



The iconic three-tiered pool at Amankila carved into the slope of the hill

JOIN THE CLUB!

FROM A BLISSFUL HAVEN NESTLED IN QUIET KARANGASEM TO BALI'S VERY OWN IBIZA-INSPIRED PARTIES IN SEMINYAK, THESE ARE THE TOP FIVE BEACH CLUBS THAT OUR CONTRIBUTOR PAUL V. WALTERS HAS HANDPICKED FOR YOU.

By Paul V. Walters

Club. It's funny how when you put the word 'club' into a sentence it suddenly adds a certain sense of exclusivity to the context of the paragraph. It has such a nice ring to it, somewhere to belong, somewhere private or, part of the 'club crowd,' far away from the everyday.

Bali offers an eclectic mix of beach clubs lining the coast, many often situated in spectacular spots hidden below pristine cliffs or behind dense foliage. Some have brought Mediterranean style and the Ibiza-inspired party scenes to the island while a handful of others retain a more local and traditional setup, serving as seaside weekend retreats

for families, friends, and locals alike who are having a holiday. With world-class chefs and skilled bartenders, some of these top venues spice up the sunny coastline while the sun is still up.

I have to say, even as a long-term resident of Bali I have not been an active participant in these clubs, but I think now is the time to 'sample the goods'. What I didn't anticipate was the sheer number of beach clubs operating around Bali and so I restricted myself to five establishments who seem to be doing a splendid job of making sure visitors have a wonderful day out.

BLISSFUL HEAVEN

My first stop was the beach club at the Amankila resort. Nestling in



the shadow of Mount Agung in a sleepy village in Karangasem and overlooking the Lombok Strait, the Amankila is part of the Aman Resorts group that is renowned for marketing and managing small to medium sized luxury resorts worldwide.

This stunning property literally tumbles down the slopes of a hill to the beach, past free-standing suites and a sparkling three-tiered pool set amidst luscious tropical gardens teeming with frangipani and bougainvillea. The beach club has its own 50-meter swimming pool shaded by tall waving palms, and

is surrounded by impossibly green lawns rolling down to a patrolled black-sand beach complete with crashing waves.

Beautifully attired staff appear as if by magic to prepare day beds and fill small side tables with jugs of ice-cold water. They also offer delicious snacks, sunscreen, and fluffy towels before melting back into the foliage appearing only when you need them.

If you're seeking a tranquil day out, this club is for you. It's pure,

'heaven on a stick,' as it is designed primarily for one purpose and one purpose only, relaxation! Take a massage, order lunch from the extensive menu, have a nap, swim in the pool, kayak the ocean, or just (as I did) lie about and do absolutely nothing. Bliss!

Amankila

Manggis, Karangasem, Bali
(0363) 41-333
www.amanresorts.com



Crystal clear ocean and a 165-meter stretch of white sand beach

A BEACH RETREAT

Bali's Bukit Peninsula hides most of the island's favorite beach clubs, and Finn's Beach Club is perfect for those seeking a beach retreat with a pristine stretch of white sand and swimmable waves. Part of the Semara Uluwatu in Ungasan, this club has one of the most gorgeous hidden beach locations on the island, given its dramatic setting between a rock face and the shoreline. The 165-meter stretch of sand is yours for a day with a minimum deposit of Rp. 250,000 net, which can be



Previously known as Nammos Beach Club, the Karma Beach Club is one of the favorites



set off against food and beverage purchases. Access is via a two-minute funicular ride down the cliff to arguably one of the best beaches in Bali, and comes complete with selections of water sports to enjoy it with. It is definitely hard to beat this one! Finn's Beach Club is open from 9 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Finn's Beach Club, Semara Luxury Villa Resort

Jalan Pantai Selatan Gau, Banjar Wijaya Kusuma, Ungasan
(0361) 848-2111
www.finnsbeachclub.com

SUBLIME SUNSETS

What I began to like about these clubs is their ability to 'hide' their locations in the most exotic places. The Karma Beach Club, open from 9 a.m. to 11 p.m., epitomizes privacy as it is accessed by a funicular ride down a sheer cliff to a stretch of clean white sand. To ensure its exclusivity you have to pay an entrance fee, but don't panic as once again it's offset against the price of food and drinks. The kitchen is housed under a raised thatched roof bamboo structure serving Mediterranean-inspired selections,

and beach barbeque parties are among its regular events. And of course, the sunsets are sublime!

**Karma Beach Club
Karma Kandara Resort**

Jalan Villa Kandara, Banjar Wijaya Kusuma, Ungasan
(0361) 848-2202
www.karmabeach.com

SURF THE CLUB

Perhaps the only beach club fronting one of the favorite surf breaks in East Bali, the Komune Beach Club is an excellent venue for surfers, beach lovers or anyone – it is that kind of place to hang out, chill, and recharge. Here you can paddle out, ride a few waves, and then head back for healthy bites and drinks at the bar (a circular structure that looks like a giant mushroom), laze on the comfortable day beds, roll into the pool, or walk down the beach – your call.

ALL COURTESY PHOTOS





Ku De Ta, one of the hottest spots in Bali as well as the trendsetter for Seminyak nightlife

Evenings mean music around the pool deck, while regular movie screenings are held on the 'lawn cinema', when beachside fire pits are also set ablaze. Depending on the tide, Komune Beach Club hosts special night surfing events as well, lit up by towering soccer stadium-grade floodlights. Easily the best beach club in Bali to experience the



surfing lifestyle, Komune Beach Club welcomes you from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m.

Komune Resorts and Beach Club

Jalan Pantai Keramas, Gianyar
(0361) 301-8888
www.komuneresorts.com

IBIZA IN BALI

I conclude my club tour with a visit to the iconic Ku De Ta, a sort of "Ibiza comes to Bali" kind of place. This venue is the ultimate spot for a 'look at me, I'm at Ku De Ta' selfie, and is actually great to enjoy a lazy breakfast, lunch, or a sunset cocktail overlooking the beach as the doors are open from 8 a.m. to 2 a.m. I like the way the place morphs throughout the day as it constantly re-invents itself to the changing clientele as the sun sinks into the sea.

Ku De Ta is one of Bali's most prominent hotspots, a trendsetter for an upscale night in Seminyak, which has inspired other similar enterprises



all over the island. The layout features a main restaurant area, a dedicated bar, a centerpiece lawn bordering the beachfront as well as restaurants and private areas. The club obviously continues to appeal to the Bali international set – it was packed the day I went – and will do for many years to come even though other locations are trying hard to knock it off its lofty perch! ■

Ku De Ta

Jalan Kayu Aya No. 9, Seminyak
(0361) 736-969
www.kudeta.net