

The Finer Things In Life

Indonesia

# THE PEAK

[www.thepeakmagazine.com](http://www.thepeakmagazine.com)

Volume 21 No 2



## ASIA'S RENAISSANCE MAN

**THAM KHAI MENG**

Co-Chairman, Ogilvy & Mather Asia Pacific



# EXOTIC VILLA RETREAT

A three-bedroom villa with deep-water pool in the foreground

Over the last 10 years or so, Seminyak has been developing at a furious pace. To find a blissfully quiet villa complex plus exotic spa right in the middle of it all is something of a revelation. **Jim Read** reports.

**S**eminyak, at the northern end of the Kuta-Legian tourist strip, started to be 'discovered' as a major tourist draw in the late 1990s. Originally, it was for more Bohemian Bali holidaymakers and expats, and the only business property of note on Jl Oberoi (now more colloquially known as 'eat street') was The Oberoi hotel itself.

These days, Jl Oberoi seems to boast a permanent traffic jam caused by the huge amount of restaurants, shops, villas and other development that has taken place along it. After the first Bali bombing in October 2002, the focus of attention shifted northwards from Kuta and Legian towards Seminyak and Kerobokan, accentuating a process that had already started to take place.

Prior to the opening of supermarket/resto Bali Deli, which has become a major draw in itself, nearby Jl Kunti was another quiet backwater. It was here that The Villas, currently a 50-villa complex, became established. The road is now anything but quiet, yet The Villas has somehow managed to retain its essential seclusion.

With their short sides fronting the road, the resort occupies two long, rectangles of land which means most of the villas are well away from any intruding road noise. The impression of seclusion is almost hypnotic: While wandering through the property's lush grounds, you could quite easily be mistaken for thinking you have the entire place to yourself.

The property comprises three separate and architecturally unique areas: the villas themselves, designed

to reflect traditional Balinese building styles yet incorporating Western-style comforts, Prana spa, and contemporary minimalism at Chill reflexology centre.

Perhaps the most striking and essential element of the ambience at the villas is the mature tropical gardens that surround the individual, deep-water swimming pools.

Unlike many more recent villa complexes, where the landscaping has not yet had a chance to establish itself properly, the planting at The Villas is a hugely satisfying swathe of leaves of every size, shape and shade of green, plus a riot of colour produced by a profusion of flowers.

It would be hard to imagine a more peaceful setting in which to unwind from the stresses of urban life.

## VITAL FORCE

The Sanskrit word "Prana" refers to the vital force of life, and Prana spa has been designed to provide guests with the ultimate revitalising experience.

A relaxed, yet strangely exotic atmosphere inspired by the palaces of the legendary Moghul rulers of Rajasthan envelops the visitor. Walking through its opulent, Islamic-inspired archways and palatial corridors punctuated by elaborately painted columns in hues of gold and claret is a unique sensory experience in itself.

The spa offers a bewildering array of treatments, as attractive to the senses as a food menu might be to those about to order culinary delights at a top-class restaurant. With titles ranging from Spirit of Bali or Divine Renewal to Ayurvedic Simple Bliss, the treatments and therapies available are guaranteed to transport you to a stress-free mental plane.

Prana also offers special male treatment packages, perhaps a sign that metrosexual men are increasingly patronising spas these days. I decided to give one a try. The two-hour package starts with a 90-minute, deep-pressure massage designed to break down tensely knotted tissue, improve circulation and ease stress.

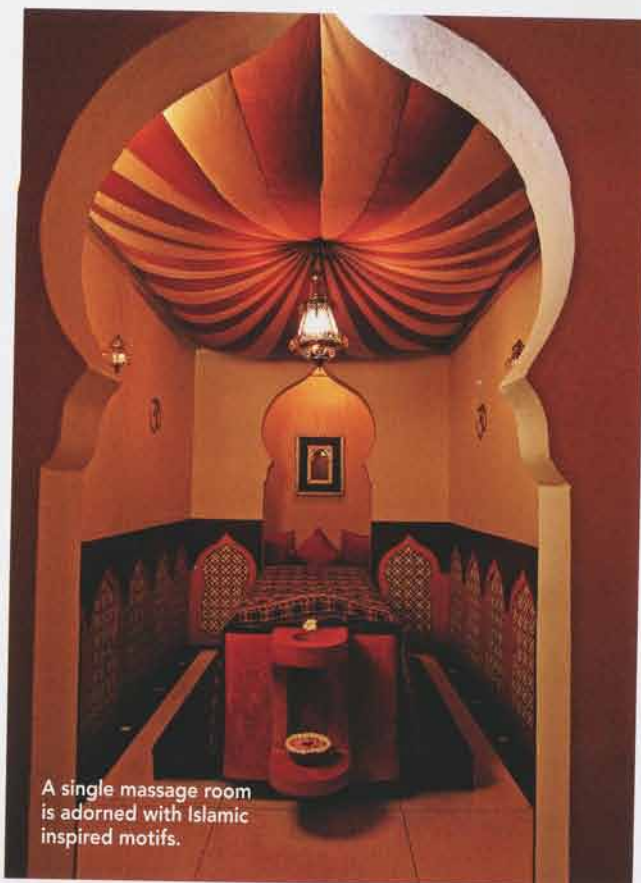
In the facial that comes next, the skin is cleansed, followed by a gentle exfoliation and steam. A hydrating mask of sandalwood is applied to the face, to restore a fresher look to the complexion.

I must admit that it was hard to remain awake for the entire duration of the treatment, such was the deep sense of relaxation it invoked.

Emerging from a stay at The Villas onto busy Jl Kunti, one is brought abruptly back into harsh reality. As one of their pamphlets puts it: The resort is easier to discover, impossible to leave. ▲

### THE VILLAS BALI HOTEL & SPA

Jl. Kunti 118X  
Seminyak  
Bali  
Tel: ++ 62 361 730840  
[www.thevillas.net](http://www.thevillas.net)



A single massage room is adorned with Islamic inspired motifs.