



MX Sydney
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If heaven was a place on Earth, its description would probably include words such as sun, beach, luxury resort, romance, massage, delectable food and drink ... oh, hang on, **VANESSA STUBBS** has found it

The warm water laps around our ankles, the air smells of salt and flowers. The Andaman Sea is a flat, shiny mirror as the sun slips behind it.

We move slowly towards a glimmering tree in the distance. As we get closer we see it has been festooned with candles. Paper lanterns hang from the branches. Tiny white flowers have been threaded and hung from the leaves and papaya leaves are formed into the shape of small fish. The sand is light-strewn.

A table is set with crisp white linen and wine glasses. This is where we will dine tonight.

Thailand. Romantic, beach-side dinners with our own chef and a seven-course meal barbecued on the sand are only the beginning.

We had found it hard to decide on where to go when presented with thousands of resorts and only a week to stay. We Googled "romance" and "no kids". And so, we found The Sarojin.

The Sarojin is a small (56 rooms) award-winning resort an hour north of Phuket.

But don't fret about the hour's travel, because someone will be there at the airport to pick you up (even at 10.30pm), give you cold, scented hand towels, a

cool drink and an airconditioned transfer to the resort.

Nothing says welcome quite like a warm candlelit bath filled with flowers.

Our bed has been taken over by a huddle of elephants made out of towels. It's our first taste of the small and luxurious touches that make our stay special.

A VERY GOOD MORNING

We awake to be enveloped by the moist heat of Thailand in monsoon

season. The sky is grey, throwing the gardens of the resort into their full green glory.

Champagne breakfast is the perfect antidote to jet lag.

And the Sarojin's breakfast is legendary. It's actually an all-day affair, meaning it can be ordered from 6am to 6pm. And it's a la carte, so I'm not exaggerating when I say you can order anything you like and as much as you like.

We feast on banana pancakes and vanilla waffles, corn fritters with bacon and fresh pastries. And that's just our first course. For those with the appetite, there's a Thai-style breakfast, which includes noodle dishes, shrimp omelets and a delicious savoury rice porridge.

We sip our sparkling wine while watching dragonflies hover on waterlilies in the pond that surrounds the restaurant.

Cappuccinos come with a twig of cinnamon in place of a spoon (and we're delighted to find the coffee is great). The wine can keep on coming if you want. But there's only so much one can eat. And besides, the pool awaits.

PRIZE POOL

In the pictures, the pool is a bright aqua surrounded by lush greenery with daybeds draped

in white cloth. It's like something out of a mirage.

The reality doesn't disappoint. It's about 11am and we are the only ones gliding through the water.

It's warm but still provides reprieve from the 38C heat. Some of the suites have their own pools, so there's always plenty of space in the palatial sunbeds or under the white umbrellas. A staff member comes over with iced water and fresh towels.

Throughout our stay, the pool is serene. Many of the guests are couples, so there's no crazy pool antics and certainly a distinct absence of children.

After our dip, we wash off under the enormous "rain shower" in our open-air bathroom. It's yet another gorgeous feature of our suite. There are candles in the bathroom, beautiful bathrobes, bath, body and hair products, citronella mosquito repellent and fluffy white towels, all of which are replenished daily.

We lounge in our bathrobes on our palm-fringed private balcony and consider our options. Massages are clearly next in order.

SPA BLISS

We arrive at the Sanctuary spa and have our feet placed carefully into slippers. We're shown to daybeds and recline as instructed.

Tall, white stone pillars overlook a section of open rainforest and we sip cool, sweet tea infused with coconut.

We're led to an open-air couples massage suite and instructed to change into bathrobes. Our feet are washed and scrubbed (Thai people consider the feet the dirtiest part of the body, which is fine with us) as we listen to waves breaking on the beach behind the trees.

My therapist's name is Fern. She has a gentle touch and the 90-minute herbal oil massage goes by in complete bliss. It is the best massage I've ever had.

My husband's traditional Thai massage is transformative and, when I open my eyes briefly, I can see why. His therapist, Joe, looks like he's doing yoga, such is his complete calm and concentration.

Post massage involves more tea, this time with freshly cut ginger and honey.

Breakfasted, champagned and massaged, I decide I'm not on holidays, I'm in heaven.

Jetstar flies directly to Phuket from Sydney and Melbourne. The Sarojin Hotel is an hour north of Phuket. Hotel transfers and packages are available. Visit: www.sarojin.com/en



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How could you not feel romantic dining on a beach sprinkled with candles?



The Sarojin's private beach is just that – very private.

Right: When the luxury gets too much, there's always an elephant ride.

Below: The Sarojin's pool is the stuff of dreams.





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