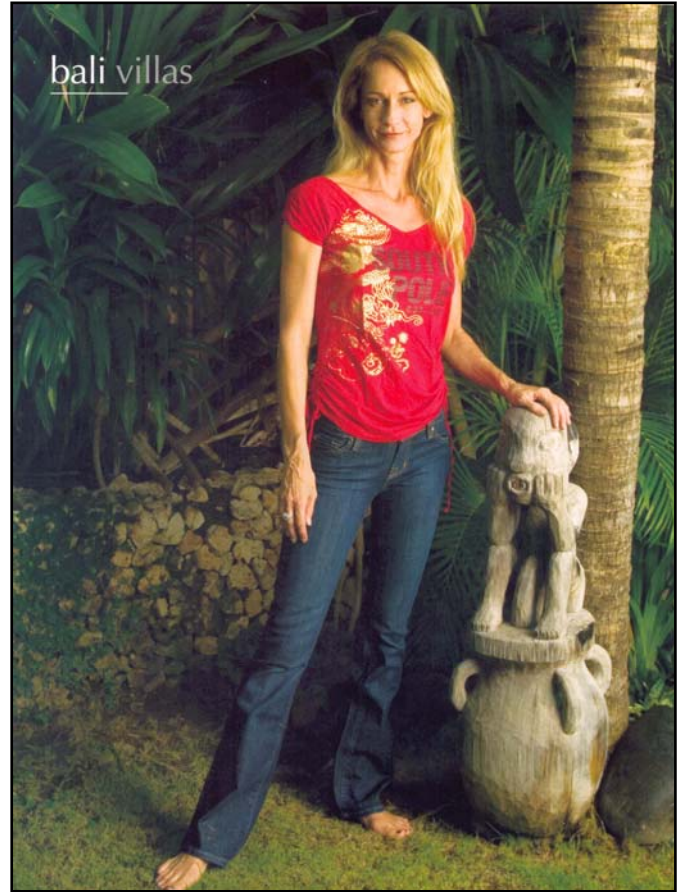


FINE RESTAURANTS AND VILLAS – VILLA KUBU

Edition 5.1, June July '08




A TO DEE

THE EVOLUTION OF VILLA KUBU

By S. Gamboa. Photos by Sulthon and JS

It was roughly a decade ago when Sydney native, Dee Myron looked ground on 90 acres of Seminyak land surrounded by dried rice paddies and no major road access. Difficult to imagine, considering the exponential development the area has gone through since 1998. "Whether it was clever foresight or "just plain luck," as Dee puts it, Villa Kubu has grown from its initial incarnation as a single rented home to a sprawling 14-villa compound situated in one of the most central locales in Bali. A small area that has fortunately managed to retain its quietude and serenity despite the network of thoroughfares that now encompasses the vicinity.

An intrepid venture at the time, but perhaps one that could also have been expected from a woman of Dee's ilk whose pioneering spirit has paved the way through a variety of experiences in Asia, where she first came as a runaway model in Hong Kong. She married while there and then moved to Singapore where she became a photographer before moving once again with her stockbroker husband to Jakarta in the early 1990s. She also delved into the world of stock trading herself. It was there that she initially grew to become very fond of Indonesia, a sentiment bolstered by frequent trips to Bali. "Those were really the halcyon days of Jakarta," Dee reminisces. "Prior to the Asian Financial Crisis [1997] there was so much money being generated in Indonesia. We thought we were the richest people in the world coming to Bali to rent these incredible \$500 a night villas!" It

was also during these sojourns to Bali that she began to entertain the thought of purchasing property there, but prices were still quite high at the time and there were no freehold options available. "Then about three years after the crisis, land prices evens out and I fortunately happened to be back in Bali once again, at the right time and place. By this point I was by myself and had to live somewhere. I've always felt safe and comfortable living in Indonesia and felt that I had come to understand the culture and embraced it rather than feared it."

Single, adventurous, but with no real property experience under her belt, Dee embarked on a deal via a Balinese friend whose family was leasing land in, what was then, a rather desolate

