

BUILDING YOUR BALI DREAM VILLA



Beautiful Villas, Sustainable Design & Respecting the Environment

GUY MORGAN WITH LYNNE PAYNE



FOREWORD

Guy Morgan has lived and worked in Indonesia for more than 25 years, designing beautiful properties for dreamers. His love for Indonesia is pre-eminent in his life. From studying architecture at Adelaide University, Guy has traversed the world designing buildings that work with the environment and for his clients. Guy now divides his time between Sydney, Australia and Seseh, Bali where he oversees not only his architectural business but his successful villa paradise Tamu Seseh.

The Tamu Seseh project started with friends in 2002 and has since expanded into a successful holiday destination welcoming international guests to a truly Balinese-inspired experience.

Guy has firsthand experience in buying land, designing for the Balinese environs, working with the local villages and all that goes with it from attending ceremonies to providing temples for the villagers. Passionate about preserving what is Balinese, balancing it with modern living while navigating building on a remote island, Guy reveals all that is required to make a dream to build in Bali a reality.



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INTRODUCTION

HAVE YOU EVER THOUGHT ABOUT OR ABOUT BUILDING A HOUSE IN BALI? YOU MAY HAVE JUST STARTED THE PLANNING PROCESS.

You may have already built a house in Bali and wondered "Where did I go so wrong?" You may even want to build again in this island paradise and don't want to make the same mistakes again.

Are you a dreamer in love with the concept of building a house in Bali and have no idea where to start and what is involved?

Then this book will be more to you than just a beautiful book with pretty pictures. It will be a step-by-step guide for a successful build in Bali navigating through the sometimes relaxed, sometimes chaotic world that is this beautiful island of the Gods. For clients who love my work – enjoy!

My world in Bali – design and beauty

If you are returning home from Bali you may be starting to get that post holiday feeling. If you are the sort of person who visits Bali frequently or even or a first timer, seeing other people who have successfully made the move to Bali and built beautiful homes might be playing upon your mind. When you arrive home, this can easily transform into post tropical depression, as blissful dreams of living in Bali seem to penetrate the consciousness of many people that have been there.

Of all of the coffee-table style books I have seen of making a life in Asian tropical modern living, all of the books managed to show you the dream without explaining how to achieve it. It occurred to me that it would be very useful to show the beautiful photos while giving a by no means exhaustive, but relatively comprehensive step-by-step to how you can achieve that dream house in Bali.

My own experience of coming to Bali was very different to this, and in fact I still believe that outside of the hotel industry I am the only person who has been transferred to Bali reluctantly. Before coming to Bali I was living in Jakarta, working for a large resort hotel architectural firm. At that time Jakarta was like being on the set of a giant science-fiction film; everybody was at the top of their game. When the Asian economic crisis hit in 1997, change began. Suharto was overthrown and there were riots in the streets. It seemed suddenly the rug had been pulled out from under us. I had been to Bali many times and had grown to love it as a holiday destination, but never considered the idea of living there. It didn't really appeal to me at that time. It seemed sleepy and there were only about two good restaurants on the whole island. In short, I was in a different place in my life, and Bali did not seem like a good fit for me.

I had to remove my office from Jakarta which was in turmoil, and was greeted with the choice to relocate to Perth or Bali. I reluctantly chose Bali.



An aerial photograph of a resort complex. The image shows several buildings with traditional thatched roofs, a large swimming pool with blue umbrellas, and lush green landscaping. The text 'CHAPTER TWO' is overlaid in the center.

CHAPTER TWO

known surf spots along the new east coast road that are very accessible. These surfing spots are only ten minutes' drive away from Sanur. The beaches in this region are black sand but quite charming and are

The north east

Sidemen and Padang Bai are charming towns near Candi Dasa. This area is characterized by working harbours, ferries leave in and out

to Sidemen in the mountains you will find it cooler with pristine rivers and beautiful rice fields. The north east coast of Bali is very different to the south once you descend over the hills there is little or no irrigation as there is less rain. The beaches here are poorer and not as attractive.

