

# Bali style

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"The World is a book, and those who do not travel read only a page".  
— St. Augustine.

THE  
HOLIDAY  
ISSUE

BLINK DESIGN:  
AN INTERVIEW WITH  
CLINT NAGATA

D'ROEMAH  
RESTAURANT:  
OWNER/CHEF LONNY  
TALKS INSPIRATION,  
DECOR AND LIFE

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This page:  
Jumeirah Dhevanafushi.

# BLINK *Design*

Recently, Bali Style’s Adam Fenton had the chance to catch up with BLINK designer Clint Nagata for the following fascinating chat.

Words by **Adam Fenton**  
Photography by **BLINK Design**

**Bali Style:** *To begin with, can you give our readers a general background on BLINK Design Group?*

**Clint Nagata:** After 14 years at WATG creating some of the world’s top resorts and hotels, I left to start BLINK Design Group in 2007. Today, with four offices, we are focused on creating bespoke hospitality designs centered around the genius loci of each place. Our projects are located in such exotic destinations as Istanbul, Bora Bora, and Bali and in urban centers like Seoul, Beijing, Shanghai, Kuala Lumpur and Jakarta.

**Bali Style:** *What is meant by an “integrated stay” in the fullest sense?*

**Clint Nagata:** Integrated stay would be more about the overall experience, drawing in elements of the local culture and authenticity to create a richer and more memorable stay.

**Bali Style:** *What sort of considerations are involved in the BLINK goal of “achieving the extraordinary”?*

**Clint Nagata:** If one were to look through our portfolio, one would immediately notice that the common thread woven through our

designs is that each project is a bespoke idea centered around the sense of place. We seek to find the uniqueness of each location while understanding the spirit of the hotel brand. The marriage of these two ideas is often essential and critical in creating a bespoke design experience exclusive to that particular hotel.

**Bali Style:** *Regarding the Six Senses Bali project in Uluwatu, could you give us some details regarding size, capacity, location, design concept?*

**Clint Nagata:** Six Senses Uluwatu is a 97 key resort perched at the edge 130 meters above the ocean. The resort has been designed to





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**These pages (left):** Hilton Goa Resort; **(bottom):** Regent Place Xian.



capture both the spirit of the site and the soul of the brand. Uluwatu is unlike most parts of Bali, due partly to its geographical feature of being on the bukit, or hill. The design of the resort tries to embed this in its concept. Some of the buildings feel as if they were carved out of the rock of the site, while still maintaining that sense of being Balinese through the careful selection of locally sourced materials and objects. By adding a few well-placed quirky surprises, the end result is distinctively Six Senses and uniquely Balinese.

**Bali Style:** Part of your goal in the project is to provide a distinct "sense of place". Can you expand on that idea for us?

**Clint Nagata:** I believe people intrinsically travel to different places to nurture and enrich their souls. Leaving the comforts of their home and experiencing a new and different

place is important. It is therefore essential that our designs manage to inherently capture the sense of place. While this may sound simple to do, what's difficult is to create a design experience that imaginatively embodies the uniqueness of the locale, yet in a bespoke way. In the heart of Nepal, we are creating an urban resort centered around tranquil water courtyards inspired by the deeply historical nature of the city. The resort is to be built out of a very common material in Nepal – brick – but, in a bespoke fashion, it will aim to be a modern day sanctuary.

**Bali Style:** How deeply concerned is BLINK with environmental awareness and responsibility in its projects? What specific efforts do you make in the interest of "green" concerns?

**Clint Nagata:** We are certainly interested in creating projects that are environmentally

friendly. On all projects, materials are sourced with the belief that the design should feel as if it has grown out of the very ground it sits on. We wouldn't want to see Italian marble on a tropical resort in Southeast Asia. On our project with Alila, in the Philippines, the brick for the facade will be made out of the actual earth from the site. You can't get much more green than that.

**Bali Style:** You mention that you source materials locally as far as possible. Tell us a little more about this insofar as it affects design decisions and ultimate design goals. What are your favourite materials to work with?

**Clint Nagata:** We intrinsically create our concepts around the notion that the design must be one with the site. I'm not fascinated with working with expensive materials if they do not relate to the location or can't help to tell a story about the location or the client.





**Clint Nagata:** Travel and see the world.

**Bali Style:** Lastly, please take as much space as you'd like to share with our readers what you would most like them to know about BLINK and your current design projects.

**Clint Nagata:** We've been fortunate to have such a geographical range of project locations which takes the notion of traveling to the job site to the next level. In Bora Bora, we are working on transforming the Hilton into a tropical paradise. We are collaborating with Alila on several projects, including a resort in Salalah and in Calabuena in the Philippines. On an island off of Istanbul, we're working on a 68 key gem. Finally, we are working on the exclusive Rosewood Clearwater Bay Resort and Residences. [www.blinkdg.com](http://www.blinkdg.com)

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These pages (top left): Jumeirah Dhevanafushi; (top right): Regent Phuket Cape Panwa Resort.

I find it much more interesting to create designs using very common materials, but in a bespoke way. Cebu is renowned around the world for creating some of the best synthetic rattan. For our project there we decided to use synthetic rattan for screens on the outside of the building. This direction helps to tell a story and create a bespoke sense of place.

**Bali Style:** The Regent Sanur (now the Fairmont) is one of our favourite Bali hotels. The design has a kind of historical grandeur to it, reminiscent of Jakarta's peerless Dharmawangsa Hotel. Can you tell us more about the inspiration and concept behind that project?

**Clint Nagata:** For Regent Sanur, we sought to create a modern Balinese sanctum that captures the essence of being in Bali through the creation of space and the use of materials. The spa is hidden below a central water garden, which is a major design feature of the resort. The guest rooms are sanctuaries - bath, bed and living each with a

unique statement of its own.

**Bali Style:** We see you recently secured the design brief for the Regent Jakarta. How would you compare the designs of the Regent Sanur and Regent Jakarta (or, for that matter, with the Regent Phuket)?

**Clint Nagata:** The only thing the designs of these three hotels have in common is luxury. Each property is a bespoke collaboration inspired by the owner and the location. We have managed to create different experiences in each location, while capturing both the essence of the brand and the unique and intrinsic qualities of the site. For Regent Jakarta, the design drew on the cultural identity of Jakarta and over 400 years of post-colonial ethnic integration of the city's own Betawi culture with the Javanese, Balinese, Dutch and Chinese cultures.

**Bali Style:** What advice would you give to young Indonesian designers who are trying to make a career from interior design?

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