



BELMOND  
JIMBARAN PURI  
BALI



PRESS KIT

Belmond Jimbaran Puri introduced by Sanjay Surana

OVERVIEW

How to explain a resort that is close to the airport but immune to the roaring sounds of the planes? It's a conundrum that guests of Belmond Jimbaran Puri often ask yet the property, with a clear view of aircraft landing and taking off in the distance to the right, manages to pull off.

The location of this beachfront, 64-cottage and -villa resort is one of its greatest assets, on a calm, quiet, shallow bay, never more than a 20-minute transfer from the Ngurah Rai International Airport. Its setting in the centre of Jimbaran is Bali through and through—the village is still a fisherman's enclave and the shops are mostly independent local enterprises. Nothing has changed here for decades, making the experience like one of visiting Bali in the 1980s, before the island's rapid development.

En route to the resort guests pass through the village, watch as local markets, temples, and small businesses appear and disappear, before turning into a side road. Suddenly, overhanging banyan trees appear, creating the effect of a tunnel reaching into a hidden realm. The hotel's entrance is so understated—at the side of the slim public road leading to the waterfront—that blink and you might miss it, just a small stone roundabout and a doorway, no blazing sign, nor fanfare, nor overbearing security prelude. Walk in through the entrance, across a small bridge over a lotus pond, and the lobby appears, an open space with a high ceiling and a roof of bamboo and alang-alang, or blady grass.

HISTORY & BACKGROUND

The resort can trace its genesis to the mid-1980s, when a local family purchased some beachfront land and built nine simple cottages. In time a French management company took over, doubling the accommodations and adding a restaurant. In 2006 Belmond (previously Orient-Express Hotels) assumed control, later expanding the property, introducing pool villas and upgrading the rooms. Despite the changes in ownership and size, the sensibilities and feel of the resort have changed little, with an unwavering commitment to retain the ambience of Bali. The structures are unfussy, with dominant materials of bamboo, alang-alang, teak, Indonesian stone. The faithful adherence to the Balinese aesthetic is fitting—and important, with the resort strongly believing in the need for a connection to the island—since Jimbaran is at the heart of South Bali. The cliffs of Uluwatu and its mesmerising temple, the heaving social scene of Seminyak, the party bars of Kuta, the beaches of Sanur and Nusa Dua, and the water sports of Tanjung Benoa, are all easily accessible, 40 minutes or less away by car. Jimbaran is a tranquil base, but one close to all the action.

Entering the property feels like stepping into an upscale Balinese village, one whose overarching sensibilities reveal the traits of calm, cool, luxury, and where Jimbaran and the environment are key components of the experience. There is daily, complimentary meditation and yoga in the garden facing the ocean every morning, while the beach retains a timeless, placid aura, with local children playing football in the late afternoon and a few couples congregating around twilight to take their pre-wedding photos.

The bay itself is a fine example of why so many travellers fall hard for Bali. It is a near-perfect crescent, easily traversed from one end to the other in 40 minutes, with Belmond Jimbaran Puri sitting virtually dead centre. It is beautifully low-tech, blissfully quiet since motorised vehicles like jet-skis and speedboats are banned. Apart from the few resorts dotted around the crescent, and two compact regiments of beachfront seafood cafes, there isn't much going on, with the sand and water the main attractions. The most common vessel plying the sea is a traditional fishing boat, many of them in fact, illustrating how Jimbaran's status as an archetypal Balinese fishing village has endured. Stroll along the beach first thing in the morning, and they line up practically the whole way from the resort to the fish market near the northern end of the crescent. The resort's beach, spanning 200 metres left to right, is by some great quirk of happenstance (or celestial munificence), deep enough to offer beachgoers plenty of space, but also sized in a way that the surf is never more than a few steps away. Since the bay is shallow, with strong waves only really kicking up a couple of times per month, this is possibly the calmest swimming beach in Bali.

Guests come here to get a true taste of Bali, to incorporate the village, the scenery, and the environment into their holiday. This is not a resort that bombards visitors with activities or tries to force them onto a strict schedule. The emphasis here is firmly on decompressing, relaxing, embracing the surroundings, making a lasting connection to the beach, enjoying a simple, well-prepared, full-flavoured meal to the sight and sound of the water. People come here to slow down, escape, clear their minds, and leave feeling recharged.

Local culture is strongly celebrated. There are free lessons each week in Balinese Massage or the national Indonesian language Bahasa, and twice a week a Balinese egg painter comes to the lobby area to show off his intricate technique. Balinese society and customs are also embraced in other ways, from ceremonies at the hotel's temples to a cili (pronounced chilly) doll figure made of woven straw placed on the guest's bed at turndown. Some represent Dewi Sri, a goddess of the rice harvest, offered by women of the village to get a bountiful crop.

