

GOURMET TRAVELLER

Published June 2013

RECIPES RESTAURANTS TRAVEL ENTERTAINING EVENTS OTW/RE VIDEO SUBSCRIBE

GOURMET TRAVELLER

GOURMET TRAVELLER > TRAVEL > TRAVEL NEWS & FEATURES > BALI'S BEST LUXURY VILLAS

SUBSCRIBE LATEST TRENDING

ER RECIPES
... know that
netimes all you want
beer. ...

SUMMER SEAFOOD
RECIPES
Turn festive seafood
into something special
with ...

SUMMER SALADS
It's time to turn over a
new leaf: these crisp ...

Home away from home

Getting there
Jetstar operates 30 services per week
between the Australian ports of
Melbourne, Sydney, Darwin and
Perth and Bali's Denpasar airport.

*Whether you're travelling in a troop,
longing for a personal butler or just loath
to share a pool, there's no better base in
Bali than a villa. Kendall Hill uncovers
some of the latest and greatest luxury stays
on the Island of the Gods.*

HOME AWAY FROM HOME

Whether you're travelling in a troop, longing for a personal butler or just loath to share a pool, there's no better base in Bali than a villa. Kendall Hill uncovers some of the latest and greatest luxury stays on the Island of the Gods.

In this day and age, there's really only one way to do Bali, especially if travelling en masse. Hire a villa. Private estates with resident staff, swimming pools, home-cooked food and transport on

tap are all the rage on the Island of the Gods. Which is hardly surprising given the ease of living in privileged bubbles where, for once in your life, you get to put your feet up and have someone else do all the work.

Hotels are ideal for short stays (and they're also booming on the island right now), but for longer-term luxury it's hard to beat villa living. For the same price or less than they'd pay for a resort room, ordinary Australian families are living it up like landed gentry in exclusive holiday homes. A Balinese villa is an affordable fantasy.

There's no official definition of what constitutes a villa, but privacy and pools are paramount. Staff is also a given, with everyone from cook and driver to security and spa therapist at your beck and call. And of course there must be frangipanis to perfume the night air and dutifully drop blossoms onto groomed lawns so guests can swoon at the sheer gorgeousness of their surroundings while briefly allowing themselves to dream of a life where they could wake to such wonders every day.

But not all villas are created equal. There are opulent private affairs, and there are some highly desirable hotel versions, and then there are the cheap, cookie-cutter compounds masquerading as villas that have colonised large swathes of Seminyak and the south-west coast.

Not all villas are tasteful, either. We found our fair share of gaudy extravagance and characterless concrete monoliths at the more exclusive end of the scale. One spectacular perch on the escarpment of the Bukit Peninsula featured a home cinema with pirated new-release films and a cellar stocked with Burgundy's finest, but that wasn't enough to make up for the vulgar interior decorating.

We prefer our villas to have an authentic Balinese feel, daring design, or a dream location. Preferably all of the above. After combing through dozens of architectural options in alluring settings, we've come up with this catalogue of exceptional digs. All of them 100 per cent dedicated to the pursuit of carefree, indulgent holidays.

THE ADDRESS BOOK

More premium villas will organize express airport arrivals for guests; transfers between airport and villa are usually standard. Rates often include daily breakfasts and chauffeured transport for eight (consecutive) hours a day, excluding petrol. Many villa managers will discuss preferred menus with guests pre-arrival, with food and drinks provided at cost plus a 15 to 20 per cent

service charge to cover shopping and preparation. Check whether the quoted rate includes taxes - if not, figure on paying an extra 15 to 21 per cent. Babysitters, spa treatments, cultural excursions and almost anything else sir or madam desires can be arranged with villa managers directly.

Bayuh Sabbha

Location, location Celebrity setting on the Bukit Peninsula above the famous surf breaks of Impossibles Beach and Bingin.

Selling points Private cliff-front pile of lawns, gardens, bushland and pools with arresting views along the sweep of southern coastline to Dreamland and Balangan beaches. Gym and tennis court on site; WiFi, barbecue and Bose sound system; children's play area and TV room. The two-bedroom guest wing has its own pool. Chef Made is a dab hand at Japanese cuisine. A path just outside the property leads down to Impossibles Beach for safe swimming and lazy lunches at the local warung.

