



## Designing a SMARTER Living



EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

with

**AREEF SAEED**

General Manager, OXON Tech

&

**MARKO BOGDANOVIC**

Marketing Executive & Export Manager, Peštan

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Dear Readers,

Welcome to our January 2023 issue of the Islandchief!

If all goes according to plan, this will be the first full year where we won't have any pandemic-related travel restrictions in most countries around the world. We were confident that this day would come sooner than later - and now that it's here, it's time to make the most of it.

Hope you had a decadent and fun-filled Christmas with your families. As we usher in a new year, may this one be everything that we dream of and more!

Here's to creating exciting content, nurturing existing partnerships, forming new alliances and writing engaging stories for the next 365 days!

Home Automation has always been an integral part of smart homes. With incredible innovations and a constant attempt to make lives exceptionally convenient, in this issue of the Islandchief, we bring you Mr. Areef Saeed, General Manager, OXON Tech, and Mr. Marko Bogdanovic, Marketing Executive & Export Manager, Peštan to find out how they are raising the bar with their innovative home automation products and solutions across the Maldives.

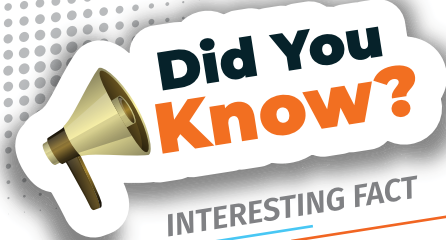
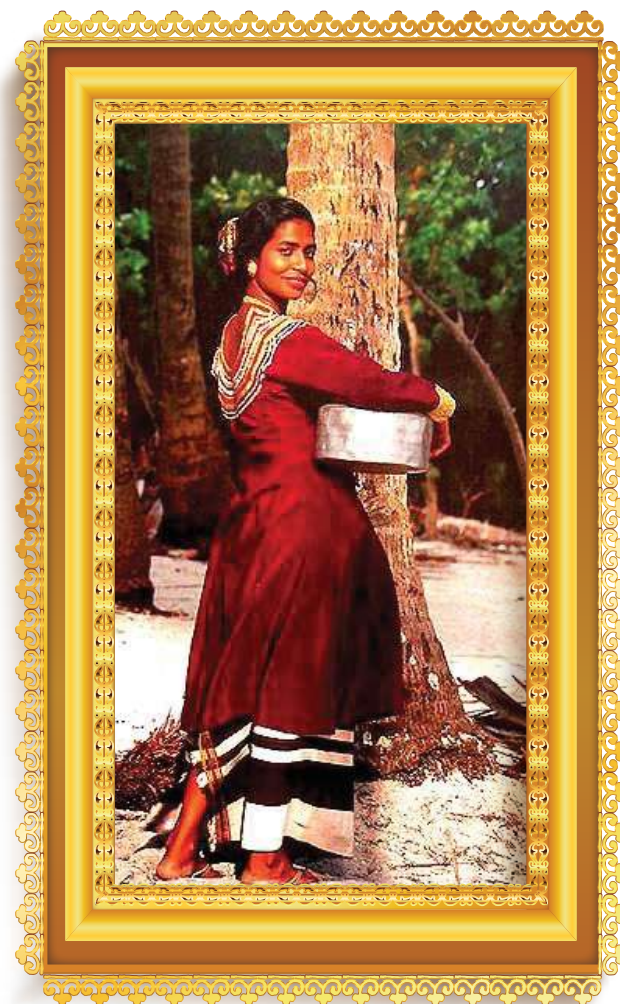
On page 22, our Bon Appétit section presents the recipe for Choux Au Crequalin (Young Coconut, Raspberry, Chocolate combination) by Chef Aminath Hameed, Chocolatier / Pastry Chef, The Ritz-Carlton Maldives.

And lastly on page 23, our industry experts share their views on the challenges faced by surfers visiting the Maldives in regards to steady domestic flight operations, luggage/gear clearance and delivery on time for departures and arrivals. Furthermore, they comment on the addition of ATR aircrafts to Maldivian fleet as means to overcome the current obstacles.

