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MALDIVES

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FEBRUARY 2011 £3.90

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EDITED BY EMILY MATHIESON

Beach chic

On the white beaches of Koh Samui, a growing number of five-star, super-stylish private places to stay are opening their doors. Among them is **AKATSUKI RESORT**, right, in Lipa Noi on the west coast of the island. Designed by Tokyo-based architect Riccardo Tossani, the private resort has five stand-alone rooms, each with its own iPad, set around a tiered pool, along with a dining room and spa. The design is a stylish fusion of Thai (the fabrics, orchids and peaked roofs) and Japanese (the bed linen, sliding screens and room names such as Kokoru, which means 'heart', and Mizu, or 'water'). Not far away is **BAAN TAWANTOK**, 'Sunset Villa' in Thai. Set in frangipani-filled gardens on the beach, the two five-bedroom villas have two-tiered roofs, vaulted ceilings, terrazzo baths and outdoor showers. A tennis court, private beach and a full-time Thai chef complete the hotel-style package. Meanwhile **THE COVE**, north of popular Chaweng Beach, is a sprawling contemporary villa in landscaped gardens with five thatched pavilions plus kids' dorms, a clean, white interior and – just to make quite sure there's absolutely no need to leave the premises – its own outdoor cinema.

DANIELLE DEMETRIOU

THE LOWDOWN

Akatsuki Resort

Whole villa from US\$2,800 a night in low season. Rooms from US\$1,500, full board (www.akatsuki-resort.com)

Baan Tawantok

Whole house from US\$1,000 a night in low season, or from US\$800 for three bedrooms (00 66 77 427648; www.samui.villasandhomes.com)

The Cove

Whole property from US\$1,350 a night in low season, or from \$1,000 for three bedrooms (00 66 848 427506; www.luxury.villasamui.com)

THAILAND

YOU'VE COME A LONG WAY

The island of Koh Samui has grown out of its backpacker-shack days – now there's an array of stylish, upmarket properties that offer beachfront action without the bug life