

# The islandchief

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**TRAIN WITH INDUSTRY EXPERTS**



**FOUR SEASONS**  
RESORTS  
MALDIVES



EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH

**CHARLIE EVERITT**

SUSTAINABILITY MANAGER, BANYAN TREE GLOBAL FOUNDATION

**SAMANTHA GALLIMORE**

MARINE LAB MANAGER, BANYAN TREE MARINE LAB

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— AVIATION PRESS —

## Manta Air Welcomes its first Seaplane

Manta Air, the five-star experience in the skies of the Maldives, welcomed its first and second seaplane on October 9 & 10, 2019, consecutively.

All of Manta Air's DHC-6 Twin Otters come fitted with latest technology Garmin G950 NXi next generation integrated flight deck avionics combined with a weather radar. Garmin G950 equipment includes dual core modern processing power, providing crew with immediate access to flight plan data and weather radar information.

"At Manta Air, we strive to provide the best service to our customers. We believe there is a need to invest in the latest technology and not rely on the obsolete legacy navigation systems to make our service as customer centric as possible. This is why we invested in G950 and the latest aviation softwares. This upgrade removes hundreds of feet of cable from the cockpit and makes the aircraft lighter, reduces maintenance costs and provides our crew with enhanced capabilities to increase the dispatch reliability of our service" said Edward Alford, COO of Manta Air.

Ahmed Maumoon, CMO of Manta Air said "Our aim from day one has always been to make a significant difference in how our customers experience air travel in the Maldives. We will be starting with fixed schedule, advanced booking capabilities and, for the first time in the Maldives, we will make the seaplane service reliable to all our passengers which will operate on a fixed schedule dedicated to on time performance. And we want to keep pushing these boundaries and to keep improving our service. Our customers will have guaranteed seats the moment the booking is confirmed with exact flight timings, thus removing all uncertainties for passengers travelling to their destinations on seaplanes."

The arrival of Manta Air has already been a game changer in the domestic aviation industry, eliminating the fears of flight uncertainty for passengers flying in the Maldives, and setting new standards in service excellence along the way with pre-published schedules and a tailored approach to provide an



amazing experience to all passengers. "The overwhelming support of the public has been a driving force for us. And we would like to assure everyone that we would keep on expanding our services so that everyone can enjoy their tropical way to fly!", said Maumoon.

Manta Air officials aim to set a new

benchmark for the seaplane service standards in the Maldives, as it follows the high standards already set by the Manta Air's domestic ATR operations. Officials also said that final preparations are now underway as the company is gearing up towards starting its seaplane operations in November.

## Gulf Air commences flights to the Maldives



Gulf Air - the national carrier of the Kingdom of Bahrain - celebrated its inaugural service to the Maldives as its flight GF144 landed in Velana International Airport in the capital, Male. The landing aircraft, a new Airbus 320neo, was welcomed with a water cannon salute and, upon arrival, a celebratory event was held at the airport which saw the attendance of Gulf Air's Chief Commercial Officer Mr. Vincent Coste, the Managing Director of Maldives Marketing & Public Relations Corporation Mr. Thoyyib Mohamed and Chief Executive of Maldives Civil Aviation Authority Mr. Hussain Jaleel along with various dignitaries, a number of local media, travel industry representatives and airport officials.

At the inaugural event in Velana International Airport, Mr. Coste said: "This is a remarkable event for us to fly, for the first time, to the Maldives. This tourist destination is widely popular amongst premium leisure travelers being honeymooners or families seeking luxurious holidays". He also added: "With five weekly direct flights between Bahrain and Male and with great connectivity through our hub, this destination promises to be a key route within our growing network."

Acting Head of Operations of Maldives Airports Company Ltd Mr. Ibrahim Hareef said: "It's an honor that 'Gulf Air' the flag carrier of Bahrain has become our newest partner and we are confident that the airline will add value to our airport and benefit the Maldives in terms of Trade & Tourism and I thank Gulf Air Team for choosing Velana International Airport in

their route expansion and I wish Gulf Air success in their future endeavors.

Followed by the inauguration ceremony held at the airport, Gulf Air held a celebratory lunch, well attended by Government dignitaries, industry professionals, Maldivian civil aviation officials and media personnel. Mr. Vincent Coste, Chief Commercial Officer addressed the gathering and expressed Gulf Air long term desire to operate its services to the Maldives as an extension of its "Boutique" strategy. The Honorable Minister of Aviation and Transport Ms. Aishath Nahula graced the event as the Chief guest and in her address to the audience; reiterated the commitment of the ministry to extend all possible assistance to Gulf Air in line with the national tourism directives. The highlights of the event included the ceremonial handing over of a plaque by Mr. Vincent Coste to Mr. Ruwan Kumarage, Country Manager of Mack Air Services Maldives; denoting the official appointment of Mack Air; a John Keells Subsidiary as the General Sales Agent for Gulf Air in the Republic of Maldives and the selection of a lucky winner of a Business Class Air ticket to London. The event concluded with a speech made by Dr. Umar, espousing the importance of new entrants such as Gulf Air into the ever-expanding Maldivian tourism market.

Flights can be booked at Mack Air Services Maldives, GSA Gulf Air by contacting +960 333 4708/ 09 or via email [res.masm@keells.com](mailto:res.masm@keells.com).

AVIATION PRESS

# Trans Maldivian Airways Expands Their Massive Fleet



Trans Maldivian Airways expands its fleet to 53 aircrafts by adding the first seaplane of the new to be joining soon. In the history of the airline's 30 years, this is the biggest expansion drive done so far.

The first of four seaplanes took delivery on 26th September 2019 and the remaining planes are scheduled to be brought over the next few months. The first aircraft was ferried from Santa Maria, Portugal.

TMA currently operates an all-amphibian fleet of 53 Twin Otter aircrafts on regular flights throughout the Maldivian archipelago. With the addition of the 53rd aircraft to its fleet, they have strengthened

their position as the largest seaplane operator in the world.

TMA has played a pivotal role in developing the tourism infrastructure in the Maldives and the latest addition to its fleet is in line with its commitment to serve the growing demand with the new upcoming resorts and also provide added flexibility to all its partner resorts.

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## NEW OPENINGS

## Luxurious JW Marriott Debuts in the Maldives



**JW Marriot Maldives Resort & Spa located on the island of Vagaru in Shaviyani Atoll has welcomed its first guests on November 1, 2019.**

“We are thrilled to open our JW Marriott brand in this truly amazing destination,” said Mitzi Gaskins, Vice President & Global Brand Leader, JW Marriott. “With a focus on holistic well-being and enriching, thoughtfully-curated experiences, this private island resort will inspire our guests to be fully present and come together with loved ones to enjoy a getaway that nourishes not only the body but also the mind and soul.”

The first JW Marriot hotel in the Maldives has 60 spacious villas with a minimum of 2,520sqft, all with private decks and pools, under the management of General Manager Marc Gussing. Dining, located at the center of the resort, consists of five trendy restaurants, showcasing impressive culinary treats in the Maldives with chefs from some of the world’s top restaurants including Nobu, one

of the most recognized Japanese restaurants in the world.

