



Shinta Mani Angkor

} Bensley Collection,
} Siem Reap

A stylish stay in the heart of Siem Reap, gateway to the ancient temples of Angkor Wat.

By Katrina Holden



My personal Bensley Butler Sopheak is showing me to my pool villa – one of 10 private, 156-square-metre, two-level accommodations. It opened in December 2017 at Shinta Mani Angkor: The Bensley Collection, created by renowned hotel designer Bill Bensley.

The villas are an extension of the 62-room Shinta Mani Shack hotel in the leafy French Quarter of Siem Reap, located between The Royal Gardens and the Old Market Area, and a 15-minute ride from the temples of Angkor Wat.

To reach the villa, we walk over pebble stones and past imposing white contemporary wall motifs reflective of traditional Khmer designs to arrive at the villa's frangipani-framed entrance.

Inside, geometric black-and-white tiling with a touch of art deco paves the poolside and outdoor spaces; it also lines the lengthy nine-metre

lap pool. Above the pool, three-dimensional murals have been carved to represent the folds of Jayavarman's robe – a revered Khmer king. An outdoor seating area appears perfect for enjoying a drink.

A gigantic bed stands proud in the bedroom, decorated with splashes of colour and whimsy set against the striped black-and-gold floors, including a vintage telephone, yellow cushions and two pink flamingos atop each bedside bamboo tower. The 'bedhead'

is a glass window that offers a backdrop of lush, green plants in the villa's atrium. A settee overlooks the pool with enormous floor-to-ceiling glass doors that open, allowing you to splash into the pool below directly from the bedroom.

Through a landscaped walkway with a trickling water feature, guests reach the stunning boudoir area. The walk-in wardrobe is massive, with ample room for luggage and clothing. Above a double vanity, circular wicker mirrors

dangle from the roof above a vase of fresh pink lotus flowers. The marble-lined shower is spacious, and even the shower rose is ornate in shape. While one may expect a side shower wall, the space is completely open to a private courtyard where a freestanding bathtub sits among the ferns, providing an oasis for relaxation.

A wander upstairs reveals an outdoor entertaining area with bar and private daybed where you can indulge in a number of professionally delivered spa treatments or Khmer massage, instead of visiting the main spa in the neighbouring hotel facility. I can just imagine the parties this space has hosted, overlooking another Bensley quirk – a large sign that reads 'Dance first, think later'.

There are good vibes here. Prices at *Shinta Mani Angkor, Bensley Collection* start from US\$815 (about A\$1142) per night. 📍 shintamani.com/angkor/

