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INNER PEACE WITH A VIEW

Offering the quintessential Bali accommodation experience, villa vajra is sure to comfort the mind, body and soul

Enveloped deep within the rice fields and jungle of central Bali is a new and exquisite hideaway that is already being hailed as an Ubud classic.

Villa Vajra is named after the quintessential symbol of Vajrayana Buddhism – a five-pronged ritual object that symbolizes wisdom and cuts through ignorance ‘towards’ the ultimate goal of compassion and equanimity. The Vajra is represented by a gold embossed carving in a freestanding stone at

the main entrance to the villa, offering just a small clue about the aura of peace that lies within.

Indeed, every room and corner of the property, together with its magnificent outlook, has the effect of producing gasps of surprise and delight when guests view it for the first time.

Designed by the internationally acclaimed architect, Guy Morgan, the villa is perched dramatically on the edge of a deep river gorge, resourcefully integrated into the natural contours of the hill. It is comprised a series of thatched pavilions, housing a remarkable open living and dining area, three bedrooms, and a lounge that doubles as an additional bedroom.

The two main buildings are linked on the upper level by a lotus pond and pergola; achieving a unique sense of space within a natural setting. A serene Buddha statue rests at the head of the lotus pond and white thunbergia cascades over the pergola covered walkway leading to the master bedroom and the Sawah Room, named after its rice field surrounds. The master bedroom is characterized by elegant furniture, teak floors, and glass on three sides to maximize the awesome panorama of the jungle and river valley. Sliding glass doors open on to a timber balcony where, fringed by a food forest of fruit trees, the built-in bench seat is an ideal place to absorb the natural surroundings.

The en-suite garden bathroom is dominated by an oversized black terrazzo bathtub, creating a strong contrast against the white Palimanan stone floor.

A black terrazzo washstand supports a stylish chrome washbowl, and the shower is flanked by shelves and cabinets. Everything possible has been considered for the comfort of the guests; the luxurious al fresco bath is sheltered by a thatched canopy, and privacy is maintained by a wall. Peepholes within the wall can be exposed to reveal a view of the rice fields, and a larger wooden shutter beside the tub offers a delightful vista of the jungle. Umbrella ferns, bird's-nest ferns, and stepping stones across a star-grass lawn complete the natural décor of this charming open-air bathroom.

Each room in the villa exudes its own distinct styles. On the opposite side of the lotus pond is the lounge, complete with a stone terrace that is almost completely encompassed by rippling fields of rice. A striking cathedral window overlooks the main living and dining area on the lower level, which is accessed by an external floating staircase.

It is upon reaching this lower level that visitors will be able to fully appreciate the unique design of Villa Vajra. The gargantuan, 12 x 8 metre, living and dining pavilion extends the full height of the building and features a marble floor underneath a vaulted roof supported by coconut-wood pillars on stone

plinths. Furnished with water-hyacinth chairs and sofas, pendulous steel globe lanterns and Buddhist welcome statues, this pavilion represents open living at its very best, and is a fantastic venue for parties.

A small aviary, home to parrots and love birds, is situated to one side, and a large hatch links the dining area with the kitchen. The adjoining half-moon timber deck overhangs the lush river valley and provides an alternative romantic dining area. Living jack fruit trees grow through holes that have been cut in the floor of the deck, creating a solution that blends style with nature without threatening the environment.

A further example of environmental conservation is the water recycling system that has been devised for the 8 x 3 metre infinity edge swimming pool, the outdoor Jacuzzi, and the graceful cascade flowing down from the lotus pond above. Another Buddha statue sets within an alcove behind the cascade.

Rustic stone steps lead down from the swimming pool and the adjacent Valley Room to the lowest level, past a bed of beautiful white peace lilies and a small lotus pond contained within a stone pot. Here, an open terrace overlooks the grassy meadow below; another wooden deck juts out to one side and narrow path winds down to the river past a small temple and a coconut grove. On one side is a fully equipped gym providing the facility to maintain a daily fitness routine while appreciating the wonderful views. On the other side is a secret sanctuary a traditional open pavilion, known as 'bale bengong'. With a thatched roof and a raised teak floor scattered with cushions. This is the place to relax, contemplate and meditate, while being lulled by the ceaseless gurgle of the Ooz River as it coils its way through the deep gorge below.

Villa Vajra is destined to exceed expectations. An exclusive retreat where guests will experience the ultimate in elegant seclusion imbued with quixotic beauty and genuine luxurious appeal. *FRV*