



first class



paradise revisited

Clockwise from left: model Kristy Hinze takes it easy at Karma Kandara, Bali; the Nammos Beach Club; lounge around in the open air rooftop bar.



Chill out

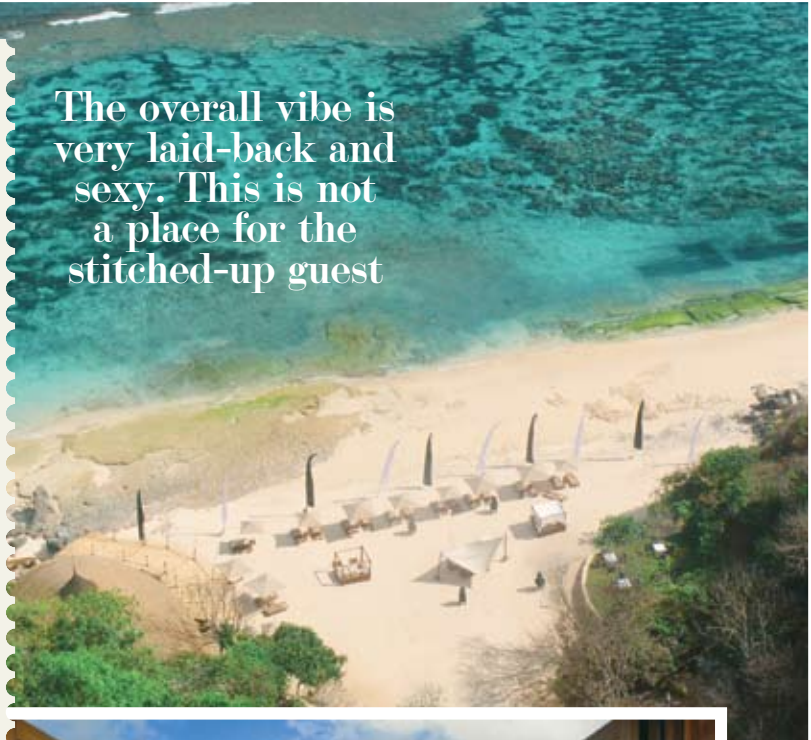
A stunning cliff-top paradise in Bali delivers a new sense of beachside.

“What’s that noise?” I asked my husband, as we checked into our villa at Karma Kandara, Bali, in the dead of night. Too tired to check it out then and there, when I awoke the next morning I realised that the noise was in fact the sound of rhythmic, thunderous surf resonating throughout the whole resort. Making my way through the lovely, rambling honeycomb alleys of coral limestone splashed with bougainvillea, I eventually came to the edge of the cliff-top terrace and looked down. There, at the bottom of a vertiginous 100-metre drop, was the most pristine beach, complete with elegant lounging pavilions and a very cool

beach club. A private inclinator worked its way up and down through the trees, as monkeys darted mischievously from branch to branch. Chilled-out music drifted up from the club, along with the smell of wood-fired pizza. My BlackBerry lost reception. All excellent signs that there was not going to be any reason to leave the resort for our entire stay.

Karma Kandara is one of the recent jewels in the crown of the very clever and hospitable proprietor John Spence, who already has several five-star Karma properties in Bali and Thailand. Spence has plans to open in Margaret River, Western Australia; India;





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Mykonos; Malaysia; Fiji; and Indonesia. Yes, the Karma resorts are undeniably upmarket, but the overall vibe is very laid-back and sexy. This is not a place for the stitched-up guest – it's all about lounging, either on your own deck next to your private pool, flopping about at the beach club with an icy cocktail in hand, or languishing at dusk in the gorgeous rooftop bar with its slightly Moroccan feel. The ultimate indulgence is to have a massage in the spectacular Chakra spa, in a small hut that seems to cling to the edge of the cliff, with a sweeping view of the azure Indian Ocean. The spa treatments are, of course, sublime, given the Balinese people are so gifted and educated in the restorative power of touch.

The di Mare restaurant serves up fine food with Mediterranean touches, such as risotto, bouillabaisse, gazpacho and mezze plates. It is also the most perfect location on earth for breakfast: a sparkling sea, Balinese music tinkling in the background and always, always, the rolling, comforting sound of a surprisingly powerful ocean.

ultra marine
 Right, from top: the resort's perfectly sized beach; an incomparable view from the Chakra Wellness & Spa; one of the estate's 46 stand-alone villas.



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For details visit www.karmakandara.com.