If you drive further down you will encounter the sleepy charm of Amed a traditional fishing village. Along the north west coast there is lots of diving activity with wrecks to explore on the sea floor. Land prices here are more affordable and you will find amazing plots at a reasonable prices. They area possesses a pre-tourist charm with beautiful views of the ocean surrounded by tiny villages.

Down along the north coast it is sparsely populated, with a majority Muslim population and offers beautiful and dramatic views land at reasonable prices. The diving along this coast is sensational.

Along the far west coast you will come across Negara. This area has not really been developed and is only a few kilometers from the beach. The environs are gentle and undulating with no cliffs, it is a more windswept area and surrounded by nice villages. The north is characterized by rock. It is in a



populated by traditional working fishing villages. It is a good place to look at for your dream plot if you want to be by the beach and experience the good life.

Coastal land prices continue to increase year on year. So you may want to think about starting your dream so you don't miss out.

for Lombok and they are lovely beachside towns. If you are fortunate to buy land here then you are very lucky, it is great land to own. There are awesome views but a word of warning, prices are increasing. It will take you about two hours to get to the airport. Infrastructure here is minimal and services maybe far away. If you go up

THOUGHTS ON BALINESE CONTEMPORARY DESIGN

Broad schools of thought in terms of residential design evident in contemporary Balinese architecture.

1. **The Rusty Rustic Hippy Hut**

No Architects or Engineers involved and the owner's overwhelming need to 'express their individuality', regardless of background, qualifications or experience, prevails. They may have the best intentions in the world, but, in an environment with few enforceable planning or building laws - the results are what you'd expect. The 'better' ones are often old antique Indonesian buildings from other parts of Indonesia that have been imported to the island, placed on inappropriate sites, butchered beyond recognition or kept intact but at the expense of any semblance to practical or romantic living. Mostly leaky. Detailing is basic, at best. Delusions that they are somehow contributing to the Balinese built environment by plonking a Javanese joglo (traditional Javanese house) in the middle of a ricefield. Generally working with a budget that is hopelessly inadequate. Would be horrified to know the true environmental impact of their 'work'. It would be better for everyone if these folk rented from a Balinese family and kept their design ideas on paper. The worse examples of 'Rustic Hippy Huts' are unspeakably

hot, often uninhabitable and certainly unsanitary. The owners/ designers/ builders get older, sicker and (often) drunker, due to living in a airless, lightless shack, even while boasting how they 'didn't need an architect' ! Denial is not just a river in Egypt!

2. **Contemporary Balinese / Modern Asian**

Acknowledging, utilising and maximising the beauty of traditional Indonesian materials. Finding new and inventive ways of reinterpreting these materials and evolving design ideas with each new project. Respecting the great traditions of indigenous tropical architecture while avoiding the twee and facadism. Creating spaces that enhance the whole idea of 'being in Bali' and create emotional responses from clients, tourist and guests alike. This type of design recognises the requirements of the times we live in, and allows for the needs in terms of a group of people that may redefine 'family'. Unique reinterpretations of the indoor/outdoor relationship. Environmental and cultural awareness. Requires an architect.

3. **White Box School Of Minimalism – 'Less is Less'**

Has emerged over the last 15 years in Bali. Assumes a crisp, white and clean line with a flat

roof is the most desirable trend in all buildings across the world, regardless of location. Ignores the fact that the entire effect is lost when the line is less than crisp or the white walls are less than white, or the materials are anything less than perfectly finished, thus setting themselves and their clients up for inevitable failure in an environment, culture and climate such as Bali's. Or at the least endless repainting and maintenance. Recognisable by low ceilings, a smell of damp after the waterproof membranes fail, a complete lack of 'visually intrusive' items such as ceiling fans, and the need to wear sun glasses at all times due to excessive glare. Furniture gets wet after rainstorms due to inadequate overhangs. Silicone jointed frameless glass means windows don't open and joints are impossible to keep clean. This style is known to frequently produces amnesia in guests as they wander around trying to remember just where they are in the world. Occasionally they decide they must be in South Beach Miami and accordingly ride their motorbikes on the wrong side of the road with tragic results. This style sells very well in Seminyak and The Bukit.

