

# INTERNATIONAL Traveller

FOR MODERN EXPLORERS

## The *VERY BEST* of **BRITAIN**

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THE *ISLANDS*, THE *BEACHES*

**LUXE  
LODGINGS**  
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TO *CAMBODIA*  
TO *NZ* TO  
*ABU DHABI*

**HANG LOOSE**  
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EVOLUTION

ISSUE 22



Mar / Apr 2016 AUST \$9.95 INC GST

**THE TEXAN  
CAPITAL OF COOL**

**AFRICA IN LIVING COLOUR**

**BORDEAUX GOES FROM  
FRUMPY TO FUNKY**



# THE LUXURY

A photograph of a hotel interior. The background is a wall made of large, rectangular stone tiles. Several horizontal wooden shelves are mounted on the wall, each holding a small potted plant with trailing green leaves. In the foreground, there is a plush, light-colored velvet armchair with a matching cushion. To the right of the chair is a dark, ornate wooden cabinet or side table with drawers and a decorative top. On the cabinet, there are some small decorative items, including a bowl of fruit. The floor is made of dark, square tiles. The lighting is warm and focused, creating a cozy and luxurious atmosphere.

*Taking design inspiration from a traditional Cambodian village,  
a new hotel raises the bar for boutique stays in Siem Reap.*

Words **MEGAN ARKINSTALL**

The entrance to Phum  
Baitang's Spa Temple,  
which is inspired by the  
nearby Temples of Angkor.



*Journeys*

# OF SIMPLICITY







**CLOCKWISE FROM THIS IMAGE:** Relax by the hotel's infinity pool with a fresh juice served from a tuk-tuk. The guest villas are understated and elegant in natural tones. Lanterns light the way around the tropical property.

**OPPOSITE:** With the use of wood and stone, the hotel feels rustic, just like a traditional Cambodian village.







**M**ost travellers head to Siem Reap to see one thing: Cambodia's most important archaeological site, the magnificent temples of Angkor. But once you've explored the awe-inspiring jungle-swallowed ruins of Ta Prohm, cycled out to lesser-known temples such as Banteay Samré, and watched the sun set behind Angkor Wat, chances are you'll be tired of the crowds and backpackers to boot.

That's where luxury hotel group Zannier comes in with its second Cambodian property, the recently opened Phum Baitang. Designed by Paris-based architects AW<sup>2</sup>, the people behind the über plush Six Senses Con Dao, Phum Baitang is, dare we say it, one of the city's most exciting luxury hotels since the legendary Raffles Grand Hotel d'Angkor.

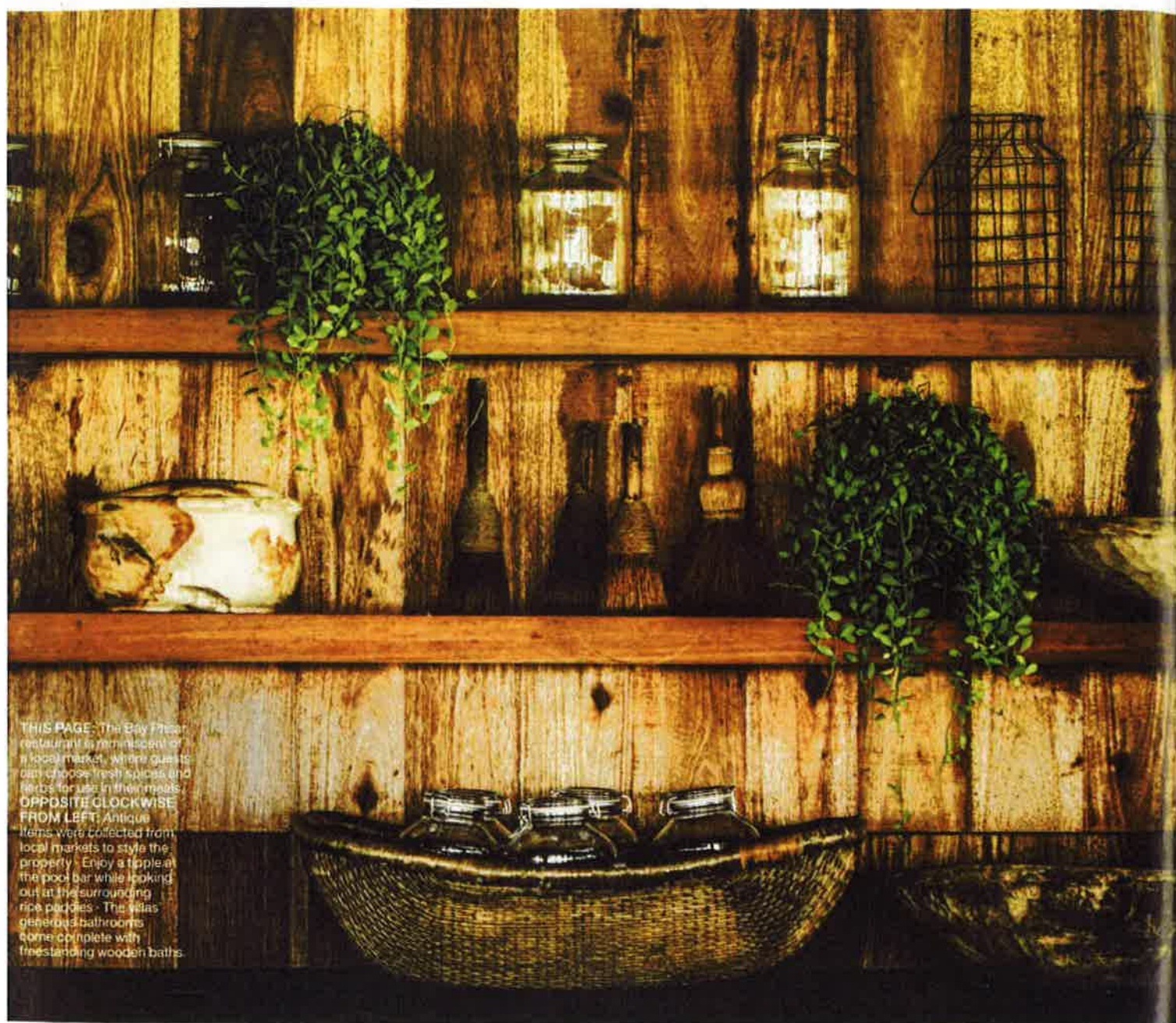
Despite being just 10 minutes down the road from the town centre, this simply luxurious (and luxuriously simple) resort is a complete escape from the city's hustle and bustle. A member of Design Hotels, the property is far from cookie-cutter, built on the principles of a traditional Khmer village, promising to take guests on a 'visceral experience that embodies all the senses'.

