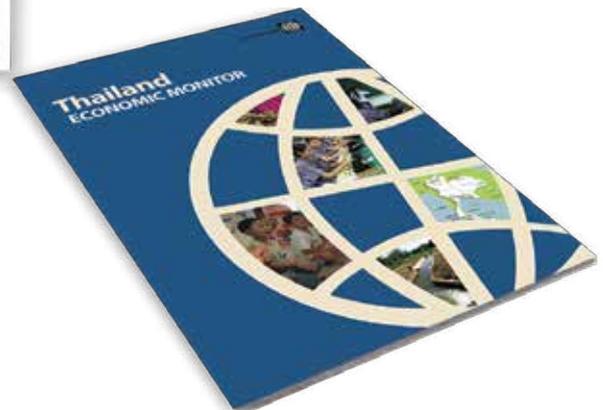
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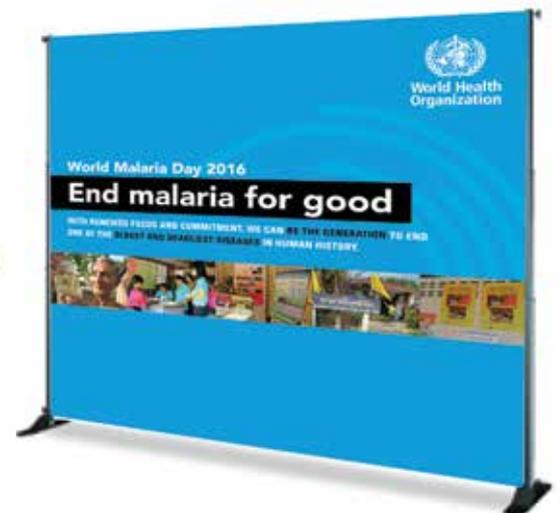
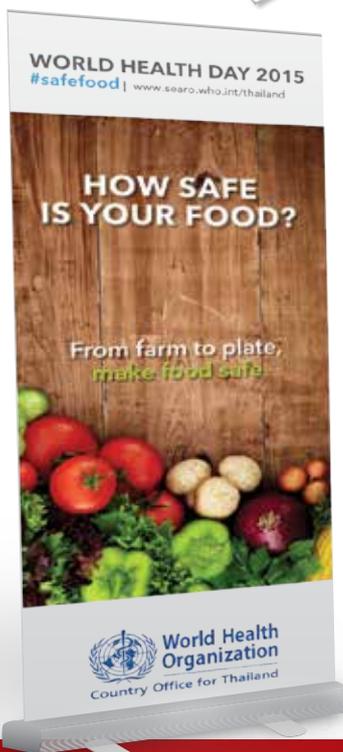
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Please contact

211 Soi Prasert - Manukitch 29, Chorakaebua, Ladprao, Bangkok 10230, Thailand
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patcharee.scandmedia@gmail.com
suchaya.scandmedia@gmail.com

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Farewells and welcomes at the Nordic Embassies



Norway's Ambassador to Vietnam Grete Løchen has left Vietnam after a memorable period as the head of the mission. (Photo: Norway Embassy)

Norwegian Ambassador Grete Løchen in Hanoi had on 26 August her last working day as Ambassador of Norway to Vietnam. Over the past several weeks, she paid numerous farewell visits to the State and ministerial leaders as well as Norway's local and international partners in Vietnam and Lao PDR. Ambassador Løchen has contributed significantly to strengthen and promote the good relationship between Norway and Vietnam and Laos.

The Norwegian Embassy in Hanoi has welcomed Mrs. Mette Møglestue who will be Counselor and Deputy Head of Mission in Hanoi, Vietnam for the next four years. Previously, Mette Møglestue worked with the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and various UN committees and she also was Deputy Director of the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD).

The Norwegian embassy also welcomes Mr. Geir Repstad Magnusen who for the next 3 years will be the 1st Secretary and Head Office in charge of administrative and administrative tasks at the Embassy in



Mr. Ole Chr Lindholm is the new Head of Trade at the Danish Embassy in Bangkok.

Hanoi. Geir has just completed his term in Seoul Korea.

In Thailand, Norwegian Ambassador to Thailand, Ms. Kjersti Rødsmoen has also completed her four years as ambassador. During her tenure, the trade agreement negotiations between EFTA and Thailand were resumed and Norwegian Seafood import kept soaring. Ms Kjersti Rødsmoen's successor in Bangkok will be Ms. Astrid Emilie Helle.

Please visit the embassy's Facebook page to read the full version of the farewell message.

In the Philippines, Danish Ambassador Grete Sillasen in Manila is

leaving this summer. The ambassador has served as Denmark's envoy to the Philippines from December 2019. Grete Sillasen has spent several weeks paying farewell calls to officials and business community leaders.

Also the Norwegian Ambassador to the Philippines, Mr. Bjørn Staurset has left after four years of duty.

In Bangkok, the Danish Embassy welcomes Mr. Ole Chr Lindholm as the new Head of Trade in Bangkok. Mr. Lindholm has previous experience from working in the private sector as International Director for Business Development.

Likewise in Thailand, the Finnish Embassy in Bangkok welcomes Ms. Maria Vehviläinen as the new Consular Affairs officer. She has previously worked as a Roving Consular officer assisting Finnish embassies around the world.

In Malaysia, the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Kuala Lumpur welcomes Tom Jørgen Martinussen who will be the new Deputy Head of Mission. He has previously served at the Norwegian missions in Brasilia, Islamabad, and Guangzhou. For the past two years he has been working with regional affairs in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Oslo.

In Singapore, the Danish embassy welcomes Ms. Laura Sørensen as new Commercial Advisor to the Trade Council. In a previous position back in Denmark she served as an Innovation Consultant at Copenhagen Fintech, where she worked with global partnerships, facilitating, and scaling the Danish Fintech Ecosystem.

In Cambodia, Sweden welcomes Mrs. Maria Bendel as a Head of Administration at the Embassy of Sweden's Section Office in Phnom Penh.

Back in the Nordics, Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), Stockholm office welcomes the new director, Mrs. Orn Doungchan for the Nordic and Baltic countries. Mrs. Orn previously was a deputy director in the Stockholm office four years ago. It is her goals to keep Thailand as a top destination in the Nordic and the Baltic market.

Danish Crown Prince, industry delegation to travel to Vietnam



A delegation of major Danish companies will accompany Crown Prince Frederik and Crown Princess Mary on their upcoming visit to Vietnam to seek business and investment opportunities with Vietnamese companies and partners.

The Crown Prince and Crown Princess will lead the business promotion in Vietnam on 1 and 2 November 2022.

During the visit, the Crown Prince couple and the business delegation will participate in seminars and debates on the green transition together with Vietnamese business leaders and government representatives. The Crown Prince couple's

The Danish Royal family has a special relationship to Vietnam. In this photo from February 2013, the Crown Prince couple visits Vietnam together with his mother, Queen Margrethe II of Denmark and his late father, who grew up in Vietnam. (Photo: Embassy of Denmark in Hanoi)

official visit to Vietnam will also mark that it has been 50 years since Denmark and Vietnam entered into diplomatic relations.

The final program for the visit will be published later. Companies interested in participating in the visit may contact the Confederation of Danish Industries or the Royal Danish Embassy in Hanoi.

The Danish Royal family has special relations to Vietnam. In the above photo from February 2013, the Crown Prince couple is visiting

Vietnam together with his mother, Queen Margrethe II of Denmark and his late father, Prince Henrik.

The Prince Consort had a unique relationship to Vietnam where he spent his early childhood and later studied and graduated from the French secondary school in Hanoi before travelling to France where he studied law and political science at the Sorbonne, Paris, and Chinese and Vietnamese languages at the École Nationale des Langues Orientales.



Why do elderly Nordic tourists re-visit Thailand?

Mr. Narudome Oksue, a Ph.D. student of Tourism Management at the National Institute of Development Administration (NIDA) is currently working on a research project about why elderly Nordic tourists choose to visit Thailand more than once.

"While pursuing my Ph.D., I have had an opportunity to study documents from the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) and the Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council (NESDC)," Mr. Narudome explains to ScandAsia.

"These documents show how Thailand's economic revenues closely relate to the high percentage of tourism from Nordic countries that increases each year," he adds.

This information is what triggered his curiosity and now he wants to find out the reasons why so many elderly people from Scan-

dinavia decide to visit Thailand and revisit the country again.

In addition, he is also curious why Thailand is the popular destination for many Scandinavians after their retirement.

Mr. Narudome Oksue has a professional background in outbound tourism from Thailand. He shared with ScandAsia that he has organized Scandinavia OKS Grace Tour for approximately 18 years to provide tour programs for Thai people who want to travel to Scandinavian countries.

To help him with enough data for his Ph.D., Mr. Narudome is hoping ScandAsia can bring him in touch with enough people that fits the description of being "elderly" and from "a Scandinavian country" and a "repeat visitor".

"To qualify, respondents will have to be registered as living in one of the Nordic countries and must

have been visiting Thailand more than one time – and be over 55 years old," he says. These people will be asked to fill in a questionnaire, which he is currently designing.

The questionnaire survey for the research will be available online in the upcoming October and November.

ScandAsia would like to encourage readers to contact Mr. Narudome Oksue already now to get on the list of respondents when the questionnaire is set up in a way that will provide him with answers that can be computed to provide useful quantitatively data output.

To volunteer for the survey or to ask for more information, please contact Mr. Narudome Oksue.

E-mail: narudome.oks@stu.nida.ac.th

Phone: (+66) 81- 8741412

Christmas Bazaar in Bangkok is back!

The popular Danish Christmas Bazaar in Bangkok is back Friday 2 December 2022.

Last year, in 2021, the bazaar was cancelled due to Covid. But the bazaar in 2020 took place as planned. That year, the bazaar was visited by well over one thousand people from way beyond the Nordic community alone.

Gaysorn Urban Resort, 19 floor, with access from BTS Chidlom skytrain station, will again this year be the location for the coming Christmas Bazaar. This is the third year, that the bazaar has taken place there.

Start looking forward to a lottery with many attractive prizes, Sct. Lucia procession, Santa Claus and much more for the whole family.

Last time the bazaar was held, there were 45 booths selling a great variety of goods. Bags, masks, beer and gløgg, æbleskiver, hotdogs, open sandwiches, jewelry, Scandinavian design, home made Christmas deco-



rations, Christmas wreaths, plants, ceramics, French delicacies, cheese, wine, t-shirts, leather accessories, aromatic oils, soap, and much more.

An important feature was a big room where the kids and the adults could make their own decorations with paper and glue.

