



# NEWSLETTER

April/May 2016

Amed, Bali



## 3 VILLAS PROJECT: ESTIMATED PRICES NOW PUBLISHED

FOR MORE INFO ABOUT THIS PROJECT EMAIL TO

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**Derk Izaks**

*Owner of Villa Bukit Segara*



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## 3 VILLAS PROJECT: ESTIMATED PRICES NOW PUBLISHED

The project to build three villas on the land of Villa Bukit Segara (VBS) is in full preparation. Based on concept drawings, the architect and contractors have given a price for building between 90.000 to 110.000 Euro. The price of the land is 86.000 Euro, other costs, like garden, interior, architect, supervising, etc are estimated on 30.000 Euro, which means that the average price will be around 216.000 Euro, all included.

The definite price will be based on more detailed drawings and choices by the buyer for example a bigger or smaller pool and so on.

Based on a occupation of 150 nights and a nett price per night of 160 Euro, the total sales will be 24.000 Euro, the total costs of maintenance electric etc on 6.000 Euro per year. So the nett income is estimated on 18.000 Euro. Above that there is the free use of the villa by the owner.

At this moment there are five candidates who

consider to buy, their decision depends of the definitive price. All five got detailed information about ownership of the land, tax, expenses, estimated occupancy etcetera.

As long as no definitive decisions are made, you can still get all information about the project.

One of the three villas is not for sale, because the owner of VBS keeps it for himself.

### Interested?

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# THE DANISH ARE THE MOST HAPPY PEOPLE ON EARTH... BUT WOULD THEY MATCH THE BALINESE?



According to the World Happiness Report 2015, the Danish are the most happy people on earth. The other Scandinavian countries, Sweden, Norway, Iceland are also ranked high and so is Switzerland. Other countries in the top are the Netherlands and New Zealand. Indonesia is ranked somewhere in the middle, there is no data about the different provinces, like Bali.

So when a guest from Norway (Myra, indeed very happy) asked us: are the Balinese people happy, we did not have good information to give an answer. Well, why not do "research"?

First we gave all our 14 staff members a paper with just two questions:

1. Are you happy with your life ?
2. Do you think the people around you, like family, friends are happy?

And we asked: please give a rating on a scale of one to five, from unhappy to very happy. There was an explanation, the text was in Indonesian language and it was anonymous.

These are the results:

Are you happy with your life?

Very Happy	2
Happy	10
Medium Happy	1

Do you think the people around you are happy?

Very Happy	1
Happy	8
Medium Happy	3

We asked the respondents to give some reasons why they/their family are happy or not so happy. This is an impression of the answer:

All respondents give as reasons for being happy the life with their family and with their friends. My parents love me, we all live in one house, there is no family living outside Bali, are the remarks made.

Also nearly all people say that they are happy because they live on Bali, Bali is beautiful, I am proud to be Balinese.

And many people say: because I have a good job. Reasons for being less happy: my parents don't have a son, my 2 babies are often sick, one of my family lives far away.

In the World Happiness Report many factors are mentioned that are positive related to happiness. One is called "Social Support". We have no doubt that Bali would beat every top ranked country on that issue. The Balinese live in "extended families", together with parents, grand parents, aunts and in a small community, the banjar. They don't need to bring their children to preschool and the idea to put their old grandfather in an old peoples home is shocking for them. Also their hindu belief with many ceremonies creates a strong feeling of belonging together.

Denmark ranks number one but would be easily beaten by Bali on issues like: number of suicides and the use of anti-depressants.

In the mentioned report also laughing and smiling is mentioned as a relevant indicator for happiness, well we can be short about that Bali: against whatever other country 10-0!

Of course we realize that the outcomes are not representative for all Bali but it gives an impression. And if Bali was included in the study, it would rank at the top of the happiest people in the world maybe even beat the Danish!

## WHAT'S A GOOD MASSAGE AND WHAT'S A REASONABLE PRICE?



What's a good massage?

We collected some information about the massage that Villa Bukit Segara (VBS) offers.

