



MOST
OUTSTANDING
CITY SPA



THE SIAM BANGKOK, THAILAND

IN BRIEF Switch off in a pampering urban slicker

THE LOWDOWN In a city of mega hotels, this clever boutique get-up is a revelation. Owned by a Thai-American former rock star with impeccable taste, The Siam is Asia's ultimate urban hideaway and the perfect stopover if you're heading further east. Reached by a 20-minute private speedboat ride, the blissfully hushed Opium spa is a thrill to walk into. The therapists here deliver a massage that's smooth and sweet, firm and steady, or as zingingly tough as you can take. Ask for Panitta Kaljak, who really understands your body and can melt away all the knots. Only chemical-free Sodashi products are used, and there's a full-size Muay Thai boxing ring in the gym. Contemplate the twinkling lights as dusk falls, while sipping a zesty lime cocktail in the riverside Bathers Bar. Opt for a dinner of roast duck red curry or chargrilled river prawns at the Chon Thai restaurant, set in a traditional teak house. Bill Bensley's contemporary interior, inspired by the Deco style popular during King Rama V's reign, has been pepped up with wood and stone, leather and glass. The owner's antiques are scattered about the place: vintage travel posters, Ming and Tang ceramics, the brass horns of old gramophones, a stuffed crocodile. When you can stay awake no longer, slide between the zillion-thread-count sheets in your suite (try and bag a pool villa – they are the only ones in the capital). The serenity of the hotel's riverside setting, near the Grand Palace in the Dusit area, is a big part of its soothing charm. You'll be reluctant to pack up and push on to your final destination.

INSIDER TIP Book a facial with the excellent Surtharat Poolsawat, who is a favourite with the locals.

BOOK IT Cleveland Collection (+44 20 3111 0805; www.clevelandcollection.co.uk) offers two nights from £1,235 per person, including breakfast, flights and transfers.