

# BALI Bali seeks risk assessment to clear way for

## MICE business

**THE Bali Hotels Association has initiated talks with global risk management organisations hoping to gain a positive review for Bali.**

Michael Burchett, president of the Bali Hotels Association (BHA) and general manager of Conrad Bali Resort & Spa, said BHA wants the support from ISMA (International Security Managers Association) and ACSG (Asia Regional Association for Corporate Risk Managers).

Burchett said it was crucial for Bali to have “approved” destination status for corporate MICE travel.

“Several individuals who are members of these groups have already visited and reported back to their general membership,” said Burchett.

“By offering to sponsor meetings in Bali for these groups we support their objectives and at the same time exposing our destination to them.

“We believe this will be a valuable learning experience for the hotels and for Bali generally, helping us to meet the expectations of the international risk decision makers.”

Burchett said corporate feedback indicated the key issue to resolve in order to win back MICE business is security.

“Actually, the issue is not so much



The Kertagosa at the Dynasty

improving security further, although that is an ongoing objective of most hotels, but rather overcoming the perception that security is not up to international standards. We believe that in many cases we are already achieving these standards, however we need to convince the decision makers.”

Burchett said the approval process for companies to visit a destination had changed significantly over the past few years.

“Previously, the organising executive could arrange (a meeting) without much client consultation or approval in regard to security.

“However, now, before anybody goes anywhere, the corporate risk manager or security consultant generally must approve the destination. This is not just for Bali, this is anywhere in the world.

“However, there is no “official” worldwide recognised risk indicator that

companies can use, thus word of mouth, country travel alerts, inspections and so on are all that's publicly available to provide the decision makers with the information needed.

“Our issue in Bali is that inspections to the destination have been limited, and the only point of reference for most people's travel alerts, which we feel — in some cases — are unrealistic and only provide a general overview of the situation. And they are often exploited by the tabloid press to sensationalise a situation. They also are prone to being exploited by tabloid press to sensationalise a situation.”

Burchett said another issue is that MICE attendees do not generally travel widely throughout the destination. Generally, they spend 90 percent of their time at the hotel where the events are being held, or else they are visiting specific pre-identified locations.

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## Low risk factor

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“Generally the majority of these locations are highly secured as the organiser is focused on quality, service and security.

“For example, take a three day meeting at Conrad which includes a golf day and a dinner at Ku De Ta. Any risk manager assessing potential risks for their company executives would be expected to give this event a low risk rating due to the high levels of security and controlled environments provided at each of these destinations.

“In other words, unlike the broad-based travel alerts, these assessments are more realistic as they are specific to the people travelling and their activities while in Bali.”

There are signs that the MICE market is beginning to take an interest in Bali again although some traditional markets are still holding off.

Nick Porter, Sheraton Laguna Nusa Dua executive assistant manager sales and marketing said that while the overall international MICE market has suffered considerably since 2002, “we are starting to see an increase in the number of leads from PCOs in Europe, in particular for 2007-8, while demand from regional markets such as Singapore, Hong Kong, Japan and Malaysia has also shown a healthy growth in the past few months”.

“Overall, we are cautiously optimistic that the MICE market will return to its former levels, although we expect to see business from emerging markets such as China and India replacing the more traditional markets — Australia and United States — which still seem to be susceptible one-sided media portrayals of Bali.”

Nigel Mason, of Bali Adventure Tours also blames the media for Bali’s predicament. “It’s only the media and panic government warnings in Australia that are blocking the return of tourism,” he said. “People will finally realise that Bali is no different to any other destination in this troubled world and will eventually ignore the paranoia that has been



created by the media.”

India has appeared on the radar as a potential source market for Bali. Bounty Cruises says its bookings from India have increased 20 percent this year. For group bookings, Bounty is offering complimentary team building sessions during its daytime cruise.

Official arrival figures indicate that Bali is clawing its way back from the October 2005 bombing outrages. Latest international arrival figures show that in April a total of 103,866 passengers arrived at Denpasar — 10.6 per cent fewer than the total achieved in April 2005 (116,272).

