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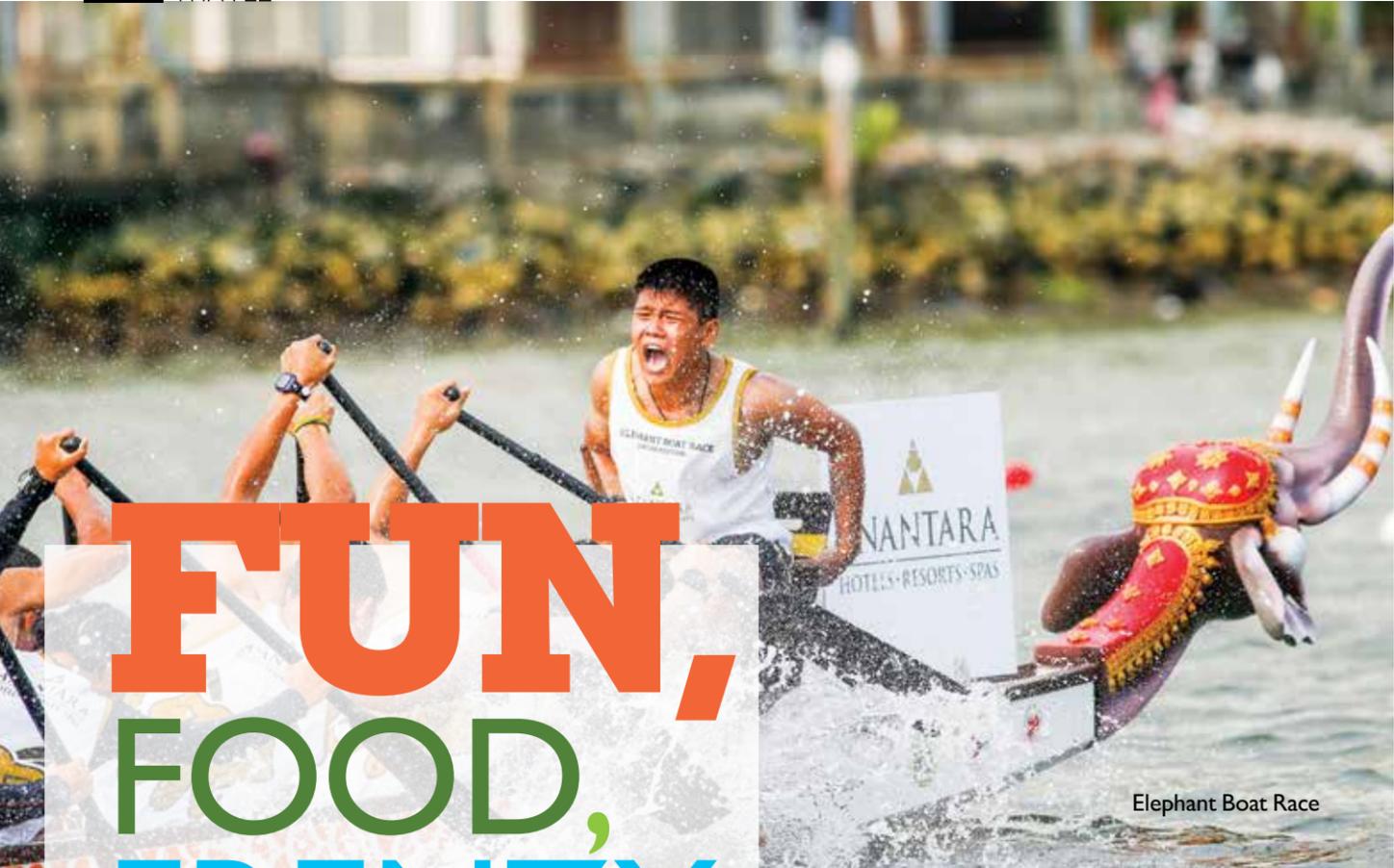
READY TO
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THE **ARC**

Lights!

NAVYA NAIR is back after a hiatus of eight years!

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EXCITING INTERVIEWS, RESTAURANT REVIEWS, FASHION TRENDS, BEAUTY NEWS AND LOTS MORE!



