



### network europe

The **European Young Professional Group**, a newly formed society of young business professionals in Thailand, was officially launched at V9, Sofitel Silom, Bangkok, and attracted more than 150 people from 20 different countries. The group was set up to bring together Thai and European young professionals for business networking and social events. Memberships are currently free and open to European and Thai young professionals working and living in Thailand. Social events currently welcome all young professionals of all nationalities.

For more details, contact Nick Jonsson. Tel: + 66 (0) 1 909 0522, [nick@spark.co.th](mailto:nick@spark.co.th).

### back to work

**Le Méridien Phuket Beach Resort** is back in business with a special re-opening rate starting from USD 95 ++. "It's more beautiful than ever. I'm sure that all our visitors will be delighted with our fresh new look," said Philippe Seigle, Regional General Manager. "We have supported our 700 staff throughout this closure period and are delighted to be working together again." Over the last months, the property undertook several refurbishment projects not possible in a functioning hotel, including the reception, main lobby, swimming pools and several restaurants.

For more information, visit [www.lemeridien.com](http://www.lemeridien.com).

### young at heart

Your childhood dream about being in a Robinson Crusoe-style adventure can be fulfilled at Six Senses' signature **Soneva Fushi Resort & Spa** in the Maldives. Their first Maldivian tree-house has been introduced as part of the exclusive resort's unique **Jungle Reserve**. Covering a footprint of 700 sq.-m and incorporating a palm-shaded beachfront and villa, the Crusoe ambience is everywhere. A hideout particularly fun for the kids, a footbridge elevated 2.5 metres above the ground joins the tree house to the villa. The tree house has its own toilet plus a terrace looking out through the tree tops.

Visit [www.sixsenses.com](http://www.sixsenses.com).



### brand new on the bund

Located in a historic building on the Bund, newly-opened **Laris** (pictured top left) is part of an integrated project of four unique restaurants, an exquisite fashion store, Giorgio Armani flagship store, the Evian Spa, Shanghai Gallery of Art and a music lounge.

David Laris, an internationally-renowned chef who has received critical acclaim for his cuisine at prestigious restaurants on several continents, including the Conran Group flagship Mezzo in London, says his food reflects not only his Australian/Greek roots, but also his experiences, passions and travels.

Laris features an a la carte menu as well as two dégustation options, offering a full evening's experience of outstanding, leisurely dining.

Visit [www.threeonthebund.com](http://www.threeonthebund.com).

### it's the club med, not the destination

To celebrate their 20th year anniversary in Thailand, **Club Med** recently announced a re-launch of a true pearl of **Andaman - Phuket Village** (pictured top right). The new face of Club Med includes touches of delightful interior design, an even-friendlier environment and a fun-filled blend of fine fusion foods and recreation activities. Club Med also offers an 'All-Inclusive' service in which one simply selects their preferred Club Med destination, and leaves the rest to them to manage airfare booking and a personalised activity plan.

Visit their new site at [www.clubmed.co.th](http://www.clubmed.co.th).



### klm has entered the building

KLM's Crown Lounge at Amsterdam Airport has recently been renovated. The new lounge is designed to provide more comfort, more privacy and more space - with an additional 660 m<sup>2</sup> and seating for an extra 180 passengers. Food service has also been upgraded to include breakfast, lunch and dinner snacks served during meal time. KLM's first Airbus A330-200 has also recently arrived, marking a new stage in their fleet renewal. The new aircraft feature personal video screens for all passengers and sleeper seats in World Business Class. They are also friendlier to the environment, producing less noise and consuming less fuel than their predecessors.

Visit [www.klm.com](http://www.klm.com).

### the real shangri-la

Visitors can explore the awe-inspiring frontiers of Tibet and Shangri-la in style. Banyan Tree Hotels and Resorts has added to its collection of high-end resorts a unique sanctuary in China's Yunnan province (pictured above) bordering Tibet with Banyan Tree Ringha. Group Exec. Chairman Ho Kwon Ping, was struck by the rustic charm of the Tibetan lifestyle and landscape when he visited Ringha, heralding "this unexplored region, with its majestic peaks, eco-diversity and rich culture" a dream destination only explored by a handful of travellers.

Visit [www.banyantree.com](http://www.banyantree.com).

### history repeating

La Residence Hotel & Spa, Hue's historic icon on the Perfume River has joined Accor's hotel network in Vietnam and gives the group an important presence in the country's former Imperial Capital. Le Residence is a unique mix of the old and the new, blending an original French colonial structure with Art Deco design. The hotel's history dates back to the early 1920's when it was the official residence of French governors responsible for looking after central Vietnam. After 1975, it was used as a government guesthouse and the original structure was enlarged. The most recent project involves the renovation of two existing buildings and an additional structure that connects the three into one exclusive hotel. The result is a striking 122-room boutique property with modern facilities complementing its time-capsule evocation of the French colonial era.

Visit [la-residence-hue.com](http://la-residence-hue.com).

