



GRAFF

THE MOST FABULOUS JEWELS IN THE WORLD

THE ETERNAL TWINS: 50 CARATS EACH, IDENTICAL D FLAWLESS DIAMONDS
35 CARAT D FLAWLESS DIAMOND RING

Samujano Sajourn

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Film: **SCREAMING EAGLE PRODUCTIONS**

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After two nights spent crisscrossing the urban metropolis of Bangkok trying to catch up with old friends, I was rather glad to be arriving on the tropical island of Koh Samui. Traversing Europe is commonplace, but I only make the effort to fly long haul if the destination is honest-to-god, come-to-Jesus' grade glorious. On a gentle slope overlooking Koh Matlang and Hanuman Bay, you'll find Samujana. It's the sort of retreat you genuinely feel lethargic to leave. And I am talking about real sorrow. Not the Hollywood

kind where someone on the flight is carrying a Samsung Galaxy 'Exploder 5' that requires you all exit the plane and return to your infinity pool. However, Samujana is a Villa come Hotel hybrid which means, if you are in the market, you never have to leave.

It was three years ago that a friend mentioned his family were thinking of investing in a property in the foothills of Mount Khao Pom in Koh Samui. They had not broken ground, but the land had been purchased and the architect had been instructed. He told me how the market was expanding in the region and having travelled there for many years,

how much development had taken place in a short period of time. But with all the leg work involved in securing land, construction, security and maintaining a property either as a holiday or investment, I have always preferred a turnkey approach.

The first thing you will notice about the Island of Koh Samui is the airport. The conspicuous consumerism we are so used to in Europe is swept neatly away into a small corner giving way to beautiful palm trees, natural bamboo-roofed security areas and ornate fountains. We flew the 45-minute hop with Bangkok Airways. I advise signing up for



properties are designed by the award-winning Gary Fell of GFAB Architects. Fell studied at The Bartlett School of Architecture and then went on to work on the Four Seasons Sayan (Bali), in 1996. Having moved to South East Asia and with a cacophony of projects on their books, GFAB has remained as the development's architects through the 1st, 2nd and 3rd build phase. It's easy to see why. The properties geometric, contemporary designs fit well into the tropical surroundings with trees and incredible rock formations incorporated into the living areas. I have scouted locations for adverts and features alike and nothing quite has the same visceral sense of space that Gary Fell and his team have brought to life. "I wanted the buildings to be very much "part" of the hillside, and for greenery to cover as much of the surfaces

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as possible, blending gardens with interior spaces in such a way as to minimize the difference between what is inside and what is outside. In many ways it's a huge exercise in terracing a hillside, much as a rice farmer might, except with lots of concrete." The views aren't just noteworthy, they are the jewel in the crown. Each villa features panoramic sea and island views that evoke a reimagining of the modern beach house, centred around a seawater infinity pool of course.

their FlyerBonus program for the additional luggage and lounge access. Regardless the island is accessible internationally. It's a 45-minute flight from Bangkok and Phuket, 2 hours direct from both Singapore and Kuala Lumpur and 3 hours from Hong Kong. The airfield is also equipped for jet and chopper arrival.

traversing the island fool you though, there is a wealth of boutiques, untouched beaches, fine dining and nightlife to rival the best superyacht marinas. Steady increases in visitor numbers have attracted Six Senses, W and Four Seasons supported by an accompanying development in a wide range of island services and infrastructure in the last decade.

Samujana is a ten-minute drive from the International airport and the sandy beaches of Chaweng and about five minutes from Choeng Mon. In fact, you can drive from the most Northern to the most Southern point in less than an hour. Don't let the ease of

After the short drive, we find ourselves at the gated entrance to Samujana on the North East tip of the island. The estate covers some 18 acres but given the comparatively small amount of properties built on the land, (27), you still have a real sense of space. The

With our luggage stowed we sauntered along the entranceway, past ornate water features and expertly manicured gardens, into a pool of light. Nothing prepares you for the view overlooking the beach below and out to Ko Mat Lang and the mountains beyond. The villas cascade down the hill to the inviting waters of the Gulf of Siam but you don't feel hemmed in. Every property uses reflective pools and feature planters on the roofs of the buildings in harmony with the tropical surroundings.

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need a nanny or a board-certified thoracic surgeon, I am sure it can be arranged. There is a team of staff on-site to provide estate, villa and hospitality services of course. I presume one can also bring one's own staff with minimal fuss. Over arrival drinks, we meet the affable Paul, our host. Now I don't need to explain the purpose of a host here, those of you that own a passport and read the magazine will know how to 'do the do'. Paul can arrange everything from in-villa dining by their expert chefs, to sailing, wellness and beyond as you would expect. We spent the week at Villa 22, an expansive six-bedroom property covering 2,678 SQ.M. It has the largest land

area of any villa in the development making it perfect for large groups wishing to sprawl. The obligatory tour of the property reveals a gym, cinema, pool room, multiple living areas and six bedrooms. Not to mention a selection of fine wines and an outdoor bar. Yes, life at Samujana was going to be a pleasure.

