

Cigars seem to have avoided the taboo of smoking and remain an icon of sophistication and good living. Where better to enjoy a Cuban stogie than in London, home to some of Europe's top cigar lounges.



Dukes Hotel

LONDON'S Cuban Corners



Lanesborough Hotel



The Montague on the Gardens

Cigar & Cognac Garden, Dukes Hotel

The city's newest cigar den, guests can choose from an enviable selection of cigars, including classic Cuban styles, as well as a wide range of cognacs. The garden has a summer time harem feel, with cane chairs, gilded mirrors and a vaulted tent-like ceiling, perfectly suited for London's long warm summer evenings. St. James's Place, Tel: +44 20 7491 4840, www.dukeshotel.com

The Garden Room, Lanesborough Hotel

One of the first contemporary smoking gardens in London, the Knightsbridge venue has an extensive collection of cigars, best enjoyed in the garden's intimate, lamp-lit surrounds. A walk-in humidor is a treat for the senses, with its more than 1,000 cigars, and a menu of rare cognacs are on hand to match any smoke. Hyde Park Corner, Tel: +44 20 7259 5599, www.lanesborough.com

The Cigar Terrace, Boisdale Belgravia

Housed in an elegant Regency townhouse, this club's restaurant is steeped in tradition, right down to its trademark tartan patterns and plush Chesterfield armchairs. Cigar aficionados can head out to the heated outdoor garden, wrapped in special cashmere blankets if there's a nip in the air, and consult with award-winning sommelier Victor Ferreira as to the perfect cigar and cognac or whisky pairing. 15 Eccleston Street, Belgravia, Tel: +44 20 7730 6922, www.boisdale.co.uk

Alfred Dunhill London

Once home to the Duke of Westminster, this heritage building boasts both a Dunhill flagship store over three floors, and a luxurious gentleman's club in the basement, complete with a private cinema, a spa and barber, an extensive wine cellar, sunny courtyard and humidor. You'll never have to wait long for a drink in the courtyard and can match your Cohiba with a list of fine spirits. 2 Davies Street Mayfair, Tel: +44 845 458 0779, www.dunhill.com

The Cigar Terrace, The Montague on the Gardens

Located in stylish midtown overlooking the Bedford Estate gardens, the Montague's Cigar Terrace is one of Bloomsbury's most stylish after-five spots for stogie fans. The humidor is filled with cigars from across the Caribbean, including iconic Cuban favourites and a comprehensive snack menu will keep you sustained until you decide where to push off for dinner. 15 Montague Street, Bloomsbury, Tel: +44 207 637 1001, www.montaguehotel.com

Location, Location



One new boutique resort in Samui's Bophut Bay seems to have it all.



It's rare when a hotel finds the perfect balance between rooms that can actually be lived in, and a location that's practical. Usually you win either way; you may have the best spot in town, right next to one of the region's choicest beaches, but your rooms are shoe box small. Alternatively you have room to breath and to dance, but have to take a shuttle to re-find civilization.

Hansar, a new 74-room boutique hotel nestled in the heart of northern Samui's Fisherman's Village, has maintained the balance with perfection. Located right against the Gulf of Siam, with views out across to Koh Phangan, Hansar is both intimate and welcoming, a resort with all the trimmings, but in a setting that's a far cry from the island's tourist beat.

All three styles of guest room have one thing in common; plenty of space. The Beachfront

rooms are especially good; walk into an open plan suite that features a massive bathroom with rain shower, and a free-standing stone tub with views out to the ocean. A four poster bed with luxurious white linen sits regally on polished wood floors in front of a wall mounted LCD television. Beyond, the deep, covered balcony is perfect for reading, sunset cocktails and impromptu naps.

When you do feel like a drink, head down to the pool side cocktail bar, with its open air views across Bophut Bay and Hansar's eye-catching 30m infinity pool. The Beach Bar serves up a great range of innovative cocktails, many capitalising on the region's fresh tropical fruit. Another great spot for sundowners is the Chill Out Lounge, a chic space of granite and timber located above the main restaurant, and which serves up one of the island's best wine lists.

When your appetite catches up with you, head downstairs to the H Bistro Restaurant and the French Mediterranean cuisine of executive chef Stephen Jean Dion. His menu features everything from French classics like foie gras, right through to subtle pasta dishes with Thai highlights, and seafood favourites like lobster from Maine and fresh-caught fish from the local markets, all matched with great international wines.

Finally, if you've had a long day exploring Samui and the surrounding islands, head to the LUXSA Spa for authentic, contemporary Thai facials, massages and spa rituals that will poke and prod you into submission.

After all, it's all about balance.

Hansar Samui, Bophut, Samui, Tel: +66 7724 5511, www.hansarsamui.com, from US\$197 per night.