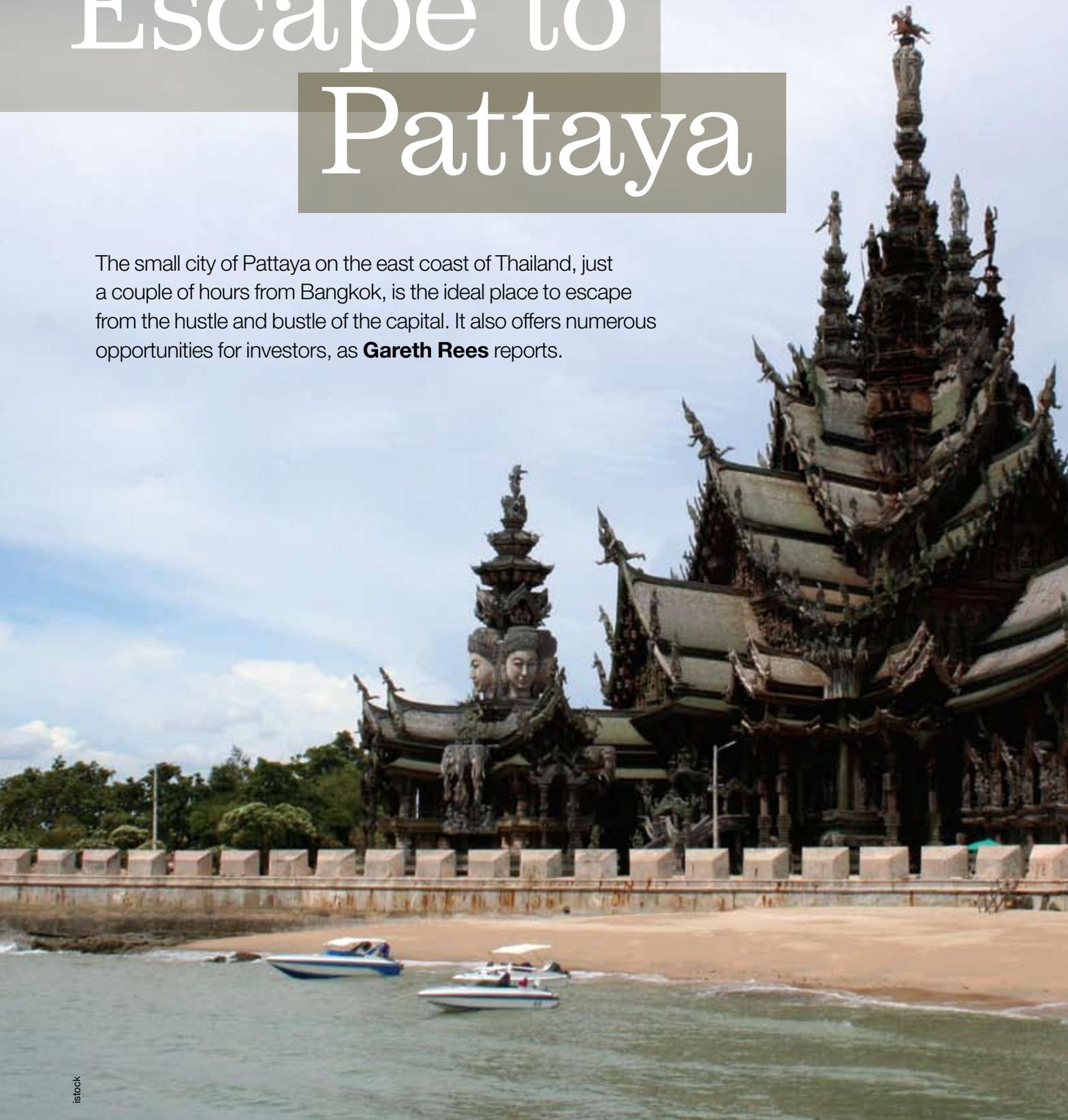


Escape to Pattaya

The small city of Pattaya on the east coast of Thailand, just a couple of hours from Bangkok, is the ideal place to escape from the hustle and bustle of the capital. It also offers numerous opportunities for investors, as **Gareth Rees** reports.





Sanctuary of Truth.

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hailand has a bit of a reputation as the party capital of Asia, a place where hedonists and holidaymakers alike go in search of fun and sun. With the low prices and high temperatures, Bangkok's spirited nightlife and world-renowned tourist magnets like the Full Moon Party in Koh Phangan, Phuket, enticing millions of western tourists every year, the country offers endless opportunities for indulgence.

But Thailand isn't all about living hard and fast. It's home to a large community of expatriates escaping hectic lives in their home countries. Opinion in the business community is that Bangkok is thriving and the city welcomes business people keen to take advantage in their droves. The country is thought to be ripe for investment.

