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The backpack Ibiza



A crystal clear sea, a slowly shimmering sunset with palm trees gently slowly swaying in the 30 degree heat. To top that a DJ legend on the decks easing you into a Saturday night. A common enough occurrence nowadays the holiday island Koh Samui.

Without any super clubs, Samui, located way out in the Gulf of Thailand, has an extraordinarily large number of top DJs arriving to play in return for a stay in a nice villa and a few quid. They often play virtually unannounced and the crowds, especially the locals and the large number of expats, get to see high calibre talent at work; talent they would be paying an arm a leg to see in a club elsewhere.

Only recently, Jon Carter, Dirty Vegas and LTJ Bukem (above) have played sets on Samui. All of this is down to two slightly unhinged dance music fans, Gary Gecko and Stevie Bray, who have been persuading the DJs to make the effort (which, let's face it, shouldn't be too difficult considering Samui constant temperature, sunshine and mellow atmosphere).

Gary Gecko hosted one of Danny Rampling's last ever gigs after the Shoom maestro threatened retirement – and was almost taken seriously. Recently, Gary's mountain top club spontaneously combusted after a three-day bender with Leeroy Thornhill from Prodigy. Disco inferno indeed – it took six hours to quell the flames.

Unlike Ibiza, Samui doesn't boast a big entertainment industry but the island is an easy stop off for DJs playing lucrative gigs in nearby Singapore, Bali or Bangkok, or tempting as a week's rest on the way back from Australia. Such is the life of a working DJ these days.

It's all good news, of course, for the locals and holiday dance enthusiast that head to south east Asia. Gary's club is already rebuilt and a new club, Beach Republic, is starting to get busy. Good Times' Norman Jay is on his way and, did we mention, it's lovely and hot out here? **Words and pictures by Martyn Goodacre**

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