Every guest that leaves gets a review paper.

One question is about massage.

"If you had a massage, please give your rating on a scale from 1 to 10."

The average ratings for the two ladies who do most of our massage are:

1. Made 8.53
2. Parmi 8.75

We stopped with one lady with an average of 6.75. Amazingly is that the same lady can get many times an excellent rating (ten) and also just a six or even a five. It seems that personal preference of the guest is an important factor. For example one guest likes a strong massage, another more soft, although the ladies will always ask about that. ("do you want more strong?")

We see that the average of Parmi is a bit higher than that of Made. What's Parmi doing better and what can others learn from that?

We met a couple in our Restaurant from Germany, Mr. and Mrs. Sonnhild. Mrs. Sonnhild is a professional therapist and Mr. Sonnhild often takes a massage. On the same afternoon each got a massage from Made and Parmi. Their conclusions: Both ladies give a good massage. And also we give a compliment that they speak enough English for basic communication. But we would give Parmi a bit higher rating. So that's consistent with the ratings of the guests as mentioned above.

Why does Parmi get a bit higher rating? This are the points mentioned:

1. She always first touches the part of the body that will be treated before she starts. That's very attentive .
2. She seems to feel the places that need extra treatment.
3. She gives a very good head massage.

We discussed the results with both ladies. Their attitude is great: we keep learning and we are never to old for that. Both have over 25 years experience. It's good to realise that massage in Bali is just a relaxing massage, it's not a medical treatment by a physiotherapist. So we think that talking about therapists is overdone.

Prices are very different, from 50.000 IDR on the beach up to 650.000 IDR in an expensive resort. You pay mainly extra for the ambiance. In VBS it's 150.000 IDR. A higher price does not guarantee a better massage, it's even possible that the woman on the beach will work the next day in the resort.

### SPA

The word Spa is easily used for every place that offers massage. Often its not more than a bale (small rest house) or a simple salon with a mattress or massage table. A SPA is supposed to have extra facilities related to water. SPA means sanitas per aqua, healthy through water.

### BALEAN

If you have a serious problem you could do what the Balinese do: visit the Balean. It's always a man and his treatment is not for relaxing! Balinese describe it as a tough treatment that gives them a lot of pain but he can even put broken arms and legs back in position and cure.

Our staff member Tuti fell from her motorbike and broke her arm. (falling from motorbikes seems to be a Balinese tradition!). The hospital said: we can't fix it, we think amputation is necessary... The Balean treated her during 2 months, and completely cured the arm. Indeed, the doctor in the hospital who suggested amputation should be fired.



Tuti. Thank to the Balean still with 2 arms.

Note: The Balean operates without narcosis, Tuti was accompanied by 6 family members- who had to hold her tight. "I thought I would die," she said.



## A VISIT TO A CASHEW FACTORY WITH SPECTACULAR VIEW ON MT AGUNG

Just recently we "discovered" this factory. The story behind it is amazing, also, the fabric itself is and the location.

Less than one hour from the villa, on the slopes of Mt Agung is the village Ban. It is situated in one of the most beautiful parts of Bali, a valley with spectacular views on mountains. One of them is Mt Agung, the nr 1 mountain of Bali. Also the place of the Besaki Temple, the mother of all temples in Bali.

It is one of the poorest parts of Bali, the people are farmers but can not grow much on the mountains. Only for cashew nuts the conditions are perfect, so they collect them and sell them for low prices to merchants who bring them to other countries where they are processed and sold for high prices.

When an American, Aaron Fishman, visited the area he saw a chance. After a lot of research (he knew nothing about processing cashews) and fund raising, he started the East-Bali Cashew Company. We visited it in March 2016.

We came back enthusiastic! Forget to visit the water palace in Tirta Ganga, don't go to Mt Agung, but don't miss this "fabrik" (factory). It's halfway between Amed and Singaraja, then 5 kilometer up in a beautiful mountain area. There is the place, on top of a mountain, a modern factory with 300 enthusiastic and happy women. For most of them it is the first time in their life that they have a paid job. A combination of modern machines and 600 fast moving brown hands do the job, at the end there are beautiful packed nuts in different flavours, sea salt, ginger, chocolate etc.

