

TABANAN'S NEW TIDE

An idyllic find in Bali's new hotspot

Bali's once idyllic hotspots Kuta and Seminyak are now cluttered hotbeds of traffic, hustle, bustle and hawkers. The saturated land no longer provides the relaxing holiday it once promised; there is simply not the space to build and the skyline is closing in, making it more akin to any other congested Asian city than a paradise getaway. While it is still a popular destination among holidaymakers, smart property investors must look elsewhere, to areas that are being smartly developed in a way that will maintain the rich and luxurious landscape that allows Bali to shine. 2010 saw record numbers of visitors to Bali (2.3m) and 2011 is already up 17% on that, meaning there is no shortage of interest – just space. With hindsight, eco awareness, sustainability and smart planning, however, there are still prime pockets of Bali that offer ideal investment returns and dream breaks for holidaymakers.

An hour to the west of the tourism hub lies Tabanan: a vast area of sprawling untouched rice paddies that open out to picture-perfect beaches. Best of all, the area is protected from overdevelopment by law, thanks to the local council's strict rules on maintaining irrigation standards that allow for farming to continue uninterrupted, and the regulation that 40% of any plot must be building-free.

Since the mid 2000s Tabanan has seen the first few developments of hugely successful luxury properties. Alila Villas Soori is one such success, earning a spot in the most recent Conde Nast Hot List: their pick of the 65 best hotels in the world. Tabanan's Alila Soori was one of the only three hotels in Asia that made the cut - a testament to the area and the truly unique experience that it offers, marrying the pace of village life with the best modern amenities.

[Rice has long-term plans to assist child education and welfare in the area]



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Joining such esteemed ranks is Rice, a new development of 19 luxury villas deep in the heart of the verdant paddy fields, from long-time industry leader Claire Brown Realty.

Combining stunning architecture with the area's natural beauty and lush farmland, Rice sits at the head of a rich sloping rice valley amphitheatre that has been guaranteed to the local population to remain as agricultural land. This means from the retreat's main area, unbelievable 360-degree panoramic views can be taken in, capturing the beauty and tranquility of the tropical getaway. The only thing before you is the occasional farmer tending the fields with buffalo and Rice's three-tier 300sqm infinity pool, which blends beautifully and effortlessly with the landscape. As if floating, limestone steps sit atop the water, leading the way from the lowest pool back up to the dining gallery and cocktail lounge. The food served is organic and local, handpicked and delivered from the cooler mountainous regions of the island. The bar's inclusion allows for all-round indulgence however the individual sees fit, rather than acting simply as a healthy spa or detox retreat.

With beauty must come brains: with the ideal setup in perfect surroundings, Rice needs of course to be as sound an investment as it is beautiful. Claire Brown Realty's model is to be at the forefront of investment areas and their success is down to the company's precise planning and stringent due diligence policy. Experts in Asia, the company specialises in being on the pulse for intelligent investment and Rice is the culmination of four years of planning and researching in Tabanan. The local village council's rules mean that only a carefully planned and equally considerate development can thrive here and Rice ticks both boxes. Getting the council's approval before planning can go ahead is a weighty task, resulting in only the most diligent of developers moving into the area and working with the population, rather than blindly erecting villas to tout. Rice will be recruiting and training members of the community for its hotel operation and have long-term plans to assist child education and welfare in the area, furthering strong links to the site's roots, following the Claire Brown Realty corporate social responsibility approach which

encompasses 'Profit – Place – People'.

The 19 villas are built for privacy and comfort: everything executives need to get away from it all - the perfect millionaire's playground. Costing just US\$295,000 per villa, through traditional overnight rental and half and full day spa usage the projected annual yield is 11.6% (US\$34,220) based on 50% annual occupancy.

In conjunction with other hotels in the crowded Kuta and Seminyak region, day spa excursions to Rice will be offered, allowing the full relaxation the visitors went to Bali to for in the first place. Villa owners in Rice will also benefit from these day spa package revenues as an additional way for investors to earn on their properties.

With Bali tourist figures perpetually increasing, the maxed out former hotspots simply can't provide the relaxing getaway the once did. It is now time for the smart traveller and investor to turn to Tabanan for a well-managed and sustainable future.

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01 The Rice amphitheatre

02, 03 The slick lines of Rice villas



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