

House & Garden



Bites

Balinese rice rituals and fishy tales from the beach

JOURNEY'S END

Hidden away in the midst of lush rice paddies on the south-west coast of Bali are the Aila Villas Soori, named after the architect, Soo Chan who designed the 44 villas and is himself an owner. After winding your way from Denpasar airport through villages festooned with banana leaf and bamboo decorations, you are greeted on arrival with a fresh passion fruit juice and lemongrass-infused towels. At once you are struck by the stunning view of the roaring waves, which can be seen from all corners of the villa. Soori is constructed mainly from dark volcanic rocks that mirror the glittering black-sand beaches on the horizon. Sliding doors fronting the living and sleeping space open onto your own infinity pool. Local materials such as sandstone and merbau wood form the basis of the architecture creating a moody darkness, a perfect foil for the shifting light and waters throughout the day. The bathroom has a giant bath with an ocean view, while generously proportioned Italian furniture, inside and out, creates a well-balanced space that is open and yet maintains intimacy.

After using the 'dine-in' service in your outdoor pavilion you can fall asleep under the stars and wake up to the topos-style breakfast in the Cotta restaurant. The menu changes daily and has delicious smoothie options such as fennel, cucumber and parsley or lavender cappuccino. Soori also has a spa with international and Balinese treatments using



Journey through iconic rice terraces to a temple for a traditional blessing

Journey celebrates the recent awarding of UNESCO World Heritage Status to the unique irrigation system that created Western Bali's iconic rice terraces. This 'Journey' explores the significance of rice and how rice planting, growing and harvesting is linked to ceremonies. The Journey visits local villages and concludes with a guided walk through paddy fields, finishing at a Hindu temple for a blessing. Ampersand Travel offers seven nights' B&B at Aila Villas Soori (www.ailahotels.com/soori) from £2,525pp (based on two sharing), with flights and transfers. 020-7289 6100. www.ampersandtravel.com

products made with home-grown ingredients. Should you wish to explore, Soori offers a multitude of adventures, known as 'Journeys by Aila', which include visits to the market or horse-riding on the beach. The 'All About Rice'

CATCHING ON THREE PLACES TO FISH FOR YOUR SUPPER



MALDIVES

As part of a day's sailing, snorkelling and fishing, guests of bijou luxury resort Naladhu, Maldives, are invited to catch their own dinner on the reef. The resort's chef will then teach guests how to cook it Maldivian-style using herbs and spices. Seven nights' B&B in an Ocean House costs from £3,745pp with Red Savannah (based on two sharing), with flights and transfers. Valid April 16 - July 31, subject to availability. 01242-787800; www.redsavannah.com

For families, the Colony Club in Barbados offers free 'Bait to Plate' excursions for all guests, including children over eight, to catch their supper. Fishing trips take place every Monday and are accompanied by a chef who will prepare a Bajan feast. Elegant Resorts offers seven nights' B&B from £2,395 per adult, £810 per child, based on two adults, one child in a Pool/Garden Junior Suite, with flights and transfers. 01244-897317; www.elegantresorts.co.uk



BARBADOS



THAILAND

Guests of The Sarojin in Khao Lak in southern Thailand may join fishermen to head out into the Andaman Sea to catch fish for a cooking class with the head chef, as part of their 'Catch, Cook & Dine' experience. Other excursions are offered to markets and villages for a real taste of life on the Thai coast. Cox & Kings offers seven nights' B&B from £1,975 (based on two sharing), with flights and transfers. 020-7873 5000; www.coxandkings.co.uk

SPECIAL DISH MasterChef 2012 winner, Shelina Permalloo, goes back to her Mauritian roots with a week's open-air cooking course at Marnidiva Resort & Spa from March 11-17. Seven-night cooking package available from £2,858pp. 020-7751 0880; www.theprivatetravelcompany.co.uk