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FUN AND ADVENTURE IN
SUN CITY

THE 'ROSE OF THE NORTH'
CHIANG MAI

FINDING CALM IN
KHANOM



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HAPPINESS AT HANSAR

David Bowden luxuriated in the comforts that Hansar Samui Resort & Spa offers on the beautiful Thai resort island of Sumui.



Pool



Bistro

THE ISLAND OF SAMUI (KOH SAMUI) in the Gulf of Thailand is closer than it seems. Within less than two hours of departing Changi Airport you can be sifting sand through your toes and sipping on a Singha beer while the sun sets over the sea. Flying into the island's compact international airport is quite unique and intentionally so in offering open-sided carts to ferry passengers from their Bangkok Airways flight, through immigration and to awaiting transport to resorts such as Hansar Samui Resort & Spa, which is just ten minute's drive away.

A Peaceful Backwater

Hansar is a Sanskrit word meaning happiness; the surprising joy in providing the smallest touches for the grandest events. Hansar Samui is situated along Bophut Bay, a peaceful backwater on an island that appears to have enough space for a multitude of resorts and yet provide the impression within each one that they almost have this island paradise all to themselves.

Hansar Samui overlooks the bay with just a few boats moored offshore, but without the noise and commotion that is typical of some other Thai beach resorts. All I can hear in my room is the gentle hum of the air conditioning. In the morning, the rays of the early morning sun create a picture postcard vista that I take in for what seems like an eternity from my spacious verandah. Every one of the 74 rooms in the resort has a sea view.

I like the verandah as it is an integral extension of the room and purpose built for guests to enjoy the tropical air. A large and contemporary-styled rocking chair and a spacious daybed with comfortable pillows entice me to spend time there. A ceiling fan and candles ensure that I stay there in the cool of the early evening while having a chilled beer from the minibar. Complimentary wi-fi, resort wide, makes this a perfect location to stay in touch with the world.

Luxe Spa

LUXSA Spa in Hansar Samui offers an array of holistic treatments from the SPACATION menu. These include aromatherapy with pure Thai essential oils, aromas and spices. Body wraps such as the After Sun Wrap are specialties as are various massage treatments

including a two-hour Thai massage and herbal compress. Revitalising facials using natural Thai extracts are also available. LUXSA Spa is open daily from 10:00am until 10:00pm.

Beachside Dining

Western and Thai dishes are served in H Bistro or from the room service menu. In-room dining includes enticing dishes such as a charcuterie selection of Pyrénées cured meats and Parmesan shavings and, an imported cheese platter featuring Champagne, Normandie, Perigord and Alsace cheeses.

Obtaining the best imported ingredients isn't an issue on Samui with Canadian Chef Stephen Dion and his team serving produce such as Maine lobster, spring Bresse baby chicken, USA beef, Soulard foie gras and porcini mushrooms. Naturally, there is an extensive selection of Thai dishes including Massaman curry, tom yum goong and phad Thai.

H Bistro specialises in French Mediterranean cuisine with an exclusive wine list. The must-try meal here is the Chef's Dinner Special of six courses and

matched with wines if required. This culinary extravaganza enjoyed under the stars by the beach includes a menu of imported produce such as Alaskan king crab, salmon eggs and prawn carpaccio with a lobster bisque emulsion, foie gras with Hokkaido scallop, Bresse quail, Norwegian salmon and lamb rump while finishing with an amber caramel mousse. The accompanying sommelier's selection is equally impressive and includes rarely seen wines such as Salomon Rosé Sekt from Kremstal Austria and a dessert wine of MR Mountain Wine by Telmo Rodriguez from Malaga Spain. It's an indulgence, but well worth it. The bistro is open for breakfast, lunch and dinner and light meals are also served to bathers relaxing on the adjoining pool desk.

Happy Hours on the Beach

The creatively-named Beach Bar, not surprisingly, overlooks the beach and offers three happy hour periods at lunchtime, sunset and late evening when two for one prices are offered at reasonable rates considering it's a five-star resort. While prices in neighbouring beach bars

are cheaper, they don't offer the luxury, style and comfort of the Hansar Samui. The other creatively-named Chill Bar is perched above the H Bistro and earns extra points for its orange bean bag section and inviting wine list. I didn't see one television monitor in either bar so guests are only distracted by their immediate surroundings; a good old fashioned tradition that needs revitalising in bars around Asia.

Other facilities at the resort include a small shop and a reading area just off the lobby. Its gym is air-conditioned and provides computer controlled cardiovascular equipment such as treadmills, bicycles and multi-station weights.

Hansar Samui is located next to Fisherman's Village so there are restaurants, bars and also The Wharf shopping centre within walking distance.

The resort and Samui appeal because of direct flights from Singapore and Kuala Lumpur to the island and, upon arrival, a luxurious resort along a quiet beachfront.



Seaview Room



Bean Bags Chill Bar



Chill Bar



Room & Verandah

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