The profit from the bazaar is split 50/50 between the DWN – Danish Women's Network and the Danish Church Thailand. As for

the Danish Church, the revenue goes towards activities in the year to come like visits to inmates in the prisons in Thailand, and sick and elderly Danes in need of a Danish chat. The regular activities include Christ Services in Bangkok and Pattaya, confidential talks with Danes in Thailand and relatives in Denmark.

DWN's use their share to support Children of the Forrest in North Thailand.



Popular Danish pop band MLTR returns to Asia

One of Denmark's biggest pop exports, the band Michael Learns to Rock (MLTR), will return to Asia in October for the first time since before Covid broke out, on their much-anticipated Back On the Road Tour 2022.

The trio of singer-keyboardist Jascha Richter, guitarist Mikkel Lentz and drummer Kare Wanscher will

play two concerts in Indonesia, in Jakarta October 16 and Surabaya October 19, followed by another concert in Singapore October 24.

Despite being Danish, MLTR has a huge following in Asia, and the band has attributed its success in Asia to their drug-free, clean-living image and to singing in English. MLTR has earned gold and platinum status for records in many countries,

and has sold over 11 million records over the course of their career, with the majority sold in Scandinavia and Asia. The group is known for soft rock hits such as That's Why You Go Away, The Actor, Paint My Love, Sleeping Child, Out Of The Blue and more.



Nordic Harvest: Danish-Taiwanese indoor farming collaboration

Jesper Hansen, Chief Commercial Officer at YesHealth Group in Taiwan, has played an instrumental role in establishing a business partnership with Danish start-up Nordic Harvest and setting up their first Indoor Vertical Farming (IVF) plant in Copenhagen. Jesper has, aside business planning and marketing, developed vertical farm designs and so far helped raise more than USD \$100 million for vertical farming projects across the world.

By Joakim Persson

Following ten years of development and establishing Taiwan's largest and profitable indoor vertical farm, further expansion in Denmark, the Nordics as well as in various countries in Asia, is in the works. YesHealth's elaborate international expansion plan is based on developing technology, and building and operating such indoor vertical farming systems. Their farming technology is hydroponics-based; where plants grow in a solution of water and nutrients and no soil is used. This addresses climate change and food security challenges through sustainable and environment-friendly agricultural practices.



“
*The harsher the climate
is outside the better our
technology is because it
means you cannot grow
outside.*
”

YesHealth Group is currently the largest vertical farming company in Asia, with own operations and proprietary technology that underpins their vertical farms such as engineering design, climate control systems, fertilizer and micro-biology, automation design, and data collection and management.

The launch in Denmark represents a crucial milestone and the first step in its elaborate international expansion plan. “We are by far the largest player in Taiwan and our main production unit is the largest farm provider for the major retailers, in addition to hotels,” says Jesper.

Chinese studies the beginning

Jesper got involved through the family business of his Taiwanese wife. So let's rewind to how it all started with this Dane working for a Taiwanese company exporting to Denmark.

After taking a degree in history at the University of Copenhagen earlier, Jesper realised that being a historian was not the kind of job he wanted. He then thought how he could further his studies with some skills that could





allow him to travel. Language! Chinese! So he started Chinese studies, which included language, history, culture, politics and society.

"That really kick-started my studies overseas and the first stay I had was in Hangzhou, where I first learned the basics of Chinese and got to a level where I could have a very basic conversation. I spent six months there as an integrated part of the Chinese programme at University of Copenhagen."

Then an opportunity to apply for a one-year scholarship worldwide came up and Jesper applied to University of California that is very strong on Chinese studies.

"I did a one-year programme of combined history and Chinese studies. That really took me to the next level of understanding Chinese – learning how to read and write and how to understand more technical conversations."

"Next, a Taiwanese representative office in Copenhagen contacted my Professor with the offer for some of the best students from Copenhagen to go to Taiwan, paid by the Taiwanese government, to study Chinese. My professor offered this to me and I was granted six months of Chinese studies at Taiwan University – the top university in Taipei. So I took another six months on top of my degree to go there, and I managed to increase my Chinese to an even higher level during my time here," says the Dane about his new-found home.

"When I was just about to go back to Copenhagen I met my current wife. We had little time to get to know each other before I had to go back to Copenhagen, so I told her that I would return after completing my graduation in Copenhagen. And so I did."

Family job offer

"Once there I first joined a local Taiwanese company that helps large Western manufacturers (American and big customers such as Ericsson in Sweden), with mechanical components, specialising on Wi-Fi devices. My role was sales but just as much a matter of acting as a cross-cultural bridge. During my two years with this company I got very familiar with Taiwanese business and I also experienced how to link a Taiwanese company's business mindset and way of approaching business with western practice. I was gradually becoming an expert on how to sell something from there to overseas, especially towards the western world," he explains.

Then, as YesHealth Group was building a larger facility, his Taiwanese father in law took Jesper under his wings and offered him to join the company and work on its global expansion.

"So I joined and then spent about a year before we took on the first project, which was in China in 2018. And we succeeded in delivering that project in Shenzhen. That remains one of the largest farms ever built up to today. Then, from 2019 onwards, I started developing projects in Europe."

Danish partnership

First out is Denmark, where in the fourth quarter of 2020 Nordic Harvest began operations of its vertical farm in greater Copenhagen, which will with full production capacity yield more than 3.000 kg every day, making it the most efficient vertical farm in Europe to date.

This Danish start-up that aims to make food production more sustainable has been made possible through a business partnership with YesHealth Group.



“
YesHealth Group is currently the largest vertical farming company in Asia, with own operations and proprietary technology
 ”

“Nordic Harvest ApS is backed by prominent investors and leaders within business, the food industry, and agriculture making Nordic Harvest an ideal partner,” says Jesper.

It has more than 40 private investors, aside some bigger investors and lenders like Vækstfonden, the Danish government’s financing fund for venture capital & private equity; and Danmarks Grønne Investeringsfond, a new, independent investment fund that co-finances investments supporting the transfer to a green society.

As an investor Yeshealth has also contributed capital towards setting up the Danish food business.

“We have a significantly larger stake through our technology transfer; licensing our technologies and proprietary formulas.”

Setting up sales and distribution, marketing and operating the business is done by Nordic Harvest, while Yeshealth looks after everything relating to technology.

“We are building the next phase in 2021, which will almost triple the capacity to around 1000 tons per year - to be completed and fully operational by early next year.”

The grow area is utilised optimally by placing the plants in floors. By having full control over the plants’ environment, the best conditions is created for their growth. Therefore, the indoor farm can deliver delicious, tasteful and nutrient-rich herbs and lettuces every day year round - 100% free of pesticides and herbicides.

Nordic Harvest is also one part in a two-pillar idea, by the Danish founder and CEO Anders Riemann, to take away the need for traditional farmland and instead grow vegetables inside cities. Farmland outside the cities should be returned to nature by growing forests, creating lakes etc.

“What we call nature in Denmark consist in farmland everywhere, and that’s not what nature looks like before. It’s all artificial - made by people. We should have untouched forest, which we almost don’t have any more. So the idea is to regenerate and create a better balance in the ecosystem.”

Making it sustainable and viable

The start-up also has further plans to expand into the other Nordic countries over the next years. Jesper called the Danish launch a “proof that it is now possible to commercialise vertical farming produce on a large scale and that this produce will be able to support the traditional farming sector from now on. Vertical farming is no longer just a theoretical concept for the garage.”

Favourable conditions in various markets and countries can vary.

“It can be a combination of climate conditions favouring indoor farming, coupled with inexpensive energy or access to green energy. We are not dependent on the weather, so this enables us to supply the whole world locally. We can build a farm even in Greenland or Iceland if we want to and supply locally and take out the need for transportation,” says Jesper.

“The harsher the climate is outside the better our technology is because it means you cannot grow outside. But it also means the more difficult it is for us to control the temperature inside. And we try purposefully to link our technology with green energy resources. Actually in the case of Denmark, including the wind power, electricity is not inexpensive. But it’s clean, so we don’t have the



“

When I was just about to go back to Copenhagen I met my current wife. We had little time to get to know each other before I had to go back to Copenhagen, so I told her that I would return after my graduation. And so I did.

”

carbon footprint. The link with green energy sources is a driver and whether or not there is a market for high quality sustainably produced produce,” adds the Dane.

“In Denmark we are the only large-scale vertical farm. So the competition comes from overseas’ producers. We identify which crops that can be, and are grown, in Denmark, and we purposely grow other things. We are trying to take away import to Denmark. Competitors would be from countries like Italy and Spain. But we’re selling at a certain price point – because the cost structure is still relatively high compared to outdoor farming. The challenge is to make it a sustainable and viable business by being able to offer produce that doesn’t cost more than the traditional. So our goal is to bring down the cost so that this kind of quality and healthy produce is available to anyone,” he continues.

This is something they will achieve gradually, partly via technology improvement in terms of driving down cost. LED technology, for instance, becomes better and better and lower in cost. The same goes for software and automation.

“There is also an operational aspect that you get better and better at operating these farms, so using the same input in money and labour we can get more and more out of the farms,” says Jesper.

“So there’s a learning curve in terms of being better at that but there’s also technology improvement over time.”

“With all of our technology in-house, YesHealth Group will be able to utilise real-world data from vastly different climates and environments and improve our





technology at an even greater speed and efficiency.’

The Taiwanese company is the developer of all the technology that underpins their vertical farms such as engineering design, climate control systems, fertiliser and micro-biology, automation design, and data collection and management.

Bugs and insects on the market

YesHealth Group was actually mainly started to solve the issue with pesticides:

“Taiwan is a hot country with lots of bugs and insects in nature. So the farmers have to spray a lot of pesticides on the crops. By bringing farming into a closed environment, relying on LED for light source instead of the sun, we have a whole lot of advantages. For instance, we can skip all the harmful chemicals and pesticides – we don’t need them anymore; they belong to the outside world. We can also use significantly less fertilizer and water to achieve the same result. We hardly use any other water than what goes into the crops, so it’s very resource-efficient. Then, in some areas like for instance Singapore, we have the ability to grow a lot on a very small footprint.”

Over time the Taiwanese company has developed technology and become experts at running these large farms that are suitable solutions also for export. “And our combination of being both a technology developer and manufacturer, and an operator, gives us a competitive edge towards many of our competitors who focus only on making the equipment; they don’t have live insights from operating these systems. We are one of the few companies that have been operating these farms over a number of years.”

“Almost everything essential to a vertical farm, such

as LED lighting, is proprietary; something we developed. The same goes for the automation equipment - everything is made in-house.”

