

# THE NEW BREED

Barely a month passes when we don't receive an invitation to the opening of some new hotel, be it uber-luxurious or a trendy but cheapie. Sometimes, in our more cynical moments, we wonder where it will all end, but there's no doubt the end result is more choice and bargains for you. Here are four from the latest crop, some already open for business, others destined to be in the very near future.



## ALOFT BANGKOK [MAP3 / D6]

35 Sukhumvit Soi 11 | 02-207-7061

[www.aloft-hotels.com/bangkok-sukhumvit11](http://www.aloft-hotels.com/bangkok-sukhumvit11)

Open since late last year, the most affordable of this batch of openings is a mid-range (i.e. affordable) city hotel by the Starwood Group. Probably its strongest selling point is its buzzing location perfect for bar hounds: it sits deep inside Sukhumvit Soi 11, the go-to party soi for foreigners, directly opposite one of the clubs at the vanguard of the soi's rise, Bed Supperclub.

The grey exterior is brightened up with blue neon, and the same applies inside, where vibrant furnishings, tiling, LED lights and more neon lurk round every corner. Rooms are well kitted out with the sorts of extras usually found in serviced apartments: kettles and ironing boards, plus 42" LCD TVs and ipod docking stations. There's a gym and pool area, and food and drinks venues include vibrant lounge bar W XYZ, where the bartender blends molecular cocktails (review on p.81), and the forthcoming Crave restaurant, where you'll be able to peruse the menu and order a bottle using an iPad.

► **THE PRICE** Opening rates are B2,111++ for a Chic room and B2,411++ for an Urban room, and include free wireless internet and entry to Bed Supperclub (except when big-name international DJs are spinning).



## BANGKOK TREE HOUSE [MAP2 / G2]

Bang Namphueng, Moo 1 | Samut Prakarn district

BTS Bang Na | 08-1453-1100 | [www.bangkoktreehouse.com](http://www.bangkoktreehouse.com)

The most pioneering of this selection, the Bangkok Tree House sits on the edge of Samut Prakan province's Bang Krachao, a peninsula of lush, largely undeveloped land surrounded on three sides by the Chao Phraya River. To get there, guests must catch a boat from a pier located a short drive from Bangna BTS skytrain station. Inspired by Walden, American Henry David Thoreau's 1854 manual for self-reliance, it's a riverside tree lodge that aims to be truly at one with nature, featuring twelve three-tiered modern bungalows made with as much natural material as possible, a chemical-free swimming pool and Reflect, a waterfront organic restaurant.

The rustic setting of this eco-masterpiece is matched by a manifesto, or 'Green Alphabet' – a staggeringly ambitious list of 26 environmental principles that begins with air-quality control and ends with their zero-waste goal. Almost as impressive is the long list of freebies: free bicycle rental, so you can explore what many refer to as Bangkok's Green Lung, free WIFI, free cell-phone rental, and free ice-cream.

► **THE PRICE** Until the end of their soft opening (April 31), they're offering 25% off their published rates: B6,000–B10,000.



## THE SIAM [MAP8 / D7]

3/2 Thanon Khao, Vachirapayabal | Dusit district

02-41-8755 | [www.thesiamhotel.com](http://www.thesiamhotel.com)

It's not opening until around June but there's already a buzz about The Siam: an Art Deco inspired, Thai antique strewn urban resort brought to us by the Sukosols, a prominent Thai family as well known for their musical and acting talents as their hotels.

Antique enthusiast Khun Noi, the handsome actor and lead singer of rock band Pru, came up with the concept for the 39 room retreat, set on three acres of premium river front in Bangkok's royal Dusit district. To help him execute it he enlisted the services of architect and landscaper extraordinaire Bill Bensley. Guests will be able to flit from their high-ceilinged suite or villa done out in turn-of-the-century antiques into opulently landscaped gardens, and a restaurant housed in one of four traditional Thai teakwood houses. Prior to being moved here, these apparently hosted a long list of 20<sup>th</sup> century greats during dinners hosted by their previous owner, socialite Connie Mangskau.

Leisure facilities will include a gym with outdoor terrace, a spa with bathhouse, steam room and sauna, and a riverside infinity pool; while a luxury speedboat and Thai barge will offer both quick hops upstream and more leisurely tours along the city's canals.

► **THE PRICE** B16,300–B46,000 per night

## SOFITEL SO [MAP5 / M7]

2 North Sathorn Rd | Bang Rak district | MRT Lumpini

02-624-0000 | [www.sofitel.com](http://www.sofitel.com)

The latest Bangkok opening from the aggressively expanding Accor Group (slated opening date: 28 February) has been catching our eye for months now, its high-rise tower made up of a mosaic of glass, zinc and stone cutting a tall, dark and sleek figure on the edge of Lumpini Park.

Smith Obayawat, a well known Thai architect and leading figure in the Association of Siamese Architects, designed this shell, while the five-element themed guestrooms, public areas and restaurants are by a who's who of the local design scene. To name but two of them, Pongthep Sanguku of August Design is behind the dark and mysterious tone of the Water element rooms, while IAW Design's Viton Kunalungkarn chose to pair primeval wall paintings with ravishing blue in the Earth Element rooms. Meanwhile, the five restaurants and bars look set to make waves on the drink and dine scene, not least because of the Manhattan-esque views the hotel has over Lumpini Park's tree tops, complete with soaring skyscrapers in the distance.

► **THE PRICE** From B5,100 ++ a night until the end of the high season (March 31), after which they'll start from B4,300++.