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Bali Travel: The Undying Balinese Arts

By Made Dertha

The island of Bali is literally a very beautiful island situated under the equator in Indonesian

Archipelago, is one of the most interesting and ultimate tourist destination in Asia. Since the first decade of the 20th century visitors have given to it several nicknames "Island of Gods" – "Island of thousand Temples" - "The Last Paradise" - and also often called "Island of Artist".

The spirit of creativity pervades everything in Balinese life, from the cultivation of the steeply-terraced rice field to the elaborate temple offerings of flowers and foods given to the gods at times of celebration. Dancing, playing the gamelan, painting and carving is as much a part of an ordinary day as working in the offices, in the fields or feeding livestock.

In ancient times, the people of the Indonesian Archipelago followed the ways of animism and ancestor worship. By around A.D. 600 however, Indian ideas and beliefs began to spread throughout Southeast Asia. Both Buddhism and Hinduism became active force on the islands of Sumatra and Java. When Islam gained control of Java in the 16th century, many Hindu princes, their followers and artisans fled to Bali. They established principalities on Bali.

The earliest art of Bali dates from this pre-Hindu era, including highly of decorative works of bronze, as well as skilled basketworks and weaving. During the Hindu era, the princes and their relatives were the patronage of the native arts of Bali, and also sustained by the guiding rituals of its religion. The palaces and temples, as political and religious center of the island, were also centers of the arts.

A prince would adorn his pavilions with the most exquisitely carved wood panels, paintings, silken materials, gilded umbrellas and would be entertained by gamelan music, dances and songs of poetical Kawi language. The opulence of the court - had its religious parallel in the lavish decoration and dances within the temples. So the courts and the temples have been receiving equal high performance in art.

This convergence of beauty and ritual explains why the arts have endured to such a great extent in Bali. Ritual demanded a continuous renewal of communion with the divine through temple celebrations. The people poured their artistic talents into preparations of these occasions. New offerings have to be

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made, new shrines constructed, new statues of stones and woods have to be carved, dances, music and dramas created and practiced. This kept carvers and masons constantly occupied creating new sculptures or retouching older ones.

The Balinese language has no words for "art" and "artist". In former times there had been no need for such definitions. Art was never considered a conscious production for its own sake. Rather, it was regarded as a collective obligation to make thing beautiful. And this was always done with a definite purpose: to create beauty in service to society and religion. Thus a "figure-maker" or "picture-maker" as well as a farmer or merchant, he was called upon when his skills were needed. He neither signed his name to his work, nor received money for his labor. His prime aim was to serve his community. As was true in the olden days, the majority of Bali's artists are highly skilled craftsmen who learned their trade by mastering the traditional forms inherited from their forefathers.

In the first decade of the 20th century, the Dutch took the island, and Bali entered a new era as a

colony of the Netherlands. Western education, modern technology, magazines, and a steady tourist trade opened up a new world for many Balinese, and this widening of outlook was reflected in the arts. For the first time, craftsmen began to treat their work as art for art's sake, experimenting in new style, themes and media. With the arrival of the Western influence, the rigid conventions of the traditional style were no longer binding. Instead of illustrating stories from the great Hindu epics, some Balinese artists began to depict scenes of everyday life and nature in their work. The present art community has two criteria: (a) a work of art is praiseworthy in the eyes of fellow Balinese, or (b) it appeals to the foreign market and is sold.

To day the traditional and modern arts can be viewed at various places: Museum Bali in Denpasar presents a commendable survey of Balinese art from prehistoric times to the early 20th century and modern arts. Werdi Budaya Arts Center in Denpasar offers exhibitions and sales of local handicrafts and hand loomed fabrics. Tohpati for fine batiks. Celuk for silver and gold works. Mas for excellent woodcarvings. Ubud is the heart of arts and cultures, home of the most talented painters. And Klungkung for the traditional paintings and silver works.

So if you are interested in arts, do not hesitate to choose this enchanting island for your Bali Vacation. It also has very nice beaches, hotels, fabulous nature's views, friendly people and of course excellent foods. Go online and search your preferred Bali hotels or contact your reputable travel agent.

Ciao readers, my immense thank to you all.

Made Dertha was an English and Italian tour guide for many years in Bali, writes for Bali Turista Tours where he is the Managing Director now. Bali Turista is focusing on Bali hotels and villas reservation. Just visit

<http://www.baliturismo.com>

and

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Bali's Islands And Natural Treasures

By Naldo Camarones

Thinking about traveling to somewhere different on your next vacations? Then here is an interesting option for you: Bali.

Bali is found in Indonesia and is arguably one of the most beautiful and peaceful tourist resorts on earth. People enjoy visiting Bali because unlike other tropical destinations, Bali hasn't been broken into an array of hotels and water front resorts. The people of Bali take pride in their land and exhibit this in many ways.

One way that they do this is through their art. Local art is a cornerstone of life in Bali and it's also one of the first things most tourists notice. Everything from paintings to woodwork can be found in Bali. Dance is also a fundamental part of life in Bali and it's not uncommon to see local people engaged in a ritualistic dance.

The people who live in Bali don't normally speak English which can make the stay interesting for those who only speak the language. They speak Balinese but when staying at a hotel you will have the ability to converse in English with the staff. The native tongue is lovely to listen to though.

The water around Bali is pure heaven. You can stand near the edge and look out onto a sea of brilliant blue among the coral reefs. If you are particularly adventurous you can even arrange to travel by boat out into the water.

One of the most amazing sights you'll witness while in Bali is the serene beaches. Much of the sand in Bali is white. For someone venturing there from North America, where the sand is a dingy brown, this is a delight. Not to be outdone, there are also beaches in Bali, mainly in the southern regions that boast black sand.

Traveling around Bali can prove to be an adventure. Transportation is fast and efficient in the urban areas but when you wander into the more rural settings you'll find yourself faced with an unending maze of country roads. These are best left to the natives as they know how to navigate from point a to point b without getting lost. You can arrange for a private tour of the islands of Bali and if you have the resources to do this, it's a wonderful way to fully experience the area.

The people of the islands of Bali are very cordial. They welcome visitors and you'll often find them sitting selling their wares.

It's been said that once you visit Bali it's very difficult to leave. The pure beauty of the surroundings and the climate make it a tiny corner of serenity. If you get a chance to visit the islands of Bali don't let the opportunity pass you by.

Read more from this author at:

<http://www.travelviaje-magazine.com>



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