

Issue #9

# One Create



Wellness & Lifestyle.  
Legacy &  
Tourism Edition

A Life Inspired.



**Simon  
WOODROFFE OBE**

Featured Interviews  
Now with Audio





## **Her Majesty Queen Sirikit The Queen Mother 1932 – 2025**

Thailand and the world have lost a truly remarkable woman. Her Majesty Queen Sirikit The Queen Mother passed away on 24 October 2025 at the age of 93, marking the end of an era defined by grace, vision, and unwavering dedication to her nation.

Born in Bangkok, she attended schools during wartime before moving with her diplomat father to France where he served as ambassador. At 16, she met Thailand's newly crowned king in Paris, where she was studying music and languages. The pair married in 1950, beginning a partnership that would span seven decades and transform Thailand's cultural identity.

Her Majesty's 1960 state visit to the United States and fifteen European nations became a landmark moment in cultural diplomacy. Collaborating with French couturier Pierre Balmain, she transformed Thai silk from a traditional fabric into a statement of modern elegance. The French press dubbed her "the most beautiful queen in the world", whilst she was inducted into the International Best Dressed List as one of the world's twelve most stylish women.

In 1976, Her Majesty founded the SUPPORT Foundation, which empowered rural communities by revitalising traditional crafts, particularly silk weaving, providing sustainable livelihoods for countless artisans. Her vision extended far beyond fashion to encompass environmental conservation, women's welfare, and the preservation of Thailand's cultural heritage.

As consort to the monarch who became the world's longest-reigning head of state, she held the distinction of being the world's longest-serving queen consort. Her legacy lives on in every thread of Thai silk, in the communities she uplifted, and in the hearts of all who admired her grace and dedication.

Rest in peace, Your Majesty.

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One Create Magazine is published by

One Create Agency Ltd.,

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Wellness & Lifestyle

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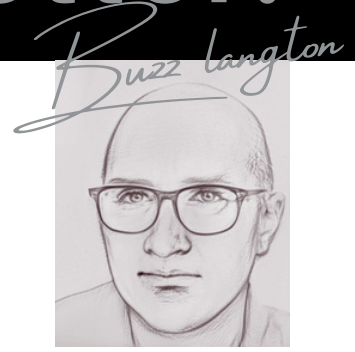
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## **Book Shelf**

Team Picks and Book Review

# Editor-in-Chief's Letter.



Welcome to Issue number 9 of One Create Magazine!

It's all systems go at One Create HQ. Our mothership One Create Agency continues forging brilliant partnerships that strengthen relationships and brand awareness across Thailand and APAC. Come January, we'll celebrate our second birthday properly with a spectacular Q1 2026 issue.

This Q4 edition carries particular significance. We open with a heartfelt tribute to Her Majesty Queen Sirikit The Queen Mother, whose passing on 24 October 2025 at age 93 marked the end of an extraordinary era defined by grace, vision, and unwavering dedication to Thailand. Her legacy touches every corner of this kingdom we call home.

We've assembled genuinely fascinating conversations for you. Simon Woodroffe OBE, founder of YO! Sushi and YOTEL, shares his insights on business, life, and what it means to stay "on it" after decades of innovation. His perspective proves refreshingly candid and wonderfully inspiring. Dr Andy Schillinger takes us from Bundesliga pitches to Bangkok's wellness scene, revealing how elite sports medicine principles apply to everyday health. Dr Suwanna Suwanaphong updates us on longevity medicine's evolution from supplements to sophisticated procedures. Stefan Bruns introduces Thailand's first luxury sleeper train experience, proving slow travel delivers profound rewards.

Dave McCaughan explores what happens when we reach our fifties and sixties- spoiler: it's about building new lives, not winding down. Martin Blunos reflects candidly on hospitality's challenging year whilst offering blessings from Bhutan. We reveal Bangkok's most extraordinary tailoring dynasty, hidden behind military gates for over six decades.

This issue celebrates those who challenge convention, champion authenticity, and demonstrate that excellence requires both vision and relentless dedication. From Karen villages maintaining traditional ways to Swiss precision applied to Thai cultural tourism, these stories remind us that genuine quality transcends trends.

We hope you enjoy this issue.

BL

# Featured Interview.



Audio



# YO! MAN

## Simon Woodroffe OBE

Hold on! Here comes the unstoppable Yo-prenuer

*Interview by Buzz Langton*

*The YO! Sushi founder and original Dragons' Den dragon discusses his unconventional path from roadie to restaurant royalty, and why at 73, he's still dreaming up flying airships, floating islands and broadcast production ideas*

Simon Woodroffe OBE built one of Britain's most recognisable hospitality brands from a simple observation: eating could be entertainment. Speaking from his base in Chiang Mai to me in Bangkok's True Digital Park, the 73-year-old entrepreneur discusses his latest ventures, his business philosophy, and why Thailand has become his main operational headquarters.

Woodroffe's route to business success defied conventional wisdom. After leaving Marlborough College at 16 with two O-levels, he spent three decades in entertainment production, designing stages for Rod Stewart and Motörhead and many more big rock names, before launching YO! Sushi at 45.

The company's theatrical approach to dining revolutionised Britain's restaurant sector and established the template for experience-driven hospitality.

"The reason I spend so much time out here in Asia is because my formative years were spent in Singapore," Woodroffe explains. "About ten years ago, I was in Bali, up in the rice fields in Ubud, and I walked out there and there were people in the fields with their bamboo hats (caping) on, the smells, the feeling. It was the smell and feeling of my childhood. A proper déjà vu moment. As a result of that, I think I'm here talking to you today from Thailand."

Thailand's strategic advantages extend beyond personal nostalgia. "Thailand is unique in the world. For historical reasons, the country's never been invaded, and we live in a country here that works and is pretty kind. Even the people who run the military seem to be decent people. I've lived all over the world, South America, spent a long time sailing across the Pacific and all the islands there, North America, and Europe, and this is a very unique place to live."

The Buddhist influence on business culture particularly appeals to Woodroffe, who argues that modern entrepreneurs increasingly embrace mindfulness practices. "My friend Luke Johnson, who started Pizza Express, wrote a book and always said entrepreneurs aren't spiritual, don't meditate. And I said, 'You're wrong, Luke. The new generation absolutely do, actually using it as a way to reduce stress, to deal with the pressures of life in this complicated world.'"

Woodroffe's early departure from formal education proved strategically advantageous. "I never had the imagination educated out of me. Kids today are forced by parents and teachers to believe that without qualifications, life will go terribly wrong.

I was thrown into the world and had to use imagination. I didn't have the fear. I thought if you had an idea and you did it, it would probably work out."

His counsel to aspiring entrepreneurs remains characteristically direct: "If you're going to be a brain surgeon or airline pilot, please go to university and get properly trained.

But if you want to be an entrepreneur, don't go to university because you're going to learn from the School of Hard Knocks. When they (peers) come out of university, you're going to be three years ahead of them."

The psychological drivers behind entrepreneurship fascinate Woodroffe. "I came out of childhood feeling pretty chippy, probably a bit resentful and angry. And they're useful things. It took me a long time to learn to be comfortable with myself, and it was that discomfort that drove me to want to prove myself to the world. If there's anybody listening who feels that way, it's quite a useful thing to have. Why would you give up a comfortable life for sleepless nights and put all your money on the line? There's got to be what I call a bit of grit in the oyster that drives you."

His entry into the music business began at the ground level. "I went into the rock and roll business as a roadie early on. I used to put the lights up in the early rock shows: the Jeff Beck Group, the Moody Blues, all these early rock bands.

I used to see those big shows all around the world and think these ought to be big spectacles, like Busby Berkeley did for the movies in the 1930s."

The resistance from artists was immediate. "I'd tell the bands this when I got my chance, and they'd go, 'No, man, this is rock and roll. Never the twain shall meet, showbiz, never the twain should meet.' Of course, after a while they said, 'You know, I could appear out of a trap in the stage.' And that is how I became a stage designer."

The Rod Stewart commission represented his first major breakthrough. "I'd started a small lighting company with Ricky Farr, who put on the first Isle of Wight Festival. Rod said he wanted a big wide stage, one of the early spectacle rock shows. Because I'd been in theatre, I knew how to do it. I'd learned to draw to scale when I was a small kid because I used to draw boats. I got my scale rule and drew up this drawing, presented it to him. I remember him saying, 'If it travels, it's exactly what I want.' I remember going to a dinner afterwards and somebody asked what I did. I said, 'I'm a stage designer,' and in that moment, I'd become that person because I'd said yes and stepped up and done it."

His subsequent television career brought exposure to major international productions. "I got with a guy in Los Angeles, Kevin Wool, who was acquiring the rights to films of jazz shows and selling them to television.

We got Billy Joel Live in Russia, and Elton John, the Sydney Philharmonic Orchestra, big shows and then Nelson Mandela shows post Live Aid."

This willingness to commit before complete preparation became a recurring theme. "It must have been a form of self-delusion. Looking back at what I did, I think I had a lot of bottle to do that."

Woodroffe's media consumption habits contributed to his innovative thinking. "I never really had a TV and didn't go to many movies. I wasn't indoctrinated by advertising in its widest form because I was always busy doing something. So I was slightly outside the mainstream, and I could see things. I think I can see into the future and imagine what's going to happen."

The transition from entertainment to hospitality combined his creative background with strategic business knowledge.

"When I opened YO! Sushi eventually, I had the creativity to do something that was a breed of show business, but also the business knowledge to get Sony and airlines as sponsors. If you can marry those two things, you have a business head. Business is very simple: don't run out of money, basically. Count the beans. It's simple to understand, difficult to do well."

Woodroffe's management philosophy evolved significantly as his businesses scaled. "In the early days of any business, megalomaniacal control is absolutely the right thing to do. You don't want to do things by committees. Search all the parks in the world, you won't find a statue to a committee. But once something is up and running, you need a more systematised approach."

The delegation challenge became acute with YO! Sushi's growth. "I had Robert Rowlands, who'd been an operations director at Whitbread. He was very process-driven and said, 'I could never have done what you did, starting YO! Sushi and getting all that publicity. But you can't do what I can do, which is build a team and do things one step at a time.' As entrepreneurs, we need lieutenants who can put the Lego pieces in place."

The critical transition occurred during a direct conversation with his operations director. "Robin said, 'You're an inspiration to work with, but you change your mind all the time.' I was running it, so the money was rolling in but rolling right back out again with a new idea every day. He said, 'You need to systematise more.'

So I said, 'If you think you could do it better, get on with it.' He said, 'You'll never let go, you're megalomaniacally controlling.' And I shut the door and let go.

In the first few months it wobbled, then they got it running, and it allowed me to get on and do the next thing."

The delegation lesson proved transformative. "The word I always use is to let other people do things their way, not your way."

Woodroffe has distilled his business philosophy into three operational principles. "Don't try and change anybody ever. Everything works out, always. And don't take anything personally, ever. The reason I know these rules is that I did the opposite most of my life.

I always tried to control people and change them and worry about problems. You can't even remember what the problems were three weeks or three months ago, they've gone off into the ether."

The psychological discipline required for the third principle particularly challenges entrepreneurs.

"Don't take anything personally, ever. Very difficult to do, but quite an interesting game to play. Forgiving people doesn't mean you're saying they shouldn't have done something. It just means that inside you, you're forgiving them so you don't walk around with resentment.

That famous line: resentment is poison that you take, hoping the other person will die."

At 73, Woodroffe maintains an active development schedule. Current projects include a 250-bedroom YOTEL property at Bangkok's Cloud 11 development, and "Yo and No", a social media platform for business idea validation.

"It's a dozen new businesses we've been considering, everything from flying airships to floating islands to the marijuana business, and then ask people whether we should do them or not."

The "Yo" brand's linguistic versatility has proved strategically valuable. "Yo has been such a good name for us because it rhymes with everything.

In Spanish, it's the possessive word. In Japan, it's the greeting between men. The way our logo is designed, it actually reads almost exactly like Japanese in Hebrew script. People used to ask if the owner was Jewish." Woodroffe describes his current operational philosophy as strategic balance management.

"This part of my life is like being a mountaineer walking along an arête, a sharp ridge. On one side is stress and anxiety, on the other side is boredom. Trying to keep that balance is what I do.

I've retired from stress but not from ideas.

I still want to do things." Simon Woodroffe OBE continues to operate between Chiang Mai and the UK, developing new ventures across the YO! hospitality ecosystem.

His approach demonstrates how experienced entrepreneurs can maintain strategic relevance and business momentum through disciplined delegation, geographic positioning, and systematic innovation processes.

Simon Woodroffe OBE continues to operate between Chiang Mai and the UK, developing new ventures across the YO! hospitality ecosystem.

His approach demonstrates how experienced entrepreneurs can maintain strategic relevance and business momentum through disciplined delegation, geographic positioning, and systematic innovation processes.

For a business leader who has successfully navigated multiple industry transitions, from entertainment production to hospitality to technology platforms.

Woodroffe's combination of intuitive decision-making and operational systematisation offers valuable insights for modern entrepreneurship.



If you enjoyed this interview:

Visit [yo.co.uk](https://yo.co.uk) to find out more about Simon and read **The Book of YO!**

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# IT'S ALL ABOUT NEW LIFE BUILDING

By Dave McCaughan

Storyteller at BIBLIOSEXUAL



## So you get to your late 50s and what happens ?

The myth in popular media for decades has been “get ready to retire” which was usually code for “giving up”. Retire and go play golf or fish. Maybe make that “one big trip”. Or “take care of the grand kids”. All true for a few, way too general from what I could see. So I started asking more broadly and have ended up making a good part of my post 55 life helping others understand.

It was the question I started looking at thirty years ago. I arrived in Bangkok to lead a team trying to understand what matters to people across the region for the then largest advertising agency in the world, McCann, and set up a new type of research project where we would explore lives and hopes and fears to help get our clients on the right messaging to be relevant.

Initially in Thailand and five other SE Asia markets and India, and eventually globally we built a program where each week we would hold open ended discussions with groups of people from four life-stages. Those times in life we pretty much all share and have in common ... what we called :

**Identity Builders :** the teens and early 20s years when young people are just trying to figure life out.

**Career Builders :** that first decade or so of real adulthood, finding a job, finding what you want to do, finding partners.

**Family Builders :** that two decade stretch where building a home, having and caring for family are the priority.

**And then what ??**

I had been interested in misconceptions about aging, retirement, what people did after the “kids left home” for a long while. So we started adding discussions with people 55 to 75 years of age. And pretty soon we discovered what we called :

### **New Life Builders : that stage in life where you are starting again.**

The children have grown and yes maybe some stay at home, some are having children of their own, work is work or maybe if you are lucky you can think about retirement. But what was really interesting from those first interviews in the mid 1990s and that I find still true, is a desire to ask “what’s next”.

Not in a negative way. Not a fear of the future. But a desire to think about the next 2, 3 maybe 4 decades and “what am I going to do?”

### **Literally how am I going to build a new life ?**

And that comes down to a simple piece of math. Because people are not dumb. Ask people in Isan or Phuket or Thonglor ( or in my experience in Delhi or Darwin or Detroit ) that are in their 60s about the future and they are more than aware that they will likely have 20 plus years to go. **So what to do ?**

And this is a new thing. Starting in the 90s people everywhere started to read or just notice that other people were living longer. It was no longer “freaky” to live to be 80 or 90. Let me give you a person example.

When my father died at 74 people came to his wake ( he was Irish after all ) and said lovely things about how “old Freddy, boy he lived a full life”. And they told stories of how much he had done. And that was great. Well I am 69 as I write this and while never a great athlete I am super positive I am in much better shape than my dad was at my age. And more importantly to this conversation if I died at 74 people would not say “what a long life” they would say “oh he died so young”.

