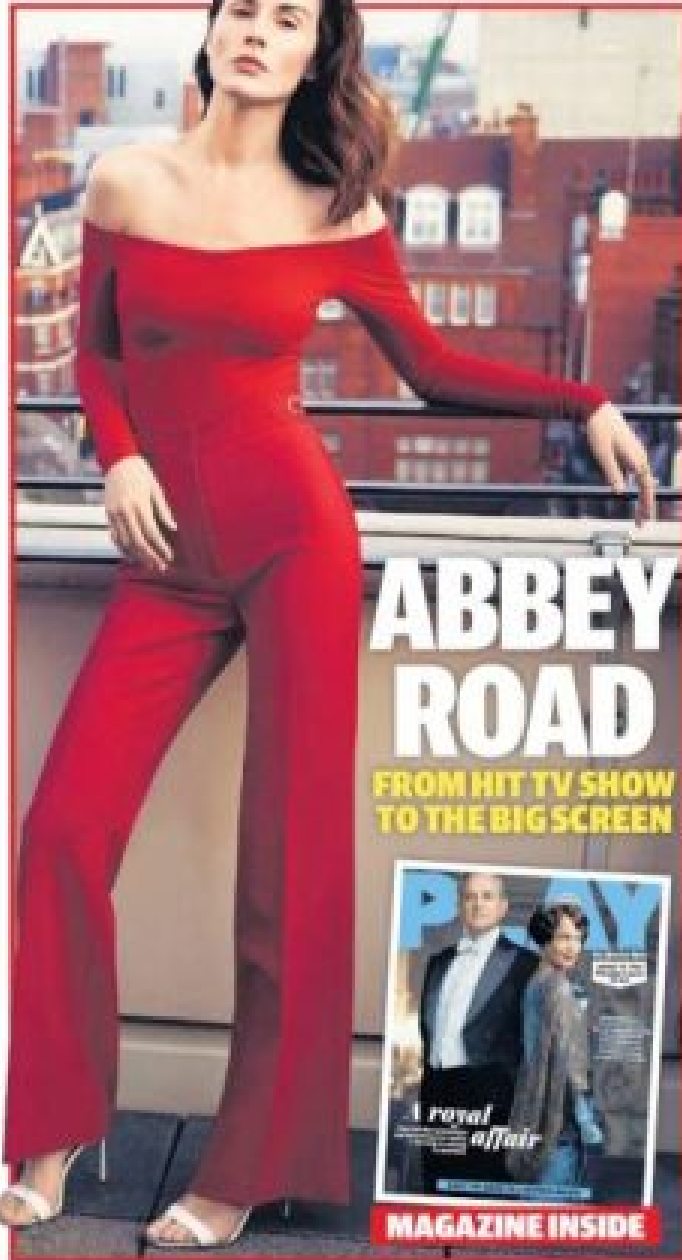


# The Weekend West



## ABBEY ROAD

FROM HIT TV SHOW TO THE BIG SCREEN



**MAGAZINE INSIDE**

**EXCLUSIVE:** The \$5m plan for a CBD pool from the big end of town

# SWAN DIVE

**KIM MACDONALD**

The city centre is poised to get its first public swimming pool in more than a century.

The \$5 million plan is being locked by building magnate Dale Alcock and Olympic rower

Sullivan, who described the four-to-six-lane development in the Swan River at Elizabeth Quay as a "stroke of genius".

**FULL REPORT** PAGES 8-9



## EXCLUSIVE: Inside the fake blue line

**PHIL HICKEY**

Public servants are being used to fill senior police roles, a move that has raised concerns that sensitive investigations could be compromised.

Examples include a public servant appointed as an acting detective superintendent in the same division that looks after the homicide squad.

Police Union president Harry Arnold said the practice risked

eroding "the effectiveness of the force".

The union has written to Police Commissioner Chris Dawson to demand answers.

**FULL REPORT** PAGE 10

**HAIR WE GO!**

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LOMBOK

# Live life like a rock star in paradise

It's not just swanky Villa Sapi that impresses NATALIE RICHARDS; it's also the talents of her personal chef

**T**he blast of the heat on my pasty skin, the "shhh" of the ocean in my ears, the smell of fresh frangipani as leis is looped around my neck, the taste of a refreshing welcome iced tea and the sight of a grinning line of uniformed staff lining up to welcome me — I'm not sure my senses can take any more of it!

