

# VIRGIN BLUE VOYEUR – THE ISTANA EDITION SEPTEMBER 2010



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## BALI BLISS

Bali's rustic beach huts have made way for luxury five-star villas with stunning views. Rachel Lovelock laps it up.

**T**he hippies, backpackers, bohemians and surfers who came to Bali in the 1970s called it paradise. Many of these nomads stayed on to build grass-roofed bamboo shacks beside the beach, indulge in creative pursuits and live out their Guguin fantasies. As tourism accelerated in the 1980s and '90s, business opportunities and the attraction of a tropical island lifestyle wooed entrepreneurs and designers, who chose to make Bali their home. Bali embraced tourism, responded to market needs and adapted to change without losing her essential individuality. Bamboo beach huts were replaced by world-class resorts like The Oberoi, Four Seasons, Amanjaya and Amanjaya, while the infrastructure was improved sufficiently

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**At The Istana the picture is completed with a cliff-edge relaxation bale with outstanding views of the ocean.**

**Luxurious with a private pool, detail, while you enjoy the view of the ocean, it's a relaxing holiday villa in the heart of the island.**

**THE ISTANA**  
An opulent villa in blissful seclusion on the Uluwatu cliffs, 100 metres above the Indian Ocean. The Istana was Bali's first 'destination villa'. Completed in 2003, it was designed to offer as many amenities as possible and the highest level of service. Its enduring aim is to ensure guests feel no need to leave for top-quality dining and entertainment.

The property was extensively renovated last year and a world-class menu created to make it one of the most desirable places to stay in Asia. The main building is a single-storey long house with a semi-open-air living room bordered by a magnificent 22-metre swimming pool. Two symmetrical wings accommodate an air-conditioned dining room, a home theatre and four sizeable bedrooms. The splendid master suite is a stand-alone pavilion with a private pool, while a new wing is devoted entirely to children. Facilities in here include a home theatre, pool table and PlayStation console, as well as a bedroom with sleeping space for four kids. The picture is completed with a pampering spa room and a cliff-edge relaxation bale (gazebo) offering outstanding views of the ocean.

A destination villa in every sense, The Istana attracts international jetsetters >

to support the development of remote cliff-edge and river gorge sites. Certainly, the island still welcomes backpackers with plenty of cheap 'n' cheerful places to eat and sleep, but since the new millennium it has grown to become an exceptional high-end holiday destination, partly because of new investments flooding into the country in the aftermath of Suharto's fall and the 1997 economic crisis. The people who originally built dream houses for themselves are now building holiday villas for the new dreamers to rent or buy, and Bali presents a very different image from when it was a port on the hippie trail. Today, Bali is home to internationally acclaimed restaurants,

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and celebrities who opt for helicopter transfers to and from the airport. Rates are from US\$1,750 (A\$2,010) to US\$3,250 (A\$3,735) per night, including tax.

The Istana, contact *BHM* to enquire or book, 462 361 720/648, www.theistanabali.com.

**VILLA BABAR**  
The beautiful Tabanan regency (district), which extends from the central western highlands to the south-west coast, is far removed from the bustle and bustle of mainstream tourism. Here, under the gaze of Mount Batukaru, the spectacular Villa Babar stands sentinel on a beachside bluff, offering views of rice fields, volcanoes and the sea at every turn with its spellbinding 360-degree outlook. The elegant simplicity of Villa Babar's contemporary architecture is complemented by the cream stone walls, lime-washed timber and colonnaded walkways. Guests can explore the six luxurious bedrooms adorned with local artworks, the garden bathrooms, the state-of-the-art kitchen and the air-conditioned living, recreation and dining rooms. The villa also boasts a helicopter pad and a dazzling 27-metre infinity swimming pool that appears to merge with the ocean and flow onto a beach of glistening black sand. Every comfort is considered, with five-star personal butlers (inclusive of price) and meals cooked

by a talented chef (an additional cost). Rates are from US\$2,400 (A\$2,760) per night, including tax.

Villa Babar, Banjar Pondsik, Desa Jemeluh, Kecamatan Seléndang Timur, Tabanan, www.balivillababar.com.

**PANTAI LIMA**  
Pantai Lima roughly translates as five on the beach' and is a private enclave of five majestic villas near Canggu. Each five- or six-bedroom property can be rented separately or together, with a total of 26 bedrooms and a common tennis court, gym and seminar room. The beauty of Pantai Lima extends beyond the glorious views of the ocean, coastline, river estuary and rice fields to the classic Balinese architectural design and graceful interiors. Each two-storey villa is uniquely >

**Villa Babar stands sentinel on a beachside bluff, offering views at every turn with its 360-degree outlook.**



Highly coveted, Villa Babar is a delightful journey via traditional villas and away fields of rice. Below, the villa is followed by the waves at Villa Babar.

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Certainly, the island still welcomes backpackers with plenty of cheap 'n' cheerful places to eat and sleep, but since the new millennium it has grown to become an exceptional high-end holiday destination, partly because of new investments flooding into the country in the aftermath of Suharto's fall and the 1997 economic crisis.

The people who originally built dream houses for themselves are now building holiday villas for the new dreamers to rent or buy, and Bali presents a very different image from when it was a port on the hippie trail. Today, Bali is home to internationally acclaimed restaurants, luxury branded boutique hotels and some of the world's most glamorous private villas. Here is our pick of some of the best.

# THE ISTANA

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The property was extensively renovated last year and a world-class menu created to make it one of the most desirable places to stay in Asia. The main building is a single-storey long house with a semi-open-air living room bordered by a magnificent 32-metre swimming pool. Two symmetrical wings accommodate an air-conditioned dining room, a home theatre and four sizeable bedrooms. The splendid master suite is a stand-alone pavilion with a private pool, while a new wing is devoted entirely to children. Facilities in here include a home theatre, pool table and PlayStation console, as well as a bedroom with sleeping space for four kids. The picture is completed with a pampering spa room and a cliff-edge relaxation bale (gazebo) offering outstanding views of the ocean.

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[www.bhm villas.com](http://www.bhm villas.com)