

BALI / LIFE ON THE ISLAND

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SPA SCHOOL TO THE WORLD

[Spa](#) | Written By, Jill Gocher | September 24th, 2016

Have you ever wondered where your smiling spa therapist has learned her, or more rarely, his skills? The spa business has moved upmarket and is booming like never before. It has become a worldwide phenomenon. The business has turned nothing short of professional as training is needed and skilled therapists are always in demand. Not only do they need to know and master different massage techniques, but also a degree of English and how to treat their clients, to make them feel comfortable, relaxed in their hands. In the old days, girls would learn from their mothers, or grandmothers, but as everyone gets busy, and girls go to work rather than staying in the home, new teachers and more varied techniques are needed. Healing is one side, relaxation the other.



So where do you find the teachers? Several schools operate in Bali and three operate at international standards with full accreditation. Graduates from these schools can be assured of getting a job anywhere.

We went to visit Bali Bisa International Spa Academy, one of Bali's best schools with full international accreditations and numerous awards.

Started by British woman Penny Ellis in 2004, the school has been through its ups and downs, but now, business is booming. Her students come from Bali and further afield from other parts of Indonesia, from Russia, the UK, in fact from any country

where a student feels that they would like to learn massage or health and beauty therapy in the spa industry.

This professional industry has good rewards for good therapists. Balinese and Indonesian therapists are in big demand, due to their gentle manner and pleasant nature. So investing in a course is like buying a ticket to the future.

Bali Bisa has full accreditations from both the international CIBTAC and VICT and has been awarded their top awards on several occasions.

The Academy offers more than 20 massage courses, plus scrubs, wraps, waxing, manicures, pedicures and hair cream baths, giving a decent grounding in most aspects of the spa and wellness industry. Students can come to the centre and discuss their needs and discover which therapies are best for them to study.

While Swedish massage is well-accepted world wide, Balinese and Javanese techniques are less well known, although they are gaining ground. They come with an interesting history. These massage techniques and bodywork did not just spring up in some remote village, they are the evolution of various techniques that have come to the islands over the centuries.

During the 6th to 8th Century AD Hinduism and Buddhism came to the archipelago by way of holy seekers, as well as coastal traders from India and even China. They travelled to the famed Spice Islands in search of riches and conversions. The Indian Hindus brought Hinduism and their Ayurvedic influence, massage techniques and a vast knowledge of healing spices, oils and herbs which, when mixed with the already existing local knowledge created a huge knowledge base of healing.

From China came techniques of acupressure, and other techniques that became part of Java's great healing traditions. Many beauty and anti-ageing techniques were developed secretly in the royal courts of Java, especially for the queens and princesses of the royal courts of Solo and Yogyakarta. These secrets were jealously guarded and only the most privileged were able to take advantage.



Later in the 15 Century when the Majapahit Kingdom was compromised by Islam, the royal courts, the courtiers, artists and artisans, priests fled to Bali, bringing their culture, their skills and knowledge along with them.

With this rich cultural background and knowledge, along with modern infusions of other skills, it is no wonder that Balinese and Indonesian therapists are in such great demand, worldwide.

What is being offered now, is a fusion of ancient Asian techniques with Swedish massage morphed with relaxation focused techniques – so that instead of being used purely for healing, it can be as simple as a feel good massage. At the same time, Bali's ancient healing massage techniques, used by healers and balians, can still be found around the island. These are generally painful, but effective but need to be sought out privately.

Bali Bisa has brought together myriad techniques to make sure their therapists are the best. Their international accreditation ensures their graduates will be welcome within the spa industry, wherever they want to work.

The academy is located in Sanur and courses are ongoing.

Original Article : <http://nowbali.co.id/spa-school-world/>