



# Elitist Intentions

*Elite Havens has been leading the Bali luxury villa market for two decades. Stephanie Mee finds out why.*



On an island where there are nearly as many villas as people, choosing the perfect holiday abode can be tricky. Where does one even begin? Beachfront or botanical views? Antique grandeur or designer chic? And how do you know you're going to be in good hands when you arrive? Enter Elite Havens, Bali's most renowned and reputable luxury villa rental company offering the biggest portfolio of properties on the island and superlative services to boot.

Elite Havens was established nearly two decades ago when Bali was hitting its stride as a luxury holiday destination. At that time there were plenty of plush villas to choose from, but few places where you could find a diverse range of options all in one place, and even fewer portals that connected villa owners with renters. Elite Havens stepped up to the plate, and in 1998 they launched their website with an exclusive selection of fully-staffed villas.

From the beginning, Elite Havens focused on two main areas: outstanding villas that were a cut above the rest and exceptional customer service from start to finish. Their attention to detail paid off, and they soon gained a solid reputation in Bali and abroad.

CEO Jon Stonham says, "Originally there were 30 villas, and then we were up to about 100 until we partnered with Prestige Luxury Villas in 2013 and added another 23 villas, some of which hailed from the exclusive Seminyak enclave in Laksmana Estate on Jalan Oberoi.

"We were also looking to add some diversity to the portfolio as we had four villas in Phuket and saw this as a natural extension and a further opportunity for growth. Now our portfolio includes 19 villas, with another outstanding development of 10 villas about to be completed and join.

“And late last year we were thrilled to add eight stunning estates in the Maldives. These villas are definitely villas for the ‘rich and famous’ and truly add to our statement of the ‘the very best luxury villas in the world’s best tropical islands’.”

Now just five years on, Elite Havens boasts over 200 villas in Bali, Lombok, Thailand, Sri Lanka and the Maldives. Yet despite exponentially expanding their portfolio, they still stay true to the original mantra of ‘only the best’. Each villa is still hand selected and personally inspected by a team of villa specialists, and only a small percentage of villas they view make the grade.

Jon says, “We first look at the location, for example whether the villa is on the beachfront, a stone’s throw to the action, or has superb scenery in a tranquil rural setting. Then it’s the villa itself, the size, the grounds, the interior design, the suitability for families or maybe a party pad, the finishing and most importantly the attention to detail, the X factor that differentiates the villa from the masses on the market. Then we drill right down to the bed configuration, the linens, and even the quality of the knives and forks.”

Elite Havens also ensures that each villa is fully staffed with a villa manager, housekeepers, butlers, gardeners, security and an experienced cook who can cater to guest’s every need. They also have experienced guest services reps on the ground in each travel destination, as well as offices in Bali, Phuket, Manila and Singapore.

“We really are customer obsessed,” says Jon. “We consider it the elite experience from start to finish, so the journey begins when a guest finds us on the Internet or interacts with our team and books. Then we have a guest relations officer meet them at the airport, a concierge to look after them at the villa, a full complement of staff at the villa, and officers on the ground to take care of any problems that may arise.”

“We also have our own app, The Elite Experience, which can be downloaded before guests arrive. On it we’ve selected businesses in Bali that we think are first-class. There is no monetary involvement with the businesses, we’ve just chosen those we think are the best. Guests can find suggestions for everything from restaurants to chartering a helicopter to throwing a kid’s party and having the circus arrive.”

What many people might not know is that Elite Havens actually personally manages more than 60 per cent of their villas, and they are the exclusive and official representatives for the owners of all their villas. When they include a villa in their portfolio, they will market and distribute the villa on behalf of the owner, which means you may find the villa on a partner travel agent site, but actually all roads lead back to Elite Havens.

Jon says, “Because Elite Havens owns the relationship with the villa owners, the buck really does stop with us. Often people rent a villa and have no redress if something isn’t quite right. With us we are on the ground, and as the owners ‘partner’, we can fix any issue straight away. We also have the depth of product so we can move a guest to another villa if need be. We really do take everything personally to add that extra bit of luxury at every turn.”

With so much value added to the Elite Havens experience, it should come as no surprise that the company works with clientele from around the world including regions as diverse as Australia, Europe, China, Russia, Malaysia, Singapore and Hong Kong. Some seek spacious family villas, some seek secluded honeymoon hideaways, and yet others look for spectacular venues for weddings, retreats and corporate events. Yet what they all strive for is the luxury experience, which Elite Havens consistently delivers time after time.

[www.elitehavens.com](http://www.elitehavens.com)