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**THE FULL
FLAVOR OF
SOUTHERN
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**TEN
TOP
BALI
VILLAS**

From secluded cliff-top estates and indulgent beach houses to hideaways tucked amid bucolic rice fields, Bali's holiday- rental scene is bound to entice even the most ardent of hotel-goers.

BY JULIAN KOH Photographs by Christian Leigelle

FRANCIS PLEASANT: A manicured lawn flanks the sparkling swimming pool at The Bali.

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WHEN THE BALI scene blossoms in the season, the island's most desirable villas are beginning to jostle against one another. Many resorts that were remote and exotic (even some are now surrounded by competitors) on rice fields and coconut groves are reported one by one to be replaced by sleek accommodations for foreign visitors. From the dawn of the new century, intergal developers and architects have gone ever further afield in search of quiet, bucolic settings. Many of the best of them are building blue-glass holiday houses—rather than high-occupancy lodgings.

The result is a bonanza of choice for visitors, particularly those wishing to stay a week or longer. If you're going crazy (visiting the Bali Five tell you that the good old days are gone forever, that the magic is lost, veritas) into the fields of Canggu, the remote gorge of the Ubud area, the rocky splendor of the Bukit area, at a remote remove from the bustle (crowded beaches, shops, and nightlife, to name a few), in private villa that also exceeds traditional resort lodgings. Here are 10 of our favorites.



THE BALI The Fabulous infinity pool at The Bali, a five-bedroom villa perched on a sheer bluff 50 meters above the surf breaks of The Bali.

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of Canggu. The place has the push feel of a well-tended country club, among other sport options, it maintains a pair of tennis courts just outside the compound walls. Most of the new luxury villas in Bali have an entertainment center; here, it's a top-of-the-line home theater, with a big, bright digital screen. For guests with an entourage, the adjoining five-bedroom Unah di Bali, finished in a hammock, equally luxurious style, can be booked simultaneously (62-361-739-741; www.villa-bali.com; sleeps 12; from US\$1,000 a night).

THE INDIANIS While most of Canggu's private villas are set inland, this estate is sited just south of the resort of Seminyak on a magnificent



just beyond the villa's walls (62-361-742-7364; www.hongdewillan.com; sleeps 12; from US\$1,200 a night).

VILLAGES Sunar Beach is where tourism in Bali began, around 1930s, and yet the island's southern coast has been slower than other established resort areas to jump on the villa bandwagon. Can it be a glorious exception. This compound of quiet cottages set around a landscaped pool is finished in smart, glow, contemporary Asian style, suggesting a hybrid residence on Hong Kong's Victoria Peak more than a Bali beach house. Amenities throughout are lavish; guest-room appointments are particularly comfortable, with goose-down beds, five-piece custom dress, fully furnished, and handmade spa wraps and shampoos. The villa sits at the end of a shady lane, 200 meters from the beach; the

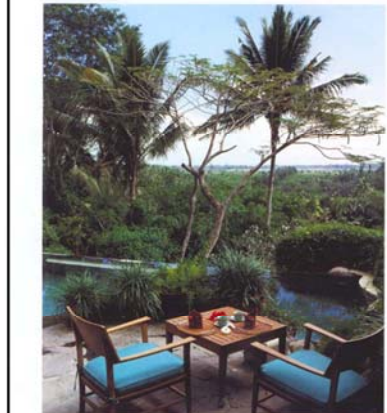
location is quiet even at midday in high season, yet an easy stroll from Sunar's best restaurant. For guests who elect to dine in, Cain has its own kitchen and gourmet chef, ready to serve a 14-course dinner for 14 overlooking the garden (62-361-270-521; www.villain.com; sleeps 12; from US\$800 a night).

VILLAGEMARA Nothing is more prized in a holiday rental than direct beach access; this one's compound, sunny enough for a big family, occupies a 60-meter stretch of golden sand on Sunar Beach, tucked between a five-star resort (the Hilton) and an ancient temple. Lenses by the villa's pool will see the colorful process of fishing boats curving



THE BALI Set against the verdant backdrop of the Ayung River gorge near Ubud, Villa Kinara is a stunning upland hideaway for friends and families.

THE BALI The villa's master bedroom. Below: Kinara's real masterpiece is the view. Opposite: The dining pavilion is flanked by a multi-tiered water garden.



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up against the sea, with the spectacular prospect of the seascapes of east Bali rising in the distance. The traditional Indianis houses and pavilions, created by prize-winning Balinese architect Pipo Doris, harmonize beautifully with the quiet village setting. The interiors glow with old-fashioned charm, and walls are hung with fine copies (not reproductions) of the timeless paintings associated with Sunar. These include the impressionistic landscapes and historic scenes of Adren Jean Le Mayeur (1880-1958), whose former home, now a museum, is just a short stroll down the paved footpath that winds along Sunar's seashore, shared coastline (61-68217-6108; www.villain.com; sleeps eight; from US\$550 a night).

THE INDIANIS If the three most important considerations in choosing a place to stay are location, location, location, then there's a good argument to be made that this cliff-top estate is the best villa in Bali. Perched 10 meters above the celebrated surf locale of Uluwatu on the Bukit, the island's southernmost peninsula, the five-suite Indianis has a more complete sense of seclusion than any house on the market, with a view composed entirely of sea and sky, sunlight and air. The architecture is an attractive hybrid of understated modernism with traditional Indonesian detailing; every right line is cleverly calculated to bring the eye back to the sea. The interiors are pleasant enough, if provided by a Balinese one might associate with a midrange resort rather than a great private estate. But the bar is well stocked and the resident chef can prepare a wide range of

THE ISTANA

If there most important consideration in choosing a place to stay are location, location, location, then there's a good argument to be made that this cliff top aerie is the best villa in Bali. Perched 50 meters above the celebrated surf breaks of Uluwatu on the Bukit, the island's Southmont peninsula, the five-suite Istana has a more complete sense of seclusion than any house on the market, with a view composed entirely of sea and sky, sunlight and air. The architecture is an attractive hybrid of understand modernist with traditional Indonesian detailing; Every sight line is cleverly calculated to bring the eye back to the sea. The interior are pleasant enough, if pervaded by a blandness one might associate with a midrange resort rather than a great private estate. But the bar is well stocked and the resident chef can prepare a wide range of cuisines; the state-of the art-kitchen also available for self catering.

(62-361/730668; www.theistana.com; sleeps 10, from US\$ 1,250 a night, including car and driver).