DESTINATION ✶ THAILAND

EVERYTHING OLD IS NEW AGAIN
In a scheme to resuscitate soulful pockets of Bangkok’s old town precincts, shop house facades built a century ago are slowly restored to their architectural origins. However, behind this historic camouflaging, a contemporary creative scene expresses itself in the form of art galleries, quirky inns and seriously spunky restaurants, bars and cafes. Head to the port area southwest of Wat Pho temple and explore the soi (laneways) that connect Maha Rat Road to the Chao Phraya’s edge. Check out Elenin Coffee or Make Me Mango Cafe, but don’t miss Supanigga Eating Room for sunset cocktails and addictive smoking. A little further south, stroll along Song Wat Road for a quick stop for sustenance at Pieces Cafe & Bed. Situated at Chinatown’s southern eastern corner, on Nana, just off Maitri Chit Road, a colourful assortment of “entertainment” awaits – check out 32 Bar and Gallery. Teens of Thailand, Nahim Cafe x Handcraft, Tep Bar and Bar-Hao.

SHOUT TO THE TOP
A rooftop bar’s novelty fades quickly when out of tune with its audience – fortunately Bangkok’s impressive ensemble are mostly on key. Perched high above the operatic staging of snaking headlight Morse code and lantern-lit island connections there’s an achingly cool relief system in place for the capital’s balmy eyes. Stars in your eyes? Be careful not to recreate the movie Hangover by sucking down too many frozen pop-tails at Sky Bar, one of the world’s loftiest drinking establishments. Seeking something tall, dark and handsome? Peruse two sophisticated floors at The Speakeasy – think chocolate leather, wood paneling, cigar and martini made with your choice of 20 gins. Love the high life? Attitude, the glamorous cherry topping AVANI Riverside Hotel, offers dreamy drinks and dining, Bond-film worthy decor, views to swoon over and a sexy as all get-out infinity pool. Talk about floating on air.

Putting a spin on the rooftop theme, The Commons offers groovin’ cool spots and other food-centric events in their Top Yard bar, handsome Brewski pours more than 100 craft beers and cider; and Zense offers a chic retreat in shopping central – the perfect end to a shaken and stirred fashion frenzy.

EAT, SLEEP, RAVE, REPEAT
In a town where people talk about food almost constantly, it won’t come as a surprise that even hotel offerings are top-notch and Anantara’s Siam Bangkok Hotel is no exception. Sure, the lush breakfast buffet is as long and abundant as Sukhumvit Road, champagne flows in the lobby like the Mekong in rainy season and the base Biscotti rates as the city’s top Italian restaurant – but the hotel’s continued dedication to the wider culinary world is equally impressive. The annual World Gourmet Festival is hosted here, its collection of leading international chefs and winemakers connecting people and cultures in a regal demonstration of Thai hospitality. The best part is that you can walk to your room, fully immersing yourself in the experience. But don’t venture outside without your complimentary mobile phone – you will need to book restaurant, hose Uber or map your walk to the hipsterish Talad Neon night market for highly Instagrammable edibles.

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