“We have something called ‘Nano bubble oxygene injection system’, which we use to induce oxygen in water. We have some 50 patents of which some are only here in Taiwan and some are international, but, actually most of our core technologies are what we call trade secrets,” informs Jesper.

In Taiwan they have a cost competitiveness advantage, but it is by no means any easy market for vertical farming and thus a tough test-bed.

“Some of the values – for instance being pesticide-free and sustainable – are things that just don’t resonate. Taiwan is a little bit behind Europe and the U.S in focusing on these kinds of things, so selling the produce is more difficult. The fact that traditional produce from the field is extremely cheap in Taiwan also contributes to that. Hence, the price gap between the traditional produce and our premium produce becomes higher; whereas in Denmark people are used to eating organic, pesticide-free, high quality produce. There, we don’t have to fight this price gap and change people’s perception. We just tap into the mass market, while in Taiwan we’re still a very premium product and a niche.”

“The way we see vertical farming is that it’s never going to replace traditional farming; it’s just going to be a big niche technology that will have applications in areas where you cannot grow, or have a problem with pesticides. And providing year-round pesticide-free, safe and healthy vegetables is part of a larger trend, which is to move away from the need for meat everyday to a more plant-based diet. This is the kind of trend we are tapping into.”



Chef Mikko says his wife, Ying, is his strength.

Finnish Chef Mikko Vuori cooking his heart out in Khanom

“

I love cooking from my heart. I think I will still be cooking and creating new things as long as I have the energy to do so.

”



The first thing I personally heard about this little village ‘off-the-beaten-track’ called Khanom was: “You need to go and eat at Dusty Gecko...and say hi to Mikko from me.” That was more than ten years ago.

By Jaqueline Deeon

When first visiting Dusty Gecko you are greeted personally, either by Chef Mikko or one of his staff; and sitting down to a meal in Dusty Gecko, you may feel as if you are royalty as delicious meals are served along with a description of the dish you are about to savour.

In fact, Dusty Gecko and Chef Mikko have been around for much longer than that, and not only has his brand evolved with the times, but he withstood the shutdown of civilization during the COVID-19 pandemic!

This tenacious chef did not throw his hands up in despair at the loss of customers; instead, he turned his establishment into a deli delivery business as he trucked and winged his delectable products to all corners of Thailand for expats and Thai citizens stuck at home and who yearned for something of the old world in this ‘new normal’.

ScandAsia caught up with Chef Mikko in his kitchen as he deftly prepared some of his smoked and cured products for yet another deliver-on-demand by a client more than 700km away in Bangkok.

A Young Chef’s Journey

Chef Mikko, you’ve made a name for yourself, not only in the south of Thailand, but have extended your brand’s reach and influence way beyond the south. When and where did your journey as a chef begin for you?

Mikko: I’ve enjoyed cooking since I was a kid. After my military service at the age of 17, I went to cooking school in Finland and later when I graduated as a chef, I did some extra personal courses to build my skills as a head chef.





As a young chef I worked at many good hotels and restaurants in Helsinki. I was very eager to learn and worked really hard to learn all I could about the industry. After this, I worked as a hired and additional chef in various restaurants and high-end catering companies.

This was honestly a crazy time for me in my career as a chef because I grafted many, many hours and tried to take in as much information and learn as many skills and recipes that I could. Often, in a single week, I worked more than normal office workers worked in 2 weeks! I pushed myself to learn kitchen skills from all angles – cold kitchen, hot kitchen, BBQ, bakery, etc.

After attaining positions such as chef de cuisine and head chef positions, where I was in charge of all kitchen operations, I also got to be part of the opening process of many different restaurants in Helsinki, such as Restaurant Sipuli, Finnish cuisine restaurant KUU, Hotel Intercontinental, Hotel Hilton and Restaurant Bulevardia. Now, I have been cooking & rocking 36 years already!

What made you choose Thailand as a destination? Was Khanom your first stop or did you try to put down roots somewhere else before, like so many other people?

Mikko: Christmas is a very busy time in the restaurant business. Big companies and groups start their pre-Christmas parties and buffets for their employees and customers as early as October. During that time, I always worked like a 'war horse' without days off!

However, after all the holidaymakers have spent their money and gotten fat over the Christmas period, everything dies down in January and February. That was the time that I would take my leave and escape from snowy and cold Finland for a couple of months of rest and recreation.

In the beginning I toured the South of Europe, the Caribbean and other places. I then went to Asia and visited Bangkok initially; after which I decided on the island life of Koh Samui. I fell in love with Koh Samui 110%. Samui was my battery charging holiday target for many years, a couple months there and of course Koh Tao and Phangan; relaxing and scuba diving.

While on my holidays, I met a Norwegian hotel owner in Samui and he offer me a job as head chef in his resort, so I said goodbye to Finland and moved to Thailand. A year later I created SIBELIUS, my own fine-dining restaurant at Chaweng beach, Koh Samui, that also enjoyed a certain amount of fame with tourists and locals. I ran my establishment for 5 years before I sold that and moved back to Finland.

However, after 2 years I was already missing Thailand terribly. So, I moved back for good.

I discovered that Samui was way too busy with traffic, criminal activity and exceptionally high rentals for personal and business accommodation. I wanted to find something calm and new, hence I found myself in Khanom.

Discovering a Gem in Paradise

What was your first impression of Khanom and who were your first contacts in the town?

Mikko: During my Samui years, many of my expat friends had visited Khanom and had told me nice things about the place. I came over to the mainland to see it for myself and really liked the village atmosphere a lot.

The four-star Finnish Aava Resort had just opened its doors and I was hired there as a consulting executive chef. However, I still felt a need for my own place and after buying my business from a German expat, I created



Some wise guy once said that if you want be a millionaire in Thailand, you need to come here as a billionaire first



Dusty Gecko Restaurant & Deli Shop. That was in 2009.

Was it easy to establish your business or did you have to 'make friends' with the locals to ensure you could remain open?

Mikko: Settling into Khanom was easy for me because one of my best Thai friends from Samui was actually from Khanom, and he helped ease my way into the local social scene, where I learned to know loads of nice local people. At that time there were very few farangs [westerners] living in Khanom who had made it their home.

Where is your restaurant located and how many staff do you employ? Do you serve customers as well or are you solely in charge of kitchen operations?

Mikko: Our restaurant is near Khanom Tesco Lotus express in town. We have only a few staff and my teacher wife, Ying, helps out a lot too after her university work is finished for the day. Besides cooking, I love chatting with customers and serving them, as well as working behind the bar when it is possible.

How long has your business been in operation?

Mikko: The Restaurant has been going about 13 years now and my online Deli shop, about 3 years.

The Near Future

Where do you see yourself and your business in the next 5 to 10 years?

Mikko: In a Hammock on the beach sipping Pina Coladas ;0) OR MAYBE NOT, LOL !!! I love cooking from my heart. I think I will still be cooking and creating new things as long as I have the energy to do so. Honestly, I want to develop our online business further and really hope it will do very well in the future.

Awards and Recognition

What awards and recognition have you received over the years for yourself as a chef and for Dusty Gecko as a restaurant?

Mikko: Dusty Gecko has been named the number 1 restaurant in Khanom on TripAdvisor and we are also highly ranked with other listings, such as Restaurant Guru. Back in Finland, I was fortunate enough to have worked with professional chefs in Helsinki such as chef guru, Eero Mäkelä.

The Sociable Sport of MÖlkky

What sports do you like? We know you have organized some games of MÖlkky for expats and locals on the beach so that people can socialize in a different setting. We heard that people really enjoyed that. Are you still offering this fun pastime from your cultural roots?

Mikko: I am not a very sporty person. Swimming and running around the restaurant is enough for me. Maintaining our rental villas @ Khanom Mountain View Residence keeps me quite busy too!

Mölkky is a traditional Finnish summer game that's nice to play on the beach. (it's a bit similar to the French Petanque but is played with wooden sticks). I do plan to start arranging games again every week as it gets our expats together, and of course locals are always welcome too.

The Most Valuable Gem of All

You found your soulmate in Khanom. Tell us about your family.

Mikko: My dear wife is an awesome person. Always willing to help in the restaurant and loves to make cocktails and chat with customers, even after her own hard workday is done at the university. She is my constant source of power.

A Culinary Sensation

What menu do you most like to offer your in-house guests? Give us an example of what would be on a typical menu for western people to come and enjoy?





The popular Finnish MÖLKKY is a game Chef Mikko introduced in Khanom for expats and locals to enjoy.



Mikko: Maybe for starters our home-made DELI cold cuts, main course, our famous Pepper Steak with Pepper-Brandy Sauce, desserts like our Homemade Toblerone Chocolate with Ice Cream or Crème Brûlée-Cheesecake.

Tell us what kinds of products you are normally asked to send to other cities and towns in Thailand. Which of these are the most popular?

Mikko: Best sellers are our Whisky-brushed Cold Smoked Salmon, Gin-brushed Gravlax (cured) Salmon, Cold-smoked Tuna Fillet or King Mackerell, Dark Sourdough Rye Bread, Air-dried Beef and Pork Fillet, Cold-smoked Cheese, Beef Fillet, Pastrami, etc.

Orders have mostly been from regular people who enjoy these kinds of products, but luckily now we have a few restaurants and hotels ordering our high-quality DELI products too. We hope to get more restaurants and hotels as customers but will not forget to continue our good service to the everyday customers who have supported us thus far.

The Dark Days of the COVID-19 Pandemic

Tell us your thoughts when COVID hit? Clearly you went into 'survival' mode as opposed to many other people in the industry, who were unable to stay in business. How did you cope with the huge losses the pandemic caused?

Mikko: At first, I was very depressed and felt lost myself because Khanom was totally empty. There were no customers at all. I realized that if we don't do something new right away, we will die.

Then, Ying and I started to think about selling ONLINE, and that's where the DELI started.

Last December, we sent DELI and Christmas foods of more than 1000kg around Thailand with SCG EXPRESS cold delivery trucks, straight to customers' doorsteps. For example, if we sent an order to BKK, the customer had their products at their home the very next day! The whole process was very exciting but also a great relief. Dusty Gecko would not go to dust after all!

Luckily, we have our rental villas too and these bring in some extra income. During the pandemic many people

were looking to rent accommodation in more natural and less crowded places and our villas were ideal for this situation.

Rubbing Shoulders With Famous Chefs

Are there any world-famous chefs you admire? Did you work under a famous chef when you started out in this career?

Mikko: The late Anthony Bourdain was a chef I really admired. He was a great culinarian and person, in my opinion. As I mentioned above, I was fortunate enough to work with the old chef guru, Eero Mäkelä, in Finland. There are many other great chefs I had the privilege to work with over the years.