However, Australian arrivals for April (11,373) were down 45.7 per cent from one year before, although this figure is a little better than arrivals figures in the months immediately following the October bombings when the number of

Australian visitors to Bali dropped by almost two thirds.

Stephen Radcliffe, general manager of Bali Hyatt, said there are promising signs that the MICE business in Bali is regaining momentum.

“We already have a number of group bookings on our records which promises a positive return for tourism in general. A good 600 room nights are secured until the end of this year for meetings and incentives.

“MICE planners in Asia are still looking at Bali to host their meetings and incentives and Sanur still captures a major percentage of this business,” said Radcliffe.

“Also, the community of Sanur is working closely to ensure safety can be assured, the most recent initiative being the implementation of CCTV cameras throughout the area.”

## Time to stop building hotels, says Ave

JOOP Ave, the former Indonesia Minister of Tourism, has called for an end to all incentives that encourage hotel and tourism infrastructure projects.

Reported in the Indonesia-language Bali Post and the Bali Update newsletter, Ave said that the Indonesian government should create “disincentives” as Bali had a more than sufficient supply of hotel rooms.

He argued that if the hotel sector continued to expand in Bali it would do so at the cost of other sectors of society, such as agriculture and culture.

It could diminish the contribution each makes to the island’s natural attractiveness all of which make the island a premier destination.

“Incentives need to be ended,” he told a bankers’ seminar. “If needed, disincentives should be introduced as we need no more hotel investment.”

The former minister cautioned the provincial government not to “wrongly assume that the way to increase local tax revenues is to allow more hotels to be built”.

He said overdevelopment of the tourism sector threatened Bali’s reputation and served to depress prices, which, in fact, reduced tax revenue.

Ave warned that the time had come for professional management of Bali’s tourism industry to avoid a boomerang effect in the coming years.

Calling for diversification of Bali’s over-dependence on tourism, he pointed to the vast unexplored potential of agriculture and flower cultivation, citing just two examples of many areas warranting coordinated support from the government for future economic development.



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— The new ballroom at the Sheraton Laguna —

## Sheraton Laguna is having a US\$6m ball

THE RECENT completion of a US\$6 million refurbishment program at the 270-room Sheraton Laguna Nusa Dua has boosted guest and convention amenities.

A new ballroom, the chief feature of the facilities upgrade, has an open plan formation, with Swarovski crystal droplets complementing new kinetic lighting from the alcove ceiling.

The new ballroom can be divided into three separate meeting venues and can accommodate groups of between 12 and 600 guests

The hotel's in-house convention service team assists in arranging inventive team-building programs. The team also can organise photographers, audio-visual technicians and entertainers on request.

On the accommodation front, all rooms and suites have ample workspace, a 42-inch plasma TV and cable Internet access.



"We are utilising the various marketing channels available through Starwood to promote our new meeting facilities, particularly Starwood Preferred Planner (SPP) — a loyalty program for meeting planners," said Nick Porter, Sheraton Laguna executive assistant manager, sales and marketing.

"We are able to promote via a dedicated SPP website, as well as via SPP statement mailings."

Porter said value-add elements had been introduced to meeting packages in order to attract business which may have otherwise been held in alternative destinations. "For example, Coffee Break Mini Massages, tailor-made Internet options and complimentary pre-dinner cocktail arrangements.

"The added value has generated interest in Sheraton Laguna as a MICE venue, as well as increasing awareness of Bali as a MICE destination," Porter said.