Because in the last few decades we have indeed come to expect to live longer. Life expectancy averages have jumped in most countries. In Thailand we have gone from life expectancy being somewhere in the late 60s to close to 80 in less than 3 decades. My favourite statistic is that if you are a Japanese woman turning 60 today your life expectancy is 96. Which means over half of those 60 year olds can expect to live much longer. And that sort of realization is true in most countries.

## **We expect to live longer, and maybe live healthier longer.**

So what is next becomes a valid question. What do we do? How do I build a new life after turning 60.

Some of it is turning back. We hear so often of people “reliving the old days” in some way.

In Japan in 2007 when the first of the Japanese baby boomer started retiring on mass the fastest growing sales of any product was electric guitars. Literally 60 year old men on mass were reforming their old college bands. And that made sense when you think of it because we all have that 18 year old us inside us.

A long time ago when I first started working in the advertising world I asked one of Australia’s most successful TV commercial makers what made a great ad.

His answer was a simple formula: find out exactly who the target audience was, when they were eighteen years old and what was the number one song, band of that year.

Then he would either play that music as the backing track, or something very similar.

Because as he said “no matter how old you are there was something that happened you around the time you were 18, 19, 20

that defined your life, maybe moving out of home, first love, first success, and there was music that accompanied that time in life and it never leaves you. We all have our 18 year old self inside.

That came to life for me in the 90s when I started doing that research in to New Life Builders and noticed something pretty special. I got paid to travel across Asia researching lives. And whether it was on the Bund in Shanghai or the waterfront parks in Singapore or in Sukhumvit Park here in Bangkok we saw that just after dawn on every day of the week there were groups of people in the 60-70s and older all dancing.

Maybe it was more formal lessons, or groups women learning traditional dances or just someone setting up a cassette player and friends and strangers gathering and dancing.

**And that was part of answering the question “what’s next?” because regardless of wealth they just wanted to dance.**

To feel good.

And yes to socialize.

Another key part of the New Life people were and are building to deal with their decades after 60 is to socialize.

If you have ever read about the famous Blue Zones you will understand. Made famous in a book published just after 2000 the original Blue Zones were five locations in the world where an exceptional number of people lived to be over 100 years old. The authors identified five key factors that seemed to contribute to much longer lives. Some like diet and physical activity seemed obvious. What was interesting was the importance of social activity and have a sense of purpose. Two things that aligned then and now with my own research.

Purpose has become a much over used word in the marketing world of late but what this meant for ageing populations was having hobbies, finding things you want to do over time. In Thailand we had noticed in our research with those 55-75 year olds even back in the 90s was a desire to think about and then act on “what am I going to do to fill the years”. Now of course for many healing take care of family is part of that. But it also meant finding or re-finding hobbies. Those early morning dancing in the park sessions. Or maybe learning something new. No surprise that since the 90s we have seen massive growth in older people returning to education in formal or semi-formal ways.

## **Or purpose has been found in exploring.**

The classic example in American media would be retirees going on long extended travel. And travel is, for those who can afford it, certainly common in Japan, Thailand and every where. And it does not have to be “BIG” travel.

Last year it was well reported that in Seoul many retirees were finding a cheap local way of finding purpose through travel.

That city has hundreds of metro stations. For older couples with limited funds who can not afford bigger travel plans it had become a habit to pick a day of the week, take their free transport pass and go explore and metro station and it’s surrounds they had never visited.

And I have to be honest living here in Bangkok my wife does that regularly as well. It adds a little “purpose” to weekly life, provides a little exploration and just makes us think about “whats next?”

The other big Blue Zones finding that New Life Builders really need to consider is socialization. Being with other people, finding friendships and conversation and doing things with others.

Again the dancing or tai chi sessions in the parks was and is a part of that. Getting together with other people around a common interest. And more importantly when the dancing stops just sitting around for a chat. We are after all social beings. But one of the big issues New Life Builders face is “who is next?”. Who will I talk to, who will I socialize with?

It’s an issue that businesses and governments really have not come to grips with. Here we have generations of people hitting the decades after 60 wanting to share a story, hear a story, make old friends, stay connected with new ones.

### **Oh and It’s not about technology.**

There is a strange misconception that “older people” can’t use personal technology. That unlike young people they can not adapt. WRONG! You don’t have to use sophisticated research to understand a typical Thai 60 something knows how to use a mobile phone.

Do you know any who don’t have one? The 60,70 even 80 year has been adapting to new tech their who lives. Sure you have to allow them to do it in their own way but the technology is not the issue.

The problem is too much tech and not enough touch. Because one of the things the 30 years of New Life Builders research has taught me is that people want to hear real voices, not just texts. They want to be able to see whole bodies, not just faces on a screen. They want to be able to touch, when appropriate, and breathe the same air and maybe just sit or walk together. To find new friends, keep old friends, rediscover friends.

Two of my closest friends from my teens live in different parts of Sydney, I live in Bangkok. For decades we were rarely in contact. But in recent years we started a monthly zoom call and when ever I am in Sydney there is a plan to meet at the same pub for lunch. Catching up on those missed decades, socializing, talking about “what’s next”.

Now how about governments, companies, brands, media helping getting people together and socialize. Old friends, or strangers making new friendships.

What about encouraging older Thais to do little explorations like those couple in Seoul but with new groups of potential friends. What about making sure those dancing groups in parks are not seen as cute, but encouraged to be normal.

So to be clear when we call people in that roughly 55 to 75+ life stage New Life Builders it is not all about big retirement, or expensive travelling, or having a pension to look forward to or live off.

It covers everyone going through a stage of life where things are different. Kids are grown up if you had any, maybe grand children will come, or maybe they wont. It is a time of thinking and acting in a way that makes for happier next two or three decades. It's about "what's next" and making it happen.



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# THE BLUNOS GASTRONOMIC GAZETTE

BY MARTIN BLUNOS

## BLESSINGS FROM BHUTAN

It's that time of year when we can all start using the c-word quite freely. I've been using it throughout the year anyway, but now's the time.

Yes, I'm talking Christmas, just around the corner for everyone, and whilst it's nice, hospitality this year has pretty much taken a spanking.

I think that's down to the economy, and this isn't just here in Thailand. It's been slow to reach Thailand, but my God it's here.

It's around the world and it all comes down to economies. There's less money and people are much more conscious of that.



They're spending wisely and I think the first thing that gets hit is going out to eat, wining and dining, staying in lovely hotels. It still happens but it's all been dumbed down.

Here in Thailand we've even lost Michelin restaurants, and the Michelin hasn't been here that long in the big scheme of things. To already start losing restaurants, closing down for one reason or another, whatever the media is told, there may be other reasons. I think it's pretty much down to operational costs. Wages have gone up, food has gone up, energy's gone up, rents have gone up. People are being squeezed, squeezed, squeezed. As an operator, you can't put that onto the customer. Some of it you can, but it comes to a point where it's just not feasible to charge twenty or thirty quid for a bowl of soup. Something has to give and you can cut back staff.

You cut staff, you cut quality, and that is the biggie.

People come out for a great experience and that's what we do. Restaurants and serving food isn't just about food. It's not just about taking on more fuel to operate. It's for an experience. That's from the meet and greet at the door to sitting down, to the atmosphere, the ambience, the staff around you, the way you're treated, the food, the whole experience at the end of it when you leave that place satisfied, mentally and gastronomically. If you're not getting that kind of experience, you're going to find it somewhere else. People are dumbing down. Even me myself, but I love it anyway. It's the street food thing that's holding its own. Yes, those operators have been hit with the cost of gas going up and the food, but they're small operators.

They can kind of ride the storm. I tell you what will happen, those that can ride the storm will be the ones that come out on top. They will be the survivors. When it all picks up again, and it will, these peaks and troughs we go through all happen. It's normally, I don't know, I was told it was like a seven-year cycle. Things get great, then they're super great, then it kind of hits the skids and starts going downhill. Going back to Michelin, we've lost Canvas and Villa Frantzén. Whatever they said, they're gone. Villa Frantzén mentioned something about coming back after a refurb, watch this space. Well, I think you're going to waste your time if you're watching that space, to be honest. These operators are still operating elsewhere, so there is a reason that they've closed up and it all comes down to revenue.

We are in the business of food and that word business is to make money. If that's not happening, what do you do? Do you keep ploughing your own money into it to survive or do you just shut up shop? That's what's happening. It's a sad state of affairs.

What gets me is we've had these amazing awards ceremonies. Just recently we've had Tatler, Asia's Best. It just seems like jobs for the boys, like the club. If you're a member, you're in. We have these events where we all pat each other on the back, great photo opportunities, but is it really supporting our industry? I don't think so. I feel quite confident in saying that because I've kind of been there, seen it and done it, got the t-shirt. It's so out of your comfort zone. I remember the first event when we achieved the second star.

I went to in the UK and you think what am I doing here? It's not my thing to put on a black tie and attend an event and stand up with applause ringing in your ears to get handed a gong. You look around and the people there are all in the same kind of boat. I think currently it's even more niche and more select. If you're in the club, you're in the club. That saying, it's not what you know but who you know, I think that applies even more nowadays for the awards kind of thing. That doesn't help the small man or even the big man. They're closing.

Will it get better? It will, but not straight away. We're coming up to Christmas now and every festival, every occasion, business picks up. Normally you make hay with Christmas and New Year's Eve and then it dies a death a bit.

It eases right off. That's where you make hay when you can and you get the cream in, because when it gets lean, you survive on those profits that you made on those busy periods. It will get very quiet I think again in January. People have to pay their credit card bills off. What goes out the window? Dining out, visiting, weekend breaks and hotels. That goes out the window because you've got to pay off your credit card because you've had a great time over the Christmas period. I think other places will disappear. What's the option now? You change your offering. I think the death of the tasting menu will become more evident. People will stop going to spend like four and a half thousand baht on a nine-course tasting menu, and we're talking four and a half thousand baht plus, plus.

*Martin Blunos hails from the beautiful South West of England. He's a renowned 2 Michelin Star restaurateur, Iron Chef and Master Chef, now based in Bangkok, Thailand*  
You can follow Martin Blunos on his Instagram account:  
[@martin\\_blunos-chef](https://www.instagram.com/martin_blunos-chef)

You've got your tax, you've got your service charge.

That's a lot of dosh to lash out for nine little plates of something that has been, hot food should come hot, not cold because it's been played around with and assembled on a plate.

That will die a death, the whole tasting menu thing, because people want much more control over their spending. They will go back to the à la carte restaurant. If I want to eat two starters and a dessert that's what I want.

I maybe don't want to sit through nine courses and be told how many bites to take and when to take it. Which is a good thing, I think. From an operator side of thing, from a kitchen side of thing, you'll see a lot more energy in the kitchen with an à la carte menu.

If people book up on your tasting menu and the whole restaurant runs on tasting menus, you've got ten people coming and they're all going to have the same thing. Those nine courses get delivered very, very smoothly because everybody knows what to do and how many they've got to do it for. Now, you get ten tables in a restaurant all ordering different things and you don't know what they're ordering, then you see the fireworks. It all kicks off. Maybe on a Friday all good Catholics eat fish, so the fish section in the restaurant kitchen is getting hammered and the guy who does the meats, he's having a nice easy Friday. Then Saturday night comes and it's the steak guy gets hit, the meat guy. It's fun to watch, sometimes it can be hell to be in, but you get through.

Whatever happens is you get through and you build your reputation on that. You can have a kitchen brigade full of energy and it's all kicking off and you hate the next guy to you because he's let you down, he hasn't delivered, he's short on this, he's run out of that, he's pinched your knife. You could be at each other's throats and then at the end of the night you'll go out and have a few beers and a curry and by two o'clock in the morning you're the best of buddies again. You are like a band of brothers.

It all kicks off in service and then when you're out in the big wide world and something else happens, you gather your forces and you look after each other.

That's the beauty of the industry really.

The good thing is everybody's got to eat.

Whatever happens there will be places we can eat, places we can dine. I'm currently in Bhutan on a bit of business, which is an amazing place.

Never been before, didn't know nothing about it, but it's a pretty cool place and the weather is chilly, just making it into double digits, which is nice. It's refreshing, a bit like home. I'm here with the World Peace Festival with 250 odd monks flying in throughout this week. It's the first of its kind in the world apparently and there's a bit of a vibe around the city.

Having visited a few monuments and the giant Buddha on the mountainside, it's quite a spiritual thing.

You think, well, of all the bad in the world and all the things you see in the news, here there is a lot of good still in the world.

This year's been pretty shit, to be honest, for everyone. Even the ones that say no, it's been good for us, we got through, they would have had to trim the cloth a little bit and adjust what they do to survive.

We'll lose a few more places before the year's end and new things will happen, new things will develop.

This industry will always be around in some form because we need hospitality, we need restaurants, we need food.

It will stick around in some form or another. In my time and your time, I think we'll be okay. We'll feel the pinch, but we'll be okay. A restaurant will still be a restaurant, a hotel will still be a hotel.

Another little gripe with Michelin, and this is only because I'm older and I've been there, seen it and done it. I got the stars not from social media and publicising and travelling the world and stuff. I got it by working behind the stove, cooking every day, didn't miss a service. That isn't the case nowadays. You don't necessarily need that if you know the right people and you're in the right crowd, in with the right influencers. What's an influencer for God's sake? Maybe without that technology I kind of got on with my life rather than beholden to technology. Maybe that's part of the reason the world's getting fucked up, because technology is taking the place of man in certain areas, this AI thing. The good thing is AI will never be able to make you a fucking scrambled egg or a bacon butty.

Here we're in a safe place I think, it's just this rough patch we're getting through.

We can use the c-word a lot now because, yes,

Christmas is around the corner.

We tend to forget the bad times and the bad periods because Christmas kind of wipes it all away, but my God, it'll come back with a bang.

January will maybe be a little bit more quiet.

Hospitality is a wonderful thing and it'll go on in some form. We need it. It's just a bit of a dip that we're in at the moment and the culinary map is changing a little bit.

There's a few faces in the limelight, whether they cook or they aspire to cook or they preach that they cook, and God bless them. If you can milk it while you're in the limelight because it doesn't last.

Everything you do becomes a memory and you try and repeat that like for like and it never happens. You've got to embrace it at that time.

Words of wisdom? Perhaps not. Maybe just words from a West Country bumpkin, but hospitality will survive and will have to survive in some form because we all need it.

As I sign off on this wonderful Issue number nine, I'd like to send you some words from Bhutan..

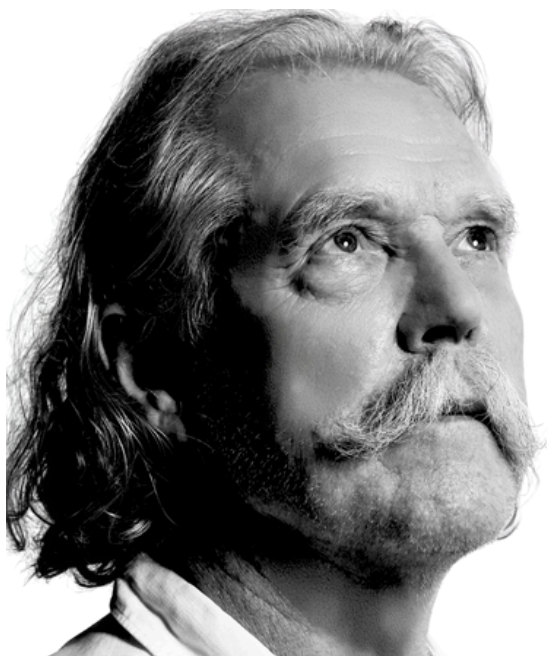
The blessings of Guru Rinpoche be upon you.