Fate and Good Fortune

If you had a chance to do things over, would you have changed anything on your journey as a chef and business owner in Thailand?

Mikko: I'd definitely have started the online business earlier, and would have loved to have met my lovely wife earlier too ;0)

Mikko: It is very hard work everywhere in the world to start your own business. I'd say here in Thailand the environment is nicer and there is not so much snow and ice. Luckily, I have lots of Finnish SISU and with that I can survive the bad times. Some wise guy once said that if you want to be a millionaire in Thailand, you need to come here as a billionaire first ;0)

* The dictionary describes SISU as a quality within that has a mystical or magical meaning and is a unique Finnish concept that could mean the strength of will or determination.

Chef Mikko says in his own words: "SISU is also like very strong mind power. Let's say that it's as if you are running a marathon and one kilometre before the finish line, when you are so exhausted and almost collapsing, that absolute power kicks in and you are able to finish the race."

Dusty Gecko website: www.dustygecko.com



Finland's PM defends her right to party

Finland's Prime Minister Sanna Marin was in mid-August having a party with her friends and celebrities where they among others played up to a video camera. When the video appeared on Instagram it was shared widely. It is not often we see national leaders having a really good time like Sanna Marin clearly had.

When some people criticized her for having a good time, she said she disliked that the video clips from the party a few days later emerged on Instagram but insists she just had some alcohol and some good fun. And to defend herself against accusations by the opposition, she took a drug test.

In the video on this page, you can see her reactions to the fact that the videos went viral, but even when expressing her resentment, she smiles and asks what's wrong with partying.

Sanna Marin herself is clear: "I hope that in the year 2022 it's accepted that even decision-makers dance, sing and go to parties," Marin told reporters. "I didn't wish for any images to be spread, but it's up to the voters to decide what they think about it."

The prime minister, who is married and has a 4-year-old daughter, has often insisted that even though she's the head of Finland's government, she's just like anyone else her age who likes a good time with friends and family in their leisure time.

Marin became Finland's youngest prime minister in 2019 at age 34. Even in the egalitarian Nordic country, Marin felt her gender and age sometimes received too much emphasis. She told Vogue magazine in 2020 that "in every position I've ever been in, my gender has always been the starting point – that I am a

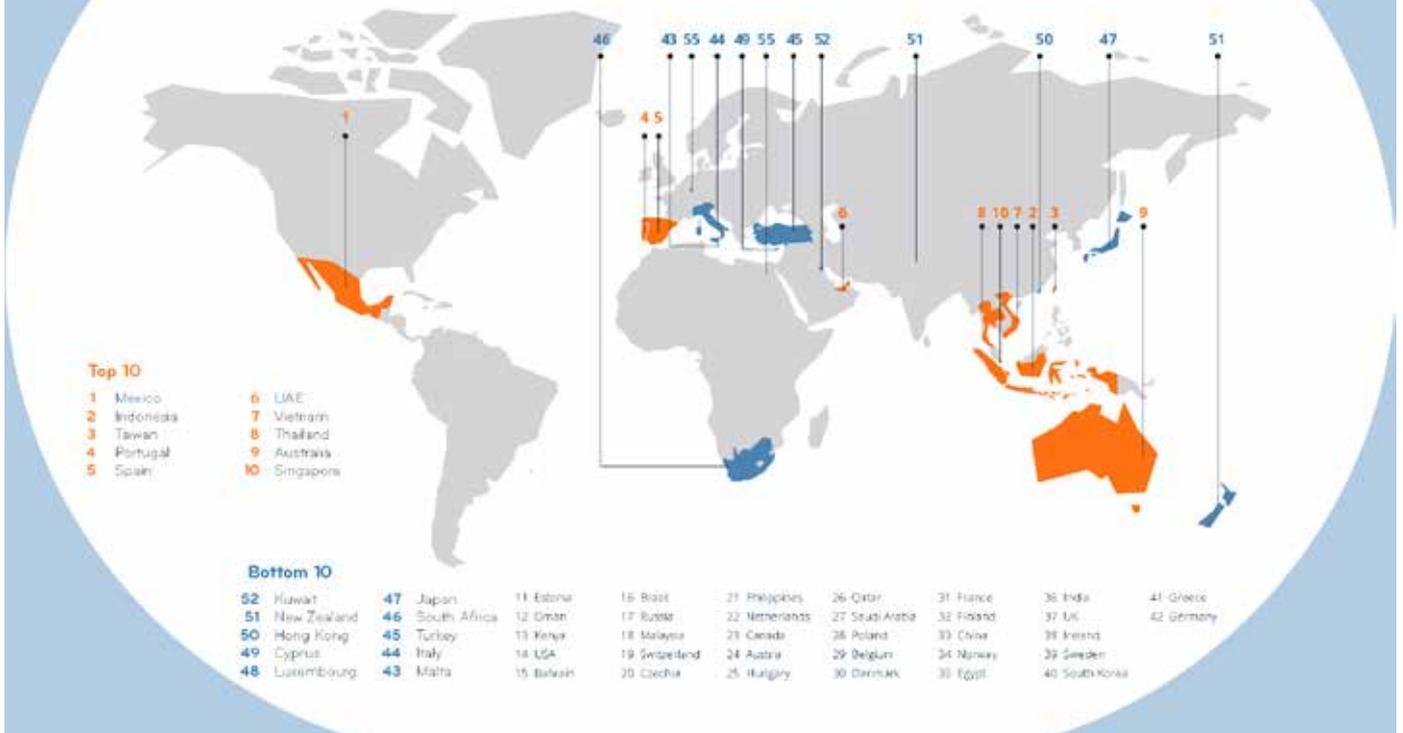
young woman."

Even in a progressive society like Finland's, Marin breaks the mold of a typical politician. She grew up with a single mother who was in a relationship with another woman. Many Finns are proud of her modern approach to the office, including her casual attire. Marin set social media abuzz in April when she showed up to a press conference with her Swedish counterpart wearing a black leather jacket.

Marin and her female-majority Cabinet have also won praise in Finland and internationally for guiding the country steadfastly through the COVID-19 pandemic and the NATO application process.

The German media Bild is a fan and has named her the "Coolest Prime Minister Ever".

The Best & Worst Places for Expats in 2022



New 2022 survey: Best and worst countries to live and work in

Mexico (1st), Indonesia (2nd), and Taiwan (3rd) are the overall three best countries for expats to live and work abroad, according to a newly released Expat Insider survey for 2022.

At the bottom, the expats rated Kuwait (52th), New Zealand (51st), and Hong Kong (50th) as the worst places to live and work abroad.

South East Asia performed overall very well in the survey. Apart from Indonesia (2) and Taiwan (3) five more countries in South East Asia made it to the top half of the list: They are Vietnam (7), Thailand (8), Singapore (10) and further down Malaysia (18), and Philippines (21).

By contrast, all the four Nordic countries in the survey performed overall worse than all the Southeast Asian countries – in particular because the unfriendliness of the Nordic people were counted in.

But wait. Before you pack up and move, it is important to read the details.

Indonesia is easy to settled in, but ...

Overall, Indonesia ranks second in the Expat Insider 2022 survey and performs best in the Ease of Settling In Index (2nd): 90% of expats describe the Indonesian population as friendly in general (vs. 66% globally), as well as friendly towards foreign residents in particular (vs. 65% globally). Close to half (46%) even think that they could not be any friendlier to expats, compared to 27% globally. With a strong personal support network (66% happy vs. 59% globally) and a great social life (77% happy vs. 56% globally), 80% of expats feel at home in Indonesia (vs. 62% globally).

The country's great performance in the Expat Essentials Index (6th) is mainly due to two aspects: First, while only 49% find it easy to live in Indonesia without speaking the local language, which is just about average (51%), 73% say it is easy to learn (vs. 41% globally). In fact, 53% speak the local language very or fairly well. Sec-

ond, housing is easy to find (84% vs. 54% globally) and to afford (74% vs. 39% globally). Beyond housing, 73% of expats are happy with the general cost of living (vs. 45% globally), and 64% say that their disposable household income is more than enough to lead a comfortable life (vs. 45% globally). "It is a great opportunity to save due to the low living expenses," shares an expat from South Korea.

However, the country's performance is just mediocre when it comes to Admin Topics (30th). This is mainly due to the local bureaucracy and authorities, which 57% of expats find it hard to deal with (vs. 39% globally). The Digital Life Subcategory (42nd) is also not one of Indonesia's strongest assets: one in ten expats (10%) is unhappy with the restricted access to online services (vs. 7% globally), and 25% rate the availability of administrative services online negatively (vs. 21% globally).

Working life seems to be laid back in Indonesia, which ranks twelfth worldwide in the Work & Leisure Subcategory. More than seven in ten (72%) are happy with their working hours (vs. 63% globally), and 62% rate their work-life balance positively. While the latter matches the global average, the share of those who are completely satisfied with their work-life balance is a lot higher (36% vs. 25% globally). Overall, 78% of expats are satisfied with their job in general (vs. 64% globally), making Indonesia the world's best country for this factor.

Indonesia's real weak spot is the Quality of Life Index (41st), particularly when it comes to Health & Well-Being (48th): just 60% of expats rate the availability of healthcare positively (vs. 73% globally), and an even lower share (54%) find it easy to access all the healthcare services they need (vs. 67% globally). Overall, 28% are unhappy with the quality of medical care, which is twice the global average (14%). "The quality of healthcare services is low," a South Korean expat shares.

When it comes to the Environment & Climate Subcategory (42nd), 35% of expats find it hard to get green goods and services (vs. 17% globally). They are also unhappy with the urban environment (36% unhappy vs. 17% globally) and the air quality (33% unhappy vs. 19% globally).

While 88% enjoy the opportunity to travel (vs. 82% globally), the local infrastructure poses some challenges. Expats rate the infrastructure for cars negatively (40% unhappy vs. 13% globally), but neither do they find it easy and safe to get around on foot and/or by bicycle (27% unhappy vs. 13% globally). While more than two in five (42%) rate the availability of public transportation negatively (vs. 17% globally), a slightly above-average share finds it at least affordable (73% vs. 70% globally).

According to the respondents, Indonesia has a lot of Leisure Options (12th) to offer. While the opportunities for recreational sports are average (75% happy vs. 75% globally), 70% of expats are happy with the culture and nightlife (vs. 67% globally). Lastly, more than four in five (84%) rate the culinary variety and dining options positively (vs. 77% globally).



