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# IN SEMARA'S REALM

BALI'S PREMIER RESORT COLLECTION EXPANDS ITS OPULENT PROPERTIES

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# SEMARA'S REALM

Villa Gajah Putih



THE SEMARA COLLECTION HAS SECURED A PLACE AS ONE OF THE TOP HOSPITALITY PLAYERS IN BALI

WORDS | WAYAN JUNIARTA

Splash Waterpark Aerial



Bounce Trampoline



Strike Ten Pin Bowling



Cubby House Kids Club



Canggu Club Lap Pool

With attractive properties ranging from an immensely popular villa resort and beach club in Uluwatu to a club boasting the island's most comprehensive sporting facilities for kids in Canggu; the properties of the **Semara Collection** have succeeded in booking a large and lavish place for themselves in Bali's hospitality landscape.

The resort management company was established in 2009 by Australian businessman and former professional football player **Tony Smith** and his long-time Balinese friend **I Ketut Subina**.

The latter is a native of Tabanan and has more than 15 years of experience in the tourism industry under his belt. The company takes

its name from the Balinese word for amorous love.

Their first project was the **Semara Resort and Spa** in Kuta's trendiest region of Seminyak.

The Semara team managed the design, construction and interiors of the boutique resort, which includes the **Cubby House Kids Club, Semara Spa** and **The Deck Sports Bar**.

The Semara Collection owned and managed this highly successful business until February 2015, when it was sold to a Singapore-based company.

That first project prepared the company for making a bigger leap in 2011, when it launched **Semara Luxury Villa Resort** and **Finn's Beach Club** in Uluwatu, one of the island's top destinations.

The historic Hindu temple that is perched on a towering cliff facing the Indian Ocean and a long stretch of pristine white sandy beach are the key factors behind Uluwatu's popularity.

The Semara Luxury Villa Resort turned out to be a big success, adding a new dimension to fantastic family holidays.

Its exquisite villas, which boast private infinity pools and unparalleled vistas, are immensely popular with large families who want to stay – and play – together during holidays.

Surprisingly, the Semara Luxury Villa Resort also drew a large number of love-struck couples wishing to say "I do" with the blue ocean and liberating sky as the backdrop.

The resort's success convinced the company that an opulent beach front property with excellent staff designed to pamper big families was the way to go, when a majority of the players on the island were busy constructing blocky city and budget hotels.

Semara later acquired **Villa Gajah Putih**, which was built in the 1980s as one of Bali's original villas. It is located on an absolutely gorgeous part of Berawa Beach with a 105-meter-long stretch of sand lying directly in front of it.

A growingly popular beach, Berawa is the gem of Canggu, a village that now has become the go-to place for expatriates and holiday-goers looking for an authentic experience without abandoning the urban conveniences.

It is just a 15-minute drive from Seminyak, where the best dining, shopping and nightlife in Bali are located.

Given its slightly out-of-town setting, Villa Gajah Putih has the double attraction of being relatively close to everything one might need, while being far enough away to retain a peaceful rural feel. The surrounding villages are traditionally Balinese and retain large expanses of pictorial rice fields.

The villa has five principal bedrooms and two junior suites, affording sleeping arrangements for as many as 22 people.

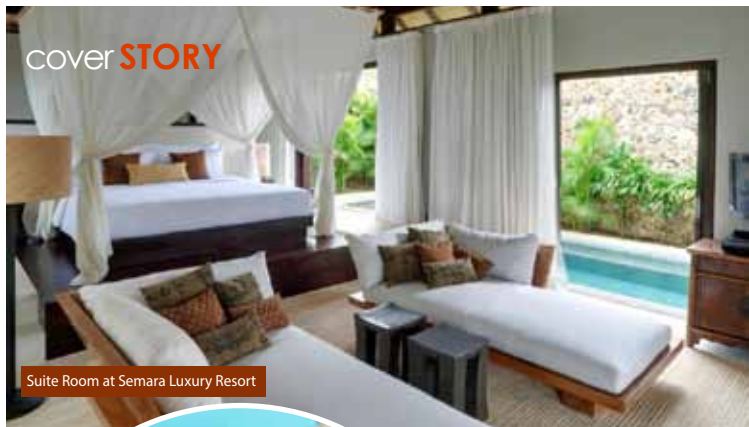
Each bedroom is air-conditioned with an en suite bathroom. The floor and ceiling of the bedrooms are of unique polished ironwood, and each bedroom has at least one glass wall overlooking the ocean or gardens of the property.



