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# Mai, Oh Mai!

It's no secret among my friends that Phuket is one of my favourite places on earth, and when you pair the destination with one of my all time favorite hotel brands - Anantara - I knew I was in for a great time. A collection of 91 pool villas sandwiched by Mai Khao beach on one side and the Sirinath National Park on the other, a family holiday at the villas guarantees rest, relaxation and really cool things to do.

<b>OUTLET</b>	OK! Middle East	<b>FREQUENCY</b>	Weekly
<b>COUNTRY</b>	United Arab Emirates	<b>CIRCULATION</b>	25,436 Monthly
<b>LANGUAGE</b>	English	<b>IMPRESSIONS</b>	1,672
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**MAI, OH MAI!**  
OK! EDITOR, GEMMA JETTED OFF TO THAILAND FOR A FAMILY VACATION AT THE GORGEOUS ANANTARA MAI KHAO PHUKET VILLAS

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international airport - the first thing we noticed was all the gorgeous water features. Here you stroll or bike across wooden bridges to get to your villa, and the check-in area is surrounded by lily-pod-filled ponds, instantly adding a peaceful vibe to the process. After traditional Thai beverages and a cooling lemongrass cold towel to freshen up, we were taken to our two-bedroom pool villa.

bedroom and main bathroom opening out directly onto the pool, although you definitely have to be on the ball if you have young kids or non-swimmers with you, the doors' locks are high up away from curious little fingers, so you can secure the area. The villa entrance took us straight into the main bedroom, where a welcome message spelt out in petals awaited us on the bed, and the luggage and wardrobe area was really big - a blessing when you have four suitcases, hand luggage and a double pram to find space for. The bathroom was huge and airy, with separate shower and toilet cubicles, with the second bedroom for the kids just beyond. All decked out in traditional dark Thai wood, the villa was also really light, thanks to all the big windows.

**Water, Water, Everywhere!**

When we arrived at Anantara Mai Khao Phuket Villas - an easy 15-minute drive from the

**Villa Living**

Our accommodation was the sort of place that pops up when you type 'dream pool villa' into Google. With the sliding doors of both the master

**Bathtime Under The Stars**

The star of the villa is undoubtedly the pool area, with its in-built seating areas for chilling out. A silver turtle fountain spouts water and the covered seating area boasts a huge day bed and pillows and an outdoor bar area and refrigerator. Have no doubt about it, these villas are designed to embrace outdoor living. Old wooden doors on the decking area opened up onto the tall trees and lagoon which winds through the resort, but what we loved the most was the in-pool bath! Almost as deep as the pool itself, the bath is separated from the pool by a





The villas are beautiful, and all rooms open up onto the pool

glass wall which our two sons – aged four and two – found fascinating when they took their evening bath under the stars.

### Around The Resort

As we have children, the first thing we do when we arrive at a new resort is to check out the kids club. Well-staffed and with indoor and outdoor spaces, the club runs hourly activities, and the water balloon painting session – which is as awesome as it sounds, consisting of the four of us throwing water and paint-filled balloons at a giant sheet of white paper to create our very own Jackson Pollock – was a favourite. Out on the lawn, the resort organises team sports of an evening (including a memorably competitive all-nations game of football one night), and the long, beautiful beach lies beyond the green grass. Staying on-site, there are fun cooking courses, an amazing spa, yoga sessions and holistic exercise classes. While, for those who venture beyond the resort, you can tee off at the nearby golf course, or enjoy an elephant ride through the national park next door.

### Food, Glorious Food

Having stayed at Anantara resorts globally, I've always found that the brand's dining options are incredible in their variety and dishes. And it was no different at Mai Khao. The seaside barbecue restaurant, Sea Fire Salt was a chic favourite, serving up fresh seafood including slow-poached crab, scallops, mussels, oysters and more, while La Sala (where we enjoyed breakfast every morning) transforms into the resort's traditional Thai



restaurant, and we were to be found dining alfresco by the water's edge, as the kids amused themselves feeding the huge fish. Come sundown, there's only one place to be if you're not Instagramming at the beach, and that's at The Tree House, where you can tuck into Thai-style canapes and cocktails with a view of the pink sunset Phuket is famous for. Finally, The Tasting Room is the epitome of bespoke, private dining and the perfect place to celebrate a deus



Stroll around the resort over wooden bridges which traverse the lagoon



or mark a special occasion, with its individually designed menus and cellar setting. All in all, our stay at Anantara Mai Khao Phuket Villas was family friendly, welcoming, relaxing and left us with lasting memories – everything you could possibly want! [OKMIDDLEEAST.COM](https://www.okmideast.com)

VISIT PHUKET.ANANTARA.COM

REVIEW BY GEMMA WHITE

## LEONARDO & BELLA: THE A-LIST'S HOTTEST NEW COUPLE



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"RUNNING AROUND, PUSHING THINGS, JUMPING" INSIDE THE ROYAL TOTS' INFORMAL UPBRINGING



THE KLUM CLAN ALL GROWN UP! HEIDI KLUM HITS NEW YORK WITH LENI, SAMUEL & JOHAN



'I DIDN'T KNOW WHO I WAS' WHY CAMERON DIAZ QUIT HOLLYWOOD

# "THEY'RE BRILLIANT KIDS"

PRINCE GEORGE & PRINCESS CHARLOTTE'S ADORABLE SIBLING RELATIONSHIP

PLUS: BOYBANDER DADS EIGHT PAGE TRAVEL SPECIAL

