

WINE & DINE ■ PRAPAI KRAISORNKOVIT

Epicurean weekend in Samui

One of Thailand's most famous tropical islands, Koh Samui today is a cosmopolitan melting pot — a destination attracting both budget travellers and the rich and famous. Packed into 247 square kilometres, Thailand's third largest island houses a cornucopia of accommodations from hotels and resorts to spa destinations. Lately, many of the big name 5-star brands have already etched their mark on the island.

Introduced to Samui recently by Fin (Fabulous is needed), Thailand's exclusive lifestyle company, is the "Fabulous Dine & Wine Weekend", a three-day programme exclusively crafted posh experience on Samui with an emphasis on luxury, fine food and great wines.

"This weekend programme aims to promote to this famous island resort an all-in-one stylish lifestyle," said Benjawan Wisootsat, managing director of Fin. "The programme is designed for a small group of people who want to fully enjoy their weekend without the inconvenience of looking for things to do or find places to dine and wine. We individualised the experience by tailor-making every agenda for them.

"For example, we work with W Retreat on accommodation and W and Conrad on our two wine dinners," she said. "Importance is especially paid to the menus on which we work directly with the chefs. We sample the cuisine and select only the top wines to perfectly



Above:
A risotto canape created by chef Reuben of YL Residence.

Left:
The stylish Namu at W Samui where the exclusive 'Asia Tomorrow' wine dinner will take place.

match the courses." Because Fin is also a local distributor of many great boutique wines from around the world, Benjawan has extensive experience when it comes to pairing food and wines. During the meal, she and her associate, Jan Ganser, will personally entertain guests and provide them with useful information on the wines and how to pair them with fine food.

The Fin Fabulous Dine & Wine Weekend will have its maiden voyage to Samui on the weekend of October 7-9 and the trip is limited to five couples.

"We want to make it small and private so we can provide personalised care as I and Jan will accompany the group during the three days in Samui," said Benjawan.

"Personalised luxury lifestyle holidaying is very trendy now, especially for a small group of people," said Jan Ganser. "The small group will allow everyone to get to know each other. For our programme, guests can enjoy the fine food and wines, the unique high tea and spa

treatment we have carefully tailor-made for them. You don't need to be a wine connoisseur to enjoy the trip; it's the pleasure of the company that's important."

"We are very happy to work with Fin," said Nicholas Downing, general manager of W Samui. "W Samui is refreshing. We offer a sexy-chic retreat style that is destined to feature as a top pick especially for leisure travellers seeking an exotic blend of entertainment, fashion, music and culture.

"Food is big here and we offer many choices — the Kitchen Table which serves food from the heart, including freshly baked treats, gourmet pizzas and inspirational buffets, and our signature restaurant, Namu which is already the talk of the island," said the GM.

The three-day Fabulous Dine & Wine Weekend features two nights stay in a Pool Villa at W Retreat Samui where guests will experience two interactive breakfasts at chef Matthew Woolford's Kitchen Table, a sunset pre-dinner

'Fin Fabulous Dine & Wine Weekend' in Samui is from October 7-9 and is limited to five couples. An all-inclusive package price per couple is 58,000 baht including Bangkok-Samui-Bangkok round trip tickets for two and limousine service on Koh Samui. Flight departs Bangkok Friday afternoon and returns on Sunday afternoon. For reservations, call 02-653-2009, 085-004-684 or email benjawan@fin-event.com or janganser@fin-wine.

Benjawan Wisootsat (2nd left), managing director of Fin, with, from left, Christian Humbert, director of sales & marketing of W Samui; Nicholas Downing, general manager of W Samui; and Jan Ganser.



The beautiful YL Private Residence.

cocktail at the Sip Bar, a unique "Asia Tomorrow" wine dinner at Namu, plus a 90-minute signature treatment at W's Away Spa.

"Venturing outside, we will take the group to the exclusive YL Private Residence for a 'high tea by the sea' that will be served along with an array of modern canapes created by resident chef Reuben of YL Residence," said Benjawan.

YL Private Residence is set on five hectares of tropical gardens with 450 metres of beautiful Nattien Beach waterfront on the southern coast of Samui. Designed by renowned architect Martin Palleros, it is the largest and the most distinguished beachside villa in Thailand

and is available for reservation. The residence is perfect for weddings, corporate events and socials of all shapes and sizes.

After afternoon tea by the sea, the group will proceed to the Conrad Samui's Glow Lounge for a sunset aperitif, followed by another gourmet wine dinner at the stylish Jahn restaurant.

"Today, Samui is an international destination, Thailand's world-famous island resort," said Benjawan. "So, we hope that this value-for-money programme will attract more local people to the island. This is a great opportunity for them to enjoy and experience the many beautiful luxury lifestyle resources Samui has to offer."

'Asia Tomorrow' wine dinner



Toro tuna tartare.

Among the highlights of the Fabulous Dine & Wine Weekend is a wine dinner at the stylish Namu. The gourmet menu is created by the talented Matthew Woolford, W Samui's director of cuisine & beverage.

"Namu is more than a Japanese restaurant," said chef Matthew. "It offers a sensationally sensual Japanese dining experience where the style is described as being 'Asia Tomorrow'. Reinventing itself each day depending on what the Gulf of Thailand yields, Namu is both sophisticated and immensely stylish."

