



enter the new

From on-trend eateries
to to-die-for day spas
and spectacular scenery,
Rachel Lovelock
uncovers Bali's
newest attractions



Left and right: Decadent decor and a creative Sicilian menu hits the spot at the new La Sicilia. Below: Another new offering, Shanghai Baby specialises in modern Asian cuisine. Bottom left and right: Balinese chef Will Metric serves up fragrant dishes inspired by his Malaysian travels. Opposite page (bottom right): If you're after a fresh, healthy alternative, try Savage Kitchen in Canggu

More than a million Australians visited Indonesia last year, a figure that has increased by 50% in the last five years, with Bali consistently featuring in the top three most popular overseas holiday destinations for Aussies. With a mix of traditional and modern, simple and sophisticated, inexpensive, exclusive and priceless experiences on offer, whether you're regular returnees or curious first-timers, Bali has something new and inspiring to offer.

Seminyak and the neighbouring Petitenget area are Bali's hip 'n' happening capitals of cool, filled with designer boutiques and some of the island's top restaurants, with such a proliferation of choice that you won't know where to begin. One of the latest offerings is the funky-fantastic, baroque-chic **La Sicilia** ([facebook.com/lasiciliabali](https://www.facebook.com/lasiciliabali)) – a romantic restaurant with curved ceilings, seductive black-lace curtains, glittering chandeliers, hundreds of candles and highly acclaimed Italian cuisine. Another dramatic jewellery box interior is showcased at **Shanghai Baby** (shanghaibaby.asia), where a colossal wooden entrance door opens to reveal a decadent 1930s Shanghai mansion-inspired space. Gorgeous wall and ceiling murals, leather sofas, a mirrored bar and atmospheric lighting illuminating Cantonese dishes from Shanghai to Sichuan won't disappoint. At the opulent **Al Diwan** (aldiwanbali.com) you'll find yourself in the exotic Middle East, dining on a mezze of Lebanese dishes that are as good as anything you'll find this side of the Arabian Sea. If Malaysian cuisine is more to your taste, head to the recently opened Seminyak Village shopping mall where you'll find **Tiger Palm** (tigerpalmbali.com), brought to you by Balinese celebrity chef Will Meyrick of the flourishing Sarong and Mama San restaurants. At Tiger Palm you'll be served fragrant dishes from the streets and kitchens of Penang, including delectable Nyonya specialties. The newly opened **Savage Kitchen** ([facebook.com/thesavagekitchen](https://www.facebook.com/thesavagekitchen)) is also worth a look – here you'll find healthy fast-food dishes such as twice-cooked organic chicken or a side of coconut-crust pumpkin wedges. The Savage Kitchen opens daily at 6.30am, which is earlier than any other café in the hood, so if you're planning on riding the waves or saluting the sun, call by on your way for a cold-brew coffee or brekkie.



