



Dream Construct

David and Gill Wilson built their contemporary home in Sanur. It was a dream build...

What made you decide to buy in Bali?

We have always loved Bali and have been coming here for many years. After we relocated to Bali for work reasons we thought about buying, that was in 2002. Shortly after we arrived however there was the terrorist attack in Kuta. At that time I thought what a good thing we didn't buy! But as time went on I could see that property prices didn't drop in the slightest and after a very short interval, demand was actually increasing for villas. In light of all that, we decided Bali would be a strong investment.

Why Sanur?

We love Sanur! The village has an old world charm to it, beautiful old tree-lined streets, moss covered walls and of course one of the best white sand beaches in Bali, where we love to spend our Sundays. We chose Sanur initially because of the close proximity to the international school but now would not want to live anywhere else. We can travel to any of the popular restaurants in Legian and Seminyak in 30 minutes but return and wake up in peace and quiet the next day. Sanur has a residential feel about it, just pass by Café Batu Jimbar on Sunday and you will see what I mean.

On looking for land, did any friends and

frenemies tell you horror stories about buying and building in Bali? What was the worst tale?

One story was that someone had bought a property and when it was almost finished found out it wasn't in the location that they thought it was at all! Another friend built a beautiful house only to find the access road was promptly closed and only a scooter could get through.

How did you find the land you bought?

I found this land with the help of my contractor and builder, who knew I was looking for somewhere in Sanur.

How big is the plot? And what did it cost?

Nine *are*, or about 900 sq. meters. As for cost, it was reasonable enough for us to develop but expensive enough that we had to build a luxury villa on it. In other words, today's land cost is becoming so expensive that the days of building a cheaper residence are long gone, at least in prime locations.

Why is Sanur more expensive than, let's say, Seminyak?

Sanur land has always been the most expensive in Bali, partly I think due to the fact that most landowners in Sanur are quite wealthy and have a sort of "take it or leave

it" attitude, and partly because land in Sanur is so limited. Prime land is only available between the Grand Bali Beach and Jalan Tanjung, which is a relatively small area. When you take into account also that most land and villa owners in Sanur don't want to sell and tend to be longer term residents, you can see how prices are driven up by the lack of supply.

Is this the first house you have ever owned?

No, we had a place in London and before this another villa in Sanur.

Where have you lived previously?

London, Jakarta, Adelaide, New Delhi, Fukuoka, Kuala Lumpur, Singapore and finally Bali. We saved the best for last!

What is the cash difference between what you planned to spend on the house and what you actually ended up spending?

About 20 per cent, but not due to any budget overruns, only because I got carried away and started spending more on some of the areas than we originally planned. I think this is quite common when you build your own villa, unless you have amazing self-control.

Your criteria for choosing one architect over another?





Passion firstly. Then energy and creativity and attention to detail.

Who did you end up choosing and why?

Putu Edy Semara, ESA Architects, an amazing architect with all those qualities. He was a true delight to work with. And Ida Bagus Mega Antara, owner of Pillar, Construction, for the building. Again, a wonderful person who did an outstanding job. And Anton of Laksamana Landscaping, who brought his creativity and skill into the project. The wonderful thing was that they were all so good to work with it made the whole exercise a very pleasant experience.

A home or an investment?

Definitely a home, but it is always good to think that it will be an excellent investment too.

What were the five most important criteria you used for the design?

Creating a peaceful environment where we could relax. Building to a high construction quality and international standard. Creating luxurious spaces in living and sleeping areas, using good but practical materials. Eco-friendly, using solar panels and synthetic roofing tiles and wood laminates. A great

swimming pool and waterfall.

Who or what most influenced the end product?

My wife and I.

How would you describe your house – Balinese, contemporary, Mediterranean?

It's a contemporary villa.

Give us a quick rundown on your house (number of beds, baths etc).

One master bedroom, around 70 sq. metres with large outdoor shower area, three guest bedrooms, gym, outdoor dining pavilion, AV Room, lounge/indoor dining area, kitchen – fully air-conditioned and designed as a place you would want to be. Many kitchens are put at the back, almost as an afterthought.

What did you two compromise on, and what did you agree to disagree on?

It was good teamwork. I did the design with the architect and then handed over to Gill who did the interiors, my only request was that I did the garage and AV room.

Your house is ideal for entertaining, what is the biggest party you have ever had?

Xmas dinner for 45 guests. We planned a dinner by the pool with a Christmas choir. In good Bali fashion (for that time of the year) it poured down with rain! Despite the rain it was fun.

Has any one ever fallen in the pool?

Our new Labrador puppy, many times.

If you had to, do something different, what would it be?

Nothing.

You built in endless amounts of cupboard space. David, does Gill really have that many clothes?

Can a woman ever have enough wardrobes?

You have 'His and Her' sinks. Whose idea was it and why?

Absolutely, the secret of a happy marriage, definitely my idea. I am minimalist and Gill, like most women, has so many things it looks like a cosmetic counter at a department store. Men who share sinks have no chance of minimalist happiness.

Do you have a separate wine room? Why is it so important?

I have had so many good bottles spoiled due to the climate that I decided it would be a

good investment. Now I can actually collect some good wines.

What are the pluses and minuses of being your own interior designer?

Gill Wilson owns and runs GW Interiors, based in Bali. Says Gill:

You can do whatever you want to do and have access to the best materials. The downside is that I tend to get carried away and costs can overrun!

Any new construction projects in the pipeline?

Possibly – as we enjoyed doing this one.

Whose house on Bali, besides your own, do you like the most?

A good friend of ours from Malaysia, Asri Ghaffar. His villa in Tabanan is very unique and minimalist with superb views. Also, in a very different way, our friend Malik's house in Petitengett is fabulous!

Finally, any tips you would like to offer other couples planning to build on Bali?

Engage the best people you can and that your budget will allow...lawyers, builders architects etc...it will save you money later.

Gill and David – thank you.

A pleasure. ☑