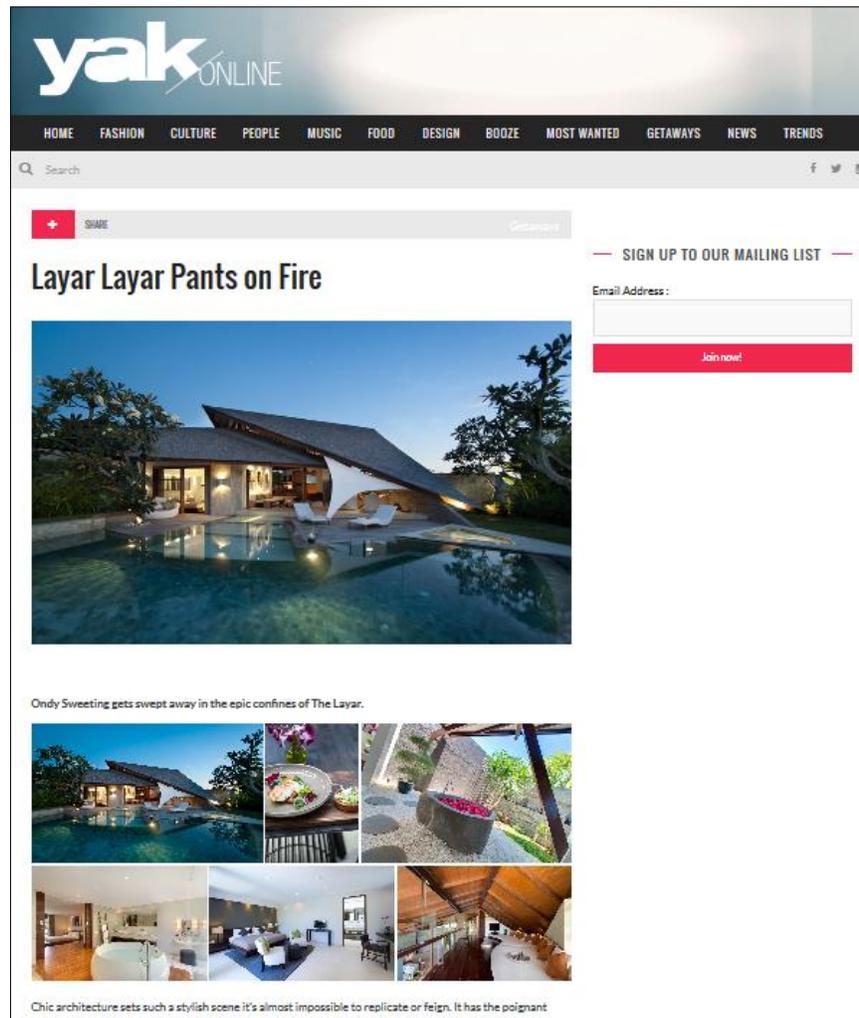


The Yak Online – The Layar Designer Villas & Spa



Layar Layar Pants on Fire

Ondy Sweeting gets swept away in the epic confines of The Layar.

Chic architecture sets such a stylish scene it's almost impossible to replicate or feign. It has the poignant power to relax as much as it has the ability to unhinge a design devotee. Architecture is emotional.

Ancient Roman architect Vitruvius asserted that a building must balance function, structure and beauty. The Layar Designer Villas and Spa captures this maxim and delivers a range of stunning holiday accommodation in the pulsing heart of Seminyak.

As a vacation destination The Layar has a deep insight into what guests adore and even anticipates what they might just desire.

On arrival we're refreshed with a champagne flute filled with a luscious tropical concoction of passionfruit and lemon along with a chilled face towel to cool off. The complimentary delights just start here, such is the hospitality of The Layar.

Within moments of arrival we're invited to book a complimentary 10-minute in-villa neck and shoulder massage – this for every guest in the group. Not just the organiser.

Next up is a unique concept for test dining with an invitation for an aperitivo of three types of antipasto at the sensational new restaurant Settimo Cielo, which is at the street front of the compound.

The iconic shell-like rooftops of the 23 villas that complete The Layar bear the unmistakable mark of Italian design duo GM Architects' Gianni Francione and Mauro Garavoglia.

