

FIRST-CLASS LIFESTYLE

# HIGHEND

MARIA &  
ELIZABETH  
RAHAJENG

*Savvy Stunners*



*Flair of  
Festivity*

DECEMBER 2015 Rp 90.000,-

ISSN 1979-2875



9 771979 287549

[www.highend-magazine.com](http://www.highend-magazine.com)

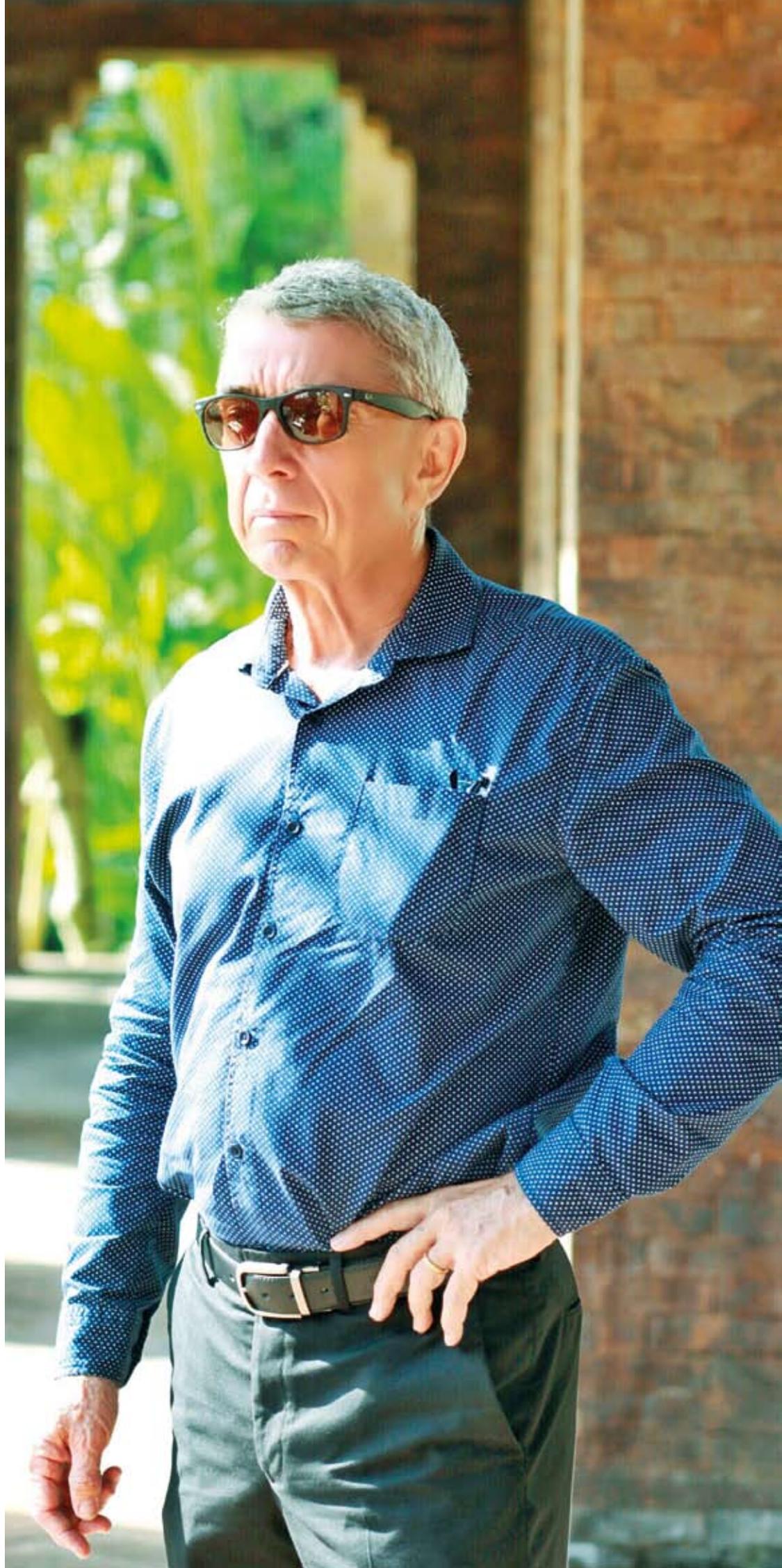
PEOPLE

MILES HUMPHREYS

# A Sense of Place

THE ESTEEMED ARCHITECT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ACCLAIMED FIRST-CLASS RETREATS IN BALI. HIS PORTFOLIO INCLUDES REALIZING LUXURIOUS SANCTUARIES FOR PADMA RESORTS AND RITZ-CARLTON RESERVE – PADMA RESORT UBUD IN PUHU AND RITZ-CARLTON'S MANDAPA HAVING RECENTLY OPENED IN THE PAST MONTHS.

*Text NISA SOEHERMAN  
Photos courtesy of ARI WIDIANINGSIH*



**HighEnd** had the opportunity to ask Miles Humphreys about his approach to architecture, the new resorts and the many things that the Island of Gods inspires.

**What were some of the important elements you made sure to include in realizing Mandapa, a Ritz-Carlton Reserve?**

The key element was to generate a resort that resonated directly with a true sense of place, and for me that place was Ubud. I wanted guests to walk into the resort and say, "This is Ubud". This is already happening and for me this underlines the success of the newly opened resort. The reference of any design, in my opinion, should be the surrounding built structures and natural context within which these built structures sit. At Mandapa it was made easy as we were blessed with a strong and very clear "Ubud flavour", and it was this that we set out to honor and embrace. Another key element was the use of external building materials that would quickly take on their own natural patina and evoke a visual effect of having existed for many years, but were in fact only a few months old. Overall, I wanted to realize an architecture that the guests could relate to in scale and enjoy as a true Ubud village.

**How does Bali itself inspire your architecture?**

The key for me is that Bali *does* have an architecture that is specific to its location and, as such, this empowers one to extrapolate the key elements of it into a new-build form that still resonates with the fundamentals

of Balinese architecture. The very specific, human scale of Balinese architecture is still very relevant to buildings today and enables one to engage with new-build structures in a meaningful way, without being overwhelmed by them. Finally, it is the village-type environment that Balinese architecture so inspires within its manifestation that I find so attractive and very relevant to generating a resort that, in truth, is a village in itself.

