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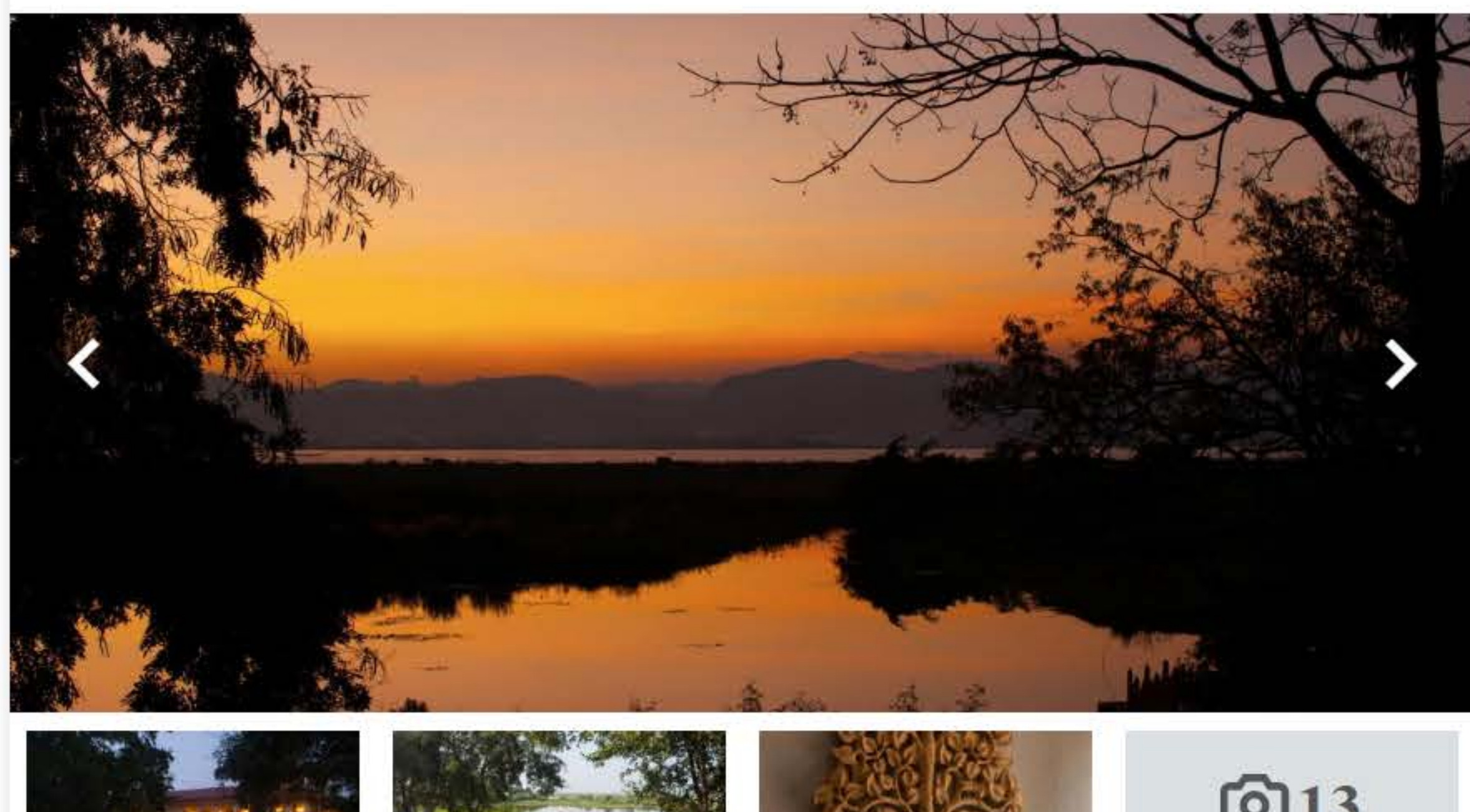
# Sanctum Inle Resort, Myanmar - hotel review

Julia Pearson soaks up the scenery at this five star retreat

JULIA PEARSON | Friday 27 January 2017 | 0 comments

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## Sanctum Inle Resort, Myanmar - in pictures



As Myanmar sits on the cusp of a tourism boom, Sanctum Inle Resort is a welcome addition to this beautiful part of the world...