### historic, high-tech opening

Mandarin Oriental, Tokyo (pictured top left), the exclusive MOHG's first property in Japan is completing construction in the historic Nihonbashi district's Nihonbashi Mitsui Tower, and has a direct bridge link to the stately Mitsui Honkan landmark erected in 1929. Designed by Cesar Pelli, the main tower opened in July with the grand opening following at the end of the year. The tallest building in the Tokyo Station vicinity, the tower's upper storeys are of soaring and futuristic glass, while its lower floors maintain continuity and a sense of unity with the older building. The redevelopment scheme is the first in Japan to achieve compatibility of preservation and development.

For more information, visit [www.mandarinoriental.com](http://www.mandarinoriental.com).

### a landmark decision

The Landmark Mandarin Oriental in Hong Kong has recently opened. The luxurious and contemporary hotel, located in the city's premier shopping and commercial district, will offer 113 of the largest guestrooms and suites in Hong Kong, designed by Peter Remedios, with an average size of over 540 sq. ft. Every aspect has been carefully planned for pure sensory indulgence, from the avant-garde *objets d'art* and the stunning glass-walled bathrooms to the 400 thread-count linen. The latest in-room guest entertainment includes widescreen plasma televisions in every room, and communication technology delivered via broadband. Eminent interior designer Adam Tihany is responsible for the innovative public areas and interiors, the restaurant, Amber and the ultra-hip MO Bar. Executive chef, Richard Ekkebus is set to bring a new level of sophisticated dining to Hong Kong. The Oriental Spa at The Landmark occupies 21,000 sq.-ft over two floors of the hotel.

For reservations and info, visit [www.mandarinoriental.com](http://www.mandarinoriental.com).

## quintessentially yours

At last, help is on hand for discerning local jetsetters looking for the best the world has to offer. Global private members' club and luxury concierge service **Quintessentially** was recently launched in Hong Kong. Quintessentially has been an insider secret to the rich and famous since its UK launch in 2000 by two 'socially connected' Britons. Now with offices all over the world, Quintessentially has grown dramatically into an international phenomenon, with celebrities such as Madonna, Gwyneth Paltrow and Mick Jagger finding the service rather useful. Aiming to satisfy practically any last-minute whim its members may have, from front row seats at a fashion show and spur-of-the-moment chartered yachts, to impossible dinner reservations at some of the world's finest restaurants, in Hong Kong Quintessentially can guarantee members VIP access and the best tables at some of the hottest and most desirable venues, including Volar, Dragon-i and the members-only KEE Club.

Call + 852 2540 8595 or visit [www.quintessentially.com](http://www.quintessentially.com).

## bangkok's season of culture

**Bangkok's 7th International Festival of Dance and Music** is the latest of the Thai capital's annual cultural extravaganzas that bring together hundreds of renowned international artists and entertainers. The event is being staged from 7 September to 4 October 2005 at the Thailand Cultural Centre, Bangkok. This year's highlights include Northern Ballet Theatre's *Peter Pan* (pictured bottom right) and The Moscow Stanislavsky Ballet's *Swan Lake*.

Tickets are available from Thai Ticket Master, Tel: + 66 (0) 2262 3456, or [www.thaiticketmaster.com](http://www.thaiticketmaster.com) (open 24 hours), or call + 66 (0) 2 661 6835-7 for more information, schedules and tickets.

## new zealand crosses the on-line line

A new online travel planner is set to see NZ lead the way in online destination marketing. The 'Travel Planner' on [www.newzealand.com](http://www.newzealand.com) is the first time that a National Tourism Organisation has given its web users so much control over how to plan what to see and where to go.

As George Hickton, Tourism New Zealand Chief Executive explains, "Travel planning tools have been the most commonly requested feature on our site. Our potential visitors say they want to be able to plan, to collect their information, and to look at where all that fits on a map. We have given them all that and a level of detail that we think they will be delighted with."

The smart planner will let users zoom down to street level details of a map of New Zealand, pick up attractions, accommodation or transport that may appeal to them and drop into what is effectively a shopping basket, or place them in a calendar.

Visit [www.newzealand.com](http://www.newzealand.com).

## culture stays

The new **Hôtel de la Paix** (pictured below) in Siem Reap, Cambodia is a unique combination of history, design, lifestyle and people, offering guests the opportunity to meet, experience, taste and enjoy the true essence of Cambodia. Created by internationally acclaimed landscape and interior designer Bill Bensley, the chic establishment must be the most stylish hotel in the area. Set around an inner courtyard with lush gardens and water features, its art deco-inspired design is complemented by strong Khmer influences that look to the future while respecting the past. Connect with Cambodia's arts, culture and people through exclusive community-based activities - all within the shadows of the Temples of Angkor Wat - the spiritual soul and cultural heart of a proud nation. And watch out for the flood-on-demand lobby - surely a world first.

Visit [www.hoteldelapaixangkor.com](http://www.hoteldelapaixangkor.com).

## the japanese connection

**Singapore Airlines** has launched six-times weekly direct flights between Bangkok and Tokyo using Boeing 777-200s. The non-stop flight will depart Bangkok at 11 pm and arrive in Tokyo at 6.55 am the following day. Depart Tokyo at 9.25 am and arrive Bangkok at 1.35 am. The airline also operates a daily flight from Bangkok to Osaka.

Visit [www.singaporeair.com](http://www.singaporeair.com).

