



## COME TO MAMA

There's a new kid on the block in the Balinese resort town of Seminyak. **Chloe Street** soaks up the boho beachy vibe at the first hotel by the group behind the wildly popular Potato Head lifestyle venues

“**W**ould you like your welcome mojito served here or in your suite, Miss?” And there you have it: this is how all hotel check-ins should begin. I am standing in Akademi, the supercool terrazzo- and vinyl-lined bar of the brand new Katamama hotel in Seminyak, Bali, where a smiley staff member clad in fisherman pants is prioritising my refreshment over the usual check-in rigmarole

### TAKE THE PLUNGE

The pool is a leafy, quiet oasis tucked back from the beach. Below: The bathroom in the Katamama Suite

of photocopying credit cards and scanning passports. In fact, Katamama has done away entirely with anything so dull as a reception area, instead designating, rather sensibly, the bar as the focal and meeting point of the hotel.

I opt to enjoy the rather excellent arrival mojito in the seclusion of my rooftop suite, where a staff member arrives to make it fresh in front of me while I recline on the balcony. Each of the 58 suites—all the rooms are suites—has a balcony or slice of garden, and they all have vast, white-tiled bathrooms with generous tubs, monsoon showers and locally produced shower products. They're equipped with everything you might need, from a beach bag and sarong (locally produced and naturally dyed with indigo, of course) to the discreetly hidden charging cables for every phone or gadget you could possibly be carrying. Water comes in large, eco-friendly glass bottles. There



is a pleasing lack of plastic throughout the hotel—even the bar uses paper straws.

The suite’s “maxi” bar comes fully stocked with large bottles of house-infused spirits, spicy homemade negroni mixes and a full cocktail-making kit. The kit and the chest-like snack box are made by local artisans, the latter filled with a selection of delicious and healthy Balinese treats of cashew nuts, cereal bars and dried mango.

I have been in the hotel nearly half an hour before anyone asks me to sign anything, and it is this uber-chilled, no-nonsense vibe that sets Katamama apart from other five-star counterparts. “We got together and tried to pinpoint the things about hotels that we hated, and we eliminated them,” says Andrew Steele, managing director of the hotel division of PTT Family, the hospitality and lifestyle group founded by Balinese businessman Ronald Akili. The group opened its first venture, Potato Head Jakarta, in 2009 and has since added the Potato Head Beach Club Bali (a stone’s throw from Katamama), Jakarta’s Potato Head Garage (a steakhouse), the Three Buns burger and cocktail outlets in Jakarta and Singapore, Potato Head Folk in Singapore, and, most recently, an outpost in Hong Kong’s Sai Ying Pun neighbourhood.

The hotel is the first of three planned for the Seminyak area, along with a second beach club in nearby Canggu.

Katamama is directly behind the Potato Head Beach Club, a massive open-air party hotspot with a capacity for 3,500 whose coliseum-like walls are constructed from 1,000 pastel-coloured antique wooden shutters. Somewhat differing in style, the angular, brutalist edifice of the hotel has been built with 1.4 million of the locally handmade red bricks used in the island’s temples. Their dominance is striking, and particularly pleasant when the light dapples and shines through them at different points of the day.

Designed by renowned Indonesian architect and longtime PTT collaborator Andra Matin, the property feels very Bali-meets-Brooklyn, with geometric patterns and ’60s and ’70s references permeating throughout. Vintage furniture (many pieces from Akili’s personal collection), brightly coloured woven rugs and more than 100 items of Indonesian contemporary art decorate the lofty, airy spaces. The emphasis on supporting Balinese craftsmanship extends throughout. All the textiles and baskets are made with local materials and natural dyes by a business in Ubud, Threads of Life, which supports



**LIQUOR LICENSE** The Akademi bar serves as hotel entrance, check-in counter, meeting area and a fine watering hole too



NEED TO KNOW



**SUN’S UP**

Don’t miss dancing to Disclosure and Mark Ronson at the Sunny Side Up festival, which takes place on August 13 and 14 at the Potato Head Beach Club.

**RETAIL THE TALE**

Forgot your bikini? Don’t fret. Seminyak is stuffed full with drool-worthy beachwear boutiques. Plenty of opportunities to splash that hard-earned holiday cash about.



**SHORE THING**

As fabulous as the hotel is, make sure you toddle through the beach club and onto Seminyak beach itself. It really is a cracker, particularly early in the morning before the other punters arrive.



**BEACH BUBBLE** The rooftop jacuzzi of the Katamama Suite is the perfect place to unwind after a long, hard day sunbathing. This holiday malarkey can really take its toll

1,000 female weavers on 11 islands across Indonesia, while all the beautiful colourful ceramics are produced by another Ubud-based company, Gaya.

“We’re all global citizens, constantly travelling and exposed to many different cultures, but we also have our own traditions that we’re proud of,” says Akili. “At PTT we always want to bring Indonesian traditions and balance them with the global context. We also want to showcase to Indonesians themselves that we’re so rich in heritage.”

Katamama’s restaurant, Movida, is an outpost of the popular Spanish restaurant from Melbourne and serves seriously tasty tapas at lunch and dinner—Wagyu tartar on a sesame crisp, air-dried beef with a poached egg and truffle foam, and Javanese chicken cooked in a Jospir oven were standouts. Movida is also the venue for breakfasts, which are chosen from an interesting (if perhaps too interesting at that time of the day) Spanish-influenced a la carte menu—buffet disciples you have been warned. Guests can also eat at the beach club or walk around to the row of shops where alongside Canaan, the hotel gift shop brimming with vintage ceramics, Indonesian crafts and Scandinavian design, there’s Alchemy, a raw vegan cafe with a cult following in Bali.

For those who fancy doing something other than flopping by the serene pool, the

24-hour cultural concierge is on hand to make bookings and provide inspiration on activities and places to visit. The concierge is also the person to speak to about reserving a daybed at the wildly popular beach club, for which hotel guests get priority access with no minimum spend. Katamama also runs a timetabled “cultural programme,” with guests invited to partake in a range of daily activities, such as poolside yoga and Tibetan bowl sessions, Reiki, cocktail masterclasses and cold-pressed juice and raw chocolate tastings at Akademi.

Whether you spend two weeks or 24 hours at Katamama, you’ll leave feeling imbued with its super-luxe surfer vibe. From the island-feel playlists that gently hum throughout the public spaces to the sweet little woven bracelets guests are presented with on departure—a fittingly boho memento—Katamama has thought of everything. When it comes to Seminyak, this really is the perfect place to rest your (potato) head. 🍌