May you have good fortune and auspiciousness in all your endeavours.

May your path be clear like the mountain streams of the Himalayas.

May compassion guide your actions and wisdom illuminate your mind.

May you and all sentient beings find peace and happiness and of course a very Merry Christmas if you're reading this before 2026, and if it's already the New Year, I wish us all a positive one!



**Martin Blunos** hails from the beautiful South West of England. He's a renowned 2 Michelin Star restaurateur, Iron Chef and Master Chef, now based in Bangkok, Thailand

You can follow Martin Blunos on his Instagram account:

**[@martin\\_blunos-chef](#)**

## TINKER TAILOR SOLDIER SPY



### Audio

Behind the High Gates of JUSMAGTHAI Lies Bangkok's Most Extraordinary Tailoring Dynasty - Where Spies, Presidents, and Generals Have Been Getting Suited Up for Over Six Decades.

*By Buzz Langton*

The security checkpoint at JUSMAGTHAI is no joke. Before you even reach passport control, guards direct you to pop your bonnet and boot, mirrors slide under your chassis, and every inch of your vehicle gets scrutinised. Hand over your passport, wait for the background check, receive your visitor's badge, and only then are you escorted through Bangkok's most classified compound to Amrapur tailoring shop.

Because tucked away behind military-grade security in the heart of Thailand's diplomatic quarter lives a family secret that has dressed some of the most powerful and influential people on earth.

Step into Amrapur Tailors and you're immediately struck by the walls. Not the fabrics, though the Italian wools and English tweeds are magnificent, but the photographs. Hundreds of them, covering every available surface like a living museum of power.

Military aircraft photos line the border of the ceiling, while below them, signed portraits of presidents, generals, congressmen, and diplomats span six decades of Cold War intrigue and Southeast Asian realpolitik. Ronald Reagan beams from a prominent frame, his signature carefully inscribed: "With My Best Wishes: Ronald Reagan."

Nearby, aerial photographs of the Pentagon share space with commemorative military patches, unit insignia, and personal messages from Defence Secretaries during some of America's most sensitive operations in the region.



But here's what makes this story truly intriguing, for every president or general whose photo adorns these walls, think how many intelligence operatives, CIA station chiefs, and deep-cover agents have passed through these doors without leaving a trace?

The Amrapur story begins with an extraordinary man. Maya's father was originally from Lahore in what's now Pakistan. As a Hindu family, they had to relocate to India during Partition and the border upheavals of 1947. From there, he somehow made his way to 1960s Japan, where he worked at a tailor shop serving American military personnel at Kadena Air Base in Okinawa.

Think about that journey for a moment; a man who spoke Hindi, learned Japanese and English, and would eventually master Thai when he moved to Bangkok. In my personal estimation, that's an incredible feat.

But what really set him apart was his attitude.

Extreme professionalism. Nothing was ever a problem. 100% service minded. Friendly and sincere. These qualities impressed the base commander so much that when the opportunity arose to move operations to Bangkok and the commander learned Maya's father had no money to open his own shop, he said simply;

"We'll give you a shop."

As the Vietnam War was coming to a close, Maya's father was invited to come to Bangkok. He ended up with not one, but four concessions. The Americans had clearly seen something special.

"We had stores in The Chao Phraya Hotel, Windsor Hotel, Sukhumvit soi 39 and their current location," Sam and Maya explain, gesturing to their current location. "This was the only one that survived when the GI's left."



But Sam's casual mention of "other bases" reveals the true scope of their operation.

Nakhon Sawan Air Force Base. Utapau Naval Air Station. These weren't just military installations, they were launching points for some of the most classified operations of the Vietnam era.

The Amrapur tailors were there, measuring inseams and noting lapel preferences, while B-52s thundered overhead on missions that wouldn't be declassified for decades.



"The congressmen used to come to Bangkok, and they knew our shop very well," Sam and Maya recall with the matter-of-fact tone of people who have long since ceased to be impressed by power. "But they couldn't always come to the shop because JUSMAG closes by 4 o'clock. So they often asked us to come to their hotels to measure up.

Now try and picture this, a Bangkok hotel suite, curtains drawn, security details posted outside. Inside, America's most sensitive decision-makers are being fitted for suits by a family of tailors who've just spent their day measuring colonels, attachés, and men whose business cards list innocuous job titles that bear no resemblance to their actual work.



When President Reagan visited Bangkok in the 1980s, the family was ready. "President Reagan and Nancy were very, very nice," Sam and Maya recall. "His whole entourage was here. More than 40 people. We went to the Hilton to measure them all." That's a lot of people who expect nothing but the best.





General Harry "Heinie" Aderholt, the legendary Special Operations commander who ran some of America's most classified programs in Southeast Asia, became a client and champion. His photo occupies prime real estate on the shop's wall of fame, a testament to the trust placed in this remarkable family.

Today, third-generation tailor Dev, son of Maya and Sam, carries on the family tradition with the same discretion that has made them Bangkok's most trusted secret. The shop still operates within JUSMAGTHAI's secure perimeter, still maintains the kind of client confidentiality that would make a Swiss banker proud.



Dev has modernised the operation, flying to America, Singapore and other notable international locations for hotel suite fittings, maintaining international shipping networks, adapting to the 21st century's global requirements.

But the fundamentals remain unchanged: impeccable craftsmanship, absolute discretion, and an intuitive understanding that their clients' lives may depend on blending in perfectly wherever their next assignment takes them.



The shop's expertise extends far beyond men's suiting. A fact immediately apparent during my visit. An elegantly dressed woman was being fitted for what can only be described as a masterpiece. A stunning white sleeveless trouser suit destined for the very popular Melbourne Cup charity gala luncheon in Bangkok that Amrapur Tailors sponsors each year as part of their community support.



The event raises money for charities such as Hands Across The Water, the largest Australian-Thai charity. The precision of the cut, the fall of the fabric, the attention to every detail suggested she'll indeed be the belle of the ball.





This expertise in ladies' wear has made them the go-to choice for Bangkok's most discerning women, from ambassadors' wives to high-powered executives. The same meticulous attention to detail that has dressed presidents extends seamlessly to evening gowns, cocktail dresses, and power suits that command respect in any boardroom or ballroom.

"I love putting patterns, putting colours together, and see what matches best," Dev explains quietly, his passion for the craft evident despite his reserved demeanour. "Every country has their own style, and we have clients from different parts of the world. Recommending clients according to what the trend is... that's always a challenge and the fun."

It's this attention to cultural nuances that sets them apart. Whether crafting a navy blazer for a British attaché, a lightweight tropical wool suit for an Australian diplomat, or an elegant cocktail dress for an ambassador's spouse, Amrapur Tailors understand that clothing is often the first line of cultural diplomacy.

The family's expertise spans the full spectrum of formal wear: bespoke suits, evening gowns, military dress uniforms, cocktail attire, and everything in between. Each piece is hand-crafted using premium fabrics. Italian wools, English tweeds, Egyptian cottons. These are selected not just for their quality but for their performance in Bangkok's challenging climate and the varied environments their clients navigate worldwide.



In a city obsessed with luxury malls and flashy tailoring shops hawking quick suits to tourists, the cognoscenti know better. They endure vehicle inspections, security clearances, and appointment-only protocols for one simple reason: Amrapur Tailors represents something increasingly rare in today's world, genuine craft mastery passed down through three generations, untainted by commercial compromise.

The shop's client retention speaks volumes. Clients return decade after decade, their measurements filed away like state secrets. Corporate executives flying in from Singapore know to block out half a day for proper fittings. Wedding parties plan their Bangkok visits around Amrapur's schedule, understanding that some things simply cannot be rushed.

What sets this operation apart isn't just the presidential pedigree, it's the obsessive attention to detail that comes from dressing people whose lives depend on looking effortlessly appropriate in any situation. Whether you're facing a boardroom in London, a charity gala in Bangkok, or a diplomatic reception in Washington, Amrapur-tailored garments perform flawlessly.

The family's international reach means they'll fly to major cities for group fittings, maintaining measurement files for clients worldwide, and shipping completed garments globally. For Bangkok residents, the experience is unparalleled: consultations that feel more like collaborative design sessions, access to fabrics sourced directly from Italian mills and English weavers, and the kind of alterations service that ensures perfection long after purchase.

Dev's generation brings contemporary sensibilities to classical techniques, understanding that today's power players need clothes that transition seamlessly from humid Bangkok streets to air-conditioned boardrooms to evening events. The safari-print tuxedo with forest-green lapels he crafted for a longtime client exemplifies this approach.



To God & Wife, On the occasion of your first visit to the Embassy



To your wife, the  
best of luck and  
the best of times  
in the future

Impeccably constructed using traditional methods, but boldly contemporary in design and execution.

They've witnessed the ebb and flow of American influence in Southeast Asia through the lens of changing uniform regulations and evolving dress codes. They've measured the waistlines of men and women who've shaped history from the shadows, noting the stress-induced weight fluctuations that accompany particularly intense postings, and making sure the extra fabric needed is there for potential adjustments.

In an age of flashy shopping malls and high street retailers pushing quick turnover, Amrapur Tailors represents something almost extinct: a family business built on genuine reputation, absolute discretion, and the all but disappearing humble life of service.

Three generations have perfected the art of seeing everything and saying nothing, of putting the client's needs above profit margins, of treating every customer with the same respect whether they're a president or a businessman planning his wedding. Try finding that level of service on the high street or in a shopping mall. You won't!

They are, quite simply, a hidden gem in Bangkok's bespoke landscape. What makes them truly special isn't just the illustrious clientele. It's three generations of absolute craftsmanship and discretion, creating wardrobes for people whose work demands they look perfectly appropriate wherever duty calls, from embassy receptions to classified briefings to charity galas.

The next time you see a perfectly tailored diplomat or businessman at a Bangkok reception, or an impeccably dressed attaché at an embassy function, remember: there's a very good chance their suit was cut in a small shop behind high walls, by a family that has been keeping the best secrets in Thailand for over half a century.

Located within JUSMAGTHAI Building, Sathorn Soi 1, Bangkok. Appointments required - no walk-ins accepted - Bring your passport or Thai ID for security clearance. For consultations: +66 88 463 9027 or email. International fittings available upon request.



**AMRAPUR TAILORS**

EST. 1960



JUSTMAGTHAI - BANGKOK

## DR. ANDY SCHILLINGER Bundesliga to Bangkok

### How Elite Sports Medicine Came to Thailand

Interview by Buzz Langton

Buzz Langton sits down with Dr. Andy Schillinger, Director of Rehabilitation at Miskawaan Health Group, to discuss his remarkable journey from German football to pioneering integrative medicine in Thailand.

I'm Dr. Andy Schillinger. Everybody here in Thailand calls me Dr. Andy. I'm from Germany, Freiburg in the Black Forest, a beautiful area. I'm a doctor in physical therapy, so physiotherapy. I studied physiotherapy, then I did my master's degree in sports physiotherapy rehabilitation, then my doctor's degree. Quite early, I started working mainly in orthopedic and sports. Then I worked in Germany in Bundesliga.



Buzz: How did you get into the Bundesliga?

Dr. Andy: Actually, I was asked. I was still a young therapist and I got headhunted.

I got asked if I wanted to work for the team and I was very surprised. I said, 'Why are you asking me?' And they said, 'Yeah, we heard about you.' So I had a reputation already there.



## ***“A bomb blew up at the school of our daughter and directly next to our house”***

Buzz: You already had a reputation, that's pretty phenomenal. Which team?

Dr. Andy: SC Freiburg. The interesting part is when you work in professional football, your job is to look after the health of the players. So it's prevention. It's about their lifestyle, what they eat, how they sleep. You look after everything because that's your main responsibility.

Buzz: It's like almost you're the godfather of the team, right?

Dr. Andy: Yes, absolutely. So I did this for six years, then I worked as a lecturer at university in Germany and also in further education. I built up my own rehabilitation centre with twelve or thirteen employees.

Everything was good, everything was great, but my wife and I, we always had the dream of living somewhere else.

The civil war in Sri Lanka escalated dangerously when we tried living there. A bomb blew up at the school of our daughter and directly next to our house. So we had to leave again, we came back to Germany, started again, another building, another rehab center. We always went to Thailand for holidays, and we fell in love completely.

Buzz: So what happened?

Dr. Andy: We were here for Christmas and New Year 2011 to 2012, then we came back to Germany. It was January, 6 AM, I was sitting in my office. It was dark, it was cold. I asked myself, what am I doing here? I don't want to be here. So I sent my resume to a friend and he had connections to the Thai Football Association. One week later the president of the Thai Football Association called me and said, 'We need someone with your reputation. Your resume is brilliant.'

Buzz: What about your wife?

Dr. Andy: She said this chance comes only once in your life. The door's just been opened for you. She booked me a flight. Two days later I was flying to Bangkok.

I worked with the Thai national team and after a few days they said, 'Okay, we want you to stay.'

That was 13 years ago. I worked for the national team six years, then for other clubs, Bangkok United, Muang Thong. For four and a half years now, I'm working for Miskawaan Health Group.

## THE BUNDESLIGA YEARS

Buzz: Let's circle back to the Bundesliga. You were dealing with young men, and you're a young man yourself at that time.

That's quite a challenging situation; But young man to young man, they don't take being told what to do so easily from a comparative peer, do they?

if you went back now and did it, you've got the gravitas of experience and a bit of age behind you, which works very well when dealing with young men.



Dr. Andy: Yes, absolutely. You really have to prove your knowledge. They have to see, 'Wow, this guy really knows what he's talking about.' You must have the confidence, you must have the knowledge that they trust you.

You have to build a relationship with them.

That's in football, but also now with normal patients and clients. It's always the same.

You have to build a relationship and you need to get their trust.

Buzz: Even more so than the manager?

Dr. Andy: Yes, really. They arrive at the club, the meeting point is usually the treatment area. That's where all the boys come. Also for me it's always the rule: they have to come, they have to check in with me. So I'm actually giving them a verbal pass that they can go on and play. It's every day. The first thing they have to do is come and see me. I talk with them.

How are you?

How do you feel?

How did you sleep?

Is everything okay?

Checking, are they ready to have the training session?

## **SLEEP SCIENCE BEFORE IT WAS COOL**

Buzz: The whole subject around sleep habits and sleep health has only really come to pass over the last five or six years.

How long ago were you discussing sleep with your players?

Dr. Andy: Much earlier. From my personal background, when I was young, I played football also at quite a high level.

But then I started doing bodybuilding.

I was doing bodybuilding championships. In bodybuilding everything is about training, eating and recovery.

Already at that time we all knew sleep is so important that our body, our nerve system and our brain can recover from these heavy training sessions.

So I implemented this directly also to the football players.

Buzz: So this is a direct reflection of your own personal healthy training habits that you managed to bring forward.

Dr. Andy: That's right! From the practical I come to the research and bring the evidence to my experience. That's how I work.

## NUTRITION REVELATIONS

Nowadays we all talk about longevity and this healthy lifestyle. For me already at that time it was the training, exercise, the nutrition, sleep, so recovery with everything what includes recovery, and the mindset, happiness, being happy. These parameters.

Buzz: In terms of nutrition, what were you telling the football players about what they should eat and what they should not eat?

Dr. Andy: Obviously what we need is to get all our nutrition what the body needs to perform. It's like if you have your beautiful Lamborghini or Ferrari and you put diesel inside, the engine cannot work. What our body needs is that we look that we get all the vitamins, minerals, enough protein and good carbohydrates.



Buzz: Are you recommending that this is coming from food and not supplements?