From all of us at The islandchief, we wish you and your loved ones a blessed and prosperous 2023!

Safe travels!

**The Islandchief Team**



## MALDIVIAN CULTURAL ATTIRE OF WOMEN

The Maldives, like any other country, is blessed with cultural attires which are unique, rich with traditional characteristics.

### Dhivehi Libaas

This is one of the oldest cultural dresses worn by Maldivian women and it boasts one of the most intricate embroidery techniques called "Kasabu Viyun" on the "Boavalhu" or neckline of the dress. This embroidery surrounds the neckline and sometimes the hem of the skirt or long sleeve. Dhivehi Libaas usually come in bright colors such as red, green, blue, the more official one being the bright blood red dress.

### Hedhun Buri

Hedhun Buri was the most casual attire worn usually by girls and young ladies. This is a day wear outfit but was often used for special occasions such as Boduberu or Bandiyaa dance performances held on celebratory days. The tops are made with plain or flowery fabrics, with short sleeves (with longer sleeves under it for adults who wear Buruga) and pleated skirts which end above the knee. This top is worn with a "feyli" (skirt) made of plain black material with white accenting on the hemline or sides.

### Dhiguhedhun (Faaskuri Hedhun)

Dhiguhedhun, also known as Faaskurihedhun is the current national dress of the Maldives. The Dhiguhedhun can be best described as charming and feminine, designed to accentuate the curves of the person wearing the gown. Dhiguhedhun, which translates to long dress, is a floor length gown, with long sleeves and a puritan collar. The dress is accessorized with a small lace veil, called "bolifothikolhu", which is pinned to the back of the hair, and runs to the length of the hair which is kept loose and flowing.

Credit: [Visitmaldives.com](http://Visitmaldives.com)

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ACROSS THE SKIES

# THAI and Singapore Airlines Sign MoU to Forge New Strategic Partnership



Thai Airways International Public Company Limited (THAI) and Singapore Airlines (SIA) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to form a new strategic partnership. This will result in the airlines progressively code sharing more extensively on each other's services and exploring wide-ranging commercial collaboration that provides their customers with more options and value, as well as greater benefits and an enhanced travel experience.

In the initial phase, THAI and SIA will codeshare on each other's flight services between Singapore and Bangkok. THAI will also codeshare on SIA's flight services to Cape Town and Johannesburg in South Africa; Houston, Los Angeles, New York (John F. Kennedy International Airport and Newark Liberty International Airport), San Francisco, and Seattle in the United States of America; as well as Vancouver in Canada, by the first quarter of 2023, subject to regulatory approval.

Additional codeshare arrangements to points in both airlines' networks will be explored to support increased air connectivity to Thailand and Singapore, as well as points in Europe, India, and South West Pacific routes.

Mr Goh Choon Phong, Chief Executive Officer, Singapore Airlines, said: "SIA and THAI have had a close relationship for many years, which we aim to strengthen through this comprehensive agreement. Both airlines have a loyal customer base, as well as extensive operations within South East Asia and around the world. This is a win-win opportunity to support the growth of our respective hubs and enhance the options and service offerings for our customers."

Mr Suvadhana Sibunruang, THAI Acting Chief Executive Officer, said: "THAI and Singapore Airlines have shared a long-term relationship, and I am glad that this cooperation between the two airlines will certainly cater for the demand of travelers between Thailand, Singapore, and beyond. It will also enable the expansion of THAI's network to more service points in the United States, Canada, South Africa, Europe, India, and South West Pacific routes. The codeshare arrangements will greatly benefit our customers in a range of service areas including the frequent flyer programme, customer experiences, lounge access, and airport ground services. The collaboration strengthens both the airlines' networks as members of Star Alliance."


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## ACROSS THE SKIES



ITA Airways has commenced direct flights from Rome Fiumicino to Malé (Maldives) from December 17. It will be operated with the Company's flagship, the Airbus A350.

