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REVIVAL
ISSUE

There is no season like spring. That magical time filled with the scent of flowers and chirping of birds. After months of ice cold, gloomy winter, its warm touch on one's skin, is the embodiment of relief.

Here in South-East Asia, spring is nowhere to be found, but what comes closest to it, is monsoon. In a way, it's nothing like its continental climate counterpart – instead of relief of the sun, it brings relief from it; in place of much welcome warmth, it offers weather that is cooler, hence more tolerable. Yet in its essence, monsoon season is very much like spring. It's the season of awakening, a season of new beginnings, a season of revival. And it's this revival that we pay homage to in this issue of NAA – both literal, embodied by the arrival of monsoon in the upcoming months, and symbolic, as in revival of the body, mind and spirit.

We begin on page 18 with our profile of Natalia Berglund, a young artist whose intriguing portrait decorates the cover of this issue. Each of her pieces is made using a different technique, each exemplifies a different style, and as a whole her body of work represents an endless opportunity for growth just like the one promised by monsoon and spring alike.

Flip to page 26 to find our review of PRU restaurant – a new fine dining experience at Phuket's beloved Trisara resort. With its farm to table concept and astonishing creativity represented by each and every dish on the menu, PRU is a breath of fresh air on Phuket's culinary scene.

On page 32, we travel to Thailand's second biggest island to discover it through all five senses in its top luxury resorts. From their marvellous vistas, through the array of flavours at their restaurants to shameless pampering at their wellness centres, we offer you a complete guide to sensual revival on Koh Samui.

As we travel on, we board a train on page 48 for a trip from Singapore to Bangkok. Not just any train though, but the marvellous Eastern & Oriental Express. This shamelessly decadent ride brings back to life the experience of a journey in the golden age of travel, and does so in style.

In fact, whichever page you turn to, you will find more stories of revival – rejuvenating spa treatments, refreshing approach to fine cuisine, ground-breaking yacht design and much, much more. Those stories of new beginnings abound, because life itself is filled with them. Every day is a chance waiting to be taken. A chance to reinvent yourself and start anew. A chance for revival.



Maciek Klimowicz
Editor In Chief



W KOH SAMUI

On Koh Samui Thailand's most pristine beach whose golden sands give way to the Island's most idyllic sunsets, **W KOH SAMUI** is the quintessential escape, with 74 private villas – each with its own dive pool. Explore new levels of refreshment at **AWAY® SPA**, and enjoy insider access to worlds of culinary **WOW** at our 2 signature restaurants. Then wink your way across Samui's most scenic playground – **WOOBAR®** – where W lights up the night with peerless mixology, live DJs, and signature **W HAPPENINGS** celebrating our passion for fashion, music and design. Whether for a wedding or a wish, **WHATEVER/WHENEVER®** has arrived.

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① Fourth Aman in China

Amanyangyun, Aman's fourth resort in China, will open in Autumn this year. Located just outside downtown Shanghai, Amanyangyun is a unique forest village of modern and historic Ming and Qing dynasty dwellings, tranquil gardens and an enriching Aman Spa. Amanyangyun sits at the heart of an ancient forest of camphor trees, some over 1000 years old



and more than 100 feet tall. The result of a monumental decade-long conservation initiative, the resort offers fascinating insights into the life and culture of both contemporary and ancient China.

aman.com

② Phuket's got wheels

Whether you prefer your Rolls-Royces and Aston Martins brand new or second hand, now you will be able to get them in Phuket. All thanks to the recently launched MGC-ASIA Autoplex Phuket. Spanning on 4 rais of land with 14,000 square meters of utility space, when complete this 400 million Baht venture will feature a showroom for brands like Rolls-Royce, Aston Martin, Azimut Yacht, BMW and Mini, as well as used cars and one-stop auto paint and body facility.

mgc-asia.com



③ Camp like a champ



To accommodate your adventurous spirit without any compromises when it comes to luxury, Four Seasons Tented Camp Golden Triangle introduces the stunning Explorer's Lodge. This safari-style lodge comes with two airy bedrooms and a spacious deck, featuring an outdoor pool with stunning views of the surrounding jungle. The interiors blend luxury and the spirit of adventure and include custom-crafted bathtubs, bespoke accessories and carefully chosen artwork.

fourseasons.com/thailand

④ Asia's first Rosewood

Ultra-luxury Rosewood Hotels and Resorts will debut their first resort in Asia with Rosewood Phuket, set to open on the third quarter of 2017. Nestled along a secluded 600-meter beachfront at Emerald Bay, all 71 residential-style pavilions and villas will be immersed in tropical surroundings and feature a private pool and stunning oceans views. Guests will be able to experience Asaya - Rosewood's recently unveiled holistic wellness concept, four restaurants and lounges, fitness centre, children's explorer club and beachside pool.

rosewoodhotels.com



⑤ Seven sins on seven seas

Underlining its position among the very finest yacht builders in the world, Sanlorenzo recently launched their biggest build



to date, the astounding 52Steel, named Seven Sins. As an example of Sanlorenzo's craftsmanship, the yacht will be on display at the Monaco Yacht Show. As with all Sanlorenzo's creations, Seven Sins was fully customized to the owner's needs - the 60 year old company boast a reputation of a yacht builder for nautical connoisseurs. In 2015, Sanlorenzo joined forces with Simpson Marine and has since then introduced a long list of exciting yachts to Asian waters, the latest being a SL78 arriving in Hong Kong this May.

Simpsonmarine.com

⑥ Rediscover Angkor at Anantara

The presence of Angkor, the world's largest temple complex, is a reason enough to visit Siem Reap, and now there is one more - the recent makeover of Anantara Angkor. The 39-suite resort has evolved into Siem Reap's premier all-suite boutique experience, drawing heavily from local culture, art and history. The list of improvements is too long to print it here, but whether you enjoy dining at Chi Restaurant and Bar, indulge in a Khmer massage at the spa or take a dip in the naturally



salted water of the central courtyard pool, knowing you are minutes away from awe-inspiring temples of Angkor only adds to the experience.

anantara.com

⑦ Let's Dance!

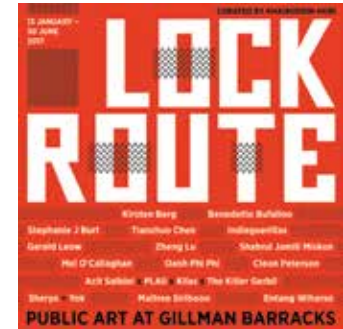
This May twenty dancers and actors led by veteran stage director Tang Wai-kit and award-winning playwright Matthew Cheng will take to the streets of Hong Kong as part of the Danz Up 2.0 performance. The choreography was designed by Shing Mak, the choreographer of the hit homegrown dance movie 'The Way We Dance' while the music was penned by Day Tai, a two-time winner of Best Original Film Song in the 33rd and 35th Hong Kong Film Awards. The performances take place on the 19, 20 and 21 May at the Jockey Club Auditorium.

hk.artsfestival.org



⑧ Art in the barracks

Curated by Khairuddin Hori, Gillman Barracks' public art showcase, "Lock Route" will be the highlight of Singapore Art Week. Inspired by Gillman Barracks' address - 9 Lock Road - and the traditional 24km march of 'graduating' army recruits in Singapore, the showcase will feature installations, sculptures, and murals by renowned and emerging international and Singapore artists. It runs until June 30.



gillmanbarracks.com

⑨ Fuji Rocks

Europe has Glastonbury, Japan has Fuji Rock. Taking place on the backdrop of pristine mountainous vistas of



Japan's largest ski resort, each year the festival welcomes some of the biggest international music acts. This year, international giants such as Bjork, Lorde, LCD Sound System, Aphex Twin, Queens Of The Stone Age and many more are expected, as well as up to 150,000 music lovers. It takes place from July 28 to 30.

fujirock-eng.com

⑩ Wet, wetter, Songkran

For some – the world’s largest water fight, for others – the beginning of a new year and a spiritual event – Songkran might be your best excuse to visit Thailand at the peak of hot season, especially that you’re guaranteed to get cooled down by getting drenched. It takes places in every town and village, but the water battles of Bangkok and Phuket are legendary while the Chiang Mai edition tends to be a bit more spiritual, though only a bit.



⑪ Ironman Danang



It has a 30 km long stretch of white sand beach, it’s located within 100km of three UNESCO World Heritage Sites, it abounds in world-class resorts, golf courses and attractions – if that’s not enough reasons to visit Danang, how about this one – on May 7, this Vietnamese coastal town will host the inaugural IRONMAN 70.3 Vietnam. Swimming, running and cycling in Danang’s beautiful scenery might not be easier, but it will surely be even more memorable.

ap.ironman.com

⑫ Artisan Project



The first phase of the recently opened Project Artisan in Phuket consists of a Garden Eatery serving healthy, locally sourced food in a tropical garden or from the comfort of the air-conditioned all-day café; a Grab & Go offering quick and healthy salads, pastries, drinks and other goodies to those in a hurry, as well as a Foot & Nail Spa to those who have time to sit down for a bit of pampering. The project’s goal is to embody the culture, crafts, cuisine and lifestyle of the local community.

⑬ Water from air

Love is in the air, and so is water! There is an estimated 12,504 cubic kilometers of renewable water in the earth’s atmosphere and Generation Water is here to help you harvest it. The company’s solutions can produce anything from 10 to 10,000 plus liters of mineralized drinking water, depending on your needs. A good example comes from JW Marriott Phuket Resort & Spa, which uses a custom designed Generation Water solution to produce 75,000 liters of premium-mineralized drinking water from the air per month. This, in turn, helps the resort reduce the costs and the negative impact on the environment, while at the same time improving guests’ experience.

generationwater.com



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AUTHENTICITY
WITH A TWIST
OF TODAY

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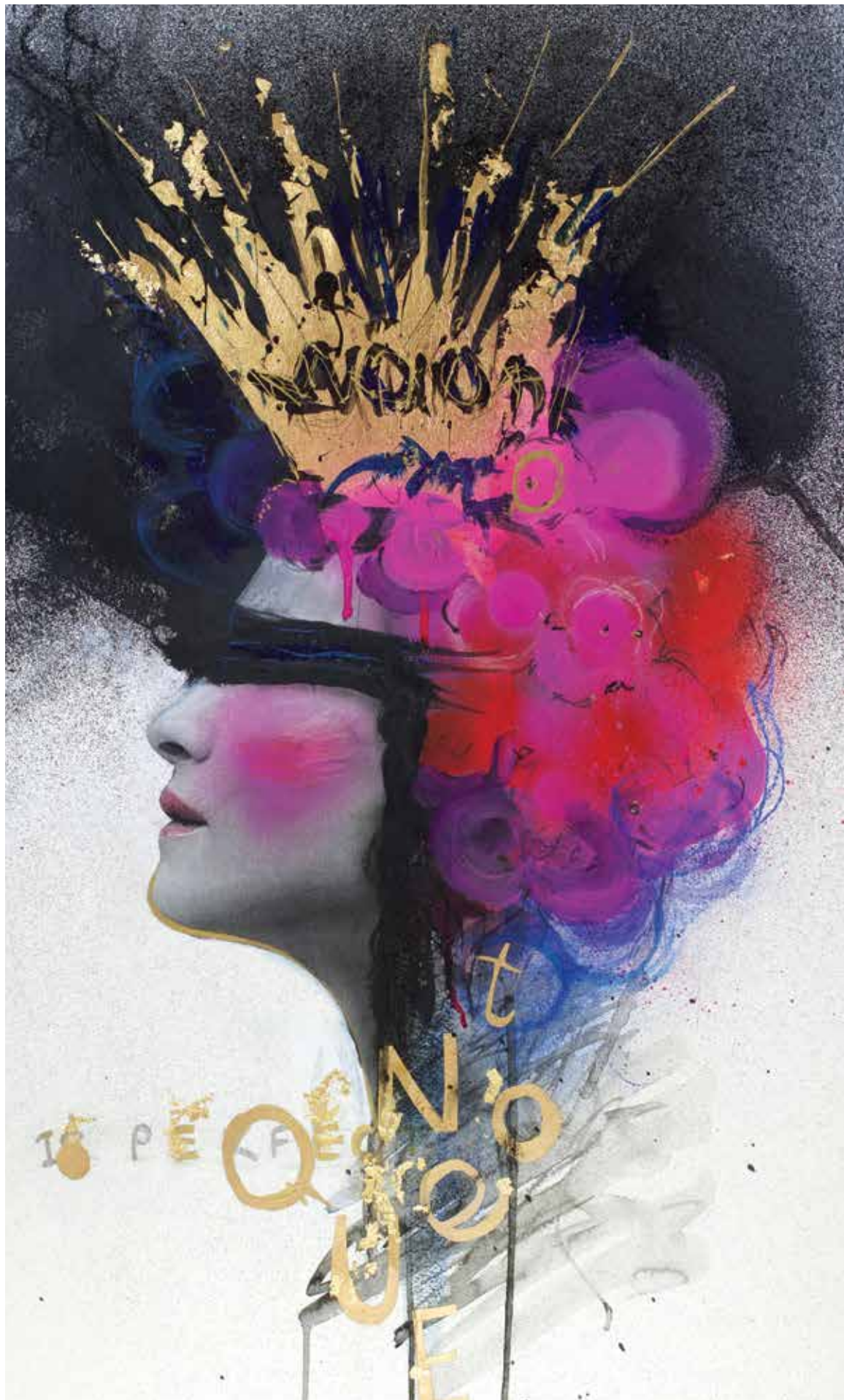
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WWW.PHUKETMARRIOTTNAIYANG.COM



FACES OF *CHANGE*

Words by Maciek Klimowicz

Signature style — every great artist in history had his own. A unique technique, a visual language, a philosophy, that allowed them to leave their mark on our cultural heritage. But a signature style doesn't come in a ready to use, prepacked form; it becomes distilled out of years of trial and error, it constantly evolves and changes, until — if ever — it reaches its utmost expression. Natalia Berglund is an artist on such a quest of self-discovery. See where it might take her.





