

THE AUSTRALIAN – KABA KABA ESTATE

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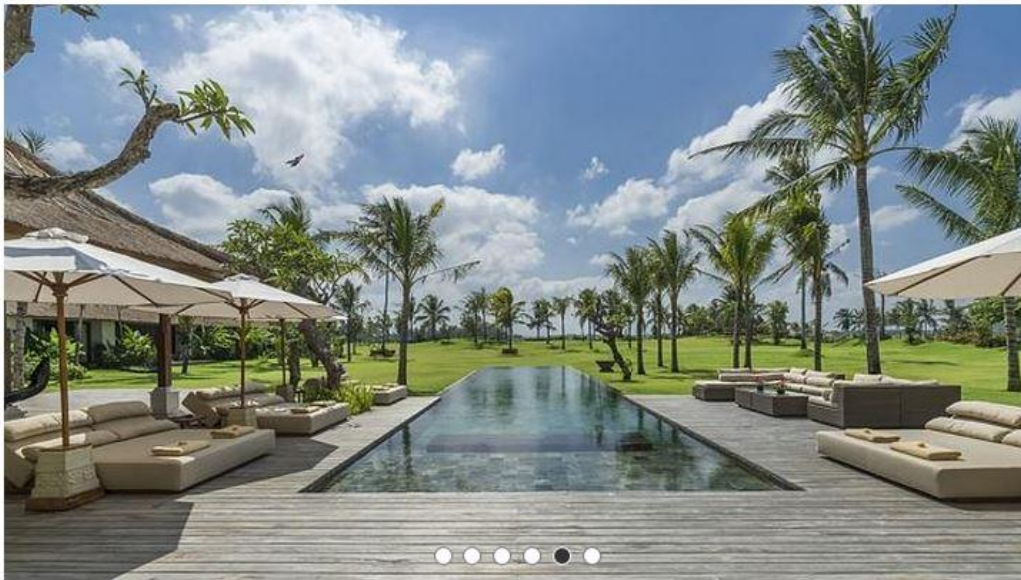


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BEACHSIDE VILLAS IN BYRON, NOOSA AND BALI TURN UP THE LUXURY FOR CHRISTMAS

Lisa Allen

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IT's cocktail hour, and your private butler is festooning your dining table with pink rose petals while your drinks waiter mixes the margaritas. As the sun sets over your beachfront pool, you face an impossible choice: indulge in another cocktail or take a refreshing dip before dinner?

Renting a big house always seems like the perfect way to enjoy the summer holidays in a private, relaxed manner — particularly when the mansion in question comes with oodles of fawning staff. But timing is always the critical element, especially when it comes to the top east-coast offerings.

Properties in the iconic NSW north coast township of Byron Bay, for example, and further north in Noosa are booked well ahead — at astronomical prices. Byron Bay real estate agent Graham Dunn gleefully reports that one of his prized holiday house offerings, a five-bedroom mansion on Byron Bay's scenic Belongil peninsula, will earn its owner a hefty \$40,000 a week come Christmas.

“Everything is booked; there's only a couple of cheapies left,” says Dunn, director of Byron Bay Property Sales. “Cheapies”, in Dunn's book, are houses priced at \$5000 to \$10,000 a week. “But the real top end is already locked and loaded for Christmas.”

A couple of \$40,000-a-week holiday houses are still up for grabs at Palm Beach, north of Sydney in January — you'll be battling American, British and Southeast Asian holiday renters for these piles. Competition is also fierce on Victoria's Mornington Peninsula, where many of the mansions rent out at the \$15,000-a-week mark, with minimum two- or three-week letting contracts come the festive season.

Bali might be a better option, with three-bedroom villas renting through Elite Havens in the Christmas week for a minimum of \$US3500 (\$3990) a week — but at the other end of the spectrum there are villas in Bali built on royal land replete with 23 staff at a much higher rate.

KABA KABA ESTATE, BALI

If you have \$US5000 a night plus tax to spare come Christmas, the eight-bedroom Kaba Kaba retreat is available along with your pick of personal chefs, private drivers, butlers, housekeepers and security to keep you happy. Lying on the edge of a historic village in Tabanan in southwest Bali, the property is 26km from the airport and 16km from trendy Seminyak. With the bejewelled throne of a Burmese king presiding over the dining pavilion, Kaba Kaba's stunning interiors are a treasure trove of skilfully curated antiques, curios and paintings. There's also a gym and a couple of swimming holes including a main pool and a master suite plunge pool. elitehavens.com