



# Bonjour!

**BONJOUR!**  
CLOCKWISE FROM TOP  
—  
A Zen-like interior design that makes use of natural materials, intricate patterns and penumbral lighting  
—  
This entry experience prepares the guest with a natural ventilated expansive stone rotunda accentuated by a central 20 meter tall timber 'Banyan Tree' sculpture cloaked with a cantilevered stone stairs

It is hard to believe that from a tiny seed inside a fig grows the giant Banyan tree. This timeless tree, with its enormous trunk, far reaching branches and its voluminous thick roots runs deep into the earth and can grow across many human generations. Like trees, we are the mediators between the seen and the unseen, the Balinese believe, and the new Sofitel Bali Nusa Dua Beach Resort's design, inspired by this very tree, provides a heavenly shelter in this tropical paradise.

STORY & PHOTO BY Will Wiriawan

# AN IMPOSSIBLE SCHEDULE WITH A NOT-SO-IDEAL SITE WOULD USUALLY BE A DEAL-BREAKER,



but not for Agung Podomoro and his design partner WATG. As the last available site in the Nusa Dua Complex, the project is situated right next to the new toll road's exit. With obvious security and convenience advantages, the site was preselected by the organizing committee to be the Indonesian delegation's base and main venue of the 2013 APEC Summit.

The original brief was received by the design team in November 2011. The Client's initial objective was to develop an independent, high quality residential product that would be supported by the hotels back-of-house and infrastructure, but this element was removed from the brief during the completion of the conceptual design.

"Initially the client wanted to preserve as many of the existing, uncompleted Villas as well as the Main Building components. It significantly limited our option for the layout which ultimately did not achieve the density which the client wanted." said a WATG representative. "Ultimately we were able to retain only seventeen of the existing ones, including the Presidential Villa."

After exploring a number of their limited options, the architects settled on an inverted U-shaped master layout. It places the Main Building in the middle of the curve, at the furthest side from the beach.