Staff size 17, including five housekeepers and 24-hour security.

Perfect for Two families holidaying together, bridal parties, surfie mates.

Max pax 10.

GT loves Apart from the killer views and glorious grounds? The patina of the property. The now 11-year-old Bayuh Sabbha's antique-filled pavilions, weathered and full of character, blend beautifully with the natural environment. You may not want to go home. (Villa manager Cok Gede Putra Wahudi says guests stay an average of 10 nights, "and when they leave, sometimes with crying".)

What you'll pay From \$1700 a night plus taxes.

Contact Book via [Marketing Villas](#).

Puri Bawana

Location, location In Canggu on the island's south-west coast, close by Echo Beach. Seminyak is seven kilometres away, which, depending on the time of day, can be a doddle or a drama in traffic.

Selling points A handsome property entered through an open-sided wantilan with sightlines down a sloping hillside to 30-metre pool, rice paddies and dense forest on the property's

border. Five bedrooms in pavilions staggered down the slope, with lily ponds and indoor/outdoor bathrooms.

Staff size 11.

Perfect for Family groups. Guests get free membership to the nearby Canggu Club with its sporting facilities, bars and eateries and activities for children.

Max pax 10, plus bunk room for five youngsters.

GT loves The rice paddies planted within the 7000-square-metre compound, purely for aesthetics.

What you'll pay From \$1070 per night plus taxes.

Contact Book through [Marketing Villas](#).

[Mahatma House](#)

Location, location Seseh, a black-sand beach between Cemagi and Canggu, about 30 minutes' drive north of Seminyak.

Selling points This dark and sexy five-bedroom villa (owned by a Spanish model and a fashion designer) is a welcome relief from the alang-alang thatched roofs and pale interiors of typical Bali abodes. Mahatma blends vertical gardens in walls of volcanic stone with black terrazzo, vintage Sino objets and the obligatory giant Buddha. The five bedrooms, three in the main duplex pavilion and one each in pavilions either side of the 18-metre pool, are similar except for the views - the two masters have direct ocean outlooks. The compact grounds are flanked by coconut grove and sea, and feature emerald lawns and a poolside lounge perfect for evening cocktails and alfresco dining.

Staff size Nine, including senior and junior butlers.

Perfect for Special-occasion celebrations and family getaways.

Max pax 10.

GT loves The firepit at the poolside lounge for long, lazy evenings beneath the stars; the dazzling Asian artefacts that lend unique character to this classy crash-pad.

What you'll pay \$710 a night plus taxes. Bargain.

Contact Bookings through [Marketing Villas](#).

[Villa Maridadi](#)

Location, location At Cemagi on the south-west coast, beyond Canggu and Seseh. Seemingly in the middle of nowhere, backed by paddocks but fronted by magnificent pounding surf. About 35 minutes' drive from Seminyak.

Selling points That view. The property frames it like an amphitheatre so all eyes are drawn to the constantly pounding waves (far too dangerous for swimming, sadly) and an evocative black-stone sea temple on the point. Five bedrooms in four buildings (one of them two-storey) are simply but attractively furnished with teak floors, raised beds, modern paintings and outdoor bathrooms in walled gardens of palm and heliconia. The children's bedroom has twin beds with trundles underneath. The upstairs family room has a billiards table and slightly garish colouring. There's a 20-metre pool in front of the ocean, and a shared tennis court.

Staff size 16.

Perfect for Larger family groups or friends wanting to get away from it all.

Max pax 10 (plus four trundle beds).

GT loves The traditional lumbung stilt house framing the crashing surf - perfect for daydreaming or dramatic oceanfront dining and barbecues.

What you'll pay From \$900 a night, plus taxes.

Contact: Book through [Marketing Villas](#).

- Topics:
- [Resorts,Bali,Asia](#)
- Story:
- [Kendall Hill](#)
- Photography:
- [Julian Kingma](#)
- Destination:
- [Bali](#)
- Magazine:
- [Jun 2013](#)