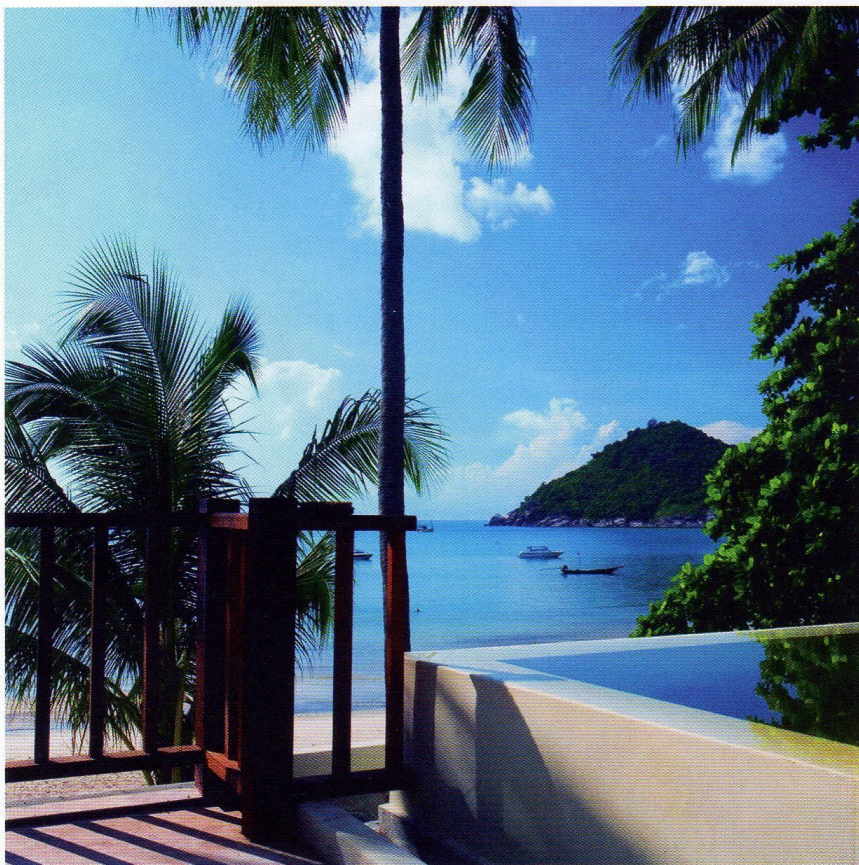


EASTERN PROMISE

INSPIRATION FOR WINTER SUN IN THE FAR EAST, INDONESIA AND AUSTRALASIA



FAR FROM THE MAD CROWD

Famous for its full-moon parties, the island of Koh Phangan might seem an unlikely choice for a relaxing break. But on the island's north-eastern side, beaches are quieter and there is protected rainforest perfect for hiking and spotting wildlife, such as long-tailed macaques and sea eagles. Stay in the new Anantara Phangan Rasananda on Tong Nai Pan Noi Beach (www.anantara.com), which has 64 contemporary Thai villas with plunge pools, and join one of the daily guided walks with the naturalist. *Scott Dunn offers seven nights from £1,710pp, with B&B, return flights and transfers. 020-8682 5060; www.scottdunn.com*

100 per cent Cambodia At last it is possible to combine a visit to the temples of Angkor with a stay on Cambodia's unspoilt coast, as the country's first five-star beach property opens in the Koh Rong archipelago, a string of 21 pristine islands reminiscent of the Thai islands 40 years ago. Two of the islands comprise the private resort of Song Saa (opening in February); 27 villas inspired by a traditional Cambodian fishing village. All-inclusive from £410pp per night. www.songsaa.com



VIRGIN TERRITORY

Planning a party or family reunion and want to make a splash? Makepeace Island (www.makepeaceisland.com), Sir Richard Branson's home from home in Australia, has quietly opened its doors for private hire. The 25-acre Balinese-style property is situated on a heart-shaped island in the Noosa River on the Sunshine Coast and houses up to 22 guests. Previously a private retreat, Branson is now keen to share 'the tranquillity of what is a very special place'. The island has its own riverboat to ferry guests from the tennis court to the spa or theatre, and there's a lagoon pool, plus a large bar for entertaining. *Original Travel offers seven nights from £5,780pp (based on eight sharing) with flights, transfers, meals and activities. 020-7978 7333; originaltravel.co.uk*