Enjoying the high quality of life in Taiwan

In Taiwan, expats are particularly happy with the high quality of life, the ease of settling in, and their personal finances. The country does best in the Quality of Life Index (2nd), only beaten by Spain, and makes it into the top 10 for many related factors. The Health & Well-Being Subcategory is a particular highlight since Taiwan ranks first overall and first for all its factors. Expats find healthcare affordable (100% vs. 61% globally) and widely available (98% vs. 73% globally), and 88% say that they have access to all the healthcare services they need (vs. 67% globally).

Beyond that, Taiwan ranks first in the world for personal safety. While nearly all expats (98%) feel generally safe there (vs. 81% globally), 84% even feel completely safe in Taiwan, compared to 47% globally.

Travel & Transit (7th) is another highlight about life in Taiwan. Expats describe public transportation as affordable (94% vs. 70% globally) and easily available (90% vs. 73% globally). The vast majority of expats (90%) also finds it easy and safe to get around on foot and/or bicycle (vs. 77% globally). "I enjoy living in a beautiful place with world-class infrastructure and services," shares a British expat.

In fact, while not among the top 10, Taiwan still lands in a good 16th place in the Leisure Options Subcategory. More than four in five expats (82%) enjoy the culinary variety and dining options (vs. 77% globally). They are also happy with the culture and nightlife (66% vs. 67% globally) and the opportunities for recreational sports (73% vs. 75% globally).

According to 75% of expats, green goods and services — such as renewable energy, organic food, and sustainable products — are easily available in Taiwan (vs. 64% globally). Despite this, Taiwan ranks only 21st in the Environment & Climate Subcategory, which is mainly due to the low air quality (41st). More than three in ten expats (31%) are unhappy with this factor, compared to 19% globally.

Expats find it very easy to get settled in Taiwan, ranking the destination sixth in this index. More than three-quarters (78%) feel welcome there (vs. 66% globally), and 53% even feel completely welcome (vs. 30% globally). It is easy to make local friends (50% vs. 42% globally), and



most expats have a personal support network (67% vs. 59% globally). In fact, one-quarter of expats (25%) are mainly friends with local residents (vs. 17% globally).

"I am happy that I can experience life in Taiwan with the warm-hearted friends I made here," shares an expat from Vietnam. More than four in five expats (84%) describe the local residents as generally friendly (vs. 66% globally), and 53% even find them very friendly (vs. 30% globally).

While Taiwan only comes 22nd in the Working Abroad Index, it gets another top ranking for one of its factors: 85% of expats feel paid fairly for their work (based on industry, qualifications, role, etc.), compared to 62% globally. This also might explain why they are satisfied with their financial situation (70% vs. 60% globally), and 55% state that their disposable household income is enough to lead a comfortable life (vs. 45% globally). "It is less expensive here to enjoy a high-quality, modern standard of living, including healthcare, fitness, food, and so on," shares a US American expat.

However, working in Taiwan also has its downsides. The destination ranks 39th in the Work Culture & Satisfaction Subcategory and even ends up among the bottom 10 when it comes to flexibility at work (47th).

Lastly, Taiwan lands in a mediocre 23rd place in the Expat Essentials Index, receiving its best results in the Digital Life Subcategory (15th). It does rank among the top 5 worldwide for the ease of getting high-speed internet access at home (4th) and the unrestricted access to online services (3rd). What is more, 63% are happy with the availability of administrative/government services online, which is just slightly above the global average (61%). On the other hand, Taiwan lands among the bottom 10 for the ease of paying without cash (43rd). While 79% are still happy with this factor, this share is below the global average of 84%



Vietnam offers easy finances but poor administration

Expats find it very easy to get settled in Vietnam but struggle with the local language and the environment. The country excels when it comes to Personal Finance, ranking first worldwide in this index. The majority of expats (80%) is happy with the general cost of living, compared to only 45% globally. "There are affordable prices in almost all areas," reports a Swiss expat.

There is no stress when it comes to their financial situation: about four in five (79%) are satisfied with this factor (vs. 60% globally), and 92% say that their disposable household income is enough or more than enough to lead a comfortable life (vs. 72% globally). "I live comfortably on my limited income," shares a US American expat.

Settling in is also a breeze for expats in Vietnam. They rank the country ninth in the Ease of Settling In Index. They greatly enjoy the Local Friendliness (6th) they experience. Most expats (84%) describe the local residents as generally friendly (vs. 66% globally), and 83% find them friendly towards foreign residents in particular (vs. 65% globally).

Creating a personal network is certainly important to expat life. Expats rank Vietnam among the top 10 in the Finding Friends Subcategory (7th), saying it is easy to make local friends (54% happy vs. 42% globally). Over two in three (69%) are happy with their social life, compared to 56% globally. Moreover, 63% have a personal support network in Vietnam, e.g., people that they can go to for practical/emotional support (vs. 59% globally).

Expats have mixed opinions about Working Abroad (29th) in Vietnam. On the downside, 29% of expats feel that moving to Vietnam has not improved their career prospects (vs. 18% globally).

While the country places in the bottom 10 for all these factors, it ranks eighth for another one: over two in three expats (68%) feel paid fairly for their work based on their industry, qualifications, and role (vs. 62% globally). The most common fields expats in Vietnam work in are education — including language education — (21%), manufacturing & engineering (15%), and advertising, marketing & communication (13%).

The country lands among the bottom 10 in the Quality of Life Index (48th), and the Environment & Climate (49th) raises major concerns for expats in Vietnam. Over half of them (53%) are unhappy with the urban environment, over triple the global average (17%). "The noise pollution is terrible," a French expat reports.

They are also disappointed with the availability of green goods and services (37% unhappy vs. 17% globally) and are especially unhappy with the air quality (64% unsatisfied vs. 19% globally).

Additionally, expats in Vietnam are unsatisfied with their Health & Well-Being (40th). About one in five expats (19%) say that healthcare is generally unavailable (vs. 13% globally), and one in four (25%) reports that it is difficult to access all the kinds of healthcare services that they need (vs. 17% globally). When expats are able to access healthcare services, they find them to be of poor quality — 23% are unhappy with the quality of medical care, compared to 14% globally.

Language (47th) is another issue in Vietnam. Four in five expats (80%) report that learning the local language is difficult, compared to only 38% globally. They rate the country last for this factor (52nd).

Language is not the only hurdle in the Expat Essentials Index (46th). In the Admin Topics Subcategory, Viet-

nam ranks 51st overall, only Malta (52nd) does worse. Expats find it difficult to deal with local bureaucracy (66% vs. 39% globally), open a local bank account (41% vs. 21% globally), and get a visa in order to move there (48% vs. 24% globally). Digital Life (49th) does not perform much better.

Thailand is affordable & friendly

In Thailand, finance and leisure options are no trouble for expats, but they struggle with their working life. They vote the country fourth in the Personal Finance Index. In fact, most expats (85%) feel that their disposable household income is enough or more than enough to lead a comfortable life (vs. 72% globally). “Your money definitely goes far,” a British expat reports.

Expats vote Thailand third for general cost of living — 71% are happy with this factor, 26 percentage points more than the global average (45%). Thus, it is no surprise that 70% are happy with their financial situation overall (vs. 60% globally). Housing is no trouble either, and Thailand also lands in first place in this subcategory.

Aside from housing, expats are not too happy with the factors surveyed in the Expat Essentials Index (18th). Thailand ranks in the bottom 10 of the Digital Life Subcategory (43rd), and expats are particularly unhappy with the availability of administrative/government services online (43% unhappy vs. 21% globally). “It is all paperwork for everything,” explains an expat from Chile. Overall, more than half (51%) find it hard to deal with the local bureaucracy/authorities, compared to 39% globally.

While 70% find it easy to live in Thailand without speaking the local language (vs. 51% globally), 68% struggle to learn it (vs. 38% globally). “I just cannot pick up the language,” says a British expat. In fact, 78% speak the language just a little (54% vs. 25% globally) or not at all (24% vs. 10% globally).

The Ease of Settling In Index (11th) is a genuine highlight, though, and expats rate Thailand particularly well in the Local Friendliness Subcategory (8th). The majority (86%) finds the residents to be generally friendly (vs. 66% globally), and another 81% describe them as friendly towards foreign residents (vs. 65% globally).

Expats also love the healthcare in Thailand — the country narrowly misses out on a top 10 spot in the Health & Well-Being Subcategory (11th). More than three-quarters of expats (77%) state that they have access to all the kinds of healthcare services that they need (vs. 67% globally). Most also say that medical care is easily available (84% vs. 73% globally) and of good quality (85% vs. 72% globally).

On the other hand, the Environment & Climate Subcategory (44th) is a major concern for expats in Thailand. Two in five expats (40%) believe that the government does not support policies to protect the environment, more than double the global average (18%). “People are not aware enough about pollution, and it is sad to see nature spoiled by rubbish,” a French expat reports.

The Safety & Security Subcategory (47th) also receives mixed results. In general, 85% of expats feel personally safe in Thailand (vs. 81% globally). But 37% are unhappy with the country’s political stability (vs. 15% globally), and 44% think that they cannot openly express themselves and their opinions (vs. 18% globally).

Thailand performs worst in the Working Abroad Index (45th). Expats vote the country into the bottom 10 of the Work Culture & Satisfaction Subcategory (48th). According to them, the local business culture does not encourage creativity (41% vs. 26% globally), nor does it promote independent work (45% vs. 28% globally). Expats are also especially disappointed when it comes to Career Prospects (45th). Nearly two in five (38%) are unhappy with the local job market (vs. 27% globally), and only 41% say that moving to Thailand has improved their career prospects (vs. 60% globally).

Expats also rank Thailand among the bottom 10 for Salary & Job Security (46th). More than three in ten (31%) are unhappy with the state of the local economy, compared to only 17% globally. Additionally, one in four expats (25%) is unsatisfied with their job security (vs. 20% globally). However, 35% of expats do not have to worry about this, as they are already retired, compared to the global average of 10% retirees. In fact, 19% of expats in Thailand moved there specifically to retire, compared to only 3% globally.





Singapore for a modern, digital life

Singapore performs best in the Expat Essentials Index (3rd), only beaten by Bahrain (1st) and the UAE (2nd). Expats vote Singapore fifth in the Admin Topics Subcategory, and 63% find it easy to deal with the local bureaucracy/authorities, compared to 40% globally. A French expat says that “the efficiency of the administration” is one of the things he likes most about life in Singapore. According to more than four in five expats (81%), it is also easy to open a local bank account (vs. 64% globally).

Digital Life (4th) is another highlight for expats. The vast majority (91%) is happy with the availability of administrative services online (vs. 61% globally). An Indonesian expat enjoys the “fast, organized online services for many administrative purposes”. The country ranks first overall for access to high-speed internet at home, as well as fourth for paying without cash.