Elephant Boat Race



Saturday Night Fireworks



FUN, FOOD, FRENZY, FESTIVITIES, FIREWORKS & FINESSE

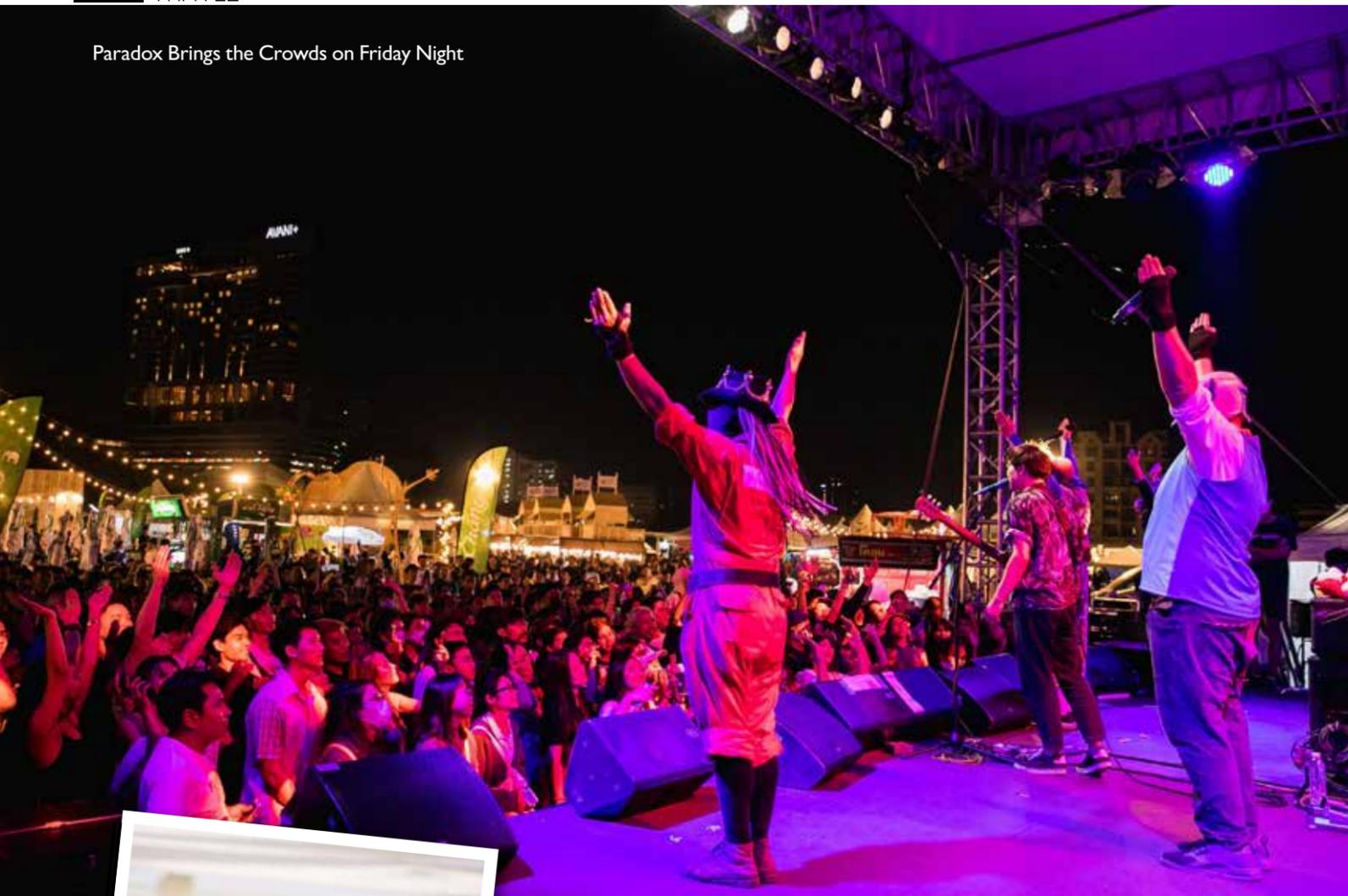
Thailand's Elephant Boat Race and River Festival saw a spectacular adrenaline-filled weekend of paddlers, singers, music, food and tipple lovers, and some celeb spotting too.