The women can also take their small children to their work, there are nice looking facilities for playgroups.

The cashews are now available in the restaurant Villa Bukit Segara and in the souvenir shop of the villa. But better you visit the place yourself, you will come back inspired by what Aaron Fishman and many people created.

We added a visit to the cashew factory to the paper that is available for guests, called "Nice Little Trips Designed for You" with the following information:

- Planning** : We leave the Villa around 8 a.m and will arrive there around 9. We would suggest to go by car but you can also rent our motorbike. Back around lunchtime.
- Price** : Car, driver, half a day 375.000 IDR, fee for the factory plus drinks and tasting different kind of nuts 100.000 IDR p.p.

## THE FISHERMEN THAT GOT LOST.. AND CAME BACK

In small fishermen's communities in and around Amed, there are very old people who had unbelievable experiences in their life. About the colonial time, the Japanese occupation, catching a monster fish or getting lost at sea. They can not speak Indonesian, they can't read or write...sometimes we hear a part of a story and we try to find the person involved...

The rumor we heard was about a man that got lost on the sea and after about three weeks got back while all people already thought that he was dead. Thanks to our Putu, we found him. Already the place where he lives with his wife and sons is worth a visit....Seraya, East of Amed. It's an area of mountains close to the sea...not one villa or hotel, not one tourist, very bad roads, spectacular views. The name of the man is Wayan. By asking his sons questions we found out that he is probably around 60 years old, he does not know. But also the sons are, around 40, they gave us their identity card when we asked their age...they also did not know. Maybe it has to do with the Balinese calendar which is different.

Piece by piece Bapak Wayan told the story, in Balinese language, translated by Putu.

With the other fishermen I was on the sea, it was in the rainseason. There was a big storm and rain, it was dark. I lost the feeling about where to go, I tried to sail back but was probably just sailing further away. It became night, I did not know where I was. All night I was on the sea, afraid. Than it became light again, the weather was still bad, I kept sailing but I did not know in which direction. Then it became night again, I could drink water because it had been raining. The day before I caught some fish but I could not eat it anymore.. already bad smell.

The third day the weather was better, but I did not see any land. I had accepted that I would die. You ask me why I did not try to catch fish..it was because I gave up. I had accepted that I would die.

The fourth day I saw a little island but I could see that it was empty, so I did not try to go ashore. Then I saw a bigger island, I could sail to this island, there were people who brought me to the head of their village and gave me a coconut. I did not know where I was, the people told me it was Selayar, nearby Sulawesi. I could stay in a house of the

people, they were very friendly. I told them that I was from Bali and got lost. I could not inform anybody, in that time there was no telephone on the island. The head of the village told me to wait until a big boat would come, then I could go to Lombok. That is not so far from Bali.

I was waiting 2 weeks. Then I went with the big boat to Lombok and from Lombok to Bali, where I finally arrived at Padang Bay. From there someone brought me by car to Seraya. He put me on the bridge which is close to my house, the rest of the road is to bad for a car. People saw me and came to me, then everybody was came out and carried me back home..because they were so happy, then I saw my wife, I was so happy, my wife was crying.

Then we asked some questions of the wife of Wayan. This is what she told us. When my husband did not come home, I was waiting night and day on the beach, I did not eat. After some time we went to the Balean (that is a holy man who can tell about the future). He told me and my family to put a duck in the sea, if he would swim back, my husband would be still alive, if not he would be dead. The duck came back, so we were hopefull again. I was planning to kill myself if he would not come back. And then, after long time, suddenly he was there. Of course we were very happy and we had many ceremonies to thank the gods.

How about fishing Bapak? I had to promise my wife to never go on the sea again. Since then I help the fishermen and we sell petrol to them.

What happened with your boat, Bapak? I gave it to the head of the village but the engine I could take with me on the big ship.

