

Living it up in luxury

For those whom money is no object, Bali has some of the most luxurious and private accommodation options you can imagine

Dave Smith

Is it a hotel? No. Is it a villa? No. It's super-villas — palatial holiday homes now making waves in Bali.

Here's a look at three super-villas where the rich and famous take time out on the island

flight. So we sent 10 staff to help her pack and organised a police escort to pick her up to make sure she made her flight."

- › Vibe: Your very own beachfront resort
- › Size: 3065sqm
- › Bedrooms: Six
- › His pocket: \$1000-\$2000 per night



amous take time out on the island of the gods.

BAYU GITA BEACH FRONT

Why be one of hundreds of guests at a luxury resort when for around the same money you can rent a luxury home with a pool and staff? That's the thinking behind renting a villa in Bali. You don't get the beachfront location, gym and hotel chefs, but you do get total privacy and personalised service.

But at Bayu Gita Beach Front, a stately six-bedroom luxury super-villa set on three-quarters of an acre of seafront on Pabean Beach in east Bali, you get the best of both worlds: a private chef who can whip up a sensational lobster curry or anything you damn well please; a gym with running machines, free weights and whatnot; three swimming pools, the largest of which has statues and a massive jacuzzi; games room with a pool table and bar; a 10-seat cinema; an over-sized dining room with teak table for 14 overlooking a hanging garden; three outdoor dining areas to choose from; and uninterrupted views of the Bali Sea and outlying islands.

You even get your own concierge. "We've had some pretty extreme requests over the years," says Scott Waters, marketing manager for Elite Havens, which manages Bayu Gita. "Sourcing and installing a grand piano. Picking up a guest from the airport in a chopper. Once we even brought in elephants from Thailand as props for a wedding.

"But nothing tops what happened when Paris Hilton . . . stayed with us in Bali. She had a gig in Dubai the following day but she mixed up her departure time and was just about to miss her

hip pocket: \$1800-\$2900 per night

THE ROYAL VILLA

Fifteen years ago, when author Elizabeth Gilbert visited Bali's spiritual capital Ubud to write *Eat, Pray, Love*, she stayed in a modest one-bedroom villa.

When Julia Roberts visited Ubud to film the motion picture, she stayed at the Royal Villa, an epic three-bedroom, three-storey residence squiggled away on the grounds of the Four Seasons Resort Bali at Sayan on Ubud's outskirts.

Guests enter the Royal Villa via its rooftop, where lily ponds and a private meditation area overlook a gentle bend in the Ayung river edged by rice terraces and lush green jungle brimming with birdlife. "The jungle is not just visible," says general manager Uday Rao. "If you close your eyes, you can hear the river flowing by, and bird songs."

Absolute privacy for guests like the Obamas, who stayed there in 2017, is guaranteed by a clocktower stairwell that descends to the second floor, where there are two huge bedroom wings. One has a king-size bed and the other has two queen-size beds, though both rooms feature a treasure trove of Indonesian artworks, handwoven fabrics, warm teak furnishings and wraparound balconies with outdoor showers.

The money-is-no-object vibe continues on the ground floor, where there is a sunken living room, a colossal main bedroom, and a formal dining room topped by a nautical chandelier. All three rooms are fronted by soaring floor-to-ceiling sliding glass doors that open on to a private garden with canopied daybeds, sun



“When you walk through the entrance and see ocean views right through the villa, you are bathed in luxury.”



lounges, a heated infinity-edged pool and lush green lawns that tumble towards the river bank.

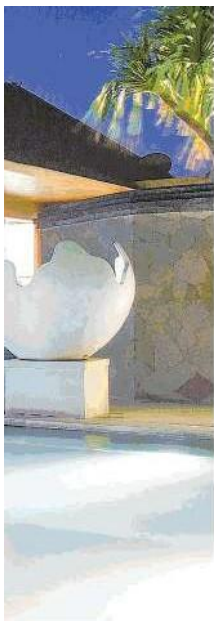
Boulders have been hollowed out as giant built-in ice buckets in the gazebo's open-air teppanyaki kitchen, where private chefs and butlers serve Indonesian-themed feasts in a setting fit for a king.

- › Vibe: Jungle manor
- › Size: 1100sqm
- › Bedrooms: Three
- › Hip pocket: \$10,000 per night

marble, exquisite Indonesian artworks and neo-colonial furnishing ensconced in glass that looks out towards the pool and clifftop blue water views.

Upstairs are two main bedrooms with four-poster beds and those same ridiculous views. I keep on repeating that word — ridiculous — again and again as I walk from room to room like a deer in the headlights, blown away by rock-star features like the artificial waterfall in the day spa and





Top and top right: Villa Maria. Left and below left: Bayu Gita Beachfront. Above: The Royal Villa.

VILLA MARIA

Perched upon a 100m-high sea cliff on Bali's south coast, AKA "millionaire's row", Karma Kandara is a five-star resort where winding coral footpaths lead to a clifftop restaurant and pool, a cable car drops like a bomb down to a white sandy beach club fit for James Bond, and 77 private pool villas. While all luxurious, none hold a candle to Villa Maria, a multimillion-dollar five-bedroom home with cinema, day spa, sauna, gym and rock-star clifftop pool.

The entrance leads to a private Japanese garden with fish ponds covered in lily pads and trees in colourful blooms where a swimming pool, multi-sectioned day spa, library and two bedrooms await in a separate wing. Turn left to the main building and enter a lavish foyer with wall-to-wall

material in the day spa and showers big enough to park a car.

"Villa Maria encapsulates the beauty of where we are," says Shaun Dunhofen, Karma Kandara's general manager. "It is set right on the edge of the cliff, so you get sensational sunsets every day, and when you walk through the entrance and see ocean views right through the villa, you are bathed in luxury. Then you get outside to the swimming pool that trickles over the cliff, and the views get even better. And being on the southernmost tip of Bali, the most prime location on the island, you have no one looking at you from the left or right, and absolute privacy."

- › Vibe: Rock star on the edge
- › Size: 822sqm
- › Bedrooms: Five
- › Hip pocket: \$2660 per night with breakfast

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