

THAI's Celebrates 50 years of the World's Most Famous Smile....Smooth as silk to over 70 destinations worldwide

Thai Airways International celebrates 50 years flying the world on 1st May 2010....1960-2010

MEDIA RELEASE : FOR IMMEDIATE CIRCULATION

Thai Airways International – 50 Years Smooth as silk

In May 2010, Thai Airways International celebrates the 50th anniversary of its foundation as the national airline of the Kingdom of Thailand. During this past half century THAI has projected the flag and prestige of the nation, as a flying ambassador around the world. It has played a vital role in the development of Thailand's dynamic economy, promoting tourism and trade worldwide and making a major contribution to the commercial and social welfare of the nation. It has also helped to establish Bangkok as the leading aviation hub of Southeast Asia.

The history of THAI over the past 50 years has been a story of rapid growth and success almost without parallel in the international aviation industry. When, on the morning of May 1st 1960, THAI's first flight, a Douglas DC-6B aircraft, took off from Bangkok's Don Mueang Airport with a full complement of 60 passengers bound for Hong Kong, Taipei and Tokyo, few could have visualised that, by 2010, THAI would have a fleet of 85 jetliners and carry almost 20 million passengers and 500,000 tons of air cargo annually.

Initially, THAI operated a purely regional service from Bangkok to just nine Asian cities. In April, 1971 the first intercontinental route to Australia was launched when THAI inaugurated flights to Sydney.

Flights to Melbourne were launched in 1980; flights to Brisbane in 1982 and flights to Perth in 1985.

THAI now flies 45 times every week from 4 on-line cities in Australia – Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth to Thailand.

Today there are 3 flights a day between Sydney and Bangkok; double daily flights to/from Melbourne; 10 flights a week to/from Brisbane and daily flights from Perth including 3 non-stop to Phuket. All flights between Australia and Thailand offer the latest in inflight comforts and personal entertainment systems.

Across the route network, THAI now flies to over 70 destinations across five continents. During the early years, THAI opened up such exotic destinations as Bali and Kathmandu for tourism, and was the first all-jet airline in Asia with a fleet of Caravelle SE-210 aircraft. It has been a pioneer in

many aspects of route and destination development.

Among THAI's greatest strengths are its extensive coverage of key business and leisure destinations throughout Asia and its high-frequency operations to 13 major European cities. THAI is also the predominant carrier, via its strategically located home base in Bangkok, in operating 'gateway' services to key destinations within the Mekong region countries of Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, South China and Myanmar, a vitally important function in aiding the development of those emerging economies. THAI also has a major commitment to boosting air links for the promotion of trade and tourism between Asia and the Indian Subcontinent, with services to 15 destinations throughout India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.

Throughout its history THAI, as the national carrier, has assumed a major responsibility in developing and expanding the potential for tourism. In 1960, tourism was only just beginning to be a significant contributor to Asian economies. Less than 200,000 international travellers visited Thailand that year. Today, over 14 million tourists arrive annually and tourism has become the country's most valuable source of foreign exchange income.

The development of trade, particularly for the whole range of Thai exports, has been a major priority for THAI, not only in the transportation of cargo to major markets worldwide, but also in the handling of inbound, outbound and transit cargo at Suvarnabhumi Airport for over 80 other airlines.

THAI is also a leader in other aspects of aviation activity. The airline's massive Flight Kitchens in Bangkok, among the largest and most advanced in Asia, produce up to 80,000 meals daily for THAI's own flights and those of some 50 other customer airlines.

In the vital fields of safety and aircraft maintenance, THAI's reputation is recognised worldwide, with full technical and engineering services carried out for its own fleet, and aircraft of many other international airlines.

THAI's 26,000 dedicated and motivated employees benefit from the company's constant and comprehensive training programmes, promoting skills and career development prospects vital in a newly industrialising country such as Thailand. In pilot training, particularly, THAI is a leader with state-of-the-art facilities benefiting its own crew and pilots from other airlines.

The popularity of THAI among its passengers over the years has been due to many factors, particularly its emphasis on "Thainess". The airline's vision has always been to create an atmosphere and standard of service on its flights that reflect the traditional Thai values of hospitality, with a warm welcome extended to its flying guests. This Royal Orchid Service commences with the gracious 'wai' gesture of greeting to boarding passengers, the giving of fresh orchid corsages to lady passengers on international flights, and the unique cabin hostess costumes of vivid Thai silk. All these elements are designed to make travellers feel that they are already in Thailand during their flight, a taste of the pleasures to come during their stay.

