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Friends of Sanon

February 2020

Dear <<First Name>>.

Thank you for being a friend and supporter of Sanon - please see below our latest newsletter. We hope you find it informative and of interest.

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Tears and Laughter: Proud to be a Class of 2019 Sanon Graduate



Myanmar Youth Development Institute held its third graduation ceremony at the Thante Hotel in Nyaung U on Nov 25th 2019. 20 disadvantaged students from different parts of Myanmar celebrated their successful completion of a 12-month hospitality training program at Sanon restaurant. Over 100 guests including VIPs, hospitality industry leaders, friends and families attended the event. There was laughter and even a few tears as graduates shared stories and celebrated together as a group for the final time. The current trainees sang "Count on me" by Bruno Mars to farewell the graduating class of 2019.

Student of the year award went to Lin Htike, who is current employed at The Secret Home restaurant in New Bagan. Together with three other students, Lin Htike completed a two-month internship at the Novotel Max in Yangon. During this time he spent the first month at the buffet line. "I learnt how to greet the customer and talk with them". Lin Htike hopes to become a great restaurant manager, but "I need to learn more about F&B knowledge and gain more experience".

Seated amongst the audience were Than Tun Lay's proud parents. They had travelled over 40 hours from Keng Tung near the Myanmar-Thai border in Shan State to Nyaung U to witness their son's graduation. In the 12 months Than Tun Lay was at Sanon, they communicated occasionally by phone and were very happy to be reunited with their son. "We are very happy - this is the second time we have been in Bagan; the first time was sending him to Sanon and now we are here for his graduation".

Cook Up a Storm... the Burmese way



To cater for more foreign tourists seeking authentic travel experiences, Sanon is now providing cooking classes. Our demonstration style cooking class includes signature Myanmar and Bagan specific dishes while engaging in conversations with staff and students around the stove.

Guests are greeted with a bespoke welcome drink created by one of our students and start their culinary journey with some authentic Myanmar hospitality with Laphet Thoke (tea leaf salad). This traditional dish is served in locally-made Bagan lacquerware tray. Over the next three hours, participants interact with the Sanon team to make three traditional Myanmar dishes from fresh ingredients procured from the local market. They make the national dish called Mohinga, the all-popular Ginger Salad and Pone Yay Gyi Chicken, a dish unique only to Bagan. Between chatting and chopping, customers get to taste their creations and learn more about the Sanon story – how we are changing lives and building a future for Myanmar youth.

Whether you are in Bagan for a honeymoon, a family trip or simply need some time out from temples and pagodas, our cooking classes are a great way to spend a morning or afternoon. As Karan from the UK says, "the staff are very friendly and the class was informative and interesting. Delicious food, made all the more tasty in the knowledge that the proceeds go towards a praiseworthy project. Thank you for the lovely time!"

Led by our head chef and assisted by our students in training, cooking classes are available any day at Sanon Restaurant. Come try a cooking class today and take home the best souvenir – our recipes and insider knowledge on how to make some popular Myanmar dishes!

A Festive Occasion



As one of the best restaurants in Bagan, Sanon often serves as a venue for special occasions. This Christmas was no different. We hosted a festive luncheon for pilots and their families from Balloons over Bagan and Golden Eagle – two of the biggest balloon operators in South East Asia.

Just before noon, all students were briefed by Sanon head chef Aye Ko in the training room before the final preparations in the kitchen. Our restaurant manager Ko Ko guided front of house students wearing Santa hats, through final checks to ensure tables were set correctly.

As balloon pilots and their families gradually filled the restaurant, they were greeted with a smiling "Merry Christmas" and offered canapés paired with glasses of bubble-filled champagne. After opening presents from Secret Santa, guests were seated in the restaurant and treated to a traditional three-course meal. Main course included roasted chicken and Yorkshire pudding with all the usual trimmings.

The day rounded off with the chief pilot from Balloons over Bagan, Nobbie, thanking all pilots for their hard work and wishing everyone a happy Christmas. As a surprise, one of Sanon's talented students presented an illustration he'd created featuring our ballooning guests - a token of appreciation for their support to Sanon. Whilst it was a festive day for guests, hosting a Christmas lunch provided a great learning opportunity for our students.

Equipped with two air-conditioned meeting rooms and AV facilities, Sanon can cater for up to 120 guests – so let us know if we can help you with a special occasion, workshop or conference.

Breaking New Grounds



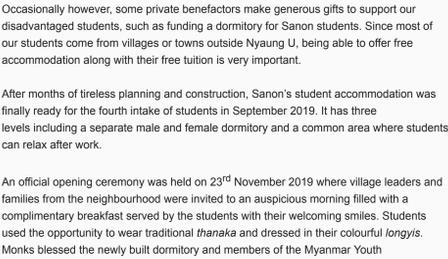
Being a registered Myanmar charity, Sanon reinvests all proceeds from its restaurant back into the daily operations, while providing a memorable dining experience for customers. Occasionally however, some private benefactors make generous gifts to support our disadvantaged students, such as funding a dormitory for Sanon students. Since most of our students come from villages or towns outside Nyaung U, being able to offer free accommodation along with their free tuition is very important.

After months of tireless planning and construction, Sanon's student accommodation was finally ready for the fourth intake of students in September 2019. It has three levels including a separate male and female dormitory and a common area where students can relax after work.

An official opening ceremony was held on 23rd November 2019 where village leaders and families from the neighbourhood were invited to an auspicious morning filled with a complimentary breakfast served by the students with their welcoming smiles. Students used the opportunity to wear traditional *thanaka* and dressed in their colourful *longyis*. Monks blessed the newly built dormitory and members of the Myanmar Youth Development Institute performed the official opening by releasing a bunch of helium-filled balloons.

The launch of Sanon's student house signals a brand new chapter in our long-term project, as Sanon continues to change lives and build a future for Myanmar youth.

Sanon on Screen



When you see a crew of fifty to sixty people walking into a restaurant with large black boxes loaded with video cameras and microphones, four of whom are seemingly VIPs surrounded by armed bodyguards – you sense something is up.

At Sanon, we were fortunate to host some famous celebrities over the past few months, namely three-time Myanmar Academy Award winner **Phway Phway**; Chinese superstars and actresses **Mavis Fan**, **Aya Liu**, **Barbie Hsu** and **Dee Hsu**; Filipino celebrity chef **Sandy Daza**.

Their visits are a testament to the food quality and offerings at Sanon, offering an authentic Burmese fusion cuisine with a contemporary twist. You can view the videos here:

[FoodPrints - Filipino food show](#) (in English)

[我们是真正的朋友 - Chinese Reality TV Show](#) (in Chinese)

Afternoon English Interactive Sessions



It can often be too hot in the afternoon to visit temples around Bagan, so why not join us for an interactive English session with our students after lunch?

To complement an ex-pat volunteering program for foreigners living in Bagan, Sanon also offers an opportunity for fluent English speaking customers to work with our students. If you have 30 minutes or an hour to spare between 2pm and 4pm (Mon-Fri), you can choose to play a game, read a book, or help students with their hospitality studies.

This is an opportunity to have a deeper interaction with our students beyond the restaurant setting and helping to change their lives through practicing English. There is some paperwork to complete but those who have been involved said it was extremely rewarding to be able to work one-on-one and shape the future of these youths.



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