

PALATIAL PHUKET Resorts

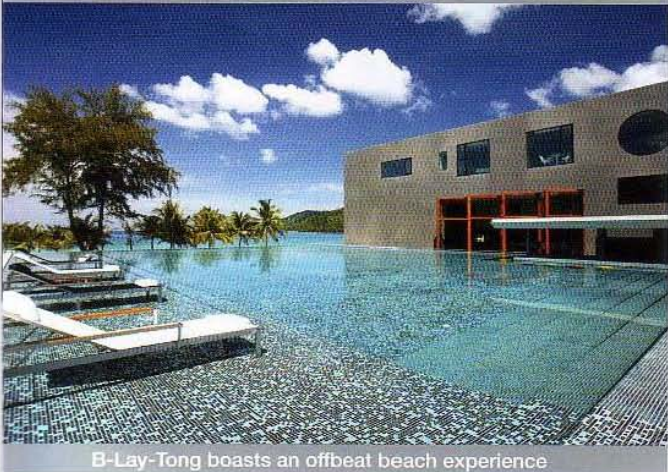
Private residences and independent resorts pepper Phuket island with travel destinations for all tastes, reports Paul Hicks



Andara's oceanscape of the Andaman Sea



The Dima Suite at Paresa



B-Lay-Tong boasts an offbeat beach experience

Paresa is a brand new independently owned resort located along a quiet stretch of Kamala Bay, an area with relatively few resorts but where many international jetsetters have built or acquired exclusive dream homes, earning it the nickname "millionaire's row".

The resort is an ultra chic sanctuary, which cocoons guests in an opulent contemporary Asian hideaway which draws its design inspiration from southern Thai influences. The 49 guest villas have been designed to wow – some featuring massive outdoor plunge pools on wooden decks, others perched dramatically on the cliffs with stunning vistas below.

The site is unusually steep which means you don't get the expansive feel of some resorts, but every villa has its own stunning vantage point and million dollar views. Phuket's main town of Patong is not so very far away,

but the chances are you won't be wanting to go out too much. One reason is the great dining as you overlook the ocean crashing on the rocks below at either Talung Thai or Diavolo, the signature Italian restaurant. Or for a very special signature dining experience, sit in one of the private "islands" of the fibre optic lit infinity pool where the light patterns mimic the night sky above.



Dinner at Talung's

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Quirky newcomer B-Lay-Tong offers an upscale resort experience close to Phuket's main shopping and nightlife district of Patong. Those who prefer a secluded island experience away from the hordes tend to shun Patong, but for those who want a stylish resort experience which is nonetheless not too far from the action will find B-Lay-Tong a great and inexpensive option. The resort brings a touch of urban chic to Phuket, with sleek minimal design, a large infinity pool which forms the centrepiece of the resort, and an optimistically huge restaurant with great local and international fare.

PHOTOS CLOCKWISE FROM RIGHT COURTESY PARESA, B LAY TONG, COURTESY PARESA, COURTESY ANDARA