The success of this policy can be judged by the countless international awards that THAI has received throughout its history. Of some 260 carriers operating around the world, THAI regularly appears among the top ten in research carried out by leading travel magazines and internet sites. The most recent of these accolades have included being voted "Best Southeast Asian Airline" by readers of both Global Traveler and TTG Asia magazines, and THAI being placed among the top ten world airlines by Travel + Leisure, Conde Nast Traveler, Business Traveler Asia-Pacific, and online surveys carried out by Skytrax and SmartTravelAsia.com.

As part of its dedication to the promotion of tourism, THAI established, in 1968, its own programmes of Royal Orchid Holidays, which today extends to 32 countries. The Royal Orchid Holidays Discover Thailand programmes offer literally hundreds of flexible tours, extensions and options covering every destination, every activity and attraction throughout the country.

In 1997, THAI was one of the five founding members of Star Alliance, which has since become the world's largest and strongest global airline network, with its 26 members serving over 1,000 destinations in 171 countries. THAI's award-winning frequent flyer programme, Royal Orchid Plus, which now has over 2.5 million members, gives passengers the opportunity to earn generous miles, to be redeemed for exciting awards, not only on THAI but also on all other Star Alliance carriers.

As Thailand's national airline, THAI's corporate strategy in seeking to be a first-choice global carrier, can be summed up as "High Trust and World Class, with Touches of Thailand". It is a combination that is ideally suited to THAI's vision, reflecting what the airline stands for and the way it seeks to present itself to the world.

With over 50 years experience globally and almost 40 years experience in Australia,

THAI will continue to support our industry partners and focus on delivering our legendary brand of hospitality and services to even more travellers in the future.

THAI plans continuous upgrades and improvements to all inflight products including the upgrade of our longhaul Boeing 747 fleet and the introduction of the A380 aircraft by 2012.

We will also continue to improve our on-board menus to integrate more local specialties in all classes and will introduce a 'Chef in the Air' programme from mid-July 2010.

From a strategic point of view and with our Star Alliance partners, we will further strengthen Bangkok as a major Asian hub as we strive to be a 'First Choice Carrier with touches of Thailand'.

"To help celebrate our 50 years milestone" commented THAI's Australian General Manager, Mr Korakot Chatasingha, "there are a number of activities under process including a 'retro' flight on 01 May from Bangkok to Hong Kong with the 'retro' painted aircraft and crew dressed in 1960's uniforms...and a consumer expo at Centralworld, Bangkok. A special commemorative book is also under production and will be released in July 2010.

In Australia, we have just signed a one year corporate sponsorship with Sydney Opera House and will host a cocktail party there for our key industry partners and colleagues on the 4th May. There are also smaller functions planned around Australia to mark the occasion.

We are producing a 'Special Edition' Travelling THAI booklet that will highlight THAI's 39 year history in Australia and will include some endorsements from our trade partners and customers. Our local website is being re-launched in April with a new modernised theme and we will be commencing an extensive digital marketing programme with our Royal Orchid Plus frequent flyer member data base. This will include a very exciting 'THAI Travel Blogger of the Year' competition, details of which will be announced shortly.

On the 1st May, 'The Australian' newspaper will produce a 4-page advertorial supplement detailing our 50 years historical timeline and the latest product developments for THAI across the network. Various trade publications will also commemorate the anniversary.

To showcase important memorabilia and awards, THAI will be opening an exhibition in the ground floor space at our company-owned building at 75 Pitt Street. It will highlight not only our heritage internationally and locally but will also include momentos from our current long-serving and retired staff.

There are also many other activities being finalised for our passengers travelling on the 1st May and throughout the month of May with a special 'birthday' fare promotion planned for launch during April. Royal Orchid Holidays, THAI's inhouse boutique wholesaler, has already released an amazing 50% discount offer at a range of hotels across Thailand, for travel in May/June 2010.

Indeed, it is a very exciting time for all of us at THAI and we look forward to participation by our valued customers, trade partners and staff in the events and activities planned throughout the year".

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