

# TRIPATLAS.COM – VILLA MOONLIGHT

The screenshot shows the TripAtlas website interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'EXPLORE', 'PLAN & BOOK', and 'SHARE'. Below that, there are categories like 'Adventure + Outdoors', 'Library', 'Culinary', 'Health + Wellness', 'Family', 'Culture', 'Romance', 'Howto', 'Photography', 'Top 10', and 'Destinations'. A search bar is visible on the right. The main content area features a purple banner for 'maldives hotels up to 75% off' with a 'book now' button. Below the banner is the article 'The Island of the Gods- Uluwatu Awaits' by I.T.B., dated November 28, 2011. The article includes a large image of a modern villa with a pool and a smaller image of a Bali hotel advertisement. The article text describes the island of Uluwatu in Bali, mentioning its location south of Jimbaran Bay and its appeal to surfers and luxury travelers.

## The Island of the Gods - Uluwatu Awaits

From [Luxury + Fine Living](#)

by [I.T.B](#)

November 28, 2011

Light and vistas sail ridges where Indonesian mountains slide into the sea. Cars play snakes and ladders on the roads. Far below, surfers from around the world hover on boards. They wait to rise to Bali's Indian Ocean surf breaks, rolling in from Africa.

This is *pulau dewata*, Bali: the Island of the Gods. Seminyak may be the new playground of the über-trendy. Uluwatu, south of famous Jimbaran Bay, lies at the other end of the same spectrum. International Uluwatu may be, but ITB and [Anne Anderson](#) say it is local, local, local too...

This is an exclusive area and a mecca for seasoned surfers looking for the Indian Ocean's biggest swells. Once it was a place where only the hardest of hard-core surfers rented cheap rooms in Balinese houses sprinkling jungled hillsides. From them watched the moon and the sea.

Now its ridgelines sport sophistication as well as surfboards. Imagine riding a crystal glass tube, knowing you are safe from the rumble of tumble of the powerful surf, or wandering a paved path go another look out, and check out another idyllic beach scene, with a limestone rock jutting out of the sea, sunbathers in bikinis working on their tans, and, further out, surfers mincing up waves.

Above the narrow gully feeding Uluwatu's Bluefin Bay, the light and the vistas swirl and reflect and fuse as Moonlight. Soft-voiced, soft-footed Balinese servants transform Moonlight into culture without shock. Moonlight is one of the most special of the special villas of Bali.

It is the stuff of glossy magazine stories, and it reflects the people who made it. Real estate manager Johana Thomas saw the site, and set about designing the house of her dreams. Her American surfer husband, Ashley, built it for her, high above the beach where they first met.

Able to draw the best from both people and their cultures, the former model and mother of two boys has built a new life in the country where she was born. "We used to spend 6 months in America and six months in Bali." Now she heads a small army of Balinese working with Balinese land owners, villa owners from around the world, and their guests.

[Moonlight Villa](#) is her first venture into building villas of her own. Like her four-year old son, fluent in English and Mandarin, and learning Indonesian, Moonlight draws the best from American, Taiwanese and Balinese influences. Inside Moonlight, its glass walls and beautifully shaped spaces and steps harmonize three cultures, and blend them whole.

"In your country, there are standards," says Johana. "You have to build houses in certain shapes. Windows are standard sizes, and doors are standard sizes. Here you can build in a square or a circle if you want. Here it is it is possible to what you want. You can make the windows, doors the size you like."

"I think about the design. But I cannot see if the builders are building it straight or not. Ashley can."

In Uluwatu she created Moonlight Villa a ship of light sailing along a ridgeline. Night or day, light, shade, gardens, pools, the valley, and the ocean are never more than a glimpse away. Here honeymooners can shower among flowers, or take a giant spa bath together. The rest of us maybe have a cappuccino, and enjoy the meals, or just get lost in the views, mesmerized by the perfect forming waves.

Even if you don't surf, you'll be rewarded by spectacular views of shallow reefs in turquoise water, and waves joining Bali to Africa rolling up to the Wallace Line dividing Asia and Australia.

For sure, Bali has endless scooters to rent, but the man with a car is nearby. And the head of the household team will jump in with you, to fix whatever you need, and see you don't get lost.