Natalia's story is one of a journey. A literal one, that took her from her home country of Belarus and the city of Minsk where she completed an Art Lyceum, all the way to the US, where she graduated in Graphic Design from the University of Minnesota; but also an artistic one, best witnessed through her works.

The vast majority of these have one thing in common – they depict human faces. To find examples, take a look at the images around this text, as well as the one gracing the cover of this issue of NAA. While you're at it, you might notice that her choice of subject matter is where similarities end. Yes, most of her pieces depict faces, but barely any two pictures look remotely the same. If Natalia Berglund has her own style, it's one of constant change and experimentation.



And she personally believes, it's a good thing. "My love for artistic experimentation make it hard to narrow my focus and create a more consistent and uniform body of work, but that's not necessarily a bad thing," she said in one interview.

We couldn't agree more. Natalia's works show her adventurous spirit and prove that she has the courage to try her skills in different techniques. What results is a body of work, that is as diverse as it is entrancing. From more traditional watercolor and acrylic paintings, through pieces featuring elements of collage, to full on 3D sculptures popping out of flat canvases, Natalia doesn't shy away from any challenges in her search for her own language of artistic expression, and the results of this quest are largely a success.





Success in the sense of accessibility – Natalia’s works are quick and eager to grab the viewers’ attention with their aesthetic appeal – but also in the way they seem to convey a deeper meaning. Whether she intermingles thick layers of gold leaf with splashes of color, sculpts in clay and plaster or enshrines her faces in fantastic, surreal halos, her pieces raise many questions and deliver few answers, leaving the audience part puzzled and part enchanted. It’s art where nothing is certain, nothing hints on what might come next. It’s art that is still transforming, evolving and growing, yet to set in its final form.

When? How? To what effect? No one, including the artist herself, can know for sure. But what a pleasure it is to look at, as it unfolds in front of our eyes.

Find out more on nataliabergrlund.com



The Taste of
PRU



Words by Maciek Klimowicz

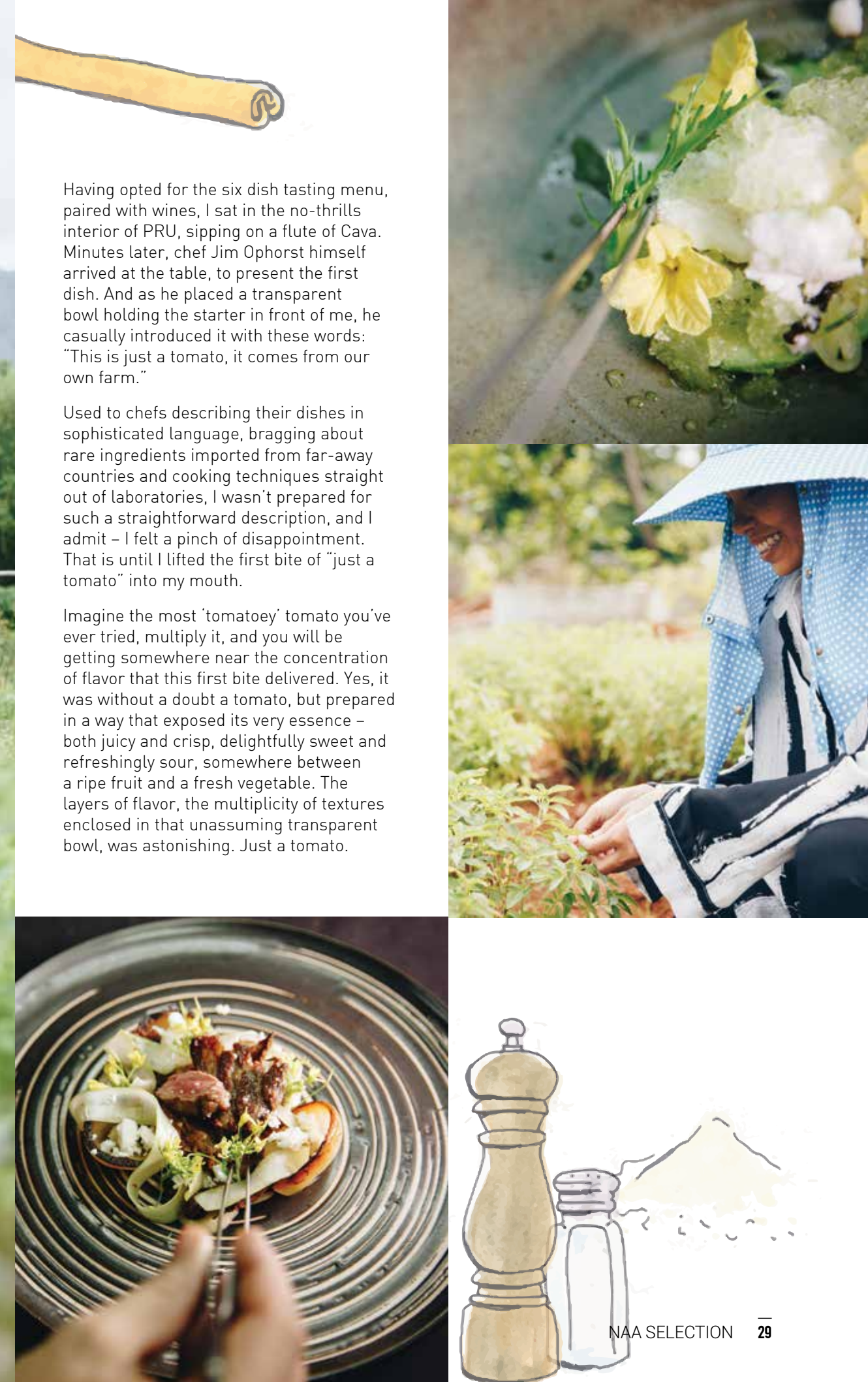
Too often, the world of fine dining becomes more about talk than about substance. Too often, poetic words used to describe food served at high end restaurants verge on exaggeration; too often, the photographs show not the chef's, but the computer graphic's skills. Too often . . . but not always. Every now and then comes a restaurant which takes us on a journey back to the origins of the art of fine dining. In Phuket this place is called PRU.

Something is cooking on the island. In recent months it has seen multiple restaurants' openings, many of them offering fine dining experiences. And when one of those openings is at Trisara – a luxury resort with enviable esteem, and the chef behind the concept has recently won the national round of San Pellegrino's Young Chefs award, things are bound to get exciting.

To keep the element of surprise, I decided not to do my homework before dining at PRU. I didn't visit the restaurant's website, didn't get myself acquainted with its philosophy, didn't scan the menu for favorites. I arrived unprepared, but ready for anything – or at least that's what I thought.

Having opted for the six dish tasting menu, paired with wines, I sat in the no-thrills interior of PRU, sipping on a flute of Cava. Minutes later, chef Jim Ophorst himself arrived at the table, to present the first dish. And as he placed a transparent bowl holding the starter in front of me, he casually introduced it with these words: "This is just a tomato, it comes from our own farm."





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Used to chefs describing their dishes in sophisticated language, bragging about rare ingredients imported from far-away countries and cooking techniques straight out of laboratories, I wasn't prepared for such a straightforward description, and I admit – I felt a pinch of disappointment. That is until I lifted the first bite of "just a tomato" into my mouth.

Imagine the most 'tomatoey' tomato you've ever tried, multiply it, and you will be getting somewhere near the concentration of flavor that this first bite delivered. Yes, it was without a doubt a tomato, but prepared in a way that exposed its very essence – both juicy and crisp, delightfully sweet and refreshingly sour, somewhere between a ripe fruit and a fresh vegetable. The layers of flavor, the multiplicity of textures enclosed in that unassuming transparent bowl, was astonishing. Just a tomato.

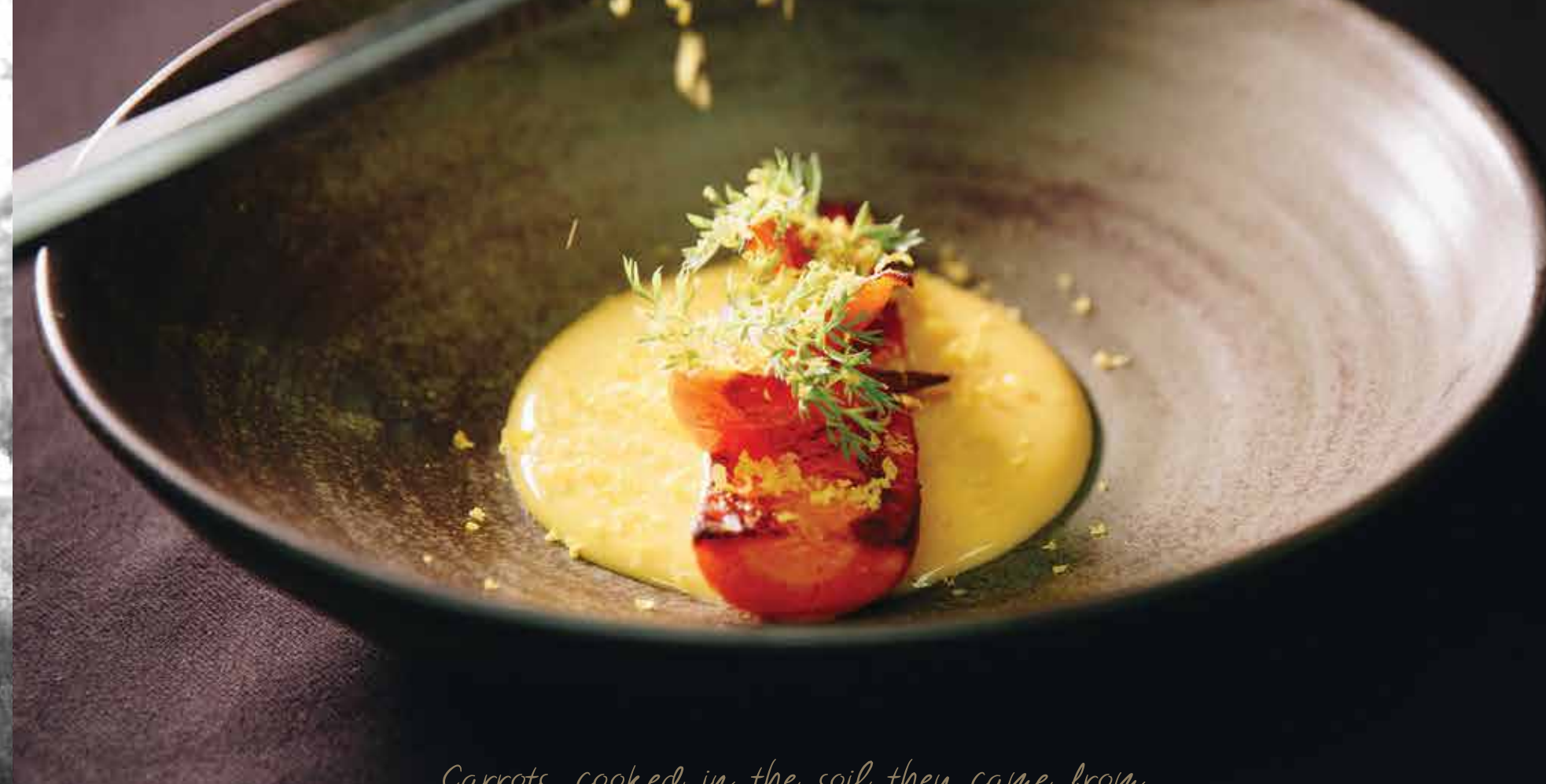


I didn't know it then, but that short sentence used by chef Ophorst to describe this starter, actually says a lot about PRU's philosophy. As I learned over the course of this delightful meal, the chef takes the restaurant's concept of "farm to table" quite seriously, sourcing the vast majority of kitchen produce at PRU's own farm, located in northern eastern Phuket. "We aspire to plant our food, raise our own meats and understand the ecosystem we belong to" reads the introduction found in PRU's menu. Plant, Raise, Understand. PRU.

But it's not just that the food is sourced locally, it's also what chef Ophorst and his team do with it in the kitchen. Thanks to their ingenuity and creative approach, deep knowledge of cooking techniques and imagination, fresh ingredients become totally transformed. After their intervention, familiar produce offers unexpected thrills without losing their essence, they become poetic while remaining down to earth. The starter is followed by a dish of eggplant showcasing more textures than I'm able to list, a carrot roasted for hours in an earth pit, reaching an unexpected depth of flavor. It's just an eggplant, it's just a carrot, but it's also so much more. It's as if those well-known, everyday ingredients came from an alternative dimension.

I could talk more – about the spotless service, exciting wines selection, wonderfully relaxed atmosphere – but I don't want to get carried away and join the ranks of food writers suffering from graphomania. Other restaurants might need more of these fancy words, to make up for what might be lacking in flavors or presentation, but not this one. At PRU, the food speaks for itself.

Find out more on prurestaurant.com



Carrots, cooked in the soil they came from.

PRU is our tribute to the unique terroir of the Andaman region.

Grown on our own farm, foraged locally or sourced through a community of local farmers, fishermen and purveyors, each ingredient tells a unique story as it is transformed into original and inventive cuisine.

A SENSUAL JOURNEY

Words by Nigel D'Sa
Photos by Vincent Sung

See it, hear it, taste it, smell it, touch it – in short, take it in with all the senses. What? Luxury lifestyle in the tropical paradise of Koh Samui. We take you on a sensual journey to its five most lavish resorts



Taste: Vana Belle, a Luxury Collection Resort, Koh Samui

Tucked within a forested hillside and sloping down to an immaculate white sand beach, Vana Belle – a Luxury Collection Resort by Marriott International, is an oasis in an area of prime convenience. Located just minutes away from Chaweng, Koh Samui's biggest commercial center, the resort is close enough to the hubbub yet far enough to feel calmly secluded, immersed in nature, and away from it all. The 80 suites and villas in this jungle oasis were designed with Thai-inspired architectural touches that blend handsomely with natural surroundings, and each one has its own private pool. But this setting is only the beginning, a visit to Vana Belle guarantees a pampering for all the senses, but first and foremost – taste.



