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Like over 90 per cent of resorts in Phuket, The Mangosteen has not been affected at all. We were lucky, as no guest was on the beach at the time. All of us have lost some friends, of course, but we had no problems within our own families or the families of our staff.

The priorities now are to rescue jobs and fill up the resort with new guests as fast as possible. Currently, like most businesses, we are trying to keep our staff and just reduce their income temporarily. But we can't survive many months like this and need new guests within at least one or two months.

There are signs that travellers will come back soon. But bookings are now 10 per cent of expected levels. The island is empty. The biggest danger is that shops that have been repaired and reopened must close again because they have no customers.

The situation has been completely exaggerated in the media. Phuket was very lucky – there was some damage on the beach-front road in Patong and a lot of damage in Kamala. Other beaches were largely unaffected and as early as 4 January everything was quite normal here. The main damage is the loss of work. Khao Lak has been almost completely destroyed and hotels can't be rebuilt quickly.

During the first two weeks after the disaster we went out every day



Both Mangosteen Resort and Spa (both pictures this page) and Evason Phuket (opposite page) were relatively unscathed by the tsunami

to 'catch' journalists and TV teams and tell them what a horrible mistake they made in their reporting from Phuket. There was a lot of repetition of gossip. People imagined there were dead bodies floating in the water, which was just nonsense. Some journalists understood and invited me to be interviewed. One German station (ARD) even produced a small movie with the title *We've Been Sent to Hell but Arrived in Paradise*.

Of course, an early warning system for the future would be a good thing. With such a system in place, the only damage would have been to buildings.

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