Dr. Andy: Absolutely. The main thing has to be the good food, the good nutrition. Nowadays many people want to go the easy way.

Buzz: People talk about supplement stacks now. It's gone a little bit too far.

Dr. Andy: Very interesting. For me, it's very important to take blood samples, blood checkups to see if there is a deficit, if there is a lack of some vitamins, minerals.

Buzz: So you're fine-tuning?

Dr. Andy: Exactly. Nowadays everybody is taking tablets, but maybe they are already at the top level, so they don't need it actually. In general nutrition we need fresh food, we need homemade cooked food. This is also a trend nowadays. Everybody is buying pre-cooked food and we don't know what's really inside it.

I remember when I came here to work for the Thai national team. I arrived, we were in the hotel. I was sitting in the lobby in the evening with the coaches and then I realised there was a KFC delivery.

One of the players taking the big bags. Five minutes later, McDonald's, then a Burger King delivery.

So the next day I was preparing a PowerPoint presentation, 'Professional Lifestyle of a Football Player.'

Buzz: And these were professional athletes who hadn't been taught about the basics of nutrition?

Dr. Andy: Some of the players asked me, 'You said protein. What is protein? Where is it inside?' This was 13 years ago, and they were very interested. Then they asked me, and we were working on it and it changed really their life and also their performance.

Many players said, 'Wow Andy, this is amazing. I feel better. I have more energy. I play better.'

# THE MISKAWAAN PHILOSOPHY

Buzz: Now you're at Miskawaan Health Group as Director of Rehabilitation. Tell us about what you do here?

Dr. Andy: Miskawaan combines conventional and alternative therapies to address root causes of health issues rather than just symptoms. We offer personalised diagnostics, chronic disease management, cancer care through our integrative cancer program, detoxification, immune system optimisation, anti-aging and wellness therapies.

For my treatment, it's always three parts: what we do here, what I do, like manual therapy techniques on the muscles, on the joints, on our nerve system. So hands-on therapy. Then it's exercises. And then, very important, it's the homework.

I always teach my clients exercises. I tell them what to do.

Buzz: Is that because they won't do it themselves otherwise.

Dr. Andy: That is sometimes the issue. This can be specific exercises.

Here's an example, 'From now on, every morning when you get up, you first sit on the bicycle and cycle to increase your metabolism.' Or every evening after work, you go to the pool. The crazy thing is here in Bangkok, we all have the possibilities. Nearly everybody has a pool at the house or apartment. Nearly everybody has a gym. But still we are not using it.

Buzz: Let's talk about what you do on a daily basis. You're dealing with people's physiology, the physics and structure of their bodies. People aren't active like they used to be.

I think we all were much more active before computers, we're pretty much stuck at our desks these days.

I know I'm guilty of that. I can sit straight almost for 11 hours and I've paid the price, so I don't do that anymore.

Dr. Andy: So our body is made for movement.

Exercise training is really what we need. For many people, it's already a big improvement to say, instead of taking always the car, I walk. Or instead of always taking the elevator, I just take the stairs. That's already a big improvement and these are small changes which count and sum up.

Buzz: The cumulative effect. It's something that you just keep building on.

Dr. Andy: Start with a little walk. It will become more and more and you will then also start enjoying it. If we think 10, 15 years ago, it was only about cardio. You have to run, you have to cycle.

In the last years, we got so much research about weight training and nowadays we know we need, especially when we get older, we need weight training. The problem is when we, from around 30 onwards already, we are losing automatically muscle mass. And bone density as well.

Very important point, especially for women.

Nowadays, osteoporosis prophylaxis and treatment is weight training.

Before, 20 years ago, the doctor said, 'Oh, you have osteoporosis, don't lift any weights. It's dangerous.' Now they say lift weights because this is the only way to make it stronger.

***“especially when we get older, we need weight training”***

Buzz: There's a guy at my gym, he's 80 years old and he's in there every morning. He's ex-army and he's just a brilliant example of what it does for you. He's not doing it to make himself look better, it's just to keep his body working.

Dr. Andy: I met a guy at an event a few months ago, middle of 60s, and we talked about health and everything. He said he doesn't have to work out! He said he still has the same weight like 20 years ago.

Then I looked at him and he had really a belly. You could see his shoulders, his legs, there were no muscles, it was only bones. He lost the muscles but he gained the belly. So the weight is the same but the body composition is totally different.

Buzz: Let's talk about office syndrome. It's a well-known phrase here. I think it was probably coined here. What's the best thing for people?

Dr. Andy: When we talk about office syndrome, everything where you have neck, shoulder pain, also coming down the arm. The reasons can be very tight muscles, it can be irritated nerves, sometimes through the disc, sometimes because of tight muscles. It can be joint problems in the cervical spine area. But the reason why people get this is really sitting at the computer in a bad posture. Rounded shoulders, looking down. The easiest way to prevent this is to say, in between, I stand up, I move, I move my arms, I bring my posture back into correct position.

Normally, I tell the people to take an elastic band, put it around the door and then pull.

Buzz: So these are the big training bands that you can pick up pretty much everywhere?

Dr. Andy: Exactly. Just to activate the back muscles again, bring your posture up and move.

Buzz: Let's talk about preventative care and early intervention from a longevity point of view for us folks who are over 40, 45. It's no point having a longer life if you don't have the quality of health because you want those to run parallel.

Dr. Andy: It's important that you have a good quality of life. Strength, muscles, is very important. Most people struggle when they are older with their leg strength, their glute strength. Standing up, sitting down, walking, then also the risk of falling has a lot to do with strength in the lower body.

This is also the area where we lose the most muscles and strength.

Buzz: So from the glutes down, we're losing it, would you say that is the issue?

Dr. Andy: Exactly. That's why we need the strength training. Doing a deadlift, doing squats. And that's going to help with your equilibrium balance as well.

If you want to do it in a perfect way, you combine these things. That's also why having a very good personal trainer or a good physiotherapist who is working with you, they will combine these things.

They will let you do heavy squats, deadlifts, but at the same time, they will let you do exercise where you have to balance on one leg, where you have to walk forward, backward, sideways, to challenge all these things.

Buzz: Give us a few good tips about how people can improve themselves. That could be anything from the way they get out of bed in the morning, to how they move through their day right?

Dr. Andy: For me, it's always this change and trying to continue this in the long term. Most people have the possibility to do something in the morning. It's always an excuse: 'I have no time.' Put your alarm a little bit earlier.

Buzz: Make time.

Dr. Andy: Absolutely. It just has to become part of your routine. For me, I set my alarm earlier, I get up, I drink some water, and then I sit straight away on the bicycle. I have my home trainer at home. I go half an hour. On the weekend, 45 minutes, but normally half an hour. I just cycle easily.

Buzz: So you're literally just getting the blood going around the body.

Dr. Andy: Exactly.

I'm increasing my metabolism, increasing the blood flow, and I cycle and I watch TV. It's really the signal for the body: hey, wake up, bring everything.

You can have a conversation with your wife. You're not going like mad.

You're just moving. This helps to burn fat calories and brings the whole body into working mode. After that, I go to the bath, I wash myself and everything. Then I prepare my breakfast. Normally I take six eggs, one can of tuna.

Buzz: How many grammes of protein is that?

Dr. Andy: Around 60, 70 grammes. Then I cut garlic, I cut onions, courgettes, carrots, or tomatoes, vegetables. Then I fry everything in a pan. First in the morning, I don't eat any carbs. A lot of protein and a lot of vegetables.

Then I can get ready and go to work. But that's how I start my day, already really focused: now I have good food inside.

When I'm eating, I drink a lot of water. So I have already around one litre of water in me. Then I know my body is now really ready to work.

Buzz: And you do that every day?

Dr. Andy: I would say, for sure, six days a week, sometimes every day.

Working Out Together

Buzz: What about evening training?

Dr. Andy: Most of the times in the evening, I do my weight training five days a week. When I come home from work, sometimes I think, 'Oh no, I'm tired.

I don't want to work out now.' But my wife is already sitting there, changed, ready for our training.

Buzz: You work out together?

Dr. Andy: We work out together. This is very nice for couples because you spend time together. You're not stealing the time from your partner. Like if I work the whole day, and then I tell her in the night, 'Oh, now I go to the gym.' When do we see each other? But like this, we go together to the gym, we work out together. At the same time, we can also talk about what happened today. I think this is very good motivation. It reduces the excuses.

Buzz: I have a huge problem trying to get my wife to exercise.

Dr. Andy: This is what I hear all the time. Bring your husband, go together. Both benefit from it. Your whole lifestyle changes. Also, your couple life changes, then both become fitter, younger. You align your diets as well. With everybody I talk, if I go to the gym and I work out, I also eat good.

Then I can get ready and go to  
But if I don't go to the gym,  
I think why should I eat good?  
I would never, after the gym,  
eat McDonald's. No, now I  
worked out, now I have to give  
good food to my body.

Buzz: Last thing. If you could give a message to the world, you had a big billboard, you want to just tell everyone one thing, just one message, what would it be?

Dr. Andy: ***Change your life and move.***

Buzz: Change your life and move. Brilliant!

Dr. Andy: The movement is really number one. Then of course, nutrition, recovery, sleep.

Buzz: That's brilliant. Dr. Andy, thanks so much for your time today. For anyone wanting to experience this holistic approach to rehabilitation and wellness, where can they find you?

What makes us special is we don't just treat symptoms - we look at the whole person. Whether someone is recovering from cancer, dealing with chronic disease, wanting to optimise their health, or just trying to get rid of office syndrome, we combine the best of conventional medicine with natural therapies.

Our approach is always the same: understand the root cause, treat the whole physiology, and most importantly, teach people how to maintain their health when they leave us. Because the real work happens at home - that's where lasting change comes from.

Buzz: And that's the key message isn't it? Change your life and move.

Dr. Andy: Exactly. Change your life and move.

For more information about Miskawaan Health Group's integrative medicine services, visit their website <https://miskawaanhealth.com>

To learn more about their clinics in Bangkok, The Sukhothai Hotel, Hong Kong and Germany.

Dr. Andy Schillinger  
(IG [@AndySchillinger](#))

leads the rehabilitation program, combining his 25+ years of sports medicine expertise with Miskawaan's holistic approach to optimal health.



Dr. Andy and His Family

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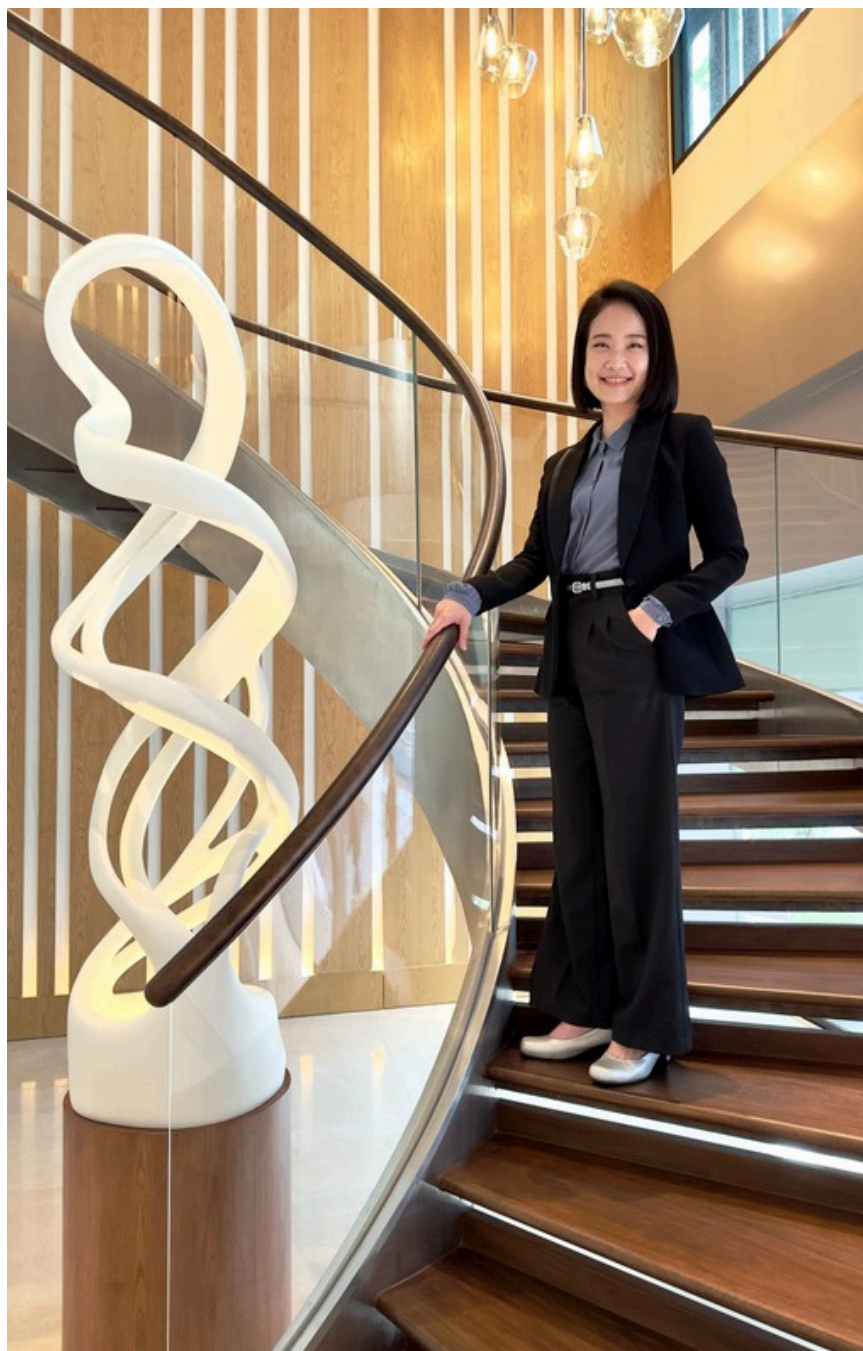
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## Longevity Revisited

**Dr. Suwanna Suwannaphong on How Longevity Medicine Has Evolved from Pills to Procedures**

In one of the extremely comfortable lounges where piped music puts you in a meditative state, I meet with Dr Waan for our second interview on the advances of longevity. Dr Suwanna Suwanaphong, as Program Director of VitalLife Scientific Wellness Centre, a part of Bumrungrad International Hospital, occupies a unique position at the intersection of cutting-edge medical technology and ancient Eastern wellness philosophy, reshaping how we think about ageing.



Settling into the plush seating, Dr Waan immediately addresses how dramatically her field has evolved since we last spoke. "The trend now is different from the past few years," she tells me. "Previously, it wasn't about molecules or supplements. But now it's more focused on activities or procedures that we can actually implement."

This shift represents a fundamental departure from the supplement-heavy approaches that once dominated longevity medicine. Where patients might previously have left with carrier bags full of pills promising to slow the ageing process, today's treatments involve sophisticated procedures such as cellular reprogramming, gene therapy, and apheresis.

The latter, a process of cleaning the plasma to remove ageing factors, has generated considerable interest within and outside the medical community, though Dr Waan cautions against jumping on trends without proper validation.

"We are talking about cellular reprogramming, gene therapy, and how we can cleanse out the factors of ageing," she explains, her enthusiasm for the scientific possibilities evident.

Yet she remains grounded about the commercial realities. "Just like other longevity technologies, there are many commercialised products out there. The results vary, of course."

The personalisation of longevity medicine extends far beyond simple blood tests, though these remain the foundation of assessment. "Most of the time it's a blood test," she says, leaning back into the comfortable chair. "

The test gives us lots of things. And that's why the biological age test is blood-based because it's easy." However, blood cannot reveal everything about a person's health status.