The star of the show is Kiree, a restaurant perched on the hillside, commanding a spectacular view of the Gulf of Siam and recently included in Thailand Tatler's Best Restaurants 2017. One of the main attractions of the venue is Vana Belle's highly vaunted Saturday Brunch. Tantalizing dishes from around the world have been seamlessly curated to form this unique brunch experience. We were delighted to find French oysters, Phuket lobster, Serrano ham and Australian Wagyu rib-eye along with various cheeses, salads and the requisite line-up of classic breakfast items.



The buffet also offers a wide selection of fresh fruits, seafood, meats, patisserie favorites, yogurts and juices. There's also an entire mini-buffet of decadent desserts, including Valrhona chocolate delicacies and even a chocolate fountain with an assortment of fruits and biscuits to dip.

A collision with taste at Vana Belle continues at dinnertime. The dinner menu showcases the richness of authentic Southern Thai cuisine while including some of the highlights among central and northeastern Thai dishes. Chef Nattanan Deeruangs, the mastermind behind the resort's signature Thai restaurant, is passionate about the farm-to-table sourcing of the island's freshest ingredients, and transforming them into unforgettable Thai culinary experiences. Nattanan is always searching for, and experimenting with, new recipes, and believes every dish must engage the key senses.

Thai food is known for its careful balancing of four fundamental flavors; sweet, sour, bitter and salty. 'Spicy' often embellishes

this balance, but the further south you go, the more fundamental spicy becomes. In the south, a dish that isn't spicy will be considered bland. Southern Thailand cuisine also has a strong emphasis on seafood with its proximity to the Gulf of Siam and the Andaman Sea. The standouts on the menu at Kiree follow the southern style and include Pla Neung Ma Now, sea bass with spicy lime sauce steamed to perfection, and Gai Phad Bai Yee Ra, stir-fried chicken with spicy curry paste and wild tree basil. This dish has an exciting peppery flavor that comes from the wild tree basil. Gaeng Gai Meng Prow, a more gently flavored soft coconut shell curry with chicken is a mouth-watering recipe, made with fresh young coconuts. Bai Liang Phad Kai, or stir fried liang leaves with egg, was personally recommended by the chef and made a pungent and savory impression that tickled the taste buds. Almost all the dishes at Kiree can be adapted to taste upon request, so don't be intimidated by the strength of southern spices.

For dessert, we tried the Kanom Mor Gaeng Bai Toey, a roasted mung bean crème brûlée with pandan-leaf flavor. The smooth crème brûlée has a contrapuntal exquisiteness in combination with the crunchy water chestnuts. It's not too sweet so the toasted coconut shavings on top with a sprinkling of coconut sugar add just the right tone.

The next morning Vana Belle's buffet breakfast provides further thrills, both in a buffet form and with an inspiring selection of cooked to order epicurean delights which can be found on the a la carte menu. One special touch are fresh raw oysters and chilled prosecco, available along with all the classic breakfast items. Oyster and bubbly? This must be our favorite breakfast on Koh Samui, if not in Thailand!

Kiree is open to both in-house guests and visitors and advance reservations are highly recommended. It is one of Samui's best kept secrets, with a location that brings together central convenience and the charms of a hidden hideaway, with its hillside grove and untouched beach below.

Sight: Four Seasons Resort Koh Samui

Nestled in a secluded bay on the northwestern tip of the island, the Four Seasons Resort Koh Samui delivers the most powerful of first impressions, with the sheer beauty of its panoramic vistas. Your eyes will drink up the scenery at every turn. Look seaward and behold the white sandy beaches set against a blue backdrop of sky and sea. Turn around and be struck by the harmonious beauty

Designed with a fidelity to traditional Thai architecture and integrating almost organically with the lush foliage of its surroundings, Four Seasons Resort Koh Samui is an island within an island, concentrating the best of the natural beauty and local flavors into a serene oasis, away from the hubbub of the island's bustling townships. The resort was formerly a coconut orchard and many of the coconut trees have been preserved, providing a scented canopy interspersed with charming botanical arrangements, which make strolling a pleasure.

With over 70 villas, all with private infinity pools, the resort offers both the ideal romantic getaway for couples as well as

all the comforts and amenities a family requires. The chic interiors feature island inspired accessories and local accents in everything from the fabrics to the furnishings. Spacious and aesthetically pleasing, the rooms include custom crafted bathtubs and playful touches like the ornamental bed canopies.

Dining at Four Seasons is also a visual experience. The KOH Thai Kitchen & Bar, set atop a breezy hilltop, allows one to enjoy culinary delights while seated on an open terrace, with a panoramic view of the palm groves and the ocean. Taking in the view in the early morning, while indulging in a breakfasting, is an invigorating start to the day and the afternoon tea with an array of gourmet items is no less pleasurable. The dinner menu adds a modern twist to popular traditional dishes of the Southern Thailand.

While KOH Thai Kitchen & Bar is perched at the apex of the resort, down below, on the pristine private beach are CoCoRum and Pla Pla restaurants. CoCoRum bar and restaurant is situated beside the resort's main infinity pool, just meters from the seashore, providing a most romantic setting, with its proximity to magical sights, tranquil sounds and alluring scent

of the sea. One can dine at the long bar or at the tables in front of a small stage, where occasional live music adds to the ambiance. CoCoRum specializes in rare and artisanal rums from Latin America with a selection of over 150 different labels. A few meters away from CoCoRum is the more traditionally designed restaurant Pla Pla, which offers a fine selection of Mediterranean style seafood dishes, and a Spanish paella night every Friday.

The resort also offers guests a chance to be pampered at its SecreGarden Spa, a sanctuary within a sanctuary. Among its signature massages, we tried the 90-minute Samui Fusion, a dynamic massage that stretches the body and gets the blood flowing, using a combination of herbal oils and an invigorating fresh ginger paste. The spa also features a charming reception area, with crystals, aromatherapy and Thai woodwork designs.

Four Seasons Resort Koh Samui satisfies all the senses and excels in sight, with some of the most spectacular views, both looking out and looking in. If you're looking for premium exclusivity, intimacy, and obsessive attention to detail, all within a secure setting with spectacular vistas, look no further.



Hearing: W Koh Samui

Located on the northern coast of Koh Samui, W Koh Samui encompasses nine miles of tropical paradise capped by one of the most pristine beaches on the island. The resort comprises 74 all private pool retreats, each offering cutting edge design and equipped with every convenience, including a state-of-the-art entertainment system, blue tooth speakers, a gorgeously contoured bathtub and both indoor and outdoor showers. W Koh Samui also has on its grounds six restaurants and bars that offer chic modern design, a distinctly contemporary vibe and a dining and drinking experience of a high caliber. A decidedly less traditional aesthetic than the Thai-influenced designs of other luxury resorts on the island, W brings ultra-modernist touch to Koh Samui and captures a younger sensibility in all its nooks and crannies. And while it excels in all of the five senses, sound is what distinguishes this luxury resort from the rest of the pack.

On entrance to the wide lobby, the first thing that catches the eye and the ear is Woobar. Situated just behind the lobby on a sea view deck, this iconic outdoor bar blessed with its own pond, blends almost seamlessly into the sea beyond it. Woobar draws crowds of visitors each day, especially in the afternoon. Unlike the often empty bars one finds in other island resorts, Woobar maintains a lively atmosphere, with young travelers dropping in for a signature cocktail.

The chill-out lounge sounds of W's in house music curator Armando Mendes immediately set the tone for this chic contemporary experience. W soundtrack introduces a measure of upscale urban clubbing into the contours of a luxury resort, allowing guests to meet and mingle should they so choose. Mendes is musically rooted in jazz, funk and house music. Born in Oporto, Portugal and a student of engineering and electronic music production, he has played in private events and clubs all over Europe, Russia and Asia. After four years as a resident DJ at the outstanding W Barcelona hotel, and a summer residency at W St. Petersburg, he moved to Thailand to take up his new position at W Samui. The resort also has several other resident DJs on hand, and special DJ pool party events throughout the year.

Music is also present at breakfast served at the W's The Kitchen Table restaurant. The food enjoyed on the plush, high-backed sofas with the sweeping beach views and Kruder and Dorfmeister tracks play pleasantly in the background is bound to make your day. Afternoons are well spent on W's semi-private beach, one of the prettiest on the island. The resort provides breezy hammocks, chaise lounges, sun beds, and umbrellas while the W Beach Grill offers up some of the island's best beach comfort food. The gentle riffs of summer lounge music from the bar complete the signature W vibe, meshing with the sounds of the surf and water sports.



© Vincent Sung



© Vincent Sung

But the real climax to the day is an evening visit to W's Japanese fine dining venue, Namu, which takes its name from the Korean word for wood. With its modern and minimalist design, the stage is set for a refined and innovative culinary experience. This is Japanese contemporary cuisine at its best, preserving intrinsic tastes while bringing in culinary influences from around Asia. Pairings with a selection of fine chilled sake make Namu one of the most memorable encounters with food on the island.

Scheduled to check out the next day but loathing to do so, we used a linguistic loophole to instead check out W's afternoon infinity pool party at WET. Spinning tunes was DJ Mark Doyle, founder of the UK-based label Fierce Angel. He had the scantily clad young crowd dancing, dipping and dripping while the next-door sunset bar SIP fueled the party mood with refreshing cocktails and crafted beers. With the music in our heads, we finally tore ourselves away from all the fun, and got ready for our next adventure.



Touch and Smell: InterContinental Samui Baan Taling Ngam Resort

Entering the cliff-perched lobby of the InterContinental Samui Baan Taling Ngam Resort for the first time is a breathtaking experience. The combination of the architecturally elegant features of the lobby with the wide and spectacular vista of the western Gulf of Siam, leaves one mesmerized. Included in the New York Times No.1 Best Seller "1,000 Places to See Before You Die," Baan Taling Ngam Resort offers what is arguably the best viewing experience on the island, with its high vantage overlooking the coastline and the expanse of blue sea bejeweled with green islands in the distance.

The lobby itself is worth a trip, with its high, open ceiling, generous space, oversized birdcage lamps and contemporary art designs. It's worth mentioning that Serene, the bar in the grand lobby, serves high tea set against amazing views, while downstairs on the deck, Air Bar serves cocktails while your spirit basks in one of the most beautiful sunset spots on Koh Samui.

Built on 22 acres of landscaped tropical gardens, Baan Taling Ngam, which means 'home on a beautiful cliff' in Thai, comprises 79 rooms, suites and villas and seven swimming pools spread around the resort, a 'Planet Trekkers' kids club, and the first exclusive HARNN Spa on the island.



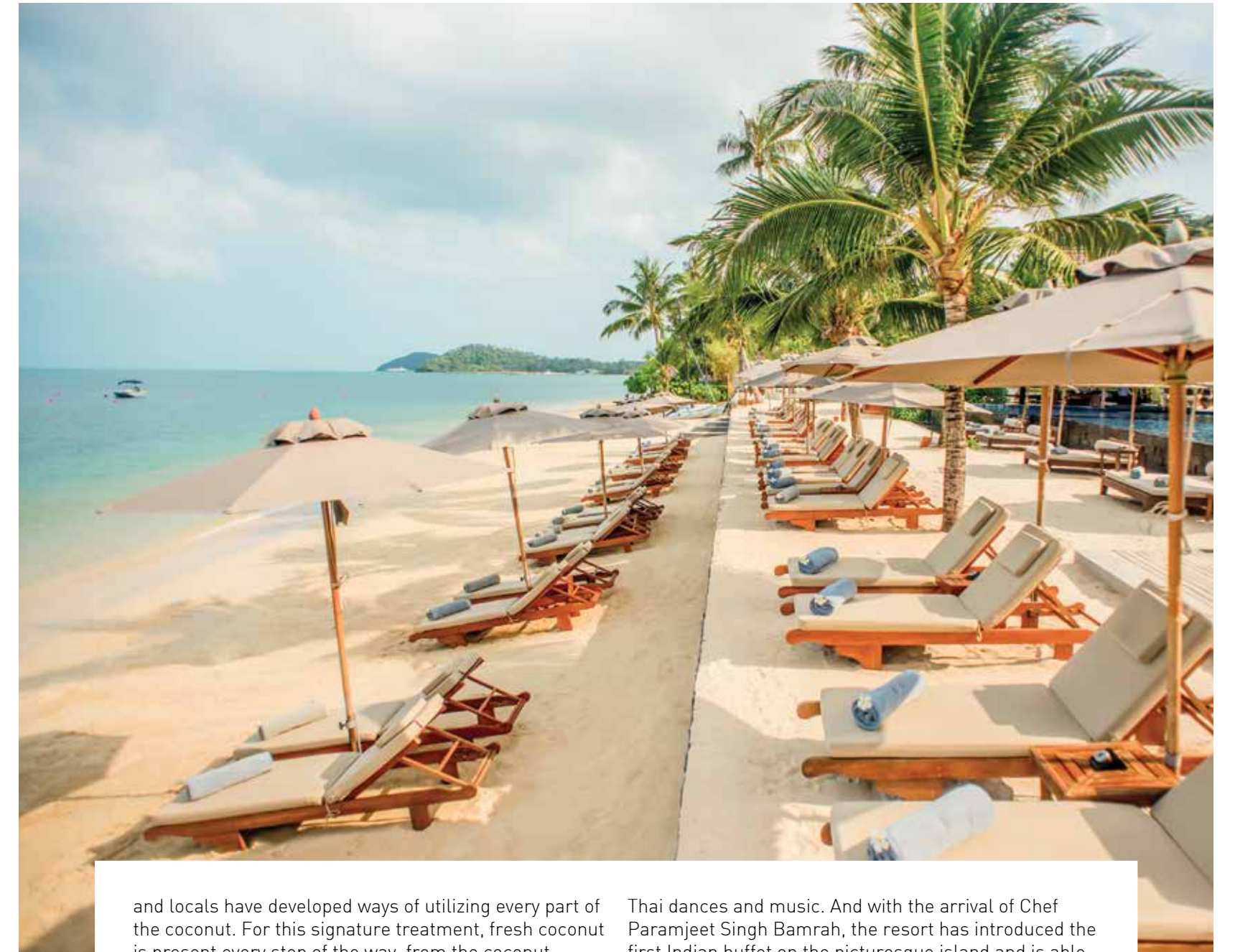
While this resort certainly captures all senses, it exceeds in two particular categories: touch and smell. This is due to its exclusive relationship with HARNN, a producer of natural body care, skincare, aromatherapy and home spa collections. The pampering grace of HARNN products is present in the resort's bathroom amenities as well as at the Baan Thai Spa by HARNN.

