

DESTINATIONS OF THE WORLD

# news

## GOURMET ADVENTURES

*Far-flung dining for  
gourmands*

## SPA & WELLNESS

*Island yoga, holistic  
health & fitness retreats*

# ESCAPE TO THE MALDIVES

FIND YOUR ULTIMATE ISLAND HIDEAWAY



# BAREFOOT LUXURY

BANYAN TREE VABBINFARU



## AN INTIMATE ISLAND HAVEN MADE FOR TWO

Cocoon yourself in a web of shimmering turquoise waters, swaying coconut trees, indigenous blooms and pure white sand. Free your spirit on the Maldives' North Male Atoll. In Maldivian, Vabbinfaru refers to a round island circled by a round coral reef. In this circle of peace, claim sanctuary at Banyan Tree Vabbinfaru resort. Feel the natural sea breeze sweeping in from the majestic Indian Ocean, and let the resort's signature hospitality bring you peace and tranquility.

Book your dream vacation now with Destinations of the World!



BANYAN TREE  
VABBINFARU

*Sanctuary for the Senses*

CHINA • INDONESIA • KOREA • MALDIVES • MEXICO • SEYCHELLES • VIETNAM • THAILAND • UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

**BANYANTREE.COM**





# THE MALDIVES BY COMO

*is about being the only footprint in the sand*

Maalifushi by COMO is the first luxury resort in the Maldives to open in the pristine Thaa Atoll in the archipelago's southwest – a new destination with overwater villas, beach suites, and spectacular Japanese, Mediterranean and healthful COMO Shambhala cooking. This is the ultimate private island experience where you will want for nothing and discover everything, from snorkelling off a string of nearby uninhabited islands, to surfing some of the Maldives' best breaks. Let us nurture and inspire you at our COMO Shambhala Retreat, with massage and yoga, or on diving trips among coral gardens lit up by shafts of sunshine. Here in these turquoise waters, where the sand is white like snow, there's only nature to disturb your quiet: birdsong in the trees, or the call of dolphins as they dance in front of the prow.



COMO

LONDON THE HALKIN METROPOLITAN BANGKOK METROPOLITAN MIAMI BEACH METROPOLITAN PERTH THE TREASURY BHUTAN UMA PARO UMA PUNAKHA  
BALI UMA UBUD COMO SHAMBHALA ESTATE PHUKET POINT YAMU MALDIVES COCOA ISLAND MAALIFUSHI TURKS AND CAICOS PARROT CAY  
comohotels.com

## DESTINATIONS OF THE WORLD news WWW.DOTWNEWS.COM

December 2015, Issue 113

Publisher Anna Zhukov  
anna@dotwnews.com

Commercial Director Jesse Vora  
jesse@dotwnews.com

Editor Michelle Wranik-Hicks  
michelle@dotwnews.com

News Editor Steven Bond  
steven@dotwnews.com

Art Editor Sarah Freeman  
sarah@dotwnews.com

Features Writer Laurel Munshower  
laurel@dotwnews.com

Assistant Online Editor Liz Wentling  
liz@dotwnews.com

Account Manager James Stead  
james@dotwnews.com

Account Manager Siby Thomas  
siby@dotwnews.com

Business Development Manager Hande Unveren  
hande@dotwnews.com

Art Director Kris Karacinski  
kris@dotwnews.com

Assistant Graphic Designer Eliot Sleep  
eliot@dotwnews.com

Multimedia Manager Vandita Gaurang  
vandita@wnnlimited.com

Multimedia Graphics Manager  
Haitham El Shazly  
haitham@wnnlimited.com

Circulation department  
circulate@dotwnews.com

Finance department  
accounts@wnnlimited.com

International Commercial Representations  
Destinations of the World News' network of international advertising sales and editorial representatives are based in the following countries: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Egypt, France, Germany, Greece, India, Italy, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Malaysia, Pakistan, Russia, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Thailand, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States of America. Destinations of the World News is published monthly by WNN Limited and distributed to more than 200 First and Business class airport lounges, our subscriber network and five-star hotels. The title Destinations of the World News is a registered trademark and the publisher reserves all rights. All material in Destinations of the World News is compiled from sources believed to be reliable and articles reflect the personal opinion of the author and not necessarily that of the publisher. Destinations of the World News is not responsible for omissions or errors that result from misrepresentation of information to the publisher. Advertisers assume all liability for their advertising content. All rights of the owner and the producer of this conceptual development and artwork design are reserved. Neither this publication nor any part of it may be imitated, reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior permission of WNN Limited.

WNN Limited, Reuters Building 1, Office 106, Dubai Media City, PO Box 500661, Dubai, UAE  
Tel +971 4 3910680 Fax +971 4 3910688; WNN Limited, 31 Archbishop Kyprianou Street, 3036, PO Box 51234, zip 3503, Limassol, Cyprus

To subscribe to Destinations of the World News at an annual rate of \$99 visit the website at [www.dotwnews.com](http://www.dotwnews.com) and hit SUBSCRIBE.

Images used in Destinations of the World News are provided by Getty Images/Corbis unless stated otherwise. DOTW News is printed by J G Cassoulides & Sons Ltd, Nicosia, Cyprus and Emirates Printing Press LLC, Dubai, UAE

Cover image Sakis Papadopoulos © Robert Harding World Imagery/Getty Images

Published by

WNNlimited



Facebook: dotwnewsmagazine Instagram: dotw\_news  
LinkedIn: Destinations of the World News Twitter: dotw\_news Tumblr: dotwnewsmagazine Pinterest: dotw\_news

Angsana Ihuru's jetty awaits your arrival in Maldivian paradise

# Welcome

With 1,190 postcard-perfect coral islands, sugar-white beaches and swaying palms, this Indian Ocean archipelago rightly deserves its paradise tag, but there's more to do in the Maldives than sink your toes into the sand. Welcome to the *Destinations of the World News'* annual Maldives special, curating the very best of the archipelago's ultra-exclusive resorts and activities, whether you seek a spa and wellness-focused stay, a culinary retreat or simply an idyllic – and luxurious – island hideaway for your honeymoon.







39 Orchid Magu, PO Box 2015, Malé 20-02, Republic of Maldives  
Tel: +960 665 6100 | Fax: +960 664 3041 | Email: info@velassaru.com  
[www.velassaru.com](http://www.velassaru.com)



[kurumba@kurumba.com](mailto:kurumba@kurumba.com)  
[www.kurumba.com](http://www.kurumba.com)

Best All Inclusive Resort  
in the World 2015



# Contents

Maldives | 2015 Edition

## 09 VITAL INFO

A handy map of the Maldives and details to help you understand the destination

## 10 DIARY

Christmas festivities and the hottest New Year's Eve parties taking place this year

## 12 NEWS

Keep up to date with some of the latest news in luxury travel from the Maldives

## 16 GOURMET NEWS

Wine cellars, international cheeses and where to go for decadent island dining

## 19 GOURMET ISLAND

Discover why Conrad Maldives Rangali Island has flourished into a bona fide foodie hotspot

## 26 BAREFOOT HEALING

Book yourself a much-needed spa package, a fitness holiday or a holistic health retreat

## 35 W MARKS THE SPOT

W Retreat & Spa - Maldives is a luxury-island playground where anything goes

## 43 AN INDIAN OCEAN IDYLL

*Destinations of the World News* presents Velaa Private Island

## 50 FLIGHT OF FANCY

Flying business class to the Maldives with a low-cost airline is a cost-effective indulgence





# ZAYA NURAI ISLAND, ABU DHABI



With glass-blue waters, powdery beachfront and a spectrum of lavish accommodation options just 12-minutes boat ride from Abu Dhabi, leave your passport at home for a slice of the Maldives in the UAE

The UAE is a cosmopolitan nation. We drive our German sports cars to dine on Asian cuisine and watch American movies, meanwhile wearing Italian fashion labels. We shop, we ski, we party, but sometimes we still need to get away from it all. Gone are the days of browsing flight listings for Indian Ocean getaways. Set your cruise control and chart a course for Zaya Nurai Island, a beach chic boutique that's a mere 20 minutes from Abu Dhabi International Airport.

## ACTIVE REST

It's not just the villas that are guaranteed to drop jaws. Every guest is entitled, and actively encouraged to make a splash in their private pool, and they have plenty of space to do that with 25 square metres of secluded swimming. For a little more adrenaline, try jet skiing, banana rides, fun tubes and marble rides. Guests can also stay active during their super staycation with kayaking, SUPing, petanque, volleyball, beach soccer, and so much more.

## KICK OFF YOUR SHOES

For ultimate relaxation, send your little ones to the resort's free-of-charge kids club, with daily activities focused on fun and education, with special attention on crafts, art and sport. Indulge with the convenience of a spa treatment in your villa and top it all off with a dining experience at Frangipani, our rustic-luxe restaurant. Relax among neutral tones and brass accents representing artisanal style and organic trade, and with five bars to choose from, you won't be rushing back to the mainland.

## SPOT THE DIFFERENCE?

When you dine, imbibe and recline in the lap of luxury, there's very little to distinguish the corner of Abu Dhabi from a distant atoll – except perhaps the architecture. The super modern accommodations range from Beach villas for couples, Water Villas with turquoise backyards, and the ultra-expansive Beach Estates, tucked under sweeping grass canopies dotted around the perimeter of the island, each with its own private beach and undisturbed ocean views.

