

First Look: Bill Bensley's Shinta Mani Mustang will be a haven in the Himalayas

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With a reputation for creating fantastical and unconventional properties – see [InterContinental Khao Yai Resort](#), [Thailand's 'train hotel'](#), and Bali's tented Capella's Ubud, where 23 tented lodges inspired by Indonesia's early-19th-century spice trade feature toilets shaped like thrones and rooftops capped by sculptures of cavorting monkeys – prolific hotel designer Bill Bensley is a dab hand at creating properties with personality. So there should be plenty of surprises in store when his own boutique hotel group Shinta Mani opens its newest hotel next year in Nepal, a Himalayan hideaway that will be called Shinta Mani Mustang – A Bensley Collection.

Housing 29 suites, the all-inclusive property has been developed with Kathmandu-based Sherpa Hospitality Group and will stand in a Buddhist region known as The Forbidden Kingdom, a gateway to Tibet. The elevated landscape here is populated with lonely monasteries, and provides arresting panoramas of the soaring, snow-capped Mount Nilgiri.





Mount Nilgiri

The setting will be one of Mustang's major draws, and a range of considered activities will ensure guests can make the most of it: there are enough privately guided excursions on offer for guests to experience a different trip every day for up to two weeks. Options include trekking, horse riding, rock climbing and archery, alongside more ambitious helicopter tours and relaxed wellness initiatives. The surrounding trails are rarely visited, the location should appeal to travellers who want proper escapism.

On site, each of the 29 suites will measure 45sq metres. Modelled in the style of a traditional Tibetan home, they'll feature an open-plan bedroom and living area and will be decorated with upcycled material and by artworks including pieces by the late artist Robert Powell; floor-to-ceiling windows will look out upon the mountainscape. Culinary options will include the 60-cover Nilgiri Restaurant, which will serve modern Nepalese cuisine alongside some western standards. The Aara Bar takes its name from a local Tibetan liquor. In place of a traditional gym, there'll be an activity room where guests can practise yoga. The Wellness Centre will also offer striking views from its two treatment rooms, alongside a plunge pool, steam room and sauna. Treatments should be novel – they've been conceived by a local 11th-generation Tibetan *amchi* doctor and incorporate the use of traditional herbal medicines.

Speaking about this latest Shinta Mani Collection launch Bensley says: "This is one of the most exciting projects we have ever had. I have never seen such wildly dramatic landscapes as the mountains and valleys of Mustang and am thrilled that Shinta Mani can be the first to introduce this Forbidden Kingdom to international adventurers. This will be their base camp for explorations all around these phenomenal mountains... for the adventure of a lifetime."



Rates at [Shinta Mani Mustang – A Bensley Collection](#) will start from \$2,113 per couple per night for a minimum five-night stay, including service charge and taxes. Rates include all food and beverages, private guided activities and excursions, unlimited spa treatments and transfers between Kathmandu and Jomson.

If you're looking to book a stay, LUTE can provide more information on this and other hotels around the world, including details on how to access extensive additional privileges and benefits with your best-available-rate booking. For more information, email rooms@lute.co.

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By John O'Ceallaigh • 5 September 2022 •



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