



**THE SEX EXPERT'S HOLIDAY**






WH sex expert  
Jacqueline Hellyer visits  
a Tantric retreat in Bali



After a long time in the air and held up on the tarmac, I'm dropped off outside the bougainvillea-covered walls of Villa Gaia in the hills of Ubud. I'm exhausted, dishevelled, and in dire need of a bath. I'm here for a two-week Tantric retreat led by Shantam Nityama (aka Tantric Mongoose). Flower-covered statues stand guard at heavy wooden doors. With a little trepidation I open the doors and walk down a covered path, edged in tropical lushness, and emerge to the most wondrous sight of a candlelit entrance to an imposing wooden building. Several dozen people are lounging around on cushions and low-slung armchairs, dressed in colourful free-flowing clothes. In my bedraggled state I'm feeling way out of place.

I'm taken to my accommodation, which overlooks rice paddies and a bamboo grove. I discard my urban filth, shower and change into a loose sundress. Ah, now I feel at home.

I return to the main venue, where Mongoose is engrossed in discussion. It's quite hypnotic being in this beautiful place, snuggled between people I don't yet know, listening to his slow resonant tones. I've got to know the Mongoose well after many interesting Skype sessions, involving conversation and the exchange of Tantric energy. This is the first time we've met in



person. He's delightful – spiritual, yet playfully light-hearted. "Divorcing sex from spirituality is insane!" he declares. I agree. So starts a truly wonderful, languid time, with 50 people from around the world. The first week is pretty free and we have time to sleep in and sightsee. A cute scooter driver becomes my unofficial guide, taking me on scenic drives to temples and markets. He even does some bargaining for me.

### SHARING ENERGIES

The second week is more intense. All day we meditate and visualise energy flows, working alone, in pairs and groups. There's no actual sex, there's no need for it. We massage part of someone's body ▶

with complete focus, then do it without attention for comparison. We stand in lines, seeing if we can sense emotion being radiated. And my favourite experience of all: we form two circles, the men on the inside and the women on the outside. In pairs we embrace in a Tantric hug, with the men holding the space so the women can go into an orgasmic wave, then move on to the next person. After 20 of these embraces and an hour-long orgasm, I'm blissed out (I'm experienced in this sort of energy work).

Finally I'm able to fully let go. Assisted by the gentleness of the participants, plus all the hugs, smiles, laidback conversations, skinny dipping, even tears, I can sense myself softening, and start to feel my inner strength shine through.

I'm also coming to realise how much pain men carry with them. Mongoose's body-work sessions can be heard throughout the day – people cry out as they clear their energy. One man on the table starts groaning, then roaring with emotional pain. I find it both confronting and illuminating.

The final day arrives and I bid farewell to my companions with a last round of long hugs. I'm taking the bliss back to Oz.

*Hellyer stayed at Villa Gaia in Ubud (villagaiaabali.com) and participated in a Tantric workshop by Tantric Mongoose (nityama.com).*

## Tantra in your bedroom

**1. BE FULLY PRESENT** "Within yourself and with your partner for peak sexual response. Become aware of what you can smell, feel, see and taste," says Hellyer.

**2. TRY DOING LESS TO FEEL MORE** "The number one secret to good sex is to surrender – to completely relax into your body and let go of the stuff in your head."

**3. SEX IS SO MUCH MORE THAN A GENITAL ENCOUNTER** "You can have excruciatingly gorgeous sensations without your genitals being involved at all. Focus on that."