**Zaya**  
NURAI ISLAND  
ABU DHABI

Zaya Nurai Island, Abu Dhabi +9712 5066 222, info@nurai.com, www.zayanuraiisland.com  
Welcome Centre: Opposite Saadiyat Beach Residences, Saadiyat Island, Abu Dhabi, UAE  
GPS: 24° 36.880', 54° 28.567

# MALDIVES FACTFILE

## GEOGRAPHY:

Capital city:  
Malé

Main airport:  
Malé International Airport

Number of islands:  
1,190 (around 200 are inhabited)

Flight time from Dubai:  
4 hours, 47 minutes

Area:  
300km<sup>2</sup>

Population:  
395,000+

## HANDY INFO:

Currency:  
Rufiyaa (MVR) (but pack some dollars)

Languages spoken:  
Maldivian Dhivehi, English

Country code:  
+960

Internet domain:  
.mv

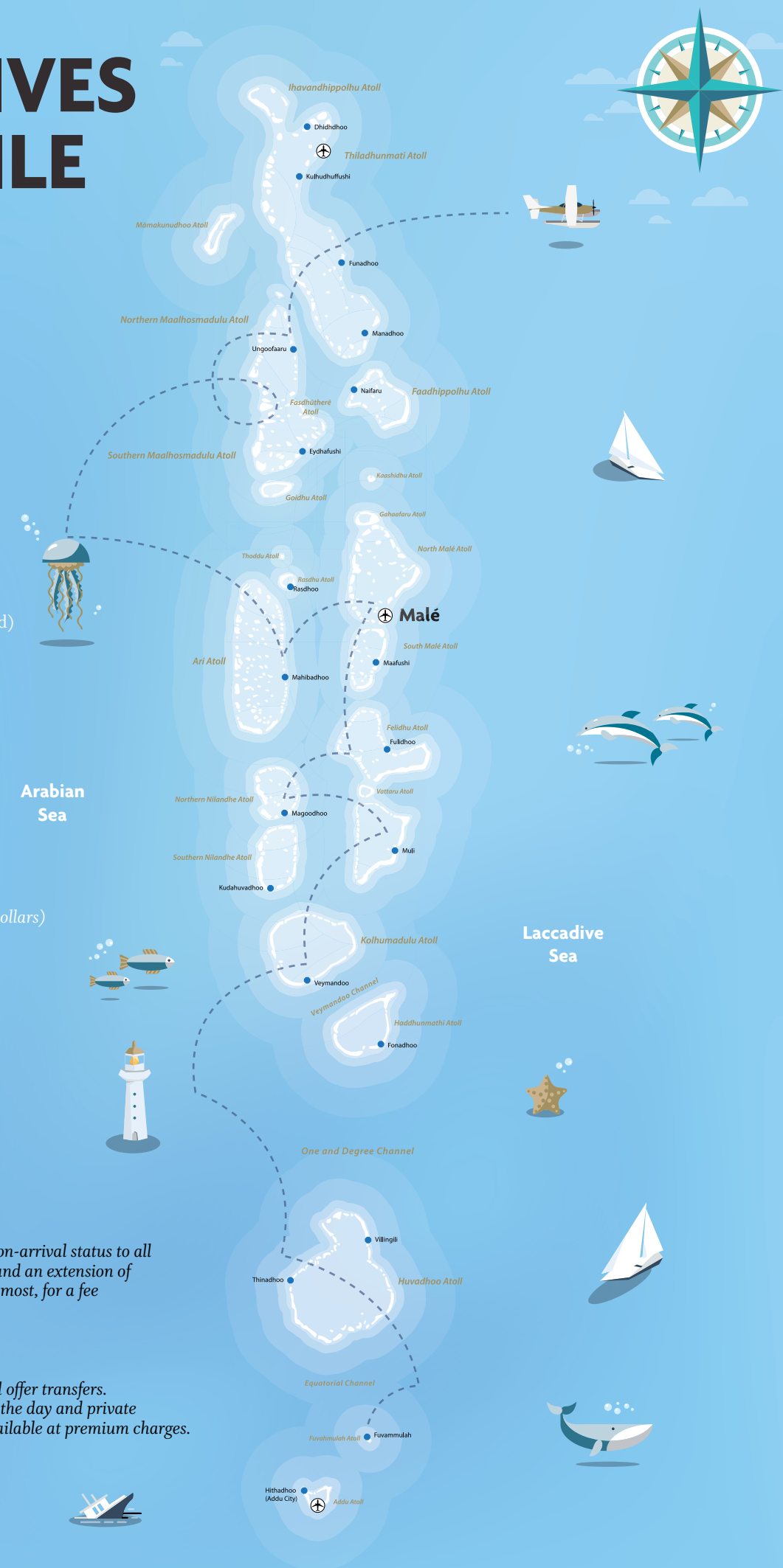
Time Zone:  
UTC+5

## VISA POLICY:

Maldives grants visa-free or visa-on-arrival status to all nations of the world for 30 days, and an extension of additional 60 days is available to most, for a fee

## GETTING AROUND:

All five-star hotels and resorts will offer transfers. Public ferries operate throughout the day and private air taxis, boats and yachts are available at premium charges.





DEC  
31**PARTY IN PARADISE**NEW YEAR'S EVE CELEBRATION –  
W RETREAT & SPA - MALDIVES

There's arguably nowhere better in the Maldivian archipelago for a party atmosphere than at W Retreat & Spa, so it's safe to say their New Year's Eve celebration is likely to go above and beyond. As guests wave goodbye to 2015 with one hand, the other is sure to be holding a flute of champagne, while a line-up of international DJs supply a hip soundtrack. As the clock strikes midnight, W fireworks bring added sparkle to the night sky, but revellers will continue to dance into the morning hours.

[www.wretreatmaldives.com](http://www.wretreatmaldives.com)

GET  
CHARITABLE  
IN MAY**GIVE & GETAWAY****PARTY WITH A PURPOSE – KURUMBA**

Let loose and get a taste of the local music scene while giving back at Kurumba's annual charitable gig, Party With A Purpose. DJs, bands and *boduberu* groups volunteer performances, and a silent auction offers up prizes from Maldivian resorts. All proceeds from the event are donated to benefit orphaned Maldivian children and caretaking programmes, with previous years raising more than US\$20,000. Check with the resort for the event's exact date to be confirmed.

[www.kurumba.com](http://www.kurumba.com)

**MALDIVES ♦ DIARY**

*Opulent tropical settings, secluded private islands and the Indian Ocean's otherworldly natural surroundings – is there anywhere better to spend the festive season or get into a charitable spirit? Make sure to lock these events into your calendar for an extra-memorable escape to the Maldives*

**SANTA GOES SOUTH****CHRISTMAS FESTIVITIES –  
ANANTARA DHIGU**

If you're looking for an island destination to celebrate the holidays with your family, Dhigu may fit the bill with its villas, which are some of the largest in the Maldives. Throughout the month of December, a jolly spirit is on offer to delight kids and parents alike with Saint Nicholas Day kicking off the fun on December 6 – after an afternoon snorkelling, stockings of treats will be found at your villa door – followed by daily Little Elves Festive Buffets and a tree-lighting ceremony before culminating with a lavish Christmas-day dinner at 73 Degrees, where the sound of lapping waves mingles with holiday cheer.

[www.dhigu-maldives.anantara.com](http://www.dhigu-maldives.anantara.com)

DEC  
6-25**NEW YEAR'S FEAST****NEW YEAR'S EVE GASTRO-  
JOURNEY – PARK HYATT  
MALDIVES HADAHAA**

Gastronomes will want to reserve space at Park Hyatt's decadent New Year's Eve table where a gastronomic journey will lead guests, well sated, into the new year. The evening begins by clinking champagne glasses on Hadahaa beach as the sun sets before being transported to The Dhoni, the resort's most distinctive dining destination. Here, interactive culinary displays and myriad cuisine – Maldivian, Chinese, barbecue, seafood à la minute – offer an unparalleled dining adventure. Desserts are served at a beachfront bar, where the sweets and a live DJ will keep the energy up until 2016 arrives.

[www.maldives.hadadaa.park.hyatt.com](http://www.maldives.hadadaa.park.hyatt.com)

“

A GASTRONOMIC  
JOURNEY WILL LEAD  
GUESTS, WELL SATIED,  
INTO THE NEW YEAR

DEC  
31



◆ CATTING AROUND WITH JUMEIRAH ◆

Stepping off terra firma to brave the water often involves a compromise – speed or style. But this luxurious transfer to Jumeirah Vittaveli excels in both. The resort's new fleet of motorised catamarans is being billed as the most exclusive boat-transfer service in the Maldives, and fits Jumeirah's "Stay Different" ethos since the 15.8-m Stealth iSpeed vessels are the only ones of their kind in the archipelago. The transfer speeds guests through turquoise waters dotted with powder-white islands, and on arrival, guests are invited onto the pier with handmade garlands of palm leaves before indulging in a relaxing 15-minute complimentary massage. Each spacious boat also offers sofa seating, Wi-Fi, television and air conditioning, along with complimentary beverages to help refresh after a long flight. The experience is even environmentally friendly as each double-hulled iSpeed is packed with Green Globe-certified yacht technology. "This exclusive luxury transfer ensures our guests experience the renowned Jumeirah hospitality from the moment their holiday begins," explains general manager Graham Kiy. "The 20-minute journey to paradise offers a fast and smooth ride with picture-perfect views of the Maldives' beautiful islands."

◆ MALDIVES NEWS ◆

Green is the theme in the Maldives with recycled glass art, environmentally friendly boat transfers and ocean-conservation programmes



◆ CONSERVE AND REFLECT ◆

Green fingers meet blue waters at Angsana Ihuru this month with its "Live For Adventure" package. The resort is stepping up to the coral plate to help protect the Indian Ocean's delicate ecosystem. The on-site team of marine biologists, led by Dr. Steven Newman, is on hand to educate and guide guests through a hands-on marine-conservation

experience. Opportunities include protecting sea turtles and rebuilding delicate coral reef systems, to collecting vital research data as part of the resort's new "Citizen Scientist" programme. From briefings at the resort's Marine Centre to snorkelling and diving with waterproof guidebooks, guests will be surrounded by a plethora of marine life, including sharks, rays, turtles, groupers and butterfly fish. The package also includes night fishing, unlimited non-motorised water sports, a sunset cruise and a "Discover Scuba Diving" course for two.



“  
THE LUXURY RESORT  
OPENED THE FIRST  
ART AND GLASS  
STUDIO IN THE  
MALDIVES

◆ SONEVA FUSHI – THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS ◆

When you consider the diminutive (but stunning) Baa Atoll, it seems baffling that five tons of glass is binned by hotel resorts each and every month. Rather than accept the colossal waste, Soneva Fushi has responded rather brilliantly. The luxury resort opened the first art and glass studio in the Maldives this summer, where guests can watch world-renowned glass artists create *objets d'art*, and learn the art of glass blowing. Here's the genius part: the facility is only using recycled glass materials from Soneva and neighbouring Maldivian resorts. Guests can also learn how to blow glass, thanks to new courses being offered by the resort, and they can even attend glass exhibitions with a rotating programme of visiting artists.

