

## News



Female winners of 2005 Thai Airways Laguna Phuket Triathlon. The winner of this year's Triathlon for women Samantha McGlone (*centre*), Laura Bennett (*left*), who placed 2<sup>nd</sup>, and Belinda Granger (*right*), who finished in 3<sup>rd</sup> place.

High resolution image available at <http://www.lagunaphuket.com/publicftp/Press%20Releases/1-3femalewinners3.jpg>



Greg Bennett and Samantha McGlone taking a victorious ride on a young elephant at the finish line.

High resolution image available at <http://www.lagunaphuket.com/publicftp/Press%20Releases/Greg&LauraBennett4.jpg>

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### Press Release

Phuket, Thailand  
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## Aussies Dominate Triathlon

A record-breaking field of 700 athletes competed at the 2005 **Thai Airways International Laguna Phuket Triathlon** presented by the Tourism Authority of Thailand and Herbalife International (Thailand) Ltd. on 4 December. In its twelfth year, this increasingly popular event attracted more triathletes than ever before, including an unprecedented total of 42 three-person relay teams.

The gruelling race began at 8:00 hours with a spectacular mass start from the beach of the Sheraton Grande Laguna Phuket with hundreds of swimmers trying to take the early lead in the first leg of the Triathlon. The uniquely designed 1.8-kilometre swim crossed two bodies of water – first, through the azure waters of the Andaman Sea, then athletes sprinted over the beach to swim the last 620 metres in a beachside lagoon. First out of the water and ahead of all the male athletes was American pro female Laura Bennett with a swim time of 23:59, followed by Richie Cunningham in 24:01 and Laura's husband Greg Bennett in 24:03.

First off the bike after completing the gruelling 55-kilometre undulating course through Phuket's tropical countryside was 2004 Laguna Phuket defending champion Craig Alexander in 1:26:59 ahead of fellow Australians Richie Cunningham and Greg Bennett. Canadian Samantha McGlone was the first pro woman off the bike with just a 43 second lead over Laura Bennett.

Greg Bennett, who joked at the pre-race press conference that he'd been beaten by Craig Alexander all year, overtook Alexander at the 6-kilometre marker on the run course and never looked back, winning the 2005 Laguna Phuket Triathlon in 2:31:40, earning US\$3,000 in prize money. Less than a minute behind, Alexander claimed second place with a total time of 2:32:37 and Richie Cunningham placed third as he did in 2004. Samantha McGlone finished strongly to claim the Pro Women's championship in a total time of 2:44:16. Three minutes later a victorious Greg Bennett greeted Laura, his wife of one year as she ran down the finish chute to take second place ahead of Australian Belinda Granger.

During their visit to Phuket, Greg and Laura Bennett are celebrating their first wedding anniversary and they are truly enjoying the local hospitality and unique attractions including elephant rides, beach massages and Thai cuisine.

The first overall amateur finisher was Craig Johns from New Zealand with a total time of 2:52:15. The fastest Thai finisher was Bunlubsak Doungdun with a very respectable time of 2:55:24 while the first Thai female to finish was a remarkable 14-year-old athlete Phuttrajit Sangkhaphan – the youngest participant in this year's Triathlon with a time of 3:35:40.

For complete race results please visit the Laguna Phuket Triathlon website [www.lagunaphuket.com/triathlon](http://www.lagunaphuket.com/triathlon).

### 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.