

VIDEO: WE SPENT THE NIGHT WITH 2 ELEPHANTS IN A 2-BEDROOM BUBBLE TENT IN THE JUNGLE

Hello, bucket list. Anantara Golden Triangle has dreamed up one of the most OTT ways to commune with elephants in nature.



By [Jeninne Lee-St. John](#)
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I AM PRETTY SPOILED as far as elephants go. Living in Thailand for nearly a decade, I've gotten to spend a lot of time up-close-and-personal with them – almost always in responsible rescue camps where you can have meaningful, cruelty-free interactions with them and learn lots about what's happening in their big brains along the way.



One such place is the Golden Triangle Asian Elephant Foundation (GTAEF), a rescue and non-intrusive-research organization based on the borderlands of Thailand, Myanmar and Laos. And one of their affiliated resorts, Anantara Golden Triangle, seems borderline obsessed with proving you can actually never get too spoiled when it comes to elephant experiences.

A couple of years ago they placed a pair of futuristic bubble tents in the jungle, so guests could eat dinner, tuck in at night, and wake up within meters of elephants – as well as stare up at a blanket of stars from bed, to boot. To outdo themselves, Anantara Golden Triangle recently added a new custom-made double-size tent, a two-bedroom bubble lodge that comes with a heated plunge pool, the better to observe the elephants chomping away in a nearby paddock through the magical mountain-region mist.

If it sounds like I loved the experience – which also included a country drive in a sidecar of a Royal Enfield, and a cannabis spa treatment, both serenity-inducing in different ways – you're right. So did my mom, which you'll see quite obviously in the video. And it was made all the better by personal tours from John Roberts, the director of GTAEF.



Photos courtesy of Jeninne Lee-St. John (3)

This is a man who walks the walk: he has a mahout license, and the story about how he got it is enlightening as it is adorable. He had been assigned an elephant who seemed disinterested and lazy, and he worried about how they would meet all the physical challenges to prove their ability to work as a team. When it came time to stack a pile of logs, Roberts feared all hope was lost, but the elephant – with barely any prodding – perked up, did a quick-as-lightning shuffle of the feet, and had Tetris-ed the woodpile perfectly in no time.

The graceful giant then promptly returned to his prior ambivalence and Roberts was left with a couple of key reminders: elephants are not only incredibly smart and dexterous, but they have unique personalities they can show off in any number of fascinating ways. These are things you can learn firsthand after a mere hour or two observing elephants in a natural jungle habitat, bubble tent or no.

We've been reporting on the unique pandemic-induced plight of already-endangered Asian elephants for a couple of years now. GTAEF funnels support for Thai elephants whose camps were shut due to Covid, and other conservation causes, such as a forest preserve in Cambodia where Khmer rangers have recently confirmed the return of wild elephants. Visit helpingelephants.org to learn more and help.



Jungle Bubble Lodge Interior. Courtesy of Anantara Golden Triangle Elephant Camp & Resort

An all-inclusive Jungle Bubble Lodge luxury experience at Anantara Golden Triangle starts from US\$6,110 for up to four guests staying in two rooms for two nights – one night in a Deluxe Three Country View Room and one night in the two-bedroom Jungle Bubble tent – and includes one daily activity from a choice of experiences with elephants, Spice Spoons cooking school, Golden Triangle Discovery excursions, Spa Discovery packages, 90-minute private yoga or private Pilates class; full-board dining at any restaurant, as well as in-room dining; unlimited beverages from an exclusive range of non-alcoholic drinks, wine, beer and spirits; private roundtrip airport transfers; and entrance to the Hall of Opium Museum. For further information or to make a reservation, visit goldentriangle.anantara.com, or contact goldentriangle@anantara.com or +66 53 784 084.