



Chilled out (from far left): a serene outdoor corner in Como Shambhala day spa; the Penthouse Suite. Facing page, the Metropolitan Room.



Light fantastic: the entrance to The Metropolitan, viewed from the pool. Centre right, tuna carpaccio, olive and parsley salad at Cy'an. Right, the C Bar area at Cy'an, with pendant lights from Italy.



## hipzone

THE METROPOLITAN IS AN OASIS OF COOL IN THE HEAT AND BUSTLE OF BANGKOK.

WORDS ROSALYN PAGE

The Metropolitan Bangkok, sister hotel to London's The Metropolitan on Old Park Lane, is a sassy new addition to the string of hip venues infiltrating Thailand's dynamic capital city.

The 171-room, 11-floor hotel opened late last year in Sathorn, Bangkok's upmarket business and embassy district. A stark street entrance leads to doors swung open by staff dressed in chic outfits by Japanese fashion designer Yohji Yamamoto.

Inside, traditional Thai touches blend with modern convenience. The lobby's pale walls and minimalist, open-plan style is juxtaposed with the dark local makha timber flooring. At reception, efficient staff count, tag and whisk your bags to your

room before you can say "Hold the lift!". Nearby, a line of Mac computers is set up, ready for guests to connect to the Internet. Laptop owners can make use of WiFi hotspots in guestrooms and public areas for wireless connectivity.

The rooms and suites feel intimate and serene. They are contemporary and spacious, (more than 50sq/m), each comprising a king-size bed (or twin beds), sofa, adjustable reading lamps, a Bose stereo system, large flat-screen television and a DVD player. Local fabrics feature in the bed linen and soft furnishings, while works by emerging Thai artist Natee Utarit hang in each room and the lobby.



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The trend towards holistic health and relaxation is part of The Met's mantra: each room is equipped with a yoga mat and meditation chair. For greater indulgence, there's the Como Shambhala day spa's signature massage – two glorious hours of long, soothing strokes – as well as a gym, yoga studio and 20-metre outdoor lap pool.

Directly outside the day spa is Glow, an intimate eatery serving light, healthy pan-Asian cuisine, including spirulina noodles with raw white fish and sea vegetable salad, and a chicken and herb "tonic" soup, as well as a range of energising juices and herbal teas. Serious foodies will consider The Met's signature restaurant, Cy'an. Its interior is slick – all cool blue and white to echo the tones of the sparkling pool in the foreground. Former Sydneysider and Rockpool-trained Amanda Gale is executive chef at the 110-seat restaurant, producing Mediterranean- and Moorish-style food. Expect dishes such as spiced seafood stew with preserved lemon and Israeli couscous, or balsamic-glazed duck with spiced cherries and sautéed spinach.

Cy'an's extensive list of wines, including French, Italian and Australian varieties, has been carefully selected to complement Gale's signature food. Her influence also extends to Met Bar, a buzzing Thai-style lunch venue that morphs into an exclusive night bar, serving exotic cocktails such as Tom Yumtini, a blend of lemongrass, galangal and bergamot-leaf vodkas.

Like its London counterpart, The Metropolitan Bangkok is decidedly cool (and this in a city with year-round humidity). The double-glazed interior is an impressive retreat with impeccable finishes. It's stylish and intrinsically Thai – minus the pomp or kitsch that typify so many luxury hotels.

*The Metropolitan Bangkok, 27 South Sathorn Rd, Tungmahamek, Sathorn, Bangkok 10120, Thailand, +66 2 625 333, [www.metropolitan.como.bz](http://www.metropolitan.como.bz). Rates from \$310 (City Room).*



Prayers answered (clockwise from top left): the modernism of The Metropolitan is a counterpoint to the rich culture that surrounds it, such as these buddhas at Wat Pho (Temple of the Reclining Buddha); the soothing hotel lobby – a balm after the bustle of the Bangkok; warm salad of Australian black marron, grilled radicchio, duck confit and fresh figs at Cy'an; the shimmering simplicity of Glow.

