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(Ruby's Rap)

Goil Amornvivat

by Ruby Comer



There's no place like home," some gal once said as she tapped her ruby red slippers together. Well, this Ruby hasn't tapped her ruby red spiked heels on the pavement of her hometown for over twenty years. But here I am back in the Midwest where I was reared. I gave a seminar today at the Leadership Summit for HIV Positive Young Adults (Ages 18–25), an annual event sponsored by the Ohio AIDS Coalition. The title of my lecture was "Stop In The Name Of Love: Think It Over!" Like most other cities you haven't been to for awhile, Columbus has clearly progressed.

I plant my pumps at the five-star Hilton Columbus, which borders on Easton Town Center, a mall-egalopolis where a lady can shop, dine, and have entertainment right at her carnation pink-colored fingertips. (This place makes The Grove in Los Angeles look like a 7-11 strip mall!) Easton is a paradise and the Hilton is its castle. The smoke-free facility boasts a gym, a swanky pool and Jacuzzi area, and several top restaurants. The staff is accommodating and my room is elegant, spacious—and the bed is beyond comfy. My picturesque view is of the fairy tale village below.

After lunch one day in The Dining Room, one of the hotel restaurants, I bump into an acquaintance that I met several years ago in Thailand. His name is Goil Amornvivat and you might know him from *Top Design* or *Trading Spaces*, since he has appeared on both. He's a

designer/architect, co-owns a company called TUG, and teaches at Parsons New School for Design and at New York Institute of Technology.

Goil and I walk out the revolving doors and it's pouring! So we merry-go-round back through the doors and huddle around the hearth in the inviting charming Old World lobby, ensconced in a couple of wingback chairs.

Ruby Comer: Get me back to L.A. where the weather is more predictable! [I blot raindrops off my peaches and cream complexion.] My lil' duckie, I could never pronounce your last name....

Goil Amornvivat: Think "amour," love in French, and "viva" as in Elvis Presley's song "Viva Las Vegas."



had to design and implement a "room."

I know! [I grin sheepishly.] I saw that segment on *The View* that was hosted by Whoopi. Spectacular work, Goil. Say, what was she like to work with?

WG is great! We met her at the event and have been great friends since. She's been very kind to us.

How'd you get involved with DIFFA?

Well since I can draw better than I can walk or run a marathon for a cause, I have been helping out with

DIFFA and have been involved with them for four years now.

Bravo! What impact has the epidemic had on you, Goil?

It's hard when I visit Changmai in Thailand and not see friends because they have passed away from the disease. It is such a beautiful place and you never think anything bad could happen there. [He looks off at the



Ahh, "amour-viva." Got it. Like it. Tell me what you've been up to.

I recently did a tabletop design for Dining by Design, an annual event that benefits DIFFA [Design Industries Foundation Fighting AIDS]. In the trade, "tabletop design" just means a table setting. But for DIFFA, we, along with the other designers, make "environments." Each of us got a 10-by-10 space and we



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RUBY ILLUSTRATION BY DAVIDD BATALON; AMORNIVIVAT PHOTO BY ALISON GOOTEE; STREET PHOTO BY UDOM SURANGSOPHON