## BONJOUR!

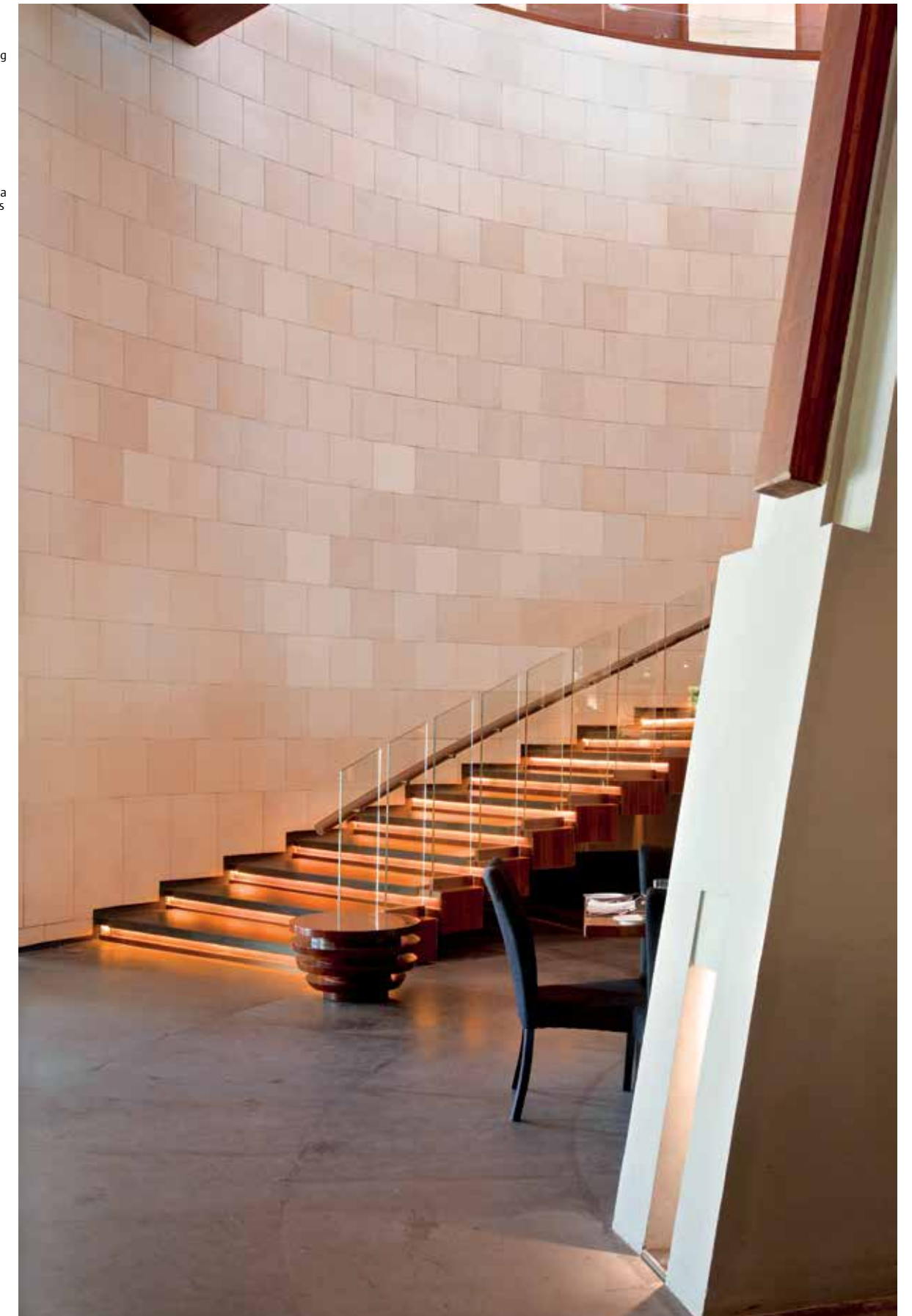
FROM LEFT PAGE

— Tingling trinkets hanging at the reception of the hotel

— The lighting, furniture and color hues in the restaurant creates a tranquil setting

— Le Bar is a multi-use resort space combining a lobby lounge, a business center and a discovery center

— A cantilevered stone stairs connected the lobby to the restaurant



## main feature SOFITEL BALI NUSA DUA BEACH RESORT

At the center of this three-storey structure, is a wooden centerpiece that inspires the entire design strategy. Made from Glulam, a type of structural timber product comprising a number of layers of dimensioned timber bonded together with durable, moisture-resistant structural adhesives, five twenty-meter curved columns are supported individually by a concrete base, forming the banyan-tree-like formations from the ground, up to the atrium's roof. The north and south wings on each side lay the guest rooms, sixty percent of them bearing ocean views. This was achieved by pointing the windows at a forty-degree angle while maintaining a rectilinear form of the guest wings. The geometry added complexity to the construction, especially the roof, but it also echoes the centerpiece icon from the main atrium, throughout the entire structure.

To obtain a seamless view from the viewing platform, the designers, working side by side with the landscape consultant Belt Collins, decided to push the all-day dining & recreational areas to the entire length of the property, covering them with green



### BONJOUR! FROM LEFT PAGE

— The Retreat is a unique stand-alone multi-functional space with electronic blind, and removable glass panels that is strategically located in front of the beach

— A fresh approach to guestrooms' experience with subtle references to the Balinese culture such as the rich timber floral carvings and a modern interpretation of the Balinese batik

— Sofitel's signature Mybed experience

— Admire the view while soaking in the bathtub



roofs to hide the structure while giving a continuous cascading rice-field-like landscape. This also reduces the distance between the two wings and viewing platform to the ocean.

Due to its impossible deadline, the project was broken into a series of layers that proceeded at different paces. Construction began shortly after the final concept artwork was submitted for review, but it was rejected for being too modern and lacking some Balinese ideals. Foundation work was already underway, so the design team came up with more traditional surface and facade treatment that eventually got the final approval from the Bali Tourism Review Board. "We applied the Balinese rule of foot, body and head components to each building façade, and historical elements were integrated into the design by using local craftsmanship," touted Ron Van Pelt, Senior VP, WATG. "We also use a combination of flat roofs, that are covered with landscape mimicking the rice fields, and pitched roofs that were designed to be in the traditional thatch or ironwood shingles, both of which are indigenous to the region," he continues.



## Project Data

**Project Name**  
Sofitel Bali Nusa Dua Beach Resort

**Location**  
Nusa Dua Tourism Complex, Nusa Dua Bali

**Site Area**  
78,000 sqm

**Client/Owner**  
Agung Podomoro Land

**Architecture Consultant**  
WATG Architects

**Principal Designer**  
Ron Van Pelt

**Interior Design Consultant**  
Wilson Associates

**Landscape Consultant**  
Belt Collins



All of the existing wooden roof structures were dismantled and reused as trellises and paneling on the guest room balconies, larger I-beams from the original building were rewelded to the structure of the new ballroom, doors and plumbing fixtures were reused in the service area, and trees were temporarily relocated before replanting them to the current landscape.

There's a very strong sense of exoticism drawn from the visual and textural treatment of the final product. Perhaps it's the Banyan Tree concept that visually expresses the nuance of these ideals. Natural colors were tastefully chosen to complement the spectacular landscape; the green cascading garden, and the blue water features looked vibrant in contrast of the indigenous limestone and near-black basalt flooring. Partially stained wood finishing brought a calming feedback against the brass signage and dimmed warm-tone light. Simple elegance that extends to every corner of the hotel, down to the guest rooms.

Luxury is identical with small-scale, boutique

treatment. But by carefully choosing the right material, cherry-picking every furniture and art piece, a subtler kind of luxury kicks in without being intimidating. "We want to evoke the feeling of being home, in, or outside their rooms," said Tommy Trisdiarto, Director of Marketing and Communications, "As the operator, we are responsible to carry on with this tasks after the construction have finished."

Unlike most hotels, Sofitel Bali Nusa Dua Beach Resort employs simple circular standing height tables to receive guests, rocking chairs were spread across the looking platform next to it. In the room, guests are greeted by the similar touches they have seen outside, including the public areas, like the lounge, or the business center that looks more like your study than the usual business hotel.

