

The islandchief

travel news

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Dear Readers,

As we celebrated World Tourism Day globally last month, the world continues to bounce back steadily from the impact of Covid-19. And just like that; we are wrapping up Q3 of what many of us are viewing as our year of recovery after 2020 - what was the most unprecedented year of our time. For us at the Islandchief, we still firmly believe we must pause to reflect on what this pandemic has taught the resilient forces behind the travel, tourism and hospitality industry.

And as we move forward from Q3 to Q4, the rumble of excitement is growing increasingly louder, especially as all roads lead to Dubai for Expo 2021 in the coming months. We are witnessing the resurgence of business across the travel landscape, with strong pushes for local tourism, especially in destinations whose borders aren't all the way open just yet. We are humbled by the opportunity to continue to deliver your travel inspiration, powered by the vibrant leisure, lifestyle and cultural environments that make it possible for us to curate content to share.

In his official message on World Tourism Day 2021, UNWTO's Secretary General Mr. Zurab Pololikashvili stated, "World Tourism Day 2021 highlights the power of 'Tourism for Inclusive Growth'. By celebrating this day, we state our commitment that, as tourism grows, the benefits that come will be felt at every level of our broad and diverse sector, from the biggest airline to the smallest family business. Today, we reaffirm our pledge that, as we move forward and work to build a more prosperous and peaceful world through tourism, we will not leave anyone behind."

In this issue of the Islandchief - page 12 - we bring you an exclusive interview of Donatella Telli popularly known as "Dodi" across the Maldives' leisure boating landscape - the journey behind her 36 years of extensive experience in promoting Maldivian Liveaboards and Yachts. On our Bon Appetite section on page 22, we have Sous-Chef Hernan from LUX* North Malé Atoll sharing an amazing recipe for a traditional Peruvian dish.

The journey continues, as we gear up to enter the Golden Jubilee year of tourism next year. 2022 will mark the 50th anniversary of the tourism and hospitality industry for this small island nation. Earlier this year, the Ministry of Tourism introduced the official logo to be used next year to celebrate the jubilee activities. So far, the Maldives has seen over 840,000 tourist arrivals this year, with India, Russia and Germany dominating as top markets.

We invite you to read the stories of some incredible entrepreneurs and discover more places to pique the curiosity of the dreamer that resides within you. Let's plug in together, let's share, let's grow and let's come together to tell the impeccable stories of Maldives and her people—across the ocean and Asia!

Until next month,
The islandchief Team



The Jewelers' Island:

Rinbudhoo island, located in the most central atoll of the Maldives is the embodiment of a paradise on earth. Like any other island in the Maldives, Rinbudhoo is encompassed within crystal clear water and a deep blue ocean filled with colorful sea creatures. The island is rich with greenery and warm inviting sands that gives you a sense of calm and serenity. People of Rinbudhoo has depended on surviving on their own since the early days by utilizing the resources that are abundantly available by nature. They have excellent carpenters, toddy tappers, herbal doctors, fishermen and boat builders. Rinbudhoo as they go by the name "The Jewelers' Island" is mostly known for jewelry making, which has passed on from generations to generations. Various materials such as gold, silver, oyster shells, pearls, black corals and wood are used to make all sorts of jewelries. Handcrafted "fattaru-bae" (traditional Maldivian necklace) and "ulha" (traditional bracelet) are still used as family heirlooms by the people of Rinbudhoo.

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Iberia Airlines to Operate Flights to Maldives During Winter Season

Iberia Airlines, flag carrier of Spain has announced to commence operations to the Maldives this coming winter due to popular demand from passengers. The airline noted successful charter operations to the destination during summer holidays.

Passengers can fly via the new winter route from December 2021 till the end of February 2022. The airline will operate 2 weekly service between its hub in Madrid, Spain to Malé, Maldives during this time.

Prior to the pandemic, large numbers of travelers from Spain used to frequent the destination. However, due to the halt in scheduled air travel between the two countries, arrival numbers greatly decreased. With this commenced winter operation, arrivals are expected to grow and contribute to Maldives' aim of welcoming over 1 million tourists by the end of 2021.



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ACROSS THE SKIES

US-Bangla to Commence Direct Operations to Maldives in November 2021



Leading premium airline of Bangladesh, US-Bangla Airlines has announced to commence direct flights to the Maldives starting this November 2021.

The Bangladeshi airline revealed to local media that four weekly services will be conducted starting November 2021 and these operations will provide ease in travel for Bangladeshi nationals working in the Maldives.

Providing standard services, reliability and ultimate flying comfort, US-Bangla was established in 2014. In 2016, the airline entered into the international air space and has been regularly increasing frequencies and widening up wings over different cities in various countries in SAARC, Middle East (GCC) and Southeast Asian countries.

At present US-Bangla Airlines hold the title of biggest fleet with the greatest number of brand-new aircraft in private aviation sector of Bangladesh.

Etihad Guest Members to Boost their Miles with a New Programme Feature

Etihad Guest, the award-winning loyalty programme of the UAE's national airline, Etihad Airways, has launched a new programme feature, MilesBooster, powered by global leader in loyalty commerce, Points.

MilesBooster lets members multiply miles they have earned from almost any activity - from previous flights or even non-travel related expenditures such as credit card transactions and everyday purchases. Members have the option to double or triple miles earned in the past 12 months when they pay a special mileage rate. Those who take advantage of this new benefit can boost up to 150,000 miles a year depending on their tier status.

Kim Hardaker, Head of Loyalty & Partnerships, Etihad Airways, said: "Thanks to this innovative new solution enabled by Points, Etihad Guests' 7+ million members can now give their miles a boost through the MilesBooster feature. This will help our loyal guests to accelerate towards their next exciting reward, whether they choose to redeem for flights, upgrades, hotel stays or donate to a good cause. This is one of the many ways our teams have been working to ensure our members are engaged and rewarded over the past year."

Rob MacLean, CEO of Points, also welcomed the news. "We are delighted to be strengthening our collaboration with Etihad once more and to be expanding the suite of product solutions we deliver to them. Offering loyalty programmes, a new feature that enables their members to boost their mileage



balance without the need for additional travel is just one of the ways that we have been innovating since the start of the pandemic to meet members evolving needs. We are certain that this new member benefit will prove popular with Etihad's most loyal customers."

Etihad Guest generously rewards travellers from the moment they join. Etihad Guest Miles can be earned with 750+ partners including restaurants, hotels, car hire and retailers. Miles can be redeemed for nearly everything from flights, upgrades, shopping, gift cards and more. As a result, Etihad Guest won awards

including the Stevie Awards, Business Traveler Middle East and WINA Award.

Points began working with the national carrier of the UAE in 2014; providing Etihad Guest members new ways to get more value from their miles and generating a new revenue stream for the loyalty programme. The introduction of MilesBooster is the fifth product innovation to be implemented since the beginning of their partnership.

For more information on how Points can help loyalty programmes unlock their full potential, visit [Points.com](https://www.points.com).

IN A NUTSHELL

Taj Exotica Resort & Spa, Maldives Gifts Meal Boxes to Employees of Health Protection Agency



In line with its purpose of giving back to the community Taj Exotica Resort & Spa, Maldives served lunch boxes to all employees of the Health Emergency Operation Centre, Maldives in recognition and appreciation of those who have been tirelessly working in the front lines of the nation's battle against the pandemic.

Gathering inspiration from the spirit of Tajness that forms the genesis of the resort's DNA, the team got together on September 2 to carry out this gesture of goodwill to show their respect and gratitude to the real-life superheroes who have been working selflessly to save the nation from the ill effects of the pandemic. The meal box was carefully curated and prepared by the dedicated team of chefs at Taj Exotica Resort & Spa, Maldives. It contained local delights and immunity-boosting superfoods with a personalised thank-you note.

"Our aim was not to provide them with a meal but to show our gratitude for the efforts they have been putting in

every day. It's always encouraging to see the spirit of sincere care and enthusiasm of our associates not only towards guests but all stakeholders, partners, and our communities," said Samrat Datta, General Manager Taj Exotica Resort & Spa, Maldives.

This initiative was very well received by the ministries, who lauded the resort's kind gesture aimed towards boosting the morale and spirit of ministry employees during this difficult time.

The hotel chain was recently bestowed with the Outstanding Community Partner Award by Virtuoso for its COVID response initiative – #MealsToSmiles which has up to date delivered over 4.5 million meals to hospital staff and other frontline workers of 38 hospitals in 12 cities across 10 states of India, funded by the Taj Public Service Welfare Trust. Taj Exotica Resort & Spa, Maldives has emulated the same philosophy to reflect the true spirit of Tajness and endeavoured to add value and make a meaningful difference to all its stakeholders.

ONEVIOLIN Set to Perform at Sun Siyam Olhuveli this November



Finland's Got Talent 2020 runner-up Pekka Niemi will be performing live at Sun Siyam Olhuveli Maldives from 22nd - 29th November 2021.