Each villa is designed to look like an inverted Dhoni boat, the traditional fishing boat of the Maldives. There are four villa categories to choose from; the Duplex Beach Pool Villas featuring two bedrooms, an upstairs lounge and direct access to the beach. Next, the Duplex Overwater Pool Villas will provide unforgettable views of the Laccadive Sea along with a private plunge pool. One-bedroom Beach Pool Villas with direct beach access and Overwater Pool Villas with a choice of sunset or sunrise view are also available.

The resort also offers an impressive culinary selection with three fully-serviced bars comprising of 98 different types of rum, an expansive wine cellar with over 300 labels as well as a

chef’s garden. Visitors can feast on a wide range of cuisines at the five restaurants, including Thai dishes in a treetop restaurant, Japanese Teppanyaki, poolside wood-fired pizzas, local dishes and seafood in a fine-dining, overwater setting. There is also a 24-hour in-villa dining services and destination dining experiences. The meals are complemented with a choice of sake, Japanese whisky, rum cocktails, smoked cocktails, and both new and old-world wines.

Marriott’s brands already present in the Maldives include St. Regis Hotels & Resorts (The St. Regis Maldives Vommuli Resort), W Hotels (W Maldives), Sheraton Hotels & Resorts (Sheraton Maldives Full Moon Resort & Spa), and Westin Hotels & Resorts (The Westin Maldives Miriandhoo Resort).



## Cinnamon opens 4th property in the Maldives, Cinnamon Velifushi

**Cinnamon Hotels & Resorts opens its newest hotel on the island of Aarah, Cinnamon Velifushi Maldives, continuing their expansion in the Maldives.**

Cinnamon Velifushi is the fourth property added to its portfolio in the Maldives, and the 15th to its overall portfolio which also consists of eight resorts and three city hotels in Sri Lanka. On October 1, 2019, the opening ceremony of the resort commenced with the participation of Namal Karunaratne, the Sri Lankan Ambassador in the Maldives.

The five-star resort consisting of total 90 rooms features 79 square meter Superior Beach Lofts designed for those of us who enjoy the view of waves crashing onto the white shores. A range of Bungalows are available to choose from as well; Beach Bungalows, Water Bungalows and Sunset Water Bungalows. The water suites, each 208 square meters, including a private pool, are truly luxurious. Moreover, a sitting area with a hammock will be included on the terrace of the suites.

For all things yum and icy under the sun, Fen Pool Bar is sure to pour you an endless list of drinks. Iru Beach Bar serves rich, signature gelatos besides

other drinks and snacks.

Marlin, the overwater seafood restaurant at the resort will bring you fresh seafood prepared in the most delectable international and Maldivian styles. Lastly, Hama - Rhythmic Bar is sure to lift your spirits with good music and fun cocktails open all night long starting from 8 pm.

Chairman of John Keells Group, Krishan Balendra stated that the Group is committed to consistent growth and further expansion in the region. Seconding his thoughts, Jit Gunaratne, President Leisure Sector at John Keells Group stated, “Cinnamon has succeeded in growing its occupancies and profitability in an economically challenging environment and envisages aggressive expansion in the region. We are committed to stay competitive and grow our portfolio with enhanced technology and processes introduced to our own operations to be the preferred management company for potential developers in Sri Lanka and the Maldives.”

Special features on the property include the main bar with sweeping views of the Indian Ocean, a fully-equipped sports bar, and a luxury wellness spa operated by the acclaimed Mandara Spas.

The hotel offers an array of unique experiences including a swimmable lagoon surrounding the island with an abundance of marine-life. Exclusively designed furniture from Germany, Italy and the Far East offer the property a chic and exclusive ambience.

Expressing his views on the opening of Cinnamon Velifushi Maldives, Minister of State for Tourism, Dr. Ahmed Solih, emphasized the importance of foreign direct investment to the cluster of islands. He also expressed appreciation towards the level of investment and commitment made by Cinnamon Hotels and Resorts as a pioneering tourism entity in the country, and to its continued support in expanding in the Maldives with its burgeoning tourism industry.

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## NEW APPOINTMENTS

## Karen Merrick Appointed as General Manager at JA Manafaru Maldives

JA Resorts & Hotels announced the appointment of Scottish National, Karen Merrick as a General Manager. Karen is the second female General Manager in the JA Resorts & Hotels portfolio of 8 properties, and currently one of the few female General Managers in the Maldives. She joins the JA Manafaru team to maintain the island's longstanding popularity with international guests and to communicate the unique soul of the island with her innate understanding of Maldivian culture and heritage.

Karen's career spans 30 years across a variety of boutique hotels in the Indian Ocean and Europe. Prior to joining JA Resorts & Hotels, Karen spent the last three years running the Song Saa Private Island in Cambodia. Her previous tenures include The Taaras



Resort & Spa in Malaysia, Kemang Icon by Alila in Indonesia, Soneva Fushi Resort & Residences, Diva/White Sands Resort & Spa and The Rania Experience - all based in the Maldives and Ackergill Tower, Scotland.

JA Manafaru is the idyllic 5-star luxury island resort. Fringed with exquisite powder beaches in pristine, lagoon ringed Haa Alif Atoll, at the northern tip of the Maldives, the chic tropical hideaway features 84 luxurious beachfront and over-water villas and bungalows, each with their own private plunge pool. World-class recreational facilities include Calm Spa, a fully equipped dive, water sports and excursion centre, plus a Marine Research Centre to conserve local ecology.

## Amilla Fushi welcomes Jason Kruse as General Manager



The Small Maldives Island Co is delighted to announce the appointment of Jason Kruse as General Manager of luxury island idyll, Amilla Fushi.

Jason brings with him over 20 years' experience in the international hospitality and tourism sector. He began his career with notable senior leadership positions across a varied portfolio of properties in his native Australia including with SPHC Hotels' Daydream Island and Laguna Quays. Jason then moved to successful tenures as General Manager at Casa Del Mar (Langkawi, Malaysia), The Breezes Resort (Bali, Indonesia), Six Senses Fiji and most notably a highly regarded six-year term at the helm of Universal Resorts' Kurumba Maldives resort.

His wealth of experience in luxury worldwide resorts will complement the current team of talented hoteliers at Amilla Fushi to further strengthen the resort's reputation for delivering bespoke services and rich experiences. Jason is also passionate about introducing more sustainable practices to the island with more focus on expanding the resort's current brand essence.

Jason has joined the Amilla Family with his wife Victoria; and together they are looking forward to a blissful journey on their new island home.

## Niushad Shareef appointed Head of Brand and Marcomms at Ooredoo Maldives



Niushad Shareef has been appointed as Head of Brand and Marcomms at Ooredoo Maldives starting from October 1, 2019.

Renowned for his marketing skills, Niushad worked at Allied Insurance, one of the biggest insurance companies in the Maldives for four years prior to the appointment. He had helped the company to flourish by gaining the public's interest through a number of ads working as the Head of Marketing.

Niushad previously worked at Ooredoo between the years 2006-2010. After that he filled the role of Brand Manager at Think Associates and then transferred to Think advertising and spent three years as their Senior Manager, Brand Planning.

It is expected that with thirteen years of experience under his belt, Ooredoo's market will improve tremendously.



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## ISLAND PRESS



## “Unveiling The New Look” of Angsana Velavaru Maldives

Angsana Velavaru Maldives, part of Banyan Tree Hotels & Resorts’ collection of private island resorts has completed a multi-million-dollar renovation and expansion by enhancing the product offering of this iconic resort.