Villa Gajah Putih Bale

PHOTOS COURTESY OF SEMARA

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Suite Room at Semara Luxury Resort



Body Temple Spa



Finn's Beach Club



Finn's Cliff Edge Burger

The bathrooms have marble walls and floors, with large, high-screened windows and plantation shutters to allow circulation and keep out insects. Most bathrooms have double vanity sinks, double showers, a large bathtub and bidets.

Private dining in the villa is an epicurean expedition as guests can discuss their preferences with the chef and then create something special.

The company is now building a beach club on the land next to the villa.

Building on the success of its Uluwatu's **Finn's Beach Club**, the new club will have an all-bamboo construction, sand-covered flooring, a 60-meter-long stretch of beach, and a gorgeous view of the sunset.

"It will be open in May 2016 and surely will add another fascinating gem to the Semara Collection," the company's director of sales and marketing, **Kelly Sturgeon**, said.

It was a humid afternoon and Kelly

was taking shelter inside a cool restaurant at **Canggu Club**, the company's newest acquisition.

In the adjacent **Splash Water Park**, groups of children were outmaneuvering the scorching heat with the help of the colorful sliders and spacious pools.

"We acquired the property in June 2013 and spent 12 months afterward carrying out renovation and expansion of its all facilities," she said.

Set on a sprawling four-hectare estate among Canggu's rice fields, the club features a fully-equipped fitness center, which includes a lap pool and sports ground, a tennis center, the **Body Temple Spa**, a sports bar and multiple restaurants.

The Splash Water Park is Bali's newest water park and home to the **Giant Racer**, a five-story high and 90-meter-long slide that can have up to four friends racing at the same time, and the Speed Racer for the younger kids. The club also boasts the **Bounce Trampoline Center**, the first and only facility of its kind in Indonesia, **Strike Ten Pin Bowling** and Cubby House Kids Club. "We are receiving a large number of visitors from Jakarta and other major cities in the country, who visited the club to give the trampoline a try," Sturgeon says.

Bounce has a specially-designed, spring-loaded frame that allows you to bounce higher. All frames and springs are covered by two-inch-thick safety pads.

Under the Semara Collection, the previously members-only club is now open for all with day passes available at

reception. Its new credo, "Something for Everyone", aptly captures that change of approach. "To limit yourself to one demographic is not a particularly good idea," she adds.

Kids and teenagers, however, are obviously still the main target of the club and it indeed offers a fantastic program for them, including the **JSA** (Junior Sport Academy), which aims at teaching new sporting skills to children while being active, having fun, and making friends.

"We have some great people to train the kids in sports, including a former Italian Olympic swimmer and a former UK professional soccer player," Sturgeon says.

Semara Collection has enjoyed a robust growth since its inception and Sturgeon is optimistic that it will continue to do so.

All of Semara's top brass are based full-time in Bali and Sturgeon says that is one key reasons behind the growth. "We understand the place, the people and the culture. I think that makes the difference – that makes us able to change and adapt quickly to the environment," Sturgeon says.

To give back to the community, the Semara Collection is involved in charitable activities, including hosting an event for Solemen Indonesia, that raised over Rp 100 million for the disadvantaged.

"The company has 600 employees and a lot of them are from the local communities. For instance, up to 60 percent of the Semara Luxury Villa employees in Uluwatu are from the surrounding villages," Sturgeon says.

## BEACH HEAVEN

Those who love white sandy beaches, bright sun and the deep blue sea will easily be enamored with **Finn's Beach Club**.

Nestled on the southernmost tip of Bali, Finn's Beach Club is a hidden oasis on a 180-meter-long stretch of beach that can be accessed only by inclinator from the Semara Luxury Villa Resort.

It has become so popular among the beach-lovers that on a busy day the club can host up to 800 people.

Its Tree Top Bales are available for guests booking a VIP Experience. Hidden amid the cliffs offering an unobstructed view of the ocean; it is the perfect place to unwind, drink and laugh with a select few in privacy.

A new sun deck, which can seat up to 90 guests, adds more charm to the club and provides a stunning venue for guests organizing private events.

The club is open daily from 9 a.m. to 10 p.m., and entrance fee is Rp 250,000 for adults and Rp 50,000 for children aged 3-11.

The fee includes use of inclinator, food and beverage credit, towels, sunbeds, stand-up paddle boards, kayak, snorkeling equipment and free wi-fi.



Semara Luxury Villa Resort

THE RESORT'S SUCCESS CONVINCED THE COMPANY THAT AN OPULENT BEACHFRONT PROPERTY WITH EXCELLENT STAFF DESIGNED TO PAMPER BIG FAMILIES WAS THE WAY TO GO.