



How Hip Can you Go?

Review and pictures by Jane Batchelor

Veranda Resort and Spa, near Hua Hin, is one of Thailand's hippest design resorts. However, its cutting-edge style does not attempt to out-do the luxury accommodation staples of comfort, quality and indulgence.

Veranda Resort and Spa is not just an upscale boutique hotel, it is Hua Hin's answer to the Tate Gallery, with a mix-match of Asian contemporary architecture and a splash of Western influence swirled around to create quite an unconventional effect.

The lobby's interior is a web of 21st century art, with tangled wooden nests wrapped around orange divans and quirky metal cubes that loom overhead. Entire tree trunk pillars branch out either side of the grey A-shaped entrance, and abstract paintings hang sporadically from the walls.

Red, regal thrones stand majestically in the lobby bar, adjacent to the rectangular pond, which stretches the full length of the resort. Even the pinnacle aqua feature does not escape the clutches of modern art: a curvy abstract sculpture captures the reflection of the dancing water.

White Mediterranean-style deluxe rooms overlook the pond, but for a more luxurious stay, Veranda offers hi-brow executive suites and 13 pool villas (three on the beach) with their own funky swimming pools.

The rooms' interior design is, as with everything else here, a fusion of ideas. The overtly modern living rooms, with their pastel hues, radiate a bright and breezy vibe, and French windows look out onto beach-view terraces. Here you can appreciate a particularly cultivated afternoon cream tea whilst listening to the waves lap against the shore.

The executive suite bathrooms are a play on 1950s décor with a pinch of present-day design. The gleaming white stand-alone bathtub and monstrous mirror are perfect for examining any sunburnt patches before immersing them in ice-cold water. Alternatively, you could opt for one of the two power rain showers for an invigorating wake-up call.

A visit to the five-room spa here will leave you practically melting, and with packages designed for couples, golfers and those simply on the quest for relaxation, a significant amount of your stay could be spent here.



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The steam room is one of the most powerful I have had the pleasure to detoxify in, and after a few minutes in the ginger and mint infused room I was enveloped in a white film. Over in the herb dish I noticed what appeared to be carrots.

Body treatments are quite literally food for the skin. I was given a mocha body scrub, a slow pick-me-up that felt like skaters dancing across my back and left my skin completely smooth. For those who have relaxed in the sun's glare for too long, an aloe soother body wrap could be the answer as the cooling properties will help reduce the burning sensation.

One of the most popular treatments is the smoothie banana, which softens the skin while retaining the fruit's sweet aroma. Couples can also indulge in romantic packages with the 'Romantic Dual' and the 'Duet Made for Two,' which both include a herbal bath for two.

If all the food for the skin tantalises the taste buds, there are two restaurants to gorge - stylishly - in: beachfront Raybiang Lay serves modern Thai sea cuisine; and the brasserie coffee shop offers European dishes, soon to be turned into a Mediterranean bistro.

At Raybiang Lay, the deep fried garoupa is a must-try; even if it is simply to appreciate the presentation which is, quite literally, jaw dropping. And if the fish's menacing expression doesn't bite, then the spices in the sauce should add a kick. The seafood here is different to the usual fish curry. Blends of herbs and bright colours almost make the dishes here part of the artwork.

The restaurant looks out onto the Veranda's immaculate beach where horse rides can be taken along the shore. However, the scene is more reminiscent of donkeys on Brighton beach than Black Beauty bounding along the sand. The only imperfections are the sunken foot - and hoof - prints, but even this could, I suppose, be viewed as abstract art. 🍀



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Romancing couples should look no further than the pool villas, however. With an outside bathtub (sprinkled with rose petals if so desired) and low lighting, it is any honeymooner's dream. The private swimming pool is also an exquisite way to relax with an early evening cocktail whilst gazing out at the sea; or, if you're an early riser, watch the sun rise over the silhouetted palm trees as the beach slowly creeps to life. The maisonette pool villas are a popular choice for families who could do without the worry of wondering if Junior has been capsize from his lilo in the shared guests' swimming pool.

A visit to the five-room spa here will leave you practically melting, and with packages designed for couples, golfers and those simply on the quest for relaxation, a significant amount of your stay could be spent here. The reception is minimalist with pleasant low-lighting glistening against the autumn-shade mosaic tiles. The staff of five, each who has been through four months of training at the world-class Banyan Tree Spa in Bangkok, will suggest the most suitable treatments whilst filling you with herbal tea.

Previous page: Veranda's ultra-chic Pool Bar.

Above: A deep-fried prawn pancake with sea scallops & marinated squid at Raybiang Lay.