



DREAM DESTINATION

# Lia Beach Bamboo Resort

TOGEAN ISLANDS, INDONESIA

Who hasn't dreamt of finding their own hidden paradise? At Lia Beach there are two dramatic bamboo bungalows, which sleep just two guests each. Backed by tropical jungle and fronted by turquoise seas and dreamlike coral gardens, this hideaway, tucked along an untamed stretch of coast in the remote Togeian archipelago, is difficult to reach. But when you're handed a freshly cut coconut as a setting sun turns the sky vermillion, you'll know it was worth the effort. *Chris Crerar*

EAT / DRINK

SEAWEED IS becoming the new salt and pepper as more chefs season their coastal cooking with its nutrient-rich savouriness. At Bondi's new Pacific Club, Bret Cameron throws sea lettuce over grilled prawns and dresses sugarloaf cabbage with kelp vinegar and Pyengana cheese. The big treat is a whole flounder (\$40), dusted in kelp powder and cooked over the wood-fired grill, dotted with pickled mussels and warrigal greens. Who needs S&P? *Jill Duplex*



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# Dressing down

BY *Amelia Lester*



I HAVE a theory that the colder the climate, the more attention is paid to fashion. It explains why Melbourne is more stylish than Sydney, and why none of the world's fashion capitals are known for their pleasant weather. New Yorkers often say that one's coat is one's car – meaning, outerwear is both a means of transport and an important status signifier. (This argument is deployed to justify spending a month's rent on a jacket.) By contrast, on a tropical island such as the one I live on now, clothes are low on most people's list of priorities – below finding the best poke bowl around, and certainly way less important than knowing the jellyfish hot spots.

When my wardrobe was recently ravaged by mould – one of the few downsides to life in a balmy clime – this point quite literally hit home. Every item felled in the attack was plainly ridiculous for Okinawa living. The fancy dry-clean-only fabrics of my former city-mouse lifestyle were – in one slow, damp sweep – done for. It was as though the mould knew my life had changed dramatically, and with it my clothing requirements. Because in addition to moving to a sleeveless latitude, I recently experienced the fashion Armageddon known as parenthood. Although my new boss is definitely my cutest (no offence to Fairfax CEO Greg Hywood), the job is demanding. Requirements include: performing *Twinkle Twinkle Little Star* on loop in a melodious yet somnolent fashion; a KPI that both employer and employee keep crying to a minimum; an unspoken expectation that, at least for the moment, workers forgo personal indulgences such as showering and teeth-cleaning.

All of this is to say that time was up for my velvet trousers and silk shirts. Post-mould, my wardrobe is almost entirely

machine washable and moisture-wicking. “Wick away!” I whisper to my clothes every night, before turning on the air conditioning and the dehumidifier. (Humidity, in case you didn't know, accentuates both pores and eccentricity.) But even places with palm trees have unofficial dress codes. And as anyone who has bought a tie-dye sarong in Bali and thought “This will really come in handy for supermarket runs at home” can attest, different locales call for subtle differences in outfit choices.

The Japanese dress for hot weather differently than we do. For one, they'd never dream of wearing thongs. The thousands of Americans who work on Okinawa's many military bases wear what Americans do the world over: shorts. Bonus points if they have cargo pockets, and bingo for a baseball cap. Locals, though, tend to cover up, in billowy blouses, ankle-skimming skirts and loose linen trousers.

*“My life had changed dramatically, and with it, my clothing requirements.”*

This could be to do with the Japanese virtue of modesty, known as *kenkyo*. Regardless of social position, Japanese people are expected to be humble, and assertiveness is more or less discouraged. (“The nail that sticks up gets hammered down” is a Japanese proverb which sums up this attitude.) It could be because – rather than a tan – smooth, porcelain skin is considered desirable here, making sun protection all the more important. Or perhaps it's simply that the Japanese have hit on the most elegant and practical solution to a problem – in this case, dressing for unrelenting heat. It wouldn't be the first time. ■

**EAT / DRINK**

THE CITY premises of treasured Italian cake shop Brunetti extends from Flinders Lane right through to Collins Street. Promenaders are happily waylaid by the celebration cakes, pastry counter, gelateria, heaving coffee station, piadina pitstop, monumental pizza oven and cicchetti bar. It's epic in every way and welcomes all-comers from early morning until late. Anytime is a good time for the panzerotto (\$4.90), a shortbread half-moon stuffed with citrus-spiked ricotta, perfect with a shot of espresso.

*Dani Valent*



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