

main feature MANDAPA, A RITZ-CARLTON RESERVE

A River Runs Through It

All there is to thinking is seeing something noticeable which makes you see something you weren't noticing which makes you see something that isn't even visible." – *Norman Maclean*

STORY BY Will Wirawan PHOTO BY Daylight Photoworks



FARMING HAS BEEN THE WAY OF LIFE FOR MANY BALINESE GENERATIONS.

At 75 kilometres, the Ayung River is the longest and most historically significant river in the island. For one, it was the lifeline of the then-farming lifestyle, and it has inspired countless objects of art. Ayung, once the main source of the majority of irrigation dams and the simplistic nature of the village life, is now attracting thousands of vacation goers to be nestled in the forests and valleys inside the many world-class luxurious resorts in Bali. The Ritz-Carlton aims to take that luxury up a notch with its latest Ritz-Carlton Reserve project and so Mandapa was born.

When designer Miles Humphreys of PT Bali Anugrah Dewata got the brief, he went to the barren site and examined its extreme contours. Both Miles



A RIVER RUNS THROUGH IT CLOCKWISE FROM THIS PAGE, LEFT

Simple bamboo woven pattern — found in most Indonesian village — were used to layer the walking canopy, casts a live pattern that enriches the equally simple floor panels

Traces of the river are carefully placed onto each villa

Separated with electronically controlled traditional wooden gate, this walk-path leads towards the main villa door

Three-panel sliding window transforms the living room in each villas from an open-space reading gazebo into a weather-controlled study

The Pandawa — the resort's no-reception lobby area — was inspired by the pendapa found in old javanese palace. The different levels of each section introduces a floating illusion, which are amplified by the shallow water feature around it



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A RIVER RUNS THROUGH IT
CLOCKWISE FROM OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP

The bathroom in the Villa uses a bronze-finished fixture. All of the wash basins are specially designed in wood

A homage to the Javanese royal architecture, whereas the suites carry the normal chromed one

The bedroom area is enveloped in sultry wood panel and comes with a window seat and specially designed bedside hanging lamps

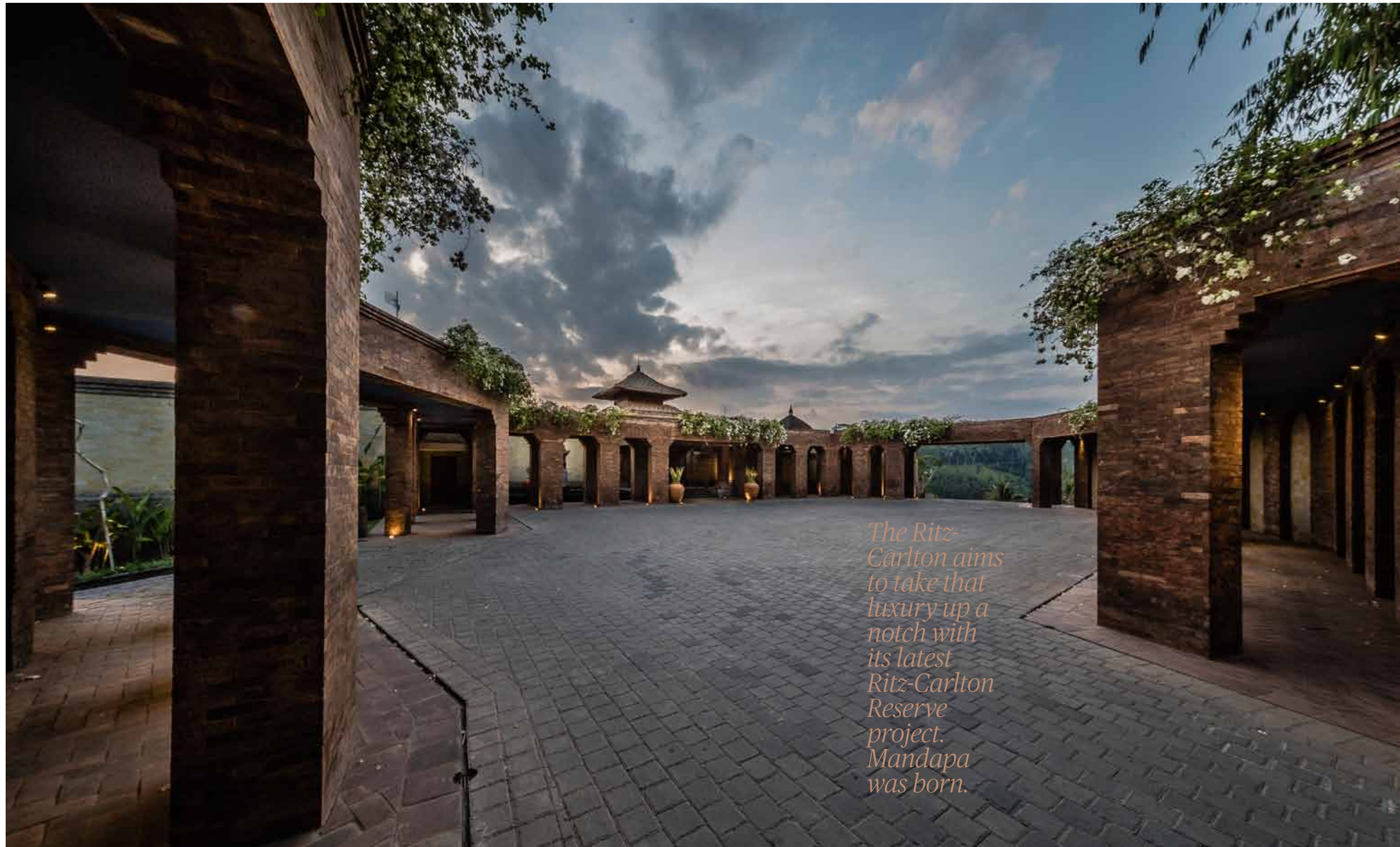
The operator works with some local painters to produce unique artwork for each unit

