

## The Australian/The Times UK – Selong Selo

Published February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2018



## World's hottest island homes for sale

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*Zil Pasyon, on the private isle of Felicite in the Seychelles.*

You have to look twice to spot what are probably the world's most architecturally breathtaking new island homes. Camouflaged by countless trees and hulking granite rocks, the villas of Zil Pasyon, on the private isle of Felicite, in the Seychelles, are invisible if you approach from the turquoise sea.

When you do finally glimpse them, you could be forgiven for thinking the Thunderbirds had given Tracy Island a seriously ritzy makeover. Their architect, Richard Hywel Evans, calls the buildings "stealth villas", his guiding strategy being that they shouldn't be seen from anywhere off the island. "I didn't want anyone

to see any sign of habitation,” he explains. “They needed to be camouflaged, so we built them from the same granite as the huge boulders that surround them. The houses appear from the rock and, in some cases, the rocks burst through the concrete floors.”



*Selong Selo resort overlooking Selong Belanak Bay in Indonesia.*

Every property features a glass-bottomed swimming pool cast into the concrete ceiling of the living area — an addition that’s designed to filter light into the dark granite houses. “A cool light fills the room, and whoever is swimming above becomes the focal point,” Hywel Evans says. Each villa is also designed to accentuate a unique view. “Although they are visually similar, the experience of being in one is completely different from the neighbour’s, whether it’s a mango tree emerging from the pool or a view of a waterfall or a rock that glows red at sunset.”

There are 30 villas in the island's new Six Senses hotel, plus 13 plots for private residences in the first phase, two of which have already been sold and built. The starting price is €4.86 million (\$7.7m) — but you'll need to act fast. "They can only build one or at most two a year," says Hywel Evans.

Don't despair if you miss out — there are plenty more top island homes for sale around the globe. Here's our pick of the best.

Fancy joining an elite club of private-island owners that includes Leonardo DiCaprio and the chief executive of Louis Vuitton, Bernard Arnault? You can — if you have \$US85m (\$115.2m) to spare. Little Pipe Cay, in the Bahamas, is one of the Exumas, an archipelago of 365 islands.



*The hard-to-get-to Leim Farm in Scotland.*

A vision of white sand and improbably azure sea, 100km southeast of Nassau, it's home to a colony of swimming pigs. The island was uninhabited until 15 years ago, when the current owners began building five houses for family and guest use, and created four private beaches and extensive dock frontage for boats. "It's one of the best real estate assets I have ever worked on — a true once-in-a-lifetime private island,"

says Edward de Mallet Morgan, head of Knight Frank’s Caribbean team. “It’s a place you will enjoy sharing with your friends. The only issue is that it will be difficult to get your guests to leave.”

When the young Australian investment-banking entrepreneurs James Kibble and Andrew Corkery arrived on the Indonesian island of Lombok for a surfing holiday nine years ago, they were so struck by the beauty of the place that they bought a 16ha hillside site overlooking Selong Belanak Bay. They planned to sell plots, but soon realised that the self-build approach wouldn’t wash with wealthy buyers — so they have gone the whole hog and created the Selong Selo resort, which largely attracts expats based in Hong Kong and Singapore. Off-plan villas start at \$US390,000 for two bedrooms, and facilities include a private beach club, pools, tennis courts and in-villa chefs. Lombok has been called “the next Bali” for years, but Kibble is adamant that its time has finally come. “Land is still a lot cheaper there than in Bali,” he says. “The improved infrastructure, an extension of the international airport and more private development throughout the island are all positive catalysts.”



*One & Only Kea Island in Greece.*

Idris Elba hid away here in Thailand while training to be a professional kickboxer, and the attractions on offer include circus skills classes in your villa. Samujana, on Koh Samui, is a high-end resort of 27 villas

with three to eight bedrooms. Built by businessman John Kinder, who persuaded friends to chip in and develop an entire estate, it has become a haven for restorative escape. Prices start at \$US999,000 and run up to \$5m.

Like any island home worth its salt, Leim Farm, on Gigha in the Inner Hebrides (population 160), takes some effort to get to. “It’s a three-hour drive from Glasgow to Tayinloan, where you catch the ferry, or there’s an airstrip near the house,” says Harry McCorkell at Strutt & Parker. He is marketing the six-bedroom house from £775,000 (\$1.4m).



*Samujana, on Koh Samui in Thailand, is a high-end resort of 27 villas*

The property is a stroll away from white sand beaches and comes with planning consent for two self-catering properties in its courtyard. “With panoramic sea views and a huge feeling of space and abundant wildlife, this is a place where you can truly get away from it all,” McCorkell says. Amanzoe, in the Peloponnese, paved the way for luxury branded residences in Greece; off-plan two-bedroom villas start at €3.2m.

Hot on its heels is One&Only Kea Island, a peaceful Cycladic isle that is loved by Athenian weekenders, but largely bypassed by the boat-hopping crowds. Beyond its raw, magnetic beauty, blissfully quiet beaches and reputation as a hikers' paradise, its big plus point is proximity to Athens: an hour away by ferry. Construction starts soon on a 65ha beachfront plot on the west coast, with 75 villas. Prices start at about €6m and the homes are due for completion from 2020.

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