It's not just about a fun way to recycle, since the studio will produce items that will actually be used at the resort's restaurants and the glasswork created will even be used within the architectural design at current and upcoming Soneva resorts and private residences. All of Soneva's restaurants are now receiving signature lines of custom-made plates, bowls and glasses, made according to the brand's signature style. "This is something we have wanted to do for many years, so we are very



excited that the project has come to fruition," said Soneva CEO Sonu Shivdasani. "We believe that small tweaks to our business model can make a big difference. For instance, we see 'waste' as an asset rather than a liability. In fact, around 80 percent of our waste at Soneva Fushi is reused; a figure of which we are very proud," he added.

‘TIS THE SEASON FESTIVE DISCOUNT OFFERS TO CELEBRATE THE HOLIDAYS IN STYLE



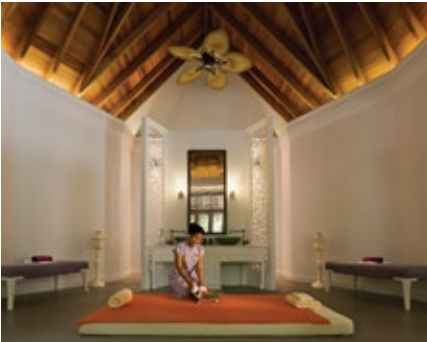
JINGLE BELLS AT BAROS

A dolphin cruise at sunset, a private-island dinner, snorkelling house reefs and spotting local marine life... perhaps not typical Christmas scenes, but this month Baros Maldives is inviting guests to celebrate each and every day from December 22 to January, with an exclusive gala dinner on December 26 to celebrate the resort's 10th anniversary. Winter revellers can also enjoy a special Maldivian evening the following day at the island's Palm Garden.



CHRISTMAS WITH CONSTANCE

Constance Hotels & Resorts is inviting guests to challenge tradition and celebrate the festive season in lavish privacy at Constance Moofushi and Constance Halaveli. With rainy season at an end, it's time to dine barefoot at Manta restaurant, enjoy undisturbed horizons and relax on a terrace with the occasional splash in a personal plunge pool.



DUSIT IN DECEMBER

Dusit Thani is drawing December travellers with its "Joyous Season" promotion. There are 25 percent discounts available for travellers who book at least 14 days in advance, and guests staying two nights or more will receive a holiday gift of THB1,000 (US\$28) credit, available to use against a seasonal spa treatment or holiday feast at any of the resort's eateries. The festive offer is available until January 31, 2016.



# BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

Pristine island elegance with all-encompassing privacy and exclusive adventures on one of the Indian Ocean's most untouched atolls – COMO makes sure that jet setters to the Maldives receive the experience of a lifetime with stays at both Cocoa Island and Maalifushi, offering swift transfers in comfort and style between the two idyllic destinations

Cocoa Island offers the ultimate private-island escape

A private pool waits for guests at a Water Villa in Maalifushi

Maalifushi's Water Suites feature high, thatched ceilings

Cocoa Island's jetty is ready for arrivals night and day

Endless ocean views at a Water Villa in Maalifushi

## MAALIFUSHI BY COMO

Harnessing the spirit of the Maldives with understated, barefoot-chic style, Maalifushi by COMO is a welcoming destination where warm staff and authentic island ambiance set the scene for a holiday that's both extraordinary and exclusive, as the only resort on the untouched Thaa Atoll.

A pearl in the midst of pristine ocean waters, thousands of species of fish and other marine life have made this region their home, and guests at Maalifushi have the pleasure of getting a look at their colourful world through snorkelling, diving and water sports activities. Alternatively, you can get a fresh taste of the ocean's bounty by game fishing for wahoo or head out on a sunset boat trip to acquire your dinner. After a day in the sun and exploring the lagoon, COMO Shambhala Retreat beckons with its eight overwater private treatment rooms for expertly performed therapies and an open-air yoga pavilion where your personal Zen can be achieved.

When an appetite has been worked up, three restaurants focus on serving fresh, local seafood and organic, healthy fare courtesy of the renowned COMO Shambhala Cuisine. Chill out at Thila where you can pull up a chair at the bar or enjoy an open-air barbecue; Madi is ready to serve guests all day with fresh Mediterranean and local fare that's light, flavourful and full of variety; for one of the top Japanese-dining experiences in the Maldives, Tai showcases the local waters' best seafood, skilfully presented as delicate sashimi around an active sushi bar.

Land or sea, whichever suits your fancy during your Indian Ocean holiday, the accommodation at Maalifushi offers unparalleled island living in stays that appreciate the indigenous architecture. Above a shallow emerald lagoon, 33 overwater one- and two-bedroom villas feature private terraces for discreet dips in the inviting water, as well as private pools, breathtaking sunset or sunrise views and loungers for lazy afternoons sunning while gazing at the endless expanse of azure ocean ahead. Nestled amid jungle greenery on land, 32 island villas are shaded by swaying palms and cooled by air conditioning and colonial-styled ceiling fans, while private sun decks and al fresco dining areas call for socialising – and while most are fitted with private pools, a swim in the calm lagoon is never more than steps away. When holidaying with friends and family, larger on-land villas of two, three, and even an expansive four-bedroom residence, can accommodate a group get-together.

## COCOA ISLAND BY COMO

Amid an archipelago of intimate islets, Cocoa Island by COMO sets itself apart with a sense of privacy that stands above the rest. Boasting serene beaches and tranquil waters where a mere 33 overwater villas dot a crystalline lagoon, restraint is a key characteristic to the Cocoa Island experience, whether it's in the design or the atmosphere. With exteriors inspired by the nation's traditional *dhoni* boats, each villa's décor is tastefully finished in soothing whites and wooden hues, with only subtle nods to Maldivian rusticity. From the simple wooden walkways connecting the residences above the water, guests are treated to cossetting accommodation with a private terrace, uninterrupted views of the Indian Ocean and direct access to the lagoon's shallow waters.

On the island, dining options are modern with varied influences, from South Indian touches to Asian and Mediterranean classics and interpretations. Under Ufaa's soaring thatched roof, gourmet cuisine inspired by the Malabar Coast mingles with fresh-caught local seafood. COMO Shambhala Cuisine's organic fare, favouring healthful cooking styles, is ideal for guests who want to follow a diet focusing on wellness without compromising on flavourful, enticing fare. Also known for its exceptional well-being programmes, the on-island COMO Shambhala Retreat takes advantage of the naturally calming surroundings to nurture purification through holistic, Asian-inspired treatments, peaceful yoga sessions in an open-air pavilion and "Wellness Paths" that address specific needs through a series of treatments.

Tempting though it is to while away a holiday lounging on your private terrace or taking languid lagoon dips outside of your villa door, a trip to Cocoa Island would be remiss without heading out on a boat to dive into the region's pristine marine world or catching a breeze on a windsurfing lesson. But however your time is spent, it's sure to be touched by COMO's special brand of luxury.

**Cocoa Island by COMO**  
+960 664 1818  
[www.comohotels.com/cocoaisland](http://www.comohotels.com/cocoaisland)

**Maalifushi by COMO**  
+960 678 0008  
[www.comohotels.com/maalifushi](http://www.comohotels.com/maalifushi)



### Sunrise on the sandbank

They say it's the most important meal of the day, so why not also make it the most incredible? The Sandbank Sunrise Breakfast At Cocoa Island by COMO is the ideal start to any morning – not only is the gourmet breakfast served by a personal waiter, but vintage champagne is served while watching the first rays of sunshine emerge from the horizon. Bubbles for breakfast? You're on holiday after all.



# GOURMET NEWS

*It may be remote, but discerning foodies are spoilt for choice in the Maldives*



### ROMANCE BY DESIGN

At sumptuous island-escape Anantara Dhigu Maldives Resort, guests can design their own candlelit dinner. Experience Maldivian food on the beach as the sun sets, or have a private chef entertain on the terrace of an overwater villa – the choice is yours. That's what we call fine dining by design.



### NOT YOUR AVERAGE WINE BAR

This may be the quirkiest wine cellar in the Maldives. But if there's one thing that's certain, Gili Lankanfushi's underground wine tasting is unforgettable. Here, guests dine off a driftwood table set on white-stone flooring and enjoy a gastronomic journey that is literally under the sea. Choose from over 500 wines in the unique cellar, accompanied by carefully selected international cheeses.



CHOOSE FROM OVER 500  
WINES ACCOMPANIED  
BY CAREFULLY SELECTED  
INTERNATIONAL CHEESES

### TROPICAL CONCOCTIONS

Dusit Thani Maldives has rolled out a special offering of infused *rum arrangé* (flavoured rum) exclusively at their Maldives property. Made and bottled in-house, this special line of *rum* includes five tropical flavours: dry fruits; lychee and vanilla; citrus and raisin; lavender honey and ginger; and banana and vanilla. Available only at Sand Bar, you can catch the sunset with a cocktail in hand from the resort's infinity pool, one of the longest in the Maldives.



### Raw revolution

Raw foodies rejoice: Per Aquum Huvaafen Fushi Maldives has a fine-dining establishment devoted to the raw-food lifestyle. The island restaurant, fittingly named Raw, offers solely organic and health-focused produce, like local lobster and Wagyu beef, that make for both indulgent and healthy recipes – the ideal holiday combination.





A PLACE THAT FEELS LIKE  
IT WAS MADE FOR YOU  
*Because it was*

Here, barefoot luxury meets unpretentious style in a place that's as unique as you. Home to whale sharks, manta rays, dolphins and an incredible coral reef just steps from the beach, it's been awarded "The Best Water Villas in the World", "The Best Luxury Resort in the Maldives" and "Best Spa Resort in the Maldives". Two spas, eight restaurants and four lounges round out the luxury experience.

