

PASCAL MORABITO'S BALI

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Living space in Morabito Art Villa



In the heart of the Indonesian archipelago lies Bali, the charming and breathtaking island of the Indian Ocean. Just like Java, its neighboring island, the island of the Gods likes to reveal its magical and volcanic landscape to the curious, in addition to its mountainous landscapes, contrasting with its coral reefs or its endless white sand beaches, bleaching to the contrast of the light rays from the setting sun. As it is the case with many 20th century artists, the majesty of its heaviest scenery along with the majesty of its temples, has charmed the French architect and designer Pascal Morebilo, who brought into being in this idyllic haven the Art Villa, a guest house on the seashore.

Louis Kahn, one of the most influential architects of the 20th century liked to say: «I don't like creating a fixed space. If you can move it or bring an change to it on a daily basis that would be ideal». This is the concept that the French jeweler and designer Pascal Morebilo made his own when he settled on the island of Bali to construct his Art Villa. Built on the Canggu beach, on the west coast of the island in the Kuta bay, its 130 meters of seashore invite visitors to a journey of reflection. The Vaseau and 2 suites that this polyvalent artist has been constantly improving and developing, as his inspirations derive, are becoming masterpieces blending Indonesian traditional artifacts with a contemporary style. Yes, this figure might change, and one day two rooms may change into a suite if the chef gets a sudden inspiration. Hence, one can rent one room or the other, but also the whole house, which can accommodate up to 20 persons. After travelling across the world with his wife Marie-Fay looking for this ideal place, today he likes to say: «I visited the world, now the world is visiting me»; as several friends and clients came and stayed for a few weeks in the Villa. The famous English artist Damien Hirst acquired there for three months. A classroom was then improvised for his children, as well as a workshop, because the magic of the place makes that it is fully changeable, depending on the inhabitants' needs. This man, who is passionate about art, has also brought with him objects he collected during his trips. European furniture, such as this bell tower which dates back to the 18th century is being restored and will be soon hung, or these hundreds of carved stones aligned in a corner of the garden and which he smartly integrated in the landscape, are scattered throughout the park and the villa. Pascal Morebilo continuously recycles and reorganizes the space to the delight of its inhabitants who are continually enthralled by the richness of details and materials, both around the lanes bordered by fountains sculpted in the granite and in the farthest corners of the rooms. Indeed, even the kitchen has got a prominent importance. The villa is a venue for wedding ceremonies and can accommodate up to 200 guests who, while soothed by the sound of the waves and fountains, can certainly enjoy regionally Indonesian food as well as French and Indian dishes. Guests staying at the Villa have the possibility to enjoy meals on the beach, in the garden or in the dining room while sitting at long



A beach house gift from Gino & Lilliana

Villa entrance adorned with wooden bird sculptures from West Java island



white table which overlooks the park. Sojourning in this place rich of an assortment of atmospheres becomes a real sensory discovery. Then, one can relax during a massage session in a cabin built on piles overlooking panoramic view on the sea or, simply read while suspended between earth and sky, on a disk surrounded by two swimming pools.

Another key point is light. Like a suggested path, the light combines modernity and tradition. A thin fluorescent thread of light runs along the reception area, the bath, whereas soft lighting decorates the - jaranan - rooms and a crack of light lightens a rock left by the flower in the spa. ... An oscillation between sensory awakening and rest.

The pure style of this estate gives a feeling of space and freedom essentially with an ocean-based inspiration. Whatever one stands, the view is on the park where are planted more than 300 trees, a mixture of palm-trees, bangkian, coccoons and banyan. A wonderful blue turquoise



Barisan rice garden



Pupuk Wayang Collection, Indonesian traditional art

swimming pool surrounded by a pond full of fish and a green lawn that reaches the beach, brings colorful views to this one of time Balinese picture, - I live in absolute self-sufficiency in this place, this is a true village life - emphasized Pucuk Miradita while looking at his last creation with full attention, a Japanese villa of 400m², 200 years old made of pieces he brought from the Pratiarak (Borneo) king. A new touch added to this magical landscape is constant development.

Finally, a museum of primitive Indonesian Arts, exhibiting stone and wooden sculptures, of the Tjaja, Saeba, Kalimantan tribes, is open to the guests who can have a look at this impressive collection while walking around. So, as you have understood, here environment and culture combine in style in a place where the outside and the inside are closely mixed, granting every evening the unforgettable sunset while the park enlightens and a new night universe reveals.

PASCAL MORABITO TELLS US ABOUT LIVING IN BALI

Sar La Terra: Tell us about Bali, this island and its people?

Pascal Morabito: Bali is, in the human subconscious, a unique and magical paradise-like place, for both nature and man. The modern world has obviously disrupted part of its sacred balance which is so famous all over the world. And yet, even today, when one stays away from the hustle of the touristic spots, the chaotic buildings, and becomes rather on the joyful, curious and kind village people, attends their great rituals and ceremonies, visits their Hindu temples or their traditional villages, admires the expansive rice paddies which might stop at a volcanic slope, one will fortunately discover a still intact Bali.

SLT: Why did you choose Bali in particular?

