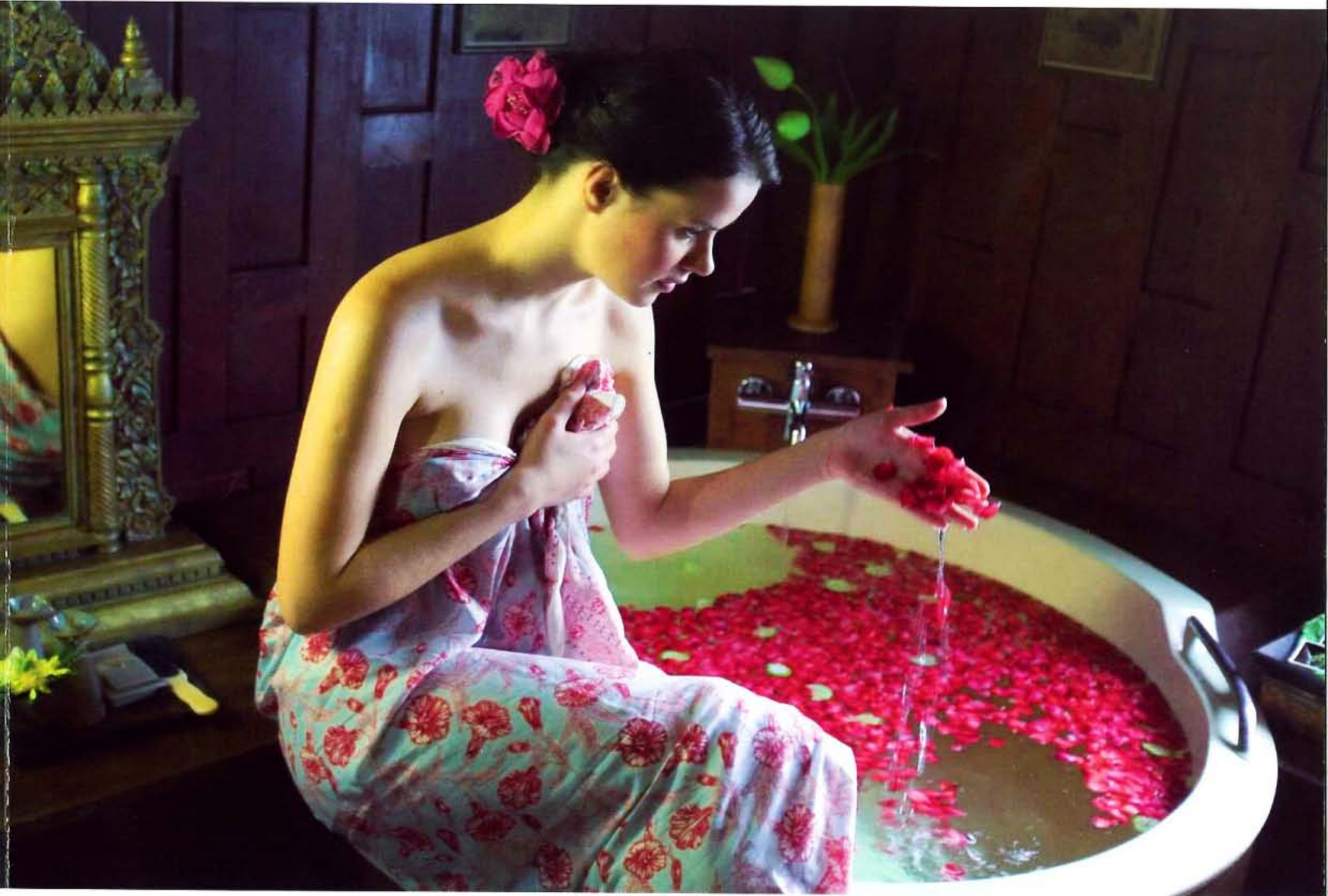


LOOKEAST

magazine

THAILAND'S LEADING TRAVEL MAGAZINE SINCE 1971.

