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THAI BREAK

Ace service, perfectly placed – this new beachfront resort in Khao Lak is set to be a winner

PHOTOGRAPHY: JASON MICHAEL LANG WRITER: SARA HENRICHS

However widely we travel, we'll never tire of retiring to a Thai island. So when we heard about the opening of Casa de La Flora, a striking, modern resort on the Andaman Sea, we couldn't resist. Located in Khao Lak, just an hour's drive from Phuket, Casa de La Flora's 35 crisp, cube-shaped bungalows bring a contemporary edge to the tropical, palm-fringed setting. The brainchild of businessman Sompong Dowpiset, who enlisted the help of leading Thai practice VaSLab Architecture and interior experts Anon Pairoi Design Studio, the new retreat manages to be both low rise and high profile.

Its glass-fronted villas have clean, minimalist interiors featuring concrete surfaces, natural stone walls and wooden floors. Ten give directly on to the beach, most have sea views, and all come with small private pools, 24-hour butler service and the latest in-room entertainment. Eco-friendly credentials come in the form of an ozone (low-chemical) purification system for the swimming pools, waste-water and rainwater recycling, and solar panels.

La Aranya beach restaurant, headed by chef Jaiphak Na Chiang Mai, serves Thai-inspired dishes such as carpaccio of beef served with apple and organic greens, and fried rice with Thai spices, while the poolside bar is the perfect place to sample a Casa Sparkling, the house cocktail – brandy, sparkling wine and cinnamon served in a champagne flute rimmed with sugarcane.

On the in-house spa menu you'll find sauna sessions and treatments such as the Parisian Top to Toe, a soothing back, neck and scalp massage combined with a Made-to-Measure facial and pressure-point foot and leg massage. Other activities on offer include cycling, elephant rides, hikes to nearby waterfalls, monkey spotting in Khao Lak-Lam Ru National Park, and hopping on a boat to James Bond Island. ★

67/213 Moo 5, Khuk-Khak, Takuapa, Phang Nga, Thailand, www.designhotels.com; www.casadeloflora.com. Rates: from THB23,596 (\$762)

