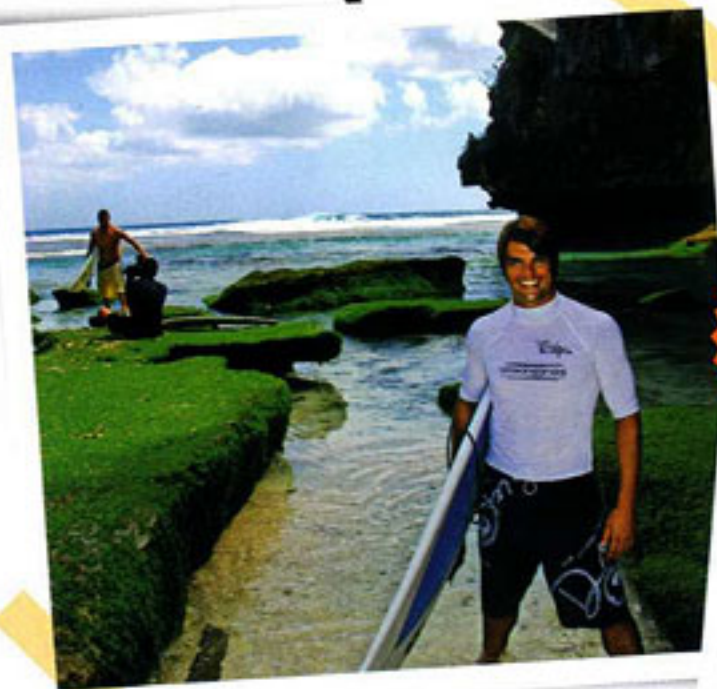


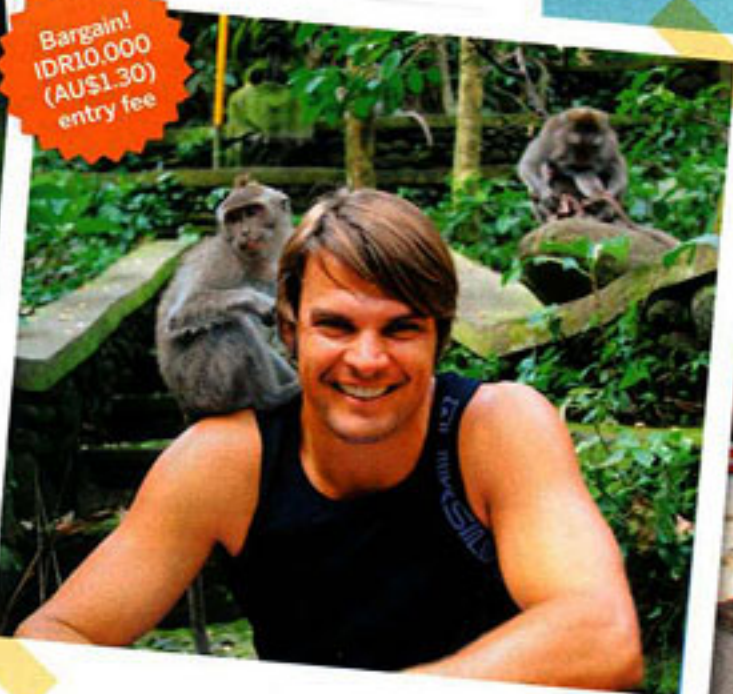
BALI ON MY MIND



We find out why adventurer and television personality Peter Wells travels all over the globe, but still calls Bali his second home



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Peter Wells, co-presenter of Channel Seven's *Sydney Weekender* show, is an avid traveller and adventurer, having climbed some of the world's highest mountains. We dip into his photo album from a recent visit to Bali to ask him about his enduring love affair with the island.

Pete, this is your eighth trip to Bali — what is it that keeps you coming back?
Bali is one of those places I always know I'm going to enjoy. I've always said it's a place where you can't lose: either you're paddling into clean, world-class barrel waves, or it's flat and you slow down to Bali tempo. Then you can buy arts and crafts, get into a long chat with a shop owner, or go for a run in the early arvo before enjoying a beer with some friends. It's my second home.

What do you like best?
The Balinese. They are beautiful people. You feel welcome in Bali. I normally hire a jeep to get around (you quickly learn how to drive like an Indonesian — horn-style). Bali is small enough to get around and see lots, but big enough to get lost in if you want to. I once got

lost on the way to Ubud. I found myself on narrow roads surrounded by forest and the occasional bungalow, but I loved it all. I saw areas of Bali I hadn't seen before and could never take anyone back to even if I tried.

So how does the perfect Bali day go?
If I'm jeep-less, my early morning surf starts by walking out onto 'Double Six' beach at Seminyak (just up from Kuta) with my board under my arm and within a minute or two a motorbike guy will offer a ride to where the surf is best. Finish your surf off (which has probably been one of your best sessions all year), flop into a seat at a *warung* (outdoor restaurant) or café, and put away scrambled eggs and a strong Bali coffee. I love those things — they really wake you up.

And if you've got the jeep — and you don't get lost?

It's all about exploring. I once saw stacks of seaweed that'd been laid out to dry near Nusa Dua, 35 minutes' drive from Kuta. So I tried out my Bahasa language skills with this nice couple working on their little farm on the beach. They get a substance from it that is used in cosmetics, as well as cooking.
Or I go up to Ubud, 70 minutes' drive north, for the markets to add to the homeware collection — it's a lot of fun bargaining — or the Monkey Forest. That last one's a classic. It's definitely worth a visit for the whole family, but hold on to your stuff! I hadn't even stepped through the gates when I saw a monkey snatch a kid's drink bottle and drop it on top of a nearby roof. I thought I was safe far



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FROM LEFT:
Peter heads out to Uluwatu for world-class surfing; Ubud's Monkey Forest is jumping with monkeys; enjoy a bargain beachside massage



Bali is more tourist-savvy in the best way, it's become even more chilled; it's definitely not so basic now.

away from it, but the hairy little monkey still got my bananas.

Still, probably my favourite is Uluwatu, 20+ minutes' drive south of Kuta — for surfing awesome long, left-hand barrel waves. Some of my best surfs in Bali have been out at "Uluwatu". This place can quickly become scary as the surf gets bigger. It's so powerful and only experienced surfers should brave these waves. In 2004, I got thrown on the reef and it ripped my back up. It's a special place to visit, though. You dump your stuff in one of the many warungs and take the path to a cave, which at the right time of the day has this green glow about it. There's also food, massages, ding repairs, CDs and T-shirts all on offer. It's a must-do on a trip to Bali, surfer or non-surfer.

Speaking of food, how's the eating?

These days in Bali, you can go for a AU\$3 meal in Kuta or a AU\$70 meal. Check out the cocktails at La Lucciola. (This is the AU\$70 place.) These are cocktails to die for and it's right on Kerobokan Beach. It's where you take your mum or your girlfriend at least once on a trip to Bali. Impressive!

How do you think things have changed over the years?

I headed over to Bali for the first time in 1992, surfing around the Indonesian islands with the boys. It was my first time overseas. Just two weeks away to somewhere really exotic at the time, enjoying the most incredible surf in

the world — there was no way I was missing it. Since then, it's become better and better. It's more tourist-savvy in the best way; a long way from the time we were all just knockabout blokes who got massages without bargaining beforehand and had to argue our way out of the IDR100,000 bill (AU\$13)! I just feel like the place has softened, become even more chilled out.

Back then it was plastic chairs and ordering off a chalkboard. Though maybe it's just because I've just started travelling there with girls — either way, Bali's definitely not so basic now! ★

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