



BEYOND BALI

Bazaar's travel insider Laura Brown finds there's more to beautiful Bali than simply surf and sand

Words by LAURA BROWN

B

ali has long been an attraction for the boho-chic crowd, the backpackers with their surfboards

in tow, and the art lovers with their paintbrushes and easles propped up on the beach. Its white sandy shores, with perfect waves lapping the shoreline, and those layered UNESCO rice fields have adorned many an Instagram account, yet the Bali I encountered had so much more to offer.

As we arrived at the Indonesian island late one December afternoon, the sun was setting fast and the roads were flooded with colourful lights from the busy Denpasar streets outside. These streets soon gave way to smaller lanes and passages that took us through the tiny village of Tabanan – the main rice growing region of Bali. It was here among the stretches of rice fields that the gates of Alila Villas Soori loomed up and let us in.

Alila Villas Soori lies between beautiful black-sand beaches and verdant rice terraces with the mystical Mount Batu Karu in the distant horizon. The volcano rock is evident in the architecture of the resort - walls of rough black stone divide the surrounding lush grasslands from the massive slabs of concrete that serve as terraces and encase each of the resort's rustic staircases.

Our beach pool villa is exactly how I would design my own fantasy beach home. However, a large perfectly made bed located in the middle of the room reminds me that I'm staying in a hotel rather than my own personal private hideaway. The adjacent bathroom is huge with a separate walk-in rain shower, eye-catching sunken stone bath and a long shallow sink all of which are filled with a variety of Alila branded amenities presented in beautiful wooden boxes. Interior ►