## Essential things to do in Bali

1. Visit one of the many Hindu temples — full of colour and ceremony — during one of the frequent ceremonies and festivals the Balinese have to celebrate their religion and culture.
2. Treat yourself to some of the local cuisine such as Nasi Goreng or Babi Guling anywhere but if you can try these local favourites at Ibu Oka's in Ubud.
3. Go shopping on the strip in Seminyak for an array of great homewares, soft furnishings and clothes, or for beautiful teak furniture hit the Kerobokan area, which is filled with furniture factories and outlets. Ubud is the place for great art galleries and unique boutiques.
4. Have a Balinese massage. Traditional Balinese massage combines soothing integration of long strokes, acupressure and slow movement muscle manipulation to enhance relaxation.
5. Take a Waka Land Cruise to experience the diversity of the island's geography from volcanic mountains to black sand beaches This is some of the most spectacular scenery any where.



## Narelle's personal 'must do' list



Narelle McDougall, director of sales at the Le Meridien Nirwana Golf & Spa resort has lived and worked in Bali for several years. Here are some of her personal recommendations.

1. A sunset visit to Tanah Lot Sea Temple is special and spectacular! Better to arrange a driver rather than go a tour because then you can enjoy a cold Bintang in one of the Warung's on the cliff top during sunset.
2. Weekend breakfast (Sat/Sun) at La Lucciola for the best corn fritters and hash browns. The coffee is also fantastic and the Bloody Marys are not bad. The staff are amazing. (Weekday breakfast menu is not as extensive.)
3. Have a foot reflexology at Cozy on Sunset Road. The pleasure and pain of it all is worth it for how you feel afterwards — completely chilled out!
4. A day in the artistic centre of the island — Ubud including a visit to the many great galleries and boutiques (take plenty of cash and note that most places don't accept Amex or Diners) then head to Glow at Como Shambhala (Begawan Giri) for a healthy lunch washed down with a chilled SSB!
5. Some of the best restaurants and bars in Bali are in Seminyak and Legian, to fit them all in have a pre dinner cocktail at Ku de Ta followed by a wonderful French meal at Warisan and a night cap (or two) at Hu'u bar!
6. Assuming you are staying somewhere fantastic like Le Meridien, take a guide from your resort and do a biking tour of the area — the countryside is beautiful and you exercise at the same time.







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## As close as you will ever come to heaven, on earth

Located in the spiritually revered and picturesque area of Kedewatan, Ubud, Bali, and sensitively integrated into the surrounding landscape of sweeping rice terraces, river gorges and lush tropical woodlands, The Royal Pita Maha is at one with the environment and at once welcoming to all who meet there.







## Pita Maha offers Ubud seclusion

UBUD has become a more sought after destination in Bali, in the expectation that it offers a more secluded and protected stay than other parts of the island.

The Royal Pita Maha Resort — owned, built and managed by Ubud's Royal family — provides an ideal setting for conferences, executive meetings, group incentives, product launches, weddings, receptions and family reunions with a difference.

Set on the crown of a hill surrounded by tropical greenery, the Royal Convention House is a walled Balinese garden compound housing a number of striking, traditionally inspired structures.

The large meeting hall, the Gedong House of 120sqm, provides space for 200 theatre-style or 100 classroom style.

The Loji House, at 49sqm, seats 40 theatre-style while two bale pavilions handle 32 and 20 persons respectively. An open-air stage and two breakout rooms, each with seating for 20, completes the group facilities.

Team building activities, themed dinners, gala events, cocktail parties and partner programs can be arranged.

The resort offers 52 pool villas decorated Balinese style, each with a bedroom, bathtub and shower, a living room, balcony and swimming pool. Royal villas have an upstairs bedroom and en-suite bathroom plus a ground level swimming pool.

The Royal House has an 800sqm private garden courtyard with a swimming pool and spectacular views with two bedrooms, a living room and kitchen. All villas are air-conditioned, with cable TV and CD player/stereo systems.

Two restaurants, each offering a range of Western and Oriental specialities, and two lounge bars, overlook the Ayung River valley, as do the resort's two free-form swimming pools and 73m riverside spring water lagoon.

## Makeover for Elephant Park

BALI Adventure Tours says it has not been sitting idle during Bali's recovery period. Managing director Nigel Mason has been busy with major new work at his Elephant Safari Park operation.