And after you came back..could you sleep or did you have a trauma.? I could not sleep one month but than I was ok again. Everyday I thank the gods. Bapak, thank you so much for this impressive story and good luck with your life.

Note:

Bapak Wayan arrived at one of the Selayar Island. An archipel with 73 islands, most uninhabited. Distance from Bali 500 km. From one of these islands, he was brought to Sulawesi.





## BUKIT SEGARA BY THE NUMBERS

We like to check the quality of the service that we provide: the room, the restaurant, the trips that we organize, even the massage.

Here are some results, the numbers are the average ratings of our guests since January 1st 2016

<b>Location</b>	<b>9.19</b>
<b>Rooms</b>	<b>9.3</b>
<b>Restaurant</b>	<b>9.7</b>
<b>Service, personal attention</b>	<b>9.9</b>
<b>Trips and transport</b>	<b>10</b>

For this information we used our "Tamu Happy Paper". Tamu means guest, we ask every guest to fill in this paper at departure.

On this paper we also ask for remarks and suggestions. We got many, nearly all have improved our quality and service, here are some examples:

1. Speed up the delivery time of the laundry
2. Make stairs alongside the entrance to the sea
3. Put an extra switch in the bathroom
4. Offer the choice between salted and unsalted butter at breakfast

Sometimes remarks of guests can be quite demanding: a guest arrives at 11 o'clock in the night, without informing us about his time of arrival which we asked him twice before. He asks the menu and want to order a dinner. Our night service man can only offer a basic nasi goreng. The guest is angry, he wants to order a complete dinner. He gave a negative review about this on booking.com. We don't say "Are you crazy?" (the Balinese staff would not even think that, the Western owner would...) Our slogan is: we keep learning, so now we have a small menu and trained the service man to provide that in the night.

Massage. We ask the guests to rate our massage. The results are a compliment for the two ladies involved: 8.53 and 8.75. Never the less there were some points that could be improved, we discussed these with them.

Reviews. Nearly all guests book after checking reviews on tripadvisor or bookingsites. So reviews are of utmost importance.

These are the numbers:

<b>Tripadvisor:</b> Excellent	<b>150</b>
Very good	<b>10</b>
Less than very good	<b>2</b>

**Booking.com** – Average rating **9.4**

At this moment we are nr 1 of 57 in B&Bs/inns in Amed. Since a few months our restaurant is open for outside guests and we have a special account on tripadvisor. So far there are 33 reviews, excellent **31**, very good **2**.

For the restaurants we have also data about the ratings for our restaurant and for some well known others.

<b>Restaurant Bukit Segara</b>	<b>9.2</b>
Gusto	8.7
The Grill	8.3
Sails	8.2
The Griya	7.3

We feel flattered of course but it could be that our guests are a bit too friendly for us.

To be honest, it's not easy to get reviews at departure all guest promise to make a review but back home there is a long "to do list". We sent them a friendly and personal reminder, sometimes even one more then we have to stop, we don't want to irritate them.

What's the secret behind these amazing results? Of course it's the "product" itself: the location, the easy access to the sea, a beautiful coral reef in front of the villa, far away from traffic noise and so on.

Above that it's about personal attention and service. But we keep learning, thanks to all the guests that helped by giving their feed back.



Some guests say: VBS is probably the most "eco" villa in Bali. You could use it for your marketing!

We won't do that...we hate the green washing-propaganda by so many hotels, every one may judge for him/herself how "green" we are. This are the facts:

### **Strict separation of waste.**

We use nearly everything again in the 1, 2, 3 system that every staff member knows.

1. Means: can be eaten by our animals or pigs of the staff
2. Can be used for compost. We have a well functioning system to make compost.
3. We have to bring to the roadside. This is mainly plastic.

### **Cans are collected and sold for re-use.**

We pay for a pick up service that brings the waste to a dump. Recently we checked if that really happened by following the pick up car. There were rumours that some (private) transporters dump the rubbish illegally, but that was not the case.