With dietary requirements confirmed as 'none' and the whereabouts of the bar now known to all, we played our game of bedroom chess. As a group of three, the sport didn't take long. I decided the master suite would work just fine. Quelle surprise. The huge bedrooms and walk in wardrobes were beautifully designed. From

the art collection adorning the walls to the craftsmanship of the furniture, a complete design ethos was in effect throughout. If only Emirates had allowed me to purchase additional luggage I might have been in need of a walk-in wardrobe. All the villas are offered fully furnished and the list price includes this of course. You are welcome to make changes to the decor at your discretion, provided they meet a certain standard. This means no chrome and diamond wind chime installation on the lawn Sergei, no matter how much it cost you.

As we continued our tour through the wrap-



Safe to say after only a few nights I was sold on the idea of owning a property in this little corner of the world. I, like you, will need to move quickly though, you are far from the only interested party and units are limited.

One thing that makes Samujana an irrefutable choice for those seeking foreign soil investment or a holiday home, is the private beach. At the bottom of the resort past the nature area, you'll find a stretch of unspoilt, well-manicured, beautiful beachfront. It's like a Getty luxury stock image, enormous outdoor spaces, sweeping infinity pools,

perfectly manicured lawns and large, Grecian urns placed amongst modernist architecture.

Now, some of us aren't really fly and flop people. No matter how much your therapist tells you it will do you good. The will to 'relax' by a pool for weeks on end is there, but reading a thick book has never really been my style. I appreciate good literature, but it must be paired with an escapist itinerary to keep me occupied once the pool has lost its azure allure. A sharp intake of breath; tennis, water skiing, diving, snorkelling, waterfalls, temples, sailing, windsurfing, go-karts, ATV safaris, golf, fishing and bungee jumping if

you are that way inclined. You can have the best of both worlds, with child care. For me, there were two items very high on my list. The Samui Elephant sanctuary was top and what a thoroughly enriching experience it was. It's the island's first sanctuary and is set on forested land offering a safe retirement home for elephants who have worked exhausting hours in the logging and tourism industries. Feed them, walk with them and watch them socialise. You don't need to climb on them to be captivated by their beauty.

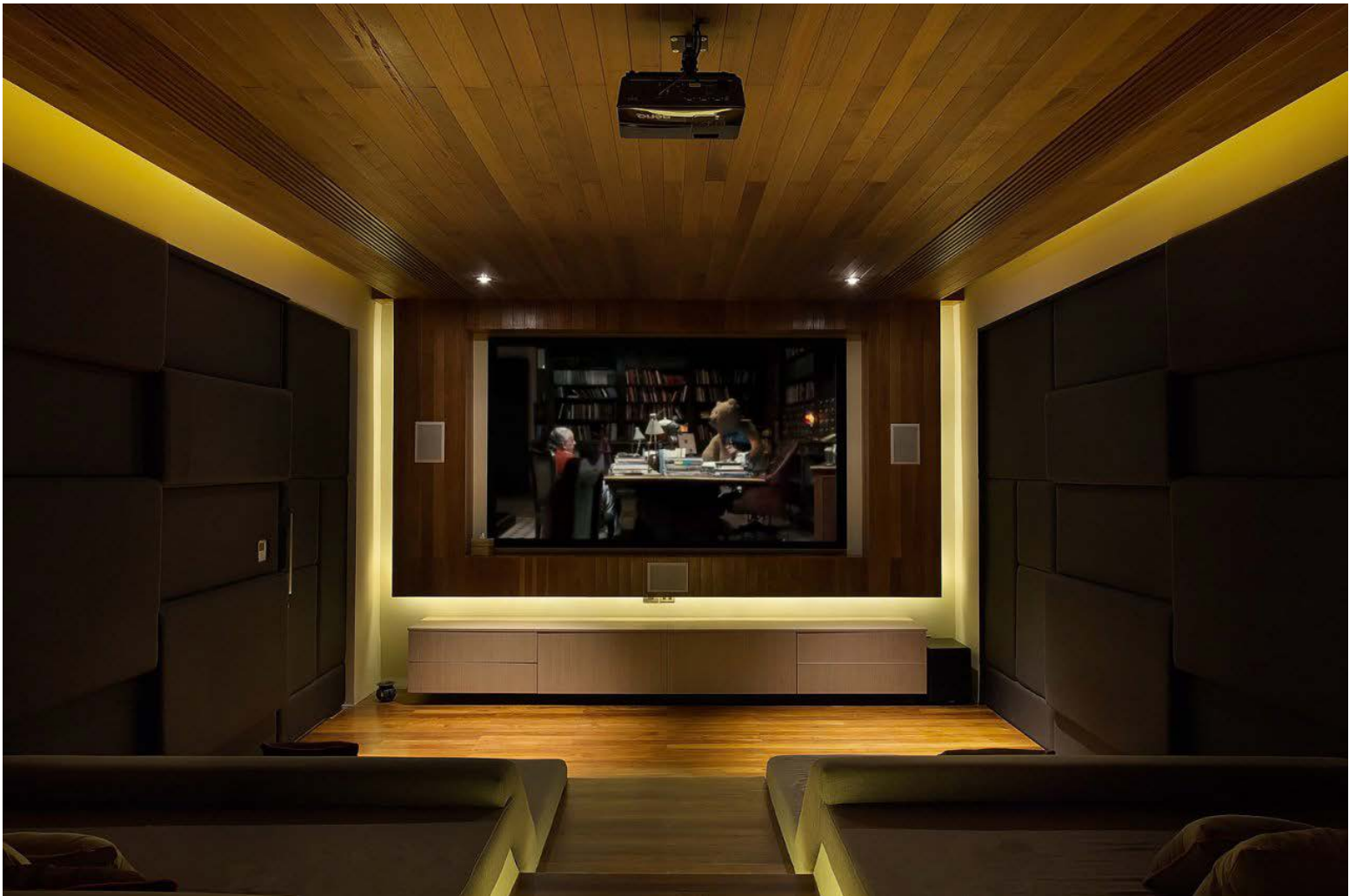
The second item on my list, sailing. Not America's Cup or Volvo Ocean Race. I am not

