





## REMARKABLE RETREAT

Step into another world from \$3,600pp

Experience the coastal glamour of Kangaroo Island over four unforgettable nights and indulge with a bonus night (Stay 4 Pay 3), a selection of gournet treats and spa and adventure credits. Relax with all dining, premium beverages, in-suite bax, signature excursions and airport transfers included. Solo special available, please enquire.

Save up to \$4,600 per couple! Valid for travel up to September 30, 2017

For more information or to make a reservation, visit southernoceanlodge.com.au or call 02 9918 4355



EVERY WEEKDAY IN THE AUSTRALIAN

## Hit the heights

The best vantage points for memorable city and river views

## **GARY WALSH**

ALL THAT GUSTENS: The Golden Mount was 1 until the 1970s, Bangkok's highest spot. Part of the Wat Saket compound, this temple with its whitewashed, battlement-like walls and dazzling golden with easiers, built on the ruins of a collapsed stupa. Its high-est point is more than 100m above the surrounding area, but the views in all directions are from a terrace 8m up, reached by 349 steps. It provides an instant impression of just how vertical Bangkok has become, and how contrasting its skyscrapers are to the old shophouses at the temple's base. More: au.tourismthailand.org.

TO COIN A PHRASE: Wat Arun is Bangkok's most recognisable landmark, even appearing on the 10-baht coin. It's under renovation at the moment; its porcelain-encrusted exterior is getting a spit and polish, so you can only climb a few metres above its base, but when it reopens fully (thought to be y the end of the year), visitors will be able to ascend ludicrously steep year), visitors will be able to ascend fudicrously steep steps to a terrace about halfway up the temple's 80m height. The view of the Grand Palace complex on the op-posite bank of the river is sublime, especially at sunset, somewhat counterintuitively given Wat Arun is known as the Temple of the Dawn. The temple itself is brilliantly

NEW KID ON THE BLOCK: The newest sky bar in NEW KID ON THE BLOCK: The newest key load in a string with Attitude, on the 26th floor of the AVANI Riverside Bangkok. The hotel is on a bend in the Chao Phraya River downstream from Taksin Bridge, opposite the bustling Asiatique Night Market and its giant ferris wheel. The bar has indoor and outdoor areas and actions exheting the area loss expensive than at most cracking cocktails that are less expensive than at most rooftop bars. Try Molecules of Love: champagne, straw-berry "caviar" and other ingredients somehow forgotten after a couple. Food from the open kitchen is excellent. The view from the Thonburi side of the Chao Phraya to central Bangkok as it lights up for the night is memorable. More: minorhotels.com/en/avani/riverside-bangkok.

SHOP 'N' DROP: Sukhumvit Road is Bangkok's 4 premier shopping and business drag, and the Marriott 57's Octave Rooftop Lounge & Bar is its first really sky-high drinking spot. There are three levels starting from 45 floors up, with staggering views, particularly from the highest point with its 360-degree vista. It's a frankly sexy spot, with an island bar It in electric blue when the sun sets, and bartenders who do the full jug-





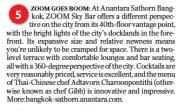
Vertigo at Banvan Tree, above; converted rice barge of Manohra Cruises, right; rooftop of River View Guest House, far right; Wat Arun, below; Attitude, bottom

Checklist

THAI Airways International flies daily to Bangkok from Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth.



gling cocktail thing. The fusion food is very good, with plenty of snacks to help the Thai mojitos and similar mixes slip down. More: marriott.com.au



TOP OF THE TREE: The 61st floor of the Banyan TOP OF THE TREE: The 61st floor of the Banyan don Bar offering open-air drinking and dining at its finest. The long, narrow shape makes it feel like a ship sailing through the Bangkon hight. Moon Bar's reputation precedes itself, and it can get insanely busy at sunset. If you have a reservation at Vertigo, you're assured a more relaxed experience. The 360-degree view over Sathorn Road, the river and CBD, is among the best to the city. A particularly incenture is when your waiter. in the city. A particularly nice touch is when your waiter takes a photo of you while dining, later presenting it to you in a commemorative frame.

More: banyantree.com/en/ap-thailand-bangkok.

ALL ABOUT THE ATMOSPHERE: You can't be

guaranteed a meteorite blasting through the Earth's atmosphere and bathing the world in un-earthly green light as you dine at the Pullman Hotel G's Scarlett Wine Bar & Restaurant, but it can add a certain Scarlett Wine Bar & Restaurant, but it can add a certain excitement toyour dining experience. Even without such a stellar cosmic event, Scarlett delivers fabulous French food and an equally spectacular view from the 37th floor above Silom Road. There's an open terrace and an enclosed dining room, both of which share the same brilliant panorama, with the serpentine Chao Phraya front and centre. More: pullmanbangkokhotelg.com.

ROOM WITH A VIEW: Most of the sky bars sit ROOM WITH A VIEW: Most or the sky pars six with the luxury and ambience. The River View Guest House is a much less imposing place lost in the tangled streets of Talad Noi district. There's a two-level bar and cafe on the eighth floor with a great perspective of the river as it curves gently downstream of the historic centre towards the business district. Local company Hivesters



will take you there for a drink as part of a highly recom-mended walking tour of Talad Noi led by a local "aunty", or you can find your own way, which is easier said than done. It's also a great spot at lunchtime. More: riverviewbkk.com; hivesters.com/home.

UP A LAZY RIVER: If we're talking bird's-eye views, it's only fair to consider the sight of, say, a duck paddling happily in the Chao Phraya. There are countless ways to enjoy a panorama of Bangkok, but the ground-level view from the river, especially at night, is simply gorgeous. River ferries and longtail boats stop is simply gorgeous. River ierries and longital loots stop around sunset, so a dinner cruise is the best way to enjoy the city as it lights up. Manohra Cruises has been plying the river in converted rice barges for years, serving excellent Thai food while gently chugging along in the cool of the evening. The Grand Palace and Wat Arun look especially alluring at night. More: manohracruises.com

## **BEST BEDS**



SO SPECTACULAR: Bangkok's main green space Lumpini Park, spreads like an exotic carpet be-neath the guestrooms, restaurants and bars of So Sofitel Bangkok. There is singular style here, highlighted by guest relations officer Khun Paul, with his Little Richard quiff and Edna Everage glasses. Staff are dressed in Christian Lacroix and accommodation is based on the four prime elements of water, metal, earth and wood. The 29th-floor Hi So bar and terrace overlooks Lumpini, and a level below is the superb Park Terrace restaurant, over-seen by Australian Paul Smart, twice winner of Thailand's Fron Chef contest. This is Asian-European fusion cuisine on a grand, glorious scale. More so-sofitel-bangkok.com.

Gary Walsh was a guest of THAI Airways International, Tourism Authority of Thailand and Accor Hotels.