



# Time to Discover Thai

**H Bistro at Hansar** Samui doesn't just offer international dishes but a wonderful Thai Discovery menu.



With its extraordinary wide-angle view of Bophut Bay, H Bistro is bound to be a hit when it comes to romantic evenings out. The views from its terraces are incomparable. You can see all the way to the headlands on either side of the bay, as well as have a striking view of neighbouring Koh Pha-Ngan. Naturally a lot of diners are seduced by the view, but this isn't the main reason for coming to the restaurant. The food is, to say the least, superb. Thai and international dishes are prepared to perfection at this very modern restaurant (don't be fooled by the humble word 'bistro').

If you love Thai food you'll be won over by the H Bistro Thai Discovery dinner menu. As the name implies it's a chance to discover just what heights Thai cuisine can reach in the hands of a team of maestros. Whether you're a novice or an old hand, you'll be impressed by the menu. It's overseen by executive chef Stephen Jean Dion, who used to be private chef for no less than the King and Queen of Jordan. He's also worked in Singapore and Malaysia, as well as in top restaurants in Bangkok.

H Bistro is both spacious and comfortable. Seating is blonde wood tables that have the clean lines of Scandinavian furniture, while the surrounding décor is pleasantly uncluttered and simple, allowing you to focus on the food itself. You can sit upstairs or downstairs (both floors have great terraces), and the setting is decidedly elegant, but without being the least bit stuffy.

The atmosphere is friendly and laid-back, with the staff attentive and welcoming.

The discovery menu starts with a wing bean salad that's accompanied by Hokkaido scallops and Bresse chicken. Though both the scallops and the chicken come from outside Thailand, this is still a Thai recipe. Says Stephen, "We've chosen scallops from Hokkaido for their sweetness, and the chicken's from Bresse, in France, as the region's known for its great quality poultry. For the salad, we use Thai ingredients that go well with the beans: garlic, chilli paste, coconut milk and kaffir lime leaves." The results are a delicate and pleasing medley of tastes that are an ideal start to your meal.

It's followed by a tom yum goong, but with the addition of little pork dumplings. Incidentally, Tahitian limes are used. These aren't specially flown in from half way across the world, as you might think, but come from the north of Thailand, where they've successfully been transplanted. You might think that all limes are alike, but it turns out not to be the case. The Tahitian variety are two or three times the usual size, and their bright green colour suggests, quite correctly, that they're saturated with goodness. "We buy them from a Royal Project in Chiang Mai," says Stephen. "We find them to be simply the best. They're very juicy and everyone likes them. We use them for drinks, as well. In high season we'll get through 200 kilos of them!"

For the next course, there's a choice to be made - maybe a hard one as both options are mouth-watering. Crispy snow fish tossed in garlic, red chilli, Thai sweet basil and chilli sauce vies with a beef massaman curry, with slow-cooked short ribs, braised baby onions, potatoes and cashews. The short ribs, by the way, are prepared in a way that's unusually painstaking. Slow-cooked means really slow. "They're cooked at a very gentle heat for 24 hours," explains Stephen. "First we seal them in a vacuum bag along with Thai herbs and this keeps the flavour in. Then we put the bag in a thermo circulator, a special device, which does the work of slow cooking the ribs to perfection and maintains the temperature exactly. When you eat meat like this, it definitely falls off the bone and is at its most tender."

Both these mains are served with steamed rice and stir-fried root vegetables, oyster sauce, chilli and garlic. Though Thai food wasn't traditionally accompanied by wines, the discovery menu has two prices, one that includes a soft drink, Singha beer or a juice, and the other that includes wine. The last course is freshly sliced mango is served, along with sticky rice - that favourite of all Thai desserts - accompanied by coconut ice-cream. It's a delicious way to end a sumptuous evening such as this. Finally, there's Eleaf tea or coffee with chocolate pralines.

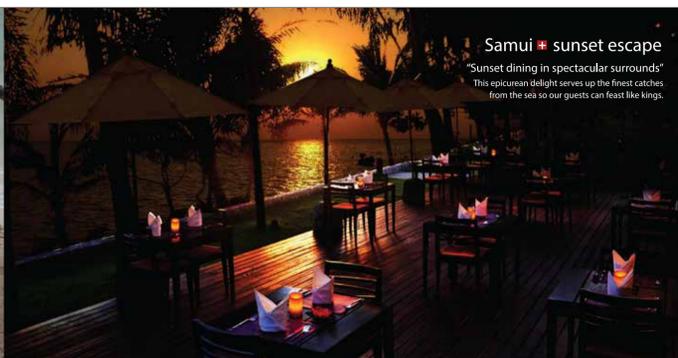
H Bistro is now in its fifth year, and has certainly acquired a much-deserved reputation for

excellence. You can find it at Hansar Samui resort, which is right on the beach at Fisherman's Village - head along the beach road westwards and you'll soon come to it. If you're approaching from the ring-road, take the small turning just next to the Anantara Bophut Resort, some 600 metres after the traffic lights at Bophut as you head towards Nathon. Follow the road till you get to the resort.

Oddly it turns out that there aren't quite as many Thai restaurants in Fisherman's Village as you might expect, so H Bistro definitely fills a gap when it comes to Thai cuisine. And just because it's a hotel, it doesn't mean to say that the costs are outlandish. They're in line with eating in a restaurant, and are distinctly affordable. Stephen and the team at H Bistro have done their utmost to bring you excellent presentation and amazing tastes, whether you're trying out their Thai discovery menu or their international selection. And judging by the number of satisfied diners, they've certainly succeeded.

**Dimtiri Waring**

For reservations or further information, telephone 0 7724 5511. [www.hansarsamui.com](http://www.hansarsamui.com)



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