

Villa Sawah



TALKING ARCHITECTURE IN BALI

As Bali's land prices and property development spiral seemingly out of control, the concept of the island as 'Paradise' is under threat, and the use of the environmentally-sound label to describe a villa is being abused to the extent that the term is fast becoming meaningless. Meanwhile, architecture is changing to meet the sophisticated lifestyle needs of discerning travellers. Rachel Love talks to three of Bali's architects to find out more.

Puri Salila at Anapuri Villas





Puri Bawana



Villa Vajra

Guy Morgan is an Australian architect who has been working in Indonesia and Bali for the last 22 years, including a ten-year-stint with Grounds Kent Architects – creators of the flagship Four Seasons Jimbaran Resort. Guy then moved on to establish 'Guy Morgan Architects', with offices in Sydney and Bali. He describes his architectural style as "regional modernist" and himself as a proponent of the "timeless school of architecture," designing buildings that will hopefully stand the test of time. He explains, "Many properties in Bali have been designed in the name of fashion with no real attention to function, but now people are starting to recognise that there are lessons in traditional architectural forms that we can still learn from today. The essence is about taking your inspiration from what makes any place beautiful or original. You can enhance the quality of an environment or lifestyle by being inspired by what is already there – rather than introducing inappropriate elements in the name of 'style' – and reinterpreting this for your client for a different kind of usage. It's evolutionary rather than revolutionary. The materials are drawn from Indonesia, stone and timbers come from the Indonesian landscape, and by drawing from this landscape you create buildings that blend beautifully with it." Guy's Bali projects include: Tamu Seseh, Puri Bawana, Villa Asta, Villa Vajra, Villa Sawah, The Angkasa, and Anapuri Villas.

Guy Morgan on 'The environmentally-sound label'

"Environmental responsibility is a question of degrees of awareness and responsibility, and inherent to this is the design and the materials. Sustainability is not just about low energy usage but also the cultural aspects and the need to contribute to the welfare of the local village in which the property is being built." Guy maximises cross-ventilation, and incorporates plantation timbers, local stone and sundried bricks into his design rather than concrete, plastic membranes and aluminium window-and-door frames. "I use wastewater gardens in all of my projects and grey-water recycling systems whenever I can." He acknowledges that rainwater harvesting necessitates a modern approach to traditional design as you can't put gutters on thatched or shingle roofs. "If a client is really into rainwater harvesting, I will design a house with a metal roof but it has to be sustainable and supportable. Going off-grid and using solar panels is admirable but not always practical in Bali, because unless you have someone here with the knowledge and the ability to maintain imported state-of-the-art technology it's a waste of time and money."

www.guymorganarchitects.com

Tamu Seseh



Villa Asta





Popo Danes Architecture Studio

Balinese architect **Popo Danes** has designed private residences, restaurants, boutique hotels, villas and resorts in locations all over the world and, in particular, on his beloved island of Bali. He is one of Bali's most prominent and acclaimed architects, and in 1993, formally established his own architectural design firm, 'Popo Danes Architect'. An advocate for the long-term future of Bali, his style is classic and unpretentious; he designs buildings that are aesthetically beautiful and in keeping with the environment.

For Popo, it is unthinkable that architecture should be a profession that focuses on profit alone, and if he suspects that a client is insensitive to the harmony between nature and art, he will refuse the project rather than compromise his own steadfast principals. His Bali projects include: Villa Bayad, Umah Cagaan, The Shanti Residence, The Longhouse, The Jewel, Villa Sankara, Ubud Hanging Gardens, and his own studio which has been described as "a workspace that breathes life."

Villa Sankara





Ubud Hanging Gardens

Popo Danes on 'Paradise under threat'

"I think every sensible person would agree that the rate of development in Bali is too much. All architects here have a major responsibility to the environment and to the people, while also maintaining Bali's position on the global map of architecture. Bali contains all of the necessary ingredients to become a world leader in architectural design but it is vital that we set an example for responsible tourism and promote the spirit of ecological responsibility". Acknowledging that in the past he was guilty of designing properties that may have contributed to environment degradation, he says, "We have been very quick to change the landscape and environment without thinking about the impacts on the other aspects of the island, especially our own future." A number of years ago, he made a commitment to safeguarding Bali's precious ecology, magnificent landscape and unique customs. This is not merely a political stance but a personal crusade in which he has created some building regulations of his own, which he calls "regulations from the heart." He now refuses to make any architectural designs on productive rice fields. "It doesn't matter how beautiful our building designs are, they would still not be comparable with the beauty of the rice fields."

www.popodanes.com

Villa Bayad





Casa Brio

After graduating from Lisbon Architectural University in 1998, Portuguese architect, **Maria Paiva**, crafted a substantial career in the south of Portugal working with key figures in the Portuguese design fraternity on apartment buildings, private residential projects, villa developments, and commercial spaces. Eight years ago she moved to Bali and later set up her own company, 'PT Maria Paiva Architects.' Her style is contemporary tropical and she says, "My philosophy of design is based on the principle that less is more, I love modern design, but no matter what the style – from traditional to unconventional – the goal is to do it well and to do it differently." She maintains that it takes the right team to make a project run smoothly, and it is therefore very important to select the best contractors and specialists for each individual project, which include the following villas in Bali: Casa Brio, Villa Lestari, Villa Malaathina, Chandra Villas, Asri Ocean Villas, and Villa Grace.



Casa Brio





Villa Malaathina

Maria Paiva on 'Architecture to meet sophisticated lifestyle needs'

“Many of my clients are now asking me to design large holidays homes situated out of town where the price of the land is still affordable. The majority of them are looking for a modern tropical modern design but with a Balinese touch as well, and these days they’re definitely keen to introduce part of the landscaping into the building design.” The needs and whims of holiday rental villa owners and their potential guests extend to gourmet kitchens, which must be equipped with commercial and designer appliances so that a five-star chef can be employed to cater for private dinner parties, while a gym and a spa is also becoming a standard now. Art lovers, meanwhile, often request rooms or wall space that can accommodate an art collection. Maria adds, “A typical brief might be for a unique, functional and often grand design, using traditional elements and featuring natural products, complete with the inclusion of a home theatre room or small cinema, a games room, and an outdoor cooking facility such as a barbeque or a Teppanyaki pavilion, as well as alfresco living areas. My company also gets involved in the interior design process; this home will be my clients’ space and it’s essential to get it right.”

www.mariapaivaarchitect.com

Villa Malaathina



Villa Malaathina



Casa Brio