Baan Thai Spa by HARNN received a World Luxury Spa Award in 2016, and offers an ultimate spa experience that redefines the art of relaxation. Set in a traditional Thai wooden house it provides a comfortable interior which co-exists in balance with the tropical environment.

HARNN's holistic philosophy focuses on creating high quality, all natural spa products to restore the natural balance of body and mind and satisfy your sense of touch and scent.

HARNN took over the management of the spa at the InterContinental Samui in 2015, bringing its knowledge of Asian restorative treatments, medicinal herbs, and traditional therapies like Chinese acupressure, Indian Ayurveda and Thai massages, into a full range of spa options, from the various massages to the brand-famous organic spa products.

Baan Thai Spa's signature treatment is the 'Tropical Samui Passage', which reflects the history of the island. For centuries coconuts were the mainstay of the island



and locals have developed ways of utilizing every part of the coconut. For this signature treatment, fresh coconut is present every step of the way, from the coconut milk herbal bath to the body polish with freshly grated coconuts. For the acupressure massage, coconut shells are used while a warm body wrap melts away any muscle tension. It's all topped off with a Siamese aromatic massage with cold pressed coconut oil.

The dining options at the InterContinental Samui range from intimate to opulent. A filling breakfast buffet is served at the hotel's main restaurant, Amber, overlooking the gulf. Along with the hot foods and fruit bar, there is a live cooking station and a section of healthy juices and smoothies. Lunch is à la carte and emphasises Thai and other Asian tastes, while in the evening they play host to theme night buffets, sometimes with live entertainment such as traditional

Thai dances and music. And with the arrival of Chef Paramjeet Singh Bamrah, the resort has introduced the first Indian buffet on the picturesque island and is able to cater to the most elaborate of Indian weddings and festivities.

And then there is one final touch - one of InterContinental's flagship hotels in Asia, the InterContinental Samui Baan Taling Ngam Resort offers guests Club Intercontinental. The service includes a 24-hour personalized butler service, additional in-room amenities, access to a private Club pool, daily afternoon tea and cocktail hour, complimentary breakfast at Amber, and more.

Along with touch and smell, InterContinental Samui, named Asia's Most Romantic Resort at the World Travel Awards, has imprinted its vision indelibly on our memories.

Harmony of Senses: Conrad Koh Samui

The final destination on this journey into the senses took us beyond our expectations, into a world where a balance of all senses create a complete experience. The Conrad Koh Samui, on the southwest tip of the island, is surrounded by a breathtaking expanse of azure sea and lush tropical forest. This secluded hideaway takes luxury to the next level, and is one of the crown jewels in the Hilton global portfolio winning the prestigious World Travel Award for Asia's Leading Honeymoon Resort in 2015. It was also the Regional Winner for Luxury Romantic Hotel in 2016 and the Global Winner for Luxury Hideaway Resort in 2014 at the World Luxury Hotel Awards.



The views of the Gulf of Thailand and outlying islands from the lobby are dazzling. The lobby itself is small and unassuming, leaving all the grandeur to the stunning view, and making guests curious as to what lies ahead as they venture onto the grounds of the 25-acre hillside resort which comprises one, two and three-bedroom luxury villas. They stand impressively on tall columns planted firmly into the cliff rock and all come with private pools and decks.

The two-story Oceanview Two-Bedroom Pool Villa comprises a spacious 297 square meters designed in contemporary-Thai style. The upper level entry opens onto a lawn with chairs looking out on a spectacular sea vista. Foyer space provides

all the comforts of home, encompassing a bright living/dining area with powder room, kitchenette, a dining table for four, and a large L-shaped sofa and coffee table along with an Apple TV entertainment center, Bose Stereo surround sound system, and WiFi. The lower level houses double bedroom suites with king bathrooms, work desks and couches. The master bedroom features a round king bed, a marble bathroom with a huge 360-degree soak tub, and spa-quality amenities for a luxurious bathroom experience. Both bedrooms open onto an outdoor wooden deck with lounge chairs and dining table and a 12-meter long infinity pool that offers both unobstructed sea view and privacy.

The dining experience at Conrad is exemplified by the highly rated Jahn, Global Winner of the World Luxury Restaurant Awards 2016. Jahn presents a refined Thai culinary journey in the intimate ambience of a candle-lit dining room, with exquisite wood interiors and seating for 28 guests, with windows looking out on the beautiful gulf. The restaurant Executive Chef Amporn Choeng-Ngam, known as Chef Berm, brings an artistic and innovative approach to fine dining. His labor of love has created a carefully selected menu that pairs the finest vintages with inspiring cuisine. Jahn offers two seven-course menus, Tasting of Jahn and Journey of Jahn. One of many stand-out items on the menu is the Plaa Pla

Bai Bua, a seared red tuna with lotus seed and avocado purée topped with Thai herbs, lemon and mint sauce, served on lotus leaf, the line between art and food blurred – the beautiful presentation matches its exquisite taste and texture. Another standout is the Kai Oob Fang, a sous-vide chicken breast with herbs and fresh wheat grain, served with a smoky single malt whisky.

Breakfast is served at Zest, Conrad's casual all-day restaurant, with both indoor and outdoor seating with ocean views. Zest offers an expansive international breakfast buffet flowing into an exciting lunch selection, with vibrant Pan-Mediterranean and classically Thai flavors married to fresh, local, and organic ingredients.

For more bodily pleasures, a visit to The Conrad Spa Koh Samui located atop a hill that provides stunning 270-degree panoramic views of an azure sea, is in order. The World Luxury Spa Awards has named this the Best Luxury Wellness Spa in 2013 and 2014 and the Global Winner of Luxury Hideaway Spa in 2016 and we can certainly vouch for that. The Conrad spa experience provides personal attention and the full spectrum of sensory engagement from the setting, the relaxing sounds and wafting aromas, to the precise and thorough touch of master therapists. The ten spa treatments feature private spa plunge pool, over-sized tub and a steam room located in the VIP treatment suite. Guests can relax on

the private spa deck overlooking the gulf or nibble on healthy snacks, spa cuisine and juices in the Relaxation Lounge.

The Conrad Koh Samui puts all its emphasis on guest experience. The resort provides several social venues and activities. Worth mentioning is the huge infinity pool near the beach, and the poolside Azure bar and grill. Aura Lounge, perched high above the resort against a large rock wall, is the perfect place for sunset cocktails. One can also reserve in advance for speedboat day excursions to nearby islands and diving tours, designed to make hearts beat faster. It's pure luxury, for all senses and in every sense of the word.

THE SOUND OF THE SIAM



Words by Maciek Klimowicz
Photos by Michael Paul

Bangkok can be heavy on your ear. In a city jam-packed with noise, it's difficult to hear something, anything, even your own thoughts. So if you're looking for an escape from this urban cacophony, we know just the place.



You don't need to open your eyes to know, that you've arrived at The Siam. You can hear it. As your taxi rolls into the hotel's driveway, leaving the notoriously busy (and noisy) streets of Thailand's capital behind, the first of your senses to experience a sense of relief, is your hearing.

Initially, it sounds like complete silence. Contrasted with the city's ubiquitous clamor, the sounds at The Siam are barely audible, tricking you into thinking, that all is perfectly quiet. But give your ears a moment to get used to the surrounding calm, listen and you'll hear it, the gentle soundtrack of The Siam.



First you'll catch the tune of the fountain situated at the heart of a small sunlit courtyard, which welcomes you to the hotel. The sound of flowing water is known to be one of the most soothing to human ear, and you'll know it to be true the moment you enter the Siam's premises, as you feel instantly reconnected with nature.



Walk further in, and while you calm your eyes with the whites, blacks and greens – the colours dominating the interiors of the lobby designed by no other than the King of tropical design, Bill Bensley - do not stop listening. As the fountain keeps playing its tune, and the birds joyfully chirp their own melody, you will have no trouble tuning into these new surroundings. In fact, the rambling of the city that enclosed you just minutes ago, will soon become somewhat distant, as it fades into the background and becomes just a memory.



But there are more sounds and sights here. As you walk deeper inside, you realise that though a hotel in name and function, The Siam resembles part a museum, part an art gallery and part a botanical garden. There are artifacts of the past in every corner, pieces of art on every wall, and where there's none, there are plants. Maybe the most impressive feature of the design is a large-size plants-filled pond at the very center of the hotel, with some of the vegetation reaching two floors up, towards the glass ceiling, which invents sumptuous amounts of natural light to the interior, and gives the whole space a feel of a vintage glasshouse.

If you keep walking, you will come out at the back end of the Siam, the one facing the river, where you will be reunited with the clamor of the city, though in its gentler form, made bearable, even pleasant, by the river breeze. Here, from the hotel's own quay, you can catch a shuttle boat to explore Bangkok's riverside attractions.

But don't go just yet, come back inside and listen some more. Yes, except the delicate sounds of nature, those of flowing water and rustling leaves, there is a more defined melody here. There's music.



Music is omnipresent in The Siam, both in the realm of sounds and objects, and there is a very good reason for it – the hotel's owner Krissada Sukosol Clapp, is a musician himself, a singer in a rock band. Add to this the fact that he is also an antiques and art collector, and it's no surprise that some, many, maybe most of the antiques exhibited at The Siam, are musical instruments - guitars, violins, piano and other, more exotic. The owner, if you happen to meet him somewhere in the lobby or walking along the brightly-lit balconies, can tell you a story about each and every one of them.

Take a closer look at the old photographs hanging on the walls, and you'll notice that many depict musicians. There are tuxedo-clad orchestras, there are jamming jazz bands, there's even Elvis Presley, but one character that keeps popping up in more pictures than any other, is a handsome man wearing shades and often holding a saxophone. Ask anyone of this small, family run hotel's staff, and they will tell you, that many of the sweet soothing melodies

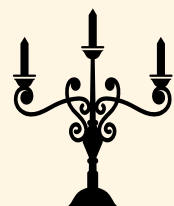
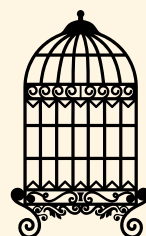
sounding from the audio system, were penned by that very man. His name was Bhumibol Adulyadej, better known as Rama IX, the late King of Thailand.

You can spend half a day or more, simply exploring the premises of The Siam, traveling from floor to floor, walking along the hallways, taking in local art, getting acquainted with the history of the Kingdom of Siam and modern-day Thailand. You can enjoy authentic Thai cuisine at the hotel's Chon restaurant, home style meals accompanied by live Jazz at Deco Bar & Bistro or have cup of coffee at the shady verandah of the Café Cha. You can opt for a retreat at the Opium Spa or at the dry and wet saunas, steam showers and Jacuzzi of the Hammam-inspired Bath House - The Siam has it all. All you need to completely forget the outside world. All you need to escape the noise, and immerse yourself in the most precious sound in this deafening city - the sound of silence.

Find out more on thesiamhotel.com



ONE TRAIN TO RULE THEM ALL



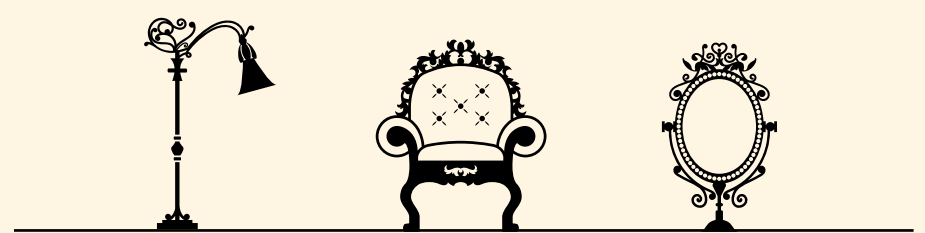
Words & Photos by Maciek Klimowicz

One of my earliest memories is of a journey; a journey by train. Except for the fact that I was on that train with my parents, I don't recall much of the ride – the destination, the time of travel, the places we passed by on the way, all escape me. But what I do remember, is how absolutely wonderful it felt. How I enjoyed the ride.



That's the thing with railway travel. Take a car, and you're mostly just swallowing kilometres, take a flight, and you're just getting there, as soon and convenient as possible, take a train however, and it's the journey itself that becomes central to the experience. One that you revel in every moment.

I've taken many trains since that first ride of my childhood memories. From the long distance railway escapades across India, to the rickety local trains of Myanmar, from a precariously steep ride on the steam engine "Toy Train" of Darjeeling Himalayan Railway, to 300km/h in the Shinkansen - Japan's Bullet Train; wherever I go, I try to take a train. Some of them are fast, some absurdly slow, some are modern, other very much less so, but from all those trains and all those rides, not one can match the experience of traveling on the Eastern & Oriental Express.



“The E&O Train does the sentimental journey experience with immense grace.



I don't want to waste your time and my page space presenting the background facts about this exceptional train, it's all there, in print and online. The train is also mentioned in countless publications on railway travel and has its own Wikipedia page. The facts are all there, so let's talk emotions.