Muscle function requires separate testing, as does cognitive assessment, creating a comprehensive picture that goes beyond chronological age.

## ***"Different organs don't age at the same time"***

Dr Waan's approach reflects a growing understanding that ageing is neither uniform nor predictable across different organs. "We don't age at the same time," she observes, pausing as a server quietly refreshes our drinks.

"Different organs don't age at the same time.

And the oldest one is going to kill you." This concept of organ-specific ageing represents one of the most intriguing developments in the field, though she admits the challenge lies in knowing how to reverse the ageing of specific organs once measured.

## ***"And the oldest one is going to kill you"***

When I ask about artificial intelligence's role in her practice, her response is immediate: "Which one doesn't have AI in it?" Yet she is careful to position technology as a tool rather than a replacement for human judgement. "

I still think that has to be hand in hand between medical personnel. It doesn't have to be a doctor. It could be a health coach, right? With the AI guidance or companions."

The integration of AI proves particularly valuable in areas where human limitations become apparent. In designing exercise programmes, for instance, AI can detect subtle imbalances that escape human observation.

"If an AI assessment reveals that your left leg muscles are smaller than your right leg because you're right-handed and unconsciously favour your right leg during exercise, the programme will focus perhaps 15% more on your left leg," she explains, gesturing to illustrate the point.

Cultural differences play a significant role in treatment approaches, particularly between Western and Asian patients.

Dr Waan observes that Western patients often arrive seeking specific pharmaceutical interventions, asking about repurposed drugs like SGLT2 inhibitors, metformin, or rapamycin.

"Should I use rapamycin? Is it too soon for that? Should I do plasma apheresis to get rid of the toxins in my body? Or stem cell therapy?" she lists, mimicking the typical Western patient enquiry.

Asian patients, by contrast, typically express a different preference. "Often when we see Asian patients, they ask how they can avoid taking pills altogether," she says, highlighting the cultural aversion to adding medications unnecessarily.

Asian patients, by contrast, typically express a different preference. "Often when we see Asian patients, they ask how they can avoid taking pills altogether," she says, highlighting the cultural aversion to adding medications unnecessarily.

This divergence extends to fundamental lifestyle factors. Western patients, she notes, often arrive with health challenges that reflect their cultural background. "Unfortunately, Westerners, even with the same chronological age, sometimes develop diseases like insulin resistance or early onset diabetes faster compared to someone from an Asian country." She attributes this partly to dietary habits established from childhood, noting that emotional eating patterns common in Western cultures are less prevalent in Asian societies. "When you get upset, your parents tell you to go to your room," she says with a wry smile, referencing the familiar Western television trope. "There's no ice cream coming out of the freezer."

The clinic's international clientele brings a unique perspective to treatment planning. "The interesting part is that we imagine we're going to go deep into the technologies," she says, "but those Western patients come here because this is half a world away from their homes, yet they come here with a purpose.

## ***"We know that data links microplastics to metabolic disease"***

They have done their homework and know exactly what they need." The appeal extends beyond cutting-edge treatments to encompass Thailand's legendary hospitality, creating a comprehensive wellness experience that patients cannot find closer to home.

Environmental factors present another layer of complexity in modern longevity medicine. Dr Waan acknowledges that contemporary life exposes us to toxins that previous generations never encountered.

"Now we live in a toxic world," she states matter-of-factly. "We know that data links microplastics to metabolic disease".

Research also shows that people with high levels of heavy metals have more risk of developing dementia."

The challenge lies not just in avoiding these toxins, which is often impossible, but in helping the body eliminate them.

"We polluted this world a bit too fast. So evolution cannot keep up. So we're trying to find a way to eliminate that from our bodies."

When I mention my own preference for getting nutrients from food rather than supplements, Dr Waan nods approvingly. "We always try to encourage that approach theoretically.

But practically, patients can often manage that for a while, but if it's not actually their preference, they will eventually stop eating those particular foods."

She acknowledges the pragmatic realities of dietary change while maintaining her preference for natural sources where possible.

Perhaps most concerning to Dr Waan are the promises being made through marketing rather than science.

Her frustration with advertisements targeting vulnerable populations, especially older adults and menopausal women, is palpable.

"Those are preying on the hope of people," she says, her tone becoming more serious.

The clinic's approach emphasises three core interventions, with the first being perhaps the most traditional: conversation.

To actually persuade somebody to change their lifestyle," Dr Waan explains. "That doesn't sound so futuristic, but it's really hard."

This counselling component requires the most time investment, recognising that sustainable change comes from understanding individual motivations and constraints rather than applying universal protocols.

The second focus involves optimising the body through hormonal adjustments and targeted nutrition. "We can adjust the hormones so they can cope with stress better, help with fatigue and feelings of burnout, when patients tell us they don't want to go to work anymore. We can provide interventions that help with those specific symptoms."

The third component encompasses regenerative treatments, tailored to individual needs.

Age considerations is still a crucial part in assessment recommendations. For example, a 25-year-old seeking comprehensive testing, Dr Waan might defer Proteomics disease risk prediction. "Unless you have a strong family history of dementia, the risk will be low because twenty years from now, you'll only be 45."

Our understanding of genetics and ageing has shifted dramatically. Where scientists once believed genetics determined 80% of how we age, research now shows it accounts for only 20-25% of the process. "The rest is what you do every day to your body," Dr Waan emphasises.

This perspective extends to social factors as well. Recent research has identified social isolation as a significant contributor to ageing, creating a cycle where isolation leads to disease, which in turn creates more isolation and accelerates ageing.

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This finding has implications for how we view activities like moderate alcohol consumption, which often accompanies social gathering. "Often alcohol correlates with social gathering, and that's actually a good thing," she notes, a slight smile crossing her face.

When I probe about robotic surgery, having heard about a friend's experience with robotic hip replacement, Dr Waan clarifies the common misconception.

"Robotic surgery still uses humans. Don't get it wrong. So basically the robot is the hand of the doctor." She explains that robots provide precision and eliminate human limitations like shaky hands, but the decision-making remains entirely human.

Dr Waan sees organ-specific ageing as a promising frontier, though she acknowledges current limitations. "Algorithms to measure organ age have emerged, but the hard part is what comes next. When we measure them, how do we reverse the ageing for that particular organ? That's the challenge the medical field hasn't solved yet."

As our conversation winds down in the tranquil lounge setting, Dr Waan reflects on what longevity medicine can realistically offer. "We don't promise the age where we are going to aim.

That's actually non-existent, like these supplements or this programme will bring you to 120 years old with a full functioning brain. Nobody can promise that."

Instead, what emerges from our discussion is a more nuanced understanding of healthy ageing. The integration of AI with human expertise represents not a replacement of medical judgement but an enhancement of it.

For international patients seeking longevity treatments in Thailand, the appeal extends beyond cost considerations to encompass a different philosophical approach to health and ageing, one that combines Eastern and Western medical knowledge with sophisticated AI-assisted personalisation.

The message from Bangkok's top longevity clinics is both sobering and optimistic: there are no miracle cures, no universal solutions, and no shortcuts to healthy ageing. What exists instead is the possibility of highly personalised interventions based on rigorous assessment, ongoing monitoring, and the recognition that sustainable health improvements require lifestyle changes that patients can actually maintain.

In an era where longevity medicine risks becoming another form of consumerism, Dr Waan's approach represents a return to fundamental medical principles, careful assessment, honest communication about limitations and possibilities, and the recognition that effective treatment requires understanding not just what the science says, but what individual patients can realistically achieve within their lives.

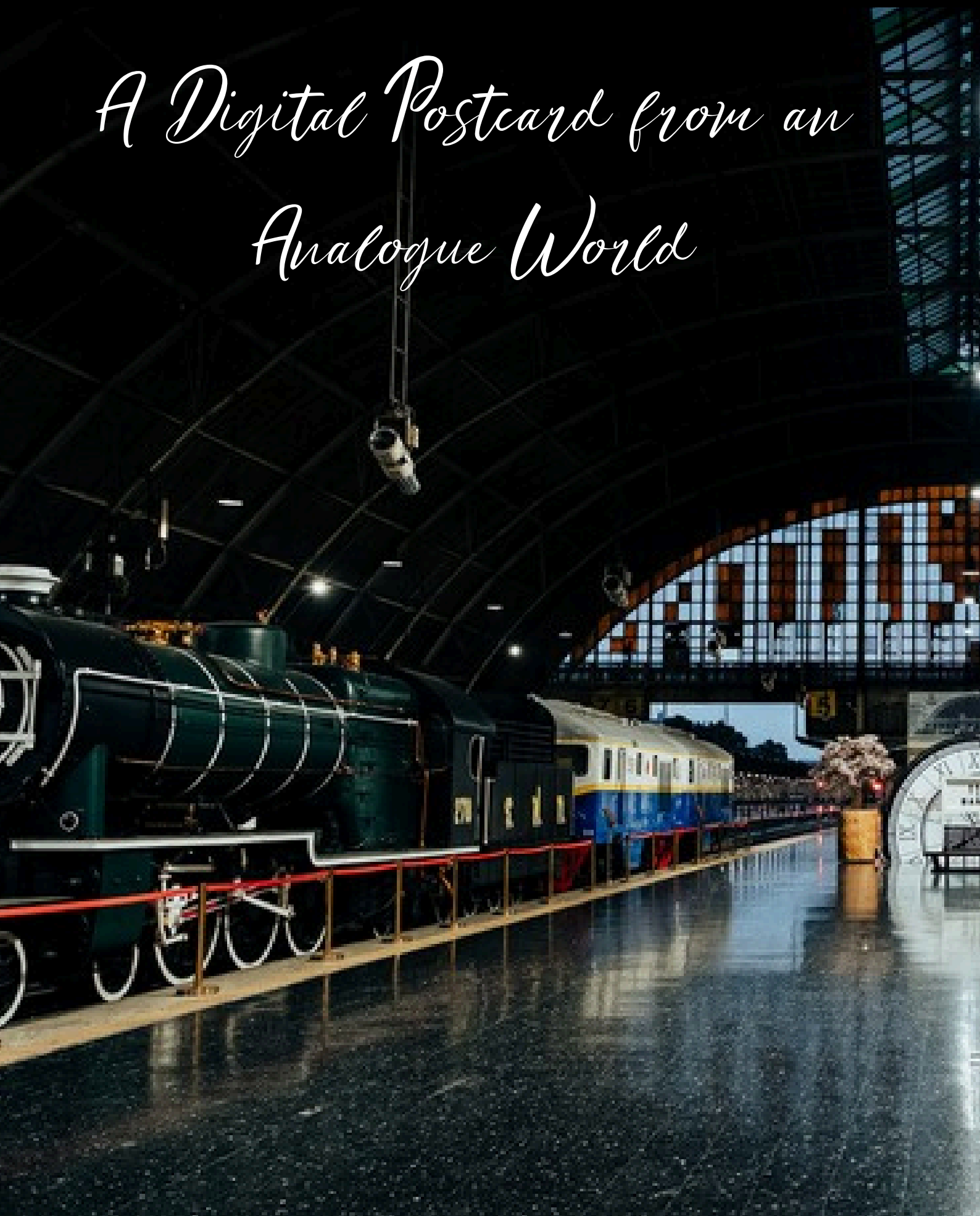
To learn more how Dr Waan and her colleagues at VitalLife can help fashion a better you..

Visit their website for further information and contact details:

[vitallifeintegratedhealth.com](https://vitallifeintegratedhealth.com)

# Travel & Leisure .

*A Digital Postcard from an  
Analogue World*



# *Interview With Stefan Bruns*



Stefan Bruns began his career at eighteen, leading travel groups to Russia whilst studying at Switzerland's School of Tourism in Chur. The mountain town near Davos proved solid training for someone who would eventually change how discerning travellers experience Thailand.

"I travelled many times to Russia as an 18-year-old guy, leading groups," Stefan recalls. Those early logistics challenges in a difficult environment built skills he would later use in Thailand's complex travel landscape.

After co-owning a Swiss travel agency for eight years, Stefan switched to Swarovski, the crystal jewellery company. He and his team built retail stores across Scandinavia, Switzerland, Eastern Europe, and Russia. The retail experience taught him luxury presentation and customer service principles he would later apply to tourism. "Then I thought I need to focus on myself," Stefan explains his decision to pursue a bachelor's degree. That led to a job offer that changed everything. A former customer, Stefan Römer, owner of tourasia in Switzerland, one of the leading tour operators for travel to Asia in Switzerland, contacted him about leading private customer department operations for an Asia-focused travel company. "That's where I started my passion for Asia," Stefan explains, "because we specialised in Asian travel."

Seven years later, a Bangkok-based company made Stefan an offer he accepted. "It was the right time to move and to try something out," he reflects. "Since then, Bangkok is now called home."

Stefan now serves as General Manager at DTH Travel alongside his former boss Stefan Römer, one of three Swiss co-owners of the Bangkok-based company. Their focus on "medium and luxury market" travel challenges standard definitions of premium experiences.

"Five-star luxury can mean different things," Stefan explains. "It is about the experience to share a Thailand which not everyone knows about." Stefan's concept of five-star isn't about thread counts or marble bathrooms but about the visceral, emotional impact of authentic encounters that leave travellers fundamentally changed. This drives DTH Travel's Heritage Collection, curated by co-owner Thomas Maurer, who has spent years identifying authentic Thai experiences beyond typical tourist circuits.

DTH Travel reflects Stefan's Swiss precision with deep local knowledge. They don't offer hundreds of different tours like conventional agencies. "It's like a quality restaurant," Stefan suggests.



"The shorter the menu, the better it is." Instead, they focus on tested experiences, typically four to six days long, designed to combine cultural immersion with flexibility for beach extensions or regional combinations with Cambodia and Vietnam.

DTH Travel operates with complete flexibility. Couples, families, and individuals can book curated private experiences, whilst those preferring company can join small group departures with maximum fourteen people. "Travelling with friends, travelling with like-minded people, this is something which we offer," Stefan explains. The intimate group size creates connections between travellers whilst ensuring everyone receives personal attention.

The company provides six-seat minibuses for Bangkok departures, removing the middle row to create more space. "It's business class drive," Stefan explains.

Stefan lights up when discussing DTH Travel's destinations. Uthai Thani exemplifies his approach, home to one of Thailand's most authentic morning markets. "This is one of the most amazing places in Thailand because you get to see the real experience in the morning market," he explains. "Everyone knows each other. When you go to the market, I get to know some of the people there because they recognise me because there are not many tourists there."

Uthai Thani also features Wat Tha Sung Temple, unique in Thailand. The temple glitters like a thousand diamonds, as if decorated and designed by Swarovski. It's an incredible sight. "The temple is full of glasses, it shines, it glitters. Completely different from what you see in any other temple," he describes.

Chanthaburi, another unusual destination in Thailand, reveals a different side of the country. Most travellers drive straight past the main town heading to Koh Chang, missing what's known as the Antwerp of the East, the gemstone trading, cutting and polishing centre of Southeast Asia. Famous for its sapphire mining, the tradition continues through small artisanal miners working much as they did in the historic past. Guests visit these small mines operated by elderly couples still digging by hand. "I'm not sure if they are so successful, but it is really impressive to see this kind of work and the passion of the people," Stefan observes.

Stefan's visits to traditional craftspeople represent living cultural heritage. South of Bangkok, guests witness bamboo production using Thailand's thinnest bamboo varieties. "When you look over the shoulders of the people who produce this unique interior, what they create, I think it's haute couture what they do," Stefan explains. "You really see how they create all these products. You see the processes step by step."



