

Get your rocks off in Patong

The previous After Dark column generated almost island-wide confusion about the message contained within the words. In the spirit of spring-time clarification, that the review was critical of the DJ and not the venue.

To make it plain, there's nothing wrong with White Box – it's one of the hippest nightspots on the island – but Cut Killer didn't do justice to his reputation. He played it safe – and nobody really enjoys playing it safe. For a venue into which so much effort has been put into creating a cutting-edge concept, Cut Killer wasn't able to deliver the goods on a similar level.

Moving on, there have been a few noteworthy rumblings in Phuket's nightlife scene. A quick mention goes to Club Lime, who celebrated their first birthday on May 9. Phuket's socialites and those to be seen at the scene were out in force to see DJ Nakadia, returning with her minimal beats. Either people didn't realize there was a free bar or else Phuket's clubbers actually prefer to pay for their drinks.

While Club Lime may have been packed, a disappointing crowd of about 80 people showed up for DJ Nakadia's debut gig at club 808 in Bangkok the following night.

Back on Phuket, Rock City recently made the bold move of opening a second venue, this time on Rat-U-Thit 200 Pi Rd, at the end of Soi Bangla.

For those who have never been to Rock City, the concept is simple. Two Swedish guys, named George and Fred, decided to take Phuket's music scene into their own hands and make the ultimate

Rock City's Metallica tribute band, led by Jim Wallenberg (inset) are one of the most popular bands at the venue.



rock club. George first visited Phuket about 20 years ago, but it wasn't until about seven years ago that he set up camp here. Whenever his friends would come to visit him, they'd ask George to take them out, but there was nowhere to go. The music scene for rock purists was non-existent.

And so Rock City, on the beach road in Patong, was born and now the venue features daily bursts of Metallica, AC/DC, Bon Jovi and pretty much every bastion of rock 'n' roll you can imagine – and Bryan Adams.

If you're wondering what gives George the right to moan about the local music scene, it's because he was a member of Swedish big-hair band Nasty

Idols, who had a string of hits across Europe and in Japan. Although George's hair isn't quite as big as it once was, he is still living the rock 'n' roll dream.

Testimony to Rock City's success is the huge tourist following the place has. Travelers in need of a dose of nostalgia usually find their way to Rock City, where much drinking ensues and the more boisterous patrons take their shirts off and shout/scream/sing along.

Rock City 2 is more of the same. The venue is a near carbon copy of the original. The music is based in one large room, with a stage before a number of tables and a bar at the back right of the club. The main room is about the same size as the original Rock City. From the back of the room, the acoustics sound odd,

so take the plunge and sit as close to the front as your eardrums will allow.

Rock City 2 has yet to achieve the popularity of its bigger brother, but the venue is still busy with a blend of tourists and locals. Perhaps the most interesting aspect of both Rock City venues is the clubs' appeal to Thai girls who love nothing more than rock beats.

The music at Rock City 2 is similar to that at Rock City 1, but the bands have a slightly more youthful appearance. One of the bands in particular looked as if they had come straight from school as they covered Green Day and other contemporary rock acts.

Stealing the show on the night the *Gazette* showed up was the tomboy fronting one of the

bands. Many Asian singers try, and fail, to mimic the vocal talent of Amy Lee, frontwoman of Evanescence, usually resulting in some of of karaoke disaster. Not this tomboy, however, who had the vocals locked down.

The atmosphere at Rock City is the same whatever night of the week you go. The only difference is in the number of people there. Perhaps this is why Rock City is so successful; because night in, night out, they deliver a tried and tested formula.

The drinks aren't the cheapest in Patong as Rock City is catering mostly to a holidaying audience, but at about 160 baht and upwards for a pint of beer, it could be worse.

The throwback to the '80s is a consistent theme at Rock City. At times, you'll wonder if you're actually in Thailand or if you've somehow been transported back to your student days. For these reasons, it's difficult to fault Rock City because the club has always been upfront about exactly what it offers. There's no pretense about the place. It's raw, rugged and you can drink shooters out of test tubes.

With such a popular venue, it would be refreshing to see a few more local bands singing their own material.

You can't, however, fault the musicians at Rock City. George handpicks them and selects only musicians in it for the love of rock – sellouts need not apply.

Phuket's music scene is still a far cry from what you'd expect it to be, given the large number of people on the island, but with places such as Rock City, there are at least a few people standing up for live music.

If you want to get your rocks off online, visit www.rockcity.cc

AFTER DARK

By Matt Crook



Water Sport Villas

Land for sale: **45,000 B / sq. wa.**

Water Sport Villas

Villa Specification

- 2-Suite bedroom / 1 Superior bedroom
- 3-Suite bathroom
- Living room / Dining room / Kitchen
- Private pool
- Wooden sala
- Parking for 3 cars / Boat port
- Locked storage
- Maid's room
- Laundry service
- Service road

Price: **38,000,000 B**

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