

OUTSTANDING OUTRIGGER KOH SAMUI

DAVID BOWDEN ENJOYED HIS RELAXING STAY AT THE SUMPTUOUS OUTRIGGER KOH SAMUI BEACH RESORT WITH ITS UNIQUE AMBIENCE, SPACIOUS ROOMS AND EXCELLENT CUISINE.

Just as I was getting comfortable on the flight to Koh Samui, located in the Gulf of Thailand, we arrived. Just as I was getting accustomed to Thai immigration and the awaiting resort transport, it was time to alight from the car, take in the fresh sea breeze and briefly wait before checking into my pool villa at the Outrigger Koh Samui Beach Resort.

EFFORTLESS ARRIVAL

Travelling to Koh Samui really is quite effortless and if you wisely choose to stay at resorts like the Outrigger, you are literally just minutes away from the airport. Not some airport hotel, mind you, but a deluxe beachside property of just 55 all-pool villas.

Also, my flight arrived early in the morning, so it was possible to make a full day of it rather than waste half the day travelling (Koh Samui time is one hour behind Singapore so you arrive not long after you depart if you get my drift). There was even time to sneak in a quick breakfast while I waited for my room to be readied.

BEACHFRONT BLISS

No villa in the resort is more than 50 metres from the beach. My villa was half-way between the lobby and the water and set amidst lush and

mature landscaping that shielded me from my nearest neighbour. While the resort is close to the airport, it is well away from flight paths so there is virtually no noise to disturb guests.

A refreshing onshore breeze was blowing making the surf a tad choppy. I didn't mind as there was always the pool if I wanted to take a dip. The crashing waves filled in the silence of the Outrigger's semi-isolated north-eastern position on the island.

UNIQUE AMBIANCE

I'm not sure if there is any feng shui significance in six-sided structures as my villa (and all others), the Outrigger's restaurant and The

Library (a pleasant open-sided retreat with comfortable seating and books for some resort reading) are all hexagonal-shaped. This adds to the resort's unique ambiance as opposed to the conventional rectangular shape of most hotel rooms.

I delighted in knowing there were more corners in which to hide on the occasions I needed to. All villas at the Outrigger are also twice the size of conventional hotel rooms and there is a spacious veranda with a lounge and two sun loungers plus a 3m by 4m plunge pool and jacuzzi. The bathroom is spacious with a semi-circular shower and two skylights to allow the sunlight to stream in.

WILD NIGHT LIFE

It wasn't difficult to drift off each night despite the in-room alert from the management that wildlife from the surrounding trees and pools might disturb me. The notice brought it to my attention that cicadas make a lot of noise during their mating season and that bull frogs did the same during the rainy season. I passed on the management's offer of ear plugs and heard no nocturnal noises that warranted being blocked out.

The resort has an easterly facing aspect, so this is a place to take in the sunrise for those who care to arise around 6:30am. Those who do

will be rewarded with the sun breaking through low-lying cloud over the gulf. The intense orange light illuminated the series of pools lining the coast where the resort meets the ocean. It silhouetted the Edgewater Restaurant and an expansive tree that provides shade for diners.

COOL BEVERAGES & SPICY DISHES

The Outrigger's food and beverage outlets are all located close to the beach with Edgewater Restaurant being as close to the edge as possible.

Each evening, I enjoyed happy hour prices from 6:00pm to 7:00pm at the poolside Wet Bar. One-for-one on cocktails, beer, whisky, bourbon and aperitifs like Pernod and Campari seemed a great deal to me. Even non-happy hour prices are cheaper than in Singapore. There was also a wine promotion of 50% off on wines as impressive as Henschke Julius Riesling.

A good balance between Western favourites, pizza and Thai dishes is offered. Thursday is one of the best nights to sample Thai food as the Thai Market buffet is available. Chef Tor and his team also conduct Thai cooking classes for budding master chefs and I was informed that this would become more part of the Outrigger Koh Samui experience this year with the establishment of a dedicated demonstration kitchen.

OUTRIGGER INDULGENCES

The Navasana Spa uses local healing traditions and wisdoms together with global therapeutic treatments that purify, rejuvenate and reward the body while restoring natural equilibrium. The spa's inspirational Zen décor and architecture enable spa-goers to drift off on the soothing sounds of whispering waters and gentle breezes flowing onshore from the gulf. The Navasana Signature Massage of 90 minutes combines lomi lomi Hawaiian techniques with traditional Thai massage. Firm continuous strokes and Thai yoga unlock energy flows and help loosen tense muscles.

Koh Samui is a wonderful Thai tropical island destination and the Outrigger Koh Samui Beach Resort is one of the best locations to take in much of what the island has to offer. ❖



Pocket Guide



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