

# Andrew Harper's Hideaway Report<sup>®</sup>

MAY 2015 | OUR 36TH YEAR

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## THIS MONTH

### ISLAND ESCAPES IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

Seductive resorts and hotels in Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia

### WYOMING AND IDAHO

Rocky Mountain lodges for multigenerational summer vacations

### WEB EXCLUSIVES

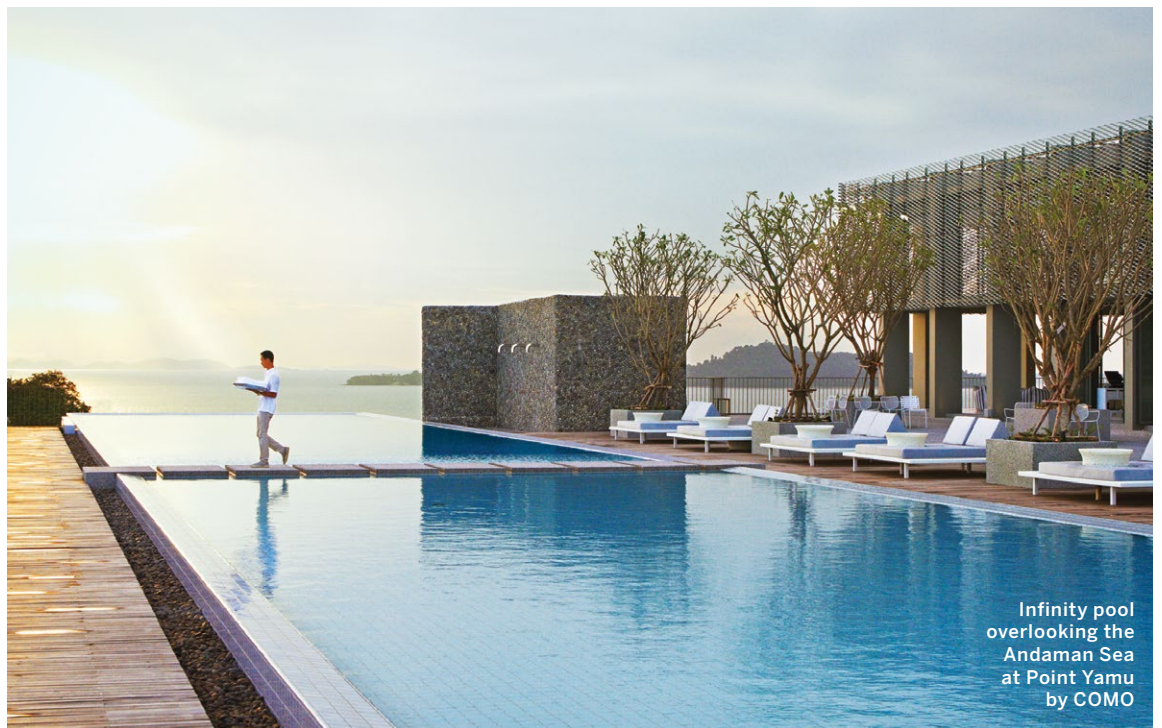
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NEW RESORTS, SENSUOUS SPAS, THAI CUISINE

## The Many Pleasures of Phuket



Infinity pool overlooking the Andaman Sea at Point Yamu by COMO

## IN THE NEWS

### Paris Debut Sensation

SINCE IT OPENED in January, **La Réserve Paris** has garnered plaudits by the sackful. Located just off the Champs-Élysées, the property offers 40 accommodations, of which 26 are suites. The building was designed by Haussmann in 1854 for the half-brother of Emperor Napoleon III. Its interior has been transformed by designer-of-the-moment Jacques Garcia at the behest of hotelier Michel Reybier (whose La Réserve brand includes my recommended La Réserve Ramatuelle near Saint-Tropez). The sumptuous décor is complemented by a spa with a 50-foot pool, and *Le Gabriel* restaurant, overseen by chef Jérôme Banctel, who trained with Alain Senderens at *Lucas Carton*. I will publish a full report in the near future.

LARESERVE-PARIS.COM

STILL RELATIVELY UNSPOILED, PHUKET PROVIDES A BLISSFUL TIMEOUT DURING A sightseeing trip to Southeast Asia. Recently, the lush and hilly island off the southwest coast of Thailand has seen the opening of several new hotels, including a property by noted Singaporean hotelier Christina Ong, and the evolution of one of the best restaurant scenes in Asia.

Tipped off to these developments by expatriate friends living in Hong Kong, I added the island to my itinerary during an extended visit to the region. Phuket already has three of my favorite resort hotels — Amanpuri, Six Senses Yao Noi and Trisara, so I was curious to see how the new contenders would stack up.

