



Get ready to 'sparty' in Bali

No wedding is complete without a 'hen's night' and for those wishing to tie the knot in Bali, the combination of a spa and party is just the ticket, writes FREDINA REBECCA.

YES, YOU READ IT right: 'sparty'... the idea is simple: gather up all the friends you would normally invite for a pre-wedding booze-up, and instead take them to a spa, then party! A number of hotels and resorts in Bali offer pre-wedding 'sparties' just for the girls – perfect for soothing away any pre-wedding jitters, and making sure you look your best on the day.

The award-winning Jiwa Spa at the Conrad Bali, Nusa Dua, includes private usage of the spa villa. A two-hour treatment is followed by a 30-minute back massage, a 30-minute face massage and 60-minute manicure and pedicure. Cocktails, canapés and finger food are also part of the package. www.conradbali.com

The Thermes Marin Spa at Ayana Resort & Spa in Jimbaran offers a sensory pool experience

followed by a trip to its bar. The pool is out of this world with its mineral-rich seawater jet streams that tease you all way to your toes. The Rock Bar, meanwhile, is located at the bottom of a cliff, overlooking romantically lit rocks upon which waves crash spectacularly—ideal for cocktails against the backdrop of an Indian Ocean sunset. www.ayanaresort.com

Offering slightly more esoteric specialties in the heart of Seminyak is the Private Spa Wellness Centre. All the cutting-edge treatments here have an air of the exotic about them, which makes it an even more seductive place to hold that hen 'sparty'. The Private Spa can even arrange a DJ and catering for groups of up to 30 people, with the package including almost five hours of venue use for you and your friends. They will even style you up for a

night on the town, the old-fashioned hen-night way. www.privatespawellnesscenter.com

Boasting two of the most upmarket spa treatment brands, Pevonia and Decleor, the Glo Day Spa has branches in both Seminyak and Sanur. Claiming to be "the only one-stop shop for all treatments in Bali", guests at the Sanur location can enjoy a comprehensive menu of services of pampering and beautifying treatments, plus waxing, eyelash extensions, shellac nail application and rhinestone art. They will even go the extra mile to open a bar for you. www.glo-day-spa.com

Other spas of note include the Prana Spa, which has a distinctive Indian and Middle Eastern flavour. Catering to groups of up to 25 over two floors, this spa features a restaurant on the ground level for post-treatment

NOVEMBER 2011
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epicurean pleasures. The signature 120-minute Turkish Trio begins in hot and cold plunge pools followed by a steam bath, then an exfoliating and cleansing session under a rain shower. The treatment is completed with a nourishing L'Oreal hair treatment while you sip on a small tippie. www.pranaspabali.com

Tucked away in the tranquil setting of the gardens at Bali Hyatt Sanur is the The Spa at Bali Hyatt. This is the place for 'leha heha', the Javanese term for peaceful escape and relaxation. Designed in traditional Balinese style with semi-covered open-air villas, you can gaze up at the heavens and dream of your future together. They offer various packages from body scrubs all the way up to the exquisite Raharj treatment which is five hours of pure bliss including a steam, sauna and Jacuzzi;

body scrub; scalp massage; milk bath; massage; facial and reflexology – topped off with their healthy spa cuisine. www.hyattpure.com

Lastly, if you're more of an Eat, Pray, Love type spartygoer, then head to the Taksu Spa in Ubud, where you'll be amazed at the range of sparty packages on offer. The Deluxe Taksu Sparty for a minimum of eight people is a six-hour special which includes a choice of a 90-minute massage, plus an ozone or organic facial, body scrub and manicure or pedicure. Closing with a floral bath and a selection of non-alcoholic healthy beverages, this really is one to purify the soul and cleanse the spirit. What you decide to do after is, of course, up to you! www.taksuspa.com

TYING THE KNOT IN BALI

Since 1994, consular officers cannot marry Australians abroad, but don't let that put you off. You can still get hitched, but you have to do it the Indonesian way, at least in terms of administration. For a legal marriage—that is, recognised both in Indonesia and Australia—you'll need:

- Passports of the groom, bride, and witnesses that are valid for at least six months from entry to Indonesia
- Copy of Decree Absolute if divorced
- Copy of Death Certificate of former spouse if applicable
- Copy of documentary evidence of any change of name (for example, former marriage certificate/deed poll)
- Certificate of No Impediment (cost \$110, paid in Indonesian rupiah only), obtained at the Australian Consulate in Denpasar
- Birth certificates
- Photographs of the couple together (groom on the right side)
- The completed booking form, wedding arrangement form and civil form.

For a marriage to be legal, it must be conducted according to religion, and conform to the laws of the countries of the parties involved. For example, for Christians and Catholics, a baptism certificate is a must—and couples must be of the same religion. You'll need to make your own arrangements with the local religious minister and/or the civil registry celebrants. The best bet is to seek advice from the wedding organiser.