CONRAD  
MALDIVES  
RANGALI ISLAND

*the luxury of being yourself*



Conrad Maldives Rangali Island

For reservations contact [MLEHI.maldives@conradhotels.com](mailto:MLEHI.maldives@conradhotels.com) or visit [www.ConradMaldives.com](http://www.ConradMaldives.com)



# GOURMET ISLAND

A far-flung island in the Maldives has become a bona fide foodie destination writes Elizabeth Wentling, who visits Conrad Maldives Rangali Island to discover a host of delicious – and otherworldly – dining experiences





Dumplings served at Ufaa by Jereme Leung; decadent chocolate dessert at Sunset Grill (previous page)



The embodiment of a tropical screen saver, there is no shortage of beauty throughout the 26 atolls of the Maldives. And beyond the coral reefs and otherworldly sightings of whale sharks, travellers can steal away to a paradise that offers total seclusion without compromising on life's greatest pleasures. This is where Conrad Maldives Rangali Island, a five-star playground offering top-shelf pastimes for those serious about luxury, comes in – albeit, as I happily discovered not long after arriving, with a leaning towards the delectable.

Yes, all the trappings of a fabulous island residency are in place: spas, outdoor yoga sessions, boat cruises, snorkelling with rainbow fish, and infinity pools galore. But Conrad Maldives knows its food-focused clientele, and it's clear this exotic island hotel has earned its reputation as a genuine

foodie destination, with more than a dozen ways to dine and drink on the menu. Add to that memorable gourmand experiences, such as Lobsters and Champagne on the Beach, and getting bored ceases to be an option.

For most people arriving at Rangali, the first culinary impression is made at Rangali Bar, where thatched-palm roofs soar above guests stretched out on chaise longues with a glass of rosé in hand, gazing at the lagoon and seaplanes arriving and departing throughout the afternoon. The bar's relaxed atmosphere gives way to tables dotting the sand beneath trees illuminated by fairy lights, all a stone's throw from vividly blue water.

My go-to item from the international menu is the Catch of the Day. The dish presents grilled grouper fillet enhanced with a squeeze of fresh lemon, accompanied by fresh vegetables, chips, salad and rice, along with a wine recommendation by the all-knowing staff ("A crisp sauvignon blanc, perhaps?"). Lazy lunches are *de rigueur* on Rangali, paired with ever-present sea breezes and idyllic swaying palms.

Next door is the Atoll Market, an open-air kitchen where the hotel's guests can graze freely in the morning on a truly international breakfast; the Maldives is a popular destination for the Chinese and there's no shortage of noodles, dumplings and other traditional Schezuan fare. Beyond the Asian cuisine, a juice bar serves freshly squeezed concoctions of beet, cucumber, ginger and apple alongside

Sunset Grill's fresh scallops



Take to the seas on a traditional dhoni; a Family Water Villa (below)

the Italian bistro, where the Market offers fresh cold cuts, international cheeses, smoked salmon and made-to-order crêpes and waffles.

Between lounging at the pool, or adventuring into the sea to catch a wave or glimpse of marine wildlife, there's one restaurant that every guest considers a must-see and must-dine: Ithaa Undersea Restaurant, the world's first glass underwater restaurant. This restaurant not only caught the world's attention with its one-of-a-kind environment, it elevated the Maldives to a bucket-list destination for jet setters seeking luxurious experiences deemed out of this world.

Upon entering Ithaa's lobby, tucked inside an overwater villa built in classic Maldivian style, I'm handed a chilled flute of champagne before heading downstairs to the restaurant where my meal will be accompanied by a view of sharks and schools of fish. Dining at Ithaa is not just unforgettable, it's borderline ethereal, and the menu matches the spectacular view with saffron champagne risotto and truffle dumplings served with Russian caviar.

Over the water at Mandhoo Restaurant, one of the island's open-air restaurants, I sample a spa-inspired menu based on its "Five Elements" theory: air (energising), fire (detoxifying), earth (nourishing), water (relaxing) and plant (fortifying). With certain dishes offering ingredients intended nurture good health and harmonise the body, this health-centric space is all about transparency while maintaining the highest quality of taste. Every plate at

“

THE BAR'S RELAXED ATMOSPHERE GIVES WAY TO TABLES DOTTING THE SAND BENEATH TREES ILLUMINATED BY FAIRY LIGHTS







Ithaa Undersea Restaurant, spicy chocolate and bananas at Vilu Restaurant (below)



Mandhoo includes a breakdown of calories, protein, cholesterol, fat and saturated fat. When it comes to ordering, the staff encourages you to follow your heart's desire, but their in-house nutritionist is there to assist in making any decisions to complement your diet. The crabmeat salad with avocado and mango, dressed with a grapefruit and blueberry granité came highly recommended. I obliged, and am glad that I did because the savoury-sweet shellfish dish, followed by equally tender nori-crusted beef tenderloin and teriyaki shiitake mushrooms, was exceptional.

Desserts – with a health spin, naturally – include unique options like organic cheesecake; a panna cotta of caramelised tofu, fine sea salt and organic kumquat confit;



“LAZY LUNCHES ARE *DE RIGUEUR* ON RANGALI, PAIRED WITH EVER-PRESENT SEA BREEZES AND IDYLIC SWAYING PALMS



The resort features 150 guest villas on land and over the sea; Sunset Grill (above)

and fruit soup with tapioca pearls. Everything is handcrafted under the same roof, and the sauces, garnishes, jellies and jams each result in a world-class standard of freshness.

Speaking to executive chef Marco Amarone, who credits the surrounding environment as his inspiration, I'm won over by his enthusiasm for the island's latest development towards a hydroponic garden where Thai chillies, mint, basil and a variety of lettuces are grown on-site. Anything the island cannot grow organically or obtain locally is flown in fresh, but Amarone is eager to minimise this in the future.

This philosophy is clear at Ufaa, by Chinese celebrity chef Jereme Leung, which offers seafood platters from local fishermen, and dishes from Leung's homeland such as hot pots where assorted vegetables, meats and shellfish are dipped into and cooked in boiling-hot saltwater.

Along with Leung's Asian flair, it's possible to taste the flavours of Europe, Africa, India and local Maldivian delicacies all within Conrad Maldives; each restaurant stands on its own with memorable dining. This is just another supporting detail that makes this destination extraordinary, and Rangali will not only win over your heart – you can actually eat your heart out.

**STAY**  
CONRAD MALDIVES RANGALI ISLAND  
+960 668 0629  
[WWW.PLACESHILTON.COM/MALDIVES-RANGALI-ISLAND](http://WWW.PLACESHILTON.COM/MALDIVES-RANGALI-ISLAND)



COCO  
BODU HITHI  
Maldives

*There are some  
moments that pass in a second,  
but last for a lifetime*

It's these experiences that you'll find dotted across the Maldivian island paradise of Coco Bodu Hithi; surprising and authentic touches that make your stay a truly timeless adventure. Coco Bodu Hithi is in an enchanting setting, where contemporary creature comforts blend stylishly with Maldivian themes to offer an environment where guests can refresh their senses, rekindle their love of travel, and reconnect with the world around them.

Visit  
[www.cocoboduhithi.com](http://www.cocoboduhithi.com)  
or email [info@cocoboduhithi.com](mailto:info@cocoboduhithi.com) for more information

LVX™  
Preferred  
HOTELS & RESORTS



PROMOTIONAL FEATURE



## HONEYMOON HEAVEN

Celebrate your romance with an Indian Ocean escape on the intimate Maldivian island paradise of Coco Bodu Hithi



**R**omantic candlelit dinners, champagne breakfasts and swoon-worthy views over the cerulean lagoon from your villa – escaping to the Maldivian paradise of Coco Bodu Hithi is the ideal way to celebrate your new-found life as a married couple.

Now, a special package dedicated to honeymooners allows couples to receive a **25 percent discount** on room rates along with thoughtful added extras to make your stay in paradise all the more romantic.

Couples choosing to stay in the Island Villas and Water Villas will receive a refreshing welcome cocktail on arrival, with a bottle of sparkling wine, a tropical fruit platter and a special bed decoration prepared in your villa prior to your arrival. Should you choose to stay in an Escape Water Villa, you and your loved one can indulge even more with a bottle of champagne.

After spending the day enjoying the island's charms and your artfully designed retreats, styled with traditional Maldivian touches and the latest in personal luxury, couples

will be treated to a romantic, candlelit, three-course dinner. The indulgences continue throughout the remainder of your stay – along with a Coco gift to take home, all honeymooning couples will receive a **10 percent discount** on all treatments at Coco Spa, which fuses modern techniques with traditional treatments that trace their roots back to Indonesia, Thailand and India. Those honeymooners staying in a Coco Residence can enjoy 15 percent discounts on spa treatments, along with a decadent champagne breakfast.

With authentic Maldivian hospitality, your dream honeymoon in an unforgettable island paradise beckons.

Coco Bodu Hithi  
North Malé Atoll  
[reservations@cocoboduhithi.com](mailto:reservations@cocoboduhithi.com)  
+960 664 6600  
[www.cocoboduhithi.com](http://www.cocoboduhithi.com)



# BAREFOOT ♦ HEALING

*From holistic retreats and celebrity-endorsed fitness programmes to Ayurvedic pampering,  
there's a Maldives wellness package designed to heal your mind, body and soul*

---







### RETREAT INTO REJUVENATION

The Residence Maldives by Cenizaro offers one of the most serene environments to be found in the Maldives, making it the ideal choice for a refreshing escape. Ensuring the ultimate journey in wellness, a trio of three- to four-day “Spa Retreat” programmes at the resort’s renowned Spa by Clarins are tailor made to relax, firm or contour guests to perfection. Choose “Relaxing” to melt stress away; “Firming” to return from your holiday with a well-toned physique; or “Contouring” to achieve an enviable silhouette. In-between treatments, complimentary sunrise and sunset yoga, as well as a 60-minute private yoga session, help reach your personal holiday apex.