I'm in northern Lombok being ushered into the grounds of Villa Sapi and the rock star welcome is only the start of it. I'm about to sample a lifestyle usually reserved for people with plenty of cash to spare. And I mean the type of cash which means you can buy yourself a



Villa Sapi. Picture: Natalie Richards

five-bedroom, 2500sqm estate with four swimming pools and not live in it.

The French businessman who shelled out for Villa Sapi had once kept it solely for holidays with his (obviously very large)

family. Nowadays guests can pay to enjoy his entire, uber-modern mansion and be served by his staff — with no holds barred.

The name Sapi, meaning "cow" in Indonesian, is a nod to

its former use as a cattle farm. But if you were expecting humble and traditional, think again. It's about as modern and swanky as it gets — bedrooms hidden behind secret doorways, a 4m diving pool, a dedicated



Sunset at Villa Sepoi Sepoi. Picture: Natalie Richards

cinema pod and the quirkiest of quirky decor.

After the grand tour, I choose to stay in the two-bedroom guest house, which is built into the manicured lawns like an up-market Teletubby Land, with an infinity pool for each floor and in easy reach of the tennis court (yes, it's that fancy).

But despite all of this, it won't be the property or even its outlook, right on the Sira beachfront, you're talking about after your stay.

I Nengah Kantun — or Kantun as guests call him — is Villa Sapi's celebrity chef and boy does he know his clientele.

He's fanatical about Western cuisine, and I don't mean burger, chips and pizza. I mean smooth sweetcorn soups, crunchy salad and stir-fry, freshly-baked chocolate croissants and oozing chocolate lava cakes.

Such is Kantun's cooking, the owner has custom-built his star chef his own cooking school. Tucked out of view of guests, young students learn how to use a knife, how to speak English and how to charge a guest for their creations.

"I am very proud, some of my students have got jobs in restaurants and I hope they can give jobs to my other students when they're finished," he said. "It gives the young people here a future."

Having a personal chef at my disposal isn't an easy thing to get used to and I find myself asking what time I should arrive for meals — "you tell us" is the reply — and there are laughs when I ask if it's OK to take my glass of wine to the couch. "It's your villa," the staff tell me and soon I'm sashaying around the grounds, soaking up the life the other half live.

But for me and my one guest, it's an awful waste. This place is crying out for a big family to take over and fill every room, return from a day snorkelling or fishing off the nearby Gili Islands to play "guest vs staff" volleyball on the grounds.

Although, you might want to make sure you're close to those you invite. The open bamboo showers and deep baths, while heavenly to take in beach views, could end up being interesting if you value privacy.

Just a couple of kilometres away, there's a change of pace at the six-bedroom Villa Sepoi Sepoi (meaning "sea breeze").

Forget futuristic decor and Western food. Here traditional Indonesian fare is the way to go. Thatched roof huts are incredibly luxurious and centred around a huge 20m pool and cabanas.

As the five-times-daily Muslim prayers ring out from nearby mosques and geckos and birds roam the grounds, it's the sort of place you go to soak up nature and culture, while still lapping up the high life.

The staff won't let you go hungry either. Be it baby snapper caught from the waters just metres away or a hearty nasi goreng with all the trimmings — it's local, traditional and there's absolutely loads of it.

While some villas charge per day or per meal, Sepoi Sepoi works on a neat grocery system which, once you're used to it, could end up costing a fraction of the price of a hotel.

You say what you like, the staff shop for it at the local markets, they cook it, and your bill is itemised and tallied at the end — right down to the last drop of cooking oil (yes, seriously).

On the western part of Lombok, Villa Sepoi Sepoi has amazing sunsets over the water.

Locals quietly fishing in the low tide and tiny boats are the only others sharing the view as the sky changes from orange to red, to purple and deep blue. The high life may mean luxury lodgings and private staff but right now it's about being lucky enough to have nature's light show to ourselves.

Natalie Richards was a guest of Elite Havens and Air Asia. They have not seen or approved this story.



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