The simplicity inherent in a stay here comes courtesy of the straightforward, intuitive, and unfussy set-up of the resort. The stone-floor lobby leads on to a lotus pond and to the right is Tunjung Restaurant, where breakfast and barbecue dinners are served.

To the left of the reception is a small library, open 24 hours and handsomely stocked with books, in many languages, for guests to borrow during their stay, an internet-enabled desktop and linked printer, and a few comfy spots ideal for whiling away some quiet time. Next door is the boutique, open throughout the day and at any other time upon request, stocking Balinese carvings, clothing, jewellery and painted eggshells. The scene expands to the right, opening to the pool, a beachfront bar and restaurant set on expanses of soft sand, a long stretch of grass populated with a few coconut trees and a couple of hammocks. A spa and a standalone bamboo pavilion used for weddings and romantic dinners bookend the resort. The rooms, all cottages and villas, are set back from the beach, arranged in rows and clusters with a few small temples in the centre of all the accommodations. That is it, all very low-rise, low-key. Even when every room is full, the resort is notable for its quiet.

There is no gym on property, but wellness is represented in the form of the spa and its clutch of open-air bamboo treatment pavilions, the sounds of the waves and bird song ever present. Activities are limited to riding a boogie board on the mild waves (the resort has many boards, complimentary for guests to use), stand-up paddle boarding, kayaking in the bay, beach volleyball and a dip in the pool—though many guests prefer the more undemanding pastime of lazing around.

Cottages, the smallest of the rooms at 100 square metres, are wholly Balinese, stone-walled compounds of marble and timber with plenty of teak, four-poster beds with cotton nets, a roof of bamboo and alang-alang, and a small garden with table, chairs, and an al fresco shower (sometimes visited by local crabs). Awareness of the surroundings is cleverly incorporated into the room, from the little wooden window shutters by the writing desk to allow a guest to have a peek outside while working, to the small note left in each room advising guests that Bali is a tropical place, and small insects and creatures are to be expected. The cottages nearest to the beach, numbered 10-18, are especially enchanting for they enjoy the soothing, rhythmic sounds of the waves breaking on the shore, lulling guests to sleep at night and waking them as nature's alarm in the morning.

Villas, set behind the cottages, are 350 square metres and are arranged along a meandering path in a manner that recalls a Balinese hamlet, with lush landscaping that includes bougainvillea, lotus ponds, and banana plants. A small channel of water prefaces the entryway to each villa, to create balance; upon entering guests encounter a screen wall, known as aling-aling, a typical Balinese feature to stop evil spirits from penetrating the compound. Once inside, you'll see the private pool (all villas have one) and a large interior living area with a daybed and French doors that lead directly to the pool.

After sunset, once darkness falls, lights in baskets strung up on trees delicately illuminate the resort and weave a mystical atmosphere. The use of lighting here is smart on many levels. In rooms, all light switches have small labels next to them so guests instantly know which switch operates which light (why don't more hotels do that?); at Nelayan restaurant at night, menus come with small light readers to save diners from having to squint; under the cover of darkness, the pool is lit from within to create a glittering aquatic jewel. Belmond Jimbaran Puri is especially alluring at about 11pm, when most guests are asleep and the staff are tidying the restaurants to close out the day. This is when the frogs call out, frangipani flowers drop from the trees onto the stone floor by the lobby, the flowers in the lotus pond stand tall like proud figurines, and the resort, with its stillness and sharp, defined contours, has a sculpturally hypnotic quality to it, like a piece of moving art frozen in time.

By day, a couple of vantage points offer equally sumptuous, lasting images of the resort. Sitting at the spa lobby, or in the morning at breakfast at one the tables by the lotus pond, you can look across at expanses of greenery, with the clear blue sky above, snatches of the beach visible between the coconut and ketapang (sea almond) trees that shade the guests on the beach and also double up as visual screening. Perhaps the finest view is the one in front of Puri Bar or Nelayan restaurant at dusk, at a table in the sand with a chilled libation, the beach in the foreground and another postcard-worthy sunset making its curtain call in the distance. These snapshots, full of the richness of nature, faithfully represent the essence of Belmond Jimbaran Puri.

## PEOPLE

### **Charles Kneipp, General Manager**

Working as a chef was General Manager Charles Kneipp's first introduction to the hospitality business, with a career beginning in the United Kingdom. From there he returned to his home country, Australia, followed by stints in Russia and China and on to Bali, where he transitioned from the kitchen to Food and Beverage Director, and eventually to his current role. Kneipp is a generous, good-humoured leader with a great sense of adventure and inquisitiveness, and a belief in inclusion—he's happy to give guests his business cards and introduce them to other general managers around the world that he knows. He loves water sports and has a particular soft spot for fly-fishing, travelling around the globe in his quest for the perfect casting technique.

