

Diva gets down at Indigo

AFTER

DARK

By Matt Crook

Learning like “a pearl in the rough”, Indigo Pearl is a luxury resort tucked away next to Nai Yang Beach. Sufficiently far away from densely-populated areas of the island, the resort offers a different kind of vibe to most places in Phuket.

Of the many dining and lounging options available there, only one is the hang-out of a real-life diva. “That’s D-I-V-A,” as she’ll tell you. Rebar is in a hip little corner of the resort and it’s where you’ll find “the northwest’s own diva”, May Palmer, performing jazz, gospel, funk, soul – whatever takes her fancy.

Time is running out though, because May, originally from Providence, Rhode Island, will be at Rebar only until the end of December.

Rebar is cool in every sense of the word. After a brief saunter through the resort, a flight of stairs leads up to the open-air bar where a slight scent of cigars lingers in the air. It is suitably dark without being gloomy, creating an ambiance that encapsulates the chilled-out atmosphere that makes the place ideal for pre-club drinks or, better yet, a hot date where you want to be somewhere quiet enough to chat.

The bar has a chic feel to it, with comfortable chairs, wooden flooring, walls and beams, views of the resort grounds and, before May Palmer takes to the stage, background music from Swedish DJ Tommy Karlsson.

As the night wears on, The Boom band rattles off a few numbers before May Palmer struts her way to the stage. Enigmatic, extravagant, extrovert – it’s hard to sum up a woman with a rare voice, with power, soul and range.

“I take singing seriously because I believe my fans deserve a great night out,” said May. May can back up her claims with a voice as powerful and full of life as you’ll ever hear in Phuket.

A true diva, May dances,



jokes with the crowd, prowls around the floor with her mic in hand – all while keeping her commanding voice in tune and on point. May brings enthusiasm and energy to an otherwise peaceful bar. Phuket just ain’t big enough for this diva and she will soon fly the coop and return to the Washington State to spend some time with her husband of 17 years, Bob.

While she’s here, you can catch May performing Tuesday through Saturday between 7 pm and 10 pm. On Sundays, May is on hand to entertain people during brunch at the Tin Mine Restaurant, another venue at Indigo Pearl.

May’s style is raucous, loud and intense. Steamrolling through covers of *Dock of the Bay*, *Mustang Sally* and *I Heard it Through the Grapevine*, May explores a variety of musical styles with her love of gospel shining through – May first started singing in churches along the American east coast in her late teens.

Her latest CD, *Mo’ May: A Celebration Of The Motown Era*, is available at the resort.

Catching May Palmer at Rebar is an entertaining way to start your night. The bar itself is open only until 11 pm. The idea of late-night drinking in a venue as swish as Rebar would likely tempt many to stay beyond the curfew. As it is, Rebar is a place

to relax and kick back in a chair before heading into town for a night out.

For early-starters, Rebar opens at 5 pm and doubles as a restaurant serving tapas, seafood, Thai dishes and Japanese fare.

Items on the food menu are reasonably priced for the high-end guests Indigo caters to, hovering a little below 300 baht for dishes such as crispy coconut prawns with plum sauce; grilled chorizo with paprika potatoes; and sautéed mussels with bell peppers, parsley and white wine sauce.

The food warrants a sampling and the drinks menu has all the usual suspects, including a wicked range of cocktails priced about 250 baht a glass. The mojito was tangy and refreshing while other offerings were intoxicating and full of tropical flavors. A bottle of wine will set you back on average between 1,500 baht and 3,000 baht.

A trip to Rebar will likely leave a dent in your wallet, but for island folk who don’t usually get to venture off the beaten track, it’s worth it.

For more information about Rebar or the Indigo Pearl Resort, Nai Yang Beach & National Park, visit www.indigo-pearl.com For further details about the diva May Palmer, visit www.maypalmer.com



Rebar at the Indigo Pearl Resort has a laid-back vibe that takes a soulful turn when jazz singer May Palmer (pictured singing) takes to the stage. The Indigo Pearl Cocktail (left) is one of a range of intoxicating concoctions that people can sample at the bar.

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