Its name, Phum Baitang, means Green Village in the Khmer language, which is apt for a place set among eight hectares of terraced rice paddies, swaying lemongrass plantations and lush gardens. Comprised of straw-thatched structures made with local stone and wood, including an ancient 100-year-old farmhouse that has been converted into a cigar and cocktail lounge furnished with rattan wing chairs and oriental carpets, the property is evocative of Cambodia's golden days.

There are 45 guest villas in all, which are designed as traditional stand-alone pavilions on stilts to protect from floods and allow for optimum ventilation in the oft times sweltering heat. Each is blessed with ample space: the 80 square-metre Terrace Villas boast large decks and tropical gardens whereas the 130 square-metre Pool Villas come complete with a private plunge pool and lounge pavilion. Inside each of the villas, the aesthetic is pared back, with a natural colour palette and handmade furniture throughout, including carved-wood headboards and lime-finished freestanding wooden baths in the bathrooms, all of which is blended seamlessly with antiques picked from local markets. >>



# Journeys



**THIS PAGE:** The Bay Phsar restaurant is reminiscent of a local market, where guests can choose fresh spices and herbs for use in their meals. **OPPOSITE CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT:** Antique items were collected from local markets to style the property. Enjoy a tipple at the pool bar while looking out at the surrounding rice paddies. The villas generated bathrooms come complete with freestanding wooden baths.

Guests who don't have a private pool can relax by the 50-metre outdoor infinity pool, where a cute traditional tuk-tuk does drink rounds every afternoon.

The hotel's signature restaurant, Bay Phsar, is a unique proposition, said to be 'an interactive display of culinary showmanship'. Set up like a traditional street market, guests choose a starter and dessert from the menu, while the main course is made-to-order using fresh ingredients and spices picked by the guests themselves. Dishes are often accompanied by rice grown in the surrounding paddy fields, which double as a picturesque backdrop to the restaurant. There is also another elegant restaurant, Hang Bay, which serves a fusion of cuisines including local fare such as Fish Amok, French-inspired foie gras terrine, and even an Australian Angus wagyu beef.

Carved in stone, the tranquil spa's design reflects the craftsmanship of the temples of Angkor. Its treatment menu specialises in traditional Cambodian techniques, such as The Angkor Temples Ritual, which aims to soothe tired muscles. Using natural products, the treatment is derived from a ritual used by rice farmers, who used hand-crushed spice as a remedy to relieve their aches and pains after a long day's work tending the rice paddies. (Or in the case of guests, from temple-hopping all day long.)

Inspired by da Vinci's adage, 'simplicity is the ultimate sophistication', owner Arnaud Zannier aims to ensure that his hotels offer a way of living that is 'free of pretention'. Phum Baitang is certainly the perfect balance of sophistication and humility; an oasis of colonial charm and tropical calm mere minutes from a buzzing and exciting city. ✈