To meet the expected demand, the new connection will have a variable number of weekly frequencies: from twice weekly, on Saturdays and Sundays (on December 17-18 and from January 28 to March 25), to three weekly frequencies (from December 21-25 and from January 19-22), to four weekly frequencies (from December 26 to January 1 and from January 11-15), and, to five weekly frequencies (from January 2-8).

The flight from Malé is scheduled from

December 18, 2022 to April 15, 2023.

The flight will therefore be operated until April 15, 2023, allowing Italian holidaymakers to choose the Maldives also for their Easter holidays. In addition, travelers flying on the new route will also be conveniently connected with the flights from major European airports thanks to ITA Airways' extensive network.

"We are proud and excited to inaugurate tomorrow ITA Airways flight from Rome Fiumicino to Malé, a new intercontinental connection which launches just a few days after the opening of the direct flights to Tokyo and Delhi - said Emiliana Limosani,

## ITA Airways Commences Direct Flights from Rome Fiumicino to Maldives

ITA Airways Chief Commercial Officer and CEO Volare. "This connection aims at further developing our network by identifying destinations of greatest interest and with the highest potential not only for the final customer but also for business partners, tour operators and travel agencies. ITA Airways passengers will also be traveling to the Maldives with convenient connections not only from Italy but from all over Europe."

"We look forward to welcoming the Italian flagship carrier to the Maldives once again and we are confident that the increase in direct connectivity will boost arrivals during the holiday and winter season," said Thoyyib Mohamed, CEO of Visit Maldives. "Italy has always been one of our key markets, one of historical importance for the Maldivian tourism

industry. Tourists from Italy were in fact the first to visit the Maldives when we started tourism development exactly 50 years ago and, today, we are really excited about this direct connection between the two Countries. Currently, Italy is the 5th market in terms of volume of arrivals with over 80,000 visitors (5.4% of the total market share)".

ITA Airways is thus expanding its intercontinental network, looking out over the Indian Ocean, and responding to the increasingly strong customers' demand for one of the most sought-after destinations in world tourism - the Maldives. This new intercontinental connection joins the eight already operated by ITA Airways with direct flights to New York, Los Angeles, Boston, Miami, Buenos Aires, Sao Paulo, Tokyo, and New Delhi.

## Emirates Skywards and Aeroplan Kick-off Joint Loyalty Programme Partnership

Emirates and Air Canada have expanded their partnership to offer frequent flyer members joint loyalty programme benefits. Emirates Skywards members can now earn and redeem Miles on all flights operated by Air Canada – accessing a network of more than 220 destinations worldwide. Aeroplan members will also benefit from earning and redeeming Points on all flights operated by Emirates – with access to more than 130 destinations across six continents, via the airline's home and hub, Dubai. The agreement was signed by Dr. Nejb Ben Khedher, Divisional Senior Vice President Emirates Skywards, and Mark Youssef Nasr, Senior Vice President, Product, Marketing, e-Commerce, Air Canada and President, Aeroplan, at the Emirates Group Headquarters in Dubai.

Dr. Nejb Ben Khedher, Divisional Senior Vice President Emirates Skywards, commented: "We're very pleased to be enhancing our partnership with Air Canada and officially kicking off our joint loyalty programme offering. Together, close to 40 million frequent flyer members will be able to earn and redeem Miles across a joint network of more than 350 destinations and enjoy selected benefits, such as lounge access. We look forward to opening new horizons for our loyal members and to also welcoming Aeroplan customers on-board Emirates with our award-winning products and exceptional services."

Mark Youssef Nasr, Senior Vice President, Product, Marketing, e-Commerce, Air Canada and President, Aeroplan commented: "The two most recognized loyalty programmes in their respective regions provided by the two most recognized airlines in their respective regions are coming together to offer something truly great. Whether it's connecting friends and family from Canada's rich immigrant diaspora or it's helping travellers explore some of the world's most exciting destinations, there's something for everyone. We're proud to partner with Emirates and Skywards as Aeroplan continues to deliver on its member promise: travel more and travel better."

