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# I am not a God!

## Gail's Hair Transplant with Dr. Pichet in Thailand

by Gail Bennett

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Dr. Pichet Rodchareon

**T**his is my second visit to Thailand for a surgical process. The original visit occurred in June 1998 when I flew to Phuket for sex reassignment surgery.

I have enormous respect for the calibre of Thai plastic surgeons, and for the graciousness of Thai people. In 2004 I stayed in Bangkok, with a dual purpose for the visit. One to have a rest and take a vacation, and the other being to have a hair transplant.

In 2003 when I was living in Brisbane I consulted a doctor who undertook hair transplants and was told I needed 600 grafts. In Bangkok I was told I required 2500. I am pleased I chose Bangkok because the results, following the transplant are wonderful. For me, having the hair transplant has been as important as having S.R.S. many moons ago. It is not an easy surgical process, and it took longer than S.R.S.

I arrived in Bangkok on a balmy Friday night and was driven to my hotel in a Mercedes Benz. The limousine and the hotel had been arranged by the surgeon, Dr. Pichet. It was about midnight when I arrived at the hotel, and I just wanted to get to bed. The hotel suite

was gorgeous and the bed was a delight to sleep in. Next morning I went the hospital where Dr. Pichet performs most of his surgical procedures, and where I knew an Australian girl was recovering from S.R.S. Shortly after arriving there, Dr. Pichet arrived and we were introduced to each other.

A short time later I went to the hospital's admission area to undertake some medical formalities, prior to my hair transplant the following day. Unless otherwise requested, Dr. Pichet's Western patients are accommodated in a private room at the hospital. The standard of service by the nursing staff at the hospital is pleasing, but during much of Dr. Pichet's surgery, he is accompanied by his own personal nursing staff, who must be applauded for their talent and dedication.

I arrived at the hospital on the Sunday morning about 9:00am. About 9:30am the procedure started, with the first of many anaesthetic injections. Initially the concentration for the injections is in the donor area. Dr. Pichet removed a portion of hair at the rear of the head, which is not vulnerable to the evils of testosterone. It took Dr. Pichet about ninety minutes to remove the donor area and to complete the sutures. For the entire ninety minutes I was lying on my stomach, which is not the most comfortable of positions. About 11:10am I was advised I could lie on my back. What a relief, I thought! Many hours of having a sore backside were, however, about to besiege me!

Periodically I asked for a pause in the procedure so I could stand or take a toilet break. About 1:30pm we took a break for lunch. At 4:30pm I realised I could not endure the procedure much further, and I saw Dr. Pichet and told him I wanted to stop and he agreed. Dr. Pichet undertakes the surgical process with the donor area, but after the sutures are in place it is his nursing staff that completes the process. Dr. Pichet however continually appears to inspect the outcome. By 4:40pm I had received 2400 grafts and despite the horrible appearance of my scalp, I was most impressed with what I saw.

I left the hospital with my head in a bandage, and headed back to my hotel room. That night I was expecting to endure a high element of pain but I was surprised that there was none.

Dr. Pichet's staff provided sufficient painkillers and antibiotics for my entire recovery period. At the time of writing this article, it is a week after the procedure and if I have lost any of the new grafts, the loss has been minimal, and the result is wonderful. Every morning Dr. Pichet sends a driver to take all of his patients residing at the hotel to his practice for a check-up.

After the check-up, sometimes his staff are available to accompany you on shopping excursions or on tourist jaunts. The level of service provided by Dr. Pichet and his staff is superb. In my case, they even helped me negotiate a cheaper cost for a new digital video camera.

It is disappointing to hear some patients of Dr. Pichet complain about the Thai food. Heavens above, what did they expect? Meat pies and tomato sauce?

*... miracles can never be guaranteed, but I am more than happy, and in the months to come I look forward to a new head of hair that I can truly call my own.*

As a devotee of hot and spicy Thai food I am in my element. I often wonder how many people come to the surgeons of Thailand expecting a miracle transformation in their lives.

In the case of S.R.S. candidates, they may realise that S.R.S. was not really the miracle they had expected, but as Dr. Pichet says, "I am not a God".

No matter the procedure, miracles can never be guaranteed, but I am more than happy, and in the months to come I look forward to a new head of hair that I can truly call my own.

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