In the Quality of Life Index (10th), Singapore performs best in the Travel & Transit Subcategory, where it ranks first overall. Expats say there is a great infrastructure for cars (2nd) and that it is also easy to get around on foot or by bicycle (9th). Nearly all respondents (97%) are happy with the availability of public transportation, 24 percentage points more than the global average (73%).

Expats are also extremely satisfied with the healthcare system, but not with its costs, ranking Singapore 15th in the Health & Well-Being Subcategory. They are pleased with the availability of healthcare (88% happy vs. 73% globally), and 84% say that it is easy to access all the healthcare services that they need (vs. 67% globally). Additionally, over four in five (84%) are happy with the quality of medical care, twelve percentage points more than the global average (72%).

However, the country falls into the bottom 3 (50th) for affordability of healthcare: 39% find it unaffordable (vs. 21% globally). Only expats in the USA and Ireland are less satisfied with this factor.

Nearly all expats (99%) feel personally safe in Singapore (vs. 81% globally). Expats are also happy with the political stability (89% satisfied vs. 64% globally). An Indian expat explains that “there is a stable government in Singapore; it is a safe place”. However, only 40% feel that they can openly express themselves and their opinions, 24 percentage points below the global average (64%).

The Culture & Welcome Subcategory (27th) gets particularly mixed results: expats vote the country in the

bottom 10 for feeling welcome (44th), while they rank the ease of getting used to the local culture among the top 10 (8th).

Expats in Singapore are quite happy with their financial situation, ranking the country sixth for this factor. The majority (87%) feels that their disposable household income is enough or more than enough to lead a comfortable life (vs. 72% globally). Still, 56% rate the general cost of living poorly, compared to 35% globally. “It is expensive,” says a US American expat. “Without the right job you cannot live here”. In fact, salaries are very high in Singapore: close to three in five (57%) have a yearly income of 100,000 USD or more, compared to 21% globally.

Close to three-quarters of expats (74%) feel paid fairly for their work (vs. 62% globally), which is one of the reasons for Singapore’s good rank in the Working Abroad Index (18th). The city-state even makes it into the top 10 of the Career Prospects Subcategory (8th). Nearly four in five (78%) say that moving to Singapore has improved their career prospects, compared to 60% globally. About two in three (67%) are also satisfied with their personal career opportunities (vs. 58% globally).

This may be one reason why 77% say they are satisfied with their job in general, compared to 64% globally. “It is a great place for working,” says an expat from Malaysia. On the other hand, expats vote Singapore in the bottom 10 for seeing a purpose in their work (43rd).

Malaysia and Philippines

Malaysia and the Philippines are not among the selected countries for a detailed highlight by Internations. Their ranking is in the mid range of countries. When it comes to ease of settling in and friendliness, The Philippines scores much higher than Malaysia. When it comes to the working abroad index, neither of the two countries make it to the top ten. But when it comes to personal finances, local cost, etc., both make it to the top ten most affordable countries. The same goes for ease of finding accommodation.

The Nordics – any better?

So maybe you should move to the Nordic countries? Well these countries certainly have their downsides too!

Denmark performs best among the Nordic countries. Placing 30th out of 52, it ranks slightly ahead of Finland (32nd), Norway (34th), and Sweden (39th).

Despite its mediocre overall ranking, Denmark is number one in the Working Abroad Index, which is mainly due to the Work & Leisure (1st) and Work Culture & Satisfaction (2nd) Subcategories. The country’s great results for working abroad and the quality of life – in particular the work-life balance – are canceled out by the high living expenses and the difficulties with settling in.

Denmark also performs badly in the Language Subcategory (33rd). While 66% find it easy to live in

Denmark without speaking the local language (vs. 51% globally), expats find Danish very hard to learn (70% unhappy vs. 38% globally). In fact, close to one-quarter of expats (24%) do not speak Danish at all, compared to 10% of expats worldwide who do not speak the local language of their host country.

In the Ease of Settling In Index, Denmark does even worse. Ranking 47th out of 52, it ends up among the bottom 10. About one in four expats (23%) describe the local population as generally unfriendly (vs. 17% globally), and 28% perceive it as unfriendly towards foreign residents (vs. 18%).

Finland comes out as the perfect expat destination for nature lovers & introverts who enjoy a high level of digitization, and a great work-life balance, but expats face major issues with settling in.

Finland places seventh in the Quality of Life Index, performing best in the Environment & Climate (1st) and Safety & Security (3rd) Subcategories. Expats love the air quality (90% happy vs. 65% globally), the urban environment (90% happy vs. 67% globally), and the natural environment (100% happy vs. 83% globally). Moreover, Finland is praised for the availability of green goods and services, as well as government support for environmentally friendly policies (2nd for each).

It does great in the Digital Life Subcategory (2nd), only beaten by Estonia (1st). More than nine in ten expats enjoy high-speed internet access (93% vs. 79% globally), unrestricted access to online services (95% vs. 82% globally), and cashless payment options (93% vs. 84% globally). Another 86% are satisfied with the availability of government services online (vs. 61% globally).

In Finland, the local language is a bigger issue: 75% find learning Finnish difficult (vs. 38% globally), and 72% speak it just a little or not at all (vs. 35% globally). Luckily, 68% say that it is possible to live in Finland without speaking it, compared to 51% globally. It probably does not help that 21% perceive the population as unfriendly (vs. 17% globally).

"They take introversion to a whole new level. I met someone who has lived here for 40 years and she said it took her neighbor 14 years to talk to her regularly," a US expat comments.

Norway offers a great working life. In the Work & Leisure Subcategory, it even lands in second place, right between its fellow Nordic countries Denmark (1st) and Sweden (3rd). Expats in Norway benefit from an amazing work-life balance, with 77% judging it favorably (vs. 62% globally).

Expats also appreciate the fact that Norway's business culture supports flat hierarchies and independent work (71% happy vs. 45% globally) and that it promotes flexibility (78% happy vs. 60% globally). The most common sectors for expats working in Norway are IT as well as manufacturing and engineering (12% each).

Norway's biggest weakness by far is the Ease of Settling In Index, where it ends up among the three worst-rated countries worldwide (50th). Only Sweden (51st) and Kuwait (52nd) do even worse. In fact, for each single rating factor surveyed in this index, Norway ranks

among the bottom 10. Expats find it difficult to get used to the local culture (40% unhappy vs. 19% globally), and they do not feel welcome (29% unhappy vs. 16% globally). Over a third (34%) even describe the local population as generally unfriendly (vs. 17% globally), and they struggle with making local friends (61% unhappy vs. 37% globally).

Sweden performs best in the Working Abroad Index (8th), where it ranks third in the Salary & Job Security Subcategory, only behind Switzerland (1st) and Denmark (2nd). In fact, 89% of expats are satisfied with the state of the economy in Sweden (vs. 64% globally), and 73% rate their job security positively (vs. 59% globally).

In addition, expats vote Sweden third in the Work & Leisure Subcategory. They are not only pleased with their work-life balance (75% vs. 62% globally) but also with their working hours (77% vs. 63% globally). Interestingly, they only work slightly fewer hours per week than the average survey respondent (39.2 hours vs. 40.2 hours globally).

It ranks tenth for the affordability of healthcare (76% happy vs. 61% globally), but 24% of expats are unhappy with its availability (vs. 13% globally) because of long waiting lists.

Similar to the other Nordic countries, the problem in Sweden is the Ease of Settling In Index. Sweden scores 51st on the index, only ahead of Kuwait (52nd) the worst of all. Sweden is near the bottom in the Subcategory Local Friendliness (49th) and the expats rank the country second to last in the Finding Friends Subcategory (51st).

Iceland does not have its own country profile.

About the InterNations Expat Insider 2022 Survey

For its annual Expat Insider survey, InterNations asked 11,970 expats representing 177 nationalities and living in 181 countries or territories to provide information on various aspects of expat life, as well as their gender, age, and nationality. Participants were asked to rate up to 56 different aspects of life abroad on a scale of one to seven.

To be featured in the indices and consequently in the overall ranking, a sample size of at least 50 survey participants per destination was necessary.

About InterNations

With more than 4 million members in 420 cities around the world, InterNations is the largest global community and a source of information for people who live and work abroad. InterNations offers global and local networking and socializing, both online and face-to-face. At around 6,000 events and activities per month, expatriates have the opportunity to meet other global minds. Online services include discussion forums and helpful articles with personal expat experiences, tips, and information about life abroad. Membership is by approval only to ensure we remain a community of trust. InterNations is part of the New Work SE, a group of brands that offer products and services for a better working life.



Bangkok lifestyle update: hotel picks in the metropolitan

As Bangkok's normally massive travel market gets going again, ScandAsia highlights the evolution of the scene via new, relatively new and a refurbished hotel – all connecting to downtown's Sukhumvit road, and also to its expanding CBD up north from Asoke, along the subway line.

Text and photos: Joakim Persson

Swissotel Bangkok Ratchada – at the heart of Bangkok's expanding downtown

Swissotel Bangkok Ratchada now finds itself nearby Bangkok's "mid-town" central business district (as the mega city's density keeps on growing).

The hotel is a draw for both business and leisure; including the luxurious Spa De Concorde designed as contemporary Thai, a large outdoor swimming pool and a large, state-of-the-art fitness centre with steam rooms.

Come evening and it looks majestic with its high-rising black pillars and soaring glass frontage, and at the

centre of a very impressive lobby: a high-vaulting ceiling in the centre stretching up to the meeting floors, featuring a stately chandelier and a European-style ceiling mural.

It is all a timeless grandeur that this lobby exploits to the fullest.

Refurbished Deli Swiss serves lunch, and right after that follows the highlight for those who love to sup on scones and sip artisan teas: Afternoon tea. This laidback and stylish cafe also offers fabulous pastries and mouth-watering cakes such as Strawberry yoghurt cheese cake, Chocolate cupcake, Bundner nut cake (Swiss pastry), Carrot cake and Swiss chocolate muffin. It also serves a selection of wines! With ample seating Deli Swiss is something of a best-kept secret in Bangkok when it comes to finding top-notch bakery and cakes combined with coffee and tea.

The Deluxe King Club room is spacious, with blonde wood and accented by bright yellow bed lamps, and a velvet lounge chair. There is also a dark timber regal work desk with armchair. The bathroom is decked out in discerning, sandy wavy-veined marble.

204 BAR provides the perfect spot for a discreet tittle, as well as the ideal setting for a post-dinner drink from the bar's mixology expert.