### More travel choices, more Miles earned

The new agreement will enable Emirates Skywards members to earn Miles on all eligible Air Canada flights. Skywards members will also be able to redeem Miles for reward tickets across Air Canada's network. Flight rewards will start from 8,000 Miles for a one-way reward ticket in Economy Class and 16,000 Miles for a one-way reward ticket in Business Class. For more details, visit [emirates.com](https://www.emirates.com). Aeroplan members will be able to earn Aeroplan Points on all eligible Emirates operated flights based on the fare type purchased, as well as redeem Aeroplan Points on Emirates flights. For more



information, visit [aircanada.com](https://www.aircanada.com).

Aeroplan members will be able to redeem Points for flights on Emirates Economy Class and Business Class, starting at 15,000 Points one-way with no carrier surcharges, as well as the ability to combine with Aeroplan's extensive network of airline partners on a single ticket to create countless reward possibilities. The ability to redeem Aeroplan Points for flights in Emirates First Class will be introduced in early 2023.

### Premium lounge access

Emirates Skywards Platinum and Gold members travelling in Economy Class with Air Canada or Emirates will also enjoy complimentary access to Air Canada's Maple Leaf Lounges and Air Canada Café in Toronto Pearson along with one guest. In Dubai, Aeroplan Elite 50K, 75K and Super Elite members travelling in Economy Class with Emirates will enjoy complimentary

access to the Emirates Business Class Lounge along with one guest.

### Access to North America, Asia, Middle East and Africa

The carriers activated their codeshare partnership earlier this year providing customers with seamless connectivity across North America, Asia, the Middle East and Africa. Emirates customers can now book flights to/from Canadian points beyond Toronto, including Calgary, Edmonton, Halifax, Montreal, Ottawa and Vancouver.

Air Canada's customers also benefit from seamless access to Emirates' extensive network via Dubai, unlocking a significant number of destinations, including Colombo, Dhaka, Karachi and Lahore in the Indian subcontinent, Southeast Asian cities such as Bangkok, Hanoi, Phuket, Kuala Lumpur and Singapore; Middle Eastern cities Jeddah and Muscat; as well as destinations in Africa, namely Addis Ababa and Dar Es Salaam.



IN A NUTSHELL

# Siyam World Maldives Hosts Football Super Star Luis Suarez



Siyam World is paving the way to become the most revolutionary product to hit the Maldives Tourism Industry with unique experiences and pioneering concepts ever seen in the Maldives. In just one year of operation, Siyam World has welcomed numerous football legends in the last few months. Among them included, Esteban Cambiasso, Marco Materazzi, Carles Puyol, Eric Abidal, Robert Pires, Bacary Sagna, Jay Jay Oacha, Patrick Kluivert and Juan Sabastian Veron. Recently, Harvey Elliot, a gifted and young English professional footballer who plays as a midfielder for Premier League club Liverpool also visited Siyam World along with Kostas Tsimikas, the Greek scouser.

Following the trend of welcoming football legends and superstars, Luis Suarez visited the world of possibilities with his family this month. Luis Suárez is a Uruguayan professional footballer who played as a striker for Barcelona, Atletico Madrid and Liverpool. Suarez is known for his passing, finishing and comfort with the ball and is a great addition to the list of football legends and superstars that has graced the football grounds of Siyam World. Suarez stayed with his family for a week and embraced all the adventures that Siyam World had to offer including trying out the Maldives' first Seabreacher, family picnics at the sandbank and horse riding. He also took part in a football game at the World Sports Arena with guests and islanders.

Siyam World Maldives features one of the biggest sport complexes in the country featuring an international standard football field, two futsal courts, three tennis courts with three different surfaces, a padel tennis



court, two badminton courts and two volleyball courts. In keeping with its quirky slogan "bye bye boredom, hello endless escapades" and with its array of never seen before experiences and countless activities, Siyam World is keen on welcoming more beloved sports legends to experience the world of possibilities and all it has to offer.