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Bali continues to shine

Bali has had a run of bad press in Australia lately. With a minor earthquake recently shaking the island and an Australian teenager held in custody on suspected drug charges, Bali seems to be in the spotlight for all the wrong reasons. Traveltalk's resident Bali correspondent, FREDINA REBECCA, provides an update from the island where the show still goes on.

THE EARTH really does move in Bali, or at least it apparently did for residents and tourists when an earthquake shook the paradise isle on Thursday 13 October. But how much did it really move?

Well, that depends on which news outlet you chose to watch or read. According to some reports, residents and tourists were "panicked" at the "extensive damage", which is really, rather odd since I was there and distinctly un-panicked. Sadly, sensationalised news sells: this is the way of things.

The Bali chapter of the Indonesian Hotel and Restaurant Association, for example, confirmed immediately that none of its member hotels suffered significant damage at all.

You see, Bali is resilient and its residents largely unshakeable. And while several aftershocks were felt in the afternoon of 13 October, if you were there and didn't feel a thing, you weren't alone. Business went on as normal and everything was on schedule—including flights in and out of Bali's Ngurah Rai International Airport.

The series of tremors was located in an area approximately 150 kilometres off the southern coast of Bali. It was felt in East Java to Bali's west, from Banyuwangi to Surabaya, and to its east on the island of Lombok. According to a report from the Visit Indonesia office in Australia, a number of older buildings, temples and government offices were heavily damaged, but the quake did not pose a tsunami threat—a fact that Bali Hotels Association (BHA) was keen to point out, since it takes pride in the fact that nearly all its hotels are 'tsunami ready' to international standards.

BHA member hotels have access to a wide range of resources and expert advice, and the association's tsunami-preparedness initiatives have won worldwide recognition, including from the United Nations.

"As hotel managers, we always advise our guests that even though they are on holiday, they need to remain vigilant and behave sensibly. We recommend secure and responsible tour operators, and safe and healthy restaurants, spas and tourist attractions," says BHA chairman

Jean-Charles Le Coz. "There are few islands in the world as prepared for "acts of God" as the Island of the Gods..."

Australian arrivals in Bali jumped almost 18 per cent to 69,000 in August with the first eight months of the year attracting more than half a million Aussies, up 25 per cent on the same period last year. Australian arrivals have risen 159 per cent since 2008.

Overall, the island has welcomed 1.8 million international visitors this year. August alone accounted for 250,000 visitors, a rise of 6.25 per cent on the same month in 2010. On current estimates Bali could enjoy a record 2.75 million arrivals by the end of the year.

With an airport renovation and road improvements on the go, and the island getting ready to welcome the East Asian and ASEAN Summit this month (which will be attended by US President Barack Obama) and APEC 2013, Bali continues to shine, despite a few publicity knocks. www.indonesia.travel; www.balihotelsassociation.com

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The show must go on!

On a recent visit, Traveltalk's DEBBIE SPROULE found more than she expected at the Bali Safari Park.

BEING ON MY FIRST TRIP to Bali I asked my friends with families who are frequent Bali goers, where were the best places to visit to keep children entertained. One of the main ones, along with Waterbom Park, was the Bali Safari and Marine Park.

A half-hour taxi ride away from the Bali Hyatt in Sanur, costing a mere \$10, it

was quick and easy to get to. There are also shuttle buses from various hotels in Sanur, Kuta, Seminyak and Ubud.

Feeding the pirhanas came first, and then we relaxed and enjoyed the animal show which included orang-utans, swooping birds of prey, cute guinea pigs and cuddly looking binturongs.

The show was funny, engaging and educational. You can tell how much an audience likes a show by the amount of "oohs" and "aahs" and there were plenty.

Next my daughter feeds the baby elephant, and then again as they bathed. This was exactly the point when the earthquake happened. Not a drama at all, the staff were quick to react and we were ushered to the middle of the park away from anything that could fall. My daughter only reacted to the fact that she'd been dragged away from the elephants.

We then sat down for the elephant show which tells the compelling and sad story of the competition between elephants and humans for food. It was dramatic with lots of elephants charging, swimming and playing dead. All cleverly done, and the audience were involved in a gentle, unintrusive way. Then we dined with the lions, rode Owen, the very clean elephant, and had our photo taken with Clo, the baby orang-utan.

Finally, we were taken on an airconditioned Safari bus to see the animals of India, Africa and Indonesia. Next time I'll make sure I see the Bali Agung theatre show which is on Friday, Saturday and Sunday only. My top tip for the trip: don't open your mouth when walking under the water sprays.

Bali Agung Village, Seminyak, is on the west-coast of the Bali island, only 15 minutes drive from Ngurah Rai International Airport and 20 minutes from the capital city.

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