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■ New hotels to open in Phuket over the next 3 years

PHUKET: Development of new Phuket hotel properties remains strong despite ongoing political issues in the country and the international financial downturn. Thirty new hotels are at various stages of development with over 4,918 rooms due to hit the supply side over the next three years through 2011, according to market research conducted by leading Thailand hospitality consulting firm, C9 Hotelworks.



Currently on the island there are nearly 40,000 rooms in registered tourism establishments, ranging from guest houses up through to branded hotels with approximately 10,000 of these, or 25% of total supply, being international star rated. Adding in the new inventory there will be an increase by 50% of the existing international standard units, with 47% being upscale and luxury hotels, 41% midscale, 9% budget/economy and 3%

extended stay (villas/condos). 2009 is set to see the largest surge in supply with 38% or 1,850 new rooms scheduled to open.

"Significant trends emerging include a greater number of Thai investment entities developing new hotels at the back of both publicly listed firms and private individuals," said C9 Hotelworks managing director Bill Barnett.

"Much of this can be attributed to the domestic liquidity and greater availability of debt. Branding of hotels is also on the rise with 27 of the 30 hotels operated by international, regional and domestic chains. Thailand based brands such as Anantara and Centara are growing at a rapid pace and regional chains such as Langham are now expanding into the country."

"The hotel market in Phuket is seeing a strong shift of new properties at the northern end of the island in particularly Mai Khao and now even over the bridge into Phang Nga," he added. "The east coast and Phang Nga bay are set to define a new era of luxury properties at the back of offerings which include The Yamu - designed by the design dream team Philippe Starck/Jean Michel Gathy, Jumeriah Private Island and Taj Exotica."

There remains, Barnett said, growing concern on possible oversupply issues facing the island in the coming years and what is currently a sleeping giant, in terms of supply growth, is the conversion of exclusive villas and condos, in the non-traditional accommodation segment, becoming a direct competitor to the mainstream hotel market.

C9 Hotelworks is an internationally recognized consulting firm with extensive experience in the Asian region.

■ Astudo launches Away Maerim in Chiang Mai

CHIANG MAI: Astudo Hotel & Resort Management's portfolio has been expanding rapidly across Thailand over the last two years. After successfully launching an increasing number of resort properties under its X2, Away and Le Bayburi brands, Astudo opens its latest development: Away Maerim, Chiang Mai.



The 25-rai (40,000sqm) Away Maerim, Chiang Mai is located in the tranquil Mae Rim Valley. The property provides the finest relaxation, a spa and excellent food and beverages. Understated rooms in huge sub-tropical surroundings offer lovely views over the surrounding mountains and a sense of calmness. The resort offers a combination of seven different types of accommodation with a total of 42 rooms. Standard room facilities include individually controlled air conditioning, a mini bar, a personal safe and hairdryer, tea and coffee making facilities, DVD and CD player, and satellite TV.

The resort had a grand opening last Dec. 12. An amazing "Buy 1 Night, Get 1 Night Free" is available from now until the end of January.

■ Amari Orchid Pattaya gets official 5-star status

PATTAYA: Amari Orchid Resort & Tower was recently awarded five-star category status, in accordance with the Thailand Tourism Standard 2008, by the Thailand Hotel Standard Foundation.

"We have worked very hard to ensure we met and exceed guest expectations time and again. Teamwork and the exceptional standards of our staff have played a major role in obtaining 5-star status in such a short space of time, coupled with our outstanding facilities and services," says Dominik Stamm, general manager of the resort. "Thanks to the excellence maintained by the resort's dedicated team, the much-deserved five-star status has been officially awarded."

Located on Pattaya Beach Road, Amari Orchid Resort & Tower boasts superb facilities such as the luxurious Sivara Spa & Sivara Salon, the executive Horizon Club floors' experience, fine wining and dining, and a new level of personalized service and innovation in exclusive accommodation.