The refurbished Beach Front Infinity Pool Villas now feature a 15 square meter plunge pool overlooking the ocean, and are all equipped with stylish facilities, light interiors and chic furnishings with Maldivian inspired decor. They also feature private and spacious rear gardens with circular shaped decks and stylish bathtubs. The panoramic views of the turtle shaped villas lead to the large front terrace where you can either laze on a sunbed or enjoy views of the unique island lagoon.

The completion of the new 324 square meter main pool at Kuredhi beach is a spectacular addition to Angsana Velavaru. Guests can now take in endless sunsets while sipping cocktails in the modern in-pool lounges or contemporary submerged cabanas, while kids can play freely in the kids’ pool. The Kids Club - Rangers Club, is now at its new location at the main beach and features a 200 square meter private area, kids pool and a separate designated entry to the new football ground. The Club offers child-friendly activities such as Easter egg hunts, craft workshops, Olympic-themed games, and more. Diving lessons,

supervised by certified instructors are a great way to help kids experience their first underwater breath.

Maldivian inspired al fresco dining concept Magoo Garden adds to the diverse dine-around experience, with the resort now offering up to 5 restaurants; Mediterranean fine dining at the overwater restaurant and bar Azzurro, lobster menus at Funa restaurant and bar, all day dining at Kaani restaurant and pool menus at Kuredhi restaurant, bar and gallery.

The new collaboration between Angsana Velavaru and MAC (Maldivian Artist Community) further enhances the local culture experience and brings an array of art events such as painting classes and art workshops. With MAC’s permanent art exhibition at Kuredhi bar, guests will have the opportunity to purchase art works and with their contribution, support the local artist community.

Mourad Essafi, General Manager, said “We look forward to providing guests with unmatched comfort of the new villas, inspirational dining experiences and hospitality that comes with

staying at an Angsana resort. The new look of Velavaru features an appealing combination of chic and vibrant elements inspired by Maldivian art creating a distinctive style that is evident at every touch point of the Angsana brand.”

Angsana Velavaru is renowned for its myriad of beach activities and groundbreaking initiatives focused on giving back to the community. These programmes are organized by Angsana Velavaru’s Marine Conservation Lab where guests may participate in unique experiences including coral planting to replenish damaged reefs and snorkeling trips to learn about the abundant marine ecosystem and coral gardens found in and around the lagoon.

Guests looking for an adrenaline rush can choose from a wide range of motorized and non-motorized sports. With more than 100 activities available to bring out your inner explorer, a return trip is likely inevitable. With its proximity to more than 30 vibrant dive sites, Angsana Velavaru is the ideal location for novice to experienced divers. Certified instructors at the PADI



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ISLAND PRESS



# Christmas completely relaxed at Hideaway Beach Resort & Spa

The children have been looking forward to the Christmas season for months. For the parents, however, the Christmas season is often associated with some challenges. The reflective moments are often missed out when too many commitments are waiting. Why not leave Christmas preparations to somebody else and spend this Christmas far away? Wouldn't that be wonderful?



The crescent-shaped island of Dhonakulhi in the northern most atoll of the Maldives, Haa Alif Atoll, is Hideaway Beach Resort & Spa with its 103 rooms in 10 categories. When the guests arrive, the island will be ready to enchant everyone with a glittering Christmas. Christmas dreams in the tropics – a very special experience for the whole family!

Finally, you can rest and pause - in shorts and barefoot on the beach. As for the kids, it kicks off with a letter to Santa for the last wishes before the big party, baking gingerbread houses, tinkering tree decorations, decorating cookies and painting T-shirts.

In the evening, the many fairy lights in the palm trees will glow with the nightly starry sky - a very festive ambiance.

The next day will begin with a discovery tour of dazzling Maldivian fish and dolphins, a 'fashionista of the island' party wearing the self-

painted T-shirts from the previous day, a splash at the Kids Club, a bubble show and a Maldivian kids party – bust a move on the dance floor with friends from all over the world in the evening.

Between the gingerbread house and the Christmas tree, there will be time to splash around in the sea and the pool, enjoying the Christmas time as relaxed as ever before with already-relaxed parents.

On the big day, excitement will rise at the Hideaway Beach Resort & Spa. Along with the smell of fresh cookies and gingerbread, the big question in the air will be whether Santa will find his way to the Maldives. He most definitely will! It will be an unforgettable meeting as the bearded man from the North Pole will most likely fall into the fun holiday mood as well.

Say "cheese" in the photo box as the most extraordinary festive pictures will be created

together with Santa. A guaranteed relaxed and unforgettable holiday for the whole family, far away, at 30 degrees.

Mr. Christian Szabo, general manager of Hideaway Beach Resort & Spa was quoted as saying "Every Christmas and New Year, we cast a magical spell all over the resort and transform it into a fantasy world for children and adults alike. It is even more beautiful to see the joy and happiness in their eyes, setting a warm festive mood all throughout the stay during the holidays."

"Christmas is considered to be one of the most joyous times of year, filled with festivities and gift giving that's why I am excited to see families and friends travel and gather together especially to those who are coming back to celebrate with us every year, making it even memorable for them this year as so many exciting surprises and activities await." says Mr. Michael Wieser, CEO of Lily Hotels & Resorts Pvt Ltd.



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## EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

# CHARLIE EVERITT

SUSTAINABILITY MANAGER, BANYAN TREE GLOBAL FOUNDATION

# SAMANTHA GALLIMORE

MARINE LAB MANAGER, BANYAN TREE MARINE LAB

### What does sustainable tourism mean to you?

Charlie:

Really it comes down to balance. By its very nature, the tourism and hospitality industry takes a huge toll on our planet's resources and contributes to all manner of footprints (carbon, food, plastic etc.); therefore the industry has a particular duty to make responsible decisions and holistic choices which affect how it operates. These considerations should not only aim to reduce any negative impacts on surrounding environments and local communities, but also support development and enhancement – encouraging both people and planet to prosper, whilst enabling the business to profit. Sustainable or responsible tourism is really about ensuring that you engage with your stakeholders effectively, in a two-way process, and looking to create long-term value for all parties involved.

Sam:

To me it is the opportunity to travel and explore our beautiful world, whilst being conscious of the footprint we leave behind, in order to preserve and protect it for the next person who comes along. Here in the Maldives, this of course includes the beautiful coral reefs, which are a major attraction. Every company has the power to influence the development of destinations, which can also lead to negative impacts, but I'm proud to say that I work for a company like Banyan Tree who have utilised this influence positively by giving back to the local communities. They look to protect one piece, albeit relatively small, of a larger puzzle that is the complex coral ecosystems of the Maldives. As an industry, we need to come together to prioritise conservation of the environment and these beautiful reefs for future generations to enjoy.

### Angsana Ihuru and Banyan Tree Vabbinfaru have been running a Marine Lab since 1996. Can you tell us a little bit about why the marine lab was established?

