

Luxury or Super-Luxury Living?

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Life always has its surprises, and often they are quite pleasant.

Living and working in Southeast Asia for over a decade now has allowed me to explore this amazing region in considerable depth. On my travels, I constantly find myself inexplicably drawn to water and the ocean, and seek it out whenever I can. Over the years, I've taken cruises down the Mekong, swum with whale sharks in the Philippines, and experienced magical sunsets over the rice terraces in Bali. I've also stayed in many five star hotels, private commercial villas and retreats, and even a few memorable bungalows in unique settings, but nothing would compare to what I was about to experience at The Aquila.

Some friends had suggested that a group of us take a trip to Phuket to stay in the newly opened Aquila villa, a private 7-bedroom luxury villa built on the side of a cliff overlooking the Andaman Sea. I was intrigued and more than a little excited. This sounded like just what I needed.

Billed as Phuket's newest 'Super Villa' I was curious to see if it lived up to that title. You see, in yachting terms a "super-yacht" refers to a yacht bigger than a normal one. If we apply that measure here, this is a seven bedroom home, set on over 10,000m2 of prime land, with over 150 metres of water frontage - it certainly qualifies as "super" on sheer scale alone.

However that summary doesn't do justice to it all its features. There are effectively four expansive living rooms on the estate, with each one unique and designed for different social settings. Then there is the gym, the 30 metre infinity pool, and the private bar and pool table in the recreation room. Why not walk down and enter the sea to swim out to a nearby tropical reef, or visit the waterfall which forms the boundary of the property. Yes the word "Super" is very apt to describe this villa. Following yachting terminology it should probably be termed a Mega-villa!



FASHION
LA DOLCE
VITA

ROOMS

Karma Reef
Aquila Phuket
French Chateau

TRAVEL

Palm Cove
Bhutan
Philippines

FASHION

Franksland
Magali Pascal
The Offering

DINING

Gueridon Grill
The Chef's Table
Coffee Shops

The Aquila currently has capacity to sleep up to 14 people with its 7 existing bedrooms, it also has a children's bunk room attached to one of the bedrooms and the villa is comfortable to take extra kids. It's perfect for two or three families, or like us, a group of couples. The spacious, modern bedrooms, all have private en-suite bathrooms and their own balcony. Ducted air conditioning and ceiling fans are used to good effect. I really enjoyed the ability to choose between natural airflow and air-conditioning designed into each room. Each room has large sliding doors opening to the surroundings. The rooms have been constructed with a variety of imported and local materials rendered to the highest standards. Every bedroom in the villa has elevated wood ceilings and features uninterrupted views of the Andaman Sea.

Our group of 9, were here for some simple R & R, and that's exactly what we set out to do. Days were spent in any number of lazy ways. Such is the design of the estate, that there is enough space and variety of facilities to satisfy all tastes. Most of my moments were spent either in the beautiful black slate infinity pool, or in one of the salas at either end of the water. Eating, drinking and generally unwinding. Others watched movies in the lounge, read books in the library or took advantage of the gym or games room. The structure is so vast everyone was able to spread out, with as much privacy as they wanted.

The entire property just exudes style. The Aquila has been built with refined luxury that blends with its natural surrounds; its clean, uncluttered minimalist features and beautiful materials combine to make the most of its unique and stunning location. Each room in the villa, including the spa and the gym and all the living and bedrooms possess floor to ceiling windows and as such, no matter where you are on the expansive estate you will most likely have an amazing view of the natural bay in front and the surrounding greenery that frames it.



Deck chairs await at the horizon pool.



The master bedroom with views and space.





Deck chairs await at the horizon pool.

Each day for me began with a brisk walk down to the ocean's edge where a swim in the crystal clear Andaman cleared away any of the cobwebs from the night before. It's a short swim out to the house reef where I could indulge myself in the sights of the ocean. What a perfect start to the day. Fresh fruit, coffee and other breakfast treats await in either the outdoor eating sala or the formal dining room. I chose to eat by the pool, with the fresh air, the cool breeze on my skin and the ocean as my view.

The Aquila is full service, and the staff were outstanding in providing everything we needed in a professional manner. Our meals were cooked to order with the ingredients we selected, mostly bought from the markets that day. Barbecued seafood, fresh fruits and vegetables dominated our choices.

One of the highlights each day is without a doubt witnessing the special sunsets over the Andaman Sea. Sitting in the comfort of your pool-side sala with a cool drink in hand you will be treated to the most amazing hues of pink and orange reflecting from the water all around. It truly is breathtaking, and you will be left wondering... Does it get any better than this? With my days beginning and ending by the pool and overlooking the expansive sea stretching to the horizon in front of me, my cravings to be by the water were well and truly satiated at the Aquila.



The dining room with the villa's central spiral staircase.

Evenings were spent doing very little other than making the most of what we had. Good food, good friends, and a magical setting. Although the villa is fully self-contained and we felt no need to go anywhere, it's a short drive from the restaurants and nightlife of Kama-la if you wish to explore.

It is difficult to fault a property that has been constructed with no expenses spared and managed and run at the highest quality. For those who crave the ultimate tropical island vacation, then the Aquila really should be at the top of your list. The Aquila has redefined luxury in Phuket, and truly deserves the moniker of "super-villa".

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www.frvbali.com/2017/luxury-super-luxury



www.aquilaphuket.com