

hot spots The Conrad Bali

Where is it? Located on the Bukit Peninsula of Bali, along the stretch of sand known as Tanjung Benoa, the Conrad Bali sits on its own private beach, which is regularly patrolled to ensure no “ugly”, non-Conrad people recline here.

Am I beautiful enough? Everyone’s beautiful enough at the Conrad Bali. Step out of the chauffeured car from the airport into the open-form foyer and feel the transformation as stresses melt away. A welcome cocktail, generously spiked, will have you seeing Uma Thurman looking back at you from the bathroom mirror applauding your new eye cream.

Do beautiful people eat? Get thee to Spice, where the food is truly beautiful. Executive chef Gary Rosen may seem bipolar with his mood swings – from affable jokester to scowling madman – but he’s a teddy bear underneath. You’ll understand when you savour the divine flavours of his ethnic creations. His demeanour may be an act but his food isn’t. Spice is the real thing and competes with Ubud’s Mozaic Restaurant to be the best in Bali.

Pictures: Rachael Oakes-Ash



What if I have an ugly day? Five words – the Jiwa Spa Morning Glow. Five hours of pampering treatments in the intimate surroundings of soothing exposed wood, granite baths and private pools. Massage, facial and lunch are followed by the signature Footsteps to Bliss foot treatment and a thousand-petal flower bath.

What is there to do? Private bales line the landscaped garden on the edge of the beach, so grab a book and recline on these cushioned platforms, which have white-cotton linen draped from the ceiling and flowing in the breeze. A massage is optional, as is the morning yoga held on the big bale daily. Not big on platforms? Shimmy poolside and grab a lounge by the lagoon pool or the Hollywood-style 33-metre version, which just begs for some synchronised-swimming manoeuvres. Children are



taken care of in the discreetly placed Kura Kura Club, where a full day’s activities are played out. Seven acres of landscaped gardens and water features absorb the noise. When junior and princess get overexcited, send them to Jiwa for a thousand-bubble bath in chocolate fudge or mango-and-strawberry scents, followed by a back scratch and lullaby that’s sure to send them to sleep.

Anything else we should know? There’s a 20-metre pool in the Jiwa Spa open to hotel guests. It’s private, serene and the Conrad’s best-kept secret. Or it was until now.

And the bottom line? Rooms cost from US\$125 a night.

The Conrad Bali Resort & Spa is at 168 Jalan Pratama, Bali, Indonesia, tel: 62 361 778 788; www.conradbali.com. Rachael Oakes-Ash

spree Holland Village, Singapore

Holland Village has a rustic appeal unique in Singapore, a city known for its shopping malls and spotless environment.

The “village” resembles a European high street, with low, terraced buildings. Restaurants representing myriad cuisines spill onto the streets, while second-floor interior-design and gift stores, along with a healthy smattering of beauty salons, make up the bulk of the shopping in this area.

The entrance of **Le Kraton** (25A Lorong Mambong, tel: 65 6464 5250) is as cool and inviting as the shop’s interior. Concrete steps decorated with inlaid jewels and scented candles lead to the sleek store and its furnishings. Oversized lampshades at S\$450 (\$2,150) are a good investment.

Next door, **Antipodean** (27A Lorong Mambong, tel: 65 6463

7336) specialises in clothing, selling 17 brands hand-picked from the cream of Australian and New Zealand fashion design. Brands include Body, from Melbourne, Camilla and Marc, from Sydney, and Morrison, from Perth, as well as Paper Denim & Cloth, from the United States. Expect to pay from S\$300 to S\$600. **Anthro** (16A Lorong Mambong, tel: 65 6467 2663) is a lifestyle store selling appealing bits and bobs from around the region. This is the place for placemats, stationery and pet accessories. Most items cost about S\$60.

Thambi Magazine Store is a Holland Village institution, selling a global what’s what of magazines and newspapers. Need your fix of Spanish *Hola!*, German motoring magazines or *Paris Match*? They’re all here on

racks and trellis tables opposite the mall.

At **Framatic Art Gallery** (245 Holland Avenue, tel: 65 6469 0911), try the handmade candles by Wicked Wix, in scents including Spring Rain and Lily (S\$26 each).

Avant-Garde (3 Lorong Liput, Holland Village Shopping Mall, tel: 65 6462 1408) is a members-only women’s apparel and accessories store, where runway-inspired tops and skirts flutter on the most adorable pearl and beaded hangers. Sequined pumps, à la Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz*, can be found at **X:Opus** (Holland Village Shopping Centre, tel: 65 6463 8823) for S\$30, as can necklaces made from coloured stones. **Beads @ Work** (17B Lorong Liput, tel: 65 6465 2878) has a market-stall approach, in which customers are encouraged to rummage through boxes of beads and hand-pick wooden, stone or glass gems – for about S\$1 each – to create their own designs. The store sells all the tools needed to make necklaces, bracelets and hair accessories, including strings, clasps and silver- and gold-plated chains. If you are too lazy to make your own, nearby **Bejeweled** (Holland Village Shopping Mall, tel: 65 6469 4977) is a candy box of designs, with most items selling for S\$30. Nicole Fall



book review

Part luxury-travel listings guide, part nifty promotional brochure, Little Cream Books are published by Wanlilu Play, a local “bespoke, luxury-travel and destination events planner”. Each book comes in its own box, with velour hardcover binding. There are three in the series: *Cool Destinations* (places to be seen); *Powder* (ski resorts and other chilly destinations); and *Goodwill* (volunteer and philanthropic travel).

Each destination occupies two pages; one for a photograph and one for practical information, brief why-to-go notes and accommodation recommendations with contact details. Each guide offers 26 suggestions in an A-to-Z format, although within these alphabetical confines, several might be considered less than the cream of the crop. *Powder*, for instance, recommends Yabuli in northeastern China, then a small disclaimer at the bottom of the page notes, “Yabuli may not be the winter holiday destination of the discerning skier or boarder, but it is still the largest in China.” It also starts with a “Y”.

Cool Destinations offers several interesting choices, such as the Benesse Art Site Naoshima in Japan and Eze in France, but also sacrifices originality for the something-beginning-with approach, featuring the relatively unglamorous Yellowstone National Park in the United States and Cambridge in England.

Unlikely to be the series bestseller, but a pleasant read nonetheless, is the *Goodwill* volume, which provides 25 countries (and oceans for “O”) to visit and volunteer in, or at least in which to be eco-friendly. Suggestions range from environmental conservation in Britain and organic farming in Japan to activities in less appealing destinations, such as kidnap-prone Yemen and the rapidly disintegrating Zimbabwe.

All the destinations featured in the guides are listed at www.

littlecreambook.com, where you can also buy the books and see a list of local retailers that

stock them. Future editions will include *Romance*, *Wilderness*, *Health*, *Paradise* and *Gourmet*. Volumes cost US\$18 each or US\$50 for a set of three, and delivery in Hong Kong is free.

Peter Walbrook