His stage name One Violin needs no introduction in music scenes, famous for his covers of global hits, producing countless sounds, from the melody to drums, with just a single Violin. Niemi's mash up performances in the Got Talent Finals consisted of spectacular 1,500 violin tracks. Videos of his covers have gathered vast international interest, being watched over millions of times on his social media platforms.

Niemi has been working internationally as a violist, songwriter and string producer from a young age. He also studied at one of the most prestigious conservatoires, the Royal College of Music. Niemi will be giving three performances at the idyllic venues of Sun Siyam Olhuveli; the Lagoon Bar and Dhoni Bar.

Set partially over the lagoon with indoor and outdoor seating, soothing sea breeze welcomes you to the Lagoon Bar. With ample space to move to the tunes, a long list of

tantalizing cocktails and some of the most spectacular sunset views. The Dhoni Bar is a chic lounge to savour balmy Maldivian evenings with an infinity pool reflecting the golden hour and sweeping sunsets.

Sun Siyam Olhuveli is the ultimate place for live entertainment and music events with the most recent being Novemberus or DJ Don't Touch My Hair. Sun Siyam Olhuveli is a swift 45-minute speedboat ride away from the airport, in South Malé Atoll and just one of the five resorts of the multi-award-winning hospitality group Sun Siyam Resorts.

With versatile suits and contemporary villas, 10 bars and restaurants, Sun Siyam Olhuveli spans two paradise islands on a vast cyanic lagoon surrounded by a thriving house reef with a plethora of aquatic life, offering a myriad of tropical vacation experiences.

Follow @sunsiyamolhuveli for updates on One Violin's upcoming performances.

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IN A NUTSHELL

Vakkaru Maldives Announces Festive Programme Ahead of 2022 Golden Jubilee Year of Tourism in the Maldives

In 2022 the Maldives will celebrate its Golden Jubilee Year of Tourism, marking 50 years since the inception of the tourism industry for this island nation. In a nod to this landmark achievement, the five-star resort, Vakkaru Maldives, will kick off its end-of-year festive celebrations with a 'Glitter and Gold' themed programme that reflects the rich heritage, culture and environment of the Indian Ocean.

Running from December 21, 2021 until January 7, 2022, guests are invited to share the joy of the holidays with family and friends at Vakkaru in tropical style, with a dynamic series of lifestyle and wellbeing experiences. From bespoke menus, wine journeys and private dinners, to kids' talent shows, sports tournaments and bespoke wellness programmes, this island paradise has something to get everyone of all ages into the festive spirit.

Located within the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve of Baa Atoll, Vakkaru is renowned for its endless ocean views, white sandy beaches, laid-back luxurious accommodation, and exceptional service.

Of the forthcoming festive season and next year's milestone, General Manager Iain McCormack says, "As this year draws to a close, we warmly welcome guests old and new to Vakkaru to enjoy our festive programme together, our prelude to this important anniversary for our island nation. Our team has worked hard to curate a range of exceptional, immersive experiences for guests, that reflect our special Vakkaru warmth and service."

The 'Glitter and Gold' programme at Vakkaru Maldives

Christmas Eve

The festive programme will kick off on December 24 with evening cocktails and a special Christmas Eve



Gala dinner featuring live cooking stations with local and international specialties. So Blue & the Band and DJ Anna will provide a 24-karat soundtrack for the evening with a mix of old favourites and the latest chartbusters, while an LED and Fire show lights up the night.

F&B

Golden Age cocktails crafted by the resort's resident mixologists will be available throughout the seasonal celebrations; meanwhile Sommelier Ivan Zugic has curated a singular wine journey that includes organic and gold label wines such as Alter Ego de Palmer Margaux, Chateau Cheval Blanc Saint Emilion, Louis Roderer Cristal, and much more.

During the week Chef Driss and his team will take guests on a culinary voyage through time, with themed menus including the Golden Heritage and Traditions of the Indian Ocean (Maldives, Sri Lanka and India), A Taste of Arabia (Middle Eastern), The Golden Triangle (Thailand), and Mediterranean fare (Italy, France, Spain, Greece).

Entertainment

Sports will play a big part in the revelry for adults and kids with a Football Golden Boot Camp, a tennis tournament with resident ATP tennis pro, paddle tennis, ping pong, volleyball competition, and Family Olympics. Meanwhile children will be entertained with immersive experiences including a Pirates' Treasure Hunt, Vakkaru Kids' Got Talent, and Meet Santa Claus.

Wellness

Those looking to make health-related resolutions for the new year can book a consultation with Domingos Folgado, a visiting award-winning wellness practitioner, therapist, acupuncture expert and qualified personal trainer based in London. Folgado will motivate guests to change their lifestyle and teach them optimal exercises to enhance it. Meanwhile Vakkaru's Resident Ayurvedic expert, Dr Kalini Perera, and yoga expert, Imron, will also be on hand to help guests on a transformative journey to explore their body, mind, and soul potential.

New Year's Eve

New Year's Eve is the night of the year to let your hair down. The entire island will be transformed into a fairyland for the finale of the festive season: the 'Glitter & Gold: Bling in The New Year' Countdown Gala. As DJ Anna and So Blue & the Band showcase the Golden Age of entertainment and keep you dancing with a medley of Oldies But Goldies, jugglers, hula hoopers, aerialists, stilt walkers, acrobats, cabaret dancers, and the LED and Fire show will keep you entertained until the early hours. The culinary team will also pull out all stops to surprise you with a decadent celebration of local and international delights.

For reservations and general information, please visit vakkarumaldives.com or contact reservations@vakkarumaldives.com.

IN A NUTSHELL

Waldorf Astoria Hotels and Conrad Hotels & Resorts Partner with Frette for Enhanced In-Room Experiences

Waldorf Astoria Hotels & Resorts and Conrad Hotels & Resorts, two of Hilton’s luxury brands, has announced a partnership with Frette, supplier of the finest linens and decorative accessories, to debut a new luxurious top-of bed linen program across both brand portfolios.

“The Frette brand aligns perfectly with our Hilton luxury brands and allows us an opportunity to give guests more of what they are looking for across our Waldorf Astoria and Conrad properties, to create authentic moments and keep guests inspired.”

“The launch of this new partnership is an exciting moment for our luxury brand portfolio and represents our commitment to offering guests exclusive and exceptional experiences and amenities,” said Dino Michael, senior vice president and global category head, Hilton luxury brands.

With this new partnership with Frette, Waldorf Astoria will feature top-of bed 100% cotton sateen 400 thread count linens in crisp white with a sleek line of piping as well as Waldorf Astoria’s logo meticulously woven on the front pillowcases, while Conrad will feature top-of bed 100% cotton sateen 300 thread count linens in crisp white with



a single line of sleek white piping.

Waldorf Astoria Hotels & Resorts is Hilton’s luxury brand of iconic hotels committed to personal service and culinary excellence in landmark locations around the world. Each property delivers unforgettable experiences and guests can expect True Waldorf Service from the moment

they book their stay to the moment they check out, and this Frette partnership further delivers that. Conrad Hotels & Resorts creates a seamless connection between contemporary design, leading innovation, and curated art to inspire the entrepreneurial spirit of the globally connected traveler.



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IN A NUTSHELL

Lily Beach Resort & Spa to Welcome Football Freestyle Extraordinaire & Guinness World Record Holder Marcel Gurk



Lily Beach Resort & Spa in the Maldives is set to welcome multiple Guinness World Record holder for football freestyle, Marcel Gurk, in October. The German football freestyle star will be leading workshops at the premium all-inclusive resort in the Maldives for one week – as well as enjoying the Maldivian sunshine and hospitality.

During Marcel's stay at the best All-Inclusive resort in the Maldives, as part of Lily Beach Surprises and this year's Halloween programme, he'll be offering guests lessons and workshops, and sharing some of his professional tips and techniques. He will also be showcasing the resort on his social media – doing some football freestyle tricks throughout the island.

He is the reigning German football freestyle champion, a successful book author, holds 10 Guinness World Records (still holds three, including the most football "clipper" tricks performed in one minute (male), the longest time balancing a football on the shin, and most football neck throw and catches in one minute), and is one of the best football freestylers in the world. He made it to the semi-finals in 'Das Supertalent', and travels around the world as a football freestyler and social media star – thrilling the audience with his extraordinary tricks.

Lily Beach's Director of Sales & Marketing, Desislav Gospodinov said: "To have someone like Marcel Gurk coming here is a huge opportunity for our guests to learn something novel such as football freestyling from one of the best freestylers in the world. I have seen some of the fun tricks that he

does and am sure he can teach us how to do some tricks as well. This exciting activity will certainly be a highlight for our guests of all ages during this Halloween period."

Marcel will be on hand at Lily Beach from October 28th to November 4th, just in time to enjoy the resort's topsy-turvy Halloween celebrations on October 31. Guests will be able to enjoy his complimentary daily football freestyle clinics as well as private lessons on request for a fee. He will also be putting on two football freestyle shows for the guests, showing off the best Guinness World Records-worthy tricks on the 28th of October and the 31st of October.