If an architect wants you to draw what you have in mind, they will ask. Another bit of advice, don't come at the architect with a giant pile of coffee table books or magazines saying, "I want all of this!" One or two inspirational photos are fine.

Let the architect be and do the job you are paying them to do – and if you have been clear with your brief just wait for the concept drawings

friendships with many of my clients here in Bali. My strong advice to clients is, don't ask your family and friends their opinions at any stage! Arriving at the perfect property for you is a complex but enjoyable task for you and those with a direct interest in the project. The whole process from design to completion should be between you and your architect. If you start asking your family, friends and relatives, you will get as many

their experience and what they have learnt, but don't seek their opinion on the design of your own villa. If you have a good team working for you with professional consultants, they will interpret your dreams and you will be able to draw on all of their experiences. This is a much better source of inspiration and information than other people whose needs will not be the same as yours.

In the sometimes emotional process of designing a house and working with your architect, try and avoid the phone and use e-mail because it allows you to self-edit and is a written record of what has been discussed. If you are suddenly inspired with a new idea for your villa firstly write it down in an email, see how it looks written down and take the time think about it. It is also a good idea to sleep on the idea before submitting. Working like this will often eliminate half the ideas before sending them to the architect, saving you unnecessary confusion and money. Calling your architect on the fly with impulsive instructions may well lead to additional cost for ideas that, on reflection, were not good ones. Your architect will advise you of this but -if you are really insistent the idea might make it to construction stage and become a lot more expensive to rectify.



and I am sure you will be pleased. This advice isn't just for building in Bali but for building anywhere – the partnership with your architect is a special one. I have built wonderful

opinions as people that you ask and it will only be overwhelming and counterproductive. If you have friends who already have a house in Bali, by all means ask them about

A photograph of a bedroom with a large window overlooking a modern outdoor pavilion. In the foreground, a bed with white linens and a green patterned runner is visible. A white teapot and two cups on a wooden tray are placed on the bed. The window shows a view of a lush green lawn, a stone staircase, and a wooden pavilion structure with a thatched roof. The text 'CHAPTER FOUR' is overlaid on the image in a white box.

CHAPTER FOUR

Design Diary

possibly one or two more additional small shrines around the house. It is the desire of most foreigners that come to Bali today to extend and enrich the Hindu culture of Bali by including a shrine in the house and if there is room build a small temple.

These are not particularly expensive in the overall scheme of things, and the kudos you will gain both in terms of the staff that work for you, the village and the people around you is priceless. These monuments are outside and should be designed with access in mind. If you want complete privacy around your swimming pool area for example, make sure that people are able to bring offerings to the temple and all shrines without passing through your personal space.

Specify this to your architect and it can be arranged on your new site. When you arrive in your new villa a garden ceremony will be conducted by the local priest who will include lots of offerings to the gods in order to keep you and your family safe. It is considered very bad jujū or bad luck to spend a night in the house before the ceremony has been completed. Do not worry about arranging the ceremony, as by the time you have to think about it someone will have come forward and offered to arrange it for you.



the world of contracting in Bali. This manifests as many architects working with building contractors and presenting you jointly with a design and build contract. Be aware that the design contracts in Indonesia are not covered by the same legal safeguards that they are in the West, and it effectively means that you are paying the architect and the builder as one entity.

