

# TWO TIMES THE PLEASURE ON THE ISLAND OF THE GODS

This month, Chris Parry takes us back to his favourite island in the world, the island of Bali, to do his best to get us all travelling to the Island of the Gods. More than just a holiday experience at a great resort, he's got two resorts for you to discover what makes Bali such a special destination for people all over the world.

WORDS **CHRIS PARRY**





**H**AVE I GOT A DEAL FOR YOU! NOT ONLY AM I going to describe one of the best island resorts on Earth, I'm going to describe two! What could be better than that? Well actually it does get better. But more on that later. I can't give everything away in the opening. Let's just say that one of the world's most beautiful women (apart from Mrs Galaxy India of course!!!) has stayed here and you never know, she may be coming back soon!

The two resorts you'll fall in love with that are in this story are very different. One is a luxury resort with a resort feel, the other is a luxury resort with a village feel.

Now this isn't the first time I've taken you to Bali for a resort experience but it is the first time I've taken you to Bali for a double resort experience.

One resort is in Bali's central heartland and highland. It's in the beating cultural heart of Bali and surrounded by a landscape best travelled by bike or by walking, or if you're daring, by white-water raft.

The other resort is nestled in one of Bali's most popular coastal regions but still far from the maddening crowds of tourists.

Both of these resorts are proudly owned by Four Seasons so where shall we start? I think we'll head up to Ubud, a community renowned for its music and art and one of the best areas of Bali to get the 'real Bali' experience.

On the jungle and rice field fringes of Ubud you'll find Four Seasons Sayan. This is a resort that feels part of the landscape. A river runs through it and a rhythm of life runs through it. Set amongst the Ayung River Valley, the Four Seasons Sayan is where you go when you're ready to do more in Bali than find a cheap Bintang beer.

As I write this, I'm trying to come up with the emotions that staying at Four Seasons Sayan brings out. I love a resort that is welcoming and exciting and has opportunities for exploration and adventure. Beyond these things I think Four Seasons Sayan has something more, or is it that where it's located provides something more?

Energy. That's what I found! There is an energy at this resort that relaxes and revitalises. Not the energy required to ride a banana boat or drink cocktails late into the evening. It's an energy of wellness that finds you and accompanies you as you spend time in your private villa, or in the river, riding a bicycle through rice fields or maybe enjoying a day at the Sacred River Spa.



**ON THE JUNGLE AND RICE FIELD FRINGES OF UBUD YOU'LL FIND FOUR SEASONS SAYAN. THIS IS A RESORT THAT FEELS PART OF THE LANDSCAPE. A RIVER RUNS THROUGH IT AND A RHYTHM OF LIFE RUNS THROUGH IT.**







**FOUR SEASONS JIMBARAN IS LAID OUT LIKE A BALINESE VILLAGE. EACH VILLA HAS THE PRIVACY OF ROCK WALLS, AND MOST HAVE VIEWS FROM YOUR PRIVATE PLUNGE POOL OF THE BEACH AND THE BAY.**

Before we leave Sayan let’s go and eat at Ayung Terrace. This is one of three restaurants available at the resort and has a wonderful elevated and open-air view of the valley. It’s dining with the Gods on the Island of the Gods!

While Bali is renowned for healing rituals and experiences perhaps all you really need is the luxury of a resort immersed in the landscape and culture. Four Seasons Sayan is a Bali experience closer to the rich volcanic topsoil of Mount Agung rather than the well-trodden beach sands of Kuta.

As we leave Four Seasons Sayan I’m reminded of a quote from the Julie Roberts movie, ‘Eat, Pray, Love’.

“At some point, you gotta let go and sit still, and allow contentment to come to you.”

Well, I’m not so sure. Maybe to sometimes find contentment we have to go to contentment. To seek it out and then befriend it. That’s what a visit to Sayan is like. Go to it and sit down.

Actually, maybe I’m reminded of ‘Eat, Pray, Love’ because Julia Roberts stayed at Four Seasons Sayan and loved it! I’m told she didn’t want to leave so maybe, just maybe, she might be back again and in the villa next to you. If she is, remember to act cool, focus on contentment and just relax because after all, relaxing is easy at Four Seasons Sayan.

One of my reasons for experiencing Four Seasons was the opportunity to get a better understanding of the commitment that Four Seasons has to supporting local communities and the environment.

As we came out of the Covid Pandemic it became obvious that during our time not being able to travel, many of us thought about how we would travel in the future. We know for years that most hotels and resorts try and save water and encourage you to reuse your towel but many of us are also looking for an experience that is beyond luxury, it includes responsibility and accountability that we are supporting the community we are spending time in and contributing to the ways in which we can be sustainable.

Four Seasons cares deeply and thinks simply. There are two pillars they operate under which contribute to the sustainability goals of the United Nations. Their hotels and resorts measure the environmental impact and social impact and underpin it all with just how many of us are raised by our parents; treat others the way you want to be treated.

Descending from the heart of Bali to its coastal life, you bypass the big regions of Kuta, Seminyak, Sanur and Legian and make down to Jimbaran Bay which sits, like Nusa Dua, to the south of those areas and is known as the Beverly Hills of Bali. It’s easy to find references of Jimbaran to Beverly Hills and lavish lifestyles but I’m not so sure. When I think of Beverly Hills I think of excess and the things in life that aren’t necessary.

Jimbaran is full of the necessities of life like fresh seafood markets and sprawling beaches with free games of beach volleyball every night and an equally free backdrop of one of the worlds best sunsets. While full of high-end properties, the heritage and charm of a fishing village is still strong in this beautiful bayside community.

Set amongst the lavishness and the laid back is Four Seasons Jimbaran and this is where you will find a luxury resort with a village feel. While I will always love the life a resort and the activity of a big pool that allows you to watch the accidents of spilled drinks and splashed phones and books, there is also the other side to resort life where you have your own villa with its own pool and life happens at a pace chosen only by you. When to eat, when to swim, when to sleep and then repeat all over again.

Four Seasons Jimbaran is laid out like a Balinese village. Each villa has the privacy of rock walls, and most have views from your private plunge pool of the beach and the bay.

With a village feel every time you leave your villa it will be tempting to not leave the resort at all but with the beach and markets nearby as well as beachside bars, sizzling satay stalls and grilled seafood shacks there are plenty of reasons to say you didn’t spend all your time in your own villa. The villas are not just well sized they are well proportioned and allow some space for those who want a quiet nap while others are enjoying the pool or just reading a book in the shade of your own courtyard frangipani tree.

Four Seasons two premium resorts on this tropical island deliver everything you expect and will still surprise you with even more. There is a level of luxury that has the energy I’ve described and has that Balinese friendliness and care for you that is without doubt the most authentic relationship you will have with a culture while you’re travelling as a tourist. Bali is an opportunity to indulge in the lifestyle of your choosing and for me, it must be the heartland of Ubud and the southern peace of Jimbaran and Nusa Dua every time.

Perhaps the greatest example of why Jimbaran is so wonderful is its ability to make you so comfortable that you try things you might not otherwise do. I’m not built for anti-gravity yoga. Stretching out for a low cardio workout while suspended off the ground in a parachute relies not just on the strength of silk but trust in your instructor. That’s what Bali does best. It builds trust and friendships with local people.

Four Seasons Jimbaran has an enduring image for me. From my villa pool I can look far across the bay and see in the distance planes taking off and landing. I can see where noise and anxiety are happening but all around me is peaceful and the only sound is my happy heart singing. 🌴