Sam:

My understanding is that it was somewhat an organic process, the coming together of proactive minds who shared the same values for conservation of the natural environment. Banyan Tree was the first international 5\* brand to open in the Maldives. The owners Mr and Mrs Ho were committed to the company's mission statement, 'embracing the environment, empowering people'. After being introduced to the former Director of Conservation for Banyan Tree and Angsana Maldives and one of the Directors of Ihuru Investments PVT LTD, Mr. Abdul Azeez Abdul Hakeem – more familiar as N.D. Azeez, who had started coral conservation on neighbouring Ihuru island (now under the Angsana sister brand to Banyan Tree), they together pioneered the first resort-based marine conservation lab here in the Maldives. It is famed for being the first resort-based marine lab to hire qualified marine biologists to carry out research. In January 2004 the team was welcomed into the new conservation hub for Banyan Tree, on Vabbinfaru. The Lab has a long history of remarkable projects and its collaborations with different researchers; when I first joined the team in March 2018 I was amazed at its achievements, and I am proud to be a part of this legacy. Personally, the most significant work undertaken by the lab includes the first video recording of coral spawning in the Maldives, which received gratitude from former President Nasheed; as well as being the first islands in the world to accommodate electric reef technology led by N.D. Azeez and two other scientists - Thomas Goreau and Wolf Hilbertz; and finally the Lab ran the longest turtle headstart program in the Maldives, which sadly stopped the year I first joined.

In the lab today we are obviously addressing global issues

such as climate change. This involves targeting critical habitats and species, predominantly focusing on coral reefs and threatened megafauna (turtles) apex predators (sharks) and overexploited species (groupers). The research that we carry out, often in partnership with PhD and Master's students from international universities, can be used to inform management strategies within the Maldives. Our current research focuses on the connectivity between the coral reefs and the open ocean, with the latest research published in the peer-reviewed journals.

**More than 60 per cent of coral reefs in the Maldives were affected by 'bleaching' in 2016 was quoted in the Guardian. How colossal is it to restore the affected 60 per cent of coral reefs across the Maldives? Could you tell us something about the amount of work that's needed to be done?**

Sam:

I think it's commonly misunderstood that the aim of coral restoration is to create a flourishing reef as quickly as possible, but in reality the true aim is to increase resilience and aid rates of recovery of coral reefs after disturbance; such as the bleaching event in 2016. We can help to restore reefs on a local scale, but in the end if the global climate continues to degrade then it becomes harder to keep restoring the reefs, because they have no time to recover. My understanding is that after the 1998 bleaching event, it took around eight years with no disturbance for the reefs to recover naturally. We are hopeful that the restoration efforts of Banyan Tree and Angsana Ihuru will aid the settlement of juvenile corals and we will start to see the rebirth of the coral reefs, predominantly here in Kaafu Atoll where we operate and in Dhaalu Atoll where our other Marine Lab (for Angsana Velavaru) is based. Whilst we of course hope for swift recovery across the whole of the Maldives, we are realistic in our understanding that the scale of this objective can only be achieved through collective efforts and we hope to play our part by improving awareness to accomplish this.

**What does coral restoration entail and what results have you achieved so far?**

Sam:

Our restoration efforts include a variety of techniques such as finding 'corals of opportunity', broken off from larger colonies, and transplanting them onto the reef and other structures, including electric reefs. The first electric reef ever built in the Maldives, was in 1996 on Angsana Ihuru, with the second shortly in 1998, and in 2001 a third reef was created. These were created by transplanting corals onto a metal frame structure, which is provided with a low-voltage electrical current to increase the growth rate of corals. These still remain the first and only electric reefs in the Maldives. Our new venture has been an extension of 'The Necklace' project which we hope will show promising scientific results. Another aspect of our restoration work involves transplanting corals from our successful coral rope nurseries on Banyan Tree and Angsana Ihuru, onto the reef slope. These colonies grow on ropes at around 10m below the surface, away from warming waters and predators. Each time I dive to clean the nursery it makes me happy to see these healthy colonies on the reef!



**Samantha Gallimore**

Marine Lab Manager, Banyan Tree Marine Lab

**How do you measure and monitor the success of your sustainability initiatives?**

Charlie:

Truthfully, it is often quite difficult to quantify the success of sustainability initiatives – given the continuously evolving nature of this area, and the fact that much of the value these initiatives create or conserve is intangible – such as coral reefs and other fragile ecosystems, public health, cultural values and traditions. Though a few bold environmental and social economists have dared to financially enumerate some of these values, it is tricky to establish how much impact individual activities can have towards achieving their ultimate goals, like solving hunger and poverty. This being said we do use simple metrics and indicators to measure the progress of our initiatives, such as the number of participants who attend our cleanups or educational talks, the kWh's of energy we save, the litres of rainwater we harvest, the number of trees or corals we plant and KG's of trash we collect. Using these data, we can then benchmark our progress and measure it against other companies and industry standards, with help from our strategic partner EarthCheck, who provide us with third-party external assurance through annual audits. Success is only really understood

as progress – and we strive towards our targets, objectives and goals, year after year, such as our current ongoing commitment to becoming a plastic free Banyan Tree, for which we have currently eliminated somewhere close to 90% of targeted single-use plastic items here in the Maldives, since we pledged on Earth Day 2018.

**From an environmental perspective, what are the main challenges that Angsana Ihuru and Banyan Tree Vabbinfaru face today?**

Sam:

Being based within one of the most sensitive ecosystems in the world comes with challenges; each island comprising the Maldives is at risk of disappearing due to the impacts of climate change. Unfortunately, this is something that cannot be tackled by one single nation, nor region, but requires cohesion across the whole international community, regardless of whether you are a coastal or landlocked state – the connectivity occurring between all environments means that we all have a role to play.

Here in the Maldives, as well as climate impacts you have added human pressure especially here in North Male' Atoll where you have very high boat traffic, we are within such close proximity to the

airport and Thilafushi and there is a higher density of resorts within a small area. The combination of this leads to overfishing and somewhat ineffective waste management, both of which I am sure can be improved with continued management and greater awareness. Like any ocean space, which is by nature vast, it is hard to monitor and enforce fishing regulations and control what does and does not occur. In terms of trying to conserve iconic species from human impacts, the Maldives has definitely set the benchmark high as one of the only nationwide shark sanctuaries in the world, and more recently also placing turtles under complete protection. It is great initiatives such as this that I hope will inspire other countries to follow suit and become fellow stewards of the natural environment.

**In your view, how important is sustainability performance for the reputation and competitiveness of a hotel?**

Charlie:

It really depends on how this question is approached or perceived. On one side of the coin, a company or hotel's sustainability performance should not be influenced by how they believe they will be regarded by the public and to impress upon the 'trend' of sustainability – i.e. leading to what we may call greenwashing and committing to sustainable or even philanthropic practices, simply to gain a competitive edge over competitors and prospective clients. Improving sustainability performance as I hope I addressed in my answer to the first question about defining sustainable tourism, is simply about doing what is right; acting responsibly to ensure you only bring positive change to communities and the environment. On the other side of the coin, it is however a positive thing that more and more people are taking sustainability performance into consideration when they choose which hotel to spend their dollars at, or even which destinations to visit; driving hotel businesses to become more accountable for their actions and the way they operate. It is not hard for me to imagine that in the near future, we will see sustainability performance indices up on sites like booking.com and tripadvisor, which will allow us to filter hotels in the same way we currently filter by price, location, room size and whether it has a swimming pool or spa – and I hope to see things like energy usage rating, use of single-use plastic, community relations and staff wellbeing driving consumer money more wisely towards responsible businesses, who are willing to invest their profits towards sustainable development of our planet and its people.

