



# 'Thai-ness' Hotels

Last year was hellish for the people of Thailand and their tourism industry, which suffered horribly due to the political demonstrations that led to the military's seizure of power.

In DESTINATION & TOURISM: Thailand welcomed just short of 25 million international visitors in 2014, compared to about 27 million in 2013. A 12.23 percent surge in foreign visitors in December helped to ease the drop as did the 6.6 million arrivals from neighboring Southeast Asian countries, accounting for about 27 percent of the total in 2014.

In 2015, the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) has set a total international arrivals target of 28 million visitors, generating an estimated \$41 billion in economic activity.

TAT is once again turning to its traditional marketing theme, the mystique of the Thai people, with its new global "2015 Discover Thai-ness" campaign. The destination has successfully positioned the character of the Thai people themselves as the primary point of distinction between Thailand and the other countries of Southeast Asia. It's a strategy that has worked, because most visitors to Thailand are charmed and intrigued by a people who seem to move and speak with an ineffable elegance.

TAT's "2015 Discover Thai-ness" campaign highlights seven distinct characteristics of the Thai people: Thai Food, Thai Way of Life, Thai Art, Thai Wellness, Thai Festivity, Thai Wisdom and Thai Fun.

**Way of Life:** [The Float House River Kwai](#) is a resort that literally floats on the famous river Kwai in Thailand's Kanchanaburi Province. Comprising 26 90-square-meter villas, the hotel is located in the same sort of dense rainforest that was featured in the film "Bridge on the River Kwai." The hotel's location is best appreciated on each villa's private balcony and pier where you can relax and, in the words of Bob Dylan, "Watch the river flow."

Each floating suite features traditional wood furniture, a thatched roof and such rustic enhancements as matted wall coverings. Developed with the eco-conscious traveler in mind, the hotel is built from locally sourced and made materials. Most of the staff was recruited from the local Mon community — an ethnic minority who migrated from Myanmar. Guests can choose from such activities as kayaking and rafting.



About the Author:

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