Was I excited when I found out I was going to travel from Singapore to Bangkok aboard the E&O Train? Excited doesn't give it justice! But in whole honestly, I was also a tiny bit anxious. That's because the line between vintage and dated is a thin one. Too often, what's meant to evoke nostalgia for some glorious past turns out to be faux fabrics covered in dust. And that's exactly what I thought Eastern & Oriental Express was – a nostalgic ride on a vintage train. But let me cut any speculations right here, right now – first of all, the E&O Train does the sentimental journey experience with immense grace, and what's even more important – it's so much more than just a ride down the memory lane.

The whole experience of traveling back in time begins at check-in – and check-in is in order, after all E&O Train – part of Belmond collection Hotels Trains and Cruises – is more like a luxury hotel on train tracks than anything else. The formalities take place at the legendary Raffles in Singapore, arguably the most famous hotel in Asia and the birthplace of the famous Singapore Sling Cocktail. A glass of this pink-hued concoction is served to those with the E&O Train boarding pass, and while I'm usually not a fan of sugary sweet drinks, in that place and those circumstances, it tasted delightfully.

After that, it's straight to the train... with a short stop for passport control. Ah, immigration checks! All travellers love to loath them. But in this case, the inconvenience of crossing the border, enduring the piercing gaze of the immigration officer as he flipped through the pages of my passport, was immediately forgotten, the moment I stepped aboard the Eastern & Oriental. It was like stepping into an alternative reality.

The first impression is of soft plush and highly polished wood, of glittering copper and dimmed lights. It's luxuriant and inviting at the same time, and the instant you enter, you fall into a soft embrace of extravagance. Yes, it's a train, the corridors are narrow, my Pullman cabin – the smallest of three kinds available – barely bigger than the bathroom I have at home, and it does shake and rattle where the tracks need maintenance. But at the same time, it's so much more than a standard train! Beginning with the open-air observation cart at its far end, through the all wooden, elegant reading room further on, up until two restaurant carts and a full swing piano bar closer to the engine, it all screams bespoke luxury in the best of vintage styles.



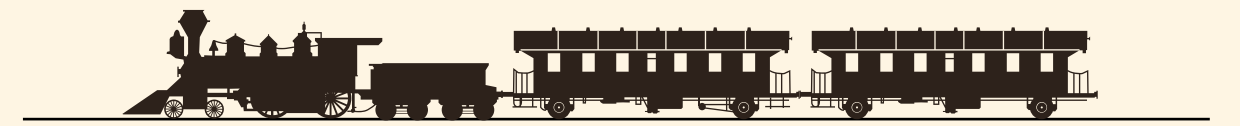


And then the train jerks ahead and starts moving. At first slowly, leaving Singapore metropolis behind, then faster, allowing those on board to enjoy the sensation of speed, best experienced with a glass of Champagne in hand, from the observation cart. With every minute and every kilometre, the surrounding landscape becomes more lush, rice paddies intermingle with rubber tree plantations, deep jungle at the forefront, dramatic hills in the distance; and as we travel further and further into this verdant south-east Asian scenery, my heart fills with the same excitement that helps me remember this first childhood train ride. Excitement that only railway travel can provide.



Only railway travel, because only on a train can you totally lose yourself in the experience of a journey. There's no need to navigate - the tracks and the train crew take care of this; no need to obsessively check your phone - the reception is scarce and for once, it's a good thing. All that's left to do is to sit back and enjoy the ride. Maybe a signature cocktail here and there - those on the menu are crafted by an inspired mixologist, their ingredients reflecting the stages of our journey; maybe a chapter of a book in the reading cart - my favorite on that ride was a sizeable volume on classic train travel; but the essence is the forward movement, the clackety-clack of wheels on tracks. It's as much transportation as it is meditation.





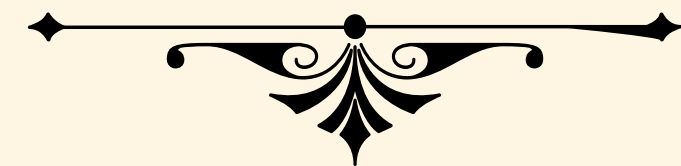
This meditative monotony is broken apart only by meals, and short sightseeing stops. There were two of these on my trip, one in Malaysia, to take a closer look at local architecture of a sultan's palace and a beautifully decorated mosque, and one in Thailand, to learn a tiny bit about the history of World War II as it happened in South East Asia. The stops, interesting as they were, had one added benefit, they allowed those on board to take a look at the train we were traveling on, set in all its glory against a picturesque scenery. A perfect photo op and a good reminder, that what felt like a stay in a five-star hotel, was actually a 1500 km train ride.

As for the meals, it seemed those were designed to make us forget we were on a train. Chef-prepared and served fresh from the on-board kitchen, they were of the exact same style and quality as one would expect from a fine dining restaurant, and a classic, vintage style restaurant at that. The glittering silverware, the crystal wine glasses, all there to build on the sentimental ambiance, their clinking sounds serving as the only reminder that we are on the move, those and the scenery swooshing past the windows. Two daily meals – lunch and dinner, come served in the dining carts, but for me the favourite part of the day came in the morning, at breakfast, and at 4 pm, in time for afternoon tea – both served in the cabin, in bed, for yet another touch of dashing luxury.

A luxury the passengers can indulge in, without compromising on the other aspects of travel – taking in the scenery, making new friends, getting to know local culture and simply moving from place to place. The lack of those elements is my biggest complaint when it comes to luxury hotels. Glorious as they are, they rarely allow me to truly experience the place I travel to. They want me to stay safely tucked away in their cocoon of luxury, dine in the in-house restaurant, swim in the hotel pool. Or if I decide to go my own way, get out and explore, then I lose out on my magnificent hotel room, the excellent service, and the lavish ambiance.

The solution? I've known it for quite a while, since I was a child in fact. To make the most of your travel, travel by train. And if you can, don't make it just any train. Go aboard the Eastern & Oriental Express.

Find out more on belmond.com





MY ROAD TO IRONMAN

By Adelaide Castano
Photos by Maciek Klimowicz

*"The impossible exists only until we find a way to make it possible.
To have a 100% positive mind, this is the secret. The key of all the victories."
- Mike Horn*

A few moments – this is how long it took me to decide to compete in an IronMan race. It was a spontaneous choice, one not preceded by thorough analysis. Sometimes one simply has to take a leap of faith. But now, as I look back and think of what motivated me in the first place, I understand my decision better.

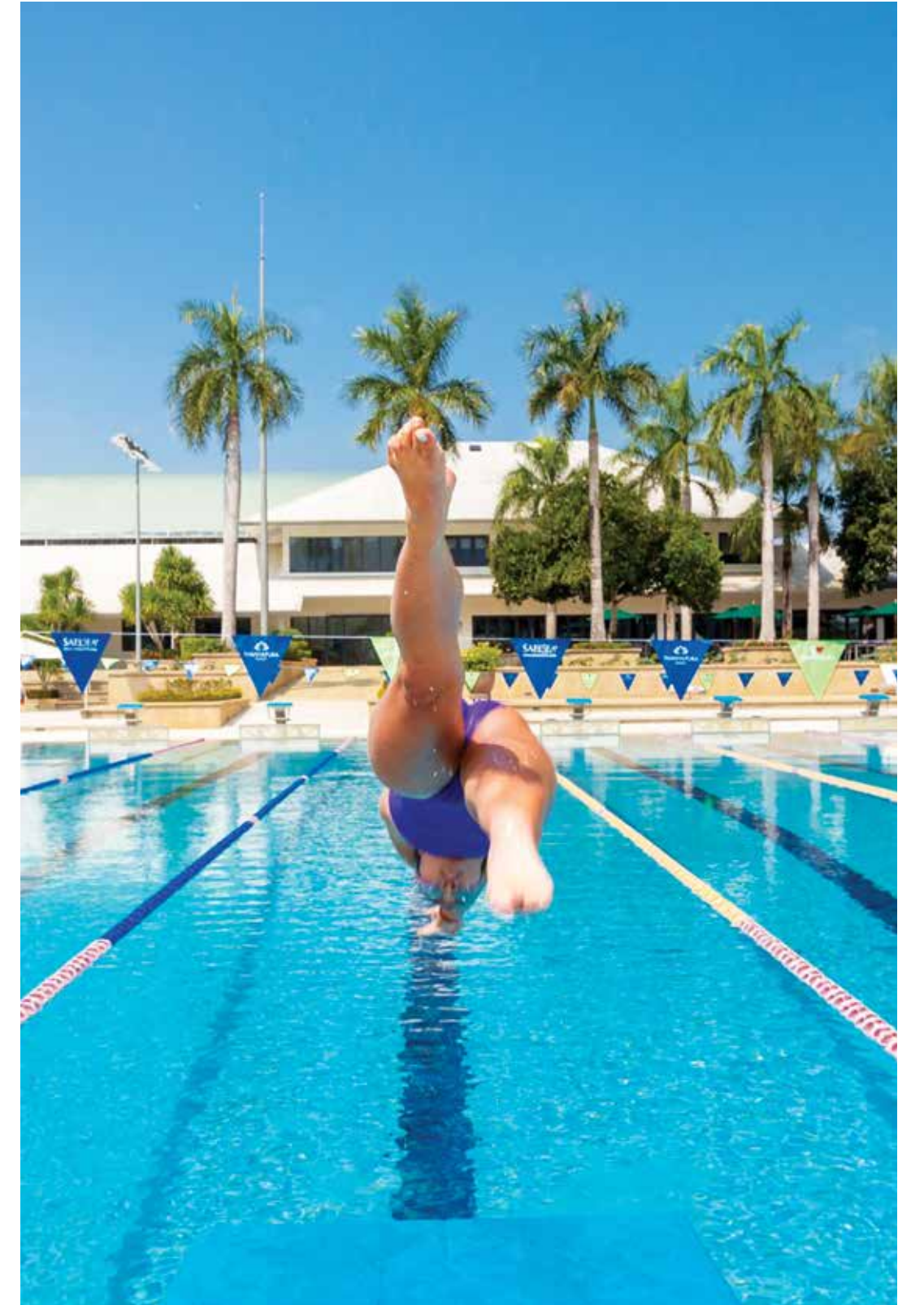
*Three years ago, I had a near-death experience. I got badly sick and stayed in a hospital for more than two months. It was hard, both physically and mentally, but somehow, by natural surviving instinct, I kept fighting. And when I finally left the hospital bed, I was physically deeply weakened. That's when I decided to join **Thanyapura Health & Sports Resort** to recover.*

After few months of physical exercises, a plant-based diet and meditation sessions I was back in shape, amazed by the potential of the body to recover in such a short time. This experience pushed me out of my comfort zone and changed my mindset forever, and when few months ago a friend suggested I should compete in IronMan Danang, something just clicked. This was exactly what I needed to go again out of my comfort zone and re-strengthen my body and mind.

So I began training, not on my own though and not just anywhere. The name itself – IronMan – has a certain weight to it, it shouldn't be taken lightly. It's not enough to simply do a little running, swimming and cycling to complete, let alone seriously compete in an IronMan race. Luckily I knew exactly who could help me achieve my goal – the same center that helped me during my post hospital recovery. Thanyapura not only provides world-class training facilities, professional coaches, optimal nutrition meals, mental training, alternative medicine services and wellness treatments but is also a worldwide renowned Triathlon Training Center – a perfect place to start on my road to IronMan.

The three days of pre-training were filled with mind training, specialist consultations and yoga. It started by a session with Ekkarat "Ricky" Phantip, Thanyapura's Triathlon Head Coach, who asked about my goals, current endurance and training habits. Based on this information, he calculated the number of weeks left to the race and designed a personalized training program. Two 1.5 hours long of training sessions per day, with a single day off every three days – seemed like a lot compared to what I was used to do, but I believed I could do it.







After checking my general health conditions, the Medical Center team sent me off to Marcela Prats, Thanyapura's nutritionist. Nutrition plays a very important role in managing one's energy levels which reflects on performance. Good diet increases physical and mental potential. Following my training plan and my food preferences, Marcela designed a personalized dietary plan - many small meals throughout the day, lots of vegetables, good quality carbs from fruits and whole grains, healthy natural proteins and good fats.

Later on, I was assessed by a physiotherapist, who checked my body structure, symmetry and recommended me to join yoga classes to improve my body balance. I discovered a new kind of yoga which helped me a lot: Yin Yoga. It forces one to stay in uncomfortable position for up to 20 minutes. The long duration of the poses targets the connective tissues, bones and joints, improving flexibility and strengthening the mind - something very useful for those eight hours of pain that IronMan is.

As for the pain, a trained mind can overcome it. My mind training sessions were conducted by Pierre Gagnon. Together we worked on concentration, emotional balance and inner peace - those guided meditations made my morning routines. What's a better way to start your day than with a positive mindset and serenity?

Am I ready for the big race day? Physically - I'm working on it. The training sessions are becoming harder and harder, but I feel my body becoming stronger with each passing day. However, it's not just my muscles that I feel growing. It's also my mind that is getting stronger. Excuses are a thing of the past, new found discipline fits me like a well-worn shoe and I'm as confident as I've ever been. I haven't even reached the start line yet, but I feel I already won. In my head, I already am an IronWoman.



THE SOUL CATCHER



His name is Rehahn, but even if it so happens that you've never heard it before, you're guaranteed to have seen some of his photographs. Rehahn's works are regularly featured by the National Geographic, BBC and Travel Live; other medias such as Los Angeles Times, The Independent, Conde Nast Traveler, Elle and many more, have featured stories about him, totalling more than 500 articles and interviews during the last four years alone.

Why the popularity? The portraits of elderly Vietnamese women we display on these pages, all with a youthful spark in their eyes, provide the answer. The works of this French-born and Vietnam-based photographer have a way of capturing the souls of his models, and touching the souls of his audience. It doesn't happen by chance though - every click of the shutter is preceded by a long process of building an intimate relationship between the photographer and the people he photographs. It's this intimacy that transpires from the images he captures. That's the power of a real human connection.

