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FEATURE:

Laguna Phuket to be Triathlon Mecca with Unique Endurance Extravaganza

New Ironman 70.3 course “Turbocharged Laguna Phuket Triathlon”



Thai backdrops are highlights of the Laguna Phuket Triathlon course.
High resolution image available at:
http://www.lagunaresorts.com/~ftpdm/Pictures/DSC_1080.JPG



Cyclists get enthusiastic encouragement from local youngsters on the Laguna Phuket Triathlon course.
High resolution image available at:
http://www.lagunaresorts.com/~ftpdm/Pictures/DSC_0860.JPG



Winner crossing the finishing line accompanied by an elephant is a unique feature of the Laguna Phuket Triathlon.
High resolution image available at:
http://www.lagunaresorts.com/~ftpdm/Pictures/_L2C927.jpg

The 17th Laguna Phuket Triathlon and inaugural Ironman 70.3 Asia Pacific Championship are highlights of a unique week-long endurance sports extravaganza set to make this paradise Thai island a mecca for professional and amateur triathletes worldwide.

The annual Laguna Phuket Triathlon on Sunday, 28 November will kick-off a calendar of sporting and social activities leading up to the Ironman event a week later on Sunday, 5 December.

And the fitness fiesta is set to reaffirm Laguna Phuket’s stature as a venue of world-class sporting activities and magnet for international tourism.

“As Thailand recovers from the effects of political turmoil earlier this year, events such as this are crucial to rebuilding tourist confidence,” said Laguna Phuket Triathlon event director Debbie Dionysius.

“Close to 1,000 international entrants are expected for each event and global attention will be focused on Phuket. This will be a sporting and tourism showcase of the best that Thailand has to offer the world,” she said.

Activities staged throughout the week will allow entrants to rub shoulders with professional triathletes - some of whom have entered both endurance events and will be at Laguna Phuket for the whole period.

A schedule of fun sporting activities, training sessions, entertainment and social events is planned to provide all entrants with opportunities to mix with the professionals.

Laguna Phuket, a resort of deluxe hotel and villa properties on the northwest coast of the island, was awarded the inaugural Ironman 70.3 Asia Pacific Championship in recognition of its world-class facilities, reputation for staging major athletic events, and ease of travel from all major cities.

The Laguna Phuket Triathlon is dubbed “The Race of Legends,” due to its ability to attract and challenge the world’s best professional triathletes.

These have included the likes of Simon Lessing, Craig Alexander, Paula Newby-Fraser, Michelle Jones, Samantha McGlone and Chrissie Wellington. The 2009 event was won by Olympic triathlon gold medalist Jan Frodeno of Germany.

Now Laguna Phuket has ramped-up the challenges of its triathlon course to meet the increased demands of an Ironman 70.3.

“The Ironman 70.3 Asia-Pacific Championship will be a turbocharged version of our triathlon course,” said Debbie Dionysius.

For the first time the bike course will run into the picturesque and undulating northeast coast, courtesy of a purpose-built bike ramp across Highway 402, the island’s main north-south traffic artery.



Competitors in the Laguna Phuket Triathlon can expect memorable Thai touches to their endurance experience.

High resolution image available at: http://www.lagunaresorts.com/~ftpdm/Pictures/_L2C9467.jpg



A happy line-up of winners in the sunshine at the Laguna Phuket Triathlon

High resolution image available at: <http://www.lagunaresorts.com/~ftpdm/Pictures/Podium%20Finishers%20LP%202009.jpg>

Media Contacts

Tel: +66 76 324 060
Fax: +66 76 324 061

Robin Wilson

Director of Marketing
Communications and Events
robinw@lagunaphuket.com

Naravadee Swangridht

Public Relations & Advertising
Manager
naravadees@lagunaphuket.com

Debbie Dionysius

AVP of Destination Marketing
debbied@lagunaphuket.com

Online media centre at
<http://www.lagunaphuket.com/media-hub/>

The new bike ramp is being built on an existing pedestrian bridge, after Laguna Phuket and the World Triathlon Corporation gained approval from the Phuket government.

"The ramp traverse will be a spectacular highlight adding a cycle-cross element as athletes will have to dismount and push their bikes up the ramped foot bridge," said Debbie Dionysius.

"We expect this to be a great attraction for spectators and a photographic signature of the event," she said.

The Ironman 70.3 swim will be a distance-adjusted version of the triathlon's trademark two-bodies of water trademark course, with a section in the saltwater Andaman Sea followed by a beach run-over into a freshwater tropical lagoon.

The run course will be contested over loops through and around Laguna Phuket resort itself, including the golf course, as well as over off-road sections.

The enthusiastic reception given to athletes by Phuket residents is another quality that makes the Laguna Phuket Triathlon memorable for competitors. Hundreds of young students line the roadsides near their schools waving flags and cheering on the cyclists.

And the Thai character of the event is personified by the presence of an elephant – an icon of Thai culture – which greets leading contestants at the finishing line and poses for photos with the winners.

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Swim starts on the beach are spectacular at Laguna Phuket Triathlon.

High resolution image available at:
http://www.lagunaresorts.com/~ftpdm/Pictures/Untitled_Panorama1.jpg

For further information please visit:

www.lagunaphukettriathlon.com

www.ironmanphuket.com

Note to the Editor

Laguna Phuket is Asia's finest destination resort – a collection of deluxe hotels and villas including Banyan Tree Phuket, Sheraton Grande Laguna, Dusit Thani Laguna Phuket, Laguna Beach Resort, Outrigger Laguna Phuket Resort and Villas, Best Western Allamanda Laguna Phuket, and Laguna Holiday Club Resort - all sharing 1,000 acres of tropical parkland and three kilometres of beach frontage with the Laguna Phuket Golf Club, Canal Shopping Village, Banyan Tree Spa, four Angsana Spas, Laguna Wedding Chapel, Quest Laguna Phuket Adventure an on-site team building facility, and Latitude a unique stand-alone function venue.