



Bulgari Resort, Bali

Ms. Annie Lam



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Villa 65 is just a hop away!

A direct airlight of about four and a half hours will deport a toiled mortal of a concrete jungle like Hong Kong to this heavenly paradise on earth. Came out of the stuffy, noisy airport of Bali, I was met by a uniformed hotel receptionist holding the usual white paper card bearing my name. Polite and smiling, he took my luggage, albeit only 2 small pieces, and led me to a brand new S350 Mercedes Benz. The half-hour drive following was enjoyable, with introductions and explanations of the latest developments of this popular tourist city. The car then veered into a private driveway to stop at a temple-like structure. One then went through security checks like putting undercar reflectors, and sniffing by the police dogs, which could be quite scary the moment when the guard opened the car door.

Situated near the cliff-top of the Pura Luhur Uluwatu Temple and the village of Pecatu on the southern tip of the island, and positioned 150 metres above the seashore, the resort property offers views across the Indian Ocean. The reception hall is constructed like a worship temple. Entrance steps are made of granite. All guests were offered with glasses of cool fruity drinks adorned with white orchids.

hardwoods, the origins of which unknown to me, were used to decorate the gardens, interior walls, outdoor showers and swimming pools. The guests commute by golf-cars among these 59 villas, the restaurants, the spa and the main reception area. You do not have to wait for more than 2 minutes to get the golf car. Our villa is No. 65. The resort has skipped some unlucky numbers and started at No. 10.



The villa doors, in traditional Balinese style, are double-folded and open to a small pebbled courtyard leading to a large open but covered pavilion lounge furnished with wooden dining table and chairs, sideboards and sofas. It continues to open out to a roofless terrace with views of the ocean, equipped with 2 deck-chairs, a small plunge pool--for dipping your dainty little feet--and some green shrubs. The first impression instantly delivered a sense of serenity, brightness and openness to the residents.



Designed by architects Antonio & Partners, this 59-villa resort reflects a contemporary interpretation of traditional Balinese design intertwined with the distinctive Bulgari Italian style. The resort opened in October 2006, so it was barely 5 months old when Paul and I visited in February 2007. The entire resort was furnished using hand-cut volcanic stones, rich exotic wood and refined fabrics. Natural lava, pallimanan stones and numerous other types of stones and

The bedroom is divided into two parts, one of the bedroom proper, and the other the shower/bath part. The bedroom proper, with floor-to-ceiling windows, benefits from views across the terrace and the ocean. The bed linens and the mattress are among the most comfortable ones I have experienced. Separate wardrobe closets for ladies and gentlemen are behind the bed separated by a wall, with lots of storage space and drawers enough for a family of four. The floors are made of long mahogany hardwood. I was told that the B & O Audio/Video equipment was the first one ever used by any hotel/resort in Bali.

The bathroom, including the shower area and toilet, boasts a net area of about 800 sq. feet, large enough to be a good-sized apartment in Hong Kong. It features



again floor-to-ceiling windows, and is enclosed by a private courtyard garden. The bath-tub is made of some unknown precious volcanic stone and is situated right at the centre of the room. There are lots of space to move around. In fact, too much. I found it a bit tiring having to go from the dressing table at one corner to fetch a piece of towel on the towel-rack at the other, and then back. It was enough morning exercise for me. The amenities provided are of course of Bulgari, of "au thé vert" flavour (green tea).



"Ding-dong, ding-dong"..... I have to rush from the dressing area to open the heavy double-door of the villa, across the slippery hardwood floor, turning small corners and stepping down to the small pebbled courtyard---mind you, it's no small feat for a Hong Kong tai-tai living in this 3500 sq. ft. house who would definitely have the maid to answer the door----just to be met with the butler in charge of my villa, beaming with a friendly smile, bearing a dish filled with my favourite sweet snacks, "Klepon", a green glutinous triangle-shaped sweets with brown sugar juice inside. Specially made for Villa 65! I have 12 of them at one time, 2 times a day. No ladies eat that many, so not so many made in stock.

The private beach is long, pristine, and very, very quiet. Because the resort is situated on a 150-meter plateau, it has to be reached by a small glass cyber-like inclined elevator descending from the cliff to the beach. There is a small, yet simple, private Beach Club. The resort's landscape is featured by walls in butik stone, a white coral stone, obtained from the promontory. To the visitor, the view is very much like one of a medieval fortress, closed with its walls and unexpectedly tucked away in the tropical vegetation of the private gardens.

There are 2 restaurants and one bar. "Sangkar" offers fusion Indonesian cuisine, and "Il Ristorante" Italian cuisine. "The Bar" is near the infinity swimming pool. I was a bit disappointed with Sangkar, its menu being limited, and the standard of cooking just ordinary. I did not have better luck with "Il Ristorante". Because of the altitude, water pressure was not enough on the night we were there. Some parts of the connecting water pipes were broken. The restaurant did not have enough water and I had to wait for quite a long while before even getting to place orders. Too many guests were placing orders at the same time. It went without saying that on that afternoon as well, there was no water supply in the villa.



To do spa is the soul of going to a resort nowadays. I am not much of a fan but not to be out-fashioned, I duly made my appointment, chose the desired massage, and headed to the spa pavilion. Compared with the other 5 or 6-star hotels, I would rate it as average. There was not much worth mentioning, except that after the spa, you were led to a covered terrace facing a small oblong pool, looking onwards to the ubiquitous Indian Ocean. Lazing half shaded, half in the sun, I slowly sipped some herbal tea, tasted some Vietnamese dim-sums, and that completed my spa ritual.

As to the swimming pool, again it is standard of any 5-star resorts. Infinity pool, with five to six cabanas on the side, facing the Indian Ocean of course. Nice and quiet for spending an afternoon or two to finish your favourite readings.

I should remind all potential guests to bring your own high-powered torches if you contemplate to go to this resort. I have made complaints to the management that the lightings were so dim that anybody would have fallen upon the many stoney staircases, pebbled walks and dark grasslands. So, all ye hold tight!

Staying in a Bulgari hotel/resort underlines the spirit and prestige of Bulgari all over the world. This designer resort takes artistic pride in having the opportunity to better serve their clientele with a lifestyle experience that associates with the quality of the brand which it has established over the years. It wants to combine impeccable service, exclusive location and contemporary style into one. Of course it has to be pricey---at around HK\$9,600 per night. Once in a while, it is nice to be extravagant.

