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Rhythm of the Seas

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Looking through the living room with the dining room beyond. The three-seater sofa, daybed and throw cushions are from the AD2012 Collection by Studio Daminato, exclusively from P5 Singapore, and are covered in Belgian linen. The curvaceous cane and rattan chairs and oiled teak table with woven rattan top are from the same collection. Abaca fibre rugs from Vantage Concept sit on solid teak wood floors.

For generations, Bali has enchanted visitors with its magical mix of year-long sun, satin nights, surf, colourful temple festivals and its eternal tableau: jade green splashes across a landscape of rice terraces, and gently tiered pagodas framed by an aquamarine sky. Little wonder that it remains a touchstone for those looking to create an escape from their quotidian lives.

When Singaporean power couple Shareen Khattar and Rolf Harrison decided to build a beachside retreat in Canggu, there was never really any doubt as to which interior designer they wanted on the project. Having worked with Albano Daminato on numerous restaurants in Singapore, they were already familiar with the Australian-born designer's ability to parse beautifully spare lines with an almost reverential sense of place.

Harrison says the brief was 'to create interiors that were in tune with the overall re-interpretation of a Bali beach house, using local materials and craftsmanship wherever possible'.

Daminato has delivered — and then some. It is as if Arnalaya, a Sanskrit portmanteau for 'rhythm of the seas', exists to prove what can be achieved with a perfect storm of designer, architect, empathetic client and location.

Cocooned on a 4,400-square-metre site and edged with a 35-metre beachfront just five minutes away from the spectacular surf break at Echo Beach, Arnalaya should overwhelm with its size: the property has five large guest suites, an entertainment room, a living room, a fully equipped spa treatment room for wet and dry massages with an en-suite and sala garden, a gymnasium and an outdoor tennis court.

Yet it never does. Instead, an almost serene sense of being cocooned pervades. Working closely with architect Sonny Chan, Daminato cleaved close to his brief that 'the interior spaces should take advantage of the seaside climate and flow seamlessly into the exterior decks and gardens while creating a sense of balance and repose'.

Achieving this balance required the Bangkok and Singapore based designer to make full use of his trademark palate of natural materials while removing any visual details that otherwise might distract the eye.

Starting with the idea of relaxed tropical living, Daminato chose natural materials that would survive the corroding effects of salt air and sea spray. To create spaces that are both tactile and visually calming, terrazzo floors were installed:

cool underfoot and a boon in the tropics, these feature sand-tinted hues that echo the beachside location. The idea, says Daminato, was for the spaces to be supremely luxurious and yet very relaxed, enabling Arnalaya's guests to walk from the beach and through the property barefoot.

This almost casual sense of calm, as Daminato makes clear, was not achieved without a lot of work and thought.

Reeds and grass are woven into window treatments edged with natural linen. Sofas are swathed in a soothing mix of Belgian and Indonesian textiles, and when it's time to turn in, natural fine linen mosquito nets drift down over beds. The bathroom walls are clad in curved vertical sheets of terrazzo to create a sculptural, sensual, almost organic effect. Meanwhile, every single piece of furniture was designed in-house, whether teak daybeds, timber tables, split bamboo wall panelling or hand-beaten brass and bronze side tables.

'The most difficult aspect,' Daminato adds, 'was to provide a relaxed ambience that was sophisticated yet visually coherent. There are spaces for adults, teenagers and children, and spaces that allow for the family to interact whether in the bamboo-lined living room, or the formal dining room in the upper level.'

To achieve the best light, view, shade and cross-ventilation, the massing and positioning of the various buildings and internal rooms alone changed numerous times during the planning and construction stages. Living spaces are staggered so that every key vantage point incorporates light throughout the day. The yoga platform on the upper level, for instance, receives dramatic morning sunrises, whilst the sea front pool *balé* provides a perfect front-row seat for sunsets. And to avoid the dreaded 'stale' scent of many tropical resort rooms, every suite in Arnalaya features large areas of glass windows that allow fresh air to flow.

Daminato is particularly pleased with the large upper-floor guest suites, whose bathtubs are set before glass-fronted bay windows. 'There's nothing like having a bath while looking out over the sea and waves,' he says.

For Khattar and Harrison, Arnalaya is a dream that has been almost five years in the making — the long awaited bolt-hole, a calm and private paradise that, at the same time, is also able to host family, friends and large celebrations.

'This is very much a deep-breath experience,' says Daminato. 'It's a place that allows you to disconnect from the outside world.' And on an island already justly famed for its bewitching quality, this is no mean feat.

The living room's rear feature wall is made from natural split bamboo





This page: Native 'ginger beehive flowers' arranged in a locally sourced ceramic pot

Facing page: A teak-framed panel of antique batik fabric, depicting traditional Balinese characters, hangs on the far side of the living room. Decorative bowls and objects were sourced by Daminato in Indonesia, and the glass and bronze lanterns are from Kaizen Design Accents



Another framed antique batik panel hangs on the rear wall of the dining room. Chairs made from solid oiled teak and natural hand-woven rattan, in a traditional Indonesian weave, surround a table of solid slabs of teak on a solid teak box base, both designed by Studio Daminato. The ceiling lanterns are bronze, and also by Studio Daminato



The powder room wall sconce is in a dark bronze finish by Viabizzuno, on teak walls. The wall mounted mixer is Axor Citterio M from Hansgrohe over a Duravit basin mounted under a terrazzo counter



At the bottom of the stair landing are two traditional Indonesian carved wood architectural elements sourced by Daminato

In the master bedroom, a solid teak four-poster bed designed by Studio Daminato is dressed with knitted cotton and wool throws and blankets from Bemboka. The side table is an antique bronze-plated, hand-beaten drum table from the AD2012 Collection. The black metal reading lamp is Italian. On the terrazzo flooring sits a woven sisal rug from Ibal Designs



Natural light from the floor-to-ceiling windows is filtered through sliding panels of grass fibre with linen tape edges from Vantage Concepts





A solid teak stool upholstered in linen from the AD2012 Collection sits at the teak beauty counter



The master ensuite's freestanding tub from Kaldewei is positioned perfectly to take in views of the beach. The bath mixer is Starck for Axor Hansgrohe, and the wall sconce is from Viabizzuno. The stool was sourced locally in Indonesia by Daminato



The beachfront view of Arnalaya