

There's no Place Like 'Home' When You're Staying at Sri Panwa, Phuket

By Janice Nieder

Feeling quite
omnipotent as I
look down from
my private villa

The minute I stepped out on my private deck, it became crystal clear how Sri Panwa scored, "Hotel with the Best View in the World"- by Beach Tomato - The Best Beach Property Awards (UK). If you've always dreamed of a secluded island retreat, but unlike Richard Branson, you can't afford to buy a private island, here are a few reasons why Sri Panwa will fill in quite nicely:

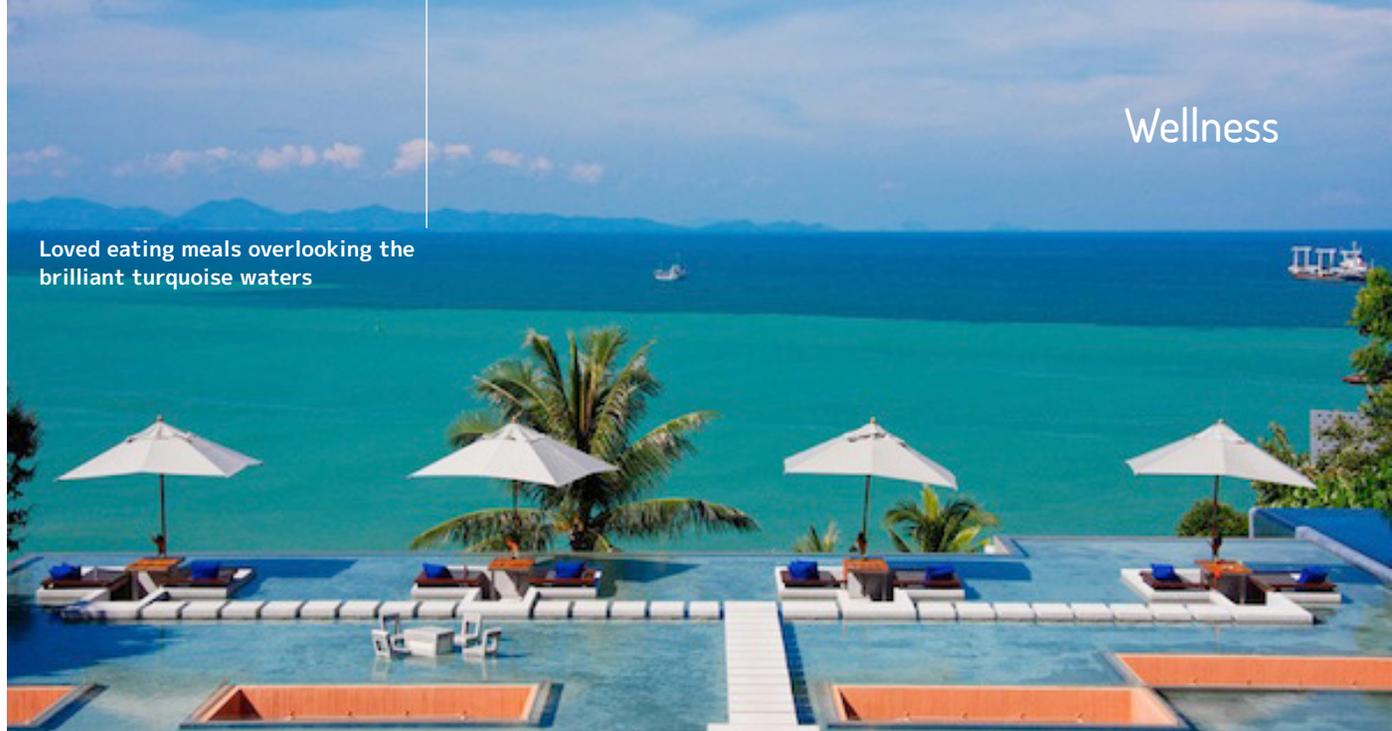
1. You just can't take a bad picture here

Located in the most South-Eastern tip of Phuket (a large island in the Andaman Sea- roughly an hour's flight from Bangkok), Sri Panwa is perched high above Cape Panwa, surrounded by a 40-acre rainforest. It doesn't get much more private than this.

2. Warning: The private villas will spoil you forever

The 52 luxe villas offer breathtaking views from your comfy bed, oversized jet-stream Jacuzzi bath, the kitchen...well, just about everywhere except from the toilet! The two separate sides, one for living/dining and the other for sleeping, felt very homey with minimalist, handcrafted décor. Out back is your own private infinity swimming pool (perfect for a midnight skinny-dip under the stars) rain shower and sunset pavilion with a comfy sofa bed. Settle in to enjoy the background music from the state-of-the-art entertainment system (the owner's son has incredible taste in music and put

Loved eating meals overlooking the brilliant turquoise waters



together some fab, eclectic mixed tapes) while watching the sunset. Other hospitable touches include (all complimentary) high-speed wireless Internet access, mini-bar stocked with beer, soda, snacks, and a selection fresh fruits, a personal espresso machine with a variety of exotic teas and coffees and even a freezer full of fruit popsicles.

3. Fabulous Food & Drink

There's no better way to start the day than with a full buffet brekkie at the outdoor BABA Poolclub, which sprawls out over 5,000 square meters, featuring a 25-meter infinity-edge lap pool. Other Baba delights include the Baba Pool Bar, BaBaQ, Baba Cooking School, and the Baba88 Disco, which has a great rep for their changing roster of international DJs. For breakfast, you can check off your faves from the ala carte menu (loved the Eggs Benedict

with Parma ham and bok choy) then take a stroll down the buffet line for assorted fresh juices, tropical fruit, cereal, pastries, and at least four different curries. I was addicted to my morning crab in green curry over rice noodles-yum!

Take a short walk down the steep hill (or chauffeur driven tuk-tuks, like golf carts, are readily available to scoot you around) to enjoy a tasty Thai dinner at Baba Soul Food, or head up the hill (burns as many calories as about 20 minutes on the Stairmaster) in time for panoramic sunset views while sipping cocktails at the Baba Nest.

4. Indulgent pampering awaits at the Cool Spa

Although I gave serious thought to working off some of my breakfast with a workout at the fitness center, a game of tennis, or at the very least

a yoga class, I opted instead to go for some indulgent pampering. Great choice! I was greeted by my lovely therapist, Lee, who handed me a cup of chrysanthemum tea, had me do a sniff test to choose from six fragrant massage oils, before leading me to my private room via gorgeous lily pad ponds, and Zen sounding waterfalls, where for the next 90 minutes I gratefully succumbed to Lee's intuitive hands of velvet/steel.

Next time, I'm going all out for the decadent sounding Moët & Chandon treatment that invites you to soak in a rose petal and champagne bubble bath while drinking a bottle of Moët.

For more info go to:

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Trying to decide if I like the view best during the day