**PRICE:** From US\$1,255 per night for two **AVAILABILITY:** Through March 31, 2016

**BOOK:** [WWW.CENIZARO.COM/THERESIDENCE/MALDIVES-FM](http://WWW.CENIZARO.COM/THERESIDENCE/MALDIVES-FM)

“  
THE RESORT'S RENOWNED  
SPA BY CLARINS  
PROGRAMMES ARE  
TAILOR MADE TO RELAX,  
FIRM OR CONTOUR  
GUESTS TO PERFECTION



### FEED THE SOUL

A detox for gourmands? It exists at Baros Maldives, which has launched a three-day wellness experience fusing detoxifying massages and yoga lessons with fine dining. Each day begins with an al fresco yoga session at the resort’s overwater pavilion, followed by a minimum two-hour spa treatment, including a dry body-brushing seaweed wrap, Ayurveda oil massage and a green-coffee wrap with lymphatic drainage. Each day of cleansing culminates with a gourmet detox feast at the resort’s Lighthouse and Cayenne Grill restaurants, with the final night spent enjoying a private meal on a secluded swathe of beach. Who says detox dining can’t be romantic?

**PRICE:** Contact hotel directly for rates **AVAILABILITY:** Now  
**BOOK:** [WWW.BAROS.COM](http://WWW.BAROS.COM)



### AN EYE OPENER

If you’re going to detox, you may as well do it with sand between your toes and views across endless stretches of azure water. With Gili Lankanfushi’s seven-day “Health Bliss Detox” programme, guests will check into paradise to undertake daily nutritional classes, dine on customised detox meals and take regular yoga sessions – all under the guidance of acclaimed health coach and plant-based nutritionist, Jennifer Thompson. Thompson’s specialism is iridology – the science of the eyes’ iris, which she uses to diagnose an individual’s healing needs. As part of her curated meal plans, guests will also sign up to a chakra-cleansing juice-fast programme, sipping on drinks made from organic ingredients grown on the resort’s farm.

**PRICE:** From US\$3,156 per night in a Villa Suite

**AVAILABILITY:** Now **BOOK:** [WWW.GILI-LANKANFUSHI.COM](http://WWW.GILI-LANKANFUSHI.COM)

### THE TRIPLE-ZEN EFFECT

If you love yoga, eating raw food and indulging in pampering – Per Aquum Huvafen Fushi’s “Healthy Holistic Luxury” package sounds like a dream wellness escape. Spend the morning stretching out above the soothing Indian Ocean waters with a private yoga session, followed by an organic feast of yuzu ceviche, Maldivian-lobster fondue or Cambodian-style raw-vegetable curry at the resort’s healthiest and hippest dining hub – Raw. The highlight is an under-the-sea massage in the resort’s surreal Lime Spa, home to the world’s first underwater treatment rooms, where you can Zen out while watching exotic fish and marine life curiously swim by.

**PRICE:** From US\$1,230 per night

**AVAILABILITY:** Now

**BOOK:** [WWW.HUVAFENFUSHI.PERAQUUM.COM](http://WWW.HUVAFENFUSHI.PERAQUUM.COM)





GOOD FOR  
FITNESS  
FANATICS

### BEAUTIFUL INSIDE AND OUT

Forget the bikini-ready holiday body – when you visit Soneva Fushi between January 2 and March 17 you can hone and tone the perfect shape while vacationing under the watchful eye of celebrity fitness trainer Dave Catudal. Guests can enrol in the resort's celebrity-endorsed Tranzend Body Workout system, which integrates one-on-one fitness routines with all-natural supplements and motivational techniques designed to rebalance the body. Between workout sessions, lap up Soneva's laid-back, barefoot-luxury charm with movie watching at the island's very own Cinema Paradiso, a celestial evening at The Observatory or an afternoon of glass blowing at the first glass studio in the Maldives.

PRICE: Tranzend Body Workout from THB7,200 (US\$200)

AVAILABILITY: January 2 – March 17, 2016

BOOK: [WWW.SONEVA.COM/SONEVA-FUSHI](http://WWW.SONEVA.COM/SONEVA-FUSHI)



### DIVE INTO WELLNESS

Six Senses Laamu has spa and diving devotees covered with their seven-night “He Dives, She Spas” package. Couples can choose to mix and match 14 different wellness and underwater activities or opt for one open-water dive course and seven individual spa experiences. While the other half is spying on reef sharks, barracuda and stingrays in Laamu Atoll's pristine coral reefs, you can be transported to a holistic haven with a Kurumbaa Kaashi coconut rub or Exfoliating Sand Massage. Missing each other already? Don't worry; you can reunite over the daily fine dining at Longitude restaurant or retreat to your private villa – both of which are included in the package.

PRICE: Contact hotel directly AVAILABILITY: Until December 21, 2015

BOOK: [WWW.SIXSENSES.COM/RESORTS/LAAMU](http://WWW.SIXSENSES.COM/RESORTS/LAAMU)



VELAA  
PRIVATE ISLAND  
MALDIVES  
*Private Moments*

# ISLAND FOR ALL THE SENSES

T: +960 6565 000 | [reservations@velaaprivateisland.com](mailto:reservations@velaaprivateisland.com) | [www.velaaprivateisland.com](http://www.velaaprivateisland.com)

“  
WHILE THE OTHER HALF IS SPYING  
ON REEF SHARKS, BARRACUDA AND  
STINGRAYS, YOU CAN BE TRANSPORTED  
TO A HOLISTIC HAVEN





## curators of rare and treasured moments

Soneva Fushi inspires the imagination with spacious, multi-bedroom luxury beach front villas that are hidden among dense foliage for ultimate privacy. Intuitive service is provided by Mr./Ms. Friday personal butlers who know what you want before you want it.

Frequently acknowledged as the world's leading holiday destination\*, Soneva Fushi makes you young again, no matter what your age.

If the experiences are magical, the philosophy is simple:  
No news, no shoes. No pretensions either.



MALDIVES

\*A full list of awards is available at [www.soneva.com](http://www.soneva.com)

## PROMOTIONAL FEATURE



# Soneva Fushi



The life of a castaway takes a new turn on Soneva Fushi, a private atoll where intelligent luxury is the key ingredient in a deserted-island escape. Nestled on Kunfunadhoo, one of the largest islets in the Maldives, crystalline lagoons and lush jungle flora set the scene for an exceptional Indian Ocean experience. With a destination so special, it may be best enjoyed as a holiday for the whole family, with the time to unwind, leave your cares behind and focus on the ones you hold dearest. Checking in at Soneva Fushi's nine-bedroom Private Residence offers the ideal environment for just that. This eco-luxe mansion eschews the Robinson Crusoe's basic rusticity for a jungle fantasy

where no detail has been overlooked – from a nanny's room to a spa and gym, a sprawling private pool and butler service – to ensure a total retreat into sumptuous decadence. Palm-frond roofs, woven ropes and tree-branch banisters help the state-of-the-art home meld into the rich natural surroundings, while guests may find themselves enveloped in a sunken dining area, surrounded by the lagoon-style pool, with an island feast.

When the mood for exploration calls, stroll directly out onto pristine sands from the beachfront abode, or hop onto one of the villa's bicycles and set off to The Observatory, where a twinkling night sky free of light pollution is on display; take in a classic film at Cinema Paradiso,

an open-air theatre; or visit The Glass Studio where artisans design and exhibit glass *objets d'art*. And, of course, there's always the opportunity to dive into the surrounding pristine water to see vibrant marine wildlife and coral reefs whether you prefer to snorkel, dive or board one of the nation's traditional *dhonis*.

## Stay

**SONEVA FUSHI**  
**+960 660 0304**

[www.soneva.com/soneva-fushi](http://www.soneva.com/soneva-fushi)



# REVEL IN LUXURY

ABANDON THE EXPECTED AND SETTLE IN THE UNEXPECTED

PLAY IN A TROPICAL PLAYGROUND WHERE THE ONLY LIMIT IS YOUR IMAGINATION

## W RETREAT & SPA - MALDIVES

1 EXTREME WOW OCEAN HAVEN

3 WOW OCEAN ESCAPE

25 SPECTACULAR OCEAN OASIS

21 FABULOUS LAGOON OASIS

28 WONDERFUL BEACH OASIS

AWAY SPA

3 RESTAURANTS

2 BARS

1 UNDERGROUND NIGHT CLUB

T: +960 666 2222

E: RESERVATIONS.WMALDIVES@WHOTELS.COM

EXPLORE [WMALDIVESRETREAT.COM](https://www.wmaldivesretreat.com)

[FACEBOOK.COM/WMALDIVES](https://www.facebook.com/wmaldives)

[TWITTER & INSTAGRAM @WMALDIVES](https://www.twitter.com/wmaldives)



MALDIVES

RETREAT & SPA

# W

## MARKS THE SPOT

Michelle Wranik-Hicks visits the  
W Retreat & Spa - Maldives and discovers a  
luxury-island playground where anything goes

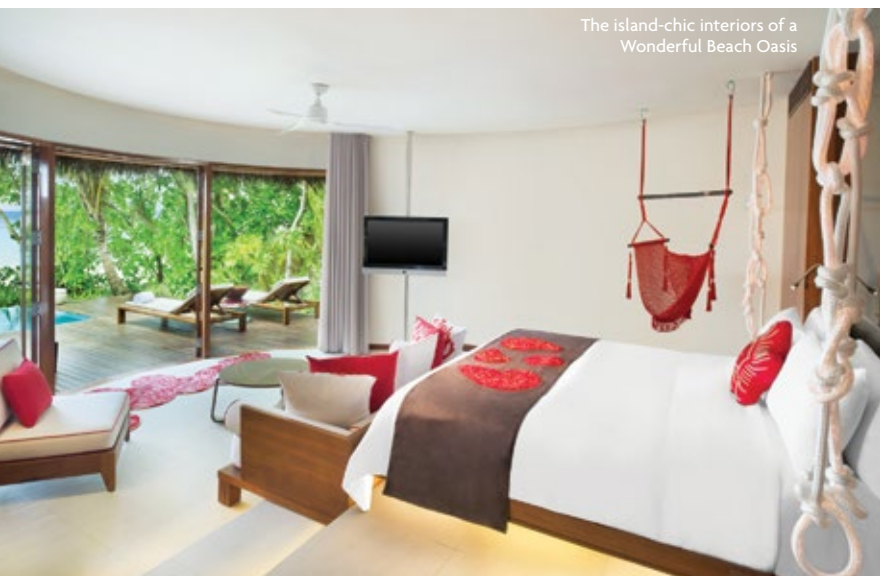






Wonderful Beach Oasis; W's hip island paradise (previous page)

IT'S JUST AFTER MIDDAY AND THERE'S A BUBBLE machine set up at the pool area. Couples are lounging around in mesh kaftans and aviators, a slender blonde DJ in gladiator sandals is spinning funky house beats, and a mixologist from the UK has flown in to hold a cocktail masterclass. It may be the Maldives, but the W is not your typical honeymoon island paradise.



