

# Fresh Getaway

## Bali Resort Courts the Culture Club

*The new Komaneka resort at Bisma overlooks a lush valley and is decked out with original local artworks. It truly is a feast for the eyes.*

Report Titania Veda

**T**hemany galleries, handicraft workshops and artist studios in Bali's Ubud attract thousands of art lovers to the area each year.

In a place where there is no shortage of backpacker lodgings where you can strip back to basics and pricey luxury resorts, the Komaneka Resort, along with its spa and gallery, occupies the middle ground. Infused with the art and culture of the island, the resort has an exclusive feel about it, yet it is more affordable than other resorts of its class.

Owner Koman Suteja Neka is the son of Suteja Neka, who founded the Neka Art Museum. The resort had humble beginnings as accommodation for artists who were exhibiting there. Koman's wife, Mansri, designed the buildings, integrating local art into the design to reflect Balinese culture, while Koman added the finishing touches.

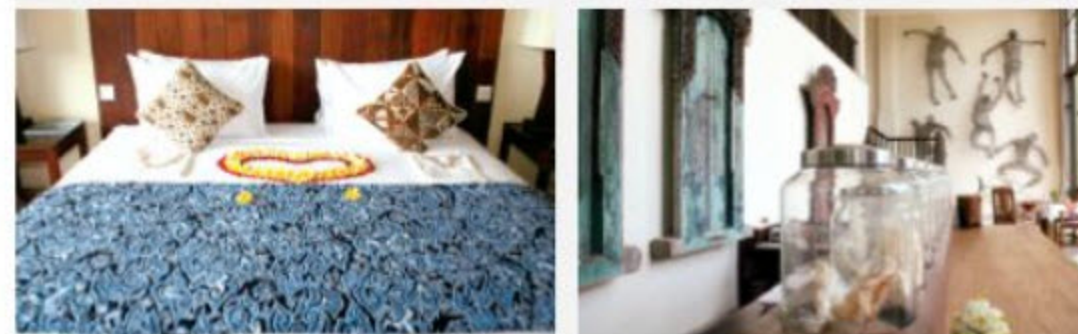
Welcome to paradise perfected, otherwise known as the Komaneka at Bisma.

Nestled in the undulating hills of the Campuhan River valley, Komaneka is more than a vacation spot; it's away of life.

The newest of the Komaneka resorts — the first is located in the Ubud Monkey Forest and the second in Tenggayuda, a short drive from Ubud — Bisma offers the best of both worlds: It is accessible to central Ubud, yet removed enough for guests to get back to nature.

Upon arrival, guests can relax and take in the sweeping view of the terraced rice fields below. The open-air lobby is furnished with tree trunks draped by a shimmering pond; its jade reflections seemingly spill out into the verdant fields.

There are 34 sumptuous suites and 10 comfortably vast villas at Komaneka at Bisma.



Rooms have high ceilings and cool marble floors and, once inside, you will find dark red and sunny-yellow petals on the crisp white sheets of the newly made beds, as well as homemade raisin cookies to munch on.

Its floor-to-ceiling windows add a light and airy feel to the resort. Former maids and mermen, lap and recreational pools extend

over the valley. There is also a meandering jogging track and state-of-the-art gym facilities for guests whose definition of relaxation means exercise.

With its apartment-sized suites, family-friendly villas and Ubud's first wedding chapel, Komaneka caters to couples, families and honeymooners. It also holds appeal for

businesspeople who may require a function room, as well as a number of bedrooms for company staff and their families.

Meals are diverse, offering a delectable mix of Indonesian fare and international dishes with a local twist. The pumpkin soup is like a warm embrace in a bowl of butternut pumpkin puree, with just the right dash of

**Opening:**  
 Unofficial: July 2008  
 Official: End of 2008

**Hotel rate:**  
 Starts at \$350 a night

**Rooms:**  
 34 x en suites, total size 8 x 11m  
 6 x one-bedroom villas with pool access  
 1 x three-bedroom villas with pool access  
 2 x one-bedroom duplex villas  
 1 x two-bedroom duplex villa

**Breakfast:**  
 Rp 130,000-160,000

**Lunch and Dinner:**  
 Rp 45,000-240,000

**Komaneka at Bisma**  
 Jalan Bisma, Ubud, Gianyar  
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 www.komaneka.com

coconut milk and a sliver of lemongrass. For the main course, try the succulent grilled chicken breast painted in rich mango mayonnaise, complemented with the cool sweetness of sliced mangoes and roasted almond toppings. Don't leave without at least a spoonful of Komaneka's special melted chocolate cake, baked to perfection and laden with cocoa goodness topped off with cinnamon, vanilla and pineapple ice cream.

The service at Komaneka is friendly and warm. The secret behind the smiles of the resort's staff is what Koman calls "Komaneka community."

"We tell our staff to accept guests as members of their own family. All guests are considered VIPs," said Iman Lubis, the resort's public relations manager.

Koman is a great promoter of young Indonesian artistic talent and has a knack for selecting suitable artists — often fresh out of art school in Bali or Yogyakarta — to exhibit in his galleries.

The resort makes a point of not hanging artworks in guests' private villas. "The concept here is one of an art market," said Ketut Swabawa, the resort's manager.

"Komaneka is for those who appreciate art and leisure. We want to exhibit the artworks but not guide a guest to a particular art piece."

Awar-themed piece by Barata Yuda dominates the wall of the starched white meeting room, awash in bold bloody reds and earthy browns, while Suklu's "Matahari di Nepal" (Sun in Nepal) uses broad impasto strokes that leap off the canvas in their daffodil-yellow bursts of sunlight through a rain cloud. In the restaurant, Sutawijaya's figurative wire sculptures clamber up the walls. They look like dancers, frozen in time and space. With the exception of the Komaneka family's private collection, all the artwork at the resort is for sale.

You may leave Komaneka with an artwork or two in your suitcase, but if you don't, you will at least leave refreshed with a new spring to your step.

**Komaneka offers a lavish getaway for art and leisure lovers. Impressive views can be enjoyed from an unconventional open-air lobby.**  
 JG Photo Titania Veda

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