**Since the inception of the Green Imperative Fund in 2001, Banyan Tree has raised over US\$7 million. In which ways have these funds been expended that benefited the local communities?**

Charlie:

The Green Imperative Fund is an inspiring mechanism, in my opinion, providing Banyan Tree hotels and also the Banyan Tree Global Foundation (BTGF) with a means for funding sustainability focused initiatives conducted around the world. Every Banyan Tree property, as well as those of sister brands Angsana, Cassia and Dhawa, operate an opt-out guest donation policy matched dollar-for-dollar by the respective properties.

(Just as a side-note, as of this year we have raised over \$10 million.)

Twenty-percent of raised funds are kept by the property, to spend autonomously on context-based initiatives that provide external benefits, either to local communities or the natural environment. The remaining eighty-percent is returned to BTGF, the decentralized non-profit arm of the group focused towards sustainable development and CSR. We at BTGF look to allocate these funds towards specific projects proposed by individuals at our properties via funding cycles at the start and finish of each year. As an example, this year in celebration of Banyan Tree's 25th Anniversary, we invited project proposals focused on schools and education. In total we allocated over \$100,000 to support 4,000 students at 25 schools, which scaled everything from building whole schools in Morocco, Mexico and Laos, to redecorating classrooms and improving facilities, and purchasing books, computers, desks, chairs and other learning materials – across China, Seychelles, Indonesia, Thailand and here in the Maldives.

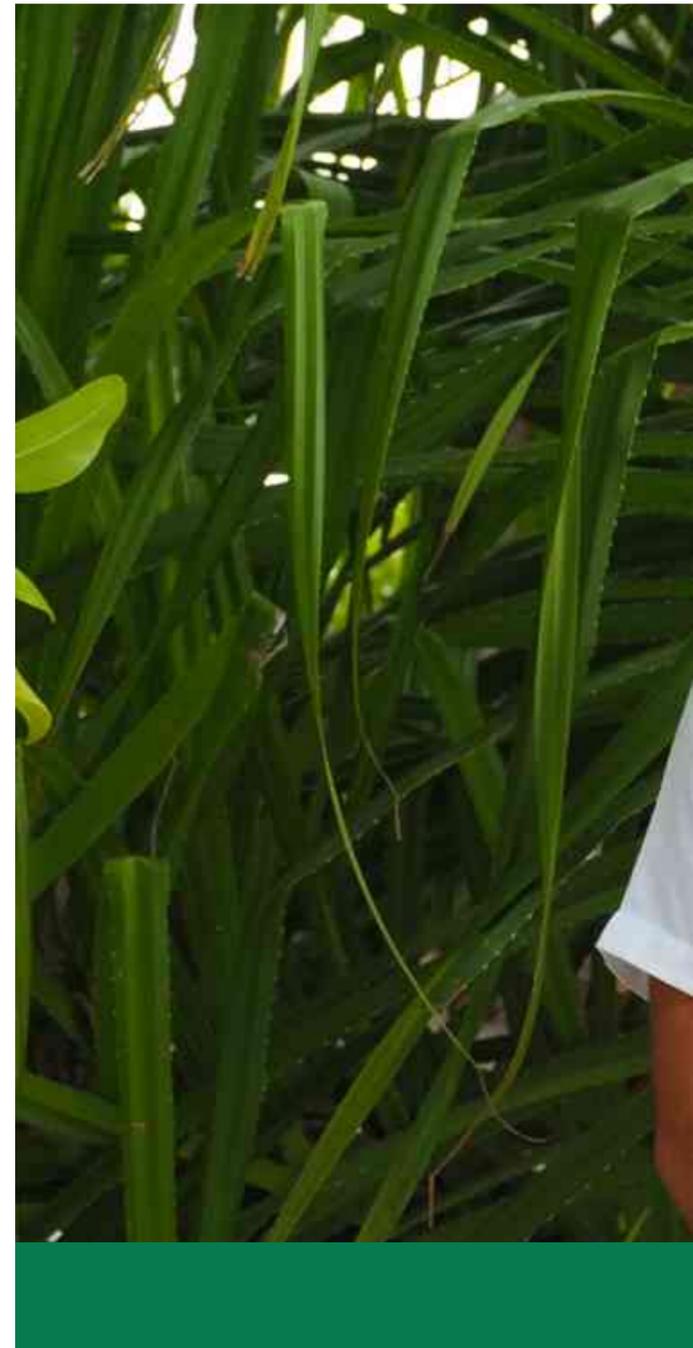
The funds are also used to support annual groupwide initiatives, such as our Seedlings programme that aims to develop vocational and life skills for youngsters from underprivileged segments of society; or the Greening Communities program, which supports restoration of natural habitats including mangroves and rainforests, with half a million trees now planted worldwide. The fund is often utilised for emergencies, providing disaster relief and humanitarian aid to areas affected by natural disasters such as earthquakes, tsunamis, floods, volcanic eruptions. Following the 2004 Tsunami, A recovery fund was established to rebuild homes and provide support to affected people in Thailand, Sri Lanka, Indonesia and here in the Maldives. Banyan Tree Maldives staff spent 3 months rebuilding a total of 80 homes in Naalafushi.

Past projects funded by GIF are diverse, for example here in the Maldives funds have supported research and conservation of coral reefs and endangered species such as sharks and turtles, as well mangrove restoration and island cleanups across multiple atolls. A primary school was built on Feydhoo island, a children's play park for Hithadhoo, a cooperative farm on Magoodhoo island. Learning materials and technical equipment such as computers and projectors have been purchased for schools across the Maldives, including specialised equipment and teaching materials for deaf and mute children in Jamaluddin School, as well as hiring audiologists to test hearing and supply hearing aids; and blood filters for thalassemia patients, a prevalent condition here in Maldives.

**You have given two amazing presentations at the White Fire photography exhibition. How was the response from the public? Do you plan to collaborate in similar projects in the future?**

Charlie:

Thank you very much – The response was positive, and it was a wonderful opportunity addressing different demographics and members of the public who may not be our usual target audience, and yet are as significant when it comes to making a positive difference and spreading awareness. Being a part of something a little different, like



this exhibition, acted as a reminder that it is not only schools, colleges, councils and business partners who can benefit from hearing about the positive impact that tourism can have on society and the environment, when managed effectively. The exhibition also aligned with our belief that learning should be fun, and important messages can be expressed through experiences - art, music, sport and adventure, which is how we look to engage our staff and guests with core sustainability principles at all our properties. We certainly look to collaborate with any like-minded individuals or groups, here in the Maldives, in the future – with the hope that collectively we can have a greater impact and shed light on important conversations that must be addressed among society, by both the public and private sectors.

**Dr. Hussain Rasheed Hassan, Maldives Environment Minister mentioned during his speech at the opening ceremony of the White Fire photography exhibition that he accepts the invitation extended by Mr. Abdul Azeez Abdul Hakeem (N.D. Azeez), former Director of Conservation for Banyan Tree and Angsana Maldives to visit and see the Necklace Project. Have you conducted any consultations for the current or former government with respect to your environmental practices?**

Sam:

Since I started my position as the Marine Lab Manager, it is obvious that the Lab is respected for its long history of coral reef restoration and environmental leadership in the Maldives. There



## Charlie Everitt

Sustainability Manager, Banyan Tree Global Foundation

are long-standing relationships with the Ministry of Fisheries, Marine Research Centre and IUCN, providing data to support research. In 2016 our properties pledged to support the establishment of the Maldives as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. In 2017 under supervision from Dr. Steven Newman, our Director of Conservation, the Marine Lab provided technical guidance, training and assistance in monitoring coral reefs for the Biosphere assessment. We have just wrapped up our fifth year of annual reef monitoring at 8 local sites here in North Male Atoll, adding to long-term data sets that can be used for future management plans within the Maldives.

