

TRAVELLING AROUND

Luxury a Thai that binds

Rama Gaiind checks into a simply super urban resort

"The greatest achievement was at first and for a time a dream. The oak sleeps in the acorn; the bird waits in the egg; and in the highest vision of the soul a waking angel stirs. Dreams are the seedlings of realities."—James Allen

It was a brief encounter, an untailored discussion, but one that left an indelible mark. There was no refuting the fact that Jason M. Friedman, general manager of Thailand's newest boutique accommodation gem, is a consummate luxury hotelier.

He was aware that expectations of high standards for hotel accommodation in Bangkok would further escalate with the opening of 'his' brand new hotel — The Siam — in June.

Attaining a totally new level of sophistication, the 'super luxury resort' on the stunning Chao Phraya River is in the historic Dusit district.

Paramount is Mr Friedman's desire to make The Siam the "most talked about hotel on the planet". He has a clear-cut vision: a desire to "make our guests' experiences the best possible".

His boundless energy, enthusiasm, integrity and drive are palpable, but this passionate manager also thrives on success. His winning streak was displayed after he was chosen by the owners of Qualia on Hamilton Island to open the island's first luxurious retreat in 2007 that has since garnered a plethora of accolades.

What's more, Mr Friedman's determination to accomplish — and triumph — is equally matched by the foresight of the Sukosol family fondly dubbed the 'musical

hoteliers' of Thailand.

They are a multi-lingual, multi-tasking, multi-skilled, multi-talented business dynasty. The Sukosols have an inimitable philosophy: "Since our illustrious leader, Kamala, started it all 30 years ago, we have sojourned in a smorgasbord of establishments: from homey abodes to private palaces. What inspired us most is the perfect balance of individuality, gracious service, cultural charm and a sense of serendipity. And we believe you will find that right here with us at The Siam."

Designed by internationally acclaimed architect Bill Bensley, The Siam is the kingdom's "super urban luxury resort" that features 39 spacious suites and intimately private pool villas with open-air roof terraces.

This is an art deco-inspired, antique-infused masterpiece with a history that "incorporates four traditional Thai teakwood houses sourced by silk tycoon, Jim Thompson, and socialite owner, Connie Mangskau".

"We are debuting Bangkok's very first pool villas (11 of them) and the hotel world's premier, luxury Muay Thai gym!"

You will relish the exclusivity of this destination and rejoice in the wide array of amenities including library/cinema, infinity pool, conservatory, restaurants, bar, tea house, spa, beauty salon and cooking school, Chon.

All rooms are fitted with plush furnishings, super-sized king beds and lofty ceilings. Each suite is individually designed with original turn-of-the-century oriental artwork and antiques and is catered for by a personal butler.

The striking property with black, white and grey décor sits on more than a hectare of verdant river frontage, with distinctive

rooms that are spacious, from between 80sqm to 160sqm.

Mr Friedman elaborated: "This is by far the most exciting project for Bangkok, where there is admittedly an overload of five-star chain business hotels and wannabe 'boutique' properties plus plenty of cute and cosy B&Bs, but nobody has done what we're doing: catering to the ultra-luxury leisure market and turning the Bangkok experience on its head through architecture, design, art and antiques, health and wellness plus location".

An irresistible array of bespoke cultural amusements await you at this resort: explore Bangkok by boat from the private pier; indulge in pampering in the 100% chemical-free spa and hammam-inspired bath house; explore the grounds and discover a veritable treasure trove of curios; or simply unwind with a sunset cocktail at the riverfront bar.

This boutique gem nestles among the capital's historical palaces, temples and museums.

Together with Qualia, Mr Friedman, 40, has honed his talents at some of the world's most unique boutique properties and luxurious five-star establishments including Raffles (Singapore), Hotel Le Royal (Cambodia), Amandari (Bali) and Four Seasons (Chiang Mai and Chiang Rai).

With a slew of awards to his name, he was not satisfied with simply running award-winning hotels. Mr Friedman decided to take time out to research some of the world's most inspiring places to stay and indulge his personal passions: globetrotting, elephant polo, sailing and scuba diving.

Rama Gaiind was a guest of the Tourism Authority of Thailand.



Maenam Suite Living Area



Chinese Villa Bedroom



Siam Suite Bathroom 2



Siam Suite Bedroom 1