### **We are selective in what and where we buy.**

Where possible on the traditional market and at local addresses. Fish is direct from the sea or our own ponds.

We have big gardens where we grow vegetables, fruit and species used in the kitchen and do not use fertilizers. No need, we have plenty of compost thanks to the animals, specially the two cows. They also cut the grass and where they can't come the gardeners cut the grass by hand. No machines needed.

We are blessed with a deep well that provides

spring water of excellent quality (tested). We provide this water in bottles of glass and stopped with plastic water.

Watering the gardens is done in the night and early morning so there is no evaporation by the sun.

We stopped giving as a standard "amenities" like combs, tooth past, shaving device and so on. We have a list of 24 items in each room which are available at the reception...hardly any one asks for it.

Final, we stopped using plastic straws for drinks, one of our staff members made bamboo-straws. After cleaning, they can be used again and again.



Christina with Dragon Fruit Juice, using a bamboo-straw.





## NEW IN THE VILLA: PRIVATE YOGA CLASS BY TEACHER MADE KOJACK

It's amazing that we did not take this initiative earlier: offer our guests private yoga classes in the environment of VBS, specially on our seaside terrace. A spectacular place for yoga, nearly above the sea, 180 degrees sea views, total silence except the sound of the waves.

Incidentally, individual guests did their yoga practice there, using yoga mats provided by the villa. But most people prefer to do yoga with a teacher and for that they had to go outside.

Now we offer private yoga class at VBS. This is what we did.

One time for two and one time for three guests we invited yoga teachers from outside to give yoga lesson. The first time it was an Italian woman who is connected to a local hotel that offers yoga classes (Life in Amed). The evaluation of the quest was positive. Then we found an independent Balinese yoga teacher: Made Kojack.

Evaluation of the guests: Excellent!

So we made appointments with Made for cooperation. This means that we will ask Made to give a yoga 'class' for one or some guests of the villa. We pay Made, we put the price on the bill of the guests. The price per person depends of the number of guests but will be max 200,000 IDR (around 13 Euro) per person. That is for 1 to 1.5 hour and as Made explains the

length depends of the energy of the guest.

Made told us that he learned to become a yoga teacher by lessons of teachers from different countries, also he stayed to practice in India and Thailand. And he read books of Ghandi and others.

About his personal background he told us: I was working as a businessman in the South of Bali. I was drinking to much and not happy with my life. I discovered yoga and it helped me to become a more balanced person. Made is married with an American woman and has a daughter in America. The guests who followed his lessons describe him as an excellent teacher and as a friendly and wise person.

Andrea Morrasut, a guest from Australia who joined the class told us: Doing yoga together with just 2 other guests in the private ambience of VBS is much more attractive than to do it in one of the big yoga studios in Ubud. I stayed there before. Some of the studios in Ubud are now offering yoga teacher programs, along with many classes. Ubud has become some what commercial, along with the yoga industry there. It was wonderful to have the opportunity to practice with an authentic Balinese teacher like Made.

Inform us a day before and we will organize your private yoga class with yoga teacher Made on the beautiful terrace at the seaside.



## FRENCH FRITES: VBS-RESTAURANT BEATEN BY SUPERMARKET

We hate to tell it but the French frites of the supermarket are better than the home made ones.

A guest asked us: so many things in your restaurant or from your own garden or home made, so why you give French frites from the supermarket... we realized that the guest had a point. So we started to make fresh frites, we followed the recipe of famous chefs, studied a 100 page book about making French frites and owner Derk did it successfully in the Netherlands.

But our home made French frites were a disaster, whatever we did.

Finally we accepted the truth. You need the right kind of potatoes to make excellent French frites and so far we did not find them in Bali. It's the same story as why the tomato soup in Bali is so much better than in Europe. In Bali you can get the right tomatoes, dark red, tasty. Cooking, it is all about the quality of the ingredients.

Note: we don't give up and will start growing a new type of potatoes in our garden imported from Belgium. Belgium is nr 1 in the world in making French frites.