Text: NAMITA GUPTA

Boat racers at their competitive best in artistic elephant-themed sculptures soaring from the bow of the vessel, paddle slicing through the water in perfect rhythm, guided by a mesmerising drumbeat. There was sheer revelry in the air, as they were cheering each other with gusto to triumph over the other one. Festival goers caught all the enthusiasm from their champagne tents, while sipping on their bubbly. With beer, wine and champagne pouring around and Thailand's top restaurants and Bangkok's favourite chefs, dishing out diverse culinary offerings, at pop-up stalls and mini food trucks, the second annual Elephant Boat Race and River Festival to celebrate Thailand's majestic national animal - the elephant, on the banks of the mighty Chao Phraya River, next to Anantara Riverside Bangkok Resort was clearly buzzing and how.

The inaugural day kickstarted with an adrenaline packed frenzy as various boat racers jostled at the races for the winning spot. On the river, the final four teams – Raja Navy (Royal Thai Navy) – Citi, Thailand National Sports University Lampang Campus – Casillero Del Diablo; Samut Prakarn – PWC Thailand; Pradu Thong Goddess – Keith&Kym; went head to head in the thrilling finale, but it was last year's winners, the Raja Navy that blitzed the race and claimed the final glory for the second year running. The Royal

Paradox Brings the Crowds on Friday Night



Minor Hotels founder William Heinecke

Thai Navy won the royal trophy graciously granted by His Majesty King Maha Vajiralongkorn Phra Vajiraklaochaoyuhua.

On land, visitors to Bangkok's largest festival were treated to an enhanced experience with champagne tents, musical concerts by top bands including Paradox and Oat Pramote, live art performance by Bangkok's own famed graffiti artist Patcharapol Tangruen, also known as Alex Face creating one of his street art masterpieces right before the spectators and spectacular fireworks displays. VIP ticket holders gained access to exclusive champagne lounges, gin pop-ups and beer tents, all positioned to provide the best vantage point for on-the-river action.

The festival, also celebrated Thai

culture with interactive art workshops from the Thailand Kite Association and fun games like Golden Axe Throw and more. Running alongside the marquee events of dragon boat races and dry dock rowing were stand-up paddling competitions, friendly football matches between U12 Bangkok teams on and other friendly games. Anantara Spa set up an oxygen bar for quick rejuvenation and also offered hand, shoulder and foot massages to the festive goers.

International celebrities seen at this year's event included author and creator of Sex and the City, Candace Bushnell and New York Fashion Designer Nicole Miller cheering on their favourite teams amongst the crowds and hobnobbing at the champagne tent. Minor Hotels founder William Heinecke, Minor Hotels CEO

Dillip Rajakarier, Anantara and Avani Hotels Complex General Manager Mark O'Sullivan were also spotted participating in all the camaraderie and bonhomie around. Thai celebrity and environmental activist Pearypie Amata Chittasenee and Jay Spencer were also in attendance along with a host of other Bangkok's glitterati.

The exciting event was not only about fun and games – a generous sum was raised through ticket sales, for many elephant charity projects during the event. Funds from the event were donated to various projects including the Zoological Parks Organisation of Thailand which support veterinary and educational projects to improve the year-round lives of elephants and mahouts in the Surin Province where ex-street elephants face ongoing hardship.

Other significant benefits from the money raised by the festival include: developing programmes with communities along the edge of Khao Yai National Park to help them survive together with the wild elephants who regularly visit their villages and crop fields, funding projects to study the behaviour patterns of crop raiding elephants as well as continuing the nine year old project to show traditional elephant trainers and camp owners the benefits of Positive Reinforcement Training for captive elephants and



Minor Hotels CEO Dillip Rajakarier w Nicole Miller & Candace Bushnell



continuing development work to give Thailand's captive elephants greater freedom and environmental enrichment in their lives.

Visitors from various parts of Thailand and overseas could stay at the Anantara Riverside Bangkok Resort, located on the west bank of the Chao Phraya amidst 11 acres of greenery and serenity. The Anantara shuttle boat connects to the charms of the city. You can go behind the scenes to uncover the real Bangkok with their Streetwise and Klong Gurus and create memories of a lifetime. Kudos to the organisers of the Elephant Boat Race and River Festival, Anantara Hotels, Resorts & Spas, a luxury hospitality brand for modern travellers, connecting them to genuine places, people and stories through personal experiences, for pulling all the stops, to continuously drive efforts in supporting its conservational expertise for Thailand's national animal.