

The TRAVEL EDIT

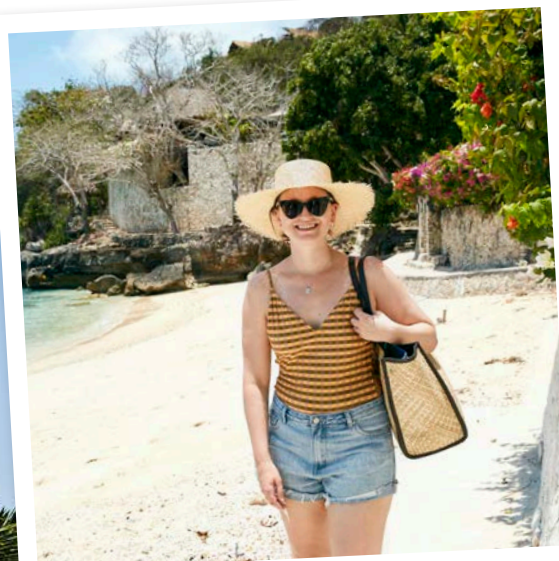
WHO'S GUIDE TO THE MOST LUXURIOUS DESTINATIONS HERE AND ABROAD

PARADISE FOUND

We explore Nusa Lembongan,
Bali's hidden treasure.



SALLY NOLAN
WHO Lifestyle Director



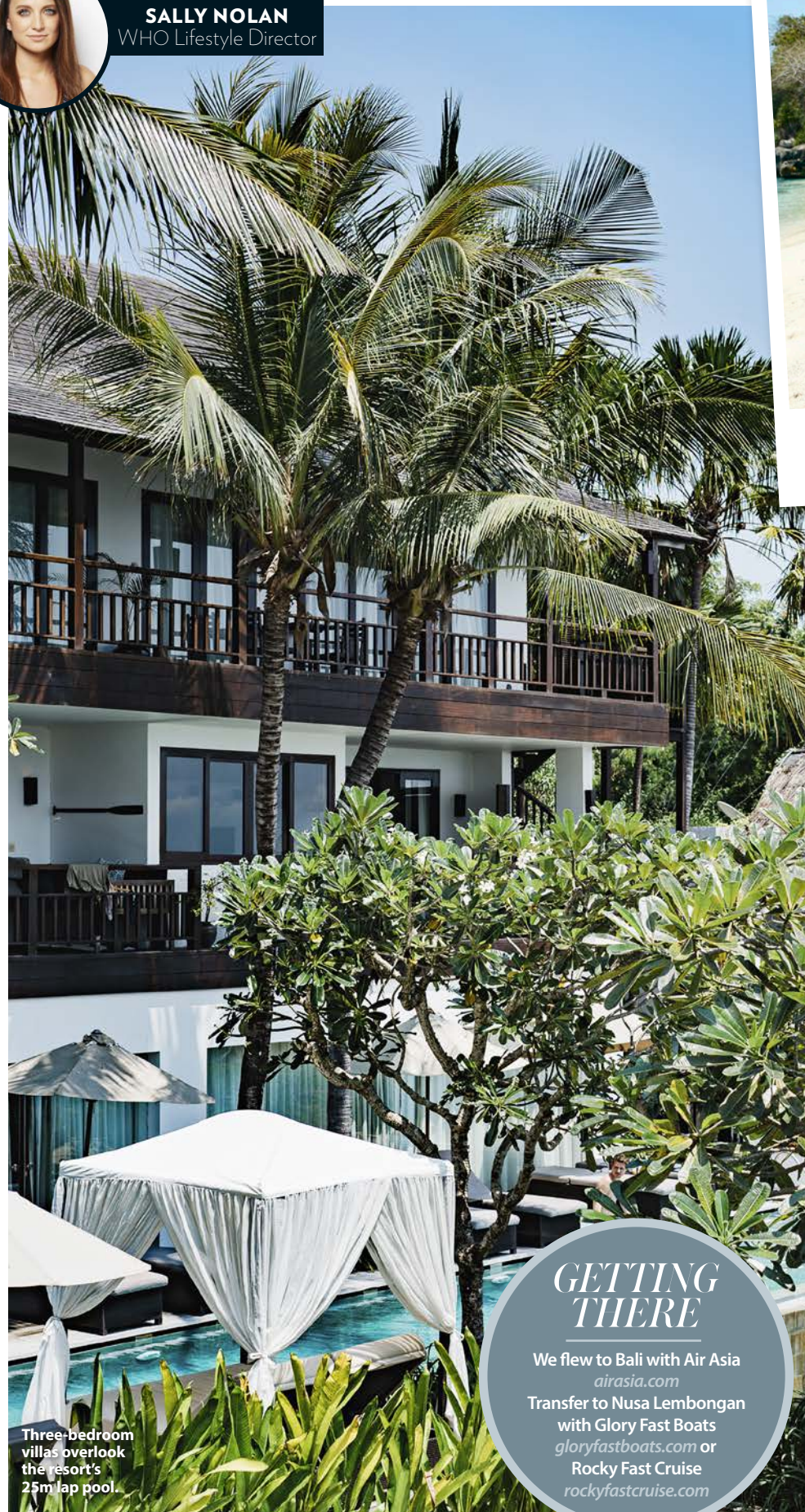
Sally explores Tamarind Bay on the way to find Secret Beach.