To find out more about the Football Freestyle Camp at Lily Beach and book a stay at the resort, send an email to: reservations@lilybeachmaldives.com

Mövenpick Resort Kuredhivaru Maldives Announces a Collaborative Partnership with MNU's Faculty of Hospitality & Tourism Studies (FHTS)

Mövenpick Resort Kuredhivaru Maldives, a 5-star resort in the Noonu atoll, signed a collaborative agreement (MoU) with the Faculty of Hospitality & Tourism Studies (FHTS) of the Maldives National University, to strengthen, promote and develop cooperation between both entities based on equality and mutual benefit. Key intention was to effectively implement nation-building strategies that encompass:

- Utilizing advanced science and technology and tapping into the country's pool of hospitality talent
- Facilitating the fostering of the new generation of the highly skilled talent
- Development of the young generation with a strong sense of practicality, hands-on skills and high level of organizational and business skills

The resort management welcomed the MNU-FHTS representatives to Mövenpick Resort Kuredhivaru Maldives for the official signing ceremony at one of its residences, which took place on September 16.

The guests included:

1. Zeenath Solih - Dean of MNU-FHTS
2. Rahushath Ibrahim - HOD (Food and Beverage Management Department)
3. Zuneena Habeeb - HOD (Tourism Management Department)
4. Hashma Adnan - HOD (Hospitality Management Department)
5. Ismail Shiyar - Associate Lecturer

As part of the ongoing partnership, Mövenpick Resort Kuredhivaru Maldives will:

- Assist FHTS with the development of teaching plans and online courses based on the current demand and trends within the country
- Formulate the concise internship training plan and prepare the training grounds, equipment and other supporting materials for onsite training sessions
- Provide trainees with the technical expertise, and assess the trainee's internship performance based on fair judgment and evaluation
- Recommend suitable technical or management personnel to attend the theory lectures, internship coaching sessions and activities for the creation of training materials



and educational courses organized by FHTS

- Offer employment opportunities to trainees based on their internship performance and other related factors
- Provide an opportunity for the FHTS academic staff to take part in internship training programs at the resort premises

"We are extremely excited to become part of this important educational project in the Maldives. It is crucial to develop the country's young talent by providing them with clear guidance, affordable education, internship and career opportunities. The island nation has been known for its high hospitality standards for decades, and we are proud to be part of this history" said Vaibhav Garg, Director of Talent & Culture.

About the Faculty of Hospitality & Tourism Studies (FHTS) of the Maldives National University

With over thirty years of educational expertise, the establishment is the leading hospitality and tourism education institute committed to producing professionals for the tourism industry in the Maldives being a country with a world class hotel industry and some of the world's leading resorts. It emphasizes on both theoretical elements and the application of knowledge through stimulated study environments, as well as through industry placements, allowing students to acquire in-depth understanding and advance skills of hospitality and tourism management.

MOVERS & SHAKERS

Maurice Van Den Bosch Appointed General Manager at Coco Bodu Hithi, Maldives

Coco Collection has announced the appointment of Maurice Van Den Bosch as the General Manager of Coco Bodu Hithi resort.

An Australian-Dutch citizen with a diverse background within the hospitality industry, Maurice joins the team at Coco Bodu Hithi with over 20 years of experience in hotel management.

Maurice most recently led the pre-opening team at Le Meridien Maldives Resort & Spa. His experience in managing resorts in the Maldives began in 2017 as the Resort Manager of Ozen by Atmosphere. He later joined Atmosphere Kanifushi as the General Manager, before being promoted to Vice President of Operations for Atmosphere Hotels & Resorts in 2019. Back home in Australia, Maurice also worked in food & beverage management and event management in multiple hotels including Novotel Pacific Bay Resort and Ayers Rock Resort.

"I am so excited to be back in the Maldives. I have missed the endless summer days! Coco Collection in particular has always been a very interesting brand for me.

Coco Collection has such a fabulous reputation in the Maldives for pioneering the resort industry here and having roots in the heritage of the country, all the while evolving to the changing trends of the industry. The resorts in the Collection are magnificent in beauty but also offerings. Coco Bodu Hithi, my new home, boasts huge, elegant villas surrounded by lush vegetation and beautiful beaches. A true natural paradise."

Drawing upon the unique selling points of Coco Bodu Hithi, Maurice will be focusing on elevating the guest experience and streamlining resort operations in the wake of these challenging times.

"When it comes to management, I truly believe in the idea of "All for one and one for All". The success of the resort can only be achieved with the success of the team which operates it. For me, there is no better achievement than having a team that is empowered to provide the best of service and challenge themselves to new heights."

Maurice is also looking forward to introducing some new projects and initiatives on Coco Bodu Hithi. "Already on the horizon are a new dining concept and a

new kids' hangout that will be added to the long list of services already on the island. Both will have a very natural relaxed atmosphere component to them. We will be looking to have a beachside dinner with a traditional Maldivian menu where guests can chill out and enjoy a cold beverage while being able to look out over the horizon and soak in the palate of colours that only the Maldives can provide. The Kids' hangout zone will consist of activities leaning more towards crafts and horticulture, with an area also to laze and relax when it's time to wind down after a full day of exploring the island and swimming all day long."

When asked about what guests can expect on the island for the upcoming festive season, Maurice gave a little teaser saying, "Santa! But how does he arrive when there is no chimney to be seen? Luckily for Santa, we have sent him a few options that should work for him. Let's wait and see what he chooses this year. He is a cheeky devil, so

you never know until he gets here. In the meantime, our Coco Elves are busy practising Christmas carols on the resort karaoke system. Indika, our very talented Executive Chef, has been busy all year cooking up a storm of new ideas and creations to dazzle the taste buds. I for one can't wait to see the end results for the festive season that our team is creating."

With Maurice at the helm, the resort looks forward to all the festive delights and new projects at Coco Bodu Hithi in the days to come.



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Photo: FSM Handhi barge delivering fuel to One&Only Reethi Rah

MOVERS & SHAKERS

LUX* South Ari Atoll Resort & Villas Appoints Monika Adlakha as Marketing and PR Manager



LUX* South Ari Atoll Resort & Villas appoints Monika Adlakha as the resort's new Marketing and Public Relations Manager. With a broad spectrum of experience across media and communication, Monika brings in over 18 years of experience to the role. Based at the island, she will be responsible for

planning, developing and implementing the resort's marketing, communications and PR strategy. She will be reporting to Roshan Radhay, Vice President, Sales and Marketing, Maldives and GCC.

Speaking on Monika's appointment, Roshan, said, "Monika brings in a wealth of experience and knowledge to this crucial role, and has a proven track record of driving significant projects in the hospitality and sustainability space. We are certain that she will play an instrumental role in introducing innovative and interactive marketing & PR initiatives at LUX* South Ari Atoll Resort and Villas."

Monika holds a bachelor's degree in Journalism (H) from the Delhi University, India, and has been associated with leading media publications including Mid-Day, Hindustan Times and PeakLife Magazine. In her corporate avatar,

specializing in sustainability, she has conceptualized various campaigns with organizations, including Cox and Kings and Vodafone India. In 2015, she pursued her Masters in Photography from the Light and Life Academy in Ooty, India, and has done independent projects with many hotels and restaurants in India, Turkey, U.A.E. and Indonesia, including Shangri-La, Hilton and JW Marriott. Before joining the LUX* family, she was working with Reethi Faru Resort, Maldives, in the same capacity.

Speaking on her new role, Monika said, "LUX* South Ari Atoll truly represents the luxe way in hospitality and it's a sheer delight to be a part of the family. I love the

challenges that come with aligning travel and hospitality ethos with that of sustainability to bring about a real change. I'm looking forward to this next chapter, continuing to put the brand's creative heritage and commitment to help people celebrate life centre-stage and truly represent the values that LUX* stands for."

Writer, traveller, photographer and a self-confessed foodie, she enjoys the art of story-telling through verbal and visual mediums. A strong advocate of sustainability and sustainable travels, she is committed to contribute to the cause with practices and principles that seamlessly blend with the industry's best.

JA Resorts & Hotels Appoints Robert El Khoury as New Vice President of Sales & Marketing



JA Resorts & Hotels has announced the appointment of hospitality veteran and experienced commercial leader, Robert El Khoury, to the position of Vice President of Sales and Marketing. He will be responsible for overseeing the commercial function of JA Resorts & Hotels 10-property portfolio across the UAE, Seychelles, and Maldives.

Echoing the values and motivation of JA Resorts & Hotels, which celebrates its 40th year in operation this year, El Khoury brings 21 years of Mena experience to the group from multiple hospitality names.

