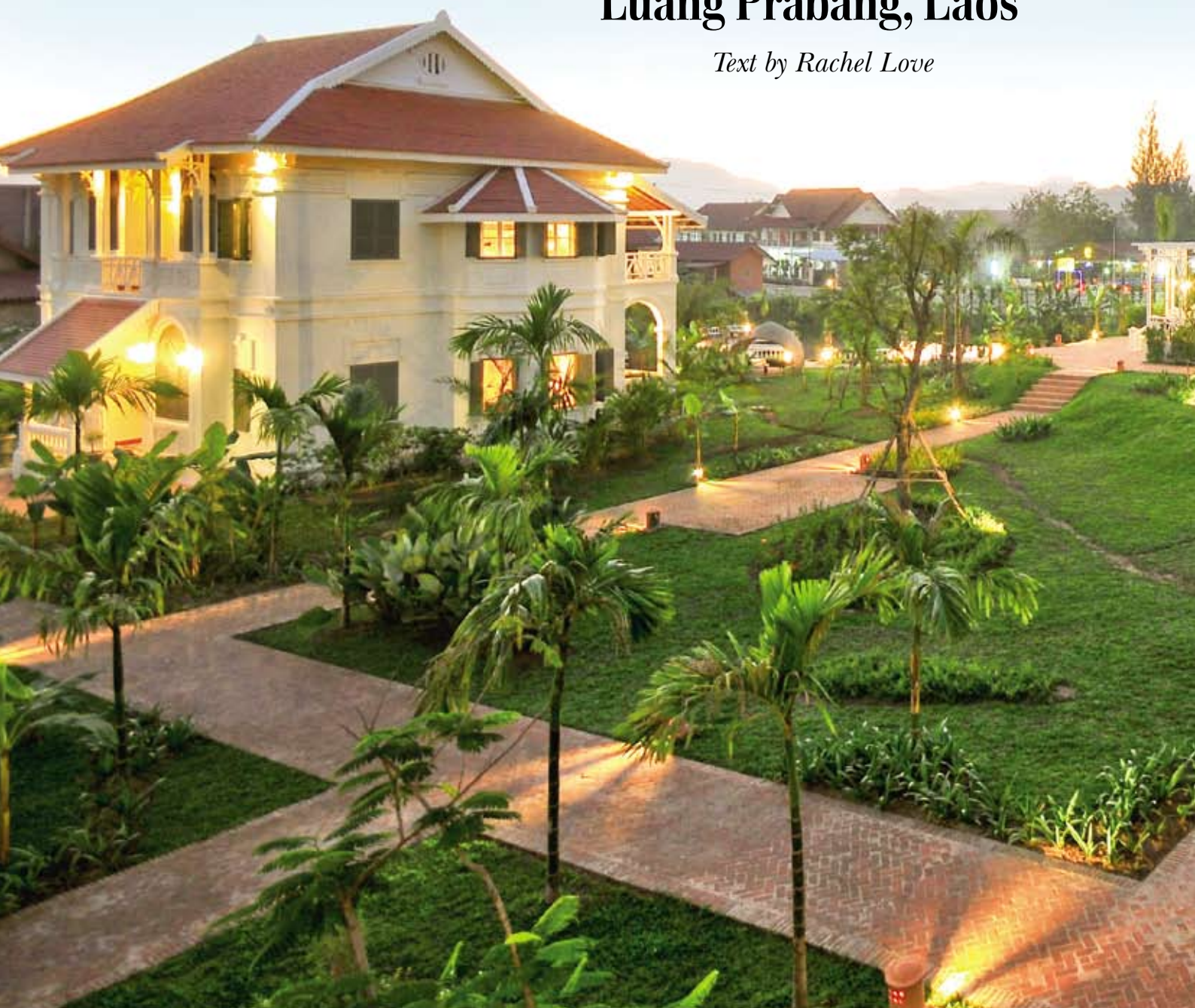


# Luang Say *Residence*

## Luang Prabang, Laos


*Text by Rachel Love*



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*A splendid night; the moon shines with extraordinary brilliancy, silvering the surface of this lovely river, bordered by high mountains, looking like a grand and gloomy rampart. The chirp of the cricket alone breaks the stillness.*

— Henri Mouhot 1861



**I**t was almost 150 years ago that the French explorer and naturalist, Henri Mouhot arrived in Luang Prabang and described it as a “delightful little town”. He was just one of a number of 19<sup>th</sup> century French adventurers who drew the attention of the outside world to the beauty and charm of Laos’ old royal capital. His legacy is a detailed and unfinished diary of his keen observations of the places, people, animals, insects and shells of the region. Some of his notes are the earliest surviving records of previously uncharted areas.

Now, in 24 suites within five pavilions and a main building, the Luang Say Residence resurrects the legacy of Mouhot and those other influential early French visitors.

In fact, ‘residence’ is an appropriate description; this immaculate five-star retreat, situated just ten minutes from downtown Luang Prabang, doesn’t feel like a hotel. Instead, it has been fashioned on a luxurious outpost of the ‘explorateurs’ glory days, when the excitement of discovering the new cultures, along Asia’s ‘lifeline’, the mighty Mekong River, was considered a



Above left: The residence's colonial past shines out in the early morning light.

Left: The splendidly regal foyer in the main residence.

Above: The bedrooms all lead to open terraces and exterior lounges, and the indulgent and spacious bathrooms have lacquer bathtubs, walk-in showers and double vanity units.

## BUILT IN 2010, COMPLETE WITH A DAZZLING SWIMMING POOL, THE PROPERTY CELEBRATES FRENCH COLONIAL ARCHITECTURE.

most fascinating experience. Built in 2010, complete with a dazzling swimming pool, the property celebrates French colonial architecture. Here, the arched and bay windows fitted with louvre shutters, red roofs, white walls and columns, black and white chequerboard floors, sweeping staircases, balustrades and intricately moulded plasterwork have been designed to portray and share the adventurous lavish lifestyles of the French colonialists.

The sumptuous 'Explorateur' and 'Pioneer' Suites introduce spacious indoor living areas furnished with writing desks, sofas, stools or lazy chairs, and twin or four poster king-size beds draped in snowy netting. The rooms are embellished with gorgeous fabrics and elegant lamps that shed light on the historical framed prints that adorn the walls. Ensuite bathrooms are fitted with reproduction washstands, oversized soaking tubs and walk-in monsoon showers, while outdoor sitting areas are presented in the form of exterior lounges, open terraces or balconies – perfect for enjoying an early morning 'chocolat chaud avec croissant et baguette' against a backdrop of mountains, palm trees and tropical gardens.

Tasty local delicacies created from favourite Asian recipes together with the signature dishes of a French brasserie are served at the Residence's 'La Belle Epoque' restaurant, followed by après-le-dîner absinthe cocktails, which can be enjoyed in '1861' – the terrace bar. The colonial era furnishings in this cosy lounge and terrace include studded leather sofas, marble tables and traditional bistro chairs. A library 'fumoir' corner adds to the intimate ambience, and during cooler months, the bar is warmed by a fire within a marble fireplace. The bar was named '1861' in honour of Mouhot; this remarkable man arrived in Luang Prabang on the 25<sup>th</sup> July of that year, and sadly died of malaria just four months later. At Luang Say Residence, however, a piece of his extraordinary life has been captured, ensuring that his memory will continue to live on. **FRV**



Above: A contemporary reflection of life in the French colonial era.

[www.luangsayresidence.com](http://www.luangsayresidence.com)