



► Early Birds

Watch bald eagles catch their breakfast



- Subscribe at Big Savings
- Send the Gift of TIME
- Magazine Customer Service

►► GET 4 FREE TRIAL ISSUES OF TIME!

SEARCH

All of TIMEeurope.com



- Home
- Europe
- Middle East
- Africa
- Technology
- Business
- Arts
- Travel
- Global Adviser
- Special Reports
- Photos

- Current Issue
- Past Covers
- TIME Archive
- Home
- Collections
- Feedback

- Other News
- U.S.
- World
- Asia
- Canada
- Pacific

- Customer Service
- Subscribe
- Renew
- Change Address
- Reprints
- Give a Gift

- Mobile Edition
- Media Kit
- Press Releases

AOL News
CNN.com

TIME EDUCATION PROGRAM
click here >>>



LE MERIDIEN

BACK TO LIFE: The relaunched Le Meridien Khao Lak

From the Magazine

The Next Phuket?

Three Thai beach destinations are polishing up their acts

By CYNTHIA ROSENFELD

» SUBSCRIBE TO TIME | PRINT | SEND TO A FRIEND

Saturday, Dec. 31, 2005

Koh Phi Phi, Koh Lanta Yai and Khao Lak — three Thai destinations better known for backpackers and hammock-strewn huts — have unveiled deluxe accommodation in a bid for upmarket business. Their swish new resorts are helping Thailand generate much-needed buzz in the first peak season after the tsunami. Who knows? One of these up-and-coming towns might someday eclipse the jet set's favorite Thai isle, Phuket.

On Koh Lanta Yai, **Rawi Warin** (rawiwarin.com) joins the burgeoning roster of five-star resorts like Pimalai and Costa Lanta. Standard rooms feature polished woods and Thai silks, while the suites will awe you with their soaring ceilings. The cliff-top pool affords the best view of Lanta's dramatic sunset. Also on the Andaman Sea is **Zeavola** (zeavola.com). The 52 bungalows that dot the sand along Koh Phi Phi's Laem Tong Bay appear basic on approach, but first impressions deceive. Hip Bangkok design house **Beyond Living** has created colorful murals and textiles for these luxurious quarters, and outdoor showers come with all-natural Thann products. Next door, France's Accor Group plans to raise the first international flag on the island with its Phi Phi Villa & Spa (softel.com). Watch builders hoist marble up to the site for a sense of what's ahead.

A brighter future is also taking shape at Khao Lak — the area worst affected by the tsunami. **Le Meridien Khao Lak** (lemeridien.com) had been open less than two months on Boxing Day 2004, but it reopened ahead of schedule 10 months later with a totally new design. It now offers many of the opulent amenities of more intimate, boutique resorts. But it also has what none of the others have: a kid's club, providing kite-making and pizza-cooking classes for young ones. It's a subtle but telling indication that Khao Lak, like other secondary Thai destinations, aspires to leave its backpacker days — and the painful memory of the tsunami — far behind

From the Jan. 09, 2006 issue of TIME Europe magazine

ADVERTISEMENT

VOTE NOW

Because change happenz™



In This Issue



- **Cover:** A Simple Solution: The Fight Against Diarrhea
- **Airbus:** A380 Delay
- **The Niqab:** Nothing To Hide

- Table of Contents
- See Recent Covers

Special Reports

► MORE FEATURES

- **Europe's New Frontiers**
[Since TIME first published in Europe 60 years ago, the frontiers of the region have shifted dramatically](#)
- **A Simple Solution For A Deadly Disease**
- **Russia's New World Order**
- **Eton: A New Kind Of Elite**

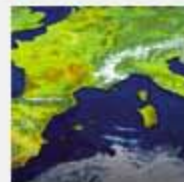


Photo Galleries

► MORE PHOTOS

- **Pre-emptive Strike**
An alleged bomb plot is disrupted
- **Heat**
- **World Cup: Fields Of Dreams**
- **Anyone For Tennis?**

