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Story by Rachel Greaves
Photos by Djuna Ivereigh/cahayafoto.com

MOONLIGHT VILLA

“A couple decides to support their dream life in Bali, by building a romantic villa for rent on the Uluwatu cliff where they first met...”

The beautiful Moonlight Villa is a labour of love, inspired by another love story that began on the very same cliff where this exceptional house now stands.

In Bali, on a fashion shoot from Taiwan, Johana was modelling tropical bridal wear, but her photographer was in dire need of a male model to pose as the bridegroom. Johana spotted a good looking surfer watching the proceedings from some rocks a few metres away, and was bold enough to ask him to help them out.

The surfer, Ashley Heath, from North Carolina, USA, was semi-resident in Bali, spending six months of each year riding the waves, especially on the world-class barrelling reef break of Uluwatu, with its famous entry cave. After meeting and getting to know Johana, he decided to live here fulltime. Johana, meanwhile, gave up her modelling career in Taiwan and also moved to Bali. Not very long after the original wedding shoot, the couple posed for more wedding photos; this time the occasion was for real and the wedding was their own.

To support their life in Bali, they decided to build a dream villa for rental purposes on the Uluwatu cliff where they first met. “This place is very special for us,” says Johana, “It is close-to-nature, peaceful, joyful and romantic. Maybe other people who come here will also find true love.”

Moonlight Villa was conceived, with love, around the same time as Johana and Ashley’s first child. Johana put together a scrapbook of ideas and sketches, and Balinese architect, Pak Putu, used these concepts to design the multilevel property. Built on the cliff edge, the villa features an abundance of glass walls and windows to maximise the spectacular 360 degree vista of forest, the sea and – on a clear day – the mountains, while the gorgeous terraced gardens cascade towards a thickly wooded gorge. “It was important to optimise the landsite,” explains Ashley, “as well as raising the height of the building to capture the views.”

Moonlight Villa comprises four air-conditioned bedrooms, each complete with a glamorous en suite bathroom and a private balcony or terrace; an open plan living and dining area incorporating a fully equipped feature kitchen, and an

upstairs sitting room. There is also a rooftop, moon and stargazing terrace, and an entertainment terrace, as well as a very spacious poolside lounge and bar. This refreshingly different and very homely villa is complemented by terraced gardens full of flowers, ponds, water features, and a 15-metre swimming pool resting beside a smooth velvety lawn, which is ideal for parties and small weddings.

“Many villas in Bali are single storey and built on a flat piece of land,” rationalises Johana, “but we wanted to create something different. It was hard to imagine what the house would look like before the construction work started, but we were here every day watching it as it grew.”

The open plan living & dining room is characterised by glass walls and windows on every side, which can be opened for a true tropical living experience, or alternatively closed for air-conditioned comfort. Ponds flow around this room, and one set of doors opens onto a shallow 20-centimetre-deep, clear water pool, lined with green Java stone. Two chairs and a small table rest in this pond, making it a great place to sit while keeping your feet cool. The staff can also place a dining table and chairs in here to initiate a unique dining experience. The water flows via a waterfall directly into the swimming pool in the garden below. “The reclining chairs in the shallow pond were my dad’s idea,” Ashley smiles, “He also did a lot of work in the garden, while my mum picked the accessories for the interior.”

The 15-metre, elbow-shaped swimming pool is positioned on the lowest level and flanked by a sundeck furnished with classy sun loungers and umbrellas. Johana put a lot of thought into the design of the pool, “The shallow end is perfect for young kids as they can safely play here beside the timber deck, which is shaded by the roof of the pool lounge and therefore protects them from the harmful rays of the sun. As an adult you will also enjoy this end of the pool, because it is designed so that you can lie down and massage your back on the whirlpool jets under the waterfall without worrying about the dangers of sunburn.”

Johana is a true perfectionist. Ashley reveals, “She has an astonishing eye for detail. She will always notice if something is not quite straight, and she doesn’t take no for an answer. She also has an artist’s eye. For example, we didn’t just buy the stepping stones. Johana commissioned someone to come in and make them, customised to her design.”

Moonlight Villa is a place to lose oneself. The rooftop terrace is open to the sky and, by day, this sunny lounge is a great lookout spot for watching butterflies, kingfishers and monkeys in the wooded valley below. By night, when the stars are shining and the moon is full, it is easy to understand how this magical dream home got its name.