

Kingdom of fruits

Make jam and wine in Yamanashi

C2

\$45,000 art award

Michael Lee vies for one of region's richest prizes

C10

F1 concerts

A formula that works

C12

You can rent a private island for as little as \$1,400 a day.
HUANG HUIFEN reports. C4&5

Your personal PARADISE

DESIGN: SALLY LAM PHOTOS: ARIARA, RAJ NADARAJAN, TED CHEN, ACTION IMAGES

Ariara Island, in northern Palawan in the Philippines, features 600m of white sandy beach and eight villas and suites for up to 17 guests.

life!travel

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Isle of mine

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Hiring your own private paradise in an island getaway complete with staff in waiting is not just for the super-rich

Picture this: no tourists, no traffic, no noise, and no one to fight for space on the beach with. Just you, a few of your closest friends, and an entire island all to yourself.

Not to mention your own dedicated team of service staff waiting on you to serve snacks and cocktails, organise a snorkelling expedition, or perhaps set off fireworks for a special occasion.

The best part? It does not have to cost an arm and a leg.

Lifted from at least five private islands in the region that can be rented out for \$1,400 to \$12,000 a day, ranging in size from 1ha to more than 100ha, these islands can accommodate between eight and 42 people. This works out to between \$94 and \$300 a person.

For most of the islands, the cost includes accommodation, meals, transport to the island and most activities.

Depending on which island you go to, accommodation ranges from luxurious traditional Japanese jogjos in traditional Japanese style, to distinctive resort design to driftwood huts located right at the edge of the sea.

They are equipped with modern amenities such as electricity and fresh water, but most do not have air-conditioning as they are designed with an open concept for a family breeze.

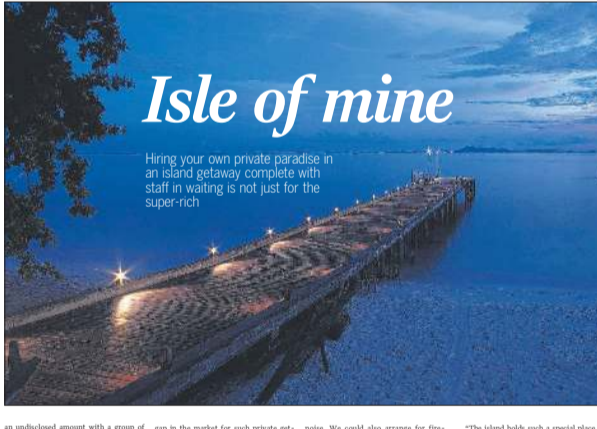
The lure of having their own private retreat is proving popular among Singaporeans and expatriates, who rent islands for family reunions, milestone birthdays and weddings.

Mr Andy Lim, a co-owner of Nikoi Island, a 15ha private island off the east coast of Bantam, says that more Singaporeans started to rent the island two years ago, usually for weddings in 2007.

The island, developed in 2007, has 15 beachfront houses and can accommodate up to 42 people in total. The houses are also available for individual bookings where the island is not booked by an entire group.

"Singaporeans now make up 50 per cent of the clients who rent my island, while the rest are made up of expatriates based in Asia or from Europe, North America and Australia," says the Australian expatriate who quit his job as a banker in 2009 to focus on his private island business.

He bought the 15ha island in 2004 for



an undisclosed amount with a group of expatriates in Singapore because he was disappointed with the holiday options in Bantam, which were either too shabby or too expensive.

Other island owners such as British property developer Charles McCulloch, 55, saw the opportunity to turn a deserted island in the Calamian Islands in the Philippines into an exclusive destination for adventure travellers such as himself.

The island's 70-strong staff look out for the safety of guests, and also provide a backup of fireworks.

Mr Yang says, "Because we had the whole island to ourselves, we could party late into the night without fearing that other people would complain about the

noise. We could also arrange for fireworks. All this made my wedding a very special experience."

In time, renter Gerard Yeo, 31, and housewife Yang Wenhao, 30, booked Nikoi Island for the weekend for their wedding celebrations. They were joined by 40 guests, who watched them say their "I do" on the beach at sunset, and parted late into the night around a campfire, against a backdrop of fireworks.

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A splash of fun

Where: Nikoi Island, 15-hectare off the east coast of Bantam

What: With 600m of white sandy beach, extensive reefs and unspoiled nature, this island in the Calamian Islands is a dream paradise for owners. British property developer Charles McCulloch, 55, was buying over the Philippines on a business trip in 2004 and was intrigued by the number of seemingly deserted islands there. He thought they would be perfect locations to create exclusive retreats for those in search of their own private island.

He appointed renowned Filipino architect Jorge Yulo to design the island's eight contemporary-styled villas and suites, which opened this year. The resort can take up to 17 guests.

The beachfront villas offer unobscured views of the sea and the surrounding



day. So the menu can range from barbecue to Western fare such as pasta salad.

Nature lovers can take a 40-minute kayaking trip for longer trips that last more than a day. Island-hopping trips include a visit to an abandoned 17th-century Spanish fort in Linapacan Island, located a

50m away from the island.

You can also go island-hopping on Ariara's speedboat or the 30m trimaran karenyoy for longer trips that last more than a day. Island-hopping trips include a visit to an abandoned 17th-century Spanish fort in Linapacan Island, located a

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Ideal for island hoppers

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Castaway fantasy

Where: Pulau Juyo, Indonesian Riau Archipelago

What: Pulau Juyo, three hours away from Singapore, is a luxurious private island resort with white sandy beaches and pristine water.

There is enough accommodation for up to 35 people.