This can be dangerous as they will generally price the villa on an incomplete set of drawings, and specifications, leaving you with no real idea of what is actually included. The other danger is that the architect is not actually working for you, but for the contractor, so it is in the builder's interest to skim as much money as they can out of the project without you knowing about it so they can make more profit. I strongly advise ensuring the architect and a team working directly for you have no vested interest in any builder or contract, supervise a fair and unbiased tender process in order to ensure that you get exactly what you pay for.



a number of different management companies of villas in Bali and all with different management styles. My suggestion is once you have narrowed it down to two or three companies who are available and willing to take on your villa, arrange to spend a night in a villa they already manage. You will get a firsthand sense of their management style the way they train their staff for example, what they do with food and handle beverage questions.

This can range from a full in-villa menu being prepared for you in the villa to giving the staff the money to go and buy the groceries that either you or they will cook. The staff often adds a percentage to the price of those groceries, and personally I think this system is not so effective. I think it makes more sense to have the guests pay a premium to have a full menu service available at any time.



The main building permit you will need for a standard villa is called an IMB. As long as your land is designed correctly for residential, then there is no real problem with obtaining this. As a warning, whilst the legal system in Bali is shifting, I would suggest you have your IMB approved in principle before you start construction.

Some clients are alarmed when they first come to visit the site once construction has started and see what looks like a shanty town from India being erected on their land. It is common that the workers in Bali come from the other islands and are employed on a daily rate on a project by project basis. They need somewhere to live. The contractor will generally negotiate a small weekly rent of a small part of the land on your site, or adjoining land, to build accommodation on. The accommodation is nothing flash. This practice is completely normal and factored into the price of your build so don't freak out. Your workers living arrangements just adds to the colour and excitement of an Indonesian construction site.

Two factors to be aware of as construction evolves in Bali are 1) safety on site and 2) underage workers. You have the right to stress to your project manager to make it a

pre-requisite in the building contract that there are to be no underage workers (under 15 years of age) on your site. The best way to do this is to make sure that they keep in their office a copy of every workers identity card and give your architect and your project manager the rights to ask to see the identity card of any worker on the basis that might be younger than 15. If an ID card is not produced, or they appear suspicious it could be falsified, make sure the contract has a pre-requisite the project manager has the right to ask that worker be removed from the site and that their return bus fare is paid to wherever they came from.

Unless you have built in a developing country before the levels of safety on site will be nothing near what you are used to or would expect. Generally in Indonesia, correct foot wear on site is almost non-existent. Ironically the supervisors will often have hard hats but the workers do not. You do have the right to specify that all workers must have hard hats and correct footwear and that it is issued to them on site.

Many jobs are completed by hand on site. A good idea is to specify in the building contract is that safety goggles and glasses are to be worn during grinding and other similar



culture. Don't be shy about attending ceremonies in the village for people you have never met, as they love it! I have attended wedding ceremonies of people I don't know, and they insisted that I appear in the main bridal photo with the family in the temple! Balinese are very generous people and they love having foreigners experience their culture. This also applies to cremations funnily enough. Just be a neighbour and help out, like you would anywhere as a sign of respect. It is always a terrific life experience.

It is very common to have a dog in Bali whether you intended to or not. Dogs have a myriad ways of entering a family home in Bali, from being inherited from friends or neighbours or just wandering in. Some houses keep dogs for security. If you do get a dog do the right thing and have the dog vaccinated, de-sexed and make sure your staff is well versed in dog welfare for when you are not around. Veterinarian care is not great in Bali, but it is available. Always put a collar on the dog, so on the occasions when the dog control men come by they do



Even with an extensive portfolio created in more than 25 years as an architect, Guy's passion for his work has not wavered and he is still very much part of the contemporary architectural scene in Bali and the surrounding areas. All the works pictured in these pages are Guy Morgan Architect projects and give a taste of Guy's design sensibility. He is available for work on new projects, depending on workload, so if you'd like to talk to Guy about working with you on your new Bali dream villa, please feel free to contact him by phone or email to discuss it further.

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