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## ON THE HORIZON

Parts of the Middle East may be off limits for now but there are still plenty of optimistic reasons to head to the region, including a flurry of new hotels to come

**Plus: Adventurous honeymoons, agent views and trends from the Maldives, inside Lux Resorts & Hotels, Phuket, Singapore and the chance of a dream trip to South Africa**

# Phuket

Aside from its obvious natural attributes – cinematic coastlines, diamond-white sands, Listerine-green Andaman Sea – Phuket offers stylish accommodation options for everyone, from cliff-top pool villas to fancy family resorts and boutique retreats. It's also had a revival of fortunes when it comes to new hotel investment, including the Marriott Resort and Spa Nai Yang and a 71-villa Rosewood set to open soon

**AUTHOR: LEE COBAJ**

Located on the posher west coast of Phuket, with distant views of Kamala beach, Keemala might just be the most-photographed new hotel of 2016. Opened at the end of last year, its *Hobbit*-like landscape of thatched-roof cottages, coconut-shaped cabins, dangling treehouses and sculptural bird's nest villas is the stuff brochure designers' dreams are made of. Despite the playful aesthetic, the 38 villas boast stylish low-key interiors – think charcoals and cherry woods, circular sofas, dramatic netted beds and striking bathrooms with giant mosaic floors. Most also have private pools, while all come with the services of a butler-like host.

There may be just one restaurant, Su Tha, reached by a series of walkways suspended along the jungle canopy, but the menu provides plenty of

variety. Split into three cuisines – Thai, Indian and Western – it's all you need. There's also a lagoon-shaped pool with mini-waterfall, a gym with personal trainers and the wonderful Mala Spa.

Secreted in a series of luxed-up huts with sea views and private steam chambers, Keemala's spa is a real highlight. A thoughtful menu offers everything from traditional treatments to more unconventional options such as raindrop healing, chakra rebalancing and singing bowl therapy. We recommend clients sign up for one of the three to six-day Holistic Living Programmes, which include a plethora of treatments, personal fitness sessions and spa cuisine.

**Rooms from £338pn with breakfast, afternoon tea, in-room mini-bar and daily wellness activities, keemala.com**



## Join the yacht club set

Roger Moore, Peter Ustinov, Rudolph Nureyev, Prince Albert of Monaco and former French president Jacques Chirac – the guest list of the old Royal Phuket Yacht Club reads like a Who's Who of the 1980s. Forty years on, it's been revamped and renamed The Nai Harn and is jet-set ready once more. Every one of the spacious 130 fruity-hued rooms – typically with lime greens, cherry pink and aubergine palette – overlook the Andaman Sea. None have private pools but they have almost direct access to Ao San beach, voted the best in Asia by TripAdvisor in 2015. **Rooms from £130pn with breakfast, thenaiharn.com**



A £50,000 a week stay at the ultra-luxe Iniala Beach House might be out of reach for most, but you can taste its cuisine at Iniala Gourmet Bakery in Bang Tao resort, [iniala.com](http://iniala.com)

Writer's choice



**1 POP THE QUESTION**  
Hidden away on the eastern side of the island, with camera-grabbing views of Phang Nga Bay – best enjoyed from the 100-metre pool – the stylish Point Yamu by Como was made for romance. **Rooms from £175pn, comohotels.com**



**2 EYE-CANDY**  
There's nothing as dull as just a double room at Kata Rocks; instead, there are 34 Kelly Hoppen-designed sky villas cantilevered out of the cliff-side above the Andaman Sea. Lounging by the pool is the place to be seen. **Villas from £470pn with breakfast, katarocks.com**

**3 FLASH FAMILIES**  
Family-friendly is far from unfashionable at gritty glam option The Slate (formerly Indigo Pearl) with its villas in dark woods, concrete and tactile fabrics. **Rooms from £135pn with breakfast, indigo-pearl.com**



**4 CELEB SPOT**  
Snoop Dogg, Rita Ora and Flo Rida are just a few of the big names that have bedded down at Sri Panwa. Go full rock star with a stay in a private pool villa, moonlight massages and a rooftop party at Baba Nest. **Villas at £299pn with breakfast, sripanwa.com**

**Don't leave without:** A visit to Phuket's first ethical sanctuary for injured and retired elephants. An outpost of the Elephant Nature Park in Chiang Mai, the new refuge is set in 2,300 hectares of rainforest, [elephantnaturepark.org](http://elephantnaturepark.org)