### Your thoughts on the current state of tourism sustainability in the Maldives?

Sam:

It is clear just traveling through Kaafu Atoll that new resorts are being built at a fast rate, only time will tell if this is being done sustainably. But due to the early efforts of Banyan Tree, almost 25 years ago, it is now almost expected for every resort in the Maldives to have a marine biologist that can advise resorts on the best practice for the environment and create awareness among guests. Our collaboration to create the first Marine Science Symposium in the Maldives allowed all of these marine biologists to come together and share research findings and hopefully help to improve cohesion between resorts, spreading the positive message about sustainable tourism.

Charlie:

I am a bit of perfectionist, so of course I think there is greater room for improvement when it comes to the current state of tourism sustainability in the Maldives. There are both positive and negative examples to be found across the country and I think at this time, the key is to follow caution and not to let the bad outweigh the good. Sustainability is technically all about continuous progress and making improvements, therefore my hopes are that better understanding will lead to better management and more sustainable development of the tourism industry here for the future.

Although I have only been working here in the Maldives for a couple of years, I have in this short time seen a large increase in the number of hotels and guesthouses being developed and opened – not only in Kaafu Atoll, but all over the country. In some respects, this is an encouraging sign – more business, generally means better prospects, for both the population and the country's economy as a whole. I think this is especially the case on smaller local islands and for the guesthouses that serve them. They have helped to open up the country to a more diverse demographic of travelers, and at the same time offer income to a greater spectrum of the country's population. However, this is not necessarily a positive situation where the so-called luxury resort market is concerned, which is increasingly saturated and provides a very small minority with a disproportionately large amount of wealth – this further supports the argument that such businesses have a duty to act responsibly and support the communities and environment which enables them to prosper.

I have in recent years come to learn about the threats of 'overtourism' – a phenomenon occurring across the planet following recent booms in tourism – and the damage it can do to a country's cultural identity, economy and the environment. I believe the Maldives could learn from examples such as Bali or islands in the Caribbean, especially where air travel is combined with cruise lining. Coral reefs are extremely fragile ecosystems and they are under enough threat as it is from existing human pressures. Increased tourism must be met with effective management and greater regulation and enforcement, to ensure that development is sustainable and minimizes risk and negative impacts on local communities and the environment. As an environmentalist, I am of course against things such as unnecessary dredging and land reclamation, and I have seen firsthand the damage this causes to coral reefs. I think that an effective land use plan should properly consider utilization of naturally formed islands as a priority over creating new artificial ones, especially when its just for the sake of being closer to an airport or appearing in a specific shape.

### Any words of wisdom for the young environmentalists?

Charlie:

Quoting one of my favourite school teachers and a true inspiration in my early life, "Snooze time is lose time", so get stuck in whilst you can and before it is too late. We need people from all walks of society to come together to fight against the increasing threats to our planet. A career in sustainability is by no means a one-size-fits all vocation, and in fact requires teams that can draw upon multi-disciplinary skillsets – artists, communicators, legislators, researchers, debaters – you name it! If you have a passion for the environment, focus on developing your skills and consider how you can apply them to the broader goal of protecting and conserving nature.

Sam:

I am in awe of the young environmentalists of today, who have a much greater understanding of the climate crisis than I did at school. It is so inspiring and I'm glad to read about people such as Greta Thunberg making big movements towards influencing people's perspectives and advancing their understanding on the current state of the climate. I think my advice would be to have patience, but keep fighting for our future.

# AS COAST CRAFT 38

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# ACTION 25

*Ready for some Action?*



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LATEST NEWS

# Bank of Maldives launches the first Business Debit Card in the country

Bank of Maldives has officially launched its Business Debit Card in Maldives enabling customers to conveniently make transactions on business accounts across the local and worldwide Mastercard network.



The Bank of Maldives Mastercard Business Debit Card was launched during a special ceremony held at Crossroads on October 17, 2019, to officially introduce Mastercard in the Maldives.

BML CEO and Managing Director Tim Sawyer commented, "This is part of our commitment to support the banking needs of SMEs and businesses throughout the country. The card is linked to business accounts to provide easy access to funds anytime, anywhere, helping

customers to better manage cash flow and record keeping. As with our other cards, the new Business Debit is also enhanced with the latest security and safety features".

With a nationwide network of 37 branches across all 20 atolls, 49 Self Service Banking Centers, 113 ATMs, 5,700 Point of Sale merchants, 277 agents and a full suite of Digital Banking services, Bank of Maldives is committed to supporting individuals, businesses and communities across the Maldives.

## UNWTO Grants Affiliate Membership to MATI



The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has granted Affiliate Membership to the Maldives Association of Tourism Industry (MATI) – the first organization to become an affiliate member of UNWTO from the Maldives, announced during the 23rd UNWTO General Assembly held at Saint Petersburg, Russia on September 11, 2019.

As an affiliate member of UNWTO, MATI will intensify efforts to promote the sustainable development of the Maldivian tourism industry, while assisting the UNWTO to achieve its goals and objectives.

Working at the forefront when it comes to activities and issues related to travel and tourism in the Maldives, MATI, the non-profit association has been active for three decades. In coordination with the government as well

as international and local companies, the association develops and enhances operations and member services in the tourism industry.

As the leading international organization in the field of tourism, UNWTO promotes tourism as a driver of economic growth, inclusive development and environmental sustainability, while offering leadership and support to the sector in advancing knowledge and tourism policies worldwide.

UNWTO's membership includes 158 countries, 6 associate members and over 500 affiliate members representing the private sector, educational institutions, tourism associations and local tourism authorities.

## Ooredoo Color Run returns to Hulhumale' with exciting weekend fun



Ooredoo Maldives has announced exciting updates to its annual Colour Run weekend, with exciting festivities including a kite festival, a morning at the beach and a star-studded music show. The weekend's program is as follows:

**Ooredoo Moodhu Majaa**  
Friday, 29th November 2019  
8.00 am to 10.00 am

A new entry to the Ooredoo Colour Run weekend, Moodhu Majaa aims to bring the community together for a fun-filled morning at the beach, with activities and exciting water sports. Partnering cafés will also provide breakfast on the beach and local favourites such as ambu majaa and maskaashi.

**Ooredoo Gudi Mahaasama**  
Friday, 29th November 2019  
4.00 pm to 6.00 pm

The kite festival, aimed to revive the wonderful tradition of flying kites with family and friends in the Maldives, includes fun displays, a kite workshop, a kite flying competition and an exciting bol race. Pre-registration is not required to participate in the kite festival.

**Ooredoo Color Run**  
Saturday, 30th November 2019  
3.30 pm to 6.00 pm

The fun-filled 5K aims to promote running as a fun way to achieve a healthy and active lifestyle. Filled with color, each kilometre covered during the Ooredoo Color Run is rewarded with a burst of color powder at the color station, and songs from incredible music artists. As the run is not a timed event, participants can choose to walk, jog, run or dance to the finish line, where their efforts are celebrated in style with color throws, finisher medals & fantastic music. While only pre-registered participants will receive the winner's medal upon completion of the run, interested runners can join the run in a white t-shirt, and be part of the fun-filled color run experience.