The island-chic interiors of a Wonderful Beach Oasis

Of course, W has never been typical, nor is it a brand that plays by the rules. Where other hotels accentuate with neutral tones, W uses neon pink. Other hotels use the term concierge; W has an Insider who promises to deliver “Whatever/Whenever”. It's daring, it's devil-may-care and oh my is it chic, especially when it's on a paradise island in the Maldives.

After jetting down at W Retreat & Spa - Maldives on a seaplane, skidding across overwhelmingly turquoise water, I'm greeted by a troupe of staff clad in white and offering cocktails. From the second my foot hits the jetty, it's clear I've landed on W island – and not just because there's a massive letter “W” standing tall on the pier; rather, it's the music. As one of the brand's biggest passion points, music is ubiquitous on the island. Bose speakers are hidden in the sides of the jetties, beats are playing in the golf buggies used to ferry guests around the island, and all retreats are fitted with indoor and outdoor Bose speakers. There's even an app you can download to stream W's signature sounds, so you are never without your fix.

The retreat is situated on Fesdu island, a palm-fringed paradise in the North Ari Atoll with overwater villas stretching across the shallow lagoon and seafront villas with private plunge pools facing the beach. The interiors, which recently underwent a little nip 'n tuck, were unveiled with the aptly named theme Let It Glow, a collaboration between

cutting-edge design influencers to highlight the island's natural, glowing wonders: namely, the fluorescent plankton and twinkling stars.

Set on the beach, the retreat's Wonderful Beach Oasis retreats are styled with splashes of red, from rope hammock chairs handcrafted by communities in Nicaragua to jellyfish- and coral-embazoned cushions, along with chic marine-inspired elements like rope lamps designed by Christian Haas. With direct beach access, the turquoise shallows peeking temptingly through the palms, the retreats have daybeds, an upper deck with water views and generous outdoor bathrooms with a tub.

Things get bigger, bolder and more beautiful for those staying overwater. The Fabulous Lagoon Oasis overwater villas feature private plunge pools on the sundeck and glass panels in the floor that at night illuminate the reef below. Design pieces like stingray-shaped rocking chairs by Thomas Pedersen are scattered throughout. The pool and glass panels increase in size in the Extreme Wow Ocean Escape, a two-bedroom junior suite with stairs that lead from the sundeck into the lagoon, while in the Extreme Wow Ocean Haven, every amenity from the bathtubs to the infinity pool is supersized. There's even a piano, a relic left over by one of W's wealthy guests, who requested it be moved from his yacht to his suite by the time he arrived.

A chat with Chunky Matthews, the retreat's W Insider, reveals some of the other astonishing lengths W has gone to please their guests. Aside from the piano, Chunky once arranged for a fish, caught by a group of holidaying Russians,



A seaplane near W's jetty

“

FISH, THE RETREAT'S OVERWATER RESTAURANT SERVES 'OCEAN TO TABLE', A CONCEPT THAT MELTS SUSTAINABILITY WITH CULINARY FLAIR



Innovative cocktails fill the bar menu



Fish restaurant stays close to the source

to be sent back to Russia “to be shared with their friends”. He also orchestrated an elaborate, secret engagement proposal for a famous (and unnamed) footballer on Gaathafushi, W's private island. Within sight of Fesdu, the tiny island is available for guests who want an extra slice of privacy – spending a bespoke evening from dusk to dawn on their own exclusive island hideaway.

I spend my evenings under the stars at Fish, the retreat's overwater restaurant serving “ocean to table”, a concept that melds sustainability with culinary flair and, as always





“  
THE OVERWATER VILLAS FEATURE  
PRIVATE PLUNGE POOLS AND GLASS  
PANELS IN THE FLOOR THAT AT NIGHT  
ILLUMINATE THE REEF BELOW

The airy Fabulous  
Lagoon Oasis bathroom

Gaathafushi private island



something new to dance to. In fact, come this New Year's Eve, you can guarantee W will be the most happening island in the Maldives, with a free (unheard of) gala dinner; New York City DJ Erica Rhone will be joined by Satin Jackets and Barber to ensure guests party well into the dawn.

I can picture it exactly – nursing the hangover on New Year's Day with some yoga on the deck of the spa, perhaps a massage and, in classic W style, a pool party. Cue the bubbles.

#### STAY

W RETREAT & SPA - MALDIVES

+960 666 2222

[WWW.WRETREATMALDIVES.COM](http://WWW.WRETREATMALDIVES.COM)

– a W twist. During my stay, I sampled a cocktail-dinner degustation of four courses paired with potent cocktails by mixologist Gareth Evans. Think pearl meat and bone marrow drizzled with garlic butter, served with Scotch whisky fused with charred pineapple and masala chai.

There might be pool parties, bubble machines and cocktail degustations, but make no mistake, it's not all party at W – there's myriad ways to relax on the island. I opt for a massage at AWAY Spa, which uses olive oil peg-7 and vitamin E as the base for the oil used in the massage. Afterwards, sipping on ginger tea on an expansive deck overlooking the lagoon, I gaze out over the house reef where I spot a couple enjoying an afternoon snorkel.

The house reef is where I too spend the majority of my time on the island, living the life aquatic. Snorkelling the reef is a pleasure; Fesdu is home to surely one of the

best house reefs in the Maldives and the coral teems with tropical fish, from parrot and angelfish to butterfly and banner fish, along with turtles, moray eels and reef sharks. It's utterly tranquil – and that's the beauty of W. You can escape to the house reef for some solo snorkelling, lounge in your infinity pool with a minibar on wheels, or head to the bar to be sociable with other guests.

While it's no Ibiza – and singles are still outnumbered by honeymooners – the brand is geared towards those seeking a side of playfulness with their paradise. Unlike other Maldivian five-star resorts where the atmosphere can be sedate, you can rely on W to break up the monotony (admit it – there's only so much sunbathing and canoodling you can do) with flame-lit barbecue fiestas on the beach to pool parties. And with DJs setting up residency on the island for three or four months at a time, it means there's always



AWAY Spa





# THE SUN SIYAM IRU FUSHI MALDIVES

At the very north of the Maldivian archipelago, your own 52 acres of paradisiacal respite wait at Sun Siyam Iru Fushi, a resort in the heart of the Noonu Atoll, with pristine coves, lush vegetation and traditional villages. Sumptuously appointed villas both on land and overwater offer peaceful seclusion amid luxury and the Indian Ocean's natural bounty; the sea gently laps nearby, contemporary décor sets a sophisticated tone, and some even feature their own infinity pools for the most intimate of getaways. More than a dozen restaurants and lounges offer a varied gourmet experience, while guests can choose to spend their time indulging in pampering wellness treatments or taking off on an adventure to discover the surrounding sea's thriving marine life.

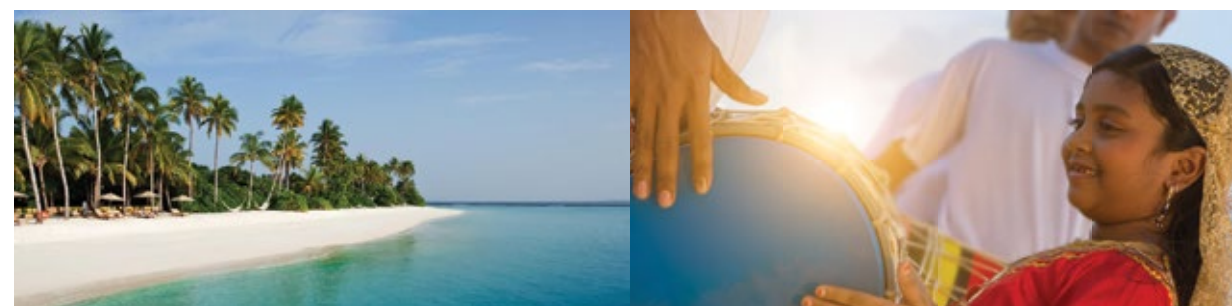
As 2015 draws to a close and the excitement of a new year approaches, time seems to fly, but Sun Siyam Iru Fushi is making it easy to take a break and let time slow down with the launch of an all-inclusive package available for every villa category. With every restaurant on the resort included in the offer – from upscale dining to casual nibbles – as well as beverages (both naughty and nice) and a selection of activities, this is your chance to treat yourself through April 20, 2016. If a short break is what you need for a quick session of island relaxation, guests staying just three nights or more through February 29, 2016 can receive a 40-percent discount on a Deluxe Beach Villa with Pool, or a **20-percent discount** on other room categories – and the deal gets even more palatable with a meal-plan upgrade if you stay before December 26 of this year in an overwater villa. And although the Maldives is a hotspot for honeymoons and romance, Sun Siyam Iru Fushi still offers plenty to keep the little ones happy, and parents will be happy too, with children's return seaplane transfers booked at a **50-percent discount** through December 26. The resorts in the Maldives are as varied as the fish in the sea, but few offer better reasons than Sun Siyam Iru Fushi to travel to the Indian Ocean's wonderland.



The Sun Siyam Iru Fushi Maldives  
+960 332 5977  
www.thesunsiyam.com



## THE SUN SIYAM IRU FUSHI MALDIVES



Located a 45-minute scenic seaplane ride from Male in the unspoilt Noonu Atoll, The Sun Siyam Iru Fushi rises like a pearl out of the Indian Ocean. Set within 52 acres of white sands and exotic flora, here guests are immersed in a timeless culture. From the intuitive detail and personalised service that creates the most beautiful of memories, to the sublime ambience that permeates each unforgettable taste, touch and experience, at Iru Fushi the incredible awaits.

