

Soul curry to recharge flat batteries in Bali

Georgina Bond

Janine Hall's leap from the corporate ladder to the beach life in Bali has created opportunity for other stressed out female executives to do the same.

The New Zealander and former head of marketing for The Warehouse has recently opened the doors of her surf and yoga retreat less than 200m from the beach in Seminyak.

Surf Haven Bali offers guests a week of yoga sessions, surf lessons, healthy meals and spa treatments while staying in a luxury villa with a personal butler.

In her customers Ms Hall sees a reflection of herself who, at 36, felt burnt out and in need of a place to unwind and rejuvenate.

"They're busy, classic type-A personalities climbing the corporate ladder.

"While they're interested in yoga and fitness, their jobs are so demanding they don't get the time to focus on their well being. They want to dedicate a week to themselves to recharge the batteries."

After numerous holidays in Bali, Ms Hall returned there last year to set up the retreat where women can take time out for themselves, meet other like-minded women from all over the world and have an adventure.

Although surf camps are popular in Bali, Surf Haven has found a niche with the surf, yoga, spa and nutrition combination.

Meals from whole-foods and local produce are designed by Australian nutritionist and award-winning restaurateur Samantha Gowing and are tailored to the energy needs of guests: Carb-heavy in the morning and protein-rich at night.

The week-long retreats are limited to eight women at a time to ensure the offering remains personalised. Staff make an effort to find out the musical tastes of each guest and what time they want to wake up to ensure they can



YOGA ON THE BEACH: Surf Haven Bali has carved itself a niche for a specific market segment

tailor the experience accordingly.

Surf Haven has run four retreats so far this year, with most guests coming from the US.

Although the target age group is 25-45, Ms Hall has taken a booking from a 70-year old and is also finding a strong interest from mothers and daughters.

The \$US1795 price tag is all inclusive and provides for the five-star villa, 24-hour butler, personal chef, daily yoga lessons, three-hours of spa treatments, 15-hours of surf instruction, airport transfers and a full-day tour of the island.

Surfing lessons provide plenty of one-on-one tuition and cater for all levels of experience, using video recording to analyse technique.

Ms Hall has had a satisfying career that has spanned marketing roles at IBM, Air New Zealand, Selfridges, David Jones and UK retailer Arcadia Group that owns Top Shop.

But a year off to explore the world as a 30-year-old provided a turning-point when she rediscovered her love for water-based activities and the beachy, bohemian lifestyle she now embraces.

"It wasn't until I had a year off that I

realised how happy the water made me.

"I've also been surprised to discover success isn't measured by job title but by doing the things you're passionate about and love."

Ms Hall has funded the retreat herself, drawing on her strong marketing background to establish the brand.

"I focused on my prime target audience and ran focus groups with friends to develop the brand so when I did outlay the money I knew it wasn't a shot in the dark."

Although she initially considered basing the retreat in Brazil, Bali won out with all the necessary elements.

"The Balinese really make this place. They're warm-hearted and open and really create the experience for travellers."

Next year she has plans to expand the offering to include retreats for couples.

She will also look at replicating Surf Haven in other countries further down the track.

Surf Haven Bali donates 5% of all profit to a local animal welfare association and a Balinese orphanage.

www.surf-haven-spa-retreats