A Woman Learning Thai… and some men too ;-)  

Expat making her way through the Thai language and culture

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Very Thai Photo Exhibition: Bangkok

By Catherine Wentworth • October 1, 2012
Very Thai: Everyday Popular Culture…

As a tourist to Thailand I enjoyed experiencing a country so very different from where I was living at the time, Brunei Darussalam. Being able to buy booze without leaving the country was also an attraction.

But when I finally moved to Thailand I switched from a carefree tourist mindset to expat mode. The country around me, previously a kaleidoscope of sounds, smells, and clashing colours, started to come into focus.

Along with the focus came questions. Like, why do Thai taxis have those dangly bits hanging from their mirrors? And why do beggars crawl face first along the sidewalk? And why are Thai police uniforms so darn tight?

When I asked other expats their answer was always the illuminating (not) “I dunno”. Being me, I needed more, so I started my own search into the **why’s** of Thailand. Hit and miss, the answers to a few Thai quirks are discussed in posts on WLT.

Then I found [Very Thai: Everyday Popular Culture](#), by Philip Cornwel-Smith. Very Thai answered many of my “why” questions, and some I hadn’t thought of yet. And now I hear there’s a [Very Bangkok in the works](#). Excellent!

These days, when a new expat breezes into Thailand, I don’t arrive at their housewarming party with the obligatory bottle of wine and chocolates. I gift them with a copy of Very Thai instead.

**Very Thai Photo Exhibition…**

On Sunday I jumped into a taxi to view the [Very Thai Exhibition in front of ZEN in Bangkok](#).
You really can’t miss it as the presentation is well placed.

It’s a small exhibition with larger than life-sized photos from Very Thai.
I wasn’t the only one curious, a stream of viewers kept popping in front of my camera.

Many found it easy to walk along the exhibition slowly, savoring the eyecandy as they went.
This photo was my favourite eyecandy of all.

While there it came to me that the photos from the exhibition would be the perfect backdrop for smartphone snappers in Thailand. Because, except for in grocery stores (where it’s off-limits to take photos of veggies) you’ll find people posing in front of just about anything. And I still don’t know why that is.

To get all the latest news about Very Bangkok and Very Thai, follow Philip on Facebook at VeryThaiBook or on twitter @verybangkok, or bookmark his website: Very Thai.

Sidenote: the editor of Very Thai is Alex Kerr. You might remember the review I wrote of Alex’s excellent Bangkok Found awhile back. And seriously, if you want to know more about Thailand, you couldn’t go wrong with both Very Thai and Bangkok Found on your bookshelf.

Categories: Thailand
Tags: features, Thai Culture, Thailand, Very Thai, Why?

Do you have questions about the quirks of the Thai language? Send them over and we’ll do our best.
In addition...

...here are a few more:

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10 Responses to “Very Thai Photo Exhibition: Bangkok”


   Disclaimer: The last photo has been doctored. The lovely Thai lass generously posed in front of a different set of photos but I felt driven to move her back a bit (all the way to the beginning of the exhibition).

2. Danyelle Franciosa Oct 2nd, 2012 at 6:29 am

   That was extremely beautiful and great photo exhibition in Bangkok. The place are great and good for relaxation. Thanks a lot for sharing this!

3. Catherine Wentworth Oct 3rd, 2012 at 8:55 am
Thanks for stopping by Danyelle :-) The exhibitions is so colourful and fun, I’m expecting to see photos on FB with different people posing in front of the posters.

4. **Amy Oct 4th, 2012 at 3:22 am**

Love that exhibition! I have not yet read the book, though I really REALLY would love to get my hands on a copy. I plan to buy one when we visit again. Another book with great photos is Bangkok Inside Out by Daniel Ziv and Guy Sharett, but I think it is out of print. It caused a stir with Thailand’s Ministry of Culture with the photos of some of the sex workers in the red-light district.

Amy recently posted…[Modifying food choices even further](#)

5. **Catherine Oct 4th, 2012 at 5:33 am**

Hi Amy. It if you enjoyed Bangkok Inside Out, you are going to be blown away by Very Thai. Philip has a passion for hunting down the tiny details of the popular culture and history of Thailand and it shows in the book. You can get Very Thai on amazon.com but if that’s what’ll take you to get back here, even for a visit, then I’m all for it :-)  

Catherine recently posted…[Thai Navy Dances Gangnam Style: Youtube Sensations](#)

6. **Martyn Oct 4th, 2012 at 6:54 pm**

Catherine – Thailand has many strange ways and many unanswered questions including the one shown in your bottom photo. Why do Thai women make the Thai two finger salute when posing for photos and what does it mean? I tried to answer that one myself a couple of years back and came to the conclusion it dated back to Siam’s war with Burma in 1767 and their(Siam’s) soldiers index and middle fingers used to draw a bow. If taken prisoner the Burmese would cut them off. However, right or wrong there’s still many answers to Thais strange quirks I’d like to know.

Nice post.

Martyn recently posted…[The Sea Side 2 Restaurant in Udon Thani](#)

7. **Catherine Oct 5th, 2012 at 6:48 am**
Thanks Martyn. I remember when you wrote the article about the two fingered salute. When I went to Burma early this year I took a photo of a Burmese girl who gave the same. As soon as I pointed my camera at her, just like the gal in the photo above, she whipped out those two fingers. So perhaps it’s doesn’t have anything to do with Burma vrs Thailand? Or… it could be that she knows nothing of the history behind the finger salute. An unsolved mystery.

8.

Martyn Oct 5th, 2012 at 2:39 pm

Catherine – Perhaps the Burmese archers made the same sign back to the Siamese. Here’s the link to the post;


Martyn recently posted…The Sea Side 2 Restaurant in Udon Thani

9.

Catherine Wentworth Oct 6th, 2012 at 7:42 am

Martyn, that could be it. Back then armies fought mostly close together (unlike now). So both sides taunting each other makes sense. I need to reread Very Thai to see if there was a mention anywhere (it’s been years).

Catherine Wentworth recently posted…Review: Language Learning Log

10.

Emil Nov 6th, 2012 at 7:19 pm

I bought this book as a present for my parents on my first stay in Thailand. Disappointingly, they never gave it more than a cursory look. Such a shame as I think it still holds up as one of the best insights into Thai culture available in printed form. Your idea of using it as a housewarming gift, Cat, is a magnificent one too. Here’s hoping Very Bangkok is out by the time I make my next trip!

Also if anyone’s still reading this thread, Alex Kerr is the author of a couple of excellent books on Japanese culture (Lost Japan is one, the other slips my mind just now (maybe it’s called Dogs and Demons… not sure). Highly recommended if Japanese culture interests you.

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... post Thai language learning tips and techniques, local quirks and insights of Thailand. Anything Thai language, culture, or travel related.

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"Glossika's Thai Fluency 1 is now shipping. Fluency 1-3 is still at the pre-launch price of $49.99 (will be
Twitter: Women Learning Thai

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yoram: hi i realy like the interview coz i’m learning the thai language by my self .but i realy like to hear...
Liam: Hugh if you’re looking for something else to read, somebody recently posted a link on the...
Angela Savage: Ooh, I thought of another one. Is there an equivalent Thai idiom for ‘No use crying over spilt...
Hugh Leong: Liam, Wow! 45 books. I even found that they have a Who? series too, about famous people in history. But I...
Liam: Interesting. I was looking for a place to buy them and I found this page where you can buy then entire 45 books...

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