P.M.: 40 years ago, in Paris, my Indonesian barber told me: -Mr Morabito, go to Bali, and you will stay there!- I have likewise always refused to go there knowing that the prophecy might be fulfilled and this will thus impend the basic creativity process which was granted to me. As I turned 60 years, I felt I was finally ready, after achieving my planned artistic and cultural pattern, to start a new stage.

Bali, through its climate, its hospitality, its people's kindness, the beauty of its landscape, the safety, the handicrafts, the history and the richness of its sites, the tribal art, all accompanied perfectly my vision and met my expectations. In addition, the technology and the new means of communication helped me combine business and family. And we thought maybe we should settle on a continent which is close enough to our deepest thoughts. I travelled to the four corners of the earth, and Bali was, by far, the best choice, our dream coming true. Indonesia is made of more than 17000 islands, half of which are inhabited! A cultural hub of Indonesia, explains being in Bali the most important



Pascal Morabito

pieces. If you are lucky enough to live here, you will be the first to examine objects coming from all these islands. In addition, abundant and historically cultivated workforces make monumental works more valuable. For really found in this place the dreams of the creator, the architect, the collector and the traveller, my own dream.

SLT: Why did you construct the Morabito Art Villa?

P.M.: By creating the Morabito Art Villa, I wanted to create a place where art, nature, culture and art of living combine perfectly. As a lapidary collector, I wanted to consider the garden as kind of an -open air museum- and incorporate in the park the important pieces of stone sculptures and monumental reliefs from the Indonesian art. I like stone and wood elements which are washed out by time. I installed in the ponds, stone elements (legans, mortar) causing water to gush from the rocks of the fountain. I placed some pieces of my collections in this way to give them a practical and aesthetic aspect. I wanted the interior decorations to differentiate between the rooms as each room has got a specific theme and a particular decoration.



Rice paddies in the Ubud area

I also exhibited my collections by themes. I grant the same attention to the minimalism and the baroque. For me, everything is meant to be part of a necessary adaptation between the outside and the inside. There is no rule; this is a real effort of harmony which cannot be defined.

Balinese artisans offered me the possibility to make a synthesis between their culture which I had minimized and my own personal taste. I incorporated these wood, stone, and metal elements in my interior

architecture, sometimes as decorative and structural elements but more often as a pleasant museum's exhibition. In opposition with the traditional Balinese houses, I favour the minimalism of the architecture and the decoration so that the environment luxuriance obtains its full value

SLT: *Generally speaking, how long do you stay here?*

P.M: We stay in Bali about seven months a year, interspersed with a few travels to Asia and a summer holiday trip, with the children, to France and Europe. We like the alternation between staying in Bali and experiencing a stimulating stay in Singapore, Hong Kong, Shanghai, Beijing, Sydney or Melbourne, where we enjoy the contemporary art and the modern culture during customers' visits and professional global fairs.

SLT: *How are your days going in Bali?*

P.M: Our days are arranged on the basis of a daily routine; they are divided into several parts: collections, drawings, mock-ups, supervision of the products which I create for my brand, the visits from friends, our strolling along the beach and a daily massage, for example.

SLT: *Is there an expat life here?*

P.M: Bali has several expatriates' nationalities, like for instance, Australians, but the French are not an exception, with a small community of about 2000 inhabitants. The EIFB, the French school in Bali, has been expanding for 16 years at its own pace and provides lessons up to the baccalaureate grade. We mix gladly with the different communities, and participate in the organized exhibitions.

SLT: *Which architects / designers do you admire most?*

P.M: I admire the contemporary architect Zaha Hadid, my favourite designer is my son Ora Ito and my sculptor is Anish Kapoor.

SLT: *Have you got a similar project elsewhere?*

P.M: I have been contacted by a hotel group to create about ten Morabito Art Villas in different places around the world.



Labour in a rice paddy in the Ubud area.



Pura Ulun Bratan temple overlooking Lake Bratan, dedicated to Dewi Danu, the goddess of waters. Built in the XVII century

PASCAL MORABITO' BEST ADDRESSES



Pascal Morabito Collection, Indonésien swords

Restaurants: Sardine, Jalan Petitenget 21, Kerobokan, Bali, a French restaurant made of a remarkable bamboo setting overlooking the paddies.

Bars: Some wonderful beach bars have just opened on the Petitenget beach at only 10 min away on foot from the Morabito Art Villa: La Barca, le Karma. A lovely atmosphere in a highly friendly beach setting. I hope they withstand the rumours of demolition from the authorities!

Hotels: Tugu Bali, Tugu Lombok, a charming blend of comfort and art. Essential.

Ultimate excursions (places to visit, shows/ceremonies...):

Nature: Visit of the heart of Bali, lakes, volcano, seemingly endless rice paddies.

Sport: Diving, memorable sites are suggested.

Shows: Depending on the months, you will experience «Nyepi» with the traditional fights of Ogo Ogo at the intersection of villages. Or on holiday periods at Bali such as Gulingan and Kuningan where each street and village of Penjor is decorated with bamboo. However, when you visit the temples you can't miss the Balinese ceremonies which are almost daily!

What to bringback:

Tribal art for amateurs,

Silk sarong for softness,

Massage oils with the scent of frangipani,

The recipe of the Nasi Goreng for the flavors,

And a recording of Ringit (bamboo percussion) to bring together the five senses of Bali within it!