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**Ready for Service**

Thai-style lobster thermidor and red rice at Chef's Table by Khao. Left: The lobby at the Avani Riverside Bangkok Hotel.

01 BANGKOK

Asia's "City of Angels" remains a feast for the senses, with head-turning architecture, watering holes of all kinds, and a profusion of new arrivals to its high-flying restaurant scene. BY CHAMI JOTISALIKORN

SLEEP

With the opening of the Park Hyatt Bangkok and a 170-room Waldorf Astoria delayed until early 2017, it's been a quiet year for luxe hotel openings in the Thai capital. But visitors looking for a new place to bed down might want to consider checking in to the **Avani Riverside Bangkok Hotel** (66-2/431-9100; minorhotels.com; doubles from US\$84), where sweeping views of the Chao Phraya beckon from the lobby all the way to the rooftop terrace, lounge, and infinity pool. Bathtubs inside the Junior suites offer another place to soak it all in.

EAT

Renowned Thai chef Vichit Mukura, formerly of the Mandarin Oriental Bangkok, has created **Chef's Table by Khao** (66/98-829-8878; khaogroup.com), which seats up to 12 diners in a private room in the same premises as Japanese restaurant Yuutaro on Sukhumvit Soi 51. The cuisine is modern Thai, made with freshly imported ingredients from Japan and Europe combined with premium local produce, such as red jasmine rice grown and harvested from the chef's own paddy field in Chonburi. Patrons

can choose from sumptuous feasts of six, eight, or 10 courses, and there is no fixed menu so every meal is guaranteed to be a singular culinary experience. A full-scale restaurant is set to open next year.

Opened in August, the hottest fine dining venue of the moment is **Morimoto Bangkok** (66-2/060-9099; morimotobangkok.com), the first Southeast Asian outlet by celebrity chef Masaharu Morimoto. Here, imaginative Japanese fusion food is served in a sleek, timber-rich setting at the city's most stylish dining address, the MahaNakhon Cube, part of a larger complex designed by former OMA partner Ole Scheeren.

Also located in the Cube is the fine contemporary Chinese restaurant **M Krub** (66-2/019-8105; no website) by Hong Kong-born chef Man Wai Yin, already known for the finest lava buns and dim sum at his other restaurants in



Avani Riverside Bangkok Hotel

By Elizabeth Wood

Minor Hotels has opened its first purpose-designed Avani hotel in Bangkok's Thonburi district. Set behind sister hotel the Anantara Riverside Bangkok Resort on the banks of the Chao Phraya River, Avani Riverside has 248 rooms and suites across 26 floors.

Events space

Primarily geared towards business events, the dedicated conference floor has over 4,500 sqm of event space including a large ballroom, multiple breakout rooms and an open-air riverside terrace.

A car lift straight to the 10th floor venues can be used for all manner of events—the vice president of a European pharmaceutical company, for example, recently arrived at a gala dinner aboard a *tuk tuk* followed by his executive team.

F&B

The standout space for cocktails and dinner is Attitude on the 26th floor, which offers stellar views over the city. The stylish venue has a sunken lounge with a retractable roof, and an adjoining indoor restaurant serving tapas-style dishes including poke tuna with whipped cream, chili and cucumber gazpacho, freshly shucked oysters and caviar.

The rooftop level can be booked in its entirety for events for up to 300 delegates (20 around the infinity pool, 140 in the sunken lounge, and the remaining in the bar and restaurant).

Wellbeing

The Avani Spa offers a range of treatments specifically designed for time-poor delegates. The Express Treatment series features 30-minute facials, head

massages and foot massages all for under THB1,700 (US\$48).

Surrounds

Small group tours of the city's colourful markets and waterways are available through the hotel's Streetwise Guru programme. The market tour is an excellent one for foodies with countless opportunities to sample delicious street food.

An alternative or add-on is the Klong Guru tour, which takes delegates by longtail boat through the River's connecting maze of canals, known as *klongs*. The waterways are dotted with ancient temples and landmarks, and offer a glimpse into the lives of the communities that live and work here.

The tour finishes with a cruise down the historic Klong Bang Luang. Once home to the rich and powerful, it is now rickety wooden houses, cafes and restaurants. ■

To read the full review visit cei.asia

THE ESSENTIALS

Wifi Complimentary for members

Largest meeting venue 1,152 sqm

Number of meeting areas 20

Number of guest rooms 248

Time from international airport 45 minutes

