



ENTREPRENEUR

HUBUD

UBUD, BALI



WORDS & IMAGES: JOE MORTIMER





ENTREPRENEUR

Peter Wall doesn't drink coffee. If he did, things might have been very different for the entrepreneurs, digital nomads and location-independent professionals who call Bali home.

Wall is one of the co-founders of Hubud, the first co-working space in the central Balinese town of Ubud. Surrounded by rice paddies and just a few steps from the Sacred Monkey Forest and its simian population, it's hard to picture a more idyllic workspace than the traditional bamboo building, which is packed even at 11.45 on a Monday morning.

Wall arrived in Bali with his wife and sons in 2010, after a decade with CBC Television in Canada. He worked for several years as a freelance journalist and videographer, before teaming up with another Canadian and a Brit to create a co-working space.

"I don't like working in isolation and I'm not a coffee drinker. I don't hang out at cafes and I don't find they're great areas to work in. So we decided to create something like a club, where we would want to hang out. We thought it would be mostly people like us, who had been living here for a year or two," Wall explains.

After a few months hunting for a location, they found the present address on Monkey Forest Road, formerly an unused showroom for a local construction company. With a few design tweaks and

the addition of a meeting room and café, Hubud was born in March 2013, with 25 founding members, whose membership fees supplemented the initial start-up investment from Wall and his co-founders.

"When I tell people I'm running a co-working space in Bali, the first thing they say is, 'What's a co-working space?' and the second thing they say is, 'Why am I not working there?'" laughs Wall.

"Soon after we opened, these digital nomads just started showing up. All of a sudden we became known on the digital nomad map and, since then, we've had 2,500 members."

For a monthly fee, Hubud members can use workstations with high-speed internet, Skype booths and meeting rooms, and have access to workshops and courses on everything from digital marketing and business coaching to Bahasa Indonesian. Members are a cross-section of society from all over the globe: web and app developers, start-up entrepreneurs, graphic designers, digital marketers and other freelance professionals looking to design a lifestyle that suits them.

There's an on-site organic café, weekly yoga classes in the garden and a Bitcoin exchange, but the main advantage, says Wall, is being around like-minded entrepreneurs who have chosen a location-independent life.

"A lot of people have figured out how to be location independent and how to run their business from anywhere. They've said 'OK, I don't want to be in a nine-to-five environment and I don't want to work for a big corporation. How am I going to use the skillset I have or pick out a new skillset to be more mobile and do more things?'"

As far as Wall's concerned, co-working is a means for these professionals to have their cake and eat it, and an opportunity that should not be overlooked by employers: "One of the ways in which you are going to retain people is by allowing them to have flexibility. It's more than a growing trend, it's the future. I think that the more people are free to follow what they love, the happier the world will be."

Future Hubud projects might include the Mexican beach town of Tulum and, if Wall has his way, a project in Cuba, but for now, he seems perfectly content where he is: spending his days amongst the rice paddies. hubud.org

LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

To eat like a local...

Try Padang food, from Sumatra. It's basically Indonesian fast food; spicy, savoury and delicious.

The best way to spend an afternoon in Ubud is...

Hike up the trail to Sari Organic. There's a lovely path through the rice paddies, with incredible views. If you go further, Ubud drops away and you're in the middle of nowhere.

The best thing about co-working is...

The connections you make and how you are constantly learning new things. You're open to attending events and meeting people and learning about new ways of doing things.

The best entrepreneurial advice I can give is...

Just go for it. I think naivety can be an asset. So just go for it and you'll figure it out.



Emirates offers daily flights to Bali, operated by a Boeing 777-300ER.