### **Komang Sudirta, Second Team Member**

Raised in a village in the regency of Karangasem, in East Bali, Komang Sudirta began climbing trees from the age of eight. Today, as a member of the gardening team at the resort, he continues to climb trees on a daily basis. He has worked at Belmond Jimbaran Puri for six years, pruning, shearing, and cleaning debris from the tops of trees to ensure nothing falls on guests or staff down below, as well as harvesting fresh coconuts for use in the kitchen or bar. Using a rope around his feet to help grip the trunk, this quiet, shy, unassuming young man in the olive-green uniform of the gardening department shimmies up a coconut tree with ridiculous speed and ease, usually climbing in the morning when the guests are at breakfast. One of the highlights of the job, he says, is the view of the ocean, especially from the tallest trees at villas 60 and 62. He has yet to offer tree-climbing demonstrations or workshops to guests, but watch this space.

## TOP EXPERIENCES

In September 2015, Belmond Jimbaran Puri became the only resort on Jimbaran Bay to launch its own boat. Dedari, which means Sea Angel, is a brightly painted seven-metre fibreglass boat whose proportions and colour scheme are completely in keeping with the type of vessel typically seen on the bay. It sails up to twice a day to Uluwatu, at the south of the island, with a maximum of six guests, though the more enticing of the trips is at sunset. What to expect? The boat hugs the shore along the striking craggy, verdant cliffs of South Bali, taking in a landscape that is different from anywhere else on the island's coast. Highlights include watching waves as they crash into the rocky shoreline to produce wild plumes of spray, spying surfers as they wait to catch a wave, briefly stopping by the otherworldly Buddhist cave at Balangan beach, and arriving at the clifftop Uluwatu temple before sunset where, if the sea is calm, passengers can leap into the clear, warm waters for a restorative swim a few hundred metres offshore (if not here, a swim is always possible at other calmer parts of the sea). The trip always includes an offering to the gods placed on the water, either at Uluwatu or the Buddhist cave, a surprisingly moving act of spiritual reflection. The gradual passage of sunset, with the fantastically coloured clouds and sky reflected off the water, is unforgettable.

Belmond Jimbaran Puri has three active temples on its grounds, with ceremonies taking place at each throughout the year. The rituals are extremely intimate; the gentle ringing of bells combined with the fragrance of incense and the baskets of flower offerings is intensely hypnotic. All guests are welcome at the ceremonies, either as passive observers or active participants, offering them a first-hand, uncommercial conduit into the Hindu culture that makes Bali unique among Indonesia's 17,000 islands, accompanied by explanations of the ceremony's significance and the offerings. Should a guest stay at the resort outside the dates of a ceremony, the Balinese staff always know of local temple events occurring each week. The weekly management cocktail, when guests mingle with staff, is a prime opportunity to discuss attending a temple festivity. This is when one former guest, a dentist, learned of a Balinese Tooth Filing Ceremony happening at a nearby temple, and was invited to attend by a member of staff, much to his delight.

The resort enjoys a perfect location—right in the middle of Jimbaran Bay. A daily walk to either end of the bay is eminently feasible and the seafood cafes to the left and the right are equidistant. The bay is as quiet as it was in the 1980s, with limited hotel development, and no hawkers or roaming massage vendors (unlike the beaches north of the airport) and a continued dominance of the fishing that defines Jimbaran. A stroll along the beach taken early in the morning reveals bright pastel fishing boats lining up on the sand, one after the other, their captains intently studying the water in readiness for the right moment to push out into the sea. The west-facing position of the resort also ensures fantastic sunsets throughout the year.

## CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY & ENVIRONMENT

Belmond Jimbaran Puri embraces its surroundings in many ways. The resort treats and uses waste, or grey water, on its gardens, and uses the chemical-free Starfish water purification system. This potable water is piped throughout the property and will also be bottled in the near future, reducing the need for pre-packaged plastic mineral water bottles. To show their respect for the environment and sensitivity to the local community, staff engage in beach cleaning along the bay on a regular basis, a service that is increased during high season. The resort also supports Bali's Turtle Conservation and Education Centre, offering donations to the turtle conservation fund, as well as actively participating—early in 2016 staff rescued turtle eggs from the beach in front of the hotel, handing them over to the centre, which is raising the hatched offspring. The plan is to eventually release the hatchlings back into the waters from the beach where they were found. Yes, the circle of life.