

Living It Up

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Here, you are welcomed and encompassed by ginormous, Indonesian teakwood pillars - illuminated by the goldfish-colored, locally-made chandelier-like lantern dangling over the smiley faces of Thai staff, and the Lanna regalia attached to the wooden wall.

While a general tour of this hotel will soon ensue, let's take note of the Rim's "butler service concept where one staff-member can do - everything."

The idea behind this service plan is that the entirety of The Rim's staff is trained and routinely rotated throughout all positions such as housekeeping, front office duties and the restaurant. "You ask, they can answer," says Tiwaporn. "It's like one-stop service."

She says bunking up at The Rim can result in someone learning "a lot about Thai people and their way of service - kind and helpful." And it is this "Thai hospitality" that lays the real foundation for The Rim's claim to authentic, Lanna-style architecture.

It's perhaps bizarre, being located on the west side of Chiang Mai's moat (along with its buzzing traffic), that sauntering away from the lobby toward your room can involve soul-stilling quietude and chirping birds perched amid lush greenery. Being inside the Rim is like warping into the real Thailand - which is... countryside.

Then there are the equally remarkable stairwells and hallways, comprised of off-white colored concrete mixed with sugar cane - creating an antique appearance, as though you're within a 100 year-old Buddhist temple.

Top this with old-style, Northern Thai stained glass windows, touches of Burmese artwork amidst the multitude of trees and bamboo encircling the swimming pool, and it really begins to feel like you're somewhere exceptional.

The Rim is offering a total of 36 rooms, placed in various locations throughout, from which you can select your privacy preference. There are the 'deluxe' rooms - lavishly decorated with locally-made items along with modern amenities. Be sure to appreciate the Northern Thai treats awaiting you before sprawling out on the cushy bed.

Maybe you feel like stepping things up a bit and disappear into the lap of further luxury via a top-notch, 'junior suite' room - with its living space and massive LCD-TV; classy bathroom, dressing room, jacuzzi and adjoining, the welcoming bedroom. This particular space overlooks the aforementioned garden, which provides from a bird's eye view how The Rim is actually built like an old Buddhist temple. Even the roof is topped with shingles with an authentic cast of age and venerability to them, although in reality this building complex is about one year old.

It's really sort of mind-boggling. It seems that Khun Tiwaporn is telling it like it is when she says, "There really is only one Rim Hotel."



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RIM-STYLE

The Rim Hotel! What is really being offered to its guests? Why would someone dish out precious travel time and cash to shack up in this elegantly designed (yet stylishly practical) accommodation?

An adventurous trip to a soul-easing bamboo hut, personable guest house or modern-style inn located near Chiang Mai's bustling markets, gurgling tuk-tuks and neon lights would likely do the trick, right? What is The Rim offering that is so unique?

"We would like to have our guests feel like they are at home when they come here," says Khun Tiwaporn Teprachoom, The Rim's senior sales manager.



Tiwaporn confides that The Rim is really about offering two main things, under one philosophy: good service within a Lanna-style atmosphere.

Granted that many of Northern Thai's resorts, guest houses and hotels claim and market these attributes, she says The Rim offers "true Northern Thai-style, which is actually difficult to find in Thailand."

Hmm. Well, beyond being somewhat struck by the expansive (yet welcoming) palace-like tarmac fronting this *galae*-topped, Lanna Kingdom-symbolizing hotel, one may gain further insight into Tiwaporn's claims by entering The Rim's earthy lobby.