and the project owner were determined to use the challenging and unforgiving 10-storey descent to the riverside to their favour even though this entailed a major excavation work. “I want the Mandapa to look aged, to have a feel that it has been there forever,” he touted “I want it to also disappear so that the nature is the main show.”

The site, designed in a more toned-down, earthy look, has since revealed itself to be a natural beauty. At the bottom of the valley is a tenderfoot curve of the river — one of its kind in the entire length of Ayung — where a well-cultivated, sizable rice field would become one of the property’s central element.

“It is a magical site, and I intend to keep it that way,” said Miles, who also added he is glad both the owner and operator share the vision. The Ritz-Carlton Reserve team has been integral to the Mandapa project since the beginning. Washington — where Ritz-Carlton is headquartered — has the final call on almost all aspects of Mandapa.





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A RIVER RUNS THROUGH IT

The first feature people see at Mandapa, terracotta piazza as the point of entry

Project Data

Mandapa, A Ritz-Carlton Reserve Ubud
Jalan Kedewatan
Banjar Kedewatan
Gianyar
Ubud, Bali 80571
Indonesia
T: +62 361 4792777
www.mandapareserve.com

Company Name
PT. Sukses Primatama Bersama

Number of Rooms
A total of 60 units of Luxury Villas (of one, two and three bedrooms) and Suites

Room sizes
One Bedroom Villa: 430 sqm, Two Bedroom Villa: 995 sqm, Three Bedroom Villa: 2000 sqm, Suites: 100 and 145 sqm

Site Area
6 Hectares
Gross Floor Area
+/- 19, 000 sqm
Architecture Consultant
PT. Bali Anugrah Dewata

Principal Designer
Miles Humphreys
Interior Design Consultant
Wilke Designs

Principal Designer
Jeffrey Wilkes
Lighting Consultant
Lumina Group
Landscape Consultant
John Pettigrew

M&E Consultant
Metakom Pranata
Civil & Structural Consultant
Candra Basuki

Main Contractor
Jaya Kusuma Sarana Bali

Started Construction
April 2013
Opening
5 September 2015

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A RIVER RUNS THROUGH IT CLOCKWISE FROM THIS PAGE, BELOW

— The walkway to the spa rooms combines timber flooring and greenery

— The Spa room, each with a floor-to-ceiling opening to the river on the other side where guests can actually hear the water running

— The bamboo pods are a complete departure from the visual identity of the Mandapa, it is by design

— The faceless facade of the villas of Mandapa

— The Spa lobby area where guests can choose from the various treatments available



It is one of the two identifiable features of the resort, the other being the one-of-a-kind terracotta piazza that is also Mandapa's point of entry.