See more on rehahnphotographer.com





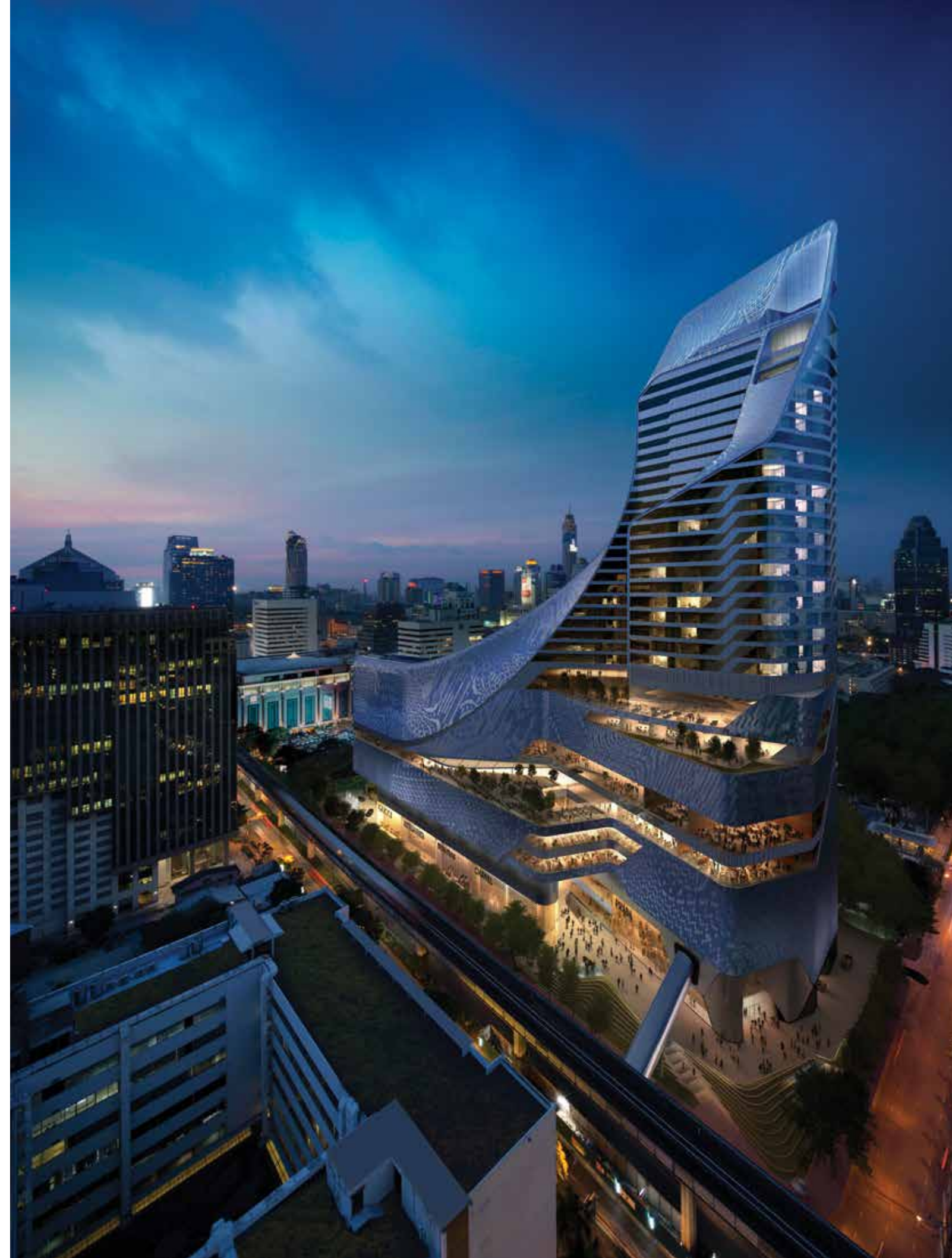




An interview with **Michael Golden**,
General Manager of the new Park Hyatt Bangkok

A FLAGSHIP SETS SAIL

The best way to get to know a hotel is, of course, to stay there for a couple of nights. The second best? Have a chat with the manager. That's why, before we get to stay at the Park Hyatt Bangkok, which is set to open on May 12, we talk to Michael Golden, the property's general manager. Michael, a seasoned hotelier associated with Hyatt hotels for more than 22 years, not only sheds some light on the character of the company's new flagship, but reveals what makes Hyatt a hotel brand unlike any other.



Can you briefly characterize the Hyatt brand to us? What makes it unique?

Michael Golden: Hyatt is a company which was built by family, our workplace allows colleagues to become friends. Our foundation in family goes back to 1957, when entrepreneur Jay Pritzker purchased the original Hyatt House motel. Jay and his brother, Donald, worked together to grow the Hyatt brand, powered by their belief in the importance of family and care. As of last September, Hyatt has 13 brands with more than 600 properties, in more than 50 countries.

We are a purpose-led company, living and breathing our core values. We care for people so they can be their best. Every day we care for our guests, suppliers and one another. Encouraging those genuine connection with people inspires experiences at Hyatt. With more than 100,000 colleagues across 54 countries, we embrace all cultures, races, ethnicities, genders, sexual orientations, ages, abilities, perspectives, and ways of thinking.

What can the guests expect in terms of design?

MG: Designed by AL_A, the London-based architecture studio founded by Amanda Levete, and Bangkok-based Pi Design, Park Hyatt Bangkok encompasses a feminine appeal through its residential interiors, usage of soft beige, natural light and curvaceous corners to provide a home-away-from-home feel. The Penthouse Bar & Grill, housed within the top three floors, takes on a more masculine approach with the usage of dark woods, brass and marbles, to create a more eventful and exciting venue.

The hotel and shopping mall are bound together using the notion of a continual looped form, to give a more intuitive merging between plinth and tower, creating a twisted-coil like structure, forming a three-dimensional figure of eight. Drawing on motifs and patterns found in traditional Thai architecture, the building's eye-catching façade is clad in extruded aluminum tiles, creating a shimmering moiré-like pattern, articulated by the play of light and reflections along the varying profiles.

As in all Park Hyatt hotels, art plays a crucial and intrinsic part at Park Hyatt Bangkok. Two of the hotel's most dramatic installations will be created by Japanese artist Hirotoishi Sawada. Within the staircase void of the Ballroom, the 'Pagoda Mirage' will incorporate hundreds of small, conical copper swirls, suspended en masse, to resemble the reflection of a pagoda on water. Equally striking will be the 'Naga', a series of batons suspended from the ceiling on level 9, to resemble a mythical water dragon travelling between the pool and internal waterfall. From the Embassy Room, its twisting dance will begin erratically in bronze acrylic, then sweep into dark-brown timber swirls through the main Living Room, before settling into an undulating vertical pattern of clear and frosted acrylic along the Living Room veranda.

What are the differences between Hyatt Regency, Grand Hyatt and Park Hyatt brands?

MG: Each brand offers a different experience through a common service philosophy. At the Hyatt Regency, you can expect your hospitality experience to be bold, allowing you to connect to people with facilities that are clever and tech savvy. At the Grand Hyatt, the experiences are grand and extraordinary. Here at the Park Hyatt, we offer a sense of serenity and calm in sophisticated spaces, with personalized experiences that are rare and enriching for our connoisseurs.



Can you briefly characterize the Park Hyatt in Bangkok?

MG: Park Hyatt Bangkok will offer peace of mind and comfort. It is a tranquil oasis above the Bangkok cityscape. Its residential living, dining and facilities are carefully crafted to help deliver Park Hyatt Hotels' discreet level of service, which is unparalleled in the market.

Can you shed some light on the F&B options at the new property?

MG: Drinking and dining experiences will have a strong sense of personalized service. We will bring down the barriers between kitchen and guests to be fully engaged with them, while sharing our knowledge and stories.

We offer two restaurants. Embassy Room, presenting both Western- and Asian-influenced cuisine, and specializing in seafood. Lively open show kitchens, equipped with a wood-fired oven, will provide live culinary theatre and an interactive kitchen experience to stimulate all senses. Guests will have the choice of dining in the main space, in a private dining

room seating ten, in a semi-private dining space for eight, or al fresco, overlooking the pool terrace and infinity pool.

Penthouse Bar & Grill, housed within the top three floors, is a dining and entertainment complex whereby the focal point is the intimate Grill Restaurant. Clad in pale marble with Rok-fah wood flooring and a walnut-marquetry ceiling it will be an open show kitchen. The grill also offers a large selection of quality meats and seafood, sourced from around the world. The restaurant will also feature an outdoor terrace and a private chefs dining room seating eight.

The drinking scene at the Park Hyatt will be offering an eclectic range of experiences. The Bar on level 9, specializes in premium whiskeys, champagnes, classic cocktails and cigars. Guests will be able to choose between sitting at the butler bar, in the lounge, at a sociable communal table or outdoors, on the terrace overlooking bustling Phloen Chit Road. The Cocktail Bar follows a vintage-motor theme,

“The world is changing every day and we see a demand for rare experiences in the value.”



with a masculine color scheme provided by walnut-wood walls, distressed dark-wood flooring and a black-glass ceiling. The moody, seductive venue will feature a double-height ceiling, adding drama to the space and maximizing the sweeping city views. Corridors will feature intimate, semi-private lounge areas demarcated by intricate brass lattice screens, while a DJ booth will hold court on an elevated platform above the back bar.

The Cocktail Bar on level 35 will offer access a mezzanine lounge on a balcony above the bar. The intimate lounge - cocooned in warm-grey marble flooring, walnut burl and grey-silk walls and an antiqued-mirror ceiling - will feature a custom wine wall, a small private bar and a collectors' wall of carefully curated objet d'art. Guests will likely lounge for hours on the comfortable channel-back sofas and opium-bed inspired seating.

On the same level, guests-in-the-know will push open a hidden walnut-paneled door to enter an antechamber lined in red Chiang Mai tiles, before discovering an intimate hidden corner beyond, dominated by a Macassar-ebony wood 'shattered wall' cantilevering out and overhead. Passing beneath the shattered wall, guests will then find a glittering back bar, decorated in backlit cut-crystal panels, black marble and classic button-tufted leather; the perfect place to enjoy one of the many single malts on offer.

The skybar will enjoy the beautiful Bangkok skyline. A large open butler bar will wrap around the core of the unique building, echoing the building's angles and curves. Guests will enjoy the outdoor lounge environment with spectacular views. The Penthouse Bar & Grill is aiming to be one of the must-visits in town.



Bangkok property is set to become the flagship for the whole group, what future will it lead the group towards?

MG: The world is changing every day and we see a demand for rare experiences in the value. It is the intangible; the connection guests feel from a truly special experience, that provide a sense of belonging. We are not re-inventing the wheel but simply doing things differently by re-examining our touchpoints and in making their stay personal and rare, so as to make it unforgettable. We recruit from across industries, we create and re-think how to care for people, so our guests and colleagues can be at their best. These practices will help brand build and lay a foundation for Park Hyatt hotels to come.


This interview has been edited and condensed for clarity

Find out more on bangkok.park.hyatt.com

finding the *Balance*

Words by Matt Clemens

Opium Spa
-THE SIAM BANGKOK



Wellness is an elusive state, achieved only by putting your body, mind and spirit in perfect balance. From meditation to nutrition, there are a dozen paths leading to it, but none will get you there on its own. There is however, a shortcut. A complete, in-depth spa experience can help you achieve wellness, and leave you feeling healthier, younger and more at peace. To that goal, we present to you our selection of best spas in South East Asia. In each of them perfect balance is within reach.



Espa

Big cities deserve big escapes. ESPA at Resorts World Sentosa is Singapore's largest luxury spa and a perfect relief from the city life. Spanning 10,000 square meters of jungle covered hillsides, landscaped gardens and ocean views, the spa has 24 balcony fitted treatment rooms as well as private Treatment Villas, two couples' suites and two Beach Villas. There is also a Hammam here, the first in Singapore, with a silver-domed ceiling, marble floors and mosaic walls for an authentic Turkish Hammam experience. ESPA's airy, indoor spaces offer a relaxed and casual ambiance with their palette of earth-toned hues and natural materials with subtle patterns and textures. The spa offers personalized treatments, Hammam cleanses and other, as well as daily passes, granting the guests access to the heat experiences and Forest Onsen pools, relaxation areas, Spa Cafe and gym.

rwsentosa.com



Xuan Spa

Inspired by Vietnamese beauty and health traditions, Xuan Spa offers a gateway to wellness using carefully selected floral, botanical and mineral resources from the Mekong, for all of its spa experiences. From Blends of Lotus essential oils to plant extracts and rice water, all ingredients used at Xuan Spa are rooted in the rich biodiversity of the Mekong Delta and its fertile mangroves.

