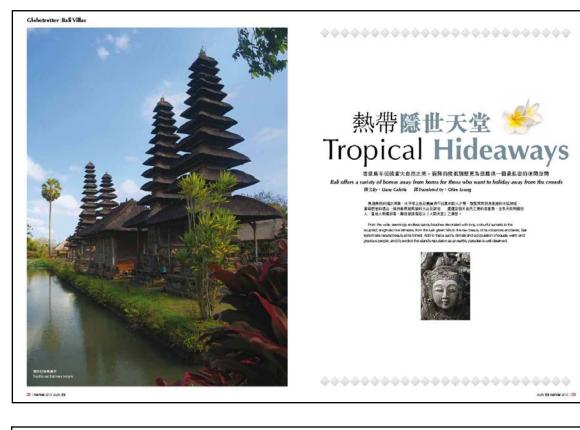
ASPIRE MAGAZINE – Alamanda Edition Feb/Mar 2010





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Most people who try villas never go back to hotels

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Tropical Hideaways

Bali offers a variety of homes away from home for those who want to holiday away from the crowds.

By: Liana Cafolla. Translated by: Olive Leung

From the wide, seemingly endless sandy beaches decorated with long, colourful sunsets to the sculpted enigmatic rice terraces; from the lush green hills to the raw beauty of its volcanoes and lakes, Bali epitomises natural beauty at its richest. Add to that a sunny climate and a population of equally warm and gracious people, and its evident the island's reputation as an early paradise is well deserved.

Those travelers looking for a slice of real privacy and total relaxation in this hedonistic haven are increasingly turning their backs on traditional hotelbased holidays and opting instead to rent a private villa. It's a trend that is being fed by the growing number of high-quality villas on the island, according to lan Macaulay, who runs villa management and marketing companies Elite Havens and BHM. "There are probably about 500 villas on the island worthy of being rented, [with] new ones being added every day," Macaulay says.

The appeal of renting a private villa is quickly apparent. As a chance to indulge in a generous, secluded space with attentive staff and far from any

connotations of mass tourism, villa holidays offer privacy, luxury and freedom. "Especially for those of us who live in Asia, we spend most of our time in shoeboxes – live in an apartment, work in an office tower. Having an expansive serviced villa with its own swimming pool and a tropical garden is a real treat," says Macaulay. "If you want to have a breakfast buffet laid out for 10 people at three in the afternoon everyday, a villa can do it easily. You can do all kinds of things in the swimming pool at any time, and in any state you choose!"

As almost every villa in Bali is remotely situated, a car is necessary to get around, but that increases the opportunities to explore. While the rates may seem pricey, when divided among a group of friends – and compared to the prices for a room in a similarly well-appointed hotel – the savings racked up are impressive.

Because of the individuality of the villas here, most visitors will be able to find one that meets their needs. Larger villas, with several individual suites, will suit large families or groups of friends looking to share a holiday but still retain some privacy. Villas with large staff are ideal for those who like to entertain whether on a small or a grand scale. The Longhouse in Jimbaran offers six sumptuous bedroom suites, spa, gym, a private wine cellar and a chef with a highly regarded reputation. Guests are charged only for the cost of the meals' ingredients, and villa rates are from US\$560 to US\$ 1,400 per night.

Villas located near Bali's tourist hotspots such as Kuta allow for wild nights out on the town, followed by peace and relaxation by day. Villa Casa Mateo is such an option. An elegant, modern and fully-staffed villa in a quiet street, it's a few minutes drive from Seminyak's hippest bars, restaurants and shops. Rates are from US\$800 to US\$1,200 per night.

Villa Sin Sin is owned by Hong Kong fashion designer Sin Sin Man, and comprises three separate villas, each with two bedrooms and a pool, near Legian and Seminyak. Nightly rates are from US\$420 to US\$580, and include the services of a ten-member team to prepare gourmet meals, offer babysitting services, provide massages, manicures and other beauty treatments, and advise and arrange a long list of activities including golf, chartering a yacht and horseback riding.

Those in search of a cooler climate could choose the four-bedroom Alamanda, which charges from US\$420 to US\$620. Tucked away in the hills of Ubud, the villa has traditional rooms and a charming, old-world feel.

"Most people who try villas never go back to hotels", says Macaulay. Somehow, that comes as no surprise.

www.elitehavens.com

http://www.marketingvillas.com/