This bamboo project operates under royal patronage, designed to preserve traditional knowledge whilst supporting local communities. "The idea is to keep the knowledge, the product knowledge, and share it and bring it to the next generation," Stefan explains.

Between Bangkok and Chiang Mai, guests visit a drum-making village where Stefan's education in traditional crafts continues. "If you asked me two years ago about drums, I wouldn't have any clue," he admits. Now he understands the complexity: monastery drums require specific woods that can't be casually harvested, and water buffalo hides that must be purchased at auction.

"The prices are getting higher and higher," Stefan explains. The drums, standing 1.5 metres tall, feature hand-painted designs destined for monasteries throughout Thailand. "There's a lot of handicraft knowledge involved, but also quite some capital just to get the resources and start the production."

Stefan's most significant discovery involves Thailand's largest Karen village outside the Golden Triangle. Unlike commercialised long neck villages, this Karen community maintains authentic cultural practices. Some villagers choose to live without electricity, following traditional beliefs about staying connected to natural rhythms.

"Part of the villages, they don't use electricity," Stefan explains. "It's part of their belief to follow the roots, their culture, how they grow up." This reflects genuine lifestyle choice rather than tourist performance.

Stefan's most ambitious project emerged from Swiss thinking. "We are used to travel by train. This is so common for us in Switzerland," he explains. The question seemed natural: could Thailand's cultural experiences be enhanced through train travel?

## **THE BLUE JASMINE**

The answer became the Blue Jasmine, Thailand's first premium and unique sleeper train experience, built around a 1957 Japanese train gifted to Thailand's government. The vintage carriages required extensive refurbishment to meet modern passenger standards. The train combines six days travelling on tracks with two nights aboard with stays at exceptional hotels, creating a nine day journey.

Stefan's team partnered with Thailand's Tourism Authority, receiving unexpected support that led to organic international media coverage. "We haven't spent marketing dollars really for this train," Stefan admits. "All of a sudden we got press, and then boom we became an article in The Sun, in The Independent and Vogue Taiwan"



The project required significant operational planning. "Train tours are very complex," Stefan admits, describing everything from passenger logistics to orchestrating the ceremonial departure from Bangkok's Hua Lamphong Station.

The Blue Jasmine isn't just transportation but a nine-day experience mixing two nights on the train with hotel stays. This addresses practical concerns whilst enhancing the overall journey. "We can't do a journey only in the train," Stefan explains.

The Blue Jasmine experience extends beyond rail travel. Day one stops in Ayutthaya at a traditional Thai house overlooking water lily ponds, where Stefan describes the owner as "a goodness in the kitchen." Dinner in Chiang Mai's mountains unfolds at a farmhouse with Myanmar views, complete with piano music and Thai opera singers performing Italian arias.

"Eighty per cent of participants had tears in their eyes," Stefan remembers of that mountain dinner. "That's the moment that said yes, this needs to be included in our train ride.

Early morning in Chiang Mai's mountains, the train stops for market coffee before breakfast service. This isn't spontaneous but precisely calculated Swiss planning. "We will stop the train. Where our passengers can disembark and get their first coffee at a local market before we serve breakfast," Stefan explains.

The timing ensures guests experience authentic local life at its most genuine moment. The timing ensures guests experience authentic local life at its most genuine moment.

The train accommodates just thirty-seven guests, creating intimate atmosphere. "Everyone was in the bar wagon, chatting and talking," Stefan describes from the maiden voyage. "Because we have beautiful large windows, you enjoy the view as well."

At Si Sachanalai, guests will enjoy a unique dinner experience at a remarkable hotel where the owner, a former Mandarin Oriental veteran, transported traditional wooden houses piece by piece to recreate vintage accommodations overlooking a working temple.

The owner had a vision, searching the jungle until he spotted temple spires rising above the trees, then purchasing the land and relocating century-old teak structures to create his perfect view. "When you wake up in the morning and you see the wat in front of you... usually I get up at six o'clock, I walk around there.

There's no tourists, there's only a few locals," Stefan explains.

The temple remains active with monks going about their morning routines whilst guests witness sunrise light filtering through ancient architecture.





Evening barbecues feature local dancers, singers, and musicians from nearby universities. "This is also a way how we integrate local people," Stefan explains, describing performances that continued even during heavy rain.

Stefan positions the Blue Jasmine within trends toward therapeutic travel. "Slow travel becomes more and more important," he observes. "You don't want to rush from one part to another part."

The train's unhurried rhythm creates space for reflection and genuine cultural absorption, it also enhances health by removing the stress often associated with modern travel options; so in fact what Stefan describes is a form of longevity travel in its own right.

The vintage 1957 carriages offer temporal displacement. Stefan describes this as a "vintage experience" with "colonial style" elements that transport passengers back to an era of unhurried travel.

At quiet morning moments at Si Sachanalai temple, Stefan captures the essence: "This is luxury. You don't need to have twenty temples. If you have one and you have that almost for yourself.

"The Blue Jasmine's maiden voyage on November 16th approached full capacity through organic interest.

"When we had the maiden train ride with TAT, I had goosebumps," Stefan remembers of that first departure from Hua Lamphong Station. After decades in hospitality, such an emotional response speaks to the significance of creating Thailand's first luxury sleeper train experience.

The impact extends to Stefan's team. "I was asking our core team, I said, how do you feel to be part of the Blue Jasmine," Stefan recalls. One team member responded: "I could never believe that we could do something like this." The pride and excitement among his Thai staff reflects the historic nature of launching Thailand's first premium sleeper train experience.

Stefan's vision extends to future routes using different Thai flower names, each offering unique regional experiences. He positions Thailand as "the wellness country of Southeast Asia," leveraging natural hospitality alongside authentic cultural encounters that promote longevity through meaningful connection rather than mere relaxation.

The slow travel philosophy underlying Stefan's approach aligns perfectly with longevity tourism principles. Extended cultural immersion reduces stress naturally whilst engaging the mind through new experiences, both proven contributors to healthy ageing.



The Blue Jasmine's unhurried pace encourages mindful presence, allowing travellers to absorb rather than rush through destinations.

Whether leading guests through Uthai Thani's morning markets, facilitating encounters with bamboo artisans, or orchestrating the Blue Jasmine's inaugural journey, DTH Travel has created a model for cultural tourism that proves luxury lies in authentic connection to place and people. These experiences offer the kind of profound engagement that research suggests contributes to cognitive vitality and emotional wellbeing throughout life.

The Blue Jasmine runs select departures throughout Thailand's cooler months, carrying thirty-seven passengers toward experiences that remind travellers why authentic cultural immersion matters, not just for memorable holidays, but for the long-term enrichment that comes from genuine human connection and purposeful travel.

The inaugural Blue Jasmine journey departed Bangkok's Hua Lamphong Station on November 16th, 2025, marking a new chapter in Thailand's luxury travel offerings.

For bookings and enquiries about DTH Travel's Heritage Collection and Blue Jasmine experiences, contact Stefan Bruns and his team at:

DTH Travel, ITF Tower, 140/7 Silom Road, Bangkok 10500

[info@th.dth.travel](mailto:info@th.dth.travel)

<https://thebluejasminetrain.com>



## WESTHEADS ON WHEELS

Three  
Friends  
One Purpose  
14,000 Km's  
East



What started as a casual phone call about visiting a friend in Thailand has transformed into an epic 14-month charity cycle across two continents. Dyfan, Louis and James, three 18-year-olds from Wrexham, North Wales, are pedalling their way through mountains, valleys and eight countries to honour the memory of their friend Harrison Veich's father, Tony Veich, who passed away from a heart attack.

'Me and Louis were on a call one day and he said to me, should we go to Thailand to go and visit Harrison, our friend?' Dyfan recalls. 'Then I said, yeah, should we video it and do social media videos along the way? And then out of nowhere Louis just came in with a, how about we cycle it and raise money for The British Heart Foundation along the way? And it just clicked.'

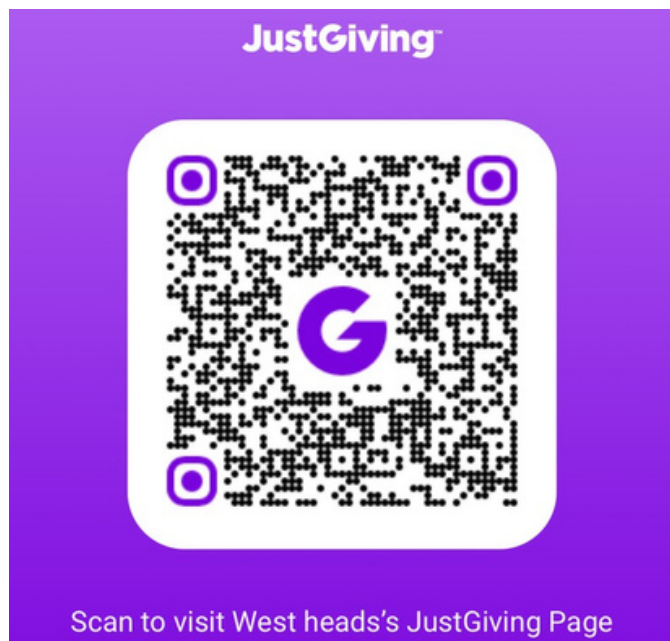
That spontaneous suggestion has led to an extraordinary adventure. The trio, who grew up playing football together in their small town of Llangollen, just 20 minutes from Wrexham, are now tackling one of the most ambitious charity challenges imaginable.

Starting from North Wales, the lads have already crossed through England, the Netherlands, Germany, Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Serbia, Romania and Bulgaria. They're currently navigating the challenging terrain of Turkey, where the mountains of the central region have tested their resolve and their bikes.

'In central Turkey, the mountains are very difficult, there's a lot of mountains,' Dyfan admits. But mechanical issues, punctures and even a stolen phone in Rotterdam haven't dampened their spirits. Riding light touring bikes (Specialised and Dawes models), and camping along the way, they're averaging 65 kilometres a day.

Their route will take them through Georgia, where they plan to stay for two to three months waiting for the weather to warm up in Kazakhstan. From there, they'll push through Kyrgyzstan, possibly Tajikistan, then into China, Vietnam, Laos and finally Thailand, where they expect to arrive in October next year.

The destination? Chiang Rai, where Harrison will be waiting for his childhood friends.





What makes this adventure even more remarkable is that these young men are doing it not for glory or personal achievement, but to honour a friend's loss and raise money for charity. Tony Veich's untimely death from a heart attack struck close to home for the group, and their response was to turn grief into action.

'Looking forward to seeing you all,' Dyfan says, his message simple but heartfelt. Their goal is to raise 25,000 for The British Heart Foundation (use the QR code to support them in their cause)

At just 18, most teenagers are thinking about university or their first jobs. These three are thinking about how many kilometres they can manage before sunset, whether their tyres will hold, and how they can keep their energy up for the months ahead. They're living proof that age is no barrier to making a difference.

As they prepare to hunker down in Batumi, Georgia for Christmas, one thing is certain: this is a journey that will change them forever. And somewhere, Tony Veich would be incredibly proud of what his son's mates are doing in his memory.

Follow the lads journey on IG - <https://Instagram.com/west.heads>  
see their Linktree for their other social media links



# Mind Soul & Body .

## The Eight Limbed Path



By Elle Sirilak

*Welcome to my second column where I have the pleasure of sharing my journey in my daily practice of Ashtanga and my teachings as a yoga teacher.*



# THE EIGHT LIMBED PATH

Expanding Your Yoga Journey

Living the Eight Limbs

*By Elle Sirilak*

After learning about the eight limbs of yoga, now it is time to deepen your understanding and bring these teachings into your daily life. Yoga is not only about the physical postures called asanas. It is a way of living that touches every part of our being, from how we breathe to how we think and behave.

We start the journey with asana, which helps to make the body strong and flexible. After you feel comfortable with asana, the next step is pranayama, which means controlling the breath. Breath is very important because it connects the body and mind. Simple practices like Nadi Shodhana or alternate nostril breathing help to calm the mind and bring balance in our energy. When the breath flows smoothly, it helps the mind to focus and prepare for meditation.

But pranayama is just one part. The first limbs, Yama and Niyama, teach us about living a good and kind life. Yama gives guidance on how we treat other people. It teaches us to practice ahimsa or non-violence, satya or truthfulness, and to avoid selfishness. Niyama is about how we care for ourselves with cleanliness, contentment, and self-discipline, called tapas. When we follow these rules, we feel more peaceful inside and outside.

Yoga is about patience too. We need to keep practicing with kindness toward ourselves, not being too hard or rushing. Every time we come to the mat, it is a chance to practice acceptance and to grow stronger in body and mind.

**This is about the eight limbs of Ashtanga yoga from my personal experience. To me, the asana practice is like moving meditation. It gives me peace of mind while the outside world is very chaotic.**

When we practice pratyahara, we learn to quiet the senses from the busy world around us. This helps us to focus inside, which is very important for meditation or dhyana. Meditation lets the mind become calm and clear. With time, meditation can bring us closer to samadhi, a special feeling of unity and peace. Even if this feeling feels far away, the practice makes life better every day.

Sometimes, it is not easy for people to live all these teachings in modern life. Yoga is not about being perfect or sitting still for a long time. It is about bringing peace into your everyday moments. Even small steps can make a big difference. A part of yoga practice is learning about yourself, called svadhyaya. You can do this by thinking quietly, writing your thoughts, or reading about yoga. When you understand yourself more, you can let go of old habits and live better.

Yoga is a path that you take your whole life. It is not a race. It shows us how to live with balance between effort and rest, discipline and gentleness, movement and calmness.

As you keep practicing, remember to be patient and kind to yourself. Take the steps that feel right for you now and enjoy your own journey. Yoga is a way to live with peace and happiness in your body, mind, and heart.

Elle Sirilak will continue to share more each month, helping you to bring the true meaning of yoga into your life one small step at a time.

Elle Sirilak is a KPJAYI Level 2 teacher from Thailand who teaches across Asia and Europe. She is known for her expertise in female Ashtanga practice. Currently busy traveling, she shares her insights here monthly.

# Watch Elle Sirilak's video

Gain deeper insight into her story and her expertise

*"WHEN I DO SOMETHING, I WILL TRY MY BEST. IF I CAN ONLY HALF-COMMIT, THEN I WON'T START THE JOURNEY."*

小红书

Elle sirilak



牺牲 Sacrifice



## About Elle

Elle Sirilak is a KPJAYI Authorized Level 2 teacher originally from Thailand, now based in Hangzhou, China. She has taught across Europe and Asia, with highlights including assisting Sharath Jois in Mysore and Laruga Glaser at Purple Valley, Goa. Elle is particularly noted for her understanding of the female body and helping female students reach their full potential in Ashtanga practice. Her personal philosophy: "When I do something, I will try my best. If I can only half-commit, then I won't start the journey." Join her journey here as she explores each limb of this transformative practice.

*maddy hopper*

@maddyhopper\_store



## BKKIFF 2025

# Bangkok International Film Festival Returns

After 17 years, Bangkok International Film Festival has found its footing again.

BKKIFF 2025 ran for 19 days this autumn, screening over 200 films from 40 countries across the city's better cinemas, Major Cineplex, SF Cinema, House Samyan, and Lido Connect.

The programming struck a sensible balance between commercial Thai blockbusters and serious international cinema.

Festival director Dr. Anchalee Chaiworaporn assembled a lineup that respected both local audiences and visiting industry professionals. No small feat in a market this diverse.

Tee Yod 3 launched the festival, the third instalment of Thailand's most successful horror franchise. Director Anucha Boonyawatana knows his craft and what works for his audience in Thailand.

The film delivers genuine scares without insulting its audience, proof that Thai genre cinema has matured considerably. It grossed 180 million baht domestically before BKKIFF, suggesting local filmmakers finally understand their home market.