Some of the essential oils applied at the spa include ginger known for its pain relieving, antidepressant and energizing properties; orange essential oil with its calming force that can reduce fatigue and muscle tension; and cajuput oil distilled from the white wood tree and known to the Vietnamese for centuries. It helps relax breathing, alleviates pain and discomfort and is good for the skin.

saigon.park.hyatt.com

The Oriental Spa

For an oasis in Hong Kong look no further than The Oriental Spa at The Landmark Mandarin - a two-floor retreat which offers far more than a traditional spa experience. It features 15 treatment rooms, including a VIP Sanctuary Suite for couples, a dedicated PEDI:MANI:CURE Studio by Bastien Gonzalez, an authentic Hammam, Moroccan Rasul and Roman Laconium, and separate relaxation lounges for men and women. The spa area is fitted with experience showers, vitality pools, ice fountains, amethyst crystal steam rooms, saunas, and Zen Relaxation Rooms - in short all you need to pamper yourself. The Oriental Spa is also the only in Hong Kong to offer a range of high performance products and exquisite signature treatments by Sodashi, the acclaimed chemical-free spa and skincare range from Australia.

mandarinoriental.com





Opium Spa

The Siam hotel in Bangkok is a true sanctuary within the city. And its Opium Spa is a sanctuary within this sanctuary. And now the spa, set in stylish, Bill Bensley-designed interiors which follow the elegant vintage style of the hotel itself, welcomes visiting consultants who will further elevate the spa's offering. This team of international specialists in personal development underpins the already available holistic programs, inviting the guests for a journey of deep relaxation and self-discovery. The list of wellness experiences to be had at Opium Spa in the upcoming months includes Memory Therapy with Mutsumi Adachi (May), Akashic record with Agapi Apostolopoulo (September) and Shamanic Journey and Drumming Circle with Vanja Olivier (November). Whether it's through a 60-minute treatment of a four-day retreat, a visit at Opium Spa will leave you relaxed and rejuvenated.

thesiamhotel.com



Jara Spa

"Nourish the roots, engage with the earth, provide strength to the core, be peaceful, take care of the inner self and outward beauty will blossom" says an incantation found in the menu of Jara Spa at Trisara Phuket. Those floral inspirations don't end there, the whole wellness experience at Jara Spa was inspired by a splendid ficus tree growing nearby. Rejuvenation through nutrition and balance of energy represents the roots; fitness and physical renewal form the trunk; anti-aging practices are symbolized by the branches; spa, beauty and pleasure are the blossoms, and all this is encompassed by the spirituality of the tree, signifying the balance of mind and body. To care for each of those five pillars of wellness, Jara offers a selection of treatments such as body wraps, scrubs, facials and a wide selection of massage, including the signature "Royal Trisara", a six-hand massage by three therapists.

trisara.com

The Peninsula Spa

All 14 state-of-the-art treatment rooms at The Peninsula Spa offer spectacular views of Victoria Harbor – and that's just the beginning. The interior design gives traditional Chinese elements a contemporary twist and features natural materials such as marble, wood and granite. Separate relaxation rooms for men and women are equipped with Hammam-style steam rooms, saunas and crescent-shaped, aromatherapy experience showers. It's in those surroundings that some of the world's most coveted treatments are on offer, including Margy's Monte Carlo - a selection of treatments and products from the hands of a famed beauty expert Margie Lombard, which make use of rare active ingredients and top quality Swiss products, to deliver enviable anti-aging results. One signature treatment is The Ultimate Radiance Aesthetic Facial Treatment by Margy's, a hi-tech therapy implementing monopolar-focused radio frequencies and ultrasound to contour the face and reduce wrinkles.

hongkong.peninsula.com



Elemis Spa

15 floors above the bustling street of Bangkok sits St Regis Bangkok ELEMIS Spa. The interiors are Thai inspired and luxuriant and the atmosphere serene, far removed from the hectic pace of life in Bangkok. The spa features two separate relaxation areas for men and women, each fitted with suspended relaxation pods that float above a wet area, steam rooms, Jacuzzis and cold plunge rooms. Out of 16 treatment rooms, two are Couple's Treatment Suites, and for something special, guests can make use of Rasul chambers to experience an ancient Arabian bathing ritual which cleanses, exfoliates, absorbs toxins, increases circulation and softens the skin with its combination of mineral-rich clay, heat and steam.

elemisspabangkok.com

Fusion Maia

Fusion Maia Da Nang makes wellness personal, with its customized retreat program, as well as holistic approach to retreats, which incorporate spa treatments, wellness activities and spa cuisine. The guests can choose from three new retreats, namely RE-THINK healthy living, a relaxing spa holiday which is both delicious and healthy and combines local culture and spa therapies with introducing vegan diet into the lifestyle; the RE-VIVE and revitalize, an introductory cleanse program with focus on vegan and raw food; and RE-BOOST body systems, a juice cleanse designed to jumpstart the body's natural healing power combined with healing and mindful practices and inclusive spa therapies. Each program is customized to the guest's needs.

fusionmaidanang.com





Palette on a plate

Words by Matt Clemens

Colours have flavours. Lime green can be as fresh as a freshly squeezed . . . well, lime; bright orange possesses the intensity and complexity of an authentic Indian masala while scarlet is a good indication of spiciness level not for the fainthearted, or in case of fruits – ripe sweetness. Good chefs are well aware of the colour-flavour connotation and use it to their advantage. Flip through the next few pages for some examples of dishes, which use colour as an ingredient.



The Siam

Yum Takrai Pla Kraphong Thord

The perfect balance and freshness of flavours is what makes Thai cuisine favourite for so many people around the world. Chef Damri Muksombat's spicy deep-fried seabass embodies those features, not just with flavours but also with presentation. The flavourful fish is served with lemongrass salad, shallots and mint leaves and decorated with butterfly pea flowers for a touch of blue on green backdrop.



Chef Damri Muksombat



Park Hyatt Saigon

Strawberry Fraisier

This classic French pâtisserie receives a technicolor treatment at Park Hyatt Saigon and to a stunning effect. It's made with all the traditional ingredients - vanilla mousse, soft genoise sponge base, and fresh strawberries - but thanks to chef Kim Narae's eye for colour, it jumps of the plate leaving those at the table charmed. Try not to have at least one bite.



Chef Kim Narae



Thanyapura

Beetroot, Carrot And Broccoli Hummus Wraps

If you're still stuck in the ancient mindset which tells you that eating vegetarian means eating green, it's time to open your eyes. A good place to start is with those hummus wraps with beetroot, carrot, broccoli, almond, avocado, capsicum, cucumber and rocket salad. All colours of the spectrum are represented here and they are just as flavourful as they are colourful.



Chef Udomsak Boonsopone



Angsana Laguna Phuket, Bodega & Grill

Sorbet & Donut

Life is short so eat dessert first. Or last. Or whatever. Just eat it. And when you have it, make the most of it. Chef Jonathan Bruelle at Angsana Laguna Phuket's Bodega & Grill pulled no punches when coming up with the Sorbet & Donut combination. The bright neon pink and yellow shades of the ice cream on the backdrop of golden donut dough are a promise of sweet wonder. And this promise is kept.



Chef Jonathan Bruelle



Four Seasons Chiang Mai

Som Tum

This classic Som Tum papaya salad is as flavourful and refreshing as the one you find in street side eateries across Thailand. But before you dig in, take a look. The light green shade of shredded young papaya provides a backdrop for the bright red colour accents of cherry tomatoes and sangria red of dried chilies. And it tastes just the way it looks – honesty, simple and utterly satisfying.



Chef Anchalee Luadkham



The Mira Hong Kong

Colourful Chocolate Capsules

How to make the wonder of chocolate even more wonderful? Add a splash of colour! That's exactly what chef Jean-Marc Gaucher did with his Colourful Chocolate Capsules. They come in a range of flavours, each dashed with a jolt of matching pigment. They range from refreshing yuzu and orange paired with praline filling in 40% Vietnamese white chocolate shell in "Yuzu Citrus Sunset" to a Vietnamese 64% dark chocolate with smoky flavor of Lapsang Souchong tea and a twist of nori in "Smoky Tea".



Chef Jean-Marc Gaucher



Four Seasons Hong Kong, The Lounge

Chilled Bluefin Tuna Tartar

Classic plates are white for a reason. Just like a painter's canvas, they are there to provide a surface for the artist to express himself. Chef Andrea Accordi does just that with his chilled Bluefin Tuna tartar served with tangerine, pine nuts, and wasabi and topped with Kaluga or Baikal caviar. The intense red dot of fresh tuna meat simply jumps off the white artisan plate feeding your eyes before you even take the first bite.



Chef Andrea Accordi



The Peninsula Hong Kong

Peach Melba

Originally dreamed up in 1892 by chef Georges Auguste Escoffier as a tribute to Australian soprano Nellie Melba, this classic dessert is revived by chef Yoshiharu Kaji with depth of flavour, spectacular presentation and a dash of colour. Made with peach compote, almond mousse and vanilla ice cream, it comes decorated with a yellow light bulb chip and serving of raspberry sauce in a light bulb shaped container.



Chef Yoshiharu Kaji



Kata Rocks

Barceloneta Seafood Rice

With her Barceloneta Seafood Rice, Chef Laia Pons of Phuket's Kata Rocks pays homage to the seafood scene of Barcelona. One look at this dish is enough to take your imagination for a tour of the city's fresh markets. All colours of the rainbow are present here with dominant tangerine so intense, that you can smell it!



Chef Laia Pons

Living the

KR KATA ROCKS
BY INFINITE LUXURY

SUPERYACHT

dream



They come in all shapes, sizes and styles – from timeless, classic sail yachts to futuristic megayachts, some resemble oversized floating palaces, others are nimble and more akin to racing cars; but whatever size, shape or style they are, they all are touched by luxury, and all are... super. After all, these are superyachts we're talking about, an elite category of boats accessible to a few and desired by many.

On the following pages, we present a selection of photographs of some of the most impressive superyachts that ascended to Phuket for the inaugural edition of the Kata Rocks Superyachts Rendezvous. This three-day long invitation-only superyacht gathering rocked the global yachting scene, and gave those who attended a unique opportunity to experience the superyacht lifestyle - both on water, aboard one of 15 magnificent vessels which graced the event, and on land, at Phuket's famed Kata Rocks, the world's first resort with design and ambiance inspired by a superyacht. Invited guests enjoyed a series of bespoke activities, glamorous parties and social events that effortlessly mixed networking and socializing in a relaxed and luxurious environment.

The 2017 Kata Rocks Superyacht Rendezvous will be held from 8 to 10 December 2017.

Find out more on katarockssuperyachtrendezvous.com

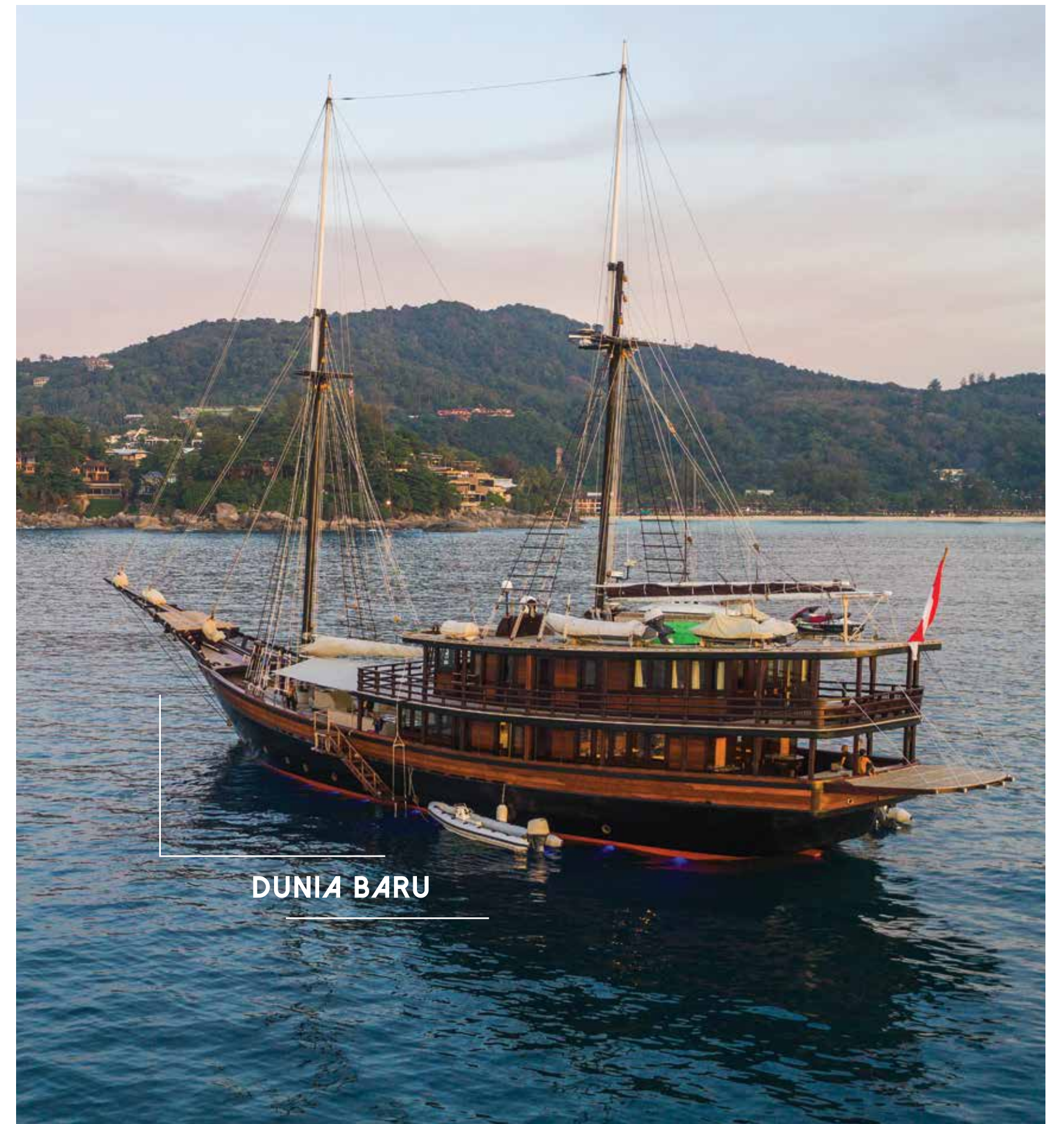


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A School by the Sea

Words by Maciek Klimowicz

We all love a good story. You do too? Then listen to this one. It has dramatic plot twists and fascinating characters, it brushes with history and is set in a magnificent tropical scenery. The story of JW Marriott Phu Quoc Emerald Bay is like no other, because it's a hotel like no other.





They say that the best way to start a story, is at the beginning. But what if there's more than one? Such is the case with the story of JW Marriott Phu Quoc Emerald Bay, whose origins reach more than 100 years back, and its heritage even further.

Its story first begun in XVIII century, on the island of Phu Quoc in southern Vietnam, in a merchant town of Bai Khem. Little is known about its past, except for the fact that to serve the needs of the offspring of local traders, a college was set up there. Later on, the same town was chosen as the site of a new university in the French ruled Vietnam – L'Université Lamarck.