A Lebanese national, El Khoury began his career with Dusit Thani in 2000, before spending nine years with InterContinental Hotels Group in a variety of sales and marketing leadership roles in the UAE,

Egypt, and Thailand. He then spent six years with Jumeirah as a Director of Sales & Marketing in Dubai, before being headhunted by Marriott International to roles in Ritz Carlton, Westin, Le Meridien cluster and W The Palm Dubai. El Khoury also completed an MBA in Hospitality Management from the Emirates Academy in 2014.

His commercial acumen combined with penetrating market insights, trilingual ability, and considerable hospitality experience, will contribute to El Khoury's success as he takes on responsibility for driving the commercial engine of JA Resorts & Hotels, overseeing the disciplines of sales, revenue, marketing, and distribution, said the statement.

El Khoury will also focus on driving global expansion, maintaining a brand promise of unique experiences and unforgettable memories, and attracting and developing talent to deliver market-leading performance.

JA Resorts & Hotels is a legacy UAE brand, born in 1981 and holding a longstanding reputation for excellence in the management and operation of award-winning resorts and hotels. Taking its name from the original Jebel Ali (JA) Beach hotel, JA Resorts & Hotels portfolio features 10 distinct properties across the UAE and Indian Ocean, each dedicated to curating unique experiences and creating unforgettable memories.

Cocoon Maldives Announces the Appointment of Ahmed Jihad as New General Manager



Cocoon Maldives has announced the appointment of Ahmed Jihad (Jay) as its new General Manager. Jay is currently the General Manager of You & Me Maldives and with this new appointment he will be the Corporate General Manager for both Cocoon resorts.

Throughout his 20 years career at hospitality industry, Jay has experience working in renowned 5-star luxury brands in the Maldives in various managerial positions from Operations Manager, Resort Manager to General Manager.

"We are proud to appoint a Maldivian background General Manager such as Jay who has immense knowledge and experience to manage both our resorts and to effectively lead the team in creating a memorable Cocoon experience to all our valued guests. We are confident that under the leadership and guidance of Jay and all

our hardworking team members, we will be able to bring Cocoon and You & Me to new heights and strategically position both properties as the leading brands in Maldives luxury resort segment" said Alessandro Azzola (Alex), Managing Director of Cocoon and You & Me Maldives.

"I am excited for this wonderful opportunity and the trust placed in me by the management of Cocoon resorts. We do take pride in ourselves on our trademark of genuine hospitality and service provided by the wonderful team, I am privileged to be part of such heartwarming and dedicated team and I can say that the future of Cocoon Resorts are bright as the shining stars" said Jay, Corporate General Manager of Cocoon Resorts.

Cocoon Maldives, located in Ookolhufinolhu Island, Lhaviyani atoll is easily accessible by a 40-minute scenic seaplane flight from Velana International Airport, blends the best of Italian design with the Maldives' stunning natural beauty. The five-star resort houses 150 villas that are exclusively designed by Lago, one of Italy's finest design firms.

You & Me is located in the secluded northern atoll of Raa and is positioned as an achingly elegant, rustic-chic resort that exclusively caters to guests aged 16 and above. It oozes romance, with drop-dead gorgeous villas and free flow champagne, not to mention an intimate fine dining designer restaurant, H2O by Andrea Berton, which is fully submerged at the bottom of the island's lagoon.



REASONABLE PRICE

Tourist Arrivals

From 1st January 2021 to 5th October 2021, a total of 890,363 tourists arrived in the Maldives. The top three market during this period were India with 204,530 arrivals, followed by Russia with 174,095 tourist arrivals. Germany stood third with 55,707 tourist arrivals.

Top 10 Markets 2021

As of 5th October 2021

| Market | Arrivals | Share (%) | Rank |
|----------------|----------|-----------|------|
| India | 204,530 | 23.0 | 01 |
| Russia | 174,095 | 19.6 | 02 |
| Germany | 55,707 | 6.3 | 03 |
| U.S.A | 36,175 | 4.1 | 04 |
| Saudi Arabia | 30,782 | 3.5 | 05 |
| Ukraine | 28,552 | 3.2 | 06 |
| Spain | 26,692 | 3.0 | 07 |
| United Kingdom | 19,523 | 2.2 | 08 |
| Kazakhstan | 17,714 | 2.0 | 09 |
| France | 16,600 | 1.9 | 10 |

Top 10 Markets 2020

end December 2020

| Market | Arrivals | Share (%) | Rank |
|----------------|----------|-----------|------|
| India | 62,960 | 11.3 | 01 |
| Russia | 61,387 | 11.1 | 02 |
| United Kingdom | 52,720 | 9.5 | 03 |
| Italy | 46,690 | 8.4 | 04 |
| Germany | 36,435 | 6.6 | 05 |
| China | 34,245 | 6.2 | 06 |
| France | 28,031 | 5.0 | 07 |
| U.S.A | 19,759 | 3.6 | 08 |
| Switzerland | 12,517 | 2.3 | 09 |
| Ukraine | 10,343 | 1.9 | 10 |

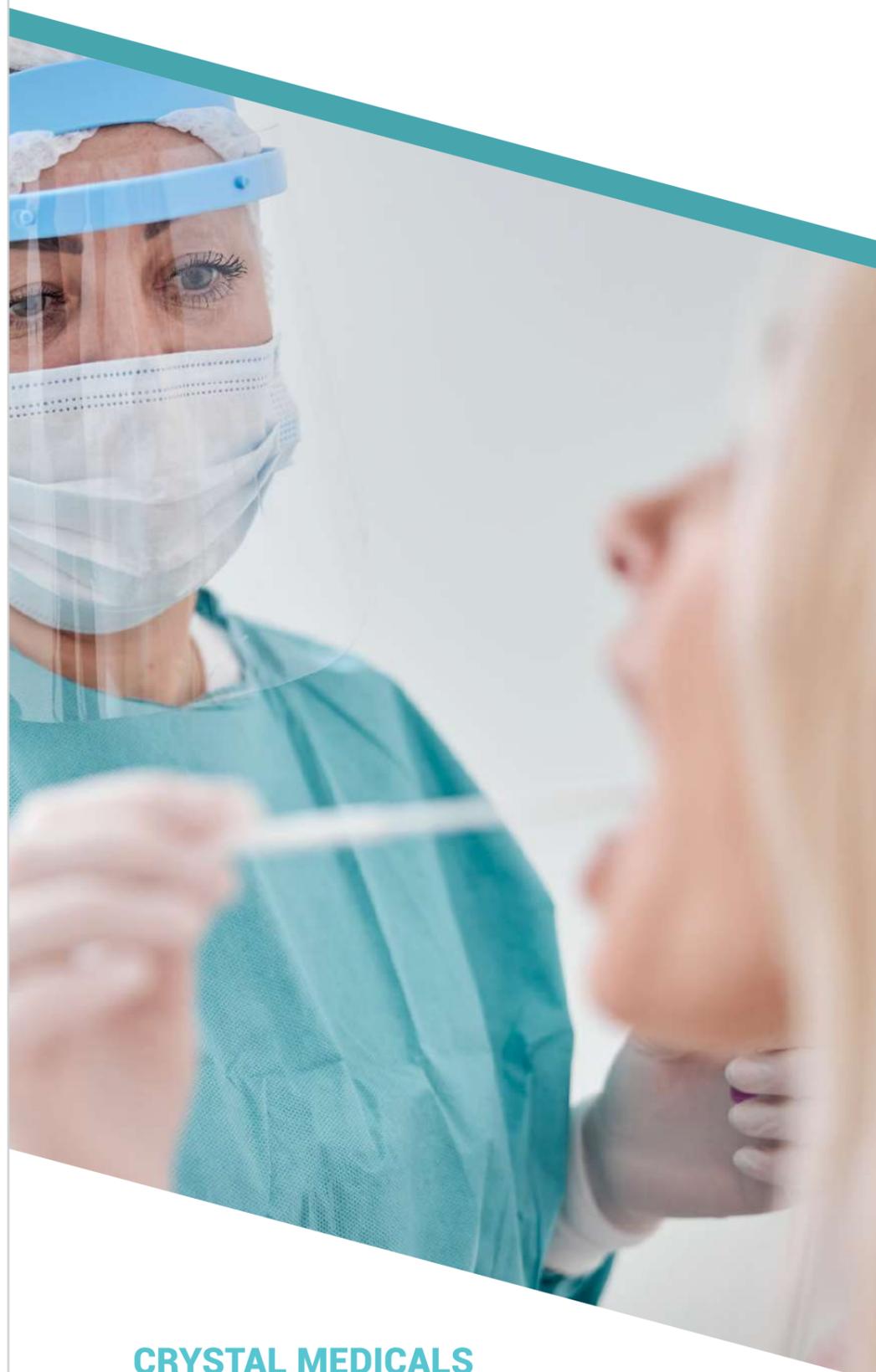
Top 10 Markets 2019

end December 2019

| Market | Arrivals | Share (%) | Rank |
|----------------|----------|-----------|------|
| China | 284,029 | 16.7 | 01 |
| India | 166,030 | 9.7 | 02 |
| Italy | 136,343 | 8.0 | 03 |
| Germany | 131,561 | 7.7 | 04 |
| United Kingdom | 126,199 | 7.4 | 05 |
| Russia | 83,369 | 4.9 | 06 |
| France | 59,738 | 3.5 | 07 |
| U.S.A | 54,474 | 3.2 | 08 |
| Japan | 44,251 | 2.6 | 09 |
| Australia | 39,928 | 2.3 | 10 |

COVID 19 RT-PCR TESTING

- Results issued after lab receives the sample: within 6 - 12 hrs & 12 - 24 hrs
- Special rates for Resorts & Guesthouses



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Loving Onboard

with

Donatella Telli (Dodi)

Founder of Luxury Yacht Maldives /
Albatros Top Boat



Donatella Telli popularly known as “Dodi” across the Maldives’ leisure boating landscape – the journey behind her 36 years of extensive experience in promoting Maldivian Liveboards and Yachts. Our team at The Islandchief sits with her onboard “Duke of York” to learn more about how she began back then and how things have transformed over the years.