Dedicated Passion [www.thesunsiyam.com](http://www.thesunsiyam.com)  
T +960 6560591 F + 960 6560592  
E [info@thesunsiyam.com](mailto:info@thesunsiyam.com)



The SUN SIYAM  
IRU FUSHI  
MALDIVES





## AN INDIAN OCEAN IDYLL

*Destinations of the World News* presents Velaa Private Island, a retreat where the typical is left far behind for an experience that's more than your typical Maldivian escape – it's a world of lavish luxury



PROMOTIONAL FEATURE

The Romantic Pool Residence features an expansive, private outdoor area (pictured here) and a stylish bedroom (opposite page)

“

IMMERSE IN A JUNGLE-ISLAND ENVIRONMENT FITTED WITH LAVISH TROPICAL-INSPIRED TEAK FURNISHINGS AND DÉCOR IN WARM, NATURAL WOODY TONES

### ISLAND LIVING

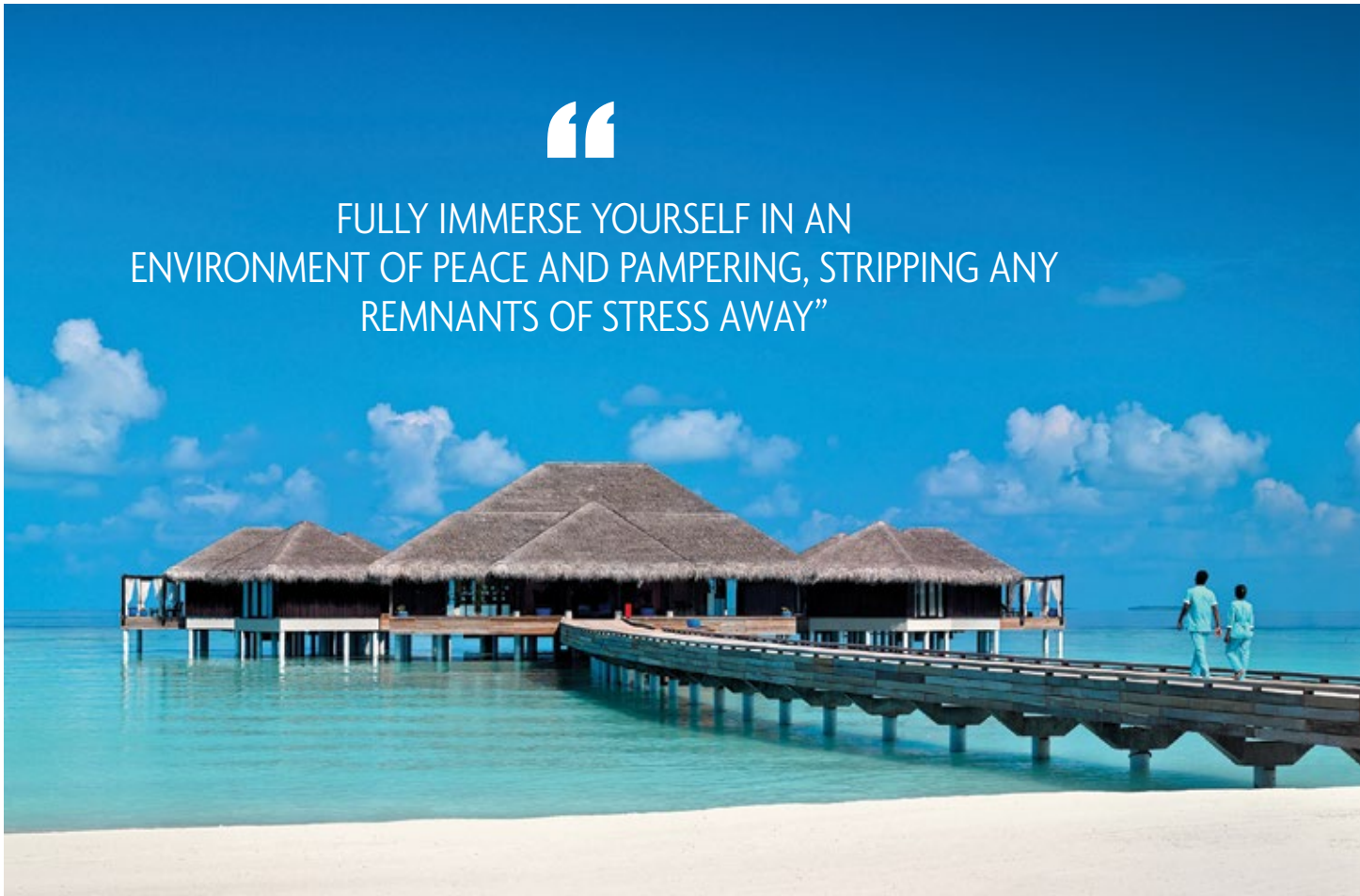
Maldivian atolls are well known for their azure skies, turquoise waters and gently swaying palms, but the sea turtles may be one of their most beloved aspects. Taking inspiration from the island's endemic creature, guests arriving by seaplane will get to glimpse Velaa's design, which subtly mimics the turtle's shell on the island while the exclusive overwater villas resemble the animal's head peeking out of crystalline waters.

Upon arrival guests are escorted to their private villa, of which there are eight sumptuous categories spread over beach and sea. On land, immerse in a jungle-

island environment fitted with lavish tropical-inspired teak furnishings and décor in warm, natural woody tones. Soaring ceilings and wide-open, wall-to-wall glass doors invite gentle breezes to enter and sunlight to flood in, while clusters of palm trees ensure seclusion. A private pool, rattan swings, comfy daybeds and a garden and gazebo proffer idyllic spaces for al fresco dining and taking in views of the never-distant ocean. Featuring one to four bedrooms, these villas are the ideal choice for those wanting to blend into the nature of the Noonu Atoll without compromising on elegance.

Perched above a lagoon teeming with life, Velaa's overwater one and two-bedroom villas offer the most idyllic of holiday experiences, with uninterrupted views of the Indian Ocean from a private pool and al fresco dining area shaded by overhanging thatch. With four bedrooms accommodating up to 10 guests, a rarity in the Maldives, the Velaa Private Residences have four bedrooms – ideal for accommodating larger groups and families. The two-storey detached residences are situated on a private stretch of sand, with a private pool, gym, spa room and outdoor living area.





“  
FULLY IMMERSE YOURSELF IN AN  
ENVIRONMENT OF PEACE AND PAMPERING, STRIPPING ANY  
REMNANTS OF STRESS AWAY”



Ocean views from the Jacuzzi at Spa My Blend By Clarins; a stress-free experience begins in the spa's reception (below)



Clockwise, from top: Spa My Blend By Clarins; a spacious bathroom in a Sunset Deluxe Water Pool Villa; gaze at the tranquil sea while indulging in a relaxing bath

PEACE, PAMPERING & PLAY

Velaa's atmosphere is one that will naturally soothe, relax and revive, but to fully immerse yourself in an environment of peace and pampering, stripping any remnants of stress away, the resort's Spa is a haven of wellness. Whether creating a programme for thorough rejuvenation, or simply submitting to the hands of a skilled therapist, Asian-inspired therapies relax through Ayurveda, yoga and meditation.

One of the few hotels globally to feature Spa My Blend By Clarins, these high-quality products are used in facials and treatments to achieve the best results whether the aim is to detox, relax, revitalise or stay looking young and fresh. Experts in beauty and fitness guide guests to the six overwater private treatment rooms, from where you emerge ready to relax in the Spa's sauna,

steam room, Jacuzzi, hair salon, nail studio or even a snow room – the ultimate tropical chill-out zone. For an innovative holistic experience, the Wolke 7 Cloud 9 cradles guests in a cloud-shaped reclining pod, resulting in the deepest relaxation.

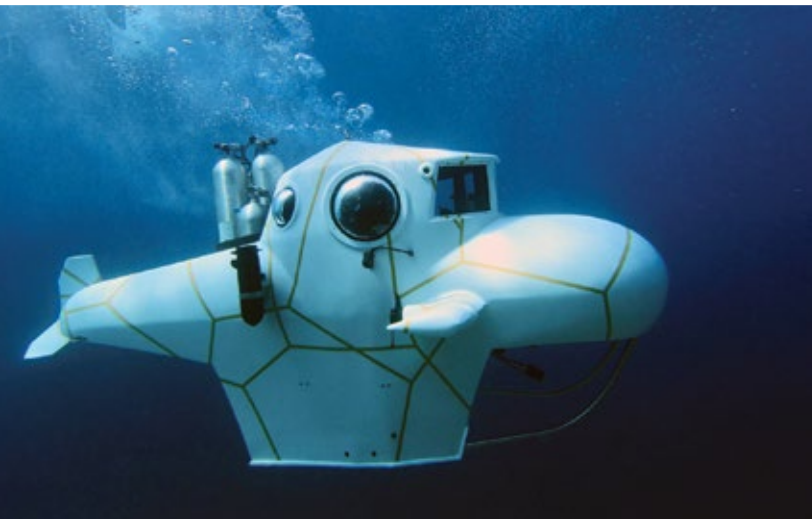
Outside, a yoga pavilion embraces the natural surroundings to help promote inner harmony with the aid of a yoga masters, while a raised-tree meditation platform with views of gardens and the golf course hosts personal-training programmes. For those who wish to keep up their fitness routine, a gym further helps guests stay healthy in-between all that relaxing with state-of-the-art TechnoGym equipment, or guests can get sporty on the covered tennis and squash courts, a football field or play some beach volleyball on the sand.







Tee off at the Velaa Golf Academy by Olazabal; learn to dive in a training pool (below right); take a seat in the cabin of a semi-submarine (below left)



Aragu Restaurant and CRU Lounge jut out into the azure waters; a unique and modern experience waits at Tavaru (above)



“  
GOURMANDS CAN TAKE  
THEIR PICK FROM DISHES  
FOCUSING ON INDIVIDUAL  
ELEMENTS OR AN EXCITING  
BLEND OF INGREDIENTS  
THAT WORK TOGETHER IN  
DELECTABLE HARMONY

#### A DESTINATION FOR DINING

Velaa may be private, but that doesn't mean it lacks in dining variety. Six lounge and fine-dining options offer a wide menu of flavours and experiences. Avi is the place to spend an afternoon or evening, with a mixologist creating refreshing island tipples and a DJ keeping the energy up while guests socialise over a game of billiards. Oenophiles will want to take a seat in the Wine Cellar with more than 500 bins – the largest on the Maldives – and bottles that include boutique sips and world-renowned marques. All the bubbles you could want can be found at CRU Champagne Lounge, where rare champagnes are poured in an elegant space with the sparkling Indian Ocean as a backdrop.

