



# GREATEST ESCAPES

*Leave your troubles behind, catch the next flight out and submerge yourself in the ultimate luxury. The very cream of rental villas, chosen for you by Asia-Pacific TROPICAL HOMES.*

*A villa in this exotic, tropical region is the perfect escape.*



## Sri Lanka – Helga's Folly

It's camp, it's kitsch and it's got more character, cobwebs and family heirlooms in its brimstone drawing room than half the world's heritage hotels. *Helga's Folly* is shamelessly over the top. This 1930s family home underwent a major makeover when its owner, the inimitable Sri Lankan society hostess Helga da Silva Blow Perera, transformed it into a 40-room hotel. Out went the whitewash and in came interiors of lime green, indigo and tangerine, as well as gigantic murals of Kandyan dancers.

A traditional four-poster bed in a fuschia-painted guestroom is swathed in black net like a Spanish widow, the toilet is a box-style commode, papered in pages from 1970s fashion magazines. Every inch of the downstairs' scarlet wall space is hung with family photographs, press clippings and paintings, with silver candelabras heaped with years of dripped wax. The drawing room screams of Victorian bohemia.

Love it or hate it, *Helga's Folly* is unique. Part fantasy, part homage to the past, it encapsulates Sri Lankan eccentricity as does nowhere else on earth. [www.helgasfolly.com](http://www.helgasfolly.com) CS

## Phuket – Coco Palace

This secluded retreat, in the south of the island and just a few minutes stroll from one of the island's best beaches, is without doubt one of the more unusual finds for this column. As with the eccentric *Helga's Folly* below, *Coco Palace* is the vision of one person — Brian W. Skyum, a Danish writer and photographer — who wanted to do something a little different from the usual shabby guest house and bring together the influences he has accumulated after travels to 220 countries and states. In the process he has created a place of such architectural eclecticism that it's quite difficult to place all the influences involved. That roof for instance. Obviously a touch of Thai in the cantilevering, but those thrusting gable ends? Samoan perhaps.

Fountains, waterfalls and pools create liquid labyrinths throughout the small and welcoming estate, and — as Brian says — there are more bronze animal sculptures filling the nooks and crannies than the resort can accommodate guests. It weird, its wonderful... and then you discover the Jacuzzi cave. [www.coco-palace.com](http://www.coco-palace.com)



## Bali – Villa Sungai

How often does the GM of your holiday hotel meet you at the airport? One of the great things about villa rental is the personal aspects of the service that you rarely experience even at the most prestigious of five-star resorts. With *Villa Sungai* guests are not only met at the airport by the villa manager when they arrive in Bali, he also acts as their chauffeur for the entirety of their stay, ensuring that they make it to all the most interesting places on the island — in the comfort of the villa's own eight-seat limousine. Of course transportation is not the only thing to recommend *Villa Sungai's* service. The guest to staff ratio is 1:1 so personal service is guaranteed.

The concept behind this understated — yet entirely enchanting — villa is aimed at travellers who are looking for something more than the five-star hotel experience. This confidential hideaway is located within the security of a beautiful traditional village, just 15 minutes from Tanah Lot, and 20 minutes north of the best dining and shopping in Bali. [www.bali-villasungai.com](http://www.bali-villasungai.com)