Dodi, tell us about your first visit to the Maldives.

I set foot on the sandy beaches of the Maldives the first time, many years ago, in 1980 with my parents on the island of Furana. What a wonderful experience! Can you even imagine what the coral reef looked like around that time? I was already a diver back then and from that holiday I began to love this splendid archipelago more and more both above and below the surface.

How did you get interested in starting a cruise business and sending people to dive and stay on the boat?

The idea and further decision to start organizing Maldives cruises was dictated by the fact that, for

divers but not only, it was and still is the best way to live the sea, navigating in search of the most beautiful and engaging places, which obviously cannot be done in a village.

It was also a choice of life for me, living aboard a safari boat was a dream that I managed to achieve with my husband and life and adventure companion Massimo.

What were the challenges of running a cruise operator business that promoted an industry in the 1990s?

First of all, I would say that the most difficult thing was convincing customers that a cruise holiday is an

experience that is absolutely worth doing. Then it was a little hard -but good fun- teaching the Maldivian staff crew and dive masters how to fulfill the requests of the guests on board.

Now that you've come this far and with over three decades in business, what did you like most about the boating industry and advise us what still needs to be changed in your thoughts?

What has always charmed me about working in the Maldives is the friendliness of the people and their keenness on learning and to deliver a superior service to guests. Whilst the biggest challenge is, on one hand, Maldivians realize the environment is their number one source of life and success, on the

other - the authorities still need to improve the measures of protection of the delicate environment. Protecting the reefs, fishing sustainability, garbage sorting and so forth: everything is implemented but a lot more can be done to improve the results.

What are your main markets? Are you focused on a region? For example, only Europe?

Definitely the European market, Italy first, but also the rest of the world, from Asia to America. By now, with the internet and social media, I would say the whole world.

What makes the tourist unique when choosing your Luxury Yacht Maldives? What extra guarantee do you give to your guests in the operating standard?

Our standards are recognized and verified by due authorities and we are well known for years in this industry. Apart from regular activities of checks and maintenance, we definitely can deliver a service that is almost fully tailor made for each guest: we can personalize the cruise for all passengers, our 30 years' experience guarantees a knowledge and familiarity with country, people and marine biology that has very little competition, and, let me tell you, that touch of "italianity" that we put in everything on board - from quality and attention of the service to the cuisine (of course!) and the whole atmosphere between crew and guests.

What is your opinion on the positioning of the nautical sector? What are the challenges and how can the industry overcome them?

Much can be definitely done in the area of maintenance - repair services. There's room for improvement. Over the years, the boats have become more comfortable but challenging to manage from the technical point of view.

You must have sailed, dived, and taken your guests to nearly all good locations. What's your favorite shot?

The whole Maldivian archipelago is breath-taking, obviously when many atolls were still closed to tourism they had a particular charm, especially in the fishermen's islands with their inhabitants. Now everything has changed. I am lucky to have lived that "magical period" and above all to have made it known to our customers.



How do you see the future of the Maldivian boating industry? What's your advice for improvement?

I believe that with the ever-high standards of cruising boats, this market will open up more and more to a demanding and sophisticated clientele. The preparation of the crew and the professionalism of all the staff both on board and in the organization will then be crucial.

What precautionary measures have been taken by Luxury Yacht Maldives for a safe trip?

Our vessels are EIFEC certified as per Health Emergency Risk Compliance Management System (HER-CMS) in epidemic context. Our onboard safety conditions are constantly screened and updated according to the rules and regulations of the Republic of Maldives. We apply very strict safety measures as per our approved and certified safety plans.

For example, for boat cleaning and disinfecting procedures:

- Boat is constantly washed with soap and water, especially in common areas where touch points can be multiple.
- Boat is disinfected with diluted bleach solution 1 ml bleach to 9 ml water (keep for 10 minutes)
- Boat is sanitized with an Ozone machine.

No common rinsing tanks are used to rinse any piece of equipment, while stern showers are available for single use. Guests keep their own equipment in their individual basket, making sure no one else touches them except themselves. At the end of every safari, the crew responsible for cleaning and disinfecting the equipment will clean and disinfect masks, snorkels and regulators, and all mouthpieces will be protected and isolated in plastic, in order to avoid any contact with people or surrounding objects.

It's a good deal of extra work for our crew, but we will do our part to take part in making this pandemic nightmare end and help the world and tourism heal and reprise a normal rhythm.



EVENTS & AWARDS

Lily Beach Resort & Spa Earns Regional Honours at Haute Grandeur Global Awards 2021



The pioneer and one of the leading all-inclusive resorts in the Maldives, Lily Beach Resort & Spa has claimed regional honours at the Haute Grandeur Global Awards 2021. The resort secured 4 prestigious awards including:

- Best Culinary Experience in the Indian Ocean
- Best Destination Wedding Retreat in the Indian Ocean
- Best Family Resort in the Indian Ocean

- Best Honeymoon Hideaway Resort in the Indian Ocean

Haute Grandeur picks winners based on guests' satisfaction and reviews. Moreover, the awards recognise excellence through feedback from guests and not the quantity of votes by the general public or a panel of judges. Hence, this fair and transparent 'rating' process guarantees

unbiased results, which is a concept exclusive to the brand.

"We are extremely excited and happy to be recognised for our work, especially as the awards are entirely based on the feedback from our guests," read a statement by Lily Beach Resort & Spa.

While the famous all-inclusive resort won the Best Family Resort in the Indian Ocean award this year, Lily Beach claimed the Best Family Resort in the Maldives from Haute Grandeur in 2018 and 2019 as well. Additionally, the island retreat also won the Best All-Inclusive Resort in the Indian Ocean Award and Best Island Resort in the Indian Ocean Award in 2019.

Lily Beach Resort & Spa is a luxury 5-star resort nestled in the natural beauty of the Maldives. Located on Huvahendhoo Island in South Ari Atoll, Lily Beach is accessible by a 25-minute

scenic seaplane journey from Velana International Airport.

Lily Beach's legendary all-inclusive Platinum Plan is an all-encompassing meal plan that has a number of complimentary offerings. These include a thoughtfully curated range of excursions, delicious and distinctive food options – especially the very epicurean themed buffet dinners at Lily Maa: their main restaurant, updated COVID-19 safety procedures which have been thoroughly accredited by Hotel Resilient, and a variety of leisure and sporting activities.

Thanks to this luxurious all-inclusive meal plan that has everything one would need to have a worry-free vacay, and the warmth of the staff who knows how to provide the generous all-inclusive experience to perfection, the resort is one of the most sought-after island all-inclusive destinations in the Maldives.

Qatar Airways Secures Four Onboard Hospitality Awards 2021

Having leveraged innovative inflight enhancements during the COVID-19 pandemic and redefining the customer journey, Qatar Airways has been rewarded with four new accolades at the Onboard Hospitality Awards 2021 virtual ceremony, including the coveted Gold Winner for the 'Cabin Concept of the Year 2021'. The airline also scooped the top global title for 'Catering Innovation of the Year' for the newly introduced brunch platter, as well as two Readers' Vote awards; the 'Best for Onboard Snack in Business and First Class' and 'Best for Service Equipment - Passenger'.

The airline was highly commended for two other accolades including 'Best use of Onboard Technology' and 'Best Onboard Amenity Kits in First and Business Class'.

Qatar Airways Chief Officer Customer Experience, Mr. Rossen Dimitrov, said: "We are pleased to receive multiple awards from Onboard Hospitality which further solidifies our position

as an industry leader in customer experience. Honouring our passengers with truly inspirational experiences, we will not stop here and will continue to strive and excel in our services as they are quintessential in Qatar Airways' DNA."

Qatar Airways attained the pinnacle of Onboard Hospitality Awards, the 'Cabin Concept of the Year', for redefining the inflight customer experience during the pandemic. The airline was awarded for its ability to adapt the highest levels of safety and comfort through enhanced services and technologies; ultimately exceeding all expectations.