The impressive view from the Deck Cafe & Bar.



A Lady Dora cocktail from The Howff.



Three-bedroom villas overlook the resort's 25m lap pool.

GETTING THERE

We flew to Bali with Air Asia
airasia.com
Transfer to Nusa Lembongan
with Glory Fast Boats
gloryfastboats.com or
Rocky Fast Cruise
rockyfastcruise.com

There's nothing better than feeling like you've discovered an untouched paradise, and this is how I feel arriving at Jungut Batu Village beach.

My husband and I are visiting Batu Karang, a luxury resort on the island of Nusa Lembongan, a short 30-minute speedboat ride off the east coast of Bali.

We opted for a beach-to-beach transfer with Glory Fast Boats, a premium transfer service between Sanur beach and Nusa Lembongan, because you get a spectacular view of the island as you reach the shore.

Once off the boat – make sure you're wearing thongs as you will get wet! – we're met by Batu Karang staff and escorted up the hill to the resort where a welcome drink awaits.

We sit at The Balcony bar and look over to Mount Agung, Bali's active volcano.

There's blooming bougainvillea (known as bunga kertas in Indonesian) and the vibrant pink blooms pop against the vivid turquoise water below.

Construction of Batu Karang began in 2005 and the resort is owned, built and run by the Sinclair family, who discovered the island on a surf trip back in 1999.

As I sip my cocktail, I'm thankful that the Sinclairs decided to share their slice of paradise with the world.

We finish our drinks and are quickly whisked off, via golf buggy, to our one-bedroom villa.

The refurbished rooms have a contemporary Balinese feel, with a calming cream and navy colour palette. The attention to detail is second to none, with most elements – from the carvings to the artworks and even the toiletries – commissioned from local businesses or the wider Indonesian community.

Our villa has a large balcony with an outdoor bath and views of Mount Agung – thankfully she's sleeping at the moment.

After we settle in, we head off to one of the three pools for a swim and some lunch.

That evening, we enjoy dinner at the Deck



Outdoor bath and shower.



The calm interior of the villa.



Sally enjoys the neighbouring island of Ceningan.

Cafe & Bar and watch the locals fly kites on the beach as the sun sets on our first day.

The next morning, we have an early breakfast and set off on foot to find Secret Beach.

We follow the meandering clifftop path past private villas for about 20 minutes and come to a beautiful secluded beach where we spend most of the day.

In the afternoon, we head back to the resort for a cocktail-making class at The Howff, the resort's whisky, gin and wine bar. We learn how to make one of their signature drinks, the Lady Dora and, after our class, order some tapas.

I highly recommend the Butter Roasted Slipper Lobster, which we devour as we watch yet another spectacular sunset.

Another early start means we can head off on our snorkelling trip before the tour groups arrive from the mainland.

Captain Ketut, who also works at Muntigs Bar & Restaurant, is our guide for the morning. We're told that Batu Karang management

prefers to refer guests to trusted local businesses for resort activities to ensure more cash is fed back into the community, and Ketut proves to be the ultimate guide, taking us to the best snorkelling spots on his *jukung*, a traditional fishing boat.

The water surrounding Nusa Lembongan is absolutely pristine and we spot a loggerhead turtle, vibrant coral and more fish than I can count. It's also common to encounter majestic manta rays as well as giant sunfish.

After a quick lunch, the assistant resort manager, Valery, takes us on a guided scooter tour of Lembongan and the neighbouring island of Ceningan.

I'm not normally one to hire a scooter while in Bali, but as the roads are mainly occupied by other scooters and the occasional minivan, I feel quite safe to do so.

We finish our day with dinner at Muntigs Bar & Restaurant, Batu Karang's premium dining option. We're treated to traditional Indonesian satays and the Penang-style lamb

curry, which is absolutely delicious. The following morning, we spend our last few hours on Lembongan doing a village walk.

Lembongan native Pande takes us on a walking tour, pointing out significant sites in the village including the Hindu temples and the local food market.

Back at the resort, I manage to squeeze in a quick Balinese massage at Lulur Spa before checking out and boarding our boat transfer.

This time, we take Rocky Fast Cruises, a jetty-to-jetty transfer, which drops us off at Serangan Harbour, a 20-minute drive from Denpasar International Airport.

I'm one of those travellers who enjoys a slow-paced town where I can unwind, explore and absorb a destination's natural beauty.

I love nothing more than a pristine beach, which has led me to have a love/hate relationship with Bali – until now. For me, the laid-back Nusa Lembongan is the perfect mix of untouched and developed and, in my opinion, Bali's crown jewel. batukaranglemongan.com