Japan's Academy Award submission *Kokuho* closed the festival. At 180 minutes, director Sang-Il Lee's Kabuki drama demands attention. The film follows orphan Kikuo (Ryo Yoshikawa) through post-war Tokyo's theatre world under veteran master Ken Watanabe's tutelage. Lee spent 15 years developing this project. The patience shows. Every frame respects the material without drowning in reverence. It's the kind of film festivals exist to champion, serious, beautiful, uncompromising.

BKKIFF curated intelligently across genres:

KY NAM INN from Vietnam offered restrained post-war family drama.

Director Tran Thanh Huy avoids melodrama, letting his Saigon-set story breathe. A Pale View of Hills brought Japanese-British arthouse meditation on memory and displacement, atmospheric without being precious.

Thailand's own Crushed tackled family crisis with social awareness.

The Bangkok Midnight section served horror devotees well, mixing local supernatural thrillers with international genre selections.

The festival honoured auteur Mom Chao Chatri Chalerm Yukol with screenings of He Chue Karn and Thong Poon Kok Proat Ratchorn Tem Kan. Smart programming, these classics provide context for contemporary Thai cinema's evolution. Young filmmakers could learn from this old master's economy of means.

Beyond screenings, BKKIFF operated a Film Market and Project Market. The \$25,000 prize pool

for emerging filmmakers matters less than the networking opportunities.

Regional cinema needs platforms for co-production and distribution deals.

Bangkok provides that space effectively.

The Multicolour and Reel of the World sections addressed contemporary issues without activism or fatigue.

Environmental crisis, cultural identity, social change, topics handled with appropriate gravity rather than agenda-driven preaching.

BKKIFF 2025 succeeded by understanding its role. Not every festival needs to be Cannes or Berlin.

Bangkok positioned itself as Southeast Asia's most accessible major festival, serious enough for industry professionals, entertaining enough for local audiences.

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Bangkok positioned itself as Southeast Asia's most accessible major festival, serious enough for industry professionals, entertaining enough for local audiences. Most importantly, BKKIFF respects cinema itself. Programming focused on storytelling craft rather than celebrity presence or political posturing. In an increasingly polarised cultural moment, this matters.

The festival's return suggests Bangkok recognises its creative potential. With Thailand's film industry gaining international recognition and the city's position as regional hub, BKKIFF could become genuinely significant. This year's edition provides a promising foundation. Whether it sustains this quality remains to be seen. For now, Bangkok has its film festival back. The city's cultural calendar is richer for it.



# THE LIVES THAT SHAPED CINEMA, TV AND BEYOND

## Reflecting on the Artists We Lost in 2025

By Clive Saunders



### Robert Redford's Quiet Power

Picture yourself not in front of a screen, but somewhere outdoors. Perhaps the Utah mountains, perhaps Sundance, perhaps even a busy New York street.

Robert Redford always seemed cool yet never remote. He brought a particular dignity to everything he touched. "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid" wasn't merely entertainment. It was Redford's way of reminding us that friendship, rebellion, and consequence are substantive things, not simply movie constructs.

When Redford established the Sundance Institute, he wasn't seeking another Hollywood accolade. He created a platform for misfits, risk-takers, dreamers: the sort who scribbled scripts on napkins and shot films on shoestring budgets. That festival became a haven for anyone who didn't quite fit the mould, and Redford's influence meant the gatekeepers of studio cinema had to acknowledge smaller, more truthful stories.

Redford's own story was a restless one.

He refused to remain still, whether making films, championing environmental causes, or speaking up for Native American rights. The best directors are listeners, not merely talkers, and Redford listened, then acted. Even late in life, he seemed more interested in amplifying others: another film from a young director, another independent screenplay, another voice requiring encouragement.

He demonstrated that it's possible to care about art and principle simultaneously. Redford's death in 2025 doesn't simply close a chapter in Hollywood history. It marks a legacy for anyone who wants cinema to signify something beyond box office returns. The conversation he initiated about how film and culture intertwine continues, shifting into new hands and new eras.



## David Lynch's Peculiar Worlds

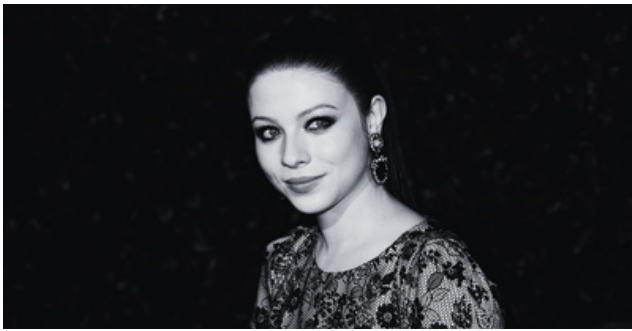
If you watched "Twin Peaks" during its original broadcast, you'll remember the sensation: disorientation, surprise, perhaps a touch of unease.

David Lynch loved playing with boundaries, between genres, between reality and dream, between sense and nonsense. He was an artist who trusted viewers to let go and experience, not simply consume. Lynch's career began with "Eraserhead", a film so strange it took five years to complete. Shot in grainy black and white, it turned domestic life into a nightmare of hissing radiators and deformed infants. "Blue Velvet" brought wider attention, peeling back small-town America's white picket fences to ask: what's hidden underneath? Jeffrey Beaumont finds a severed ear and descends into an underworld of violence and moral confusion.

"Mulholland Drive" arrived in 2001, perhaps his masterwork. It begins as a Hollywood mystery and dissolves into something else entirely: a meditation on dreams, identity, and failed ambition. The film doesn't explain itself. It circles back, contradicts itself, leaves you uncertain what was real. Lynch refused to provide answers, insisting the film meant whatever viewers found in it.

Lynch made a habit of transforming the ordinary into the inexplicable. A flickering lamp, a sudden laugh, a silent stare from Laura Palmer. Red curtains, coffee and cherry pie elevated to the sublime. He wasn't only a director. Lynch painted throughout his life, composed haunting music with Angelo Badalamenti, and offered weather reports on YouTube as though reading poetry.

He practised transcendental meditation for over four decades, and his films operated on their own dream logic. Lynch was less interested in clear answers and far more curious about what happens when things remain mysterious. With his death in 2025, cinema lost not just a director, but an entire way of seeing the world. He showed that audiences could handle ambiguity, that narrative didn't need to be linear. Lynch's films remain as strange and compelling as ever, waiting for each new generation to wonder what exactly they've just witnessed.



## Michelle Trachtenberg Unfinished Business

It's easy to recall Michelle Trachtenberg as Harriet the Spy, with her bright eyes and notebook clutched in hand.

That 1996 film made her a star at just 10 years old, but she didn't settle there. That refusal to coast on early success defined her entire career. When she joined "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" in 2000 as Dawn Summers, she faced a particular challenge.

Dawn was Buffy's younger sister, except Buffy had never had a sister before. The character was literally written into existence, a mystical key given human form, and Trachtenberg had to make viewers care about someone who, within the show's mythology, hadn't existed until that moment. She succeeded brilliantly, earning a Young Artist Award and three Saturn Award nominations.

Trachtenberg grew in front of us, taking on stories about pain and resilience that required more than charm. In "Mysterious Skin", she appeared in Gregg Araki's harrowing film about childhood trauma. For "Killing Kennedy", she played Marina Oswald, delivering around 80% of her dialogue in Russian, the language she'd learned from her mother. But it was "Gossip Girl" that gave her perhaps her most delicious role.

As Georgina Sparks, the scheming force of chaos who tormented Serena van der Woodsen, Trachtenberg embraced being the villain. She appeared across six seasons, and when the "Gossip Girl" reboot launched in 2021, she reached out herself, eager to return.

Those two guest appearances in 2022 would be her final screen work. Michelle's death at 39 was a shock. Her promise remained fresh, her presence sharp and unguarded.

She leaves behind not just memorable roles, but the sense that child stars can, sometimes, show us genuine growth, that it's possible to survive early fame with talent and integrity intact.



## Joan Plowright Beyond Olivier

Dame Joan Plowright wasn't simply part of the scenery. She helped redraw the shape of modern British theatre.

She started early, training at the Old Vic and making her mark at the Royal Court Theatre, that legendary birthplace of new writing and theatrical risk. If you see her name beside Laurence Olivier's,

Joan Plowright was more than the partner of a titan. She was a moderniser in her own right, helping pull the British stage out of dusty drawing rooms and into the urgency of post-war social reality.

Her breakthrough came with "A Taste of Honey", earning her a Tony Award and drawing audiences into a world where difficult truths were handled without sentimentality.

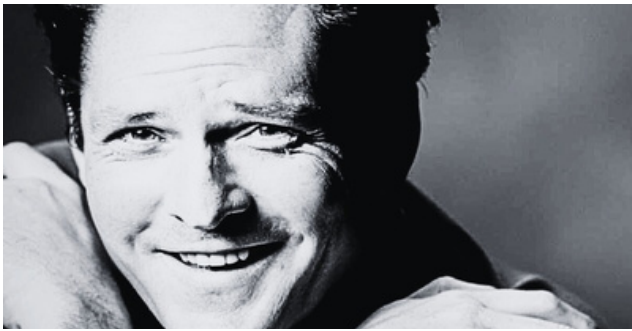
Plowright took up parts that challenged convention, sometimes bringing the first interracial kiss to the stage, other times playing against type with earthy humour and un-blinkered vitality.

She was, in critics' words, "perhaps the greatest Anglophone actor of the 20th century", equally comfortable with Shaw and Ionesco as she was navigating the kitchen-sink realism that shook off decades of theatrical repression.

Plowright's film career was equally substantial.

There's her Oscar-nominated work in "Enchanted April", formidable turns in "Equus" and "Avalon", and later, the dignified lead in "Mrs Palfrey at the Claremont". Television, too: Golden Globes for miniseries, Emmy nominations for parts as textured as the roles she built on stage. Even as macular degeneration took much of her sight, Plowright delayed retirement, working for as long as the words would stick.

Her influence reached far beyond lines learned and roles played. She mentored younger actors, championed new writing, and modelled a kind of robust, patient generosity. Her outsider's spirit, never simply conforming, helped remake the institutions she inherited.



## Michael Madsen's Unscripted Soul

For anyone who appreciates character actors, Michael Madsen was a revelation, always unpredictable, always authentic.

Perhaps you remember the infamous scene in "Reservoir Dogs". Madsen wasn't performing a cliché. He was making us sit with discomfort, uncertainty, the kind of danger it's difficult to manufacture.

That ability followed him across Tarantino films and beyond: "Kill Bill", "The Hateful Eight", dozens of crime dramas. Not all were blockbusters, but every role carried the signature of someone who refused to settle.

Colleagues spoke about Madsen's energy on set, the way a scene could shift when he entered. He wasn't a Hollywood icon in the conventional sense, always photographed at parties, always chasing awards. But he was the sort of actor who knew how to listen, abandon the script if it wasn't working, and let genuine risk shape the performance.

He moved between rough charisma and surprising gentleness, revealing layers you didn't expect in a so-called "tough guy". Off-screen, Madsen wrote poetry and reflected on creative freedom.

His death in 2025 wasn't simply another Hollywood headline. It was noticed by those who value depth, unpredictability, and truthfulness in actors, the people who understand that character work keeps the industry honest.



## Jeff Baena Trusting Chaos

For some, independent film is a moody genre. For Jeff Baena, it was an invitation: go wild, get odd, tell the stories that don't fit anywhere else.

A screenwriter, director, and collaborator, Jeff Baena could take the outline of a genre and twist it until viewers weren't sure where they'd landed.

Baena cut his teeth as a screenwriter, collaborating with David O. Russell on "I Heart Huckabees", that philosophical comedy about existential detectives. It was early evidence of his willingness to embrace the strange. His directorial debut, "Life After Beth", took the zombie genre and made it about grief and denial, the impossibility of letting go. "The Little Hours" repurposed medieval farce into full-throttle comedy, with nuns behaving badly in 14th-century Tuscany.

Then came "Horse Girl", perhaps his most personal work. Co-written with Alison Brie, it followed a woman's descent into paranoia and possible psychosis. The film refused easy answers, trusting viewers to sit with discomfort as reality fractured. Baena's direction was patient, compassionate, never exploiting Sarah's unravelling for spectacle.

Throughout his career, Baena loved letting his cast improvise, find the strange edge, staying behind the camera and letting chaos breathe until something real appeared. He worked often with the same actors, building a repertory company: Aubrey Plaza, his partner; Brie; Molly Shannon; Fred Armisen. These weren't vanity projects but genuine collaborations where trust allowed risk.

When Baena died in early 2025, the tributes came quickly. His death at 47 felt impossibly premature, a career cut short just as his voice was becoming more assured. If independent cinema today feels a little bolder, celebrates randomness, and leaves room for oddball stories, it's because Baena drew the map and invited everyone along.

He showed that you could make films about anxiety and grief without being grim, that comedy and pathos weren't opposites but companions, and that the strangest stories often tell us the most about being human.



## Julian Holloway Films Familiar Face

Julian Holloway made you feel at home in British comedy.

His turns in the "Carry On" films weren't the shouting centrepieces but rather the wry, knowing foils that gave the whole ensemble its distinctive shape. A son of Stanley Holloway, Julian carried more than a famous name. He carried the tradition of careful, collaborative work that makes British acting so enduring and robust.

Born into theatrical lineage, Holloway understood the craft from the inside. His father's legacy in "My Fair Lady" and beyond might have cast a long shadow, but Julian carved his own path through British entertainment. He drifted between genres and generations with remarkable ease, lending his voice to animation, his presence to television, and his timing to film comedy that defined an era.

Beyond the double entendres and seaside postcard humour of the Carry On genre, Holloway built a career on versatility. He appeared in everything from "The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes" to voicing characters in children's animation, always bringing that same dependable craft.

People who worked with him remember not just the dry wit, but the reliability, the professionalism, the sense you could trust the scene to land if Julian was involved.

His death reminds us that sometimes the finest performers are also the most generous colleagues, the ones who make everyone else look good, who understand that ensemble work requires ego set aside in service of something larger. The British acting tradition owes much to people like Holloway, who showed up, did the work, and left everything better than they found it.

This year, we lost people who made cinema what it is: restless, strange, assured, and never finished. It falls to those still here to keep telling those kinds of stories, to push boundaries, take risks, and let art change with the times.

# One Create

Lifestyle & Design Zine

Issue #4



PRODUCER  
DIRECTOR  
WRITER  
ACTOR

CLIVE SAUNDERS

MASSIVE  
INTERVIEW  
SPECIAL!

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Edition Click [Here](#)

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THE  
**BANGKOK**  
งานในกรุงเทพฯ  
**JOB**

YOU WIN..BUT YOU LOSE!

One Create Magazine



proud to support

A STORY  
OF CRIME  
& COMEDY

1



BEN FEITELSON  
LEANNA CHEA  
CLIVE SAUNDERS

THE  
**BANGKOK**  
JOB



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YOU WIN... BUT YOU LOSE!