The APEC may have helped put the Sofitel Bali Nusa Dua Beach Resort on the world map, but judging from the all-out effort by the parties involved, they won't have a problem getting as deeply rooted in Bali as the Banyan tree. <sup>10</sup>



## BONJOUR!

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT PAGE

— View from the lobby overlooking the water feature and the landscape beyond

— The Banyan Tree formation continues along the facade of the guest wings. Together with the green roofs, pool & the garden areas, drawing the ocean closer to home

— Bar by the pool adjacent to the amphitheater

— Wood dominates the interior of the restaurant from the floor to the furniture and even the grid panel hanging from the ceiling

# WATG From a Seed to a Banyan Tree

To understand the cycle of their design process, Will Wiriawan from Indonesia Design talks to WATG about how this project grew from a seed of an idea to its fruition into a Banyan Tree. Ron Van Pelt, Senior VP, Chiara Calufetti-Lim, Lead Designer, Aldwin Ong, Design Director, Wilson and Associates, Singapore make up the design team of WATG.

## In a nutshell, tell us how this project developed?

This was a very fast paced project as we began the site planning and architectural design in 2011 and the hotel was opened just two years later to meet the requirement of hosting the APEC conference in October of 2013. Our goal was to create a sophisticated yet relaxing resort environment that reflects the culture and setting of Bali. Architecturally we created comfortably scaled buildings consistent with the resort environment and accommodated the clients requirements.

## How did the original design evolve in the final result?

There were a number of issues that impacted the design of the project. Initially we thought we could benefit from the original scheme created about 25 years ago, as they were not as restrictive as more recent regulations. Ultimately the entire concept had to be reimagined as we were apparently restricted by the more stringent sets of design rules and styles set by the review board. The space and program planning was shaped by three

important points: a rectangular site with the short side facing the sea, the client wished to have as many guest rooms as possible with full or partial sea view and the client wanted to be able to view the sea from the lobby spaces. At concept stage we were told that this project could be designed in a contemporary style, however over the course of time as the client met with the local authorities it became clear that a strong Balinese design inspiration was to be integrated into the building design. This significantly limited the layout of the project and did not achieve the number of rooms and the density that the client wanted. Ultimately we were able to retain only 17 of the existing villas including the Presidential Villa.



Ron Van Pelt



Chiara Calufetti-Lim



Aldwin Ong

The addition of the Retreat Center into the project during the Schematic Design phase caused a number of difficulties, we had to place this large building in a prominent location on the site directly at the end of one of the guest room wings facing the ocean. This required the redesign of both guest room wings, the one wing was shortened to make room for the Retreat Center and the other wing was lengthened to accommodate the modules removed from the shortened wing.


**During the 2 years, can you please breakdown the amount of time devoted towards each phase of the project?**



significant input from the original operations team. This combination required that the team worked flexibly, quickly and that they were adaptable to change as well as have the ability to move from one aspect of the project to another to provided design input and support as required. The project ultimately came together

Great consideration were made to select key furniture pieces to evoke a low-key residential feel and yet with a whimsical touch such as rocking chairs overlooking the water feature and the landscape beyond. We reuse and recycle all reusable materials from the original site. Otherwise, new materials, such as stone and wood, were sourced locally or within the region.

**The banyan tree structure is fantastic, and it looks like the centerpiece of the design, can you tell us a bit more about the design & construction of this iconic piece?**

The Banyan Tree Structure came about during the early initial concept phase of the project when we were tasked to create a centerpiece for the lobby that was both iconic, utilitarian and elegant. After exploring a variety of different structural materials, including steel and concrete, we decided to use Glulam because of its warmth and elegance, as well as its flexibility to be shaped into a curve. Beside the artistic qualities, the tree also plays a structural role to the rotunda roof. It is the focal point of the project as much as it is an exuberant expression of art and architecture. Other historical references to Balinese tradition were emphasized in the work and designs by the Interior Designers and the Landscape Architects. 

The project was broken down into a number of phases commencing with initial concept design, concept refinement, final concept, schematic design and design development. By the end of the concept design phase, the program had been locked in by the client with the exception of the retreat center which came later on in the process. Given the tight time frame the project did not move in a linear fashion. Instead the project was broken into a serious of elements that proceeded at different paces. Things such as the main structural walls, foundations, column grid were accelerated in order to allow the other consultants to proceed with their work and to be able to have the project tendered to get started on site. Coordination with the interior designer and other members of the team came at various intervals including

in the design development phase as WATG's role became more of an advisory level and the local consultants took on the construction documentation and construction oversight responsibilities.

## Tell us more about your interior design strategy. How was it executed?

The Lobby concept was inspired by the Garuda Coat of Arms which comprises few key elements such as the tree, cotton, bull, star, and rice forming an integral part of the Indonesian crest. These elements are incorporated to the entry experience by linking the porte cochere and the Lobby with a floating bridgeway which was further accentuated by framing it with dark Andesite textural stone water features and a cascading curtain of bronze vintage raincups.