

Press Release

Anantara Announces 2011 King's Cup Elephant Polo Tournament Dates

The highly popular King's Cup Elephant Polo Tournament will be celebrating its tenth anniversary this year and will be moving to the royal seaside town of Hua Hin in Thailand. The event which will bring the best of the last decade of the popular sporting event will take place from September 7 to September 11 and promises to have nail-biting action both on and off field.

The event will see a number of teams go trunk to trunk to win the coveted King's Cup trophy. The tournament was introduced to Thailand in 2001 by Anantara Resorts and is a charitable event that raises money for the benefit of all Thailand's elephants.

Now in its tenth year the King's Cup Elephant Polo Tournament has gone from a small two-day event with six teams into a week-long extravaganza, which in 2010 featured 12 teams from four continents, encompassing 40 players from at least 15 countries.

To date the tournament has raised over US\$300,000 primarily for the National Elephant Institute, which provides medical care, sustenance, employment, and mahout training to Thailand's elephant population. In recent years, the funds were used to custom build and run an elephant ambulance as well as provide housing at the Centre's elephant hospital allowing it to offer free accommodation as well as medical treatment to any sick elephants in Thailand; these funds also provided a mobile veterinary centrifuge for their mobile elephant clinic. Proceeds from the 2009 and 2010 tournaments have been used to 'rescue rent' five street elephants to be trained in occupational therapy as part of a joint Thai Elephant Conservation Centre, Chiang Mai University project investigating the benefits of using elephants to treat Autism.

It is estimated that Thailand has around 3,600 domesticated elephants and 1,500 wild elephants. The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) fully endorses the King's Cup Elephant Polo tournament, having identified it as one of the country's prime annual special events. It will take place on grounds adjacent to Anantara Hua Hin Resort & Spa, and spectator entrance is free.

For more information on King's Cup Elephant Polo, please visit www.anantaraelephantpolo.com Anantara Hua Hin Resort & Spa is a distinctive Thai village-style resort located on the sunrise coast of the Gulf of Thailand. Hidden amidst 14 acres of luxuriantly landscaped mature gardens and lagoon pools, the picturesque resort enjoys a beachfront location at the quiet end of Thailand's historic royal seaside town. For more information please visit www.anantara.com.

Editors Note:

For hundreds of years throughout Thailand, people would leave a jar of water outside their house to provide refreshment and extend a welcome to the passing traveller. Anantara is taken from an ancient Sanskrit word that means 'without end', symbolising this sharing of water and the heartfelt hospitality that lies at the core of every Anantara experience.

Anantara Hotels, Resorts & Spas initially opened in the Thai seaside town of Hua Hin in 2001. It has since been followed by six other Thai resorts with Anantara Bophut and Anantara Lawana in Koh Samui in the Gulf of Thailand, Anantara Golden Triangle in the country's north; Anantara Si Kao which lies on the secluded Changlang Beach area south of Krabi, Anantara Phuket, situated in the serenity of Mai Khao Beach and Anantara Baan Rajprasong in Bangkok - the first serviced suites property for the Anantara group.





In the world-renowned destination of the Maldives, Anantara Dhigu and Anantara Veli are a 30-minute boat ride from the capital Male and Anantara Kihavah Villas in the Baa Atoll is poised for its grand opening in January 2011.

Anantara Seminyak debuted in April 2008 in the most fashionable district of Bali – the Island of the Gods. Late 2008 also saw the opening of Desert Islands on Sir Bani Yas Island off the coast of Abu Dhabi, while Qasr Al Sarab opened in November 2009 in the legendary Liwa desert near Abu Dhabi.

2011 will see a number of new properties welcoming guests across Asia and the Middle East to further enhance Anantara Hotels, Resorts & Spas' enviable worldwide portfolio, including Anantara Al Madina A'Zarqa in Oman, Anantara Sanya and Anantara Xishuangbanna in China and Anantara Uluwatu in Bali.

For more information on Anantara Hotels, Resorts & Spas, please visit www.anantara.com

Global Hotel Alliance (GHA) is the world's largest alliance of independent hotel brands. GHA currently includes brands such as Anantara, Doyle Collection, First, Kempinski, Leela, Marco Polo, Mirvac, Omni, Pan Pacific, PARKROYAL and Tivoli, encompassing over 260 upscale and luxury hotels with over 60,000 rooms in 47 different countries.

To book or for further information visit www.gha.com

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