

A perfect Bali getaway for special occasions, family gatherings

At maximum capacity, the four-villa Pandawa Cliff Estate is an opulent offering that works out at a fraction of the cost of five-star-hotel alternatives

By [ED PETERS](#)

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Where is it? Any further south and your feet get wet. At the bottom of the Bukit Peninsula, half-an-hour's drive from Ngurah Rai International Airport, roughly as far from that temple at Uluwatu, this is what "ideally located" really means. As the name suggests, it's on a cliff, above Pandawa beach, and – yes – it's a truly stately estate, spread over 1½ hectares. Owned by a brace of tycoons, one Singaporean, the other Indonesian, Pandawa's less a honeymoon hideaway than a coruscating quartet of villas that cries out for family reunions, milestone birthday parties, weddings and similarly merry knees-ups. Bonus trivia: convicted art forger John Myatt put up here recently while giving painting lessons to the son of one of the owners and his fiancée.

Bali continues to dazzle visitors with a festivals and fun year-round

What's the Set-up? Pandawa's four self-contained villas – Markisa, Pala, Marie (above, centre) and Rose – trumpet a total of 21 double rooms and can be rented individually or as a whole. The estate is run by Spaniard Diego Pons Alentado, who oversees 40 staff. So, essentially, this is a boutique hotel perhaps with the exception that you'll like all the other guests – or, at least, be related to them. It's beautifully designed and faultlessly appointed (each marble-floored room has a different layout and furnishing). Catching the panoramic view for the first time, most guests stop in their tracks and simply gape.



The Pala infinity pool at the Pandawa Cliff Estate.

WHAT IS THERE TO EAT AND DRINK? Breakfast – continental/American/Asian – is included in the rate. For lunch and dinner, cast an eye down the menu: prices average out at about 170,000 rupiah (HK\$100) per main dish. Head chef I Wayan Mudana can pretty much turn his hand to anything, from lobster thermidor to steak sandwiches to ikan bakar (whole snapper with chilli sauce), and there's a raft of vegetarian options, plus a snacks menu headed by chicken satay. The option of giving the order to ignite the barbecue (seafood, meat or Indonesian) is more than a little tempting – granted a few hours' notice and requests that are not overly outlandish, the kitchen will put together a meal that balances both personal tastes and budgets. The wine list is more than comprehensive while the signature cocktails – Pala Mojito, Rose Apple Martini, and Marie Frozen Daiquiri – pack a delicate evening-of-the-world punch.

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And what'll we do for fun? If you don't fancy the beach, lolling by one of the six swimming pools, a game of squash or tennis, or a workout in the gym, there's always the spa. DVD players and satellite television plus unlimited Wi-fi fill the techno spectrum. But perhaps the greatest pleasure of staying at Pandawa is its sheer exclusivity, and the cohorts of staff who balance remaining at your beck and call with never getting underfoot.



Culinary staff at the Pandawa Cliff Estate.

Is there much to love Beyond pandawa? It's Bali! What's not to lurve? Three seven-seater SUVs plus a trio of chauffeurs stand waiting to ferry guests anywhere on the island. Uluwatu's surf needs no introduction while other nearby beaches include Bingin and Padang Padang. The New Kuta Golf club's 18 ocean-side holes lie a mere 11km away, and shooting Waterbom Bali's 16 slides (including The Climax's 360-degree loop) is an essential rite of passage for nine-year-olds of all ages. It's a rare visitor who leaves Bali without some sort of handicraft; in Jimbaran, Jenggala runs make-and-paint-a-pot sessions, which are as fun as they are memorable. Rounding the day off with a sundowner at the Ayana Resort's Rock Bar is positively life-affirming.



The Pala Master bedroom at the Pandawa Cliff Estate.

What's the bottom line? The entire estate costs from US\$4,011 a night, plus service charge and taxes – try dividing that by 21 and comparing it with a five-star hotel's prices. For more details, go to pandawacliffestate.com.

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