There are six beachfront houses which have double beds and attached bathrooms. The most luxurious accommodation are the two Javanese jogjos which were dismantled and transported from East Java to the island, where they were reassembled.

Each jogjo has a plush four-poster double-bed, living room, dining table and terrace with sunbathers.

Aside from the beach, there is a 25m-long and 4m-deep pool.

There are 20 staff on the island, including a manager, housekeeping and service staff, maids and cooks.

The kitchen staff prepare a spread of grilled seafood, wine, cocktails, smoothies and ice cream every day.

Guests can choose to dine in a main pool pavilion (above), or tables by the beach or kayaking.

There are also instructors who conduct water activities such as snorkelling.

The surrounding waters boast beautiful coral systems and marine creatures such as triggerfishes and stingrays. Snorkelling is a must.

If you get bored on the island, you can charter a 40m-long yacht, the Hanyu, at an extra cost to go island-hopping to nearby islands such as Pulau Banyak. It has a crew of four members. The Pulau Juyo staff can prepare a picnic basket for your trip.

The island shares the same name as Pulau Banyak, located 11km away. The owner, a Hong Kong-based sales and ship owner who declined to be named, discovered Pulau Juyo in 2009 and started developing it in the same year.

The project was completed in August. The resort was opened for bookings in June.

Getting there: Take a 17-hour ferry ride from Tanah Merah Ferry Terminal in Tanjung Pinang, Batam, from there, the resort will arrange for a car to take you to Singapur Jetty, a 45-minute car ride away. Take a 30-minute speedboat ride to Pulau Juyo.

Price: From \$500 a person a night for a 45-minute car ride to Singapur Jetty, an additional adult will be charged from \$100 a night. The price includes full use of the island, meals, transport from Singapur Jetty to Pulau Juyo, snorkelling and kayaking.

To book: Go to www.pulau-juyo.com or e-mail deb@pulau-juyo.com



Where: Nikoi Island which is located just off Bantam in Sumatra, Indonesia

PHOTO: NIKOI ISLAND

Where: Pulau Juyo, Indonesian Riau Archipelago

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Jewel in the rough

Where: Isle Des Indes, Pulau Seribu, Java Sea

What: Once a deserted island in a state of abandonment, the Isle Des Indes is now a hidden gem among the hundreds of islands in Pulau Seribu, a luxurious Indonesian archipelago. The island is now a hidden gem among the hundreds of islands in Pulau Seribu, a luxurious Indonesian archipelago. The island is now a hidden gem among the hundreds of islands in Pulau Seribu, a luxurious Indonesian archipelago.

Measuring less than a hectare, the island houses three villas - a luxurious Japanese jogjo, a simple Balinese lumbung which is a traditional house used to store rice, and a Malay-style guesthouse raised on stilts. Meals comprise a mix of Western and Indonesian cuisine, including barbecued seafood.

The island was developed as a private retreat by Indonesian David Salim, 67, a former chief executive officer of an oil drilling services company in Indonesia, more than 20 years ago.

He decided to open it up for rental last month, at the suggestion of a friend.

Visitors to the island can do a range of water sports from water skiing and kayaking to snorkelling. They can also go island-hopping onboard the Raden Ma, an 18m-long vintage English motor sailing yacht, to islands such as Pulau Banyak, Kotak, and Putri, where they can snorkel or dive to see sea turtles, coral, and sometimes dolphins.

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Isle Des Indes' accommodation offer ranges from a luxurious jogjo to a simpler Balinese lumbung (above). PHOTO: ISLE DES INDES

Be at one with nature

Where: Tiger Islands Village & Eco Resort, Pulau Banyak, Indonesia

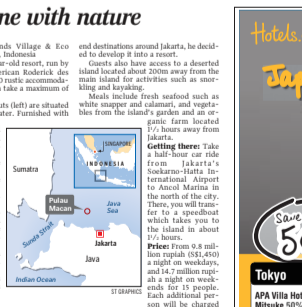
What: The three-year-old resort, run by Indonesian-born American Rodrick de Tombe, 32, features 10 rock accommodations, and can take a maximum of 24 people.

Open driftwood huts (left) are situated at the edge of the water. Furnished with double beds, mosquito nets, driftwood furniture, and roll-down bamboo shades for privacy, these huts offer the best views, while the smaller ones have a shared bathroom.

There are also more structured cottages and villas, including two bungalows raised on stilts, each with two bedrooms, a shared bathroom, and three cabins and a shared bathroom.

The island, which is tended by 14 staff, features eco-friendly features such as the use of solar panels and wind turbines to generate electricity.

Mr de Tombe was conducting eco-adventure trips around Indonesia in 2008, when he discovered the 10ha island located off the north-western coast of Java. Being a local eco-friendly or rustic work-



end destinations around Jakarta, he decided to develop it into a resort.

Guests also have access to a deserted island, four miles away from the main island for activities such as snorkelling and kayaking.

Meals include fresh seafood such as white snapper and calamari, and vegetables from the island's green and organic farm located near Jakarta.

Getting there: Take a half-hour car ride from Jakarta to Singapur Jetty (S\$2,400), a night on weekdays, and 1.7 million rupiah a night on weekends.

Price: From US\$295 (S\$385) a person a night for a group of up to 17 people, and includes exclusive use of the speedboat, staff, meals, all watersports equipment including the trimaran and fishing equipment, and two dives a week with PADI dive instructors. Guests will have to pay for the fuel used for the island-hopping and diving trips.

To book: E-mail island@tigerislands.com or call Lightfoot Travel, Ariara's agent in Singapore, on 6436-4901, or to www.ariaraisland.com for more information.

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