"Not only have we continued with our 27 room safari park lodge, due for completion late this year, but we have also used the quiet period to do major work within the park," he said.

The elephant show arena has been enlarged. The museum and information area has been re-vamped, a new entrance built and extra landscaping added to the botanical gardens.

A separate bar and function area is being completed and 10 additional elephants have joined the 17 already in the park.

"I believe in using this quieter time to my advantage. In normal busy times it's almost impossible to do major upgrading," he said. "I also believe Bali will recover later this year and when it does Bali Adventure Tours will be ready to handle the increased numbers."

Mason is convinced that his large investment in the quiet times will pay big dividends when tourism returns en masse to Bali.



## Dynasty flexibility key to success

THE Bali Dynasty Resort now has two dedicated conference venues adjacent to the hotel's main lobby.

The Kertagosa offers a spacious venue with high teak wood ceilings, permanent stage and the latest in audio visual including desktop microphones.

The Nusa Penida Suites provide the flexibility of being divisible into three and also offering plenty of natural daylight or a total blackout.

There is also a large and airy breakout area for refreshments. This is supported by a Business Centre offering a range of secretarial services including fax, photocopying and Internet access.

Nusa Penida capacity ranges from 220 up to 280, depending on the room set up. Delegates can choose from theatre style for 110, classroom, banquet or cocktail style for 100 delegates, through to boardroom and U-shape style for 50 delegates.



Right: The Nusa Penida



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# Farm tour gives away the big secret - how to seed a pearl

BALI Hai Cruises and Atlas South Sea Pearl are claiming a world first: A fully operational pearl farm with both water and land tours which include the formerly secretive process of 'seeding' a pearl.

Bali Hai Cruises was the first company

to develop a private Beach Club Resort on the island more than 11 years ago. Bali Hai Beach Club includes two-tier lagoon swimming pool, two restaurants, a sunset drinks bar and large lawn area.

Both the land and water tour of the



pearl farms are free of charge for all Bali Hai Day cruise guests.

## The Water Tour

The tour begins with a cruise along the coral reef aboard Bali Hai's Semi Submersible Coral Viewer. Guests can observe the long line nets in which the growing oysters are suspended rather like an underwater clothesline. The process of producing a pearl takes up to four years and after an initial two years the oysters are ready for 'seeding'.

The Land Tour: Pearl Visitor's Centre

The oysters are removed from the ocean and 'starved' overnight to allow the shell to open naturally. Seeding involves an intricate procedure in which a tiny bead or nucleus, made from donated pearl shell, is inserted into the oyster. Guests have the opportunity to watch technicians performing this surgery back at the Visitors Centre, part of Bali Hai's private Beach Club facility

Once seeded, the oysters are placed back into the nets until they are ready to be harvested almost two years later. The movie theatre in the visitors' centre screens a nine-minute movie illustrating this process.

Finally, guests are invited upstairs to learn about the virtues of pearls and how to detect a valuable pearl. Pearl jewellery and products from the farm are available for purchase.

Exclusive Pearl Farm Tours can be arranged for group and charter bookings. The air conditioned cinema within the Visitors Centre can also be used as a conferencing facility.

## Pearl Evening Cruise

To complement this program, Bali Hai Cruises will also launch a Pearl Evening Cruise onboard sailing catamaran Aristocat. Departing from Benoa Harbour and heading for the lights of Nusa Dua, the cruise includes an opportunity to taste pearl meat.



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Kori Ubud is a romantic hideaway hidden under Bali's blue skies and amongst lush green rice terraces. Located in the traditional Balinese Village of Sanggingan the resort offers 12 unique and serene Balinese-style suites - perfect for small incentive groups.

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# Give us the marketing dollars, urges Wibisono

JEFFREY Wibisono, corporate director of sales and marketing at Rama Hotels and Resorts, concedes that Bali's current position as a tourist destination is "very fragile".

