

# The Sail Thailand Rally 2017

By Bert van Muywijk



The poster features a central image of a tropical beach with several wooden kayaks on the sand. Above the image is a circular logo with a sailboat and the text 'Sail Thailand'. Below the image, the poster is divided into sections for 'Event Partners', 'Supporting Partners', and 'Endorsed by'.

**Event Partners**

- SEVENSTAR YACHT TRANSPORT
- PORT TAKOLA YACHT MARINA & BOATYARD
- PHUKET YACHT HAVEN
- SAIL MALAYSIA

**Event Schedule:**

- Langkawi Rally Start - Rebak Marina
- Chalong Lunch - Phuket Yacht Club
- Phuket Welcome Tour
- Krabi Cultural Party - Port Takola
- Phuket Cruisers Market - Phuket Yacht Haven
- Sevenstar Phuket Cruisers Party - Phuket Yacht Haven

**Supporting Partners**

- eastmarine
- SEAP
- NORTHROP JOHNSON
- Yachting
- MARINEWARE-ASIA
- PHUKET YACHT HAVEN

**Endorsed by**

- amazing THAILAND
- PHUKET YACHT HAVEN
- TOURISM MALAYSIA

The lush green coastline is clearly visible. It looks solid and impenetrable from a distance. A river comes out from between the mangrove forest but it is not distinguishable just yet. Checking the Cruising Notes for the exact GPS position the crew of the boat slowly drive closer to the shore. Sure enough, after 10 minutes the river coastline opens up and the yacht can proceed to the the night anchorage upstream.

This must be the dream of every explorer: finding hidden gems with the help of local information.

Long periods of moving on top of the waves of the Pacific Ocean is part of the life of a world cruiser heading towards the Asia-Pacific region. Picture-perfect islands are visited before hitting Australia and/or New Zealand. After a bit of "land-time", a touch of maintenance and good shopping the crew is ready for the Asian region, which is excitingly different from their previous cruising destinations.

## Cruising rallies

In several Asian countries, the ones that are in the 'logical sailing order' for cruisers, initiatives started to organize rallies for those cruisers that want to discover the countries in more detail. Sponsored by the national tourist boards, marinas and other local, national or international companies the rallies are promoting the region and adding value to the discovery of the culture and geography of a country. The world cruisers are quite keen to enroll in a rally because:

- ◆ You're among a community of cruisers
- ◆ Higher level of safety
- ◆ Clearance procedures are made transparent
- ◆ It's a unique way of meeting local people
- ◆ Good fun activities are often organized
- ◆ Getting a real taste of local food at lunches and dinners

When the yachts leave Australia they almost all go visit Indonesia. Hence the Sail Indonesia rally was set up a few years ago and Sail 2 Indonesia followed. In these rallies cruisers slowly make their way to Malaysia where they can participate in the Sail Malaysia rally. There are actually two rallies in Malaysia. One on the West side and later in the year Sail Malaysia East, where they'll make their way to Saba.

Up to this year there was not yet a rally opportunity in Thailand. This now has changed in 2017: Sail Thailand, a rally for visiting yachts from Langkawi to Phuket. The initiative was born over a year ago when Marieke Derks from the Sevenstar Yacht Transport company was approached by the Sail Malaysia organization with a request to look into possibilities for a rally in Thailand. Zara Tremlett from Phuket Yacht Haven Marina and Marieke were organizing the 4<sup>th</sup> Phuket Cruisers Party. Through a rally the Party could become a more regional event and hence it was decided to make that happen. The Sail Thailand rally was born. Of course this was only possible with the help of sponsors whose logos are depicted in the picture above.

## Rally start in Langkawi

On January 10, 2017 at 9 am in Rebak Marina in Langkawi the crews of 9 sailing and motor yachts assembled for a joint breakfast being the official start of the Sail Thailand rally, the 10<sup>th</sup> participating yacht would join them in Chalong, Phuket. Cruising Notes (with suggested routes) and other Information was handed out, presentations were made and soon the participants were on their way.

*“Beautiful breakfast in Reebak, great chance to meet other participants”  
“Great place to start the rally!”*



Rebak Marina, Langkawi.

*“Sail Thailand is a positive step to the creation of the ASEAN cruising agenda. Together with Sail Malaysia and Sail Indonesia, we now have a complete route around ASEAN whereby yachts from Australasia and other parts of the world can sail in a 2-3 year loop. I wish Sail Thailand every success in the future and Marieke is the perfect person to drive this initiative.”  
Sazli Kamal Basha, Director Sail Malaysia*

## Clearance in Chalong, Thailand

The next stop for the yachts was Chalong in Phuket on January 16<sup>th</sup>, which gave the yachts 6 days to explore the picturesque islands and anchorages in the South of Thailand. After the clearing into Thailand, facilitated by Porntip Logistics, the crews were treated to a delicious lunch at Phuket Yacht Club. A visit to the “Big Buddha” statue up in the hills kicked off the Phuket Welcome Tour. This was followed by a tour at the Chalong Bay Rum distillery (with some of the rum available for a tasting session...). After all these efforts a well-deserved foot massage was on offer according to the famous Thai foot reflexology method. The event sponsor for the Phuket Welcome Tour was East Marine.



Lunch at Phuket Yacht Club.

*“Excellent lunch and the afternoon program was once again superbly organized. Felt very spoilt with foot massage”*



## Port Takola, Krabi

On January 19 the Sail Thailand rally participants sailed across Phang Nga Bay to Krabi. Here, at the river leading to Krabi Town we find Port Takola Marina, currently under construction.

