



Above: No more Hollywood: The Charlermton movie house was recently renovated and is now for rent. Left, Spooky: Back-of-the-truck promotion for the 1959 version of *The Mummy*.
- Photo by Mr Sangjan Limlohasakul)

Old cinema closes curtain

"I saw the west! I saw Hollywood!" Grandpa recalls. "I loved that movie house. It was as if the projector opened a door onto all sorts of other places and people."

Grandpa is referring to the Charlermton Movie House, Phuket's first cinema, which used to be on Yaowaraj Road, close to the intersection with Deebuk Road.



Built in the 1940s, long before TV made it to the island, it was one of the few places local people could visit for regular entertainment.

The Longest Day (1962), *Jason and the Argonauts* (1963), *Cleopatra* (1963), *The Sound of Music* (1965)

and hundreds more big Hollywood hits were all shown at the Charlermton.

The night before a new movie premiered in Phuket, a truck would do the rounds of the town, carrying local people dressed as characters from the film. Sometimes they would even act out one of the signature scenes from the movie.

Grandpa remembers viv-

idly the excitement of watching cowboys on the back of the truck, drawing toy six-shooters for a gunfight.

Tickets cost B5 for seats near the screen, B7 for the back half of the auditorium and B12 for the VIP seats on the balcony level. Kids paid B3.50 to sit on a bench in the balcony.

The midday screenings at the weekend were an even

better deal, Grandpa recalls. "We kids loved the two-baht movies – that's what they were called. That's when they would run an old movie with cheap tickets. I used to skip a couple of meals just so I could save the money to buy a ticket."

The funniest thing he remembers was the talented couple who did the Thai voiceovers for the mov-

ies. There were just two of them but they would carry the whole film, employing a range of voices.

"And they loved to digress, bringing in the names of people in the audience during conversations between the movie characters," he recalls.

Eventually, however, TV killed the Charlermton. It closed in 1973.



Loving life here

Paolo Fadda

Executive Chef
Da Maurizio Var
Restaurant.



■ **How long have you lived on the island and why did you move here?**

I've lived here for four months, and Asia was the final challenge for me as it was the only part of the world where I had not worked.

■ **What is the best thing about living here?**

It's relaxing, fun and the people are polite.

■ **What do you do to relax?**

I like to relax with my wife, who is pregnant, so for me it is a really unique moment in my life.

■ **What hobbies or sports are you interested in?**

I am a football fanatic, but at the same time I love all sports. At this time I am particularly attracted to rugby.

■ **Favourite food or dish?**

I love all food, especially when it is authentic and done well.

■ **What kind of music are you into?**

I'm basically into rock. In my point of view life's not good without music in it, no matter what the music is.

■ **What is the best tip you have for people moving to Phuket?**

Enjoy the life here. Where I have come from, Dubai, it was only about the work, where here you can realise what life is all about and live a good life, but also work hard.

■ **What is the funniest thing that has happened to you while living on the island?**

One day I got lost and asked for a taxi but there wasn't one around so three locals on a motorbike stopped to ask me if I needed help. They drove me home, four people on a bike for more than 10km.

■ **The person you admire the most and why?**

I admire my wife for being so patient with me. I work 12 hours a day but when I go home she always has a smile for me, and this is real satisfaction.

■ **If you could come back as any other person who would it be and why?**

I would be a tourist and enjoy all my time living in this wonderful part of the world.