Swiss Executive Club Lounge access entitles guests to evening cocktails. Sparkling wine to start with, together with plates of antipasti, including also bruschetta with mozzarella and cherry tomato, chorizo, cheese, ham, grapes, biscuits, olives and also some Thai canapés. Also a nice Chardonnay wine is served as well as mocktails and cocktails with playful titles.

At breakfast there are even more Swiss surprises, including a vegetarian dish as well as Swiss Rösti (a traditional dish of fried grated potatoes). It is all to satisfaction, just as the overall experience is at this five-star Bangkok hotel!

Young vibe inspiration at Mercure Bangkok Sukhumvit 24 hotel

Mercure Bangkok Sukhumvit 24 is a commendable choice for its fabulous location, its design with colourful and comfy rooms, and also its amenities, combined.

Exercising in the gym, swimming laps in the pool, or working on the lap top al fresco – all on the rooftop level – are part of what is on offer. The rooftop also offers its evening bar, with an extensive drinks list paired with food, while the ground floor comes with the all-day 'Deli And Bar' and also a co-working space!

This Mercure has been designed with a nod to a young and fresh aesthetic where its concept with modern décor is inspired by the fashionable EM District, situated just steps from the hotel, along with a skytrain BTS station.

Besides the lobby there is a deli with bar and bar stools to the left, offering alcoholic drinks, coffee, tea and other beverages, along with fresh bakery and sandwiches. There is also a lobby lounge which includes designer furniture – all bringing further sophistication to the interior. A bright and warm-coloured co-working space, adds to this hotel's attraction - open for all guests and drop-in use.

The rooms are lively with splashes of purple, dark wine red, mustard yellow, grey blue and peach.

The Vue Bar Rooftop Restaurant basically doubles as pool bar and rooftop venue, integrated with a lap pool. At night this setting transforms into a low-lit, vibrant spot, with arresting views over the Bangkok skyline. A free flow unlimited drinks package, including hose wine is on offer. Some daring cocktails are on the menu, all with elements of tropical Thailand in the ingredients.

The bar menu includes temptations such as: Beef & cheese quesadillas (with spicy dip and sour cream), Chorizo & cheese potato croquettes (with tomato-paprika





sauce), New Zealand mussels (roasted with smoky bacon & garlic crumbs), Pizza boat with salami and Cold cut & cheese platter (salami, chorizo, brie and emmental cheese, olives, pickles, cantaloupe and bread).

The Market Restaurant – with its a homey feel – is where to head for the breakfast buffet; an outlet with ample space for guests to spread out and dig in to the various food stations. There is also a variety of seating in several sections with partition walls.

The breakfast offers a decent selection of western and Asian dishes, basically cooked à la minute, and varying from day to day. There are also Danish pastries, European cheese, bread pudding with vanilla sauce, fruit salad, French toast etc.

Boutique Deluxe at 137 Pillars Suites & Residences

This high-rise luxury residences and boutique hotel is also in close proximity of Bangkok's lifestyle attractions and business centres. Its 34 suites very much give this splendid hotel its 'boutique' feeling and exclusiveness. The hotel's in-house blue 'Louie the London Cab' transports guests to and from the nearby Emquartier in style.

With personalization and the intimacy of a boutique hotel 137 Pillars Suites & Residences offers every guest VIP service. Suite guests enjoy butler service, and exclusive access to the hotel's garden rooftop with its 360-degree infinity pool, skybar and cabanas (where one can also enjoy cocktails, fresh juices, light refreshments and culinary delights from the Sky Bar menu). They are also privileged with a lounge; 'Leonowens Club' on level 26, serving complimentary a-la-carte afternoon tea and canapés and sunset drinks.

Then there is the 'Pool Bar' with its cantilever plateau, including a round glass whole in its floor where one can look down (if not afraid of heights) and also an infinity-edged pool and large Jacuzzi.

The hotel has a nice coherence of the appearance and colour scheme throughout.

The generous suites range from 70 – 127 sqm, featuring in-room private wine cellars and Maxi bar (with spirits), en-suite marble bathrooms with circular free-standing 137 Pillars bathtubs, built-in TV and state of the art Bose sound system, and also spacious balconies.

The bespoke interiors have characteristic white-grey Zig Zag carpets, stepped ceilings, stylish wallpaper, black-veined marble, combined with designer furniture and indulgent bedding.

The welcome set includes surprises like boxed coconut biscuits, and butterfly pea juice, along with 137 pillars-branded artisanal loose-leaf teas. The in-room Maxi Bar offers a chilled bottle of Piper-Heidsieck Champagne or Marbera del Monterrato red wine to uncork.

Breakfast is enjoyed in the majestic Nimitr Restaurant. Its interior is quite amazing with the floor-to-ceiling windows, and with custom designed ceiling metal rod lamps, lantern-like lamps hanging in chains, and drapery. The table set is discerning, where the plates, water glasses and table cloths are all in a blue hue, as is also a mosaic wall. Bespoke latticework screens cover the windows.

Jack Baines bar brings us back to the British teak-trading days in old Siam its exclusive interior includes round golden tables, leather high-back armchairs and brown wood wall panels with pictures in brass frames. And the Bangkok Trading Post Bistro & Deli on the ground floor has a truly unique design with a touch of 'vintage cool'.

This Bistro & Deli is focused on serving high quality Western and Asian Eclectic Comfort Cuisine. Here one can enjoy fresh brew and newly baked pastries from sunrise to late supper. Also micro brewery beer on tap is available.

The 'Wine Down' promotion was offered in two of the eateries; a Free Flow wine package, handpicked daily by the sommelier and served during two hours. Here at the deli and then also at Level 27's open air Pool Bar. To be served sparkling wine here is to truly wind down...



Hyatt Regency Bangkok's residential luxury vibe

The 273 suite-room Hyatt Regency Bangkok belongs to the new breed of the metropolitan's hotel selection, ranking in the more exclusive portfolio, while feeling less formal and more laidback in style.

Both modern business travellers and in-the-know shoppers will find this to be an undeniably great base for any work or exploring the city. A lush mini park, with water feature, faces the street.

Inside, guests are greeted with a perfect blend of cultural heritage and modern vibe. The hotel designers have come up with something natural and with interesting interpretations of Thai art and culture: homey, understated and warming. There are some truly intriguing design items. The lobby's reception desk, for instance, was inspired by the Buddha. The Lobby Lounge social space offer light meals, snacks and beverages.

The hotel has also not gone unnoticed for its 'Spectrum Lounge & Bar' - a perfect sundowners' cocktail setting, as well as a late-night party venue. This features a large and spectacular open-air go-to-venue venue, featuring an elevated Disc Jockey booth, and cabanas with trees etc. The amazing interior features an open kitchen, with a marble clad interior. This rooftop attraction provides an ideal vantage point for watching the pulse of the city. There is sometimes also a 2 hours free flow package with sparkling, white and red wine, plus local beer.

Among the tempting food bites and meals are: Italian cold cuts selection; Snow crab salad; Grilled tiger prawn with garlic butter, citrus salad; or Grilled king Tasmania salmon.

Living room style Market Café is the spot for a sumptuous breakfast. Organic eggs are prepared to your liking, roast tomato, smoked salmon, wellbeing bowl, toasted open croissant with your choice of topping, freshly pressed juices including an awesome passion fruit juice etc.

Open for dining only the white-tablecloth Mar-

ket Café by Khao (a partnership with Michelin-starred, award-winning and iconic 'Khao restaurants') showcases modern Thai fine dining.

Its interior is dominated by marble combined with wood (lattice partitions and bookshelves) as well as rose gold mirror panels and framed antique glass windows.

The outdoor lap pool comes with blue mosaic tiles, enclosed by lots of lush greenery including plants and trees. There are cushy padded daybeds and grey sofa beds seating two people. The big gym comes with the very latest cardio equipment from Life Fitness.

Guests with access to the Regency Club can enjoy pre-dinner canapés and cocktails, incl. several choices of hot dishes cooked à la minute.

This handsome space is done up in shades of light brown and rose-gold – here with copper panels dominating on partition walls, and combined with wood floors and ceiling. And lots of the copper-glass lamp tubes are mounted on walls and in the ceiling. The club also serves breakfast as well as snacks and refreshments throughout the day.

The 'Club Deluxe' room comes with a beautiful veneer wood panel for built-in furniture. The design is awash in earth tones: beige, light brown, grey, and black, featuring a beautiful beige carpet with floral petals motif and brown black-out curtains.

The sandy-hued, copiously marbled bathroom has been finessed with a freestanding bath with a view through floor-to-ceiling windows, a vanity including a large mirror; plus a separate glass-enclosed rain shower.

The nod to local heritage is found also here: a traditional Thai textile pattern, whose depicted flowers turn out to be inspired by one of the Thai queen's traditional dresses.

To top it off a fabulous mattress with feather-soft pillows and duvet ensures a good night's sleep.



Denmark and China both increasing forest areas

China and Denmark have both been named in a sustainability report as countries that now have more trees than they did in the year 2000. In a report by the World Resource Institute, 36 countries were named that had increased areas covered by trees than they had lost!

“We know that deforestation is an ongoing, devastating problem — satellite data has been tracking it closely for years. But another question has remained more elusive: How much new forest is growing? Thanks to new data from researchers at the University of Maryland and WRI, we now have an answer: Tree cover — lots of it — is cropping up all over the globe,” the report said.

All told, 130.9 million hectares of land gained tree cover globally between 2000 and 2020, according to the study. Put together, that’s an area larger than Peru.

A further news report by Fast Company stated some shocking facts, such as that the world has lost forests covering more than 100 million hectares, an area said to be two and a half times larger than California.

Even though tree gain is occurring in many places, it doesn’t negate the impacts of loss — especially in primary forests. Old trees store carbon differently than new ones. Animals and plants that make forests their homes need established, connected, old-growth forests in which to thrive.

Russia, Canada and the United States comprise more than half of the world’s tree gain by area, at 68 million hectares collectively. However, all three countries also lost more tree cover than they gained, experiencing overall net losses from 2000-2020.

In spite of this, 36 countries did indeed show that they had more trees growing by 2020 than they had in the year 2000, and China and Denmark were in this group.

The new dataset is groundbreaking. It shows both tree loss and gain together, as opposed to loss alone. When gain and loss are combined, you have the full picture of forest change dynamics and can calculate net changes in the total area of trees.