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Each cozy villa harmoniously integrates natural building materials within a lush garden setting

area of Seminyak. Even though 90 are of land in central Seminyak would certainly be considered a large plot by today's standards, Dee thought otherwise at the time. "It didn't look like a lot of land! I remember thinking that I could fit about four or five houses on the property at the time. I was expecting to build beautiful big spreads with huge gardens!" She started off with one modest villa that was completed in 1999 and then quickly rented out. There she began construction on another house, which also rented out once on the block. After the third villa, she ran out of money but was able to attract an investor due to the successful precedent she had clearly established and the increasing value of land in that area. This formula has been repeated by Dee over the past

ten years, during which she has constructed an average of one to two villas per year since 1998. The fruits of her labours are apparent today with the success of Villa Kubu, which also owns a large part to the design, comforts, and location of the villas. It was a long road to get to where Dee is now, especially considering it's basically been a one-woman show. "I didn't really know what to build, or how to build, or even what my tastes were like at the time. I just knew that the house I was living in on the property was funky and cozy and I just took those basic design ideas and used them on the other villas," Dee admits. "I also learned a lot from my mistakes early on, such as building two bedrooms or bathrooms directly adjacent to each other. I

concentrated on ergonomics and flow from the very beginning. Fortunately, my architect / landscape designer (Ross Franklin from New Zealand) is very practical, has great taste, and designs along those same lines. I just made sure to improve on the design with each build. I didn't want to create these boxes where you know where everything is the minute you walk in. Each villa is fundamentally the same, yet multidimensionally different with several separate, privatized sitting areas. This is a key concept."

All the well-appointed villas feature the full amenities and services one would expect, plus comfortable lounge and dining areas, kitchenettes, swimming pools, spacious en suite bathrooms, and beautifully manicured gardens

Photo: Shutterstock.com



Photo Left: The high-ceilinged and comfortable dining area also features an adjoining kitchenette.

Photo Middle: All the bedrooms at Kubu allow access to common areas and come standard with sumptuous bedding.

Photo Below: Spacious and luxuriant open-air bathrooms are set amongst a garden pond habitat.

with vented and varied filters obscuring most of the limestone walls. Villa Kubu also boasts several environmentally friendly elements ranging from natural ocean oil mosquito control to bio-system septic tanks to filtered tap water (via UV ray and reverse osmosis technology), that actually renders it potable.



Healthy alternatives are also reflected in Villa Kubu's room-service only menu that was created a few months ago, yet has already proven very popular with guests. Breakfast, lunch, dinner, BBQs, soups, salads, snacks and dessert provide both Western and Indonesian selections. An extensive and detailed juice and smoothie menu lists each fluid concoction along with its benefits and vitamin content and this will soon be supplemented with a specialised detox tea menu of brews made from organic herbs to assist in natural cleansing.

Currently, Villa Kubu has an in-house spa that provides treatments such as hot stone and Balinese massage, reflexology, and hot scrubs, but these services will expand in August to include a new on-site spa with three massage rooms and a "far infrared sauna" room. This technology employs the use of infrared radiant heat (vs traditional steam heat) to penetrate tissue and is cited to remove toxins from the body, increase circulation, and be generally beneficial in the treatment of several ailments, including arthritis.



Although there won't be any more building additions after the spa, one cannot rule out all the possibilities, especially considering Dee's unlikely evolution from model to successful villa proprietor. "It was never a burning desire of mine to start this business. I was just here and needed to work and do something with my life. But luckily, I loved doing it and am still enjoying it!"

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more tales of buildings and food

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By S. Gamboa. Photos by Shulton and JS

It was roughly a decade ago when Sydney native, Dee Caulfield broke ground on 90 are of Seminyak land surrounded by dried rice paddies and no major road access. Difficult to imagine, considering the exponential development the area has gone through since 1998. Whether it was clever foresight or "just plain luck," as Dee puts it, Villa Kubu has grown from its initial incarnation as a single rented home to a sprawling 15-villa

compound situated in one of the most central locales in Bali. A small area that has fortuitously managed to retain its quietude and serenity despite the network of thoroughfares that now encompasses the vicinity.

An intrepid venture at the time, but perhaps one that could also have been expected from a woman of Dee's ilk whose pioneering spirit has paved the way through a variety of experiences in Asia, where she first came as a runway model to Hong Kong. She married while there and then moved to Singapore where she became a photographer before moving once again with her stockbroker husband to Jakarta in the early 1990's. She also delved into the world of stock trading herself. It was there that she initially grew to become very fond of Indonesia, a sentiment bolstered by frequent trips to Bali. "Those were really the halcyon days of Jakarta," Dee reminisces. "Prior to the Asian Financial Crisis [1997] there was so much money being generated in Indonesia. We thought we were the richest people in the world coming to Bali to rent these incredible \$500 a night villas!" It was also during these sojourns to Bali that she began to entertain the thought of purchasing property there, but prices were still quite high at the time and there were no freehold options available. "Then about three years after the crisis, land prices evened out and I fortunately happened to be back in Bali once again, at the right time and place. By this point I was by myself and had to live somewhere. I've always felt safe and comfortable living in Indonesia and felt that I had come to understand the culture and embraced it rather than feared it."

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