Siyam World - a quirky 5-star, WOW! 24 hrs Premium All-inclusive island getaway that crosses cultures and borders and offers guests an endless array of 'never-seen-before' experiences to enjoy, including unlimited access to the Maldives' biggest floating water park. The natural 54-hectare island resort boasts an enticing variety of 18 accommodation categories from 1-6-bedroom villas and residences, ranging from 89 to 3,000 square metres; from lush Pool Beach Villas or expansive Beach Suites to the playful Over-Water Villas – complete with irresistible water slides. In addition to its quirky repertoire, Siyam World also features an exclusive enclave called The Beach House Collection, boasting breath-taking and spacious Beach Residences, a stunning Grand Water Pavilion and the magnificent Palace. All accommodation types overlook the pristine Maldivian waters, come with direct access to the ocean and feature generously proportioned indoor and outdoor living spaces with private pools.

# HONDA MARINE



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## IN A NUTSHELL

# A Marine Biology Journey Starts with Trainee Marine Biologist Modules at Four Seasons Resort Maldives at Landaa Giraavaru



The fight for a healthier ocean is real and not to be taken lightly. Continuing more than 15 years of dedication to its UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve home, Four Seasons Resort Maldives at Landaa Giraavaru has launched a new series of Trainee Marine Biologist modules to offer young adults a deep dive into pioneering marine research in one of the world's most abundant oceanic territories.

Designed for 15 to 19-year-olds, the six one-day, one-to-one modules are designed as a serious foundation for scientifically minded teens, those considering a career in marine biology, or anyone with a genuine desire to deeply engage with the natural world.

Each module combines practical activities with comprehensive take-home texts for a deep dive into what it takes to be a Coral Biologist, Dolphin Biologist, Turtle Biologist, Aquarist, Plankton Biologist, or Manta Biologist. Each privately taught module stands alone and is bookable as a single-day experience.

Trainees work alongside the Resort's expert Marine Savers marine biologists, on-site veterinarian and experts from The Manta Trust, gaining a unique insight into the

Resort's conservation projects. Activities might include using artificial intelligence to monitor coral reef restoration, cultivating artemia and rotifers in the Fish Lab, tracking and identifying local cetaceans, rehabilitating injured turtles, and contributing to the conservation of the world's largest known population of manta rays.

"We know from experience that actively engaging youngsters with marine environments is key to inspiring long-term conservation efforts," comments Simon Dixon, Manager of Landaa Giraavaru's Marine Discovery Centre. "Our trainee modules offer an in-depth experience of life in our field and are a great foundation for anyone with a passion for environmental action. It's the kind of training I would have loved in my own youth."

Explore one or more of the following one-day modules:

## Trainee Coral Biologist

A unique insight into the incredible underwater world of coral reefs – the most diverse of all marine ecosystems – and how to help ensure their survival. Alongside the resident Coral Biologist, trainees will take part in every aspect of the coral restoration project, from preparation and transplanting to photography and uploading.

## Trainee Dolphin Biologist

An opportunity to be part of the conservation story of the Maldives' much-loved marine mammals: dolphins and whales. Working alongside the Dolphin Biologists, trainees will find out all about these magnificent creatures, go on a cruise to track their movements around the islands, and take and process photos to identify individuals.

## Trainee Turtle Biologist

Sea turtles have been found throughout the world's

oceans since around the time of the dinosaurs – with the exception of the polar seas – but now six of their seven species are at risk of extinction. Alongside the resident Turtle Biologist, trainees will learn about sea turtle anatomy and biology, the threats they face in the wild and what can be done to help conserve them.

## Trainee Aquarist

This module takes a closer look at some of the smaller organisms that inhabit the underwater world. From plankton to clownfish, rotifers to jellyfish, each play a part in ensuring healthy ecosystems that sustain life. A fascinating introduction to the work in the Fish Lab, this module highlights the dangers and threats facing each species and explores how we can help ourselves by helping the oceans.