When it's time to indulge your appetite three restaurants serve up ample variety. Head to beachy Athiri any time of day for breakfast, piping-hot pizzas from a wood-fired oven or island specialities with the sand between your toes. Step into modish Tavaru Tower and it's clear that a unique experience waits. The tower's eponymous restaurant looks to Asia for its inspiration with Chinese, Korean and Japanese cuisine created by skilled chefs, resulting in a melange of exotic flavours and spices to thrill the palate. To celebrate where whimsical fish float under a thatched-palm roof, Aragu includes cuisine inspired by culinary artist Gaushan de Silva, the resort's chef de cuisine. Featuring two distinct culinary styles – one simple, and another sensational – gourmands can take their pick from dishes focusing on individual elements or an exciting blend of ingredients that work together in delectable harmony. Whichever is chosen, the overwater restaurant's views complete the memorable experience.

#### STAY

VELAA PRIVATE ISLAND MALDIVES  
+960 656 5000  
WWW.VELAAPRIVATEISLAND.COM

#### INDIAN OCEAN EXPLORER

Whether you prefer to paddle, dive or catch the wind in your sails, Velaa offers one of the best destinations to get acquainted with the Maldives' pristine marine world. Myriad water sports are available for guests, from a Weta trimaran and a Topcat K1 catamaran to jet skis, a Sea Bob and kite surfing. Take a dive – or a seat in the cockpit of a submarine – to get up close and personal with underwater life, where a rainbow of colours and diverse life wait to be discovered.

Guests can tap into luxury on the surface of the Indian Ocean with cruises on a traditional yet sumptuous *batheli* boat, where dolphins may be sighted playfully jumping from the calm seas. For a bigger thrill, head out on a fishing boat, equipped with the latest gear and most comfortable fittings, well-suited to a long day on the water.

Alternatively, sail into the region's glowing sunsets with the resort's prestige yacht, for an experience ideal for the most special of occasions.

While the ocean offers a wealth of activities, there's plenty to keep guests busy on land as well. Shops brim with lavish souvenirs from fashionable clothes and limited-edition jewellery to unique children's gifts. Sedate afternoons can be spent curled up with a book and a cup of tea in the Library where 1,000 carefully curated books and magazines line shelves. Golfers and children have not been overlooked on the private island either, with a large Kids Club and the Velaa Golf Academy designed by Jose Maria Olazabel, where nine tees, six greens and an unforgettable backdrop provide the setting for teeing off in paradise.



PROMOTIONAL FEATURE

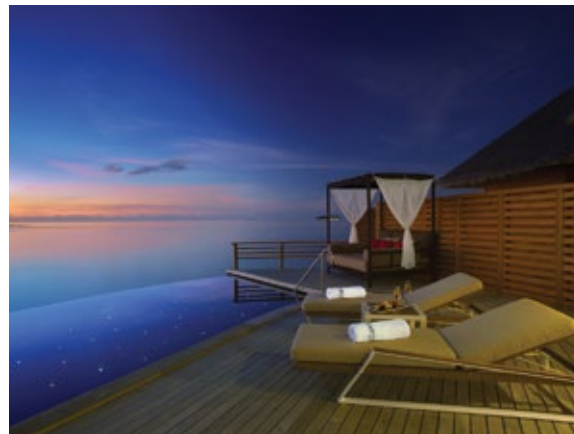


## BAROS MALDIVES

Encapsulating the magic of the Maldives, Baros was one of the archipelago's very first resorts, and has since become the pinnacle of Maldivian experiences, with genuine romance, refined luxury, and authentic and warm welcomes that make guests feel like a long-time friend. Without traffic or motorised water sports but coloured by plentiful vegetation and aquamarine seas, an ambiance of tranquillity and sophistication immerses everyone who arrives at this destination, which is far from your day-to-day, but never difficult to reach.

Just 15 to 30 metres off the resort's powder-soft beaches is a house reef teeming with colourful coral and vibrant marine life, from turtles to rays and flamboyant schools of fish. With personalised diving experiences and 30 dive sites less than an hour from Baros, it's a must-visit destination for marine enthusiasts. When you're not diving into the watery wonderland, there's plenty more to dip into, such as trips on Nooma, a traditional sailing vessel offering up intimate and romantic sunset cruises; calming sunrise yoga sessions and soothing spa sessions; or taking a meal in total privacy on the Piano Deck surrounded by calm, crystalline waters.

Sit down at one of five restaurants and lounges to indulge in gourmet dining and refreshing cocktails – but be sure not to miss the overwater Lighthouse Restaurant, ideal for romantic evenings and fine food such as fresh oysters and lobster, enjoyed while rays and fish can be seen swimming below. After a day of discovery and Maldivian hospitality, sumptuously appointed villas wait with teak floors, local design touches, large beds with pillow menus and secluded personal terraces. A sought-after destination for honeymoon and anniversary celebrations, overwater villas with private plunge pools, a dedicated villa host and direct access to the translucent lagoon ensure a getaway that won't be soon forgotten.



Baros Maldives  
+960 664 2672  
[www.baros.com](http://www.baros.com)



*"I finally found all of the privacy and relaxation I had been craving for months on an island as beautiful as it is welcoming."*

BAROS  
maldives

[www.baros.com](http://www.baros.com)







# FLIGHT OF FANCY

*A low-cost airline may not be the first choice for discerning travellers, however Michelle Wranik-Hicks finds flydubai's business class an affordable indulgence*

WORDS LIKE “LUXURY” AND “LOW COST” rarely go together, but since flying with flydubai between Dubai International Airport and the Maldives, I’m no longer so sure they shouldn’t. Flying to Malé four times a week, the budget-airline’s business-class offering is a savvy way to save money without compromising on luxury, and the new departure gate set aside exclusively for business passengers at Terminal 2 allows for a seamless, speedy and decidedly “un-budget” boarding experience.

“  
WITH ONLY 12 SEATS IN  
BUSINESS, THE FRONT  
END FEELS INTIMATE  
AND SPACIOUS

After a swift priority check-in, I head to the airline’s Business Lounge, located just after duty free, providing a welcome respite from Terminal 2’s frenetic hubbub. The two-level lounge is on the small side with café-style seating and little atmosphere on the lower level, and armchairs and a bar on the upper level, but the food and beverage options are impressive, including pastries, salads and a handful of hot meals, with a variety of teas, coffee and juices.

Business passengers are requested to be at the departure gate 20 minutes prior to take off

for fast-track boarding; I’m seated for less than 10 minutes before a dedicated minibus service arrives, transferring me to the aircraft within minutes. As the first passenger to board, I’m greeted warmly and the service is genuine – smiling cabin crew hand me hot towels and a choice of apple or orange juice.

With only 12 seats in business, the front end feels intimate and spacious (particularly when it turns out I’m the only passenger flying business). Crafted from a deep-blue, custom-Italian leather, the seat pitch is 106.6 cm with a 17.7-cm recline and an extendable leg rest that raises at the touch of a button. The tray table emerges from the chair arm, and there’s more than enough room to whip out the laptop and work, with plenty of all-important arm space separating you from the adjacent passenger. To power up, there’s also a universal plug socket

fitted into the lower section of the seat. A bottle of water and complimentary flydubai Philtek noise-cancelling headphones are stowed within the armrest compartment.

If you’d rather relax, the in-flight entertainment includes a 30.7-cm high-definition screen with a decent selection of films and television shows, free for business passengers, while the eReader allows digital access to 45 newspaper titles in seven languages. The user interface is touch screen and easy to navigate, and I experience no glitches during my movie watching.

The route to Malé is a red-eye so I don’t peruse the menu, and instead gratefully accept the offer of a second pillow and blanket from cabin crew. Upon arrival, I am given priority to disembark the plane before other passengers.

The morning return leg to Dubai flies via Colombo, Sri Lanka, and though there’s a change in cabin crew after the stopover, the service remains consistent and is no less delightful. From Malé, my freshly brewed coffee arrives with cookies and chocolates. From Colombo, a three-course meal is served atop a tablecloth and on white china, the airline offering halal, vegetarian, beef or chicken selection from the mains. My delicious braised beef is served with creamy mash and vegetables, along with a salad of leaves and pasta shells, and a baked round of pumpkin pie.

There may be no flat bed or Bulgari amenities, but for a low-cost airline, business class is a pleasant surprise (clearly even for economy passengers – just watch their expressions as they mistakenly take their seats in the first rows) and flydubai pulls it off convincingly.

AIRLINE: flydubai  
AIRCRAFT: Boeing 737-800  
ROUTE: DXB (Dubai, UAE) to MLE (Malé, Maldives)  
CLASS: Business  
SEAT: 2A  
FARE: From US\$1,640



The airline's Terminal 2 lounge



FOR WORLDWIDE HOTEL RESERVATIONS REGISTER AT  
[WWW.DOTW.COM](http://WWW.DOTW.COM)

Real-time online booking confirmations for more than 120,000 ground services in over 10,000 destinations. Net wholesale rates for hotels, resorts, apartments, villas, transfers, sightseeing tours and excursions worldwide.

FOR TRAVEL PROFESSIONALS ONLY



DESTINATIONS OF THE WORLD



## THE RESIDENCE

by *Cenizaro*

*A private sanctuary.  
A home for the heart.*

  
THE LEADING HOTELS  
OF THE WORLD®

CLOSENESS IS THE JOY OF BEING TOGETHER. AN UNSPOKEN BOND, DELIGHTING IN EACH OTHER. NATURE INVITES WITH HER BREATHTAKING BEAUTY, PROMISING ENDLESS HAPPINESS EVERY DAY IN PARADISE. LIFE AS IT IS MEANT TO BE. MOMENTS ENRICHED AT THE RESIDENCE.

TUNIS | MAURITIUS | ZANZIBAR | MALDIVES

THERESIDENCE.COM