

# DON'T STOP!

When you're in Fisherman's Village, go right next door and enjoy some of the finest cuisine anywhere – at **Anantara Bophut Koh Samui Resort!**





If you're reading this, then you're most-likely in a hotel somewhere. You'll settle by the pool for a day or so until the jet lag goes. Then start exploring. You'll go out to eat, most probably at a different place each night. You'll head off up the mountain, and see the mummified monk and the waterfalls. A boat trip maybe. Or a jungle safari. And then, most-likely when it's Walking Street, you'll head off to Fisherman's Village.

There's no need at all for me to go on about how much fun this is, or about how many things there are to look at; the shops, the pubs, the eateries, the street stalls, the mementoes, the crafts. But what I do want to do is to point something out to you. – if you walk along the beach road heading north until you run out of 'village', you'll come up against the long, high wall that borders the village at the end. And this is the boundary wall of Anantara Bophut Koh Samui Resort, to give the resort its full title.

'Anantara Bophut' is really something special. There are only a handful of resorts on the island which have been able to stake a claim on such

a huge plot of land. The entrance on the main road is across a long wooden bridge over a lily-filled pond overshadowed by giant trees festooned with hanging creepers and with lush greenery everywhere. But coming in from Fisherman's Village, along the beach, is a delight! Here there is tranquility and peace – the hustle and neon of the busy village simply evaporates as you come onto the beach. And the serenity of the discreet and warm lighting leading to the restaurant is more than inviting.

For a long time now those in the know have extolled the virtues of this wonderful little hideaway. It goes without saying that the food here is fabulous – and more about this in just a moment. But, in the same way as the resort itself tenders and extends an ongoing consideration of care to its guests in general, so does its 'Full Moon' restaurant, and there are a dozen little touches which constantly remind you that eating here is also something special.

For instance, you'd expect to have an experienced wine guru on hand to advise you. But here there's also a 'salt guru' to recommend which of the various sorts of ground-at-the-table rock salt best complements your

meal. Or the choice offered of four different sorts of knives, displayed in a rosewood box for you to select. Then there's the tableside preparation of dishes such as the 'Salmon Inferno'; a sashimi dish covered in a Japanese spice-blend and fired at the table – or the carved 500 gram Ku Beef T-Bone steak. And that's not even touching upon the uniquely-colourful concoctions of an award-winning cocktail mixologist.

But the staff here has taken things a step further. They are aware that quality dining can take different forms, from the warmly-romantic nooks that newly-weds might seek, to perhaps a birthday celebration or even a group of friends getting together to enjoy their last night on the island. And that's where the lushly-spreading grounds come in so useful, from the seclusion of a private sala in the lovely walled spa garden, to the garden-setting with views over the long lily pond, or even dining directly on the sand, with the sea whispering just a few metres away. All these options can be discussed when you book . . . as can those thoughtful little extras, such as the style of decoration, flowers, fabrics and so on, should you want them.



The menu here has been created by the Executive Chef, Martin Kindleysides, who describes his chargrill approach as “. . . modern Australian cuisine with Asian elements”. And Martin is seriously dedicated in more ways than one. “Over time I’ve been sourcing ingredients which are thoroughly sustainable,” he explained. “Naturally this includes local organically-produced vegetables, herbs and spices. The same with fish; I’ll buy-in two different kinds every day so guests have an ongoing choice.”

“But possibly the most exciting aspect are the recent developments in the north of Thailand,” Martin continued. “‘Ku Beef’ is an experiment developed by Kasetsart University for organic farming and the raising of cows. The stock is grain-fed and it’s a cross-breed between a French Charolais and a local Brahman. Along with this we are also serving a locally sourced 50-day dry-aged sirloin – the dry-aging process results in cuts of exceptional moisture, flavour and texture. Of course there’s still imported Australian grain-fed beef on the menu, but it is very hard to tell the difference!”

And I have to say right away that what must surely be the star of the show is their signature ‘Roast Spatchcock’. That’s what it’s demurely titled on the menu. But in reality this is a wondrous dish: it’s a rare gamebird with a delicate yet unique flavour, and it’s not simply ‘cooked’; rather it’s crafted into a sublime dish that takes all of 24 hours to prepare.

Firstly it’s butterflied and marinated for 24 hours in yoghurt, turmeric and spices. Then it’s fired in a tandoor oven, after which it’s removed and smoked with applewood. It comes served with cumin potatoes and asparagus, together with a Himalayan star anise sauce, mint and coriander raitha, and is individually carved for you tableside – totally

exquisite, both in its flavour and texture, and also in the delicately-combined interplay of the complimentary ingredients.

The actual menu itself is thoughtfully designed, with each item coded with a symbol to designate whether it’s gluten-free, contains nuts, is vegetarian, or its degree of spiciness. The appetisers come as Hot or Cold ‘Elements’, and items such as the tantalizing ‘Compressed Watermelon Salad’ – watermelon that has been put under pressure for 24 hours and served with locally made feta cheese, walnuts, jalapeño and pomegranate molasses – right away set the gastronomic tone.

It’s usually a good measure of the culinary integrity of a restaurant if you check the quality of the ‘starters n sweets’, and Full Moon exceeds expectations with some super sweets, too: just try their ‘Belgium Chocolate Naked Crème Brûlée’ – meringue, chocolate crumbs, ganache, berry gel and chocolate ice-cream.

So, cruise through Fisherman’s Village and enjoy yourself; it’s all good fun. But as you’re munching on something, keep this story in your mind. Because perhaps next time, instead of stopping, you’ll head next door to Anantara and the fabulous Full Moon instead!

*Rob De Wet*

For reservations or further information, telephone 0 7742 8300.  
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