



BANGKOK'S ART AWAKENING

BY JENNA SCATENA

The stats are in: This year, Bangkok became the world's most visited city. With the Thai capital's new \$65 million contemporary art museum and an influx of one-of-a-kind hotels, the cultural scene is growing as fast as the number of international travelers.



MARKET

Once known as the "Venice of the East," Bangkok is still filled with floating markets, which remind visitors of a time when the region had more canals than roads. Fifty miles outside the city, the **Amphawa Floating Market** is a favorite for noodle dishes and grilled seafood. Take an evening boat ride to explore the market while fireflies glimmer. Fri.-Sun., noon to 8 p.m. amphawafloatingmarket.com



ART

The new five-story **Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA)** houses the vast modern art collection of telecommunications tycoon Boonchai Bencharongkul. Galleries display pieces by more than 100 Thai artists who span six generations. A show on the surrealist Prateep Kochabua runs through October 16. 3 Vibhavadi Rangsit, Chatuchak, mocabangkok.com



HOTEL

Each of the 39 art deco rooms at the **Siam hotel** tells a story about Thai history. The Military Room displays 1940s cigarette cards and machetes; Connie's Cottage is the teak house where socialite Connie Mangskau hosted such icons as Jackie Onassis. Film nights and craft workshops are often held in the screening room. From \$525. 66/(0) 2-206-6999, thesiamhotel.com



DINING

Surrounded by a garden studded with beanbag chairs, **Issaya Siamese Club** serves cuisine that blends Thai flavors with international techniques. Such dishes as *massaman* lamb curry as well as jasmine flan (above) incorporate ingredients from the garden. 4 Soi Sri Aksorn, Chua Ploeng Road, Sathorn, 66/(0) 2-672-9040, issaya.com

TAXI TIP

Hailing a taxi or tuk-tuk may not work if you signal with your palm up. Instead, hold your arm out with your palm facing down and move it like you're slowly bouncing a basketball. When you catch a taxi, make sure the meter is turned on to avoid being overcharged. Your best bet is to flag down a cab that's on the move.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: ANNE MENKE/TRUNK ARCHIVE, CHRISTOPHER WISE, COURTESY OF ISSAYA SIAMESE CLUB, MIHAI POPA, INGRAM PUBLISHING/SUPERSTOCK