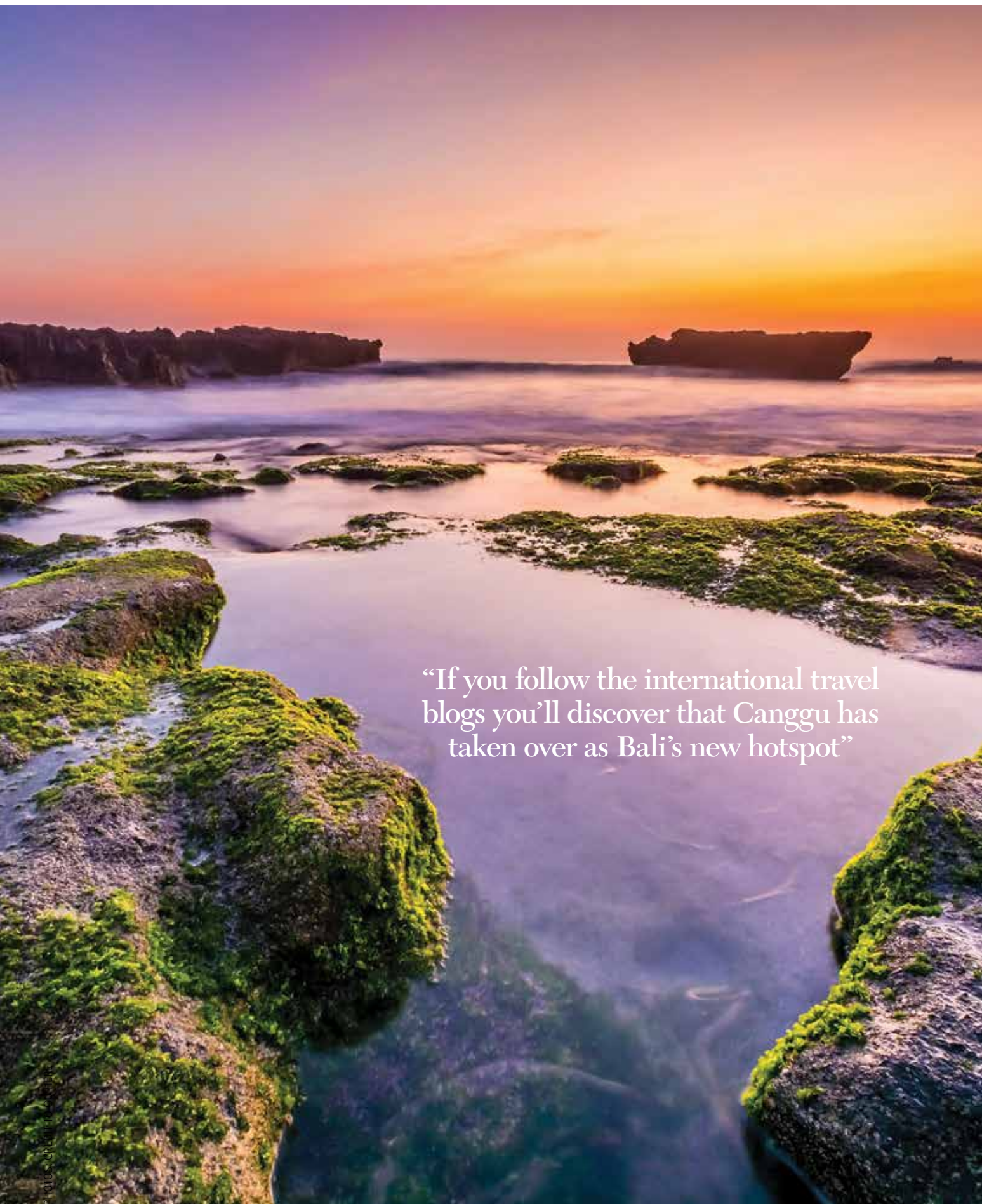


Of course, if you prefer to merely *watch* the surfers at play you can do so from the decks of the new **Finns Beach Club** (finnsbeachclub.com), located at Berawa Beach in Canggu, formerly a sleepy district celebrated among the surfing fraternity for its powerful beach breaks. Finns is a towering, environmentally friendly bamboo structure featuring organic curves and a grass roof, complete with a surf bar, dining area, pool bar, and a 30-metre infinity-edge pool with state-of-the-art underwater speakers. In the evening, take refuge at **Gimme Shelter** (facebook.com/Gimme-Shelter-Bali), Canggu's brand new rock'n'roll bar. Created by Bali's most famous blues and rock musician, Made J, it's guaranteed to draw the crowds. If you follow the international travel blogs you'll discover that Canggu has taken over as Bali's new hotspot. Situated 10km from Seminyak, between the rice fields and the sea, the über-cool Canggu offers coffee shops and yoga studios galore, a dance and wellness club, chic beachwear boutiques, spas, beauty lounges, surf schools and live music venues, as well as an abundance of eateries promoting wholesome cuisine and freshly squeezed juices.

If you're keen to venture away from Bali's built-up tourist areas and take the road less travelled, there are plenty of enchanting rice terraces, river gorges, rainforests, volcanoes, lakes and less-crowded beaches to explore. If breathtaking scenery, nature and cultural experiences are at the top of your list consider Candidasa, located two hours from the hustle and bustle of Seminyak within the magnificent eastern regency of Karangasem. Here, you can explore ancient kingdoms and mystical water palaces, climb mighty mountains or dive into a world of psychedelic fish at some excellent sites accessible by boat. In fact, you couldn't find a better host than the cheerful **Mr Paleng** (palengsbali.com), a former hotel manager who will take you out in his traditional *jukung* fishing boat to the best snorkelling spots, followed by a full afternoon at a hidden beach such as Pasir Putih, where you can relax on a sun lounger with an ice-cold Bintang beer, play in the waves and relish a seafood feast at a local *warung* (shop).

Above: Perched on the edge of the pristine Berawa Beach, in front of the famous Berawa surf break, Finn's Beach Club is the ultimate luxury getaway.
 Right: Rock on at Gimme Shelter.
 Below: Head to the best snorkelling spots in a traditional fishing boat with Mr Paleng





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Left and bottom:
Fresh cocoa is grown locally and used to make delicious dark chocolate at Uforia chocolate factory in the village of Jasri. Bottom left: 'Jari Menari' means 'flow of our fingers', and that's exactly what you get during one of their invigorating massages



Nearby is **Uforia organic chocolate factory** (uforiachocolate.com), offering tours and tastings of the seriously delicious product, and now also hosting chocolate-making classes in a beautiful flower garden environment. The area calls for gentle trekking through the forests, rice terraces and the nearby hills with their knee-buckling views. Along the way you can stroll through the 700-year-old walled village of Tenganan, where expert craftsmen and women perform their centuries-old skills, with their homes serving as shops and workshops.

The Balinese not only nail it when it comes to fine dining and picture-perfect scenery, but they also know a thing or two about relaxation – and what better way to unwind than at one of the country's many acclaimed day spas? If you're craving an exceptionally good massage, Seminyak's much-loved **Jari Menari** (jarimenari.com) has just become even more enticing with seven new treatment rooms and an 'art salon', believed to be the first in the world of wellness. Here, you'll be encouraged to extend your post-massage glow by expressing your creativity.

No trip to Bali is complete without visiting the arty enclave of Ubud to explore the market, shops and art galleries, watch Balinese dance performances at the Royal Palace, practice yoga, enjoy rice-field trekking or whitewater rafting. You could even spend the day at **Jungle Fish** (junglefishbali.com), which opened last year – with a huge swimming pool and beach club concept, it's perched on the edge of a spectacular river valley. Finally, if you're looking for other new experiences, there's always something novel going down at any one of Ubud's annual festivals, ranging from the **Bali Spirit Festival** (balispiritfestival.com) to the compelling **TEDx talks** (tedxubud.com), **Ubud Food Festival** (ubudfoodfestival.com), **Ubud Village Jazz Festival** (ubudvillagejazzfestival.com), **Bali Vegan Festival** (baliveganfestival.com) and the ever-popular **Ubud Writers & Readers Festival** (ubudwritersfestival.com). Have fun! 🇮🇩