The airline also scooped the 'Catering Innovation of the Year' award for the airline's brunch platter which consists of six-indent tantalising spreads, offering passengers a variety of flavours in one serving.

Whilst the 'Onboard Snack in Business and First Class' was awarded



for its delectable Nova Scotia Lobster Claw with fresh avocado and sourdough toast, prepared with seasonal fresh organic garden salad.

Qatar Airways' exclusively designed limited edition BRIC's Breast Cancer awareness amenity kits were also highly commended, with each kit containing select products from Italy's Castello Monte Vibiano Vecchio, the environmentally friendly and innovative nutrition-centric olive oil company. The skincare range included lip balm, hydrating facial mist, and anti-ageing moisturiser, as well as pink socks and eyeshades.

The airline was also acknowledged for its efforts in adapting to the COVID-19 pandemic and was highly commended for the 'Best use of Onboard Technology' award based on Qatar Airways' 100 per cent touch-free inflight entertainment technology - Oryx One.

The Onboard Hospitality Awards 2021 recognise innovation and excellence in people, products and services to support the onboard passenger experience in the air, on rail, ferry or cruise. With a rigorous and accountable judging process, only the very best products and companies win an Onboard Hospitality Award.

EVENTS & AWARDS

Gulf Craft's Majesty 175 Wins 'Best Revelation Yacht' Award at Cannes Yachting Festival



Gulf Craft has announced that its recently launched superyacht, Majesty 175 has won the Best Revelation Yacht award at the World Yacht Trophies held in Cannes Yachting Festival 2021.

Majesty 175 is the world's largest composite production yacht manufactured at Gulf Craft's integrated in-house production facility in the UAE. The Yacht is scheduled to be handed over to its owner this month.

Speaking from Cannes Yachting Festival, Gulf Craft's CEO, Talal Nasralla, said: "This year has been exceptionally robust for us with a strong order book and the delivery of our Majesty 175 and other superyachts. These have further established our strengths in manufacturing boats and yachts from composites – a method that is now gaining popularity in Europe, traditionally a steel boat market. We are now leading the global boating conversation around composite-built superyachts with strong demand from Europe and other global markets. To meet this, we have expanded our footprint in Europe.

"Our differentiating value proposition is our fully integrated manufacturing facility and our in-house design capabilities. Every aspect of the build of our vessels, from design concept, engineering, build and beyond happens under one roof. These enable

us to deliver highly personalised boats that meet the aspirations of global yachting enthusiasts with a diverse bouquet of five brands for customers to choose from – the Majesty series, affordable Silvercraft family boats, Oryx sports cruisers, Nomad explorer yachts and Touring Passenger Vessels."

With a significant increase of 42 per cent in new orders in the first half of 2021, Gulf Craft is now ramping up its production capacity and retailer network across the globe. "We can offer our customers in Europe a high-quality vessel to suit their needs. For instance, our Nomad SUV series is well suited to the Nordic region's cooler climate because it has been designed with an enclosed cabin which is unique to explorer boats currently available in the market," added Nasralla.

Gulf Craft has built more than 10,000 boats already, serving clients around the world. The 2019 AEU Safety Award Winner, Gulf Craft was awarded 'Best in the Show' at Fort Lauderdale International Boat Show for its 43.3m Majesty 140 superyacht.

40/60

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NEW OPENINGS

Jumeirah Group Reveals Opening Date of New Stunning Address in the Maldives



Jumeirah Group has announced that its new resort, Jumeirah Maldives has welcomed its first guests from October 1, 2021.

Adding to Jumeirah Group's growing portfolio of hotels, guests can now discover Jumeirah Maldives, an all-villa luxury resort tucked away in the crystalline turquoise waters of the North Malé Atoll, easily reachable by speedboat or seaplane from Velana International Airport. Its idyllic location offers privacy for romantic getaways, a blissful island retreat for friends and family and experiences to suit the more active traveler.

The resort's surprising panoramic architecture and calming interiors are the work of sophisticated Singaporean design studio, Miaja, who have created an elegant contemporary ethos in harmony with the natural environment, echoing modern Mediterranean chic – a design that sets it apart from the rest.

José Silva, Chief Executive Officer of Jumeirah Group, said: "The Maldives is a much-loved getaway for travellers from around the world and Jumeirah Maldives is a destination that delivers on our brand promise of Stay Different™. The resort offers unparalleled hospitality with a genuine flair that exceeds guest expectations, while pushing the limits of design, culinary and service expertise. A truly breath-taking addition to the brand's portfolio, Jumeirah Group's new home in the Maldives guarantees an immaculate guest experience right from the very moment they set foot in our new contemporary resort."

Jumeirah Maldives offers 67 beach and over-water villas in one-, two- and three-bedroom configurations, all assuring stunning panoramic views of the Indian

Ocean. Starting from 171sqm, the resort's villas are among the most spacious in the North Malé Atoll. Each villa features a private infinity pool and large roof-top terrace with a dedicated dining area for guests to take in the sensational views while indulging in delicious culinary dishes or relaxing with a picture-perfect movie-under-the-stars experience, while the three-bedroom villas also boast their own gym.

The interiors of the villas are truly breath-taking. Bathed in natural light with oversized windows framing the verdant flora and palm fringed beaches or the dramatic sweeping ocean views, guests are harmoniously connected to the natural environment, creating a calming and positive vibe. Textured walls, local artworks and handcrafts combined with Jumeirah Group's signature luxury amenities and bedding, create a sense of purity and simplicity amid organic surroundings.

As always, exceptional dining experiences are the focus of attention for Jumeirah Group, who has infused the island experience with exquisite Mediterranean and Nikkei flavours, with two of their award-winning signature restaurants, Shimmers and Kayto, for a truly memorable stay.

Delivering the ultimate in casual alfresco dining, Shimmers will feature Chef Roberto Rispoli's exquisite cuisine set against a backdrop of amazing sunrises, breath-taking ocean views and chilled vibes thanks to a resident DJ and regular live music performances. Kayto, meanwhile, will captivate guests over dinner, with an impressive open kitchen that will draw the diner's eye to the team's culinary mastery.

The globally renowned Talise Spa, with its six

overwater treatment rooms, offers unfettered access to wellness and relaxation with a range of therapeutic and re-energising treatments. There are daily yoga classes at this tropical paradise, making your wellness routine even more rewarding.

Guests can also enjoy an array of activities from water sports, beach volleyball, billiards and tennis at the resort's phenomenal court location, or perhaps partake in enriching experiences from underwater photography, planting coconut trees and making coconut oil. A highlight for any guest stay is the unique submarine tour transporting them through the vibrant marine habitat. For the most memorable experience, try a night voyage to experience the rarely-seen underwater world after sunset.

Appealing to families is a splash waterpark and indoor play area for kids, while an outdoor cinema will screen family favorites beachside as well as blockbusters more suitable for older audiences. Meanwhile, guest experiences are made effortless by a team of dedicated butlers who work round the clock curating exemplary hospitality services: from reservations to check-in, dining and spa bookings.



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IN THE NEWS

'Kulafihin Dhivehi Raajje' Art Competition Held at Fushifaru Maldives Resort



On October 9, 2021, Fushifaru Maldives held the much-anticipated Art Competition titled, 'Kulafihin Dhivehi Raajje' - an endeavor from Fushifaru Maldives Resort to revive and preserve the rich and inimitable Maldivian culture; joined by local talents from different islands of beautiful Lhaviyani Atoll, a special visiting artist, guest judges and special invitees from the islands.

The event was inaugurated with appreciation words by the General Manager of Fushifaru Maldives Resort, Mr. Ahmed Siaar. Competition began at 1030am and the participants were given 1 hour to complete their

drawings. The winner was selected based on precision, attention to detail, creativity/originality, use of color and overall appearance. Mr Scott Vickers & Mrs Laurie Nickersons participated as the guest judges of "Kulafihin Dhivehi Raajje" Art Competition.

Extremely talented local artist, Ms. Maisha Yoosuf (well-known by the name of Gulsampa), a graphic designer by profession and an illustrator at heart along with students from Ifthithaah School, Lhaviyani Atoll School, Hinnavaru School and Olhuvelifushi School participated in the event.

Winners of 'Kulafihin Dhivehi Raajje' Art Competition was awarded with the following prizes;

- 1st Place Winner; Complimentary stay at Fushifaru Maldives Resort

Name of the Winner: Chamara Gedara Najith Nethsara Gunawardhana, Grade 7, Ifthithaah School

- 2nd Place Winner: A 42" Smart Television by Fushifaru Maldives Resort

Name of the Winner: Shamaan Saeed, Grade 12, Olhuvelifushi School.