Port Takola was the event sponsor for the afternoon and evening. They also kindly organized 2 land tours and different kinds of transport the next day. Although the yachts still had to anchor outside in the river they could enter the marina basin in the afternoon with their tenders for some welcome words, refreshments and an elephant welcoming party. In the evening the Krabi Cultural

Party took place hosted by Port Takola. An excellent dinner was served at the nearby Kolek Cuisine restaurant followed by lively dancing and singing to the tunes of a live band. Over a 100 people attended. Next to the 'boaties' quite a few local authorities including the vice-governor of the Krabi Province, sailors and representatives from the marine industry were present at this event that also showed traditional Thai dancing by a group of endearing school children. Many participants appreciated the free flow of beer and wine.

The next day the participants could choose between two different day excursions or visiting Krabi Town for shopping and sightseeing. The excursions to choose from were either a visit to an artisan village followed by a visit to a fairy-like river and hot-springs in a mangrove forest. Or one could go

on a jungle tour followed by a visit to the famous 'Tiger Temple' just outside Krabi town.



*The catamaran "Twenty Twenty Vision" of Jimmy MacKey had the scoop: the very first yacht ever in Port Takola!*

*"Our first time in Krabi and loved it. Port Takola will be an excellent destination in time. This stop was so well organised with pick-ups from boat etc. The restaurant was a superb event, food and ambiance ..."*

*"Night time was the best I have ever been to. Great venue, great crowd, great staff and totally awesome food and wine!!!"*

*"It is a great pleasure for Krabi and Port Takola to be involved in a first edition of the Sail Thailand Rally. Krabi is renowned for it's many picturesque sailing destinations such as Railey, Koh Hong and Phi Phi, but it is less known for it's onshore attraction. There are captivating nature destinations, culture, and local scenes that are waiting for sailors to be explored. Krabi is also a waterfront town with more marine facilities and service rapidly becoming available."*

*Matthew Na Nagara, General Manager  
Port Takola*

## Phuket Yacht Haven Marina

It rapidly became 24 January, with the final stop and already the end of the very first 2017 Sail Thailand rally at Phuket Yacht Haven marina in the North of Phuket. Of course it goes without saying that ending the rally should be a memorable happening. Two last events were lined up for the participants. In the afternoon at The Deck of the marina restaurant a Cruisers Market was organized: a fun and sometimes instructive afternoon full of hands-on activities and demonstrations. The target audience for the afternoon event was, as signified by the title, cruisers in general. In the various stands they were invited to learn a variety of skills:

- ◆ massage your own hands and feet while cruising
- ◆ fold a towel to create a beautiful swan or other animal by Galileo Maritime Academy
- ◆ learn Thai for cruisers ("I need a sailmaker")
- ◆ make your own herbal compress for a Thai hot herbal compress massage
- ◆ ropework and rigging demonstrations and Q&A by David Samuelsson

Also information stands were present with many 'need to know' facts like where to buy great food, where to rent a car or how to transport my yacht to the Mediterranean. All very useful pieces of information for visiting cruisers. All companies on the Yacht Haven premises were present to give information.

## The Grande Finale

With 160 guests attending the Sevenstar Phuket Cruisers Party 2017 was fully booked. Already in its fifth year this Party has become one of those events that is on all cruisers' calendars. This year all Sail Thailand participants were automatically invited. Hence the remaining tickets were very sought after. The Deck at Phuket Yacht Haven proved again to be a superb venue for such a big party with its staff as always very professional, kind and helpful.

After the welcome cocktails, Marieke Derks took the floor to announce the official end of the Sail Thailand rally while thanking the rally participants and sponsors involved. Having finished this one, Sazli Kamal Basha from Sail Malaysia presented details of the next rally: Passage to the East which will end in Sabah and will start in April 2017.

A representative of the rally participants grabbed the mic and lauded the program, the hospitality and the professional organization of the last two weeks.

Dinner buffet was on the table after these kind words and everybody 'dugin'. Thanks to the Tourist Authority of Thailand elegant Thai dancers accompanied by a Thai band performed a great dancing show. Of course the visitors started to become restless after seeing that and from that moment with live entertainment available the dance floor was never empty until late.

*"We thoroughly enjoyed this rally and would recommend it very highly to other boaties. The itinerary, organization and events were excellent"*  
Rita and David Jackson, SY Beachhouse 57

*"Congratulations on a great Rally. We will be encouraging friends to join next year and will possibly do it again if we are in the area."*  
John and Barbara Bayntun on SY Murundi

*"The positive feedback we have received from the participants of Sail Thailand has encouraged us hugely. Being the first year it became obvious that some details need to be looked into while other aspects can be improved. However the survey we did after the rally showed us that we have created something valuable. So we're looking forward to another episode of Sail Thailand. Thank you participants and thank you sponsors!!"*  
Marieke Derks

**The Sail Thailand rally is an initiative of Marieke Derks, Sevenstar Yacht Transport, Asia.**

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Phuket Cruisers Market.

*"The market was awesome. Hands on was just great. The presenters of everything were well informed, funny and personable. Certainly didn't get bored ... so much fun!"*

*"The Cruisers Market was a very fun and positive way to welcome visiting cruisers. And ... this year again, the Party was just great fun with huge numbers of guests. Definitely next year again!"*

Zara Tremlett, Marina Manager Phuket Yacht Haven