With a nod to the Sydney Opera House and the Auditoria de Tenerife in Spain, the shingled roof is curved and almost greets the ground at several points. This is offset by the interior with hard angles, partial walls and wide views of the landscaped gardens and sparkling pool.

Each of the villas – which include one, two, three and four bedrooms – deliver different floor plans that optimise the grounds for views, privacy and purpose.

The Layar is a utopia for couples and larger groups seeking blissful privacy. The bedrooms are carefully tucked into distant corners and have two access points; one to the living space and another private entry to the pool and gardens via stonewalls or garden screens. Adults can play while the kids are sleeping or singles or couples can easily peel off from the main group game for quiet moments alone.

Interiors are light and airy with exotic tropical accents including lush internal gardens and open areas that capture the Bali breeze. Living areas come in pairs too with an open-plan living and dining space plus a mezzanine level with soft sofas and a TV setup gracing the two bedroom villas. In others the mezzanine is enclosed by glass and chilled down by superior air-conditioning.

Despite the casual vibe of The Layar, nothing has been left to chance. The twin baths have padded head rests and a direct view of the night sky unimpeded by walls or shrubbery, the bedrooms are large and fabulously under-dressed with simplicity keeping it elegant and comfortable. Cast some clothing about and a few sets of shoes and it will be perfectly personalised. A spa service can be booked to provide in-villa massages, scrubs, yoga, cranial sacral therapy and just about any salon therapy guests might desire.

The pool, which has been precision designed to wrap the quirky floor plan, boasts a giant Jacuzzi and is flanked by soft green lawn and sleek sun loungers. Even on the long driveway from reception to the villas a landscaped traffic island is planted with 40 mature frangipani trees heavily laden with blooms that scent the air exquisitely.

Villas on the high side of the property have been raised two metres from road level to create cool, quiet, havens where parties or family noise disturbs no one else. Unlike many 'sardine-style' holiday villas that are cramped together door-by-door, every villa entrance here is about 15 metres from the neighbours. More than a few clever design tricks have been invoked and subsequently established the venue as forgiving and discreet. Thus repeat business is constant.

Among those to appreciate the luxe and calm of The Layar are Australian fashion icon Wayne Cooper, former Ms Universe Jennifer Hawkins and owner of FC Internazionale, Milano and Indonesian football

club Persib Bandung, businessman Erick Thohir. In fact, The Layar is a bit of a hotspot for Indonesia's high profile players including lawyer Hotman Paris Hutapea and politician Adi Bakrie. The celebrated Indian actor Salman Khan loves a stay as do the Indonesian movie star family Mischa, Marcel and Nadine Chandrawinata.

When it comes to dining, The Layar is the bomb. Each villa has workable kitchen kit but guests here tend not to put them to use. A call to reception will bring the BBQ to you. Have a party and staff will be wheeling a big gas burning BBQ into the garden along with a couple of butlers and serving staff. It's a hot option so put the request in early.

Breakfast is blissful in-villa. Staff will check-in the previous evening to ask for your choice and it will be created freshly the next morning. Otherwise, head to Settimo Cielo for a five-star dining experience from a limited but impressive menu. Egg white omelet with lemon scented asparagus and English spinach filling served with roasted mushroom and rucola. Fresh juices, cut tropical fruits, house made strawberry jam and fabulous breads. The rustic flamed cooked Italian bread with a dash of olive oil is perfect.

The Layar is set in deepest Seminyak and attracts high-energy party people and families. Both appear to holiday beautifully within their own universe unhampered by the mores of the other. The villas are within minutes walking from the famous shopping and dining stretch of Jalan Laksmana. Some of the island's best bars and restaurants are in close shot and a huge new three-level gymnasium has opened around the corner for the athletically inclined.

Long days of lounging by the pool make it the perfect time to take up that last lovely offer of a traditional Italian aperitivo. Escape into the cool confines of Settimo Cielo and enjoy this unique experience. Rather than a few little canapes, this is a generous plate with three examples of antipasti from the menu. It may include a tender yellow fin tuna crudo, or an aranchini stuffed with rice and a beef ragu that will have you dialling 0 to make a dinner reservation at this super local dining destination.

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