

Condé Nast Traveller

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Into
the

Summer
Light

BRITISH STAYCATIONS

BEAUTIFUL NEW HOUSES TO RENT

WILD CAMPING'S BEST SPOTS

CORNISH HOLIDAYS BY BEN OKRI

AN INSIDE TRACK ON SUSSEX

EUROPEAN TRIPS

MEDITERRANEAN ISLAND-HOPPING

COOL ALPINE RETREATS

THE SLOW FOOD HEART OF ITALY

A NEW
GENERATION
OF LOCAL
SAFARI
PIONEERS



WORD OF MOUTH

FRESH AND GROUND-BREAKING TRAVEL UPDATES. EDITED BY FIONA KERR

ACES OF BASE

A BANGKOK CREW PUT A SPIN ON THAI CULTURE.

BY CHRIS SCHALKX

As we reconsider what we're looking for from travel, the march of the hipster aesthetic and its third-wave coffee shops everywhere from Tbilisi to Ho Chi Minh City seems relentless. But now there are the beginnings of a kickback against global gentrification, and in Bangkok the cleverest new hangouts are delving into local culture, embracing its points of difference.

Fuelled by folk music and Thai moonshine, chefs, musicians and designers are rediscovering their roots and putting traditional ingredients, sounds and crafts at the forefront of their work. This smart generation of Thai creatives mixes up country charm with downtown cool – here are the names and addresses to know.

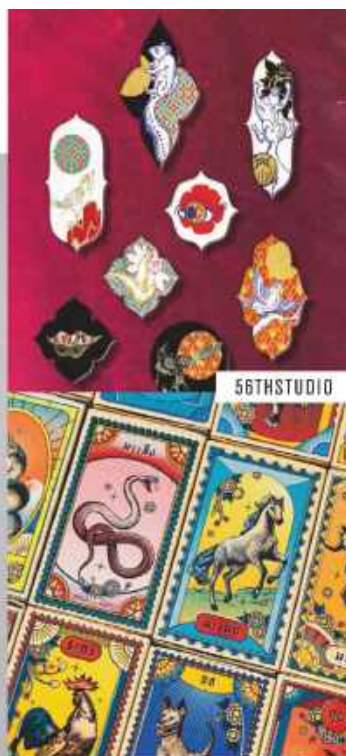


PHOTOGRAPH: CHRIS SCHALKX

SARAN YEN PANYA

WORD OF MOUTH

SARAN YEN PANYA



THE DESIGNER

Returning home after finishing a master's degree in Stockholm, multidisciplinary designer Saran Yen Panya wanted to break free from the all-pleasing appeal of Scandi minimalism and explore his own voice. His work, ranging from pop-up installations to furniture pieces, fuses the everyday with the elite: seats made from plastic fruit crates with neoclassical-style legs; tongue-in-cheek fabrics printed with kitschy pin-ups and traditional floral patterns; modern twists on *benjarong* (classic Thai ceramics). Panya also often collaborates with Thailand's forgotten craft communities, with products such as contemporary reed tote bags, handwoven and embroidered by artisans in the country's Isaan region, available at his space, **56thStudio**, in Bangkok's Talat Noi neighbourhood. 56thstudio.com

INSIDE TIP 'I love discovering crafts and textiles at the old-school shops around Yaowarat. For something a bit more modern, **Objects of Desire Store** in the Siam Discovery mall brings together work from some of the best young homegrown artists.'



GOLDEN AXE RECORDS



THE MUSIC COLLECTOR

Previously more likely to be heard playing from Bangkok's taxis than its coolest bars, the hypnotic riffs of Thai folk and country music known as *mor lam* and *luk thung* can now be listened to during indie festivals and DJ sets at some of the city's most progressive venues. In-the-know crate diggers hit up Thai-British music collector Mark Salmon for dead-stock vinyl and ultra-rare cassette tapes. After taking over the inventory of a now-defunct record shop, he launched online store **Golden Axe Records** to share his finds with enthusiasts from Germany to Japan and is a go-to resource for his vast knowledge about Thailand's musical history. goldenaxerecords.com
INSIDE TIP 'Acts such as Paradise Bangkok Molam International Band and Rasamee have been at the forefront of the evolving sound scene. And **Studio Lam**, in the Sukhumvit district, hosts live performances by up-and-coming bands.'





A TEMPLE IN BANG RAK

THE STYLIST

The capital's contrasting cityscape – with its crumbling shophouses pitched next to gleaming skyscrapers – inspired fashion-editor-turned-creative-consultant Jirawat Maan Sriluansoi to launch **The Only Market**, a line of cross-culture souvenirs capturing the perseverance of Thainess in a rapidly globalising society. Flipping the script on typical design, Sriluansoi remixes the idea of token holiday T-shirts and ubiquitous household items (market bags, handkerchiefs) to create fashion-forward tops, pins and accessories emblazoned with Thai phrases translated into Russian, Arabic and Chinese. [instagram.com/theonlymarketbangkok](https://www.instagram.com/theonlymarketbangkok)

INSIDE TIP 'I often work with the brand **Dry Clean Only**, whose pieces have been worn by Beyoncé and Rihanna, and I admire the designs of **Realistic Situation**, which I think really represent the new Bangkok – modern yet nostalgic.'



THE ONLY MARKET



NAPOL JANTRAGET

THE CHEF

When Thai food trailblazer Napol Jantraget isn't fermenting, smoking or pickling local produce at his fine-dining spot **80/20** in the riverside Bang Rak neighbourhood, you may find him scouring the countryside for little-known flavours and small-scale farmers to team up with. Jantraget's locavore approach has earned him a devoted following and his restaurant a Michelin star, making him all the more determined to continue his path deep into the nitty-gritty of Thai cooking. A food lab/chef's table is in the works, and he recently opened **Krok**, a humble shophouse joint gaining a citywide reputation for its excellent *nam prik*, a punchy chilli sauce. [8020bkk.com](https://www.8020bkk.com)

INSIDE TIP 'My friend Chalee Kader takes nose-to-tail dining to new heights at his Isaan-inspired restaurant, **100 Mahaseth**. Or try scoring a table at **Sorn**; it's hard to get a booking, but the southern Thai dishes are phenomenal.'



NIKS ANUMAN-RAJADHON

THE MIXOLOGIST

A kingpin in the renaissance of Soi Nana, the edgy nightlife enclave on the fringes of the city's Chinatown, Niks Anuman-Rajadhon is on a mission to infuse the bar landscape with a more authentic flavour. At **Teens of Thailand**, he blends native herbs and spices: such as chrysanthemum and tea with top-shelf speciality gins, while the drinks at his other space, **Asia Today**, use ingredients brought back from foraging trips around the country (elephant garlic from Lampang, cocoa from Chanthaburi). He's also the driving force behind Boom's Reserve, a collection of wild honey sourced from the mountains of northern Thailand, which plays a starring role in many of his concoctions. [facebook.com/teensofthailand](https://www.facebook.com/teensofthailand)

INSIDE TIP 'Around the corner from Asia Today, **TEP Bar** is the place to go for tipples mixed with Thai liquor. Make sure to try the flight of yadong shots, made from local rice-based moonshine.'



80/20