On arrival at Phuket's international airport, I was taken aback to see that many of the official signs are now in both Russian and Chinese. Many Russians, it seems, have bought property here as a

safe investment outside of the ruble zone, while the Chinese have fallen in love, like everyone else, with the friendly people, reasonable prices, delicious food and gorgeous beaches.

Viewed from afar, the 106-room **Point Yamu** by COMO hotel has a slightly forbidding appearance. A boxy modern structure, it is set on a crest overlooking the Andaman Sea on Phuket's east coast, the side of the island that has spectacular views but less desirable beaches. Since I've always

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## Idyllic Idaho Lakeside Retreat

LAST YEAR, THE SUN VALLEY LODGE WAS BEING RENOVATED, SO, DEPRIVED OF A CUSTOMARY summer retreat, we decided to take our extended family to another Idaho resort. From Boise, a scenic two-hour drive along the Payette River brought us to McCall, a remote town with around 3,000 inhabitants set at the edge of snow-fed Payette Lake.

A resort since 1948, **Shore Lodge**, as its name suggests, is situated lakeside and offers 77 rooms and suites, 62 of which have water views. In 2008, the resort, along with the Whitetail Club residential community, was a sentimental purchase by Joe Scott, grandson of grocery magnate Joe Albertson. He wanted to modernize the lodge while maintaining the charm and family-friendly appeal that he recalled from childhood. An investment of more than \$10 million has resulted in upgraded rooms and a spa.

The property offers accommodations on three levels, with the lower level opening onto groomed sandy beaches — a nice feature for younger children. We stayed in a spacious Lake View Suite on the third floor. A living room featured large bay windows and a small terrace. The dining room came with a mini-kitchen area. The bedroom was windowless, which was disappointing. The bath provided a walk-in shower and tub, but was very dark, owing to its green marble and brown wallpaper. Executive Suites are worth the upgrade alone for their larger, nicer baths done in cream-colored tile.

The lodge has three restaurants, all with spectacular lake views. The marina-side *Lake Grill* is the place to enjoy breakfast or lunch. Here, the food is good, if unremarkable, but the service can be slow. At *The Narrows*, a changing dinner menu features Northwest cuisine with dishes such as elk chop with smoked mushrooms and huckleberry sauce. After dinner, we wandered over to the *Narrows Grill*, a popular bar, for a “huckle-tini.” Huckleberries grow generously in the summer around McCall, attracting large numbers of black bears.

Family amenities at Shore Lodge include an in-house movie theater, game room, indoor basketball court and outdoor pool area with hot tub. However, the most fun can be had on the lake itself. Payette Lake covers 5,330 acres and, being in the shape of a horseshoe, is larger than it appears from the lodge. The water is pristine, cool and perfect for an invigorating swim. We took out kayaks and paddled right by a moose and her calf. Another highlight was renting a Manitou pontoon boat, a well-equipped floating living room with enough power for water

sports. For adults, the principal amenity is The Cove spa, where we enjoyed soaking in the indoor and outdoor saltwater immersion pools. Guests at Shore Lodge have the privilege of playing at Whitetail Club golf course, with a beautiful layout woven through the forested residential area. The driving range itself is a joy, so head over at least an hour before your tee time. In general, the course is uncrowded — we had the links to ourselves on a Saturday.

Downtown McCall, with its quaint shops, is less than a mile from the resort. On more than one evening, we took the entire family to *Steamers*, run for the past 10 years by local chef Darren Strandell and his wife, Lauri. Menu highlights included tuna tartare with avocado and capers, manila clams from Puget Sound, and a lamb and trout dinner served with Idaho Yukon Gold mashed potatoes. **HR**



### Sun Valley Upgrade


SUN VALLEY LODGE is undergoing long-overdue refurbishments, including new baths and larger rooms, some of which will now have fireplaces. Public areas are being updated, too, and a 20,000-square-foot spa wing is being constructed near the round outdoor pool. The lodge is set to reopen in June. I do not currently recommend the property, but intend to pay a visit soon.



Shore Lodge and marina  
PHOTOS BY ANDREW HARPER



### Shore Lodge 90

**LIKE** The lakeside setting; the abundance of activities; the large, comfortable rooms. **DISLIKE** Slow service; our windowless bedroom. **GOOD TO KNOW** Only lakeview rooms should be considered. Book well in advance, as summer is extremely popular. Fall is a nice time to go without the children. Internet is not reliable or fast in McCall. LAKE VIEW KING SUITE, \$260; EXECUTIVE LAKE VIEW KING SUITE, \$410. 501 WEST LAKE STREET, MCCALL, IDAHO. TEL. (208) 634-2244. SHORELODGE.COM 



preceding a rating, denotes an officially recommended hotel. Visit AndrewHarper.com for more information on this and one other recommendation in Idaho.