

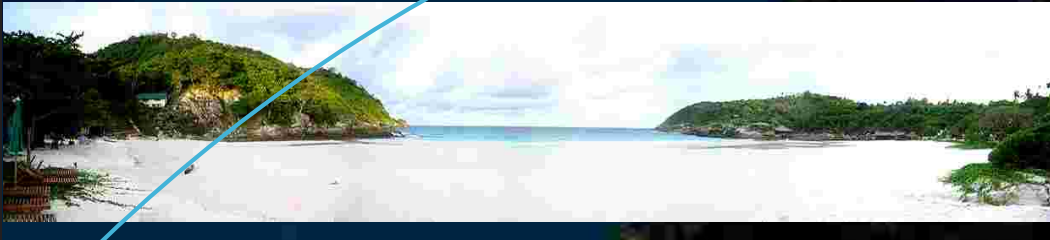
# Reef Ball At Racha Yai Island 2004-2005



## Pre-Tsunami

The Racha Resort & Spa together with Racha Seamaster Divers began a Reef Ball project with a full Reef Ball construction and coral propagation and transplanting program training by Todd Barber, Chairman of the Reef Ball Foundation and John Walch, renown expert on coral propagation. Training dates on Sept. 16-22, 2004. The Racha Hotel has been accepted into the Reef Ball Foundation's "Reefs Around the World" grant program and will be the first of it's kind in Thailand.

To kick off the project, Reef Ball Foundation gave a presentation to His Excellency, Khun Suwit Khunkitti, Minister of Natural Resources and Environment on the occasion of the launch of the first Reef Ball Project in Thailand on 18th September 2004, at Koh Racha Yai. The presentation and building/launching of the 1st Reef Ball in Thailand was jointly sponsored by The Racha Resort, Racha Seamaster Divers and the Reef Ball Foundation. Khun Suwit Khunkitti proclaimed "Permission Granted" and fully supports Reef Balls in Thailand. Thailand is the 50th country to use Reef Balls!



The first Reef Ball in Thailand is poured ceremonially by Todd Barber, Chairman of the Reef Ball Foundation, His Excellency Khun Suwit Khunkitti, Minister of Natural Resources and Environment and Phillip Goh of Racha Seamaster.

Bangkok's Independent Newspaper  
AROUND THAILAND: Reef Ball at Koh Racha - Sep 25, 2004

The Racha Resort and Spa and the Racha Seamaster Divers on Phuket's Racha Yai Island will begin a Reef Ball project.

Reef Ball programmes restore ailing coral reefs and create new fishing and scuba-diving sites. The process involves artificial reef construction, coral propagation and training in coral transplants.

Koh Racha is the first island in Thailand to be accepted into the Reef Ball Foundation's "Reefs Around the World" grant programme. In addition to support from Reef Ball Foundation, the Racha Resort and Spa has invested Bt2 million to support the programme.

Each reef ball costs approximately Bt2,000. The project will begin at Racha Yai Island and expand to other areas of coral reef degradation around Phuket, including the Phi Phi Islands, says Suwit Khunkitti, Thailand's natural resources and environment minister.

## Post-Tsunami

Following the great tsunami disaster of December 2004 the scope of the Thailand project was expanded to



include not only the creation of new reef but the rescue of damaged corals and post-disaster restoration of the reef environment.



Members of the Reef Ball Foundation, the Racha Resort and Racha Seamaster Divers, present check to His Excellency Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra and His Excellency Khun Suwit Khunkitti, Minister of Natural Resources and Environment.

The Reef Ball Coral Team returned to Phuket and Racha Yai in February of 2005 to begin surveys of the damage, collecting endangered coral specimens for propagation and to meet again with members of the Thai government. Aware that as the majority of the local economy is derived from tourism and fishing that any efforts to restore the marine environment will also be of great aid in economic recovery.

With the government eager to establish the new reef as a marine sanctuary the recovery and survival of this new environment should be assured for years to come.



Additional molds and the training of new volunteers and labor during the February visit have allowed work to begin on the construction and deployment of the over 300 new Reef Balls to be placed in March of 2005



New modular barges configured for coral fragging and plugging (above) and deployment (right.)



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Left - a Reef Ball as it was just deployed in September of 2004. Right - the same ball in February having survived the tsunami intact, and Above Right the coral plugs which also survived.