About Fushifaru Maldives Resort

Located in the heart of Lhaviyani Atoll, Fushifaru Maldives presents an Island experience like no other. Just a 35-minute breath-taking seaplane flight away from Velana International Airport. Your journey to Fushifaru Maldives starts with views of azure blue waters of the Indian Ocean and over remote islands. The resort offers a wide range of services and facilities for guests. Whether for a romantic honeymoon or a special family getaway, the resort combines the intimacy of a small boutique resort with an upscale service tending to your every need and comfort.

Ooredoo Group and CK Hutchison Signs US\$6 Billion Merger Agreement to Introduce a New Digital Telco for Indonesia

Ooredoo Group and CK Hutchison Holdings Limited announced the signing of a US\$6 billion agreement for the proposed merger of their telco businesses in Indonesia, PT Indosat Tbk (Indosat Ooredoo) and PT Hutchison 3 Indonesia (H3I). The merged company will be named PT Indosat Ooredoo Hutchison Tbk (Indosat Ooredoo Hutchison).

The merger of Indosat Ooredoo and H3I will bring together two highly complementary businesses to create a larger, commercially stronger and more competitive world-class digital telecom and internet company, well placed to deliver more value for all shareholders, customers and for Indonesia.

According to Ooredoo Group, the new digital telco will be well-positioned to accelerate Indonesia's economic growth and transformation into a digital society. It will further be the second largest mobile telecoms company in the country, with an estimated annual revenue of approximately US\$3 billion.

The combined company is said to have the scale, financial strength, and expertise to compete more effectively. Combining the highly complementary assets and products of Indosat Ooredoo and H3I will drive innovation and network improvements that will enable the delivery of outstanding digital services, as well as a broader product offering, to customers across Indonesia.

Following the merger, the Indonesian mobile market is expected to retain a healthy level of competition, attractive to long-term investment across the industry, it added.

Ooredoo Group currently has a controlling 65.0% shareholding in Indosat Ooredoo through Ooredoo Asia, a wholly-owned holding company. The merger of Indosat and H3I will result in CK Hutchison receiving newly issued shares in Indosat Ooredoo amounting to 21.8% and PT Tiga Telekomunikasi Indonesia amounting to 10.8% of the merged Indosat Ooredoo Hutchison business.

Upon closing, Indosat Ooredoo Hutchison will be jointly controlled by Ooredoo Group and CK Hutchison.

Ooredoo Managing Director Aziz Aluthman Fakhroo said: "This agreement is a significant step towards our shared vision of creating outstanding value for our customers and shareholders by bringing



together two of Indonesia's leading telecoms brands to create a stronger number two player in Indonesia, backed by two highly committed partners in Ooredoo Group and CK Hutchison."

"With this agreement in place, we can now turn our attention to closing the transaction and then working closely with CK Hutchison to leverage the combined expertise of our respective global telecoms groups to build a world-class digital telco for Indonesia," he stated.

This merged company will deliver significant value and benefits for all stakeholders including Indosat Ooredoo and Ooredoo Group shareholders, for customers, employees and Indonesia.

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DUTY FREE MALDIVES



IN THE NEWS

New Insurance Packages Launched Targeted for Hiya Flat Recipients by the Islamic Window of Allied Insurance, Ayady Takaful

Allied Insurance Company of the Maldives Islamic Window; Ayady Takaful launches “Ahareng Hiya” targeted for Hiya Flat recipients. In a joint press conference with Ayady Takaful, the product was informed by the General Manager of Allied Insurance Mr. Ibrahim Firushan.

“Ahareng Hiya” is a home content protection plan designed to cover damages or losses resulting from unfortunate incidents such as fire/ burglary/ natural disasters etc. This plan is categorized into 3 affordable sub-plans where customers can choose to their liking.

Speaking at the press event, General Manager Mr. Ibrahim Firushan congratulated the flat recipients and highlighted that Allied Islamic Window; Ayady Takaful designed this product especially for the Hiya flat recipients to add to their joy of being homeowners. He further explained that since the new homeowners are currently focused on the finishing of apartments, spending is evidently increasing causing savings to decrease. Therefore, Allied and Ayady wish to be there as insurance guardians to protect the assets of every home in



the event of an unforeseen event.

Another speaker at the press event, Assistant Manager of Ayady Takaful Ms. Fareeda added that she hopes to see the product purpose being

fulfilled as “Ahareng Hiya” is currently the most affordable protection plan for Hiya residents. She also stated that this plan will be available online from www.myallied.mv ensuring additional convenience for customers.

BML Partners with Mastercard and MTCC to Provide Digital Payments for Public Transportation



Bank of Maldives has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Mastercard and Maldives Transport and Construction Company (MTCC) to implement an integrated transport management and automatic fare collection system for the public transport service operated by MTCC in the Maldives.

The project is part of Mastercard’s ‘Smart Cities’ initiative to introduce urban mobility solutions to transform the transport experience in cities. As part of this, contactless and digital payments will be

introduced on the bus and ferry network, making travelling simpler for commuters and cost-effective for service providers.

Commenting on the project, Bank of Maldives CEO and Managing Director, said “Investing in innovative solutions that offer simplicity and convenience while meeting the changing customer expectations remains an important part of our business. We are delighted to partner with Mastercard and MTCC to implement this project which will see our digital card and mobile

payment solutions enabled for the public transport sector.”

Commenting on the solution offered to Male’ City, Rajesh Mani, Country Manager, Sri Lanka & Maldives, Mastercard said, “We are very happy to once again join hands with the Government of Maldives, this time to implement our open-loop Mastercard Transit Solutions system which will bring about significant fiscal savings, while offering unparalleled convenience to commuters. Through this program, Mastercard currently has simplified the daily commute in over 150 cities around the globe and is proud to bring this wealth of experience to help the Government of Maldives realise its digitization strategies.”

Furthermore, Maldives Transport & Contracting Company CEO, Mr. Adam Azim said “We are delighted to partner with BML and Mastercard to provide even more convenience to our customers. The past year has shown the critical importance of innovative and contactless payment methods, and as always, we will strive to provide services that are safe and easily accessible for the public. This service will undoubtedly make the use of public transport simple and straightforward.”

With a nationwide network of 35 branches across all 20 atolls, 73 Self Service Banking Centres, 134 ATMs, over 200 agents and a full suite of Digital Banking services, Bank of Maldives is committed to supporting individuals, businesses and communities across Maldives.

IN THE NEWS

GAM Holds Annual General Meeting and Announces Rebranding of its Name



Guesthouse Association of Maldives (GAM) has announced rebranding of its name to National Hotels & Guesthouse Association (NGAM) at the Annual General Meeting held at Kaani Palm Beach, Maafushi on September 19, 2021.

As the association who manages the guesthouses of Maldives, GAM revealed the new change was brought to showcase its effort in providing support for the local hotels along with the guesthouses as voted by the participants of the Annual General Meeting 2020.

During the general meeting, Mohamed Shamheed from OTO Creative signed an

agreement with the organization to conduct Guesthouse Expo and to publish the official Magazine of the organization.

Speaking at the event, President of GAM, Abdulla Nasheed said that with the expansion of Guesthouse tourism in the Maldives, it is important to plan for a way to steady the occupancy across the guesthouses. He further said despite occupancy held stable at Maafushi, several other guesthouses face challenges as it is not held as firm and the association will be working with the government to overcome and devise a solution regarding the difficulties. The association also revealed a full-time Secretary General will be appointed to carry out regular works.

GAM is a non-profitable NGO established in 2014 to coordinate with the government policy making bodies in providing the utmost assistance to develop and sustain the Local Tourism Sector which benefits the government and the local community of the Maldives.

The islandchief Partners with Musicians' Union of the Maldives (M.U.M) to Promote Local Music Talents

The islandchief has partnered with Musicians' Union of the Maldives (M.U.M) to promote local music talents and share their artistry in the hospitality industry. The talents will be featured in a special column dedicated in the monthly print edition of The islandchief.

Through this collaboration, The islandchief aims to support and make way in providing opportunities for the featured local musicians and artists across the tourism and hospitality scene of the Maldives.

Due to the pandemic and the limited opportunities available during this time, local talents have faced difficulties in securing a stable position in the industry. However, with the reopening of tourist establishments and eased restrictions in the country, the situation is gradually improving.



The Musicians' Union of the Maldives was formed in August 2020, with the goal set to empower local musicians in all aspects of the music industry in the Maldives. M.U.M represents formally employed and self-employed individuals, as well as emerging artists in the field who have registered as official members of the organization. Through their endeavours, the Union offers advice, support, and legal assistance to its members.

President Declares 3rd October as National Tourism Day



H.E President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih has declared 3rd October as National Tourism Day. President announced the decision while delivering his remarks at the ceremony held at Kurumba Maldives Resort to launch the official one-year countdown to the 50th anniversary of the Maldives Tourism Industry.