Bali, he said, is being challenged by aggressive promotion from close competitors such as Malaysia and Thailand "who have the luxury of much higher marketing budgets than we do — while no significant marketing has been done from our end to reposition Bali as a favourite and — most importantly — a safe destination."

Wibisono said Bali's private sector was in desperate need of a helping hand from the government. "Without government's active role, it will be difficult to revive Bali as a destination," he added.

"It is time for our government to combine its strength with those of the private sector to produce a decent budget for marketing. Having the right amount of money has to be coupled with the expertise to produce a spot on result.

"So far, the government is conducting its own marketing programs which mostly produce inadequate results due to lack of expertise and limited market knowledge."

Wibisono said while it was important to position Bali as a leading MICE destination, it was a challenge to attract VIPs and chief executives of companies when there was concern about safety and political stability in Indonesia.

The combination of strong culture, wonderful product and services are the basic ingredients for success, he said. "The other half of the job is to promote the destination so that people are convinced that Bali is the place to go."



## KK Barong still one to beat

TWENTY years after making a name for itself as Bali's first luxury resort, the legend lives on at Kupu Kupu Barong.

In Indonesian, Kupu Kupu Barong means "giant butterfly" a name chosen because of the many brilliantly-coloured butterflies seen fluttering around the resort.

All 20 villas blend easily with the surrounding nature and paddy fields of

Ubud. Open terraces and traditional bales with plunge pools offer calming views of the Ayung River Valley.

A unique French touch in the heart of Bali is La View restaurant which matches original French cuisine with Balinese gastronomic traditions

And for another touch of originality, the Mango Tree Spa is perched in a tree house on magical mango tree above the fast-flowing Ayung River.



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## Big agent turnout for Bali

ONE of the biggest travel agent promotions to Bali for years got one of the most enthusiastic receptions ever when the local hospitality industry turned out in force last month to welcome the huge 'Faces of Indonesia' fam. The event was staged by Garuda Indonesia to give 150 top producing agents from Australia and New Zealand the opportunity to see for themselves the positive developments taking place in Bali — and other destinations including Surabaya, Jakarta and Lombok.

"The timing was just perfect," said Suranto Yitnopawiro, regional manager for Garuda Indonesia South West Pacific. "Hoteliers have responded to adversity positively by increasing the diversity, quality of their product.

"Everyone who participated saw for themselves that Bali offers excellent value," said Suranto, with the fam program including stays at 28 different hotels, hosted meals at 88 different properties, and five major functions with more than 100 guests, including the grand gala dinner hosted by the Bali Hotel Association.

Pictured at Hotel Sanur Beach are agents team building with Paintball.



## Sobek sets course with Compass

ADVENTURE specialist Sobek has launched a corporate programme — Sobek Compass — to develop self-awareness and team skills.

Sobek is Bali's first adventure company and puts 16 years of experience into its new venture.

"Compass purposely takes participants out of their comfort zone by exposing individuals to a series of mental and physical challenges that have been designed to awaken subconscious values whilst encouraging clarity of thought," said Sobek's Steve Chadwick.

"Compass's structure provides an opportunity for honest reflection within personal, life and professional values."

Chadwick said that from Compass's basic course through to its advanced skills course, "development of personal awareness contributes to ongoing strengthening and development of team skills".

Costing for the course varies depending on the size of the group and booking method. The published price per person is Rp.975,000

For further details contact [sales@sobekcompass.com](mailto:sales@sobekcompass.com)

## Risata Spa oils up the treatment

RECENTLY renovated to provide more wet treatment rooms, The Sukha Spa at Risata Bali Resort & Spa offers several spa experiences, including its signature Ubad Bali Treatment.

The Balinese word 'ubad' means medicine. This two-hour treatment begins with a relaxing traditional Balinese massage using a choice of fragrant oils. Special mud from the ground leaves of the dadap tree — found in the resort garden— is prepared and applied as a mask to cool, refresh and relax the body.

The last part of the treatment involves the application of cool jasmine scented water followed by a refreshing shower and all-over body lotion.

