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Bambu Indah: Bali, Indonesia



The Java houses at Bambu Indah are built of teak timbers and are more than 100 years old.

By CYNTHIA ROSENFELD  
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The Canadian-born jewelry designer John Hardy and his American wife, Cynthia, opened [Bambu Indah](#) — or “beautiful bamboo” in Balinese — after selling their company, John Hardy, in 2007. The longtime [Bali](#) residents turned four transplanted Java houses (each the former residence of a Javanese nobleman and each more than 100 years old) into a rustic retreat on land adjacent to their own ironwood treehouse along the Sayan Ridge in Bali’s bucolic center.

Minutes downriver from Ubud’s most decadent resorts, Bambu Indah’s riverfront compound looks out at the stunning cascades of the Ayung River, rice fields, a Hindu temple called Pura Dalem Gede Bongkasa and, beyond, the multiple volcanic ridges surrounding Mount Batu Kau.

THE LOOK

Eco-luxe. Stone paths lead from the bamboo-encased reception area through rice paddies at various stages of growth and past a soaring black bamboo multipurpose structure reminiscent of an ancient ship.

Bambu Indah’s natural swimming pool is virtually indistinguishable from an indigenous pond, thanks to a recyclable black rubber membrane and tiny river fish.

THE ROOMS

Casually roped off from other recycled structures that house the Hardys’ own houseguests, the four one-room cottages are made of hand-carved teak. Named Padi (rice), Kuno (antique), Kuning (yellow) and Afrika by 12-year-old Carina Hardy, they are filled with various treasures collected on the family’s travels, including Tibetan vegetable-dye carpets, Kalimantan shields and Ethiopian rawhide benches.

Mosquito-netted four-poster beds would benefit from some pillow top fluffing, but each room’s movement-sensitive night lighting is a nice touch. The rustic ambience of the interiors is complemented by other modern add-ons like air-conditioning, wireless Internet access and bathrooms with hand-hammered copper sinks, plush towels and open-air rainfall showers.

AMENITIES

Pressure-point massages (\$40 an hour) are available by appointment, as are private sessions with the yogi Therese Poulsen, formerly of YogaWorks in New York (\$100 an hour).

Guests are given a two-page food questionnaire to help personalize menus. Breakfasts of local fruits like mangosteen and rambutan, plus homemade bread and [Indonesia](#)’s strong Toraja [coffee](#), are served on porches, while a picnic lunch (\$15 a person) by the river may consist of grilled peppers, mushrooms and cauliflower in a chicken stew. Dinner (\$25 a person) might consist of organic greens followed by local grilled fish.

For an excursion, the Hardys’ most recent undertaking, the just-opened Green School ([www.greenschool.org](#)), is an eco-engineering feat worth visiting. Built of sustainable natural materials such as bamboo and alang-alang grass, the school is for students of preschool age through year eight.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Bambu Indah is a good stopover for eco-travelers looking for unfussy accommodations and a chance to trek through rice paddies or skinny-dip under the stars. But more pampered campers with aversions to mud or mosquitoes should bunk elsewhere.

The Kuning house costs \$200 a night; Kuno is \$250; Padi is \$395 and the largest, Afrika, is \$495. The rates do not include tax and service charge.

Bambu Indah, Banjar Baung, Desa Sayan, Ubud, Gianyar, Bali; (62-361) 975-124; (1-718) 874-8419 from the [United States](#); [www.bambuindah.com](#).

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