As the Maldives is on track to mark its 50th anniversary since the introduction of tourism in the country, President Solih revealed that the government had decided to dedicate a day for the occasion as the Maldives does not mark a specific day to celebrate the achievements of the tourism sector. In previous years, such celebrations were held coinciding with International Tourism Day. He further clarified that National Tourism Day is attributed to the opening of the Maldives' first resort, Kurumba Village, at Vihamanaafushi island near Malé on October 3, 1972.

President Solih commended the efforts of tourism industry workers and emphasised their contributions to the advancement of the industry. The President said that the government envisions the expansion of tourism across the nation. Noting that peripheral developmental efforts are required for this to become a reality, he detailed that transport links to the islands, access to safe drinking water, proper sewerage networks and telecommunication services must be established across the nation to expand tourism.

President stated that the administration had already made great progress in the efforts to prioritise the development of such services. He reiterated that the administration strives to establish water and sewerage networks in all inhabited islands by the end of 2023. Adding that work to establish the 'Integrated National Public Ferry Network', a high-speed ferry network connecting the islands is underway, the President similarly underlined the efforts to provide easy access to internet services across the nation. He also stated that local tourism ventures such as guesthouses and homestays would become convenient with the development of these services.

Delineating the government's vision for a more prosperous future for the tourism sector, President Solih said that future generations would benefit from the implementation of sound environmental policies that ensure sustainability and focus on climate change. He underscored the importance of staying on track with the 'National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan', which encompasses the phase-out of Single-Use Plastics and the Maldives' ambition to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2030.

Highlighting the contributions of tourism industry workers, President Solih reiterated that increased participation from women and youth is crucial to the advancement of the industry.

A song for celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Maldives Tourism Industry was revealed at the ceremony and the President was presented with the lyrics of the song. The ceremony was attended by First Lady Fazna Ahmed, Cabinet Ministers, senior government officials, tourism sector representatives, long-serving members of the sector and industry leaders.

BON APPÉTIT

Lomo Saltado

Peruvian stir-fried beef



Hernan Garcia is a chef with a passion for research, he likes to cook with common ingredients and present them in many ways. He studied gastronomy and restaurant management in Colombia and Canada. Worked in El Cielo Restaurant one of the best restaurants in Colombia and Latin America and he has more than 9 years of experience in restaurants.

“Bringing a taste of my home to the Maldives to share and inspire about South American cuisine was my inspiration behind this dish”

Ingredients:

- 110g Wagyu beef tenderloin
- 20ml olive oil
- To taste sea salt flakes
- To taste black pepper

Lomo saltado sauce:

- 25ml red wine vinegar
- 50ml light soy sauce
- 10g oyster sauce
- 10g red onion – finely diced
- 2g garlic – finely chopped
- 50ml mushroom stock
- 50ml beef stock
- 50g unsalted butter - cold
- 5g parsley – finely chopped
- To taste sea salt flakes
- To taste white pepper

Potato sponge:

- 50g mashed potato
- 1g activated charcoal powder
- 1 each egg
- 2g table salt

Method:

1. To cook the beef: Season the wagyu beef tenderloin with sea salt and black pepper. In a skillet over medium high heat add some olive oil and allow it to come to almost smoking point. Add in the beef and sear on all sides for 2 minutes. Remove the beef and allow it to rest. Keep the pan with all its juices for the sauce.
2. To make Lomo saltado sauce: place the pan that the beef was cooked in back on the medium-low heat. Add the red onion, garlic and sauté until soft and slightly golden brown. Add in the red wine vinegar and cook for 2 minutes. Add in the mushroom stock, beef stock, soy sauce and oyster sauce and allow to cook until reduced by ¼, this will take approx. 5 minutes. Remove the pan from the heat and whisk in the cold butter, piece by piece, until well combined. Add in the parsley and adjust seasoning with salt and pepper as required. Keep aside until ready to plate.
3. To make potato sponge: In a heavy based pan over medium heat, add the mash potato, activated charcoal powder, egg and salt. Heat until warm. Transfer the mixture to a blender and blend until smooth. Using a charged siphon add the mixture. In a

Potato foam:

- 50g mashed potato
- 50g cooking cream
- To taste sea salt
- To taste white pepper

Confit onions and tomatoes:

- 20g pearl onions
- 20g cherry tomatoes – flamed
- 100ml smoked olive oil
- 10g garlic – lightly crushed
- 6 sprig thyme
- To taste sea salt
- To taste white pepper

Rice cracker:

- 20g cooked basmati rice
- 10ml water
- 2g corn starch
- To taste salt

- paper cup fill half the cup with the mixture from the siphon, this will allow for a very aerated sponge. Cook in the microwave for 60 seconds and allow to cool.
4. To make potato foam: In a heavy based pan over medium heat, add the mash potato and cooking cream, season to taste. Allow the mixture to completely warm before transferring to a blender. Blend well until a smooth paste is achieved. Using a charged siphon add the mixture and keep warm in a water bath until ready to use.
5. To make confit onions and tomatoes: using a gastro or oven proof bowl add the onions, tomatoes, garlic, thyme, salt and pepper. Cover completely with the smoked oil. Place into the oven at 90 degrees Celsius and cook for 30 minutes. Remove form oven and allow to cook to room temperature for plating.
6. To make rice cracker: hand blend the cooked rice, water, corn starch and salt together until a dough like consistency is formed. Using a spatula spread the dough thinly onto a silpat mat and dehydrate until dry. You can also leave in a warm place to dry out. Once dry break into pieces and deep fry in clean vegetable oil until puffy and crispy.
7. To present and plate the dish: Slice the beef and plate the dish using all components in an aesthetically pleasing manner. Garnish using micro cress and coriander leaves.



Courtesy of
Sous-Chef Hernan
LUX* North Malé Atoll



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Frankly Speaking

Tourism in the Southernmost tip of the Maldives have been one of the oldest, yet challenged in terms of growth and development- especially with two partially state-owned resorts that have not been in operation. What is your take in overcoming this decades-old obstacle and solution to develop tourism in the Southernmost islands, whilst transforming it to the country's second hub for tourists?



Fawzan Faried
Country Manager, Maldives
Sri Lankan Airlines

It is really unfortunate that Tourism Ministry overlooked one of best location in Maldives which is beyond beach!

Historical monuments in Addu especially English colonial monuments are not marketed. Fuvahmulah has its own unique mangroves as well as Mud bath which is available exclusively in this region has not been exposed to the world yet along with unique diving sites. If these areas are marketed properly, if the tourism could intervene and take some interest, certainly projected tourism arrivals could be increased by another 10-20% to Maldives. Stakeholder involvement such a Tourism Ministry, Regional Tourism, National carrier, Domestic Airline operators is mandatory as SriLankan Airlines is readily available to extend our international connectivity to southern Maldives.



Ahmed Afrah
President
National Boating Association of Maldives

As with any tourism business in Maldives, the access to tourists is a key deciding factor on the success or failure for the tourism in the Southern zone of Maldives. We are relying mostly on domestic transfers from Velana International Airport to the Southern zone. There are number of significant issues including the high price of the domestic transfers, lack of flight schedule in advance, last minute changes to the flight timings, and other difficulties in working with local carriers. Key issue which the local carriers point out it is the lack of sufficient tourist traffic to bring down the cost and to have regular frequent flights. Sufficient traffic would only come when there are a good number of beds and the investment to have this bed inventory is dependent on tourist arrival at a cheap rate. This leads to a catch-22 situation.

Currently the Ministry of Tourism is working very hard on solving this issue through bringing together all relevant parties involved including domestic flight operators, travel agents, Atoll and Island Councilors, Parliamentarians representing Southern Zone and property developers including resorts, guesthouses and liveaboards. The government is also focusing on bringing international charter flights and schedules flights directly to Southern zone. Having international flights landing at GAN airport combined with the seaplane operation from GAN catering to the southern atolls could be the answer to make the Southern zone a success.



Shaaz Waleed
Managing Director
Resort Life Travel

Undoubtedly Southern Islands of Maldives are the most beautiful ones. Governments have neglected the interest of Southern People and its potentials. While Maldivian Resorts has been positioned as world's finest, there should be some who are responsible for not positioning South in Tourism's Scope.



Misbah Nazeer
Discoveraddu.com

Tourism in Addu has huge potential. In the past government only half-heartedly put an effort to develop tourism, lacking a good vision and strategy. Necessary connectivity was not established. For international flights to operate to GAN, there needs to be sufficient amount of beds, with Fuvahmulah, Huvadhoon and Addu combined it is possible but the required domestic connectivity wasn't ever established. Addu also has the greatest opportunity for growth in guesthouse tourism due to its unique geography. Natural beauty, rich culture and history. Adduans are the most experienced in Maldives for hospitality. Hopefully with the new policies on tourism lease rent reduction, and government's efforts to increase tourist beds and establish domestic connectivity will change the whole dynamics of southern tourism in Maldives.



Moosa Rasheed
Managing Director
Aimo Travels

We have to make sure that there is demand for Addu tourism. Where there no demand businesses wouldn't be successful.

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