**Ooredoo Music Festival**  
Saturday, 30th November 2019  
8.30 pm to 11.00 pm

After the Color Run, Ooredoo Maldives will host a music show from 8.30 pm onwards, featuring fan-favourites from the Maldivian music industry like Habeys Boduberu, Mooshan, Zakitney & more.



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LATEST NEWS

# Travel by Dart to be filmed during April 2020 in the Maldives

Travel by Dart is a new inspirational series that combines travel, education, adventure and fun. Every episode, the host Sorin Mihailovici and special guests throw a dart at a world map and travel wherever it lands, no matter how far or difficult it is.



The show explores the cultures found on location and educates the viewers about the local traditions, cuisine and unique characteristics. In previous episodes, the team has traveled to the ends of the earth, from the Arctic islands of Svalbard, 300 miles from the North Pole, to a cross-country tour of Russia, exploration of the Bermuda Triangle, and diving deep into the Amazonian jungle of Brazil. The show is produced for the Canadian network OMNI Television but will also be released worldwide for online distribution.

On the latest adventure, filmed in Curacao, Sorin and his guests threw a new dart at the world map and the dart landed in the Southern Indian Ocean, very close to the Maldives. Since then, Sorin has visited the Maldives in June to prepare for the filming of the new episode planned for April 2020. Initial partnerships have been started with Inner Maldives, Heritance Aarah, Kandima, You & Me by Cocoon, Dhiffushi Inn, and Somerset hotel in Male. However, there is more to come.

The show is expected to deliver a great amount of key elements: inspiration, education, stunts, amazing cinematography, and more. The episode will also highlight the beauty of Maldives while promoting its customs, traditions, and wonderful people. It will feature local activities and local co-hosts to join Sorin in presenting the Maldives. Besides the names presented above, the producer of the show is looking forward to meet new brands that want to join in partnering for the show.

The Maldives episode of Travel by Dart will also be interviewing local figures, heroes, and other simple citizens, in order to capture a wonderful and genuine perspective of Maldives. "The idea is to have a final product that will show your country and company in its full beauty and promote the Maldives as the place to go for holidays" said Sorin speaking to The islandchief during his visit in June 2019. Full episode to be released in the summer / fall of 2020.



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## EVENTS &amp; AWARDS

## India Expo – One Country Event Successfully held in the Maldives from 15th - 17th October at Dharubaaruge

As the Maldives is embarking on the 21st century with robust development in information and communication technology, the founders of SME Entrepreneurs Federation of Maldives (SEFM) envisioned the importance of Small and Medium Enterprise Development as an essential integral part of economic development in the Maldives.



“India Expo” the One Country exhibition along with “India - Maldives Business Conclave” aims to provide a platform to the Indian based companies to showcase their range of products and services to the Maldivian public and business community. The exhibition contributes to promote India - Maldives economic relations by diversifying the existing trade patterns by introducing a wide range of quality Indian products & services.

The first One Country Event, India Expo was held at Dharubaaruge on 15th, 16th and 17th October 2019 as a 3-day event. The expo commenced with an interesting business engagement activity named “India – Maldives Business Conclave”, with professional panelists from the key industries and was open for corporates and the public to explore the Indian businesses.

The exhibition displayed 30 different stalls with a wide range of products. Government Officials, Corporates and the public visited and explored the Indian Business opportunities with the key stakeholders. H.E Ibrahim Mohamed Solih, President of the Republic

of Maldives and Hon. President Mohamed Nasheed, MP Speaker of the People’s Majlis, Government Ministers attended this interesting business engagement activity.

India’s Mohan Mutha Exports acted as the event’s main sponsor while State Bank of India (SBI) signed on as the co-sponsor of the event, in association with Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI).

**Partners of the event were:**

**Broadcasting Partner:** Raajje TV

**Hospitality Partner:** Casa Retreat

**Security Partner:** Absolute Security Advance and Protection (ASAP)

**Sound & Light Partner:** UNICA

**Set-up partner:** Sheydee Cabin

**Media Partners:**

- One online
- Corporate Maldives
- Maldives Insider
- Maldives Business Review (MBR)
- The Islandchief
- Maldives Business Standard



## Blazon Inc. to host Maldives Business Awards 2019 in December

**Maldives Business Awards 2019 - the much-coveted business event of the year organized by Blazon Inc, is scheduled for December where winning parties will be bestowed or “crowned” for their achievement.**

The Maldives Business Awards recognizes business excellence and thus, rewards local corporations and business individuals for maintaining industry best practices as well as introducing revolutionary and innovative services. This year’s edition will have two new award-categories, the People’s Choice Award for the Best Marketing Campaign of the Year and the Best CSR Program of the Year.

The awards’ major objectives include recognizing excellence and creating healthy competition among businesses, promoting innovation and business intelligence, showcasing outstanding achievements by the business community and recognizing the process of individuals and businesses who have excelled in their respective sectors.

The companies that are contending for various categories will be evaluated for their performance from the first quarter of 2018 until the second quarter of 2019. The entry window was closed on October 24, 2019. This would undoubtedly be a golden opportunity for anyone with an exceptional business portfolio to contend. The Maldives Business Awards trumps this with the involvement of a judging panel consisting of individuals who have set a standard of excellence, perseverance and dedication in their respective working fields and environments.

Maldives Business Awards 2019 has signed with their associated media partners. The signing ceremony was held on the afternoon of October 20, 2019,



at the premises of Public Service Media (PSM) and was attended by senior ranking members of all Media Partners.

**Partners of the event are;**

- Public Service Media (PSM) – Broadcasting Partner
- The islandchief – Exclusive Official Travel Tabloid Partner
- Avas Online – Online Media Partner
- Maldives Business Standard – Business News Partner
- Maldives Business Review (MBR) – Business Magazine Partner
- Maldives Insider – Official Digital Media Partner
- Images.mv – Official Photography Partner

The gala night attracted several contenders in its first edition back in 2018. Over 180 entrants forwarded their corporate credentials for the first edition. The judging was conducted by a panel of 09 industry experts who hold years of professional conduct and expertise in their respective fields. The 2018 Maldives Business Awards’ Gala Night took place at Paradise Island Resort on 22 December, 2018, where 23 winners were given their well-deserved awards.

BON APPÉTIT

# Wagyu Beef Tacos



## Ingredients

- Tuna loin 80 gr
- Wagyu Beef Tenderloin
- Red Chilli
- White Onion

## Ponzu Sauce

- 4 Wonton Sheets
- Daikon
- Extra Virgin Olive Oil
- 125ml Soya Sauce
- 60 ml Rice vinegar
- 10ml lemon juice

## Method

- Cut the beef into small dice (0.3 cm x 0.3 cm)
- Chop the chilli and onion in to small dice
- Cut the wonton sheets with a round cutter (7cm)
- Deep fry the wonton sheets in hot vegetable oil (180 degrees C)
- Mix rice vinegar, soy sauce and lemon juice together
- Panfry the onion, chilli and Wagyu beef(100Gm) and add the ponzu sauce around(5tsp)
- Slice the daikon in fine julienne

## Presentation

- Place the daikon julienne on a long plate than fill the taco shells with the beef and put it on top of the daikon julienne
- Finish the dish with some micro herbs

Courtesy of Chef Nishantha Parana , Executive Chef  
Amilla Fushi



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## EVENTS &amp; AWARDS

## 5th Edition of Maldives Marine Expo concludes successfully in Male' City



The 5th edition of the Maldives Marine Expo kicked off from 23rd to 25th October 2019 at Dharubaaruge, along with a Water Display at Fisherman's Park, with over 50 stalls. Major industry businesses including Gulf Craft, Al Shaali Marine Maldives, Marine Equipments Pvt Ltd, VAM Co, Cummins, D-Tech, The Marina @Crossroads, Seagear, MA Services, Yamaha - Alia, Yanmar & Suzuki Marine - MTCC, Mercury - HSME Marine Go, DimoCoastline, Aquacanvas and many more took part this year. The Water Display presented the latest productions of Gulf Craft and Al Shaali Marine, allowing the visitors to go onboard and experience the products.



