



WEST COAST WONDER

If you're looking for a villa-type retreat, **Siam Residence** is a fantastic beachside option.

Tucked away at the northern end of Ipa Noi bay is a small beach known as Santi Beach. This picturesque and tranquil cove is home to Siam Residence, a resort that has kept guests happy for 25 years, long before Samui became a tourist hub.

Siam Residence is Austrian owned and under Austrian and Swiss management. So the combination of Austrian perfection, Swiss precision and Thai hospitality must be part of the secret of the resort's success. The furnishings in the one and two bedroom villas are a combination of classic European and Asian style, and the villas are generously proportioned to say the least, with the one bedroomed being 80 square metres, and the two bedrooms being a spacious 130 square metres. They're spread far enough apart in the lawned garden that residents don't feel on top of each other.

For anyone preferring tranquillity to action and crowds, Siam Residence is the perfect choice. Giant pine trees line the beach offering shade, but guests who prefer to top up their tans can either move their sun-loungers closer to the water line, or laze on one of the many loungers flanking the pool – which forms a focal point of the resort. And if simply relaxing with a book under the trees or by the pool is not enough for you, visit the glassed-in massage sala located next to the restaurant on the lawn, with views across the bay. Here, guests can enjoy one of the luxuries that Thailand is best known for – massage and spa treatments. Therapists are well trained, and there's a good selection of treatments and pampering packages available, including Thai and oil massages, manicures and pedicures, body scrubs and facials, as well as combination packages.