Established in 1889, it was named after Jean-Baptiste Lamarck, a notable XIX century French biologist. An academic as well as a soldier, Lamarck was also an early proponent of the idea of evolution - evolution, which as we now know, rules supreme in nature, but leaves its mark on technology, culture and architecture, to name just a few.

And so, to adapt to the changing times, what was originally a cluster of low-rise traders' houses, evolved and was soon expanded by a cluster of multi-story modern classroom buildings, together forming the Lamarck University. The institution thrived for a few decades, welcomed numerous esteemed scholars and produced many great sport teams, that is until war tore through Vietnam, and the university was closed and deserted.





It might sound like the end of the story, but luckily, there also was a new beginning. Years later, in more peaceful and prosperous times, a group of vigorous developers of the Vietnam Sun Group – a luxury real estate investment group established in 2007 – saw the potential of the former university and set out on a journey to bring back its former glory. To that end, they joined forces with no other than Bill Bensley, one of the most creative hotel designers in South East Asia. The task took them five years of arduous restoration work until, at the beginning of 2017, Lamarck University was reborn as a one-of-a-kind beach resort – the JW Marriott Phu Quoc Emerald Bay.

And how can it not be one of a kind, if it combines such rich heritage with Bensley's limitless imagination? Bensley personally calls it one of his best designs, and the reason why, is clear to anyone, who had a chance to visit the resort and experience its unique charm. For one, while it's a big hotel, with 244 rooms, suites and villas overlooking a crescent of a white sand beach, it doesn't feel at all overwhelming. To make the ambiance more intimate, the designer drew heavily on the university's heritage and its gradual evolution over decades. And so, the original one and two-story Hoi An style buildings, were turned into the resort's private villas, while the high-rise structures developed later to accommodate growing numbers of students, formed the main, beach-front part of the resort. "The idea here was to break down the scale, so that people feel like they are in their own boutique department of a hotel," says Bensley.

This concept of compartmentalization is taken further, with the color schemes and interior design of various parts of the resort. Pastel hues with white accents dominate the palate, and match the surrounding landscape beautifully, giving the whole project a subtle, fairytale-like feel. But they do more than that, they also demarcate the hotel into different wings, which in turn play on the theme of the educational departments of the original university.

Such links to the past can be found throughout the property, and include busts of the university's more prominent speakers exhibited on the north side of the great hall, or sport memorabilia on display across the resort. Original classrooms and offices have been put to work as well, and now serve as the resort's bedrooms and suites.

You might still think that a hotel and a university couldn't be in starker contrast, with one designed for people to work hard, and the other to unwind and relax. There is however one more element that connects them, a link stronger than the common architectural features. It's the spirit of discovery, a desire to learn new things. It is shared by scholars and travelers alike, and it is very much present at the JW Marriott Phu Quoc Emerald Bay where it can be found in every corner, hall and classroom. After all, studying broadens the mind, and so does travel.

Find out more at marriott.com





THE BEAUTY WITHIN



Words by Maciek Klimowicz

Diamonds prove that true beauty comes from within. It's on the atomic level, that we discover the breathtaking structure, which results in the gem's spellbinding appeal. In the world of yachting, Savannah is such a gem.

It's a yacht to fall for at first sight. The 83.50-metre Savannah has all to catch your attention, and even more to keep you under its spell. It begins with its color, a one of a kind Sea Foam metallic green - except for the mast domes, the whole exterior has been metallic painted, ceilings and fixed deck furniture included. The added accents of black on the outside staircases and steps covered in teak, result in a structure of immaculate harmony.

Savannah's mesmerizing exterior profile is the outcome of a partnership between CG Designs and Feadship's designers, and evidence that it was a fruitful one, is everywhere. The thoughtful application of polished stainless steel strips, aluminum supports and teak give an impression of a structure that just floats, naturally and effortlessly, and so do the stainless steel doors, which form part of the yacht's continuous line.

But as in any noteworthy design, so here does the beauty translate to usability. The structure is characterized by openness of unrestrained spaces, with nothing to stop those on board from running from the main salon and diving straight into the sea. Freedom rules supreme on the main deck - a vast open space, enclosed only by weathertight sliding doors, and so it does beneath the deck, where a 'underwater lounge' - part marine life observatory, part cinema and part swimming pool - awaits. Each successive element of the interior design brings more surprises - the amount of detailing is unrivalled, the finishes and materials used, of immaculate quality, and the resulting space - alluring.



All that we established so far - that Savannah is pleasant to look at - could be deduced simply from the photographs we present here. But just as the source of a diamond's beauty is found in its inner structure, so is excellence in design found beyond sole aesthetics. In Savannah's case, it comes from the cutting edge technologies used onboard, which set the yacht's course for an enviable destination - the future. Savannah is the first superyacht to feature an eco-friendly blend of single diesel engine, three gensets, batteries, propeller, azimuthing thruster and a streamlined hull shape. Fully custom created, this pioneering electro-mechanical propulsion platform offers fuel economy of thirty percent and sets an example for cost-effectiveness and cleanliness.

Other design elements support that goal as well. Fitting a large contra-rotating and azimuthing stern thruster just aft of the main propeller ensures redundancy, and the design of the aft ship allows for a propeller that is forty per cent larger than the norm while the load it has to sustain is only half that of a conventional twin screw yacht. Result? Fewer vibrations, higher efficiency and excellent maneuverability. Another key feature are the Li-ion one million Watts batteries which facilitate super-quiet cruising at slow speeds without any engines turning and provide extra speed at the top end. Yes, she turns heads, but not because of her roaring engines. Beautiful on the outside, Savannah's hides just as much beauty within.

Find out more on feadship.nl



| BOOST YOUR LEGO |

In the past we'd use our imagination to make our Lego spaceships, racing cars and robots move, but now there's a gizmo that can actually make it happen. The recently introduced Boost modules from Lego can breathe new life into your child's (or your own) blocks' collection. The modules can be programmed to make Lego move, make sounds, flash lights, or in short – come alive.

| FIT AND CHIC |

If you'd rather stick to your classic watch than wear a fancy, sport-style smart watch, but you'd still like to track your fitness activity, the Motiv Fitness Ring was designed just for you. It's small, minimalistic and stylish, but packs a ton of features, allowing for tracking of activity type, active minutes, activity intensity, sleep, heart rate, calories, distances, and steps.



| NEVER GET LOST |

Going into the wild? Don't leave home without SD-F20 on your wrist. The latest watch from Casio is powered by Android Wear 2.0, features an energy efficient GPS and a full colour map, also available offline. With all that tech inside, it also retains the familiar look of a classic outdoor Casio watch.

| BIG GAME |

While other TV streaming boxes' producers focus on media consumption, NVIDIA goes after gamers. The second generation of their Shield TV refines the original, with improved, smaller design and a redesigned controller. Most improvements though, come with the new software, which now supports HDR and an array of 4k content. Your PC games will look better than ever when streamed directly to your 4k TV.



| AIRPAINTED |

Seems like Apple was aiming to recreate the white earphones frenzy of the original iPod earpod with its latest wireless earphones, aptly named AirPods. But a long time has passed since the early 2000s, and white is not that much in anymore. So if you like your tech with a splash of color (or stylish black), companies like Colorware (colorware.com) offer custom painting of your gadgets.



| WIFI BOOST |

Tired of hunting for strong WiFi signal? Plume Pods are here to help. Place the Pods around your house to strengthen your WiFi connection and evenly spread the signal. The Pods are smart enough to know where more bandwidth is necessary (for your 4k smart tv?) and where a slower connection will suffice (take smart lights for example). And while smart, they are also incredibly good looking.



| EYE-CATCHER |

If your idea of a watch is something that stands out from the crowd of bland timepieces, Klokers Klok-01 will catch your, and anyone else's eye. To that goal it abandons traditional "hands on face" design and reverses the whole process by rotating the dials with the indicator fixed on top. There are no gimmicks here, no GPS, no smart apps, just time presented in a unique way.



| STEP FOR THE OCEANS |

Last year these were just a concept, but now the sneakers made by Adidas from recycled ocean waste go on sale. Parley for the Oceans is largely made of recycled plastic previously polluting the oceans – each shoe contains 11 plastic bottles! A lot? With the amount of plastic in our waters, the company shouldn't run out of raw materials anytime soon.





TIME TO GIVE BACK

By Jürgen Zäck

The stunning tropical island of Phuket attracts many expats, who come here to embrace a slower-paced beach life. I was amongst those to settle here, but my pace of life is far from slow. In fact, it's extremely fast. During my career as a professional triathlete, I won eight IronMan titles, and finished 2nd at the legendary IronMan World Championship in Kona. Now at the age of 51, I run my own triathlon training group, Z-Coaching Phuket. While Embracing the island way of life with a permanent tan, I train alongside my athletes, pushing them to their athletic limit.

Much has changed over the years. When I first visited the island in 1997, it was to race at the Laguna Phuket Triathlon. I had declined an invitation three years earlier due to a combination of Kona taking place just one month before LPT, and a prejudice against racing in Asia. The stereotyped hot and humid conditions, the excessively spicy food and a fear of riding my beautiful Canyon bike on less than perfect roads had dissuaded me from making the trip.

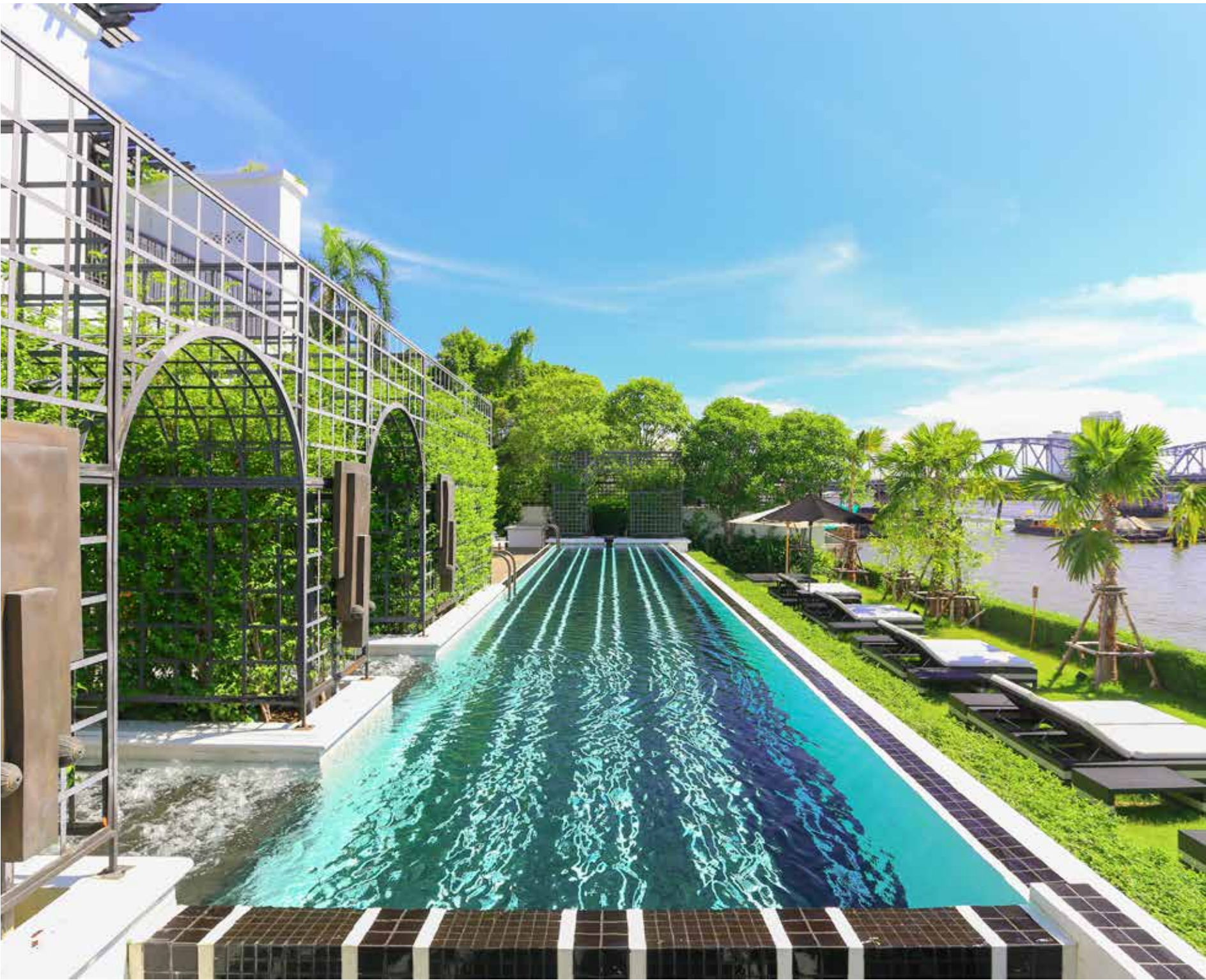
How things changed after racing that first LPT! It took very little to persuade me to return the following November. And landing back in the grey German winter after that second race, it hit me how my discovery of Thailand had only just begun. Having seen the luxurious side of the island, I craved to discover the real Thailand.

Five days later I touched back down in the Kingdom, and began a different type of adventure. I devoured the delicious food and spent time exploring the unique scenery, from the southern islands to the rice paddies of Chiang Mai and the chaotic capital of Bangkok. I had quickly fallen in love with Thailand, particularly Phuket, when I realized how it was a triathlete's ideal destination. Which is why when in 2010 I was invited to develop a triathlon academy at the newly opened Thanyapura, I didn't think twice.

I spent five years building the triathlon program there and training athletes, both expat and local, before branching off separately. Wanting to complement Thanyapura's offer while making the most of Phuket's appeal: running on the forest trails and beaches, more sea and lake swims, I decided to go independent, and so the Z-Coaching training group was born.

Together with some of the best local athletes, I want to use the knowledge and resources that we share to integrate a fresh wave of talented young Thai athletes into the squad and put the country on the map of professional triathlon racing. Phuket and Thailand have given me so much, now it's time to give back.





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