## Trainee Plankton Biologist

A chance to discover the role these incredible organisms play in our lives, from providing the oxygen we breathe to helping us track climate events and understand the migration of large sea animals. Trainees will be part of the first long-term, continuous plankton survey in the Maldives – and, to the best of the program's knowledge, in any global UNESCO Biosphere Reserve – and help contribute to a model of plankton diversity and biomass that will hopefully expand into a national database.

## Trainee Manta Biologist

An insight into the secret lives of the gentle giants of the Maldives: manta rays. Trainees will spend time with these majestic animals and learn how the Manta Ray Biologists work to conserve and protect the local manta ray population. This module enables trainees to become a part of the team's research journey, from photo identification to helping monitor size, behaviour and even pregnancy.

# The Standard, Huruvalhi Maldives Announces Wellness Star Program with Dr. Rui Pedro Loureiro, Offering Traditional Chinese Medicine Treatments

The Standard, Huruvalhi Maldives welcomes world renowned specialist in traditional Chinese Medicine, Dr. Rui Pedro Loureiro, who brings to the island alternative healing therapies from acupuncture to epigenetics.

Dr. Rui Loureiro received his Bachelor's Degree from Chengdu's University of Chinese Medicine in China, postgraduate in Cosmetic Acupuncture from CMIR/ACUMEDIC – London and Beijing's University of Chinese Medicine.

Expert in diagnosis, he has worked in a hospital in China and clinics in London and Portugal, where he currently is responsible for the Chinese Medicine Department of St. Louis Hospital in Lisbon and Clinical Director of Clinica

Cura Pura in Aveiro - Portugal.

Ancient wisdom and contemporary diagnostics meet. With over 20 years of clinical practice, he is a passionate, dedicated, and lifetime student and researcher of the knowledge of Chinese Medicine.

Dr. Rui's treatments will take place at The Standard Spa with ocean views from one of the nine private rooms, along with an indoor hydrotherapy playground boasting a traditional communal Hamman, cypress aroma steam room and contract plunge shower. The Standard Spa sitting over the pristine water of Huravalhi Island also has a yoga studio hosting daily wellness classes and Tonic, an adults-only pool and swim-up bar perfect for relaxing



post treatment or splashing around. The perfect place to recover, play, chill and explore.



IN A NUTSHELL

# UK MasterChef Champion Eddie Scott to Cook at Outrigger Maldives

UK MasterChef 2022 champion Mr Eddie Scott will create special dishes on two evenings at Outrigger Maldives Maafushivaru Resort in the second half of April 2023.

The UK MasterChef winner will also hold a special cooking demonstration at the resort for guests who want to learn culinary skills. Specific dates are set to be confirmed and announced later. Eddie, 31, from Yorkshire in northeast England, won the coveted TV accolade in May with MasterChef judge John Torode calling him a “culinary powerhouse”.

Fellow judge Gregg Wallace said: “I think we’ve just seen the birth of a future great chef.” Eddie is currently working in the 3-star Michelin restaurant Gordon Ramsay in London. Eddie spent eight years as a navigation officer in the Merchant Navy traveling the world before becoming a marine pilot in the River Humber in northeast England in 2017.

Only since storming his way to the top of MasterChef UK in May has he switched to

cooking full time Chef Eddie draws on his love of classic French food and often surprises diners by adding Indian culinary flavors, a skill he learned from his Punjabi grandparents. His father also made exciting dishes such as Mexican chimichangas and original Indian curries. His mother shared her love of baking with him. Eddie is passionate about Royal Mughlai culinary dishes from northern India.

He learned his French culinary skills from traveling around France with his family, eating in local workers’ canteens, exploring fresh markets, then emulating the dishes back home in England. “The way food was ingrained in French culture was a total revelation. I wanted to recreate the food I’d tasted and that’s how I really got into cooking,” he said.

He was making classic French dishes like Tarte Tatin, Ile Flottante, Crème Brulée and Gratin Dauphinois by the age of 12.

Eddie will create special menus on two occasions in the latter half of April at



Outrigger Maldives. He will also give a culinary demonstration and hands-on cooking class for guests. It will be Eddie’s first trip to the Maldives. “I can’t wait to go and cook there. I’ve heard so much about the place,” he said. “The water there will be a bit different from the Humber. I look forward to trying the island’s fresh seafood.”

