

## News



Faces of "The Pledge"

High resolution image available at

<http://www.lagunaphuket.com/publicftp/Press%20Releases/Pledge.jpg>

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### For Immediate Release

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## New TV Reality Show to feature Laguna Phuket Triathlon

Due to its continuing success, the twelfth annual Thai Airways International Laguna Phuket Triathlon will be featured in the final episode of a new reality television series called "The Pledge" envisioned specifically to highlight this popular sporting event.

This year's triathlon, scheduled for 4 December 2005, will be the largest yet, with over 600 triathletes competing in the gruelling 68.8-kilometre triathlon comprising a 1.8-kilometre swim, 55-kilometre cycle and 12-kilometre run. A total of 41 three-person relay teams will also compete over the same triathlon course.

"The Pledge" reality television series follows the progress of a group of ordinary people who have made 'The Pledge' to improve their sedentary unhealthy lifestyles and train for the Thai Airways Laguna Phuket Triathlon and the challenges they encounter. Filmed against the exotic backdrop of Phuket Island, the series treats its viewers to a glimpse into the remarkable transformation of regular people into triathletes, as well as an intimate portrait of Phuket's rebirth.

The contestants, who hail from various corners of the Globe have very diverse backgrounds and entered the race for a variety of personal reasons, but all are united in their drive to triumph over adversity and meet the physical and psychological challenges of the race head on.

"The Pledge" participants include such people as Guy Neale, a 45-year-old property developer from Australia, who says that he wants to become "a participant in, rather than an observer of life". Compared to the other 'Pledgers', Guy was in the worst physical condition suffering from gout and high blood pressure with 44% body fat. Doctors had warned Guy that he was heading for serious medical problems if he didn't change his unhealthy lifestyle. Guy had not participated in any kind of sport or exercise in nearly 20 years and had major mental and physical obstacles to overcome. With the help of a nutritionist Guy lost 10 kilograms in 4 weeks. Before making "The Pledge" Guy weighed in at 110 kilograms and now weighs 87 kilograms.

Stefanie Goh, 36, a Singaporean account servicing manager – who has been battling her weight since her early teens – wants to enter the race in order to stop herself from using her weight "as an excuse against being able to accomplish more in life." She believes that "the hardest part of 'The Pledge' will not be the physical transitions, but the mental challenge". Stefanie, who suffered from obesity and chronic flat feet, had literally not done any physical activity for the past 15 years. Upon taking "the Pledge" she spent the first months of training under a podiatrist's supervision learning how to walk properly. Originally weighing 101 kilograms Stefanie could barely walk up a flight of stairs and now, weighing 89 kilograms she will run the 12-kilometre leg of the Laguna Phuket Triathlon relay race.

Samantha Smith, a 28-year-old ballet teacher from South Africa, who took 'The Pledge' because "it would be an enormous challenge... both physically and mentally" is also motivated to be involved, because she feels she has found something that "will make a difference in the lives of those who have suffered." Seriously injured in a car accident at the age of 18, Samantha's doctors had advised her that she would never run again or participate in sports. Samantha set out to prove them wrong and fought back against the odds to continue her ballet career. However, she had not participated in any other sporting activity outside of ballet until she signed up for "The Pledge". Starting out as one of the more delicate 'Pledgers' Samantha's die-hard spirit has overcome her fears – she couldn't swim or ride a bicycle – to become one of the strongest 'Pledgers' in the field.

Viewers will be able to catch all the 'Pledgers' personal stories of triumph during the 13-episode series to be aired on ESPN during the first half of 2006.

For further information regarding the 2005 Thai Airways Laguna Phuket Triathlon presented by the Tourism Authority of Thailand and Herbalife, please visit [www.lagunaphukettriathlon.com](http://www.lagunaphukettriathlon.com), or contact Paula Himel, Assistant Race Director [triathlon@lagunaphuket.com](mailto:triathlon@lagunaphuket.com) Tel.: +66 76 324 060, Fax: +66 76 324 061

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### Note to the Editor

Laguna Phuket is Asia's leading resort destination comprising five deluxe hotels: Banyan Tree Phuket, Dusit Laguna Resort, Laguna Beach Resort, Sheraton Grande Laguna Phuket and Allamanda Laguna Phuket, which all share 600 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 and Quest Laguna Phuket Adventure, a leading corporate training and outdoor recreation facility.