



ThaiWISE
HELA MÄNNISKAN I MALMÖ

Nuad Thai Nordic Newsletter

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Thaidii Massage is a member of the Certification of Ethical Nuad Thai Businesses: Malmö Model.

Love and a life in Sweden

The story of Ms. Phianphon Nithichotichaiphath's move to Sweden is a little unusual.

While most Thai women in Sweden have immigrated to live with a Swedish partner, she came on a work visa and met her husband in Sweden.

Read on to hear how one of our certified salon owners found love and a successful massage career in Sweden.



Thaidii Massage's shopfront on Hyllie Kyrkoväg, Limhamn.

An unexpected change in direction

Ms. Phianphon Nithichotichaiphath, who is known by her friends and family as Ms. Tum, graduated from Ramkhamhaeng University in Thailand with a Major in History. She worked in quality control at a multinational tire company for twelve years before taking a role as assistant to a warehouse manager at DHL.

She was at a stage in her career when she felt ready for a change when her aunt suggested that she start work as

a massage therapist. She was initially doubtful, thinking that her education and experience would be wasted. But ultimately, she decided to accept the invitation and try something very different.

She started her new career by attending training run by the Department of Thai Traditional and Alternative Medicine, Ministry of Health.



Certificate from the Thai Ministry of Health.

In the first week of her studies, Ms. Tum was offered a month's work as a massage therapist in Malaysia. She accepted and quickly learnt a broad array of massage techniques from the senior therapists at her workplace.

It was clear that her skills were developing quickly. Her customers appreciated her, and she received a tip of 100 ringgit (200 SEK) which was an extraordinarily high amount at that time.

After returning to Thailand, an acquaintance invited her to work in Sweden. While she waited for her visa to be granted she worked at her aunt's massage salon. Once again, she was popular with customers, and it became obvious to her that she could earn a good living from massage. Ms. Tum was convinced that she was on the right career path.

Starting a Nuad Thai career in Sweden

In Sweden, Ms. Tum earned enough to be able to send money to her family in Thailand. After her two-year contract expired, Ms. Tum began preparing to return to Thailand, with a plan to come back to Sweden and open her own salon.

Finding love

In the time before her return to Thailand, Ms. Tum met Allan Soerensen, the kind-hearted man who would later become her husband. While Ms. Tum worked as a

massage therapist in Malaysia and Russia they kept in touch, and their relationship developed.

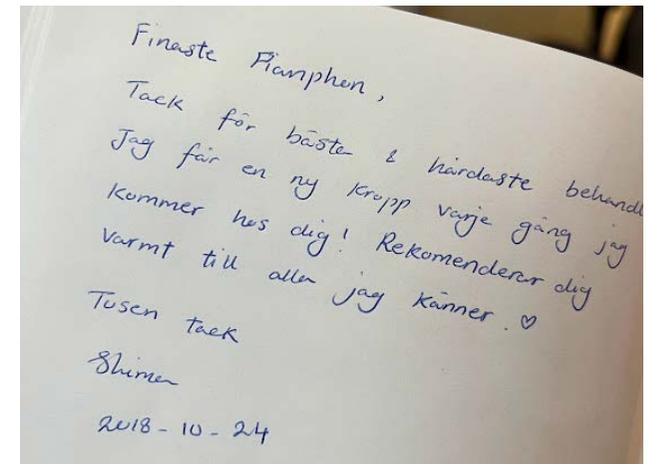
"My husband is a former police officer, so he did some investigation. He researched my background and paid me an unannounced visit in Thailand.

He wanted to make sure that I didn't already have a husband in Thailand. He found I had nothing to hide, and since then our love and mutual trust have grown."

It took 14 months for Ms. Tum's residential visa to be granted. She ran her own salon in Bangkok while she was waiting.



Ms. Tum and her husband.



An appreciative comment from a customer.

Finally, at the end of 2016, she flew to Sweden to live with her husband and start her new life.

Ms. Tum remembers how nervous she felt on the flight to Sweden. "I had hardly any money at that point. It was a real risk. I wondered what I would do if my husband wasn't there to pick me up at the airport. But he was there. He is a good, kind person. When I arrived, he gave me money on a weekly basis so that I could buy the things I needed. He took me to apply for SFI so I could learn Swedish."

Motivation: helping others

Ms. Tum was very clear that she wanted to earn an income and started working at a Thai massage salon. During the first month she earned 4 000 SEK which she immediately sent to her family in Thailand, along with her weekly allowance from her husband.



Ms. Tum outside her salon, Thaidii Massage.

This surprised her husband, who asked her why she was taking responsibility for so many others.

“But now he understands that my family is what drives me to work hard and save money. If it wasn’t for my family, I wouldn’t be here now. I would never have come to Sweden, and we would never have met. After I explained that he accepted that I would always send money to my family.”

Dream of a salon in Sweden is realised

After being employed in a salon for about 3 months, Ms. Tum found a location that was suitable for starting her own salon.

“My husband has been very supportive right from the start. He helped me write a business plan and he took a bank loan to help start my business. He even bought equipment for the salon before I arrived in Sweden. His confidence in me and my business is very touching.

He taught me a lot about running a business in Sweden and helps with everything at the salon. His support has been one of the reasons my salon has been successful. I am very grateful, and I show my gratitude by taking good care of him. He likes massages so I give him a massage as often as possible!

Taking care of her customers

Ms. Tum has been running her salon for six years. She has an excellent reputation and many regular customers. She says she wants to help as many people as possible.

“I am very focused on healing, on making my customers feel better. Some customers say that I am reading their mind because I know exactly how to help them. Maybe it’s just that I am good at understanding people, and I have a lot of massage experience.”

Ms. Tum is aware that some customers can’t afford as many sessions as they need. She offers her customers exercises to do at home so they can continue the work she has done at the salon.

Continuous learning

Ms. Tum is always developing her skills. Most recently she has participated in ThaiWISE’s Certification of Ethical Nuad Thai Businesses: Malmö Model.

“It has given me a new perspective. I was very self-assured when I joined the group, but after a while I realised I could learn a lot from ThaiWISE and the other participants. We meet on a regular basis and share ideas.

I hope that the certification programme will help to improve the image of Thai massage in Sweden. My customers are interested in the programme. I can tell that it gives them more confidence in my salon. I always tell them about the programme and ask them to help us promote it.”

Ms. Tum is proud to be an ethically certified salon. “It reminds us that Thai massage is an honourable and dignified profession. We are proving that a salon can be ethical and successful. If I can do it, everyone can do it!”



The reception area, where Ms. Tum welcomes her customers.



Ms. Tum and her sister, who also works at Thaidii Massage.

Massage course for professional massage therapists

ThaiWISE runs courses in Nuad Thai (traditional Thai massage) at the Nuad Thai Nordic - Training & Certification Center in Malmö.

These courses are run on behalf of the Union of Thai Traditional Medicine Society, the official certifying body in Thailand.

Our last Nuad Thai course for 2023 will run in November.

Find out more and apply at www.nuadthai.se or visit us on the 2nd floor at Mobilia.



This is just the beginning!

ThaiWISE will continue to set standards for the Thai massage industry in Sweden and beyond.



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Thank you for supporting the empowerment of Thai women in Sweden!