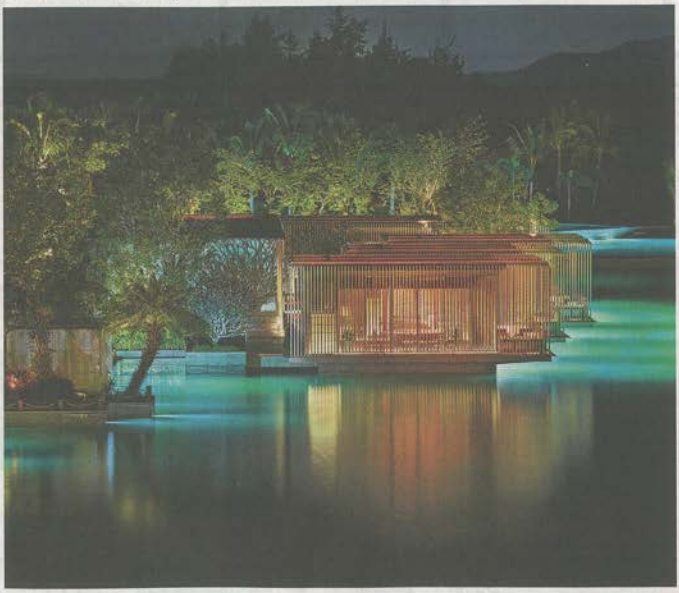
HOTELEGRAPH

Schrager style meets China's Hawaii

Spectacular futuristic resort on the tropical island of Hainan has its own 'private ocean'

The Sanya EDITION, Hainan, China



Hotel supremo Ian Schrager's first opening in Asia is a design resort like no other. He wanted to create something that will still be relevant in 10 years' time and the result is spectacular: it counts futuristic design, China's first "private ocean", and a kids' club complete with fairground-style bumper cars among its features.

Location 7/10

Hainan, often described as "China's Hawaii", is a tropical island in the South China Sea. The EDITION joins the ranks of international resorts in the newest development of Haitang Bay on the south coast, around 45 minutes from the airport, with direct flights from Hong Kong (1.5 hours) and Shanghai (3.5 hours). It's a worthy detour from mainland China for white-sand beaches and balmy weather.

Style/character 9/10

The design plays on Sanya's ancient moniker as the "end of land and sea", with spaces that blur the lines between indoors and out. Concrete pavilions with glass walls and teak latticing appear to float alongside reflective ponds. Sharp edges are softened by huge potted plants and landscaped gardens which contain more than 900 different tree species from the island and include a bamboo grove.

Service and facilities 7/10

Strong offshore currents mean guests are forbidden from swimming in Haitang Bay, so instead there's a 20,000 square-metre purpose-built "ocean" for watersports. This sets the bar for the other facilities, which include four more freshwater pools, an ESPA-run spa, a bookshop run by a Beijing art collective, gallery, gym and fabulous children's area.

Service was, at times, slow. Levels of understanding and spoken English vary, but all members of staff were friendly and made an effort: everyone said hello and, despite the language barrier, tried their hardest to understand – or find someone that would.

Rooms 8/10

The 512 guestrooms all have ocean views. Limestone floors, oak finishes, baby-soft Frette linens and white divider curtains result in a clean finish. Suites and lofts have white stone freestanding baths; lofts also have a tub on the balcony. Le Labo supplies the toiletries.

The only downside is the lack of a room-service menu. A further 17 glass-boxed villas with private pools are set on a stepped terrace like stacked shoeboxes.

The resort's design plays on the idea of Sanya being 'the end of land and sea'; some rooms have private pools

Food and drink 7/10

Understandably for a resort of this size, the cuisine is broad to suit all tastes. The Market restaurant has food stations from breakfast to dinner – the former lays out everything from French pastries to dim sum; the latter offers pizzas to open-wok cooking. More interesting options are available at Barbacoa, a Balinese-inspired beach club, which serves Indonesian curries and fish straight off the barbecue, and The Jade Egret, a cocktail bar which also deals in small plates – the "Baos & Buns" section is excellent. A rooftop bar completes the set.

Xian Hai By The Sea, a restaurant located on glass-boxed floating platforms, is scheduled to open next month. A fish pond on the central terrace will offer up the day's freshest catch.

Value for money 7/10

Doubles cost from RMB 1,688 (£194), including breakfast. There is free Wi-Fi.

Access for guests with disabilities?

There are four ADA-accessible rooms with roll-in showers, ramps in public areas and lifts to all floors.

Family-friendly?

Incredibly so. Playland offers a children's pool with slides, plus mini-golf, fairground-style bumper cars, karaoke, interactive DJing, movie nights and a kids' club.

The details

100 North Haitang Road, Sanya, China PRC.572013 (00 86 898 8835 9999; editionhotels.com).

Jade Conroy

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Pavilions with glass walls and teak latticing appear to float

OUR RATING **8/10**