### Where is it?

On the shores of Inle Lake, a huge natural lake populated by floating gardens and stilted fishing villages, in the mountainous eastern Shan State of Myanmar. Even though the lake is one of Myanmar's main tourist draws, it remains a serene spot in which to relax and enjoy the natural beauty of the surroundings, well away from the country's hectic cities. Whereas much of the accommodation in the area is centred in the dusty town of Nyaungshwe, Sanctum is one of a few hotels on the lake itself, boasting stunning views and a far more relaxed environment than the town, so we'd highly recommend it for the location alone.



(Sanctum)

### Style

Myanmar is in the very early stages of a tourism boom and as such the hotel industry is having to play catch up fast. In a country mercifully untouched by international chains, many hotels are rundown and vastly overpriced for the standard you'd expect in neighbouring Thailand for example. Sanctum, which opened in 2016, is a bit of a turning point, a genuine five star experience with lush landscaped gardens, cloistered walkways, large modern rooms, slick service, and a beautiful infinity pool overlooking the lake.

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### Facilities

There's plenty to keep you entertained but the standout feature has to be the pool. It's not heated so our sunrise swim (ok, 8am) was a little chilly but in the heat of the day, there's no better place to cool off and relax while gazing out at the lake, mountains, hotel gardens and the odd water buffalo. In keeping with the five star ambitions, there's also a gym, spa, a swish restaurant and bar, and even a hotel shop selling local handicrafts.



(Sanctum)

### Extra-Curricular

Although it's tempting to stay put, you'll want to get out on the lake and explore at some point. Again, the location of Sanctum is perfect as it has a jetty and direct access onto the lake, meaning you don't have to head into town to hire a boat. We went for a half day morning excursion which we found ample time, visiting some local villages and markets. The highlight though had to be the Inle Heritage Centre which has a refuge for native breed Burmese cats, all available for cuddles (but only during timed tours so check ahead). The hotel has a fleet of bikes too so you can go off and explore on your own. We took a great trip up to the local Red Mountain Vineyard for sunset - the wine's not amazing but the views certainly are.

### Food and Drink



(Sanctum)

The hotel's restaurant, The Refectory, is a hub of activity throughout the day. There are the default Western options on there but the kitchen admirably sticks to its guns to highlight the local Shan cuisine too, with varying degrees of authenticity compared to local street food. Amongst the myriad breakfast buffet options, you can try *mohingha*, the country's famed fish curry and later on, a very good version of Shan chicken noodles as well as tea leaf and tomato salads made from produce grown on the lake's floating gardens. The hotel also serves another local wine, from the Aythaya vineyard, which was actually pretty good.

### Which Room?

There are four room types, with the top suites boasting lake views and masses of space. All rooms are very comfy and spacious, however, each with their own private terrace, living area, large en-suite bathrooms, king size beds and all mod cons, so you really can't go wrong.



(Sanctum)

### Best For

As long as you're here to relax and soak up the scenery, Sanctum has something for everyone. Its location means there's not a huge amount on its doorstep and it's a good 25 mins in a cab to town, but what you lose in a bit of convenience you gain in soul-affirming peace and quiet.

### When to go

Myanmar has a wet season from May to October and then what should in theory be a hot and dry season the rest of the time. We were at Inle Lake in early January, however, and saw a huge downpour one day but holing up in the hotel was no bad thing. Being 800m above sea level, Inle Lake does enjoy slightly cooler temperatures all year round too.

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### Price

Rates start from £230 a night including breakfast and wifi. Book [here](#)

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