The resort’s executive chef, Christopher Long, also from Yorkshire, met Eddie while he was visiting the Michelin-starred Pipe and Glass near Beverley, Yorkshire, run by James Mackenzie, who was also a guest chef at Outrigger Maldives in 2019.

“The three of us got talking,” said Chris,



“and the idea was hatched for Eddie to do a guest chef stint in the Maldives with Outrigger.” Details of the menu and the cooking class that Eddie will organize at Outrigger Maldives will be revealed in late-January.

Offering small island charm with contemporary architecture and bespoke finishing touches, Outrigger Maldives Maafushivaru Resort – winner of Luxury Lifestyle Awards’ “Best Luxury Hideaway Resort” in the Maldives 2022 – is a 25-minute seaplane journey from Male.

The resort offers guests an idyllic island experience, epitomizing all that one thinks of when dreaming of the Maldives.



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## IN A NUTSHELL

# Vakkaru Maldives Celebrates 5th Anniversary with Top Five Highlights

Vakkaru Maldives celebrates a significant milestone this month as it marks five years of providing an unforgettable private island experience and creating memories of a lifetime for over 32,000 guests. Since it welcomed its first guests on December 17, 2017, the luxury sanctuary has maintained its position as one of the top resorts in the region, winning a slew of awards and recognitions, both international and local.

Vakkaru Maldives is the only resort in the Maldives owned by Egypt's El Chiaty family. While conceptualising the resort, chairman and CEO of Travco Group, Hamed El Chiaty, worked closely with his son and Vice-Chairman of Travco Group, Karim El Chiaty, to create a peerless distillation of all that he and his family have pioneered and admired in the luxury sector over a lifetime of work in the travel industry. Travco Group under the leadership of Hamed El Chiaty is the Middle East's leading leisure group operating through its integrated companies operating in the tourism, hospitality and aviation sectors.

The resort is thoughtfully built around the natural landscape of the island to preserve the natural vegetation. Conceived by Dutch firm, OT Design BV, the resort's 113 vast, palm- thatched overwater and beach villas and residences are pitched over the ocean or shaded by the island's coconut trees. Mr Hamad El Chiaty's wife, professional interior designer Dora El Chiaty, also the Managing Director and Head of Interior Design at the Travco Group, has played a crucial role in the resort's design process. The resort's interiors exude a timeless elegance inspired by the beauty of its location featuring bespoke furniture crafted in Indonesia.

Five reasons that make Vakkaru Maldives one of the top resorts to stay at in the region:

**Timeless Location:** Lying within the heart of the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve of Baa Atoll, Vakkaru Maldives is a secluded reef island fringed by ivory-white sands, surrounded by Tiffany-blue waters, and bookended by two deep blue holes. The island, which once was a coconut plantation, is home to over 2,300 fully grown coconut trees (Vakkaru is the Dhivehi word for "coconut timber"). Access to this idyllic paradise is via a scenic 30-minute seaplane flight from Male International Airport. The exceptional natural beauty paired with breathtaking endless views of the Indian Ocean makes the resort the perfect place to relax and reconnect with nature.

**Luxury Accommodation:** Your villa, whether on the beach or over the water, has one or two bedrooms. The residences offer more space and go from one- and two-bedroom layouts to the magnificent two-storey, four-bedroom Over Water Residence with a dedicated chef, an infinity pool and unobstructed ocean and sunset views. Each of the 113 luxury villas and residences draws on the rich



traditions of the locale. Design elements incorporate Maldivian style fused with the finest natural resources and local architecture in a contemporary style. Each villa and suite offer intelligent connectivity and are stocked with all the requisites for a luxe vacay.

