HELPING GUESTS CREATE HOLIDAY STORIES

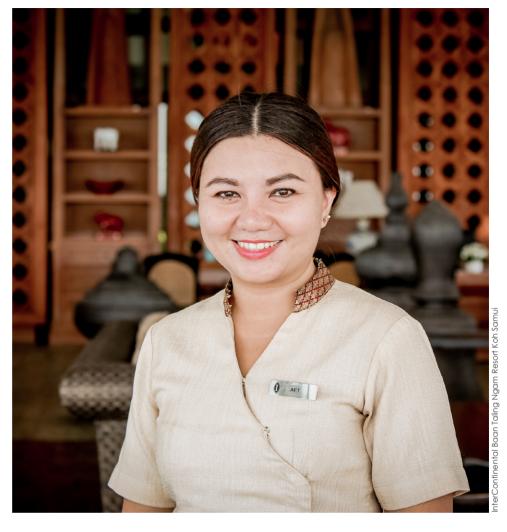
'When you stop accepting challenges, you stop you moving forward," says
Suthira Panmas, resort concierge manager,
InterContinental Baan Taling
Ngam Resort Koh Samui

by Earth Saiswang



Suthira, who has been a concierge for more than seven years, says every request is a challenge. "I think everybody has a different life style, she explains. "Sometimes when you travel with your partner or your friends, you want to do different things. My challenge is how to fulfill everybody's wish and not just one person. The island had something to offer for every one."

"I'm honored to be part of their holiday story," she says. "It can be just ordinary story such as a buffalo fighting experience, first scuba diving experience, a surprise birthday, or finding a lost the teddy bear at the airport, but if its



important to them, then its important to me."

One of her most memorable experiences as a concierge was when she received a request from one of her guests. "He wanted to find a jewelry shop in Bangkok, just a small shop in the middle of the town," Suthira shares. "He doesn't know where he to find it so I asked him about what he remembers – place or name – near that shop. Then, I did a "Google earth" search and printed out a photo of the road. I also called every jewelry shops."

It took her four hours to find, but she did find it. She even helped him transfer the money for money and for the delivery of the items he bought to the hotel. "A few days later the guest came to me, in tears, and thanked me for my help along with a US\$100 tip. The guest's happy tears made me realize how important our role is to their experiences experience. Of course, the guest and I became good friends and we still keep in touch."

Here are some tips she gives to guests:
• Visit Angthong National Marine Park. It's

a day trip. Where you can see panoramic view of 42 islands, the emerald lake, snorkeling and kayaking. Watch the movie "The Beach" by Leonardo diCaprio. It will make your journey more exciting.

- Best Local Thai Restaurant: Sabiang Lay or Haad Bang Po restaurant. They use ingredients that are fresh, seasonal, and local sauces. They have a recommended menu, the ordering of which is a must.
- Best for Party: Ark Bar and walk in the soi leading to Green Mango Bar.
- Best Souvenir: Kalamae, a sweet caramelish candy made of sticky rice, coconut milk and palm sugar, coconut virgin oil; or any product made from coconut. Samui is 'Coconut Island,' after

Suthira says she still keeps insider islander secrets and continues to seek new stories that so she can help each guest create a memorable holiday story.

"Together with my team, I'm always moving forward for my guests, and I enjoy it!" she says.