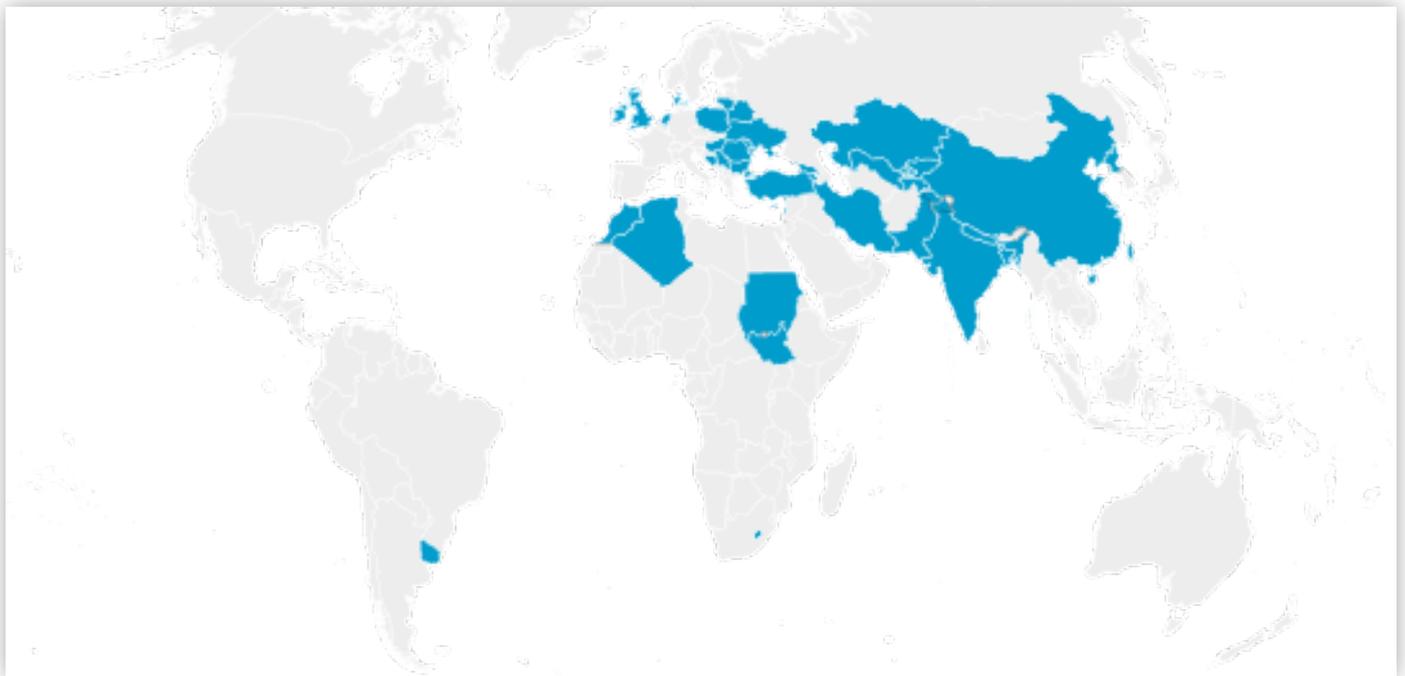
It also shows net changes in tree area along with tree height allows us to estimate the resulting emissions and absorption of greenhouse gases from the atmosphere with greater precision.

The new data is a major leap forward, but it comes with a few important shortcomings. It can take 10 to 15 years or more for some trees to reach the 5 meters in height needed for detection using this satellite technology. This means that the tree-based interventions initiated through AFR100, a massive restoration effort led by African governments since 2015, have likely not yet shown up on the map. And that’s just one of several major restoration initiatives that began in recent years.

“

We know that the world is still losing more tree cover than it's gaining. But now that we can measure gain and loss together, we have a much more accurate picture of global forest change dynamics

”



Another shortcoming is that, for now, the data only shows tree cover change between two points in time: 2000 and 2020. However, data from the University of Maryland and WRI will soon fill those gaps, looking at annual change to detect the nuance in forest dynamics. This will help governments and restoration implementers set more relevant baselines for tracking restoration commitments and assessing patterns over time.

“We’re only scratching the surface on what satellite data can show us about the state of the world’s forests,” says WRI - World Resources Institute.

“We know that the world is still losing more tree cover than it’s gaining. But now that we can measure gain and loss together, we have a much more accurate picture of global forest change dynamics, which will enable us to monitor progress toward critical climate change mitigation, ecosystem protection, and forest restoration goals.”

Norway urged to focus on West Philippine Sea as energy hub

The West Philippine Sea is part of the long-term plans to develop the area as the country's energy hub, said Makati City Rep. Luis Campos Jr. in a statement recently.

Campos was responding to Norwegian ambassador Bjorn Jahnson's pledge that Norway would help develop the Philippines' wind and other renewable energy resources during a briefing following his meeting with Marcos Jr.

"Norway has the new technologies needed to put up offshore bottom-fixed or floating wind turbines. The Philippines would benefit from the eventual transfer of these technologies," Campos said.

The Malampaya deepwater gas-to-power project in the West Philippine Sea currently supplies 20 percent of the country's demand for electricity.



He said the advantage of offshore wind farms is that they can be built faster because they do not have land use and right-of-way issues.

"We have no problem with allowing foreign companies that are majority owned by Norwegian entities to develop our offshore wind energy resources," Campos said.

He said the development of wind power would help supply the country's rapidly growing demand

for electricity and create badly-needed new jobs in the process.

"We have to transition faster to renewable energy such as wind, solar and hydro if we want to insulate the country from future global oil price shocks," he added.

Campos said the Philippines currently generates only 443 megawatts (MW) of electricity from wind farms that are all onshore.

Sino-Nordic research and seed funding



In its efforts to support the development of strong, strategic platforms for research and innovation, a partnership was formed between Nordic and Chinese universities

where the Nordic Centre launched planning grants which can be applied for with the deadline being 1 October 2022.

This Seed Funding for Sino-

Nordic Research Collaboration is to give researchers from the Nordic Centre member institutions better opportunities to prepare for larger joint research projects. The grant is a lump-sum of 10 000 EUR per project.

Projects should be within one of the Nordic Centre's four interdisciplinary thematic focus areas:

- Sino-Nordic perspectives
- Sustainable development
- Digitalization and technology
- Health and welfare

For more information please visit the Nordic Center website here: <http://www.nordiccentre.net/research#/seed-funding>



Finland latest Scandinavian country to close Confucius Institute

Finland is the latest Scandinavian country to close a CCP-funded Confucius Institute in Helsinki, said a news report in mid-June.

In Helsinki, Finland, the China-funded Confucius Institute has closed down while Sweden and Denmark have also closed their Confucius Institutes.

“We want to choose our own teachers and employ them ourselves,” is the general consensus.

Beijing would have liked to continue funding the programme, according to the university’s vice rector, Hanna Snellman.

“They asked if we would consider negotiating a continuation. We said we wouldn’t,” she explained.

The institute’s deal with the University of Helsinki lapses next January.

Finland is not alone in its decision to leave the Confucius network. In recent years dozens of western universities have shuttered Confucius Institutes on suspicions that they are an arm of the Chinese gov-

ernment’s propaganda machinery.

Sweden and Denmark have also closed their Confucius Institutes.

“We want to choose our own teachers and employ them ourselves. We also want Chinese language instruction to be research-based,” Snellman said.

The Chinese embassy in Finland contacted the university regarding the closure.

“They would have wanted the institute to continue,” she said.

In practice, closing the Confucius Institute means Helsinki University must now provide its own Chinese-language courses. Snellman told Yle the university had already hired two teachers for the job.

“We want to strengthen Chinese language skills as there’s a bigger need than ever before,” she explained.

Specialised in Chinese language and culture, Confucius Institutes have been criticised as a part of Beijing’s soft power push. These centres have

cropped up on some 500 university campuses across the globe.

Staff appointed by the Chinese government have been suspected of disseminating Chinese state propaganda, attempting to shape western perceptions about China.

Two years ago a report by Yle investigative show Spotlight found that Helsinki’s Confucius Institute tried to limit public discussion of topics sensitive to China’s ruling Communist Party, such as Tibet.

Helsinki’s Confucius Institute was established in 2007. The agreement called for Helsinki University selecting and paying the salary of the institute’s director, whereas the Chinese government would appoint and cover the costs of a deputy director as well as three language teachers.

Information obtained by Yle indicates that Helsinki University found the role of the deputy director to be “unacademic” while ties to the Chinese embassy were perceived as being too close.

Discipline in Malaysian schools cannot be the same as in Finland



The first minister of the Malaysian state, Kedah, said in a news report recently that Malaysia cannot follow the same code of discipline as in countries like Finland.

Muhammad Sanusi Md Nor, the Menteri Besar of Kedah, said the guidelines on punishment of students as practiced in the Western education system are not suitable to be adopted in Malaysian schools.

According to NST, Sanusi (pix) said removing the teachers' power to mete out disciplinary punishments does not help the country in churning out an educated future generation.

He said that while the no punishment guidelines may be suitable for western countries such as the United States of America and Finland, this will not work the same in Malaysia.

"I think if students can't be fined, can't be caned, can't be reprimanded and we can't scold them, we are just inviting danger into the education system."

"Maybe there are great experts who say that we can't do this and we have to do that, but in my opinion, we will be reduced to just breeding 'ayam daging' (broiler chickens) in schools."

"I don't know how the education minister will respond. It is up to him, but I am of the opinion that we shouldn't be breeding 'ayam daging' in schools. We need to produce educated people in schools," he was quoted as saying.

However, Sanusi stressed that teachers should comply with existing guidelines in meting out punishments to educate students and refrain from going overboard.

Source: The Sun Daily



Thai Festival at Moesgaard Museum



festival held at Moesgaard Museum. The event is organized in collaboration between the Royal Thai Embassy and the SAWASDEE Thai Danish Association and the Moesgaard Museum. The collaboration has a long history, which has meant, among other things, that the museum has an extensive collection from Thailand.

The roughly 170 year old Thai House in the park around the museum was moved from Thailand to Denmark in 1975 in connection with a major special exhibition organized at Moesgaard Museum about Thailand. The Thai house is, as far as is known, the only traditional Thai house outside of Thailand.

Thai Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn visited the house in 2002 and in 2010 it was visited by Princess Soamsawali. The house has been renovated several times, most recently in 2017 at the initiative of Thai former senator Pensak Howitz, the widow after Danish ambassador Frantz Howitz.

A Thai Festival took place this year on 21 August 2022 centered around the Thai House at the Moesgaard Museum near Aarhus in Denmark.

Thailand's Ambassador to Denmark, Sirilak Niyom opened the festival. She talked among others about the friendship between Thailand and Denmark which has been built over

400 years. There was a festive market atmosphere around the red Thai House with many booths offering delicious Thai food, Thai massage, Thai handicraft and souvenirs as well as various shows throughout the days, among others traditional and contemporary Thai music and dance.

The festival was the fourth Thai



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