

*Cool Asian Hotels • Spas A-Z • Niagara • Jewels Noir • Frank Gehry*

# DEPARTURES

JANUARY/FEBRUARY

WHAT'S

OUT

THERE

NOVA

Breeze, the Asian restaurant at  
The Tower Club at lebua

# BANGKOK

The dictum “the higher, the better”—an obvious way to stand out—defines the **TOWER**

**CLUB AT LEBUA** (from \$380; lebua.com), which sits on the 51st to 59th floors of Bangkok’s second-tallest building. While there are better places to stay, at least according to one expert travel agent, it’s worth a visit for the astonishing views from the open-air Sky Bar on 63 and the partially alfresco Asian restaurant Breeze, on 51 and 52.

For the most part, financial crisis and political upset have meant restrained growth across Bangkok. As *Monocle* editor Tyler Brulé notes, hotel architecture here could stand to “up its game.” And indeed, little has been built in recent years to compete with the city’s two luxury stalwarts, the **PENINSULA** (from \$320; peninsula.com) and the **MANDARIN ORIENTAL** (from \$360; mandarinoriental.com), a situation likely to last until 2014, when a 150-room Edition (the new luxury brand from Ian Schrager and Marriott) opens below the Ritz-Carlton Residences in a 77-story skyscraper designed by Ole Scheeren of Rem Koolhaas’s Dutch firm OMA, with interiors by Brit David Collins.

But positive signs can be found, especially at smaller, privately owned spots like the new **PRAJA PALAZZO** (from \$470; prayapalazzo.com), a 17-room mansion on the Chao Phraya River. And **THE SIAM HOTEL** (from \$500; thesiamhotel.com), also on the waterfront, debuts this summer, designed by Bangkok-based American Bill Bensley, who has also worked with Four Seasons, Hyatt and Oberoi.

Another boutique favorite is the **EUGENIA** (from \$230; theeugenia.com), a 12-room spot from Taiwanese designer Eugene Yu-Ching Yeh. The style here is the opposite of the city’s sky-high aesthetic. Built new, Eugenia’s restrained, low-lying colonial-style building is done in grays, blue-blacks and browns, with Asian antiques and taxidermy scattered about. It’s a sort of Thai-tweaked version of Florence’s J.K. Place—a Yeh favorite.