Maldives Marine Expo is the official exhibition of National Boating Association of Maldives (NBAM) organized by Blak Pvt Ltd. The Official Opening Ceremony was inaugurated by Minister of Economic Development Uz. Fayyaz Ismail, who stated, "After twelve years from inception, the Liveaboard Association has received national

status and changed to National Boating Association of Maldives. The government will hear and consider the voice of the organization when making decisions regarding the development of tourism and marine industry". The Minister also highlighted, "Approximately 300 vessels are operating in the Maldives including Safaris, Diving Dhonis and Fishing Boats. Almost 8000 locals are employed on these vessels. In the very near future, a harbor will be built that is safe and closer to both Hulhule' and Male'."

In the opening remark, Mr. Ismail Hameed, Vice President – NBAM said, "This event has expanded over the years, especially this year. An event like this has always been a challenge, but we appreciate the support from the event manager and industry. This is the longest running event in the Marine industry and the purpose of such an event is to bring the industry together on one platform to share their state-of-the-art products with other businesses,"

Over the past 5 years, Maldives Marine Expo has been the mediator for manufacturers, suppliers and service providers, facilitating connections between large corporations and stand-alone businesses, introduce newcomers and innovative technologies to the market. Maldives Marine Expo 2019, themed 'Marine Technology', aimed to share the technological developments that would improve different sectors of the maritime operations.

Gulf Craft was the main sponsor of the expo, whilst Al Shaali Marine served as co-sponsor. The Maldives Marine Expo was endorsed by the Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation, Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Economic Development, Ministry of Science, Technology and Communication and the Male' City Council. Other partners of the event include the largest telecommunication provider in Maldives, Dhiraagu, appointed as the Digital Service Partner, and Mihaaru News as the Media Partner.

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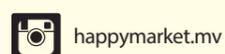
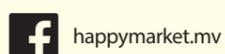
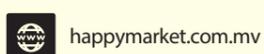
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# Frankly Speaking

The number of Luxury Yachts without duty for Special Projects has immensely increased, does this effect the market of boats operated locally?



**Moosa Rasheed**  
Managing Director  
Aimo Travels / Island Safari

Yes, It's a challenge! People call luxury, but dumping these boat prices to equivalent to safari's in the name of luxury is joke!



**Ismail Hameed**  
Vice President  
National Boating Association of Maldives ( NBAM )

The number of duty-free boats considered as luxury have not been defined by the authorities, and anyone can bring an old yacht and operate with this loop-hole saying it's a luxury boat. So, the challenge is that the locals who build the boats paying duty to everything face the difficulties in selling them, as these boats brought under the luxury tag from Egypt, Greece, Thailand and Indonesia are not luxury at all. However, they make it happen and get a ticket to operate, while they sell cheaper than the local boats.



**Abdul Latheef**  
President  
SME & Entrepreneurs Federation of Maldives (SEFM)

There is no assessment of luxury! The issue of regular boats being imported in as luxury boats cannot be resolved as long as there are no standards to assess what will be deemed "luxury" for this purpose. If government introduces an assessment method and defines luxury standards, then luxury boats will not be able to come in and offer unreasonable market rates and the local businesses will be protected.

As for situations where luxury boats are sold at an unreasonable market rate even after the government introduces such assessments for luxury, then this means that the foreign boats are doing this on purpose to kill the domestic market. This can be adequately covered if Maldives had a competition law that restricts such anti-competition activities. I did hear that the Ministry of Economic Development has a draft of the Competition Bill, I don't know why it is not being submitted to the Parliament for enactment.

The lack of anti-competition law also affects other areas of the tourism industry, such as travel agents and destination management companies.

In all other countries, local businesses are protected first before enabling foreign investments. This can be only resolved when we change our focus from GDP to GNP. ADB President spoke about this. Local DMCs or OTOs are facing difficulties connecting to foreign channel managers, so unless the government policy adequately addresses these challenges, the local future in this industry is being diminished and greatly affected.

I think politicians and MPs need to pay serious attention to these issues now, by enabling the required laws which are missing, and enforcing the existing ones properly which will protect local businesses, such as the Foreign Investment Act of Maldives.



**Ibrahim Shahid**  
President, National Boating Association of Maldives  
Managing Director, Blue K Safari Maldives

It affects a lot and becomes a major challenge. They are operating here for a few years, and going to another destination. It's like a stranger coming into our home and breaking all our house rules. They don't care about our future. They do whatever they want and they even don't bother about the future of the industry, and are simply killing our business.

It appears that their operation cost is cheaper than ours. But, my question is why is it cheap? I am sure they also use diesel for the engines, not seawater. However, from the internet sometimes we see their rates much cheaper than ours. So, are we missing something? Or something is going very wrong? Tax authorities should keep an eye on them.



**Ahmed Zubair Adam**  
Managing Director  
Blue Horizon

I guess there are different ways to manage it and we have to approach in those different ways.



PHOTOGRAPHY



Double dot  
Portrait | Fashion | Lifestyle

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# Train with Industry Experts



Four Seasons Resorts Maldives Hospitality Apprenticeship is a TVET (Technical and Vocational Educational Training) programme that will equip you with the knowledge, skills, and on-the-job training you need to be successful in the hotel industry.

You'll train on-the-job alongside experienced professionals in Resort operations and attend theory classes in the following disciplines: Food & Beverage Preparation or Service; Safe Maritime Transport; Housekeeping & Guest Service; PADI Dive Master; Water Sports; Marine Biology; Engineering; Front Office; and Retail.

To date, the Four Seasons Hospitality Apprenticeship has produced over 500 graduates, many of whom have moved on to supervisory and managerial positions in the Maldives' tourism industry. Now in its eighteenth year, it's the longest-running and most successful programme of its kind in the Indian Ocean and has been accredited by the Government of Maldives since 2010.

**If you are a Maldivian aged 17 to 20, you are invited to attend one of our recruitment sessions to find out more:**

## NOVEMBER 2019

<b>10</b> K. Malé	<b>19</b> N. Velidhoo
<b>16</b> Lh. Kurendhoo	<b>23</b> R. Alifushi
<b>17</b> B. Eydhafushi	<b>27</b> R. Dhuvaafaru

## DECEMBER 2019

<b>7, 8</b> B. Atoll Schools	<b>12</b> HA. Utheem
<b>11</b> Dh. Kudahuvadhoo	<b>13</b> H. DH. Kulhudhuffushi

## JANUARY 2020

**19** K. Malé