Matthew Woolford's specially-designed "Asia Tomorrow" menu paired with fine wines are:

■ Toro tuna tartare feta cheese, capers and shiso
Champagne Rose Extra Brut 1er Cru AOC, Gonet-Medeville from France

■ South Australian hamachi sashimi

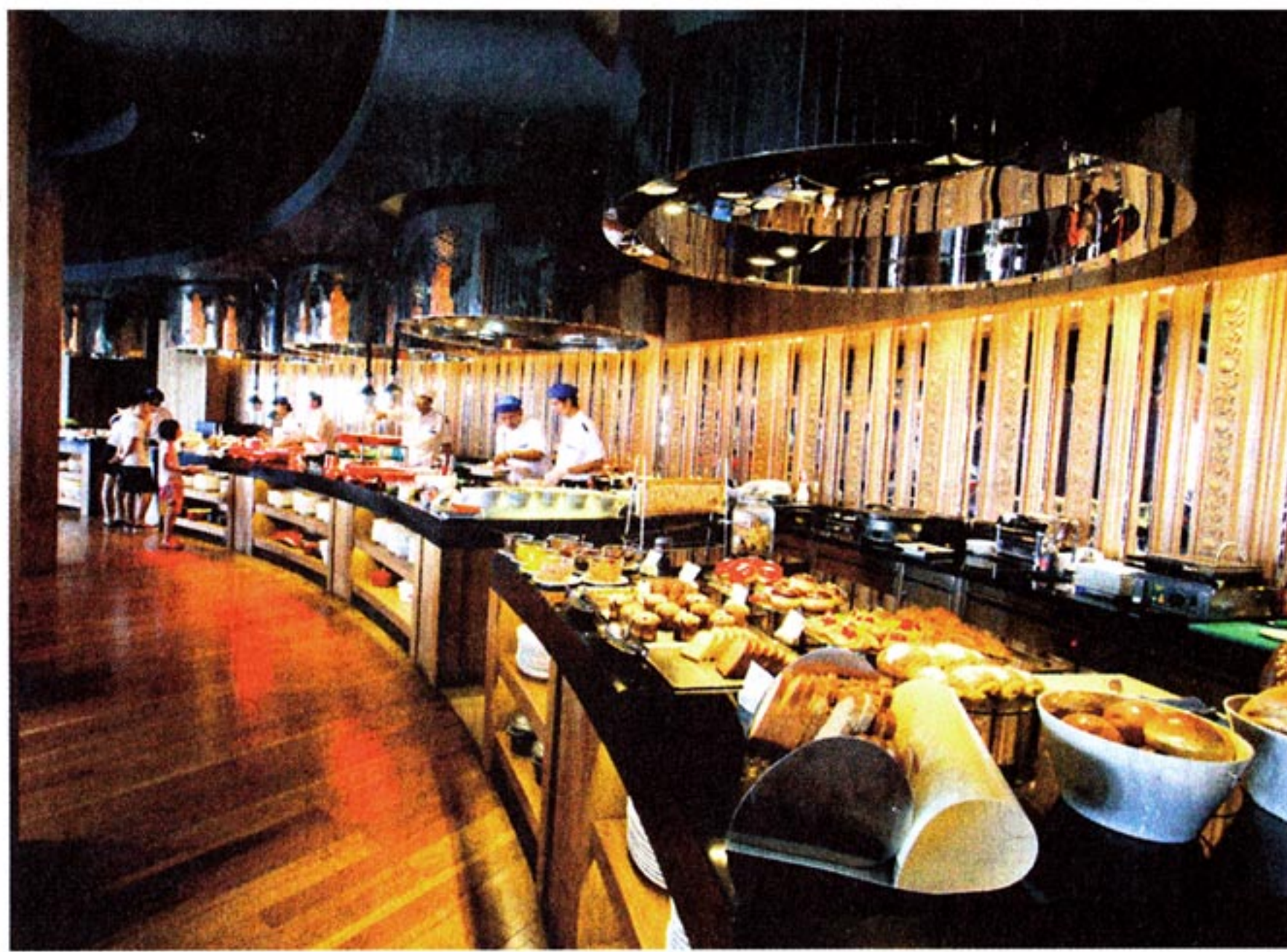
with leeks, chilli and mint
2010 Viognier, Azienda Madonna del Latte Orvieto from Umbria, Italy

■ Crisp foie gras katafi mustard miso emulsion
1598 Furst Wallerstein Edition Privee

■ 9+ Blackmore sirloin in the style of teriyaki, braised wagyu cheek
2008 Sucano Cabernet Franc, Azienda Madonna Del Latte Orvieto, Umbria, Italy

■ Chii Gye of smoked lamb shank and tendons, daikon, truffle and scallop
2009 Reliefs Domaine Le Roc Des Anges Cotes du Roussillon Villages AOC, France (Robert Parker: 92 points)

■ Rose water marinated strawberries, torched sabayon, almond ice cream
2009 Maury Op Nord, Domaine les Terres de Fagayra, Roussillon, France (Robert Parker: 92 points)



The Kitchen Table is famous for its sumptuous interactive breakfast.