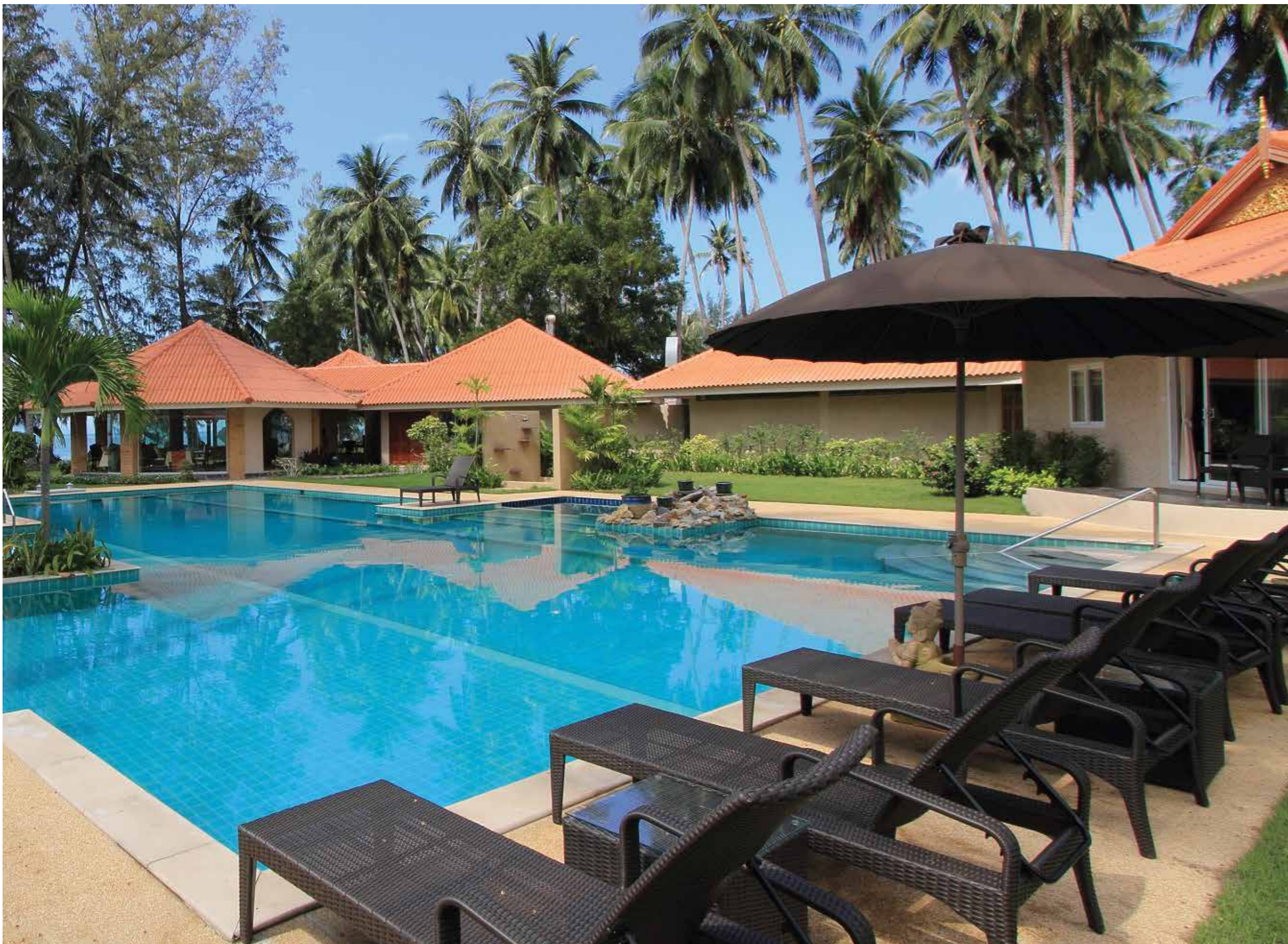


Getting back to the villas – guests really do feel as though they have a home away from home, rather than just a hotel suite. With a full-sized living room and exceptionally large bedrooms and bathrooms, it's easy to unpack your bags, and 'move in' for your holiday escape, and not have to live out of suitcases. Unwind with bubbles in the soak-in bathtubs, complete with cushioned headrests, or freshen up with in a rain shower – each villa boasts two, both indoor and outdoor. In-room luxuries make the stay more enjoyable, such as plush white bathrobes and exclusive bathroom amenities, fresh flowers and fruit in the rooms, kettles, safes and hair-dryers, minibar, telephones, music system, complete with iPod dock, as well as a good selection of TV channels. The family villas (with a choice of pool or sea views) offer two spacious bedrooms, but the one bedroom villas can also accommodate up to two children sharing with parents, in extra beds.

Siam Residence's Pavilion Restaurant welcomes outside guests to dine either inside, or on the beach. Chef Lamyai has been heading up the kitchen for an impressive 22 years. If you find yourself walking along Lipa Noi Beach and fancy a drink or nibble, pop in and give it try. It's open from 7:00 am through to 10:00 pm. Breakfasts range from a full American, to lighter options such as fruit platters, cereals, pancakes and French toast.

Chef Lamyai's speciality is seafood, and she personally shops at the local fresh market for her ingredients. Rather than keep seafood on hand in the kitchen, if a guest orders a seafood dish, she hops on her scooter and scurries off to the local market and back in ten minutes. The fish or shellfish is cooked to your liking with a variety of options including barbecued, deep-fried, curried, or stirfried with Thai-style sauces.





Those that aren't in the mood for seafood will find plenty of meat, chicken and vegetarian options too, as well as a lighter lunch menu, perfect for snacking around the pool. Non-residents who are enjoying lunch at the restaurant are welcome to enjoy the pool after lunch, and as Lipa Noi beach is the perfect spot to catch the sunset, why not make a day of it, and stay for sun-downers.

At night the restaurant puts on her evening dress, as tables are set out on the lawn and beach, candles are lit and polished silverware glistens in the moonlight. The background music and beach setting make for an ideal romantic mood.

Friendly staff make a holiday even more special, helping guests feel as though they're welcome and anticipating their every need. At Siam Residence, the staff are a close-knit group. They all speak English well, and some even speak German. With only nine villas, the setting is intimate, and guests have the option to enjoy their privacy, or interact and So if you're looking to escape the crowds of Samui's more

developed areas, and are looking to enjoy tranquility, a pristine beach, memorable sunsets, and wholesome food, then perhaps Siam Residence is just what you've been looking for.

Rosanne Turner

For reservations or further information, telephone 0 7742 0008. www.siamresidence.com.

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