And Bangkok, as one would expect of a capital city, is the business hub – no question. But if you are looking for a destination outside the city for a spot of post-business relaxation for yourself and your family, the place to go is Pattaya.

Formerly a sleepy fishing village on the east coast of the Gulf of Thailand, Pattaya was transformed by the arrival of American servicemen seeking a place to recuperate during their leave from the Vietnam War in the 1960s and is now a popular, but not too popular, beach resort city. As you would expect of a resort community, Pattaya offers limitless entertainment opportunities for both thrill seekers and sightseers.

Golfers can hit the fairway at one of the 20 golf courses on Thailand's east coast, while the coastal location means water sports galore, from sailing to snorkelling, and the lush hillsides offer opportunities for hiking and trekking. The area offers stunning beaches in abundance, polo fields, an elephant village, a water park, island excursions, go karting, bowling, a crocodile park, tropical botanical gardens and numerous other attractions. Culture vultures can check out the Sanctuary of Truth, a wooden temple currently under construction at the bequest of local millionaire, Lek Viriyaphant. It is designed in the ancient Khmer style, riddled with contemporary religious art and won't be finished until 2025.

But the highlight is the Silverlake vineyard. Who knew they produced wine in Thailand? Situated beside the watchful Khao Chee Chan Budha Image, another of the region's sightseeing gems, Silverlake covers 480 acres of land and grows both table and wine grapes, producing its own Silverlake Shiraz and Silverlake Chenin Blanc for the consumer market. The vineyard also hosts a jazz festival and offers tours. Make sure you eat at the Silverlake Wine and Grill while you're there too; the Italian food is excellent.



Down to business

The developers who spotted Pattaya's potential...

- Green Heritage Group
greenheritagegroup.com
- The Tamarind
thetamarind.co.th

Clockwise from left: The pool, dining pavilion, and bedroom of the Tamarind; scene of northern Pattaya.



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And for those who do want that traditional taste of Thailand, there's no better place to enjoy Pattaya's pleasures than amidst the carnival atmosphere of Walking Street. 'If Pattaya is fun town, then Walking Street is fun street,' exclaims its very own website (walkingstreetpattaya.net). Less than an hour by car from The Tamarind resort, Walking Street is famed for its go-go bars, blinding neon signs and hectic buzz. It's a real eye-opener for anyone who hasn't visited Thailand before, and a welcoming sight for any who have enjoyed the country's famous nightlife. There is also plenty of appetising street food on offer for those seeking culinary adventure. Avoid the pizza joints and order a steaming bowl of broth with delicious mystery contents from one of the carts in the centre of the street.

With all of these myriad attractions in mind, a group of expatriate investors has realised Pattaya's potential and found a niche in the market for an exclusive luxury resort, providing the ideal location for your escape from the city and highlighting a potential investment opportunity.

THE TAMARIND

Located just 90 minutes from the new Bangkok Airport, The Tamarind is a small luxury resort within the gated community of Buraran, lit up by the tropical greenery of the Kao Krating foothills and overlooking the coastline of the Bangsaray Village. The brainchild of expatriate owner Justin Tate it is a unique destination. Offering infinitely more privacy than a hotel, it is a truly luxurious resort and has set a benchmark for future investors and developers in the area to aspire to.

The Tamarind's nine beautiful Balinese style villas can house up to 20 guests, with another three suites located at the adjoining Buraran Clubhouse, only recently completed. There's an ample swimming pool, four-person massage sala, tennis courts, gymnasium, a fully equipped

office and all modcons, including WiFi, a BOSE sound system and a cinema room. There are also 12 staff just a phone call away 24 hours a day, and a driver, masseuses and tennis and fitness instructors on call.

You can enjoy the Sai Kaew or Navy Beach, just a short car journey from The Tamarind. Located within the local Thai Navy base, the semi-private beach is one of the most striking on the east coast.

RAINTREE

And The Tamarind is just the start. Tate's property has inspired plans for further resort development in the area, on a far grander scale.

Business associates of Tate's from Green Heritage Group, a residential and resort property developer and consultancy with offices in Bangkok and Phuket, is planning a vast residential and recreational resort in the Chonburi Hills near The Tamarind, a project they say is a prime investment opportunity.

Raintree, conceptualised by leading Singaporean design firm WOHA, would include both a resort and a gated estate. The green resort built on 105 landscaped acres would be made up of 50 private, walled villas and incorporate rooftop gardens, an organic market garden and a plant nursery. It would also boast a spa and fitness centre run by Miss Universe 2005 Natalie Glebova and a tennis academy comprising ten courts, student accommodation and a clubhouse run by her husband, Thailand's number one professional Paradorn Srichapan.

The gated estate would offer 90 private residential villas with sea and hill views, their own private residence clubhouse and access to the resort's facilities.

Even more ambitious are plans for an international school and playing fields located near the gated community.

Green Heritage Group plans to start work on Raintree in Q1 2010. 🏠