At the bottom of the valley, Bamboo pods are erected at a near river-level to house nine private dining cocoons. This is a rather radical departure from the timber-based structure all around Mandapa. Raised above the rice field, is the Sawah Terrace, where breakfast and lunch are served. The two are designed to be different yet a complement to one another; wood versus bamboo, rice field and the river, day versus night.

More conventional structures can be found at Mandapa's treatment and sports facilities, but that wouldn't fly without Mandapa's own twist; the post-treatment area offers private day bed with intricately-carved wooden partition in a descending composition leading to a floor-to-ceiling opening to the river.

Mandapa, a Ritz-Carlton Reserve, is a masterful symphony rendered with architectural objects. It has succeeded in crafting a truly local, back-to-nature experience by taking advantage of the breathtaking location, one that many luxury properties from Bali's future generation will draw inspiration from. ¹⁰



Unlike the previous Ritz-Carlton Reserve in Puerto Rico and Thailand, the Mandapa Ubud is the first Reserve property to abide by the Reserve standard in its entirety. Every single design decision was based on four mantras: Striking, Intimate, Magical and Enlightening. The same four words can be said about the experience of staying in Mandapa.

Miles showed the one picture that inspired him for this project, a picture showing the infamous Potala Palace in Tibet perched atop a hill. The concept has been cleverly realized on Mandapa's gigantic 10-storey main structure. From this al fresco joglo-style wooden structure, Mandapa's crown, guests have an unobstructed view of the whole compound.

Ana Gorjão Henriques

Ritz-Carlton Indonesia Chief Reserve

Recently opened in September 2015, Bali's Mandapa is the third property in the prestigious Ritz-Carlton Reserve portfolio and the first that was designed & built as a part of Ritz-Carlton's latest luxury initiative. Leading this venture is a Ritz-Carlton veteran, **Ana Gorjão Henriques**, a native of Portugal, who believes that guest experience is everything. Ana had managed Phulay Bay Reserve in Krabi, Thailand, before she, her husband and their beloved dog landed in Bali in 2013.

INTERVIEW BY Will Wiriawan



Having the liberty of setting up its first built-from-scratch, the Ritz-Carlton Reserve team is betting on its track record and knowledge of the local community relayed from its research team. The local culture and its visual identity are combined to be baked into a set of graphical elements, word marks, services and philosophy, each carefully chosen to ensure a second-to-none experience, even compared to other Reserve establishments. Ana Gorjão Henriques, General Manager of Mandapa, a Ritz-Carlton Reserve speaks more about her experience so far.

What's Ritz-Carlton's definition of a 'Reserve'? Is there a set of criteria, or a specific characteristic for a property to be a Reserve?

Ritz-Carlton Reserve positions itself to be the destination of choice for 'Experience Collectors'. We favour exotic sites — ones that are outside of the typical mass tourism area — and we keep a relatively low number of keys, to ensure a private and exclusive experience that blends unique elements of the local culture, history, as well as heritage.

Patih, Pandawa — as well as Mandapa itself — are aptly chosen local words that represent the unique experiences for this property. Care to share what's the philosophy behind them?

Patih means the king's or queen's right hand and usually he or she is the most trusted person. And we would like to convey the same meaning to our guests. In pursuit of the ultimate guest experience, Mandapa trains and employs a dedicated team of Patih, a personal butler that would handle your check-in, your spa appointments, as well as buggy reservations.

Many luxury establishments are doing similar things in one form or another, the Reserve by Ritz-Carlton is taking it further up a few notches by mapping it on a global scale, creating a trail of exotic world-class experiences in different parts of the world.

At what phase did your team begin working on the Mandapa? Will there be any expansion to the site that you have now?

I was the first to join the project in May 2013. All Executive Team was on board by mid October 2014, and all managers, leaders and supervisors joined — by different phases within two months before the grand opening. We now have 230 ladies and gentlemen serving in Mandapa, and we will continue hiring over the next couple of months. There is no expansion planned for now. We are finalizing the Bamboo hut at the Mini Explorers area, Mandapa Farm and our own vegetable garden.

The Ayung River is a major part of the Subak network in the island, and the Mandapa is right at the middle of it. What kind of relationship do you form with the village and the Subak village committee?

Since we are part of the Subak, we pay our dues according to the local system. Most of our local staffs are also from the village around the area and we make sure they enjoy our presence as much as we appreciate their support. 