MONKEY FILMS presents THE BANGKOK JOB a film by CLIVE SAUNDERS  
BEN FEITELSON, LEANNA CHEA, CLIVE SAUNDERS with GRANT RUSSELL, CHRISTOPHE TEX, SARA CORSO AND VICTOR TEITELBAUM  
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS: GUY BURNETT, GUY HENNINGSON, GUY MORGAN, GUY PEARCE, GUY RITCHIE, GUY WILSON  
PRODUCED BY CLIVE SAUNDERS AND BEN FEITELSON  
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: AYMERICK PILARSKI  
EDITED BY ANDRZEJ DRINGELIS  
ORIGINAL MUSIC BY SIMON WEBSTER  
COSTUME DESIGNER: ANNE MCGEE  
HAIR: SAFAER SAN ROBINSON-HORLEY  
SECOND UNIT CINEMATOGRAPHER: TAN FRANK  
FIRST ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: TOP TAPPA  
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS: GUY BURNETT, GUY HENNINGSON, GUY MORGAN, GUY PEARCE, GUY RITCHIE, GUY WILSON  
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FIRST ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: TOP TAPPA

Release Date TBA  
THE BANGKOK JOB  
MOVIE

0 20409

# Time to Watch Yourself.



## Apple Watch Series 11

Apple's flagship delivers its most comprehensive health and safety suite ever. The Series 11 now offers hypertension risk notifications and a color-coded sleep score, giving users actionable insights about high blood pressure and sleep quality. Its Ion-X glass is twice as scratch-resistant as previous models, and titanium editions sport ultra-durable sapphire crystal. The watch runs on the S10 chip, powering a crisp always-on display, 5G cellular, and an even faster user interface.

Battery life jumps to a true 24 hours with fast charging (8 hours in 15 minutes), and up to 38 hours in power-saving mode. Activity and wellness features are state-of-the-art: heart rate, ECG, blood oxygen, temperature, cycle and hearing health, plus retroactive sleep scoring. The new "Workout Buddy" (powered by Apple Intelligence) adapts to your routines and nudges you to stay active.

It's remarkably thin but still water-resistant, with new colors including space gray, jet black, and rose gold. Downsides? Battery life still can't touch Garmin's multisport watches, and iPhone exclusivity means Android fans are out of luck. For iOS users who want seamless health, fitness, and smart features in a single, stylish package, Series 11 is as good as it gets.



## Samsung Galaxy Watch 8

Samsung's latest Galaxy Watch is one of 2025's most advanced Wear OS wearables and a major step forward for health tech on Android. The display is eye-poppingly bright (3,000 nits), encased in a case that feels lighter and more comfortable than its predecessor. Health upgrades include industry-first features: sleep apnea detection, vascular load monitoring, a personal "antioxidant index" (measured via a thumb sensor), and a comprehensive sleep analysis tool that now suggests optimal bedtime routines and tracks overnight wellness.

Its dual GPS and running coach help athletes achieve new goals, while casual users benefit from extensive auto-exercise detection and daily "Energy Score" wellness advice through Samsung Health. The battery lasts 30 hours in regular use, 2-3 days with features conservatively managed, and it charges wirelessly via USB-C. Samsung stays ahead with deep Android integration, voice control, and "Wellness Tips" that adapt over time as the AI learns your health patterns.

Drawbacks? Battery is better than Apple but still won't match Garmin or Amazfit, and some metrics (antioxidant test, for example) may feel a little gimmicky for less serious users. Still, for Android fans seeking the best of health, notification, and style, the Galaxy Watch 8 is outstanding.

## Fitbit Sense 2



Fitbit's Sense 2 is a highly polished choice for anyone serious about tracking mood, stress, sleep, and exercise. With a slim, lighter redesign, it offers a 6-day battery life—trumping the biggest names for longevity. The Sense 2's continuous EDA sensor tracks all-day stress response, HRV, and body temperature. Sleep tracking, GPS, and workout auto-detection remain robust, and health data flows into Fitbit Premium for deep insights. Unique to this model is passive stress monitoring, offering real-time feedback to help manage daily pressures.

The AMOLED display is crisp, and it remains comfortable 24/7, including sleep. On the downside, smart features have been trimmed: no third-party apps, music storage, or Google Assistant, and some functions (like the ECG) sit behind a Fitbit Premium paywall. Heart rate accuracy is good but not best-in-class for serious athletes, and auto-sport tracking can still be inconsistent.

If you care more about holistic wellness and battery life than running every app from your wrist, the Sense 2 remains a compelling and affordable contender.

## Garmin Lily Active 2



A beautifully petite fitness smartwatch designed for women—with big upgrades. The Lily Active 2 adds built-in GPS and nearly double the battery life, lasting up to 9 days on a single charge. It tracks heart rate, sleep, SpO2, and multiple activity types, perfect for users who want stamina and style on smaller wrists. The patterned touchscreen lends elegance without sacrificing utility, and the Garmin Connect app is free for data review. No barometric altimeter or color display, keeping things simple and focused. Quick-change bands invite personal style, making the Lily Active 2 the go-to for active women who value both tech and fashion.

## Google Pixel Watch 4



Google's flagship watch merges luxury features with Wear OS smarts and advanced Fitbit wellness tracking. The domed display is gorgeous, and everything feels premium from rapid charging (50% in 15 minutes) to enhanced haptics and repairable battery. Satellite emergency connectivity sets it apart for outdoor safety, and dual-band GPS plus Gemini Assistant bring real utility. The Wear OS experience is clean and fast, with up to 24 hours battery. Fitness and sleep statistics are much improved, offering actionable data on the Pixel Watch itself. Occasional band quirks and less-than-Garmin longevity aside, it's easily the best Android smartwatch right now.

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## Apple Watch Ultra 3



The adventurer's dream with the biggest display ever on an Apple Watch, titanium case, dual-frequency GPS, and built-in satellite SOS. Battery life soars to 42 hours (72 in power save), designed for rugged expeditions and endurance athletes. New Workout Buddy leverages Apple's intelligence for personalized training tips, while all critical health sensors are included. Fast charging means you're rarely off your wrist. For multisport tracking, off-grid communication, and robust safety features,

Ultra 3 is unmatched. It's big and bold—not for tiny wrists or minimalist tastes—but the most complete sports watch for iPhone users.

## Honorable Mentions



### Honor Watch 5 Ultra

Fresh, lightweight, and health-centric, the Honor 5 Ultra is a favorite for smaller wrists or anyone valuing ease of use and affordability. Fitness and sleep basics are well-covered, and the look stands out in a crowded space.



### Pebble Time 2 (Classic Redesign)

The retro option for those who miss always-on controls, week-plus battery, and basic notifications—proving old-school can still compete with the best in style and simplicity.

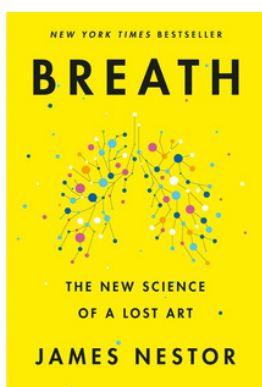
Welcome to our book recommendations. Here you'll find titles that deserve wider readership, works that might have slipped past the usual channels but merit your attention.

We've assembled these recommendations with care. Some offer fresh thinking on familiar subjects. Others challenge conventional wisdom. A few simply tell a good story exceptionally well. What they share is quality and a certain independence of spirit.

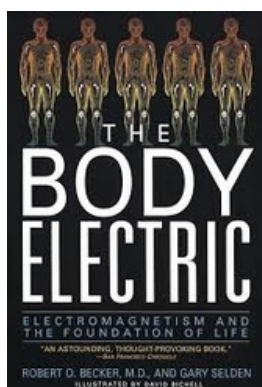
Consider this your starting point for what to read next. No grand promises, no life-changing guarantees. Just well-chosen books that respect your intelligence and time.



**TOGETHER WE CAN:** by Peter Baines OEM - Practical guide to developing mental toughness through extreme endurance. Peter offers straightforward techniques for managing doubt, pain and exhaustion whilst pursuing seemingly impossible goals. His 1400-kilometre run across Thailand demonstrates how unwavering purpose and collective support can push capability beyond perceived limitations through proven psychological strategies. (see full review)



**BREATH - The New Science of a Lost Art:** by James Nestor  
Nestor transforms breathing from autonomic function into conscious practice. Through personal experimentation and scientific investigation, he reveals how modern humans have forgotten to breathe properly. Accessible science meets ancient wisdom in this compelling argument that changing how we breathe can transform our health. Essential, practical reading.

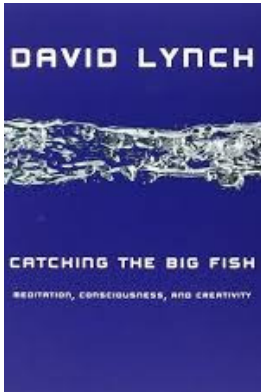


**The Body Electric:** by Robert O. Becker  
Pioneering exploration of the body's electrical systems and their role in healing. Becker's research into bioelectricity and regeneration challenges conventional medical thinking. Dense with scientific detail yet accessible, it reveals how electromagnetic fields influence cellular repair. Groundbreaking work that remains relevant decades after publication. Required reading for understanding body-mind connection.



**The Outlaw Trail: A Journey Through Time** by Robert Redford  
Redford's personal pilgrimage retracing Butch Cassidy's legendary route through the American West. Part travelogue, part historical meditation, it captures vanishing landscapes and the mythology of outlaws who chose freedom over conformity. Redford's reverence for wilderness and independent spirit shines through intimate prose. A poignant reflection on preservation, legacy and the cost of progress. Beautifully elegiac.

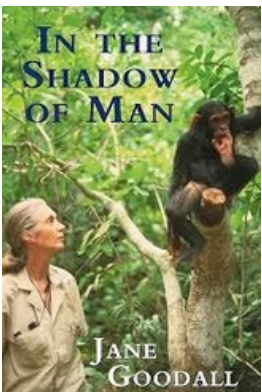
In respect and memory of Robert Redford (1936-2025)



**Catching the Big Fish: Meditation, Consciousness, and Creativity:**  
by David Lynch

Lynch's deceptively simple guide to the creative process through Transcendental Meditation. Short, enigmatic chapters mirror his films: accessible surface, mysterious depths. He argues ideas are like fish—meditate deep enough and you catch the big ones. Practical wisdom without pretension from cinema's greatest surrealist. A masterclass in trusting the subconscious and honouring the inexplicable.

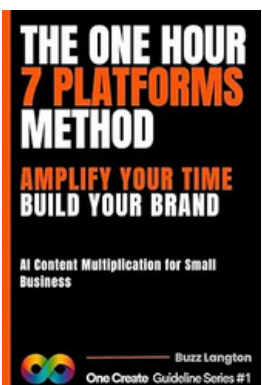
In respect and memory of David Lynch (1946-2025)



**In the Shadow of Man** by Jane Goodall

Goodall's groundbreaking account of living amongst chimpanzees in Tanzania's Gombe Stream. Her patient observation revealed tool use, complex social structures and emotional depth that revolutionised our understanding of primates and humanity itself. Written with scientific rigour and profound empathy, it reads like intimate correspondence from the forest. A testament to curiosity, courage and the power of simply paying attention.

In respect and memory of Dame Jane Goodall (1934-2025)



**The One Hour 7 Platforms Method** by Buzz Langton

An essential shortcut for small businesses and solopreneurs who need maximum visibility but have minimal time. Langton's "create once, multiply everywhere" workflow lets you repurpose one solid business story into tailored content for seven platforms in under an hour.

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Available now on Amazon Kindle.

Concise, modern, and actionable—this is a must-read for anyone serious about amplifying their brand in today's AI-powered landscape.

# TOGETHER WE CAN

## IN REVIEW

Twenty years after the Boxing Day tsunami devastated Thailand's coastline, Peter Baines chose to run 1400 kilometres across Thailand in 26 days: 33 marathons back-to-back.



The founder of Hands Across the Water charity could have marked the anniversary with speeches or fundraising dinners. Instead, this 57-year-old former forensic investigator embarked on something sports psychologists classify as elite ultra-endurance.

Peter's narrative strikes immediately with its brutal honesty. This isn't a seasoned ultra-marathoner attempting another record. The book's structure mirrors the run itself: methodical, relentless, building momentum through accumulated small victories. He details the medical scare three weeks before departure when a leg infection nearly ended everything, the brutal Thai heat, and the psychological warfare of running whilst your body screams for mercy.

What emerges is a portrait of resilience that feels both inspirational and achievable. Peter emphasises that success came not from superhuman ability but from unwavering intent supported by meticulous preparation and an extraordinary team.

The book's greatest strength lies in its exploration of teamwork under extreme conditions. The "Together We Can" philosophy is the operational framework that made the impossible possible. Peter assembles a crew of eleven: his wife CT (Claire), her parents Chris and Wendy, running partner Greg Wallace, medic Claire Oliver, and Thai team members who become family.

The book shines brightest in its crew perspectives: interwoven narratives from team members that reveal how shared purpose can transform strangers into something approaching family. CT's reflection on balancing CEO responsibilities with supporting her husband is particularly powerful, offering insights into leadership under pressure that any business professional would value.

Mae Thiew, the Buddhist monk who unexpectedly joined the run and cycled behind Peter for most of the journey, emerges as a profound figure representing service without expectation of recognition. Her decision to leave just before the finish line, having accomplished her self-appointed mission of ensuring Peter's safety, offers a meditation on achievement that transcends Western notions of completion and celebration.

For wellness enthusiasts, the book provides a compelling case study in mental resilience. Peter's approach to managing the run's psychological demands offers practical wisdom: breaking impossible tasks into manageable segments, embracing routine as an anchor, and reframing pain as temporary rather than permanent.

His account of Day 14, running with excruciating shin splints for 18 kilometres whilst tears streamed down his face, reads like a thesis on the relationship between physical and mental endurance. The key insight isn't that we should ignore pain, but that we can choose our response to it.

The book also doesn't shy away from discussing the "darkness of succeeding": the profound emptiness that followed completion. This honest exploration of post-achievement depression adds crucial balance to what could have been a simplistic triumph narrative.

Whilst the running provides the book's framework, its heart lies in the ongoing impact of Hands Across the Water. Peter weaves the charity's 20-year history throughout, from supporting tsunami orphans to creating sustainable pathways for hundreds of children to build independent lives. The run raised £670,000, falling short of the \$1 million goal but demonstrating that even "spectacular failures" can create profound impact.

The book serves as both memoir and blueprint for purpose-driven leadership. Peter's journey from police forensic investigator to charity founder to ultra-endurance athlete illustrates how crisis can become catalyst, and how individual action can create collective change.

For those interested in genuine wellbeing, "Together We Can" offers a refreshing perspective that extends far beyond personal optimisation. Peter demonstrates that true wellness might come not from perfecting ourselves, but from dedicating ourselves to something larger than personal achievement.

His philosophy that "to find growth we have to leave comfort behind" resonates throughout, challenging readers to consider what impossible things they might attempt if they focused more on intent than perceived limitations. The book suggests that our greatest constraints might not be physical or financial, but imaginative.

"Together We Can" succeeds because it balances the extraordinary with the relatable. Peter's achievement is undeniably remarkable, yet his path feels accessible to anyone willing to combine clear purpose with persistent action. The book serves as both inspiring memoir and practical guide for anyone contemplating their own version of the impossible.

In an era of individual wellness pursuits, Peter reminds us that our greatest achievements might come not from perfecting ourselves in isolation, but from committing ourselves to something that requires everything we have to give, and discovering that with the right people beside us, we have more to give than we ever imagined.

Essential reading for anyone needing an insight on giving more and achieving a better self.

Rating: ★★★★★



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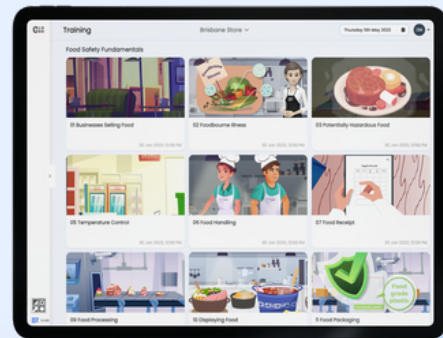
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