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“Lifestyle, Recreation, Farming, Investment & Residential Pursuits.

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Exploring the Mekong river

I escaped southern Australia’s winter this year and travelled the Mekong river through Thailand, Laos, Cambodia and then finally reaching the Vietnamese coast. Travelling the so called road less travelled by any means possible. In total I travelled on 4 planes, 3 trucks, 3 motor bikes, 11 buses, 9 boats and countless took tooks. A solo journey meeting incredible resilient people and learning about their history and culture. The human spirit needs adventure, and exploring countries for the first time and the meeting of people and embracing different cultures accomplishes that adventure need that I admit is addictive.

In northern Thailand the Long neck people who are refuges from Burma, carry on the ancient customs by placing metal bands around the young girls necks, pushing their shoulders downwards creating a long neck that was seen as a sign of beauty. Today the custom continues, with the Long necks only form of income is by people visiting their village, although these people have been living in Thailand for 30 years, the authorities still do not allow them to become Thailand citizens therefore forbidding them to work, hence the long neck practise continues for economical reasons. Travelling the Mekong river is an incredible

adventure in itself, your life's in the hand of an experienced local boatman at the helm, dodging rocks in the fast moving water through steep gorges, no life jackets or navigation aids with the exception of the boatman's assistant holding a long bamboo pole as the only sounder, and the jungle forest comes right to the waters edge. Laos known as "The Land of a million Elephants" lives up to its name as I'm eating breakfast on the banks of the river watching elephants with their handlers walk to the river to drink and bath. The joy of Laos, people and environment is saddened to learn of the many victims from exploded bombs legacy of the Vietnam war, where Laos was neutral, but this did not stop the 580,000 individual bombings by the U.S.A. that in recent years has created 20,000 victims mostly children losing their limbs by trying to remove these bombs to cash in for scrap metal desperate to earn money to buy food.

On the border of Cambodia known as 4,000 islands I am humbled to be invited to the home of a local family to eat Mekong fish soup, after spending the day looking and finding the rare fresh water Dolphin that is on the verge of extinction that occupy this part of the river.



The longest and oldest Long Neck woman



Elephants with handlers Laos

On Tonle Sap lake, Cambodia, on a floating village I was humbled to be able to buy rice and take it on a boat to primary schools where the children are able to be fed. Cambodia history is one of horror, during the Pol Pot regime it is believed 1.7 to 2.5 million people died of either starvation or where murdered by Pol Pots Khmer Rouge in the 1970s. I was fortunate to meet one of the survivors of the notorious S-21 prison Chum Mey who has written his memoirs *Survivor*, I was also shaken to stand in the infamous killing fields where by bones of the victims still protrude through the ground.

So this xmas when we all in the western world over eat and drink and spend money on material things, my thoughts will be to the happy faces and genuine nature of people of the Mekong river who know the difference between needs and wants.

Price Reduction Snowy Mountain Holdings

Mountain Views and The Valley have both been reduced in price, originally they were advertised at \$2,500 per acre, now are for sale at \$2250 per acre for "Mountain Views" a

10% reduction and “The Valley” at \$2,377 per acre a 5% reduction, Offering only 10% down take possession with a 2 years interest free period with terms over 5 years. Please contact me for the information memorandum.

I would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and all the best for the New Year

Happiness comes a lot easier when you stop complaining about your problems and you start being grateful for all the problems you don't have.



Rice workers 4,000 island Laos



Pipe smoking Bolaven Plateau Laos



Budhist monks who fed me on the Mekong Delta



On the road less travelled Vietnam

Never Die Wondering



Kind regards

Alistair Macleod

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