**For the Ritz-Carlton Reserve, to what extent is the traditional architectural style of mandapa (temples) incorporated into the design?**

It is the other way around. Each Ritz-Carlton Reserve, the highest brand of Marriott International, has to have its own name. The Reserve in Ubud was named Mandapa in honor of the multitude of columns that prevail throughout the arrival area and the guest public areas, all of which have numerous exposed timbers or terracotta columns.

**How does architecture create a sense of place – and in the case of Mandapa, a place where mind, body and soul can feel at ease?**

A sense of place has many key architectural elements and subtleties that evoke this through the build and natural forms. The overall site is blessed with a natural enclosure that "holds" it, with the very high banks on the far side of the Ayung River. With the rice paddies forming the heart of the village, we were able to array, in an organic planning fashion, the various build forms that make up the Mandapa. Having a vertical differential of over 80 metres

meant we could play with the vertical location of many buildings, which added to formatting a series of enclosures that generate a further sense of place. The feeling of being at ease, to me, is from the spaces that are dedicated to the many facets of the resort and the enclosure of the villas, as well as the vertical separation of the suites, which combines to give privacy, and peace and quiet.

**You are also the architect for Padma Resorts. Could you share something about your approach to architecture in Bali in contrast, or in comparison, to projects outside of the region?**

With Padma Legian and Padma Puhu, we were blessed with a client who is a very active patron of Indonesian arts and crafts. As such, we blended this into our designs to add a new dimension. However, the overall process was still passed through the Balinese "filter" to ensure the outcome honors the sense of place and location. In the case of Padma Puhu, opening in October, we requested that the client engage with a Balinese architect based in the region to ensure that the Balinese architectural language was delivered in a truly authentic manner and resonated with our overall design.

With projects that we have designed in places like the Seychelles, Costa Rica, Panama, Japan and Russia, we retained a consistent approach founded on delivering an architecture that honors and enhances the region in which it is located, utilizing materials and finishes that prevail in the surroundings and that retain a scale with which people can easily and comfortably interact.