



THU, 18 MAY 2017

Layan about in the sun

Relaxed elegance is the phrase which springs to mind when writing about my stay at the Anantara Layan Phuket Resort, where I spent three days laying by my private pool, enjoying the discreet service of my two (yes, two!) butlers, and living the life of a millionaire in my three-storey Residence at the luxury five-star getaway that is perfect for families, couples and singles alike.

OUTLET	OK! Middle East	FREQUENCY	Weekly
COUNTRY	United Arab Emirates	CIRCULATION	25,436 Monthly
LANGUAGE	English	IMPRESSIONS	1,672
SIZE	4 pages	AVE	\$28,212
PAGES	58, 59, 60, 61	SENTIMENT	Positive
		DISTRIBUTION	United Arab Emirates





Relaxed elegance is the phrase which springs to mind when writing about my stay at the Anantara Layan Phuket Resort, where I spent three days laying by my private pool, enjoying the discreet service of my two (yes, two!) butlers, and living the life of a millionaire in my three-storey Residence at the luxury five-star getaway that is perfect for families, couples and singles alike.

Luxury In Residence

Set into a steep hillside, offering stunning views across the Andaman Sea, the Anantara Layan Phuket Resort is a 20-minute drive from the shiny new Phuket International Airport. After we arrived, we were whisked up a meandering, tree-lined road to where The Residences are to be found, and to the Villa Caron, a three-bedroom sea view residence which proved to be jaw-dropping even to a seasoned Phuket visitor such as myself.

Ideal for up to nine guests (although there were only four of us), the Villa Caron was just one of six Residences options, which can accommodate

between six and 21 guests. Check-in was quick, painless and done wholly in-room, making it so much easier for anyone travelling with kids or who've come a long way and just want to relax.

Our Villa was designed Thai-style, to make the most of the amazing year-round weather, turning every move between the bedrooms and living quarters into an alfresco experience. The vast, high-ceilinged living room and dining room were perfect for family gatherings, and the small kitchen sufficed for everyday use, while the vast chef's kitchen down a staircase adjacent to the dining area was where catering could be done for larger groups, and to prepare breakfast in-room.

Butler Service

With two butlers looking after us, even if you're not used to having staff, Susie and Om – the ladies tasked with taking care of us and our two kids – were so incredible and easy to live with, it was genuinely like vacationing with family

OK! stayed in the luxurious Villa Caron (above), with incredible sea views



members. Moving seamlessly into our daily schedule, pretty soon they were anticipating our needs – cup of tea at 11am each day? Yes, please! – entertaining the kids and making suggestions as to how we could entertain ourselves – as well as being on hand to snap family pics for us. Honestly, we didn't have to lift a finger, it was bliss!

Perfect For Families

Our Residence was spread out over three floors, making it ideal for large gatherings of families or friends, because while there are plenty of places to socialise and hangout, you can also take some much needed time out. On the upper level were the living and dining rooms, as well as the master bedroom with amazing views out to sea. Down a flight of stone steps brought us to the lower level where there were two further bedrooms, a couple's spa room – with a window in the ceiling through which we could see the pool above – a vast study and another bathroom, all coming off a long, cool corridor. Above the main living areas was a vast rooftop deck that was perfect for sundowners and BBQs.

Around the Resort

Leaving our Residence was a difficult thing to do, simply because it was so beautiful we wanted to stay there forever. But we did manage to tear ourselves away from our home from home to explore the resort. The private beach is beautiful, with low waves lapping at the shore, making it



With plenty of accommodation options, book into a Beachfront Pool Villa

OK! MIDDLE EAST 59



Book in for the 'Dining By Design' dinner, and choose where in the picturesque resort you want to dine

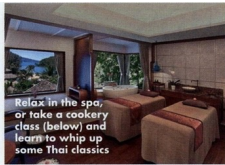
MY HOLIDAY SNAPS

Take a sneak peek into my stay at the Anantara Layan Phuket Resort



The views were stunning, and we loved the luxe details, such as the 'window' in the pool floor.

Even simple eggs Benedict (left) was beautifully presented. Below: The beach was ideal for kids



Relax in the spa or take a cookery class (below) and learn to whip up some Thai classics



perfect for little ones to paddle. Better still for little explorers, the sea flows inland in a gorgeous inlet surrounded on either side by towering trees, giving a jungle feel to any adventurous stroll taken down there.

There's also an array of watersports to enjoy, as well as cooking classes, at which you can tuck into your creations afterwards. I learnt to make the classic mango with sticky rice, and have been wowing my friends with my skills ever since. For those of you crazy... sorry, I meant 'dedicated' enough to workout while you're on hols, there's a great gym, which goes beyond just providing state of the art machinery to work up a sweat on. Sign up for group boot camp, body weight training and TRX, as well as a host of holistic classes including yoga. For anyone seeking to find balance, book in for a session with their crystal and reiki healing masters, or book yourself into the spa, which features seven luxurious treatment rooms using luxe elemis products.

Great for celebrations

After three days at the Villa Caron at The Residences, we had been so thoroughly spoilt and well looked after, it was a wrench to leave, and we briefly wondered if we could stage a protest sit-in to be allowed to stay forever. And although the accommodation at the Anantara Layan Phuket Resort is ideal for family holidays, you could also host an incredible family reunion, wedding (there's a chapel set into the cliffside), birthday celebration, or even vacation with friends there, thanks to the vast array of things to do (or not to do if you choose), and the fact that it is so child-friendly.

So, will I be back? I'm already planning it...

VISIT PHUKET-LAYAN.ANANTARA.COM

BY GEMMA EWHITE

DINE IN STYLE

Anantara Layan Phuket Resort boasts five dining options, each a piece of casual, laidback elegance for that five-star sand-between-your-toes vibe the island is rightly famous for



SALA LAYAN

The restaurant where we enjoyed breakfast every morning has incredible views of the private beach from the terrace and serves as the resort's international and Italian eatery. For breakfast, we tucked into freshly prepared eggs and pancakes, as well as Asian rice and noodles, and delicious mini pots of everything from yoghurt with fresh berries to salted caramel and apple. For a la carte lunch and dinner, tuck into traditional Italian dishes, meats and seafood, including Wagyu ravioli and Layan seafood soup.

DEE PLEE

As a huge fan of Thai food, dinner at Dee Plee (below) was a highlight, as I could enjoy a selection of regional specialities, including fresh salads (oh pome!o, how I love you!), curries and noodles, all in a relaxed ambience.



BREEZE

Open from 8pm til midnight, Breeze is the resort's pool and lounge bar, which boasts in-pool daybeds to stretch out on, ensuring you stay cool while you sip. You can also order from the extensive menu, and we particularly enjoyed the sliders.

IN ROOM DINING

We loved the in-room dining, not least for the sheer choice of options available. Making it even easier, our room service meals were received then beautifully laid out on the dining room table by our butlers, Susie and Om. Also, you can arrange for a chef to visit and cook up a BBQ feast in your Residence, or, if you like to do it yourself, they can provide everything you need for a poolside Barbie.

DINING BY DESIGN

Whether you're celebrating something special or simply want to treat yourselves to a bespoke dining experience, the resort's Dining by Design sees a personalised menu created by your personal chef in the chosen area of your choice and at the time of your choice. Might I suggest picking the Cliffside chapel (see below – those views!) at sundown. Plus, the table is decorated to match your occasion, and there'll be a personal butler on hand.

