



Meet The **Experts**

Letter from the Publisher

Kevin Panko, Group Publisher and CEO

Set the scene.

Butterflies zigzagging around the gates, the sound of water tumbling down the mountainside, cutting through the greenery. Buildings are so well hidden into the landscape they are barely perceptible.

What's the story behind it?

Thai-born owner Rena Udomkunnatum fell in love with this wild enclave outside Luang Prabang, where her sister owns a smaller hotel. She bonded with Rosewood's CEO, Sonia Cheng, and together they chose Bangkok-based architect Bill Bensley, who has developed a reputation for his quirky tented camps in the region (see also Capella Ubud and Shinta Mani in the 2019 Hot List). The design isn't entirely groundbreaking, but Bensley carries his narrative across all aspects of the hotel, and it's endearing.

What can we expect from our room?

Each of the tents, villas, and rooms are set by the waterfall, so you fall asleep to the white noise of water and spring awake to birdsong. Bensley infuses his design with imaginary stories—in this case about adventurers, their steamer trunks emblazoned with fictitious initials. The craftsmanship is lovely, with wall frescoes and trompe l'oeil. Beds are exceptionally cloud-like; the outdoor bathtub a relief in the tropical heat, as is the traditional bucket and ladle.

How about the food and drink?

Served in the open-air Great House, where chef Sebastien Rubis has a passion for ancestral Lao dishes, many served with the black sticky rice that was reserved for aristocracy—such as the braised buffalo stew with puréed eggplant, dill, and herbs. Guests can trek with the chef into neighboring farmland to forage alongside the Hmong hill tribe for wild herbs such as mint, butterfly pea flowers, mushrooms, and acacia leaves. Sweets are delivered to the rooms every night, made with honey and sesame seeds.

Anything to say about the service?

Laos is still very much a developing country but the level of service here stands out. Spotless rooms; English spoken fluently. Sommai, a former monk, leads private meditation sessions and treks to remote forest temples where abbots still practice the esoteric art of Sak Yant Buddhist tattoos. "Allow thoughts that come into your head to know that you will come back to them later," he tells you, sitting on a cool stone floor beneath saffron-colored candles.

*We Have Experienced,
We Recommend*



We Have Experienced, ... We Recommend



The resort offers 23 spacious Luang Prabang accommodations including four deluxe rooms, four specialty suites, three riverside villas, six pool villas and six luxury tents. Each of the resort's guest housings is bordered by riverbank. The 75-square-meter luxury tented villas include their own private dining areas and wrap-around decks. Lao tradition and French colonial style are sensitively woven throughout the design and architecture, including the use of indigenous materials and locally inspired artwork.



Gastronomic Laotian flavors and seasonally sourced farm-to-table ingredients, all in peaceful and mystical surrounds, define Rosewood Luang Prabang's unique culinary identity.



ROSEWOOD LUANG PRABANG

Ban Nadueay Village, Luang Prabang, Laos PDR

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<https://www.rosewoodhotels.com/en/luang-prabang>