

WHAT'S NEWS.

FINAL DESTINATION

The Potato Head hospitality group debuts its latest addition in Bali, designed by the Rem Koolhaas-led firm OMA.

BY JAY CHESHES

SUITE LIFE

One of the hotel rooms in Desa Potato Head's new Creative Centre, featuring chairs made of recycled materials, designed by Max Lamb in collaboration with Balinese craftsmen.

A 168-ROOM BEACHFRONT hotel opening in Bali next month floats above the landscape, propped about 24 feet above the ground at one end, along the island's south coast. The new building, designed by Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas's OMA studio, is the latest piece of the Desa Potato Head complex—37-year-old entrepreneur Ronald Akili's long-gestating vision for a "creative village" in the heart of Seminyak.

The seven-acre compound includes the popular Potato Head Beach Club, which opened in 2010, and the Katamama Suites hotel, launched six years later, both designed by Indonesian architect Andra Matin. Together with OMA's Creative Centre, as the new hotel's building is known, they constitute the flagship of Akili's Potato Head family, with seven bars and seven restaurants spread across the site. The hospitality brand also runs restaurants and bars in Hong Kong, Singapore and Jakarta.

The Potato Head Beach Club's towering coliseum facade became an instant icon from the time the property opened. In high season, Akili says, it now draws 3,000 people a day, clamoring for kombucha cocktails and live shows from artists like Grace Jones and Peggy Gou. Even with the OMA building's additional rooms, overnight guests will continue to be the minority in the "creative village." The architects focused on making the new public spaces a priority. "In a typical resort you are more or less shielded from the outside world," says David Gianotten, managing partner at OMA and the lead on the project. "We wanted to open the grounds to anybody."

The new building's central courtyard will be home to a rotating program of performances, lectures and art installations. Graffiti artist Futura plans to turn ocean plastic into an enormous sculpture. A new subterranean nightclub will be overseen by DJ Harvey. On the roof of the new building, Akili and OMA plan to install a sustainability camp for kids, a music school, a recording studio and exhibition spaces.

Akili, a Jakarta native, grew up in a world of travel and art. His father, Rudy, who made a fortune in the travel industry, retired to pass on the business to Ronald's brother, Anthony, and to focus on his Indonesian art collection. He's built one of the country's largest troves of contemporary work, now housed in the family's Akili Museum of Art in Jakarta. Ronald launched the Ark Galerie, his own contemporary art space, at the age of 26. Then came his first real estate venture, a high-end housing development in Jakarta, designed by some of the country's top architects. In 2009, Potato Head, his debut restaurant, was built for his wife, Sandra Juwita Budiman-Akili, then an aspiring chef. "Back then in Jakarta, all the restaurants had fancy names," he says. "We wanted to create something different. We thought if we name it Potato Head everyone will turn around and ask why. Which is exactly what happened." The Potato Head Beach Club went up a year later in Bali (where Akili, his wife and their four children eventually relocated). Akili has signed

Japanese architect Kengo Kuma to his next project, Desa Potato Head Tabanan, an eco-retreat with modular huts in the jungle, slated to open up the coast late next year. And he's in the early planning stages for a Potato Head outpost in downtown Los Angeles.

Akili's properties have an increasingly sustainable agenda. In Bali that's meant recycling 95 percent of the complex's waste. The new OMA building is furnished with bespoke pieces made locally from recycled materials. Faye Toogood combined scrap from local weavers to create pillows and throws. "They've been an amazing client to work with," she says, "so forward thinking in terms of a beach hotel."

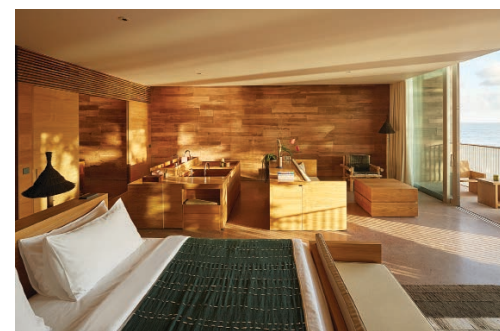
Room amenities set the tone after check-in. Guests are supplied with a "zero-waste" kit featuring a water bottle, bamboo toothbrush and sunscreen container that's refillable in the hotel's Circle store. "You don't need to bring anything to Bali," says Akili. "Just travel as light as you can."

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—DAVID GIANOTTEN



LOCAL FLAVOR
Bubur Sumsum from the complex's new restaurant, Tanaman; Potato Head founder Ronald Akili; one of the new hotel's 168 rooms with bespoke pieces, including Faye Toogood-designed pillows and throws.



FUZZY LOGIC

As a lining, exterior or accent, shearling adds a soft touch to fall's totes and purses.

For details see Sources, page 102.