It's like a cruise ship coming into port with a personal guide to the best the harbor has to offer. You can eat the best of Uluwatu local & international food at Yeye's Warong restaurant, or sit at the ideal cafe to watch the world go by, over a Beer Bintang, or be helped to buy a few DVD's from the locals.

And as the sun starts to sink, it's time for a quick fix of monkey business at Bali's Pura Uluwatu, an ancient temple of the most southwestern tip of the island. It's six p.m., and in spite of all the photo stops, we have just made it to famous Pura Uluwatu in time for the Kecak, a male choir without instruments, and the fire dance.

Indonesians from all over the archipelago come to pay homage to this temple of unique sunsets. It is a ten-minute swooping drive from Moonlight, through the undulating hills of a landscape of vegetation growing wild. The views are giddy.

First, though, we need to don yellow waist scarves ("shorts or skirts and it would be a sarong") and make our way through the guardians, grey-furred pickpockets, with long tails and pink bottoms, sitting and fighting along the path leading up to the temple.

"Watch your purse and glasses!" says the temple tour guide to some tourists walking by. A monkey relieved of a flip-flop bares its teeth at a travelling Italian. Another monkey skips away from him, carrying its new cap.

But Pura Uluwatu is more than sunsets and fur-lined brigands. High on a cliff above the swells, it throws on some of the most spectacular fire dances this Hindu island has to offer. Three hundred meters along on an uphill trail with more than its fair share of hairy vertigo moments, we reach the amphitheater.

On the way I jump the wall to take a picture of the locals wreaking vengeance on a monkey. A monkey on which the locals are wreaking vengeance. It runs towards me, I back off, and realize I'm a few inches from an 80 meter drop to the Indian Ocean. I play it safe, brave the monkey, and jump the wall again, this time to its safer side.

At the top, it's the Ramayana on high. As 40 men sing, Hanuman, the Monkey-King, and other Hindu deities play slapstick for an hour. This is no hard to follow strict rendition of the intrigues of the Hindu gods and goddesses but first class entertainment, people of every race and language bonded by the beauty of music, watching and laughing at human frailty together.

Framed by last pink wisps of daylight, Hanuman jumps playfully into the audience and rubs the bald pate of a senior. The crowd cries with laughter. The pink fades into dusk falling like a curtain. Village headmen wearing checkered sarongs spread dried coconut husks in a circle. One of the staff tells those tourists to back up, get away from the ring.

Fire licks into the husks, and the monkeying begins in earnest. Hanuman is dancing like a crazy banshee, farting in the face of a man in imaginary handcuffs inside the circle of fire, and kicking the fire at the crowd. Luckily no one gets burnt even if the odd tourist, trying to get a close shot, barely escapes being singed.

Meanwhile the swaying men are singing. Its dark now. Silhouettes compete with the dancing fire. When the last flames and vowels fade into the night, no one wants to go. When fluorescent lights come on, tourists besiege the men of the chorus, handing their cameras to strangers lining up for shots of their own. Outclassed, the long tailed monkeys are long gone.

Back in the real world, the former model says she was doing a fashion shoot for a Taiwanese wedding magazine in Bali. "It was seven years ago. And the photographer couldn't find a western model, so I called over an American surfer, who was watching the shoot from the sidelines."

To Ashley, she looked so beautiful in a wedding dress that within a year he had married her. Moonlight Villa and two laughing little boys are the living proof that Bali is still a place where fairy tales come true!

## **Bali, the island of everything**

### **GETTING TO BALI**

International direct and indirect flights (Visa on Arrival, \$US25, no photos needed, for most nationalities), or by 1.5 hour domestic flight from Jakarta, watching Java's mountains catching sunlight over the clouds, on Indonesia's national airline, Garuda.

<http://www.garuda-indonesia.com/>

### **GETTING TO ULUWATU**

Taxi from the airport, 150,000 Indonesian rupiah (\$US18), 35 minutes, or by arrangement through your tour operator or travel agent.

### **GETTING AROUND**

Walk, rent a bicycle, taxi, rent a car, with or without driver, using the British system of driving on the left.

### **MOONLIGHT VILLA**

<http://www.villamoonlight.com/>

### **Reservations:**

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