

'Fighting' for a Good Life

Chai. What does having a good life mean, to you?

"A good life is to stay where you want to stay, have a good job doing what you want to do and have family," proclaims "Chai" Somchai Intajan, while contentedly perched at his establishment located amid one of Chiang Mai's labyrinth-like sois. "If you want more than this, it means you're never happy."

Special Food	
Fruit juice / Shake / Smoothies	55
Banana - Strawberry - Yoghurt	55
Banana - Pineapple - Coconut - Yoghurt	55
Mango - Orange - Yoghurt	55
Passion fruit - Orange - Yoghurt	55
Orange - Coconut - Pineapple	55
Apple - Coconut - Ginger	55
Justis	60
Mojito	80
Frozen Mojito	90
Piña Colada	100
Chang Chalaad Cocktail	120
Coffee & Tea	
Thai Lemon Ice Tea	45
Chai's Thai Spicy Herb Tea	45
Irish Coffee	100
Desserts/Crepes	
- Chocolate	70
- Banana	
- Banana - Chocolate	80
- Lemon juice - Brown sugar	
- Crepes Saltes	80
- Ham	
- Cheese	
- Ham - Cheese	95
Tiramisu	60
Ice Cream	30
French Salad	50
French Salad	50

“When you wake up in Chiang Mai, it's nice, every day.”

“Chai” Somchai Intajan



"'Fighting' (in life) is when you are looking for what exactly you want to do," he added. "I don't fight any more, I am quiet, meaning enjoying my life... And Chiang Mai offers this."

Chai's life hasn't always been this euphoric. Although Chiang Mai is currently his life-parking-lot, his journey continues to include a high-powered thirst for connecting with others while pioneering a route tailored just for him.

A Thai-born global citizen, Chai enjoys a wide and deep perspective on Chiang Mai life – why he believes it's finer than most other locations (such as Bangkok), is convinced this area and its peoples are fostering his life goals, and on the socio-economic changes affecting the cultural map of Thailand's Jewel of the North.

Chai, 39-years-old, polished up his childhood in Lamphun. And like many Thais from smaller communities, he jetted off to (a considerably more sleepy than nowadays) Bangkok where he labored two years in his brother's shoe factory.

His bro - adamant that Chai should study because "you cannot do this all your life" - persuaded him to venture back up north and hit the books. However, now having been exposed to the big city's up-beat frazzles and dazzles, Chai's attempt to slot himself back into the "too quiet for me" life in Lamphun took him along the middle-road, attending accounting classes at Chiang Mai College.

Later working as a receptionist at a hotel in Chiang Mai - where he absorbed English, along with the love language of a Swiss woman - Chai was guided into visiting Switzerland. Here, he "learned how to live like the Swiss," while also working in coffee shops, a clinic and at a perfume factory alongside Italian, Portuguese, French, Spanish and Swiss-born folks. He also studied the French language.

"My life completely changed," said Chai. "Ten years was a long time, but it seemed very short. I learned a lot." However, "I have always loved Chiang Mai because it's lively but not too busy like Bangkok. And I can be out of the city in like 10 minutes. I never get bored with nature."

As a result, Chai suit-cased it back to where he is now, slightly life-disoriented, and spent the first three months here tour-guiding. He grasped another chance at establishing a life-oasis by selling his car, acquiring 10 motorbikes and living the remainder of that year renting them to tourists.

"I try to do something I really like to do. Renting-out motorbikes is good. It's good money. But it's not fun," admits Chai. "You just sit there, and people rent motorbikes. You don't talk."

He ditched this mission and tried running a small bar in a fairly quiet area in Chiang Mai's old city - inside the walls and moat. At the time, this location was visited by only the occasional stray tourist, or a weary wanderer ding a bell while inching-forward a squeaky ice cream cart. "Only one man (himself) sat behind the bar," said Chai, with a slight grin. "Nobody wanted to come."

Ironically, a Swiss gentleman and his gal sauntered by and a conversation (in French) was sparked. Blowing on Chai's fire by later bringing their friends, who delivered friends of friends, it was game-on from that point forward. Eventually, Chai extended to his growing number of patrons the services of friendly staff, scrumptious food and a soul-nourishing massage service – cultivating an environment where he could "make friends" and "give to people."

His enterprise - "warm and interesting," offering a living room-like atmosphere - has since evolved into a favored break-time watering hole, food trough and international location for magical mingling.

"I want everyone to share with each other...I love what I do now."

Chai says he simply couldn't live like this elsewhere. "In Bangkok, it's not fun. You just make money. Here (in Chiang Mai), the people who stop by my bar already love Chiang Mai. In Bangkok, they just stop by. It doesn't have the same feeling."

He first and foremost "loves the people" in Chiang Mai, who are kind and willing to talk - unlike in the big city, where he says "they are stressed all the time, busy and don't want to converse."

Chai deems Chiang Mai an international city, which also funnels in a plethora of changes (especially within the last three years) including a growing influx of construction, people, vehicle traffic and pollution. "It's crazy... At four or five o'clock, I don't go out; too many cars. I think everybody now has a car in Chiang Mai. I think a mother and father who have four children, have six cars. Before, they had one car; this was enough."

Chai however is patiently accepting of this scenario, particularly due to Chiang Mai's practically-nil crime rate. "I am happy, because I'm not the only one who loves Chiang Mai... I feel safe. It's what I like." However, "If more people come to live in Chiang Mai and start having this problem (crime), I will be sad."

Chai isn't concerned about Chiang Mai expanding into a Bangkok-clone, mostly because of its geographic location and size. Also, he says that "people who just want to make money" may experience difficulty with attempting to fabricate a good life in Chiang Mai.

"I don't live for money, so I can live good," says Chai. "I think I will finish the rest of my life here," because, "When you wake up in Chiang Mai, it's nice, every day..."