around multi-level garden we came across a tree surrounded by large boulders. Rather than landscape over the natural site, the developers and architect had opted to use them as a feature for the two bedrooms on the lower level. It was this lower level that featured the gym, pool room, cinema and massage room. We made ample use of the gym during the week, but it was our nightly viewings of *Band of Brothers* that became a routine for the group. The team will happily arrange a Yoga, gym or Muay Thai instructor for you at your leisure. On the other side of the coin, they can also arrange in-villa Thai cooking lessons. Learn how to make Thai

salads, Andaman-harvested prawns, noodles and stir-fries. Of course, you can still get a club sandwich at 4 am if that's your preference but the Island has many dining options.

After the tour and travel, we decided we needed a little physical relaxation and so booked in a team of therapists for treatments. What else do you do with an in-villa massage and treatment room? Beauty treatments range from facials to body masks and the traditional Thai massage without even having to leave your villa. I am not really one for fly and flop type travel but 2019 aged me so much. I was actually welcome of the ability to

wake and drag myself into a treatment room with minimal logistical support. Note to self, if your massage preference is a softly, softly affair where little is really done to rid you of lactic acid and tight muscles, take a knee. Thai massage cuts to the core and leaves you feeling physically free in the truest sense of the word. NB: They will fold you into an origami swan, but you'll go with it because your western sensibilities tell you not to complain. Trust me, Thai massage is the way forward. I got several in the villa, one on the beach, one at 1030pm whilst out having supper and one at the airport in Bangkok. It turns out they can bend you into more than just a swan.



a Helly Hansen owning ocean wanderer, but I do have an affinity with the sea. Samujana has a range of sailing vessels within their armada. From the salubrious traditional Sailing Junk Yacht ready to entertain large groups, to the 'Kindred Spirit' catamaran. A thirteen-meter cat available for charter complete with paddleboards and an array of toys. Sitting across the water from Koh Samui's north eastern corner are the islands of Koh Som and Koh Lum Mu Noi. Put plainly they are relatively untouched. Our troop having sailed at midday, headed out to the islands before embarking to the shoreline on paddleboards. I had opted to stay aboard the boat and play

drones with the captain who was reticent to pilot the small craft himself. As the sun came down and the drinks came up to the deck, all was right with the world. Sea air, an ice-cold beer and views that only Tolkien could have imagined.

So, you, like me, are now dreaming of tropical palms and days spent chasing the sun around the island, cocktail in hand. Of course, you don't need to visit Samujana if you are not specifically buying. You can always rent one of the properties to see if it suits your proclivities and tastes.

Now I would be remised if I didn't at least cover off some of the salient investment details.

All the villas are privately owned by independent third parties. All villa owners become shareholders of Samujana Ltd, a company that controls the management company of the Estate.

Samujana operates the rental of villas, management of the estate and all aspects of marketing and promoting the resort. It is overseen by an annually elected Villa Owners Committee (VOC), who represents all Villa Owners. Fairly commonplace then. The Thai

companies which own the Estate land have granted 30-year leases as this is the maximum period under Thai law. Of course, the lease contains provisions that allow for renewal for two further periods of 30 years making this a 90-year prospect. Villa owners also have the option of offering their villa for rent for part or all of the year to the luxury travel market by joining the optional Samujana Rental Programme. Owners who participate in this programme receive a commission based on the rental income from their villas. Rental rates for all villas are available on application.

Now if you need further details, you know what to do, this isn't a John Grisham novel, call your own lawyer. You can't have mine.

The resorts crowning glory is that the team at Samujana will let you decide your own level of involvement. I was most at home just being at the villa, looking out across the most magnificent views from the infinity pool. I returned to England having secured that which I needed most, R&R. 🍷



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