**Passionate Service:** The heart and soul of Vakkaru Maldives is the diverse team of dedicated professionals. Each member brings their own unique background and perspective, but each one is passionate about delivering memorable moments and creating emotional experiences for the guests through highly personalized service every day, every time. Private butlers take care of guests' whims and fancies during their time at this island resort. Celebrating a special occasion or simply craving your favorite dish? The culinary team will go above and beyond to create a memorable dining experience or cook up something to your preference. At the luxurious Merana spa, ask the specialists to tailor a wellness or spa journey to help you relax and rejuvenate. The friendly and caring 'yes we can' attitude of the staff is what keeps Vakkaru Maldives at the top of the rankings in the region.

**Engaging Experiences:** Leaving your villa might be hard, but the vast array of experiences on offer are impossible to ignore. Whether you're looking to relax on the beach, go snorkeling or diving, or try your hand at water sports, Vakkaru Maldives has something for everyone. The over-water Merana spa, with its long list of wellness programmes, therapeutic massages, and Siddhalepa Ayurvedic treatments, is just the place to reset body, mind and soul.

The dive center will get you up close and personal with the lagoon's fabulous underwater world. Or, even arrange a safari to catch a glimpse of the Baa Atoll Big Five – manta rays, whale sharks, sea turtles, dolphins, and the multitude of sharks that inhabit the surrounding waters. Sports aficionados can go up against the tennis pro from Tipsarevic Luxury Tennis or enjoy a game of padel tennis. Or, live the high life with a Baa Atoll discovery tour

aboard the luxury yacht, complete with Champagne and canapes. Also available are various cultural experiences, such as cooking and mixology classes, trips to local islands and more.

And finally, guests can renew their vows or plan an island-style ceremonial wedding at one of the idyllic venues around the island. The stunning ocean views make it the perfect backdrop to say "I Do".

**Delicious Dining:** Nobody goes hungry at this island resort. Six exquisite dining options serve the flavors and textures of Europe, Asia and local cuisine, with produce from the on- island organic farm at the center of the delicious fare. If that's not enough, there is the Maldivian-inspired cooking class at the Organic Farm, teppanyaki live action at Anguru, the new Jungle Cinema and private dining experience, or an intimate dinner under the stars on a private sandbank. For something extra special, there are gourmet dinners at the award-winning Vakkaru Reserve wine cellar paired with Old and New World vintages by Sommelier Ivan Zugic.

These five reasons are why the resort has kept adding awards to its trophy case over the years. The top accolades are the World Travel Awards for World's Leading Luxury Honeymoon Resort and Indian Ocean's Leading Suite (Vakkaru Over Water Residence) for three consecutive years. Other awards that make the list are the Tripadvisor Traveller's Choice Awards, where Vakkaru is now ranked #7 in the Maldives, the Wine Spectator Award 2020 for the private wine cellar, Vakkaru Reserve, and the No. 1 Favorite Family Hotel in the 2021 Condé Nast Traveller Middle East Readers' Choice Awards.

"Celebrating our 5th anniversary is a proud moment for all of us at Vakkaru Maldives. Over the past half-decade, the team has been striving to deliver our guests the best service and experience. I hope we have created exceptional memories for our guests and experiences that will stay with them for a lifetime. I'd also like to give my amazing team who have been a part of this wonderful journey a high five," said Iain McCormack, General Manager, Vakkaru Maldives.



MOVERS & SHAKERS

# Reethi Beach Resort Appoints Ibrahim Nazleen as Front Office Manager

Reethi Beach Resort has announced the appointment of Ibrahim Nazleen as the new Front Office Manager.

Hailing from the southern island of Addu, Nazleen comes on board with almost two decades of hospitality to his name in the Maldivian Archipelago. With his rich background that encompasses Housekeeping, Front Office and Resort Operations, Nazleen is assured to enrich the beautiful oasis to bring out the best in service to guests at Reethi Beach Resort.

A tech wizard turned hotelier, he decided to make a life changing decision decade's back after discovering the wonders of hospitality in the most sought-after destination in the world. Kick-started as a humble villa attendant who transformed into a brilliant yet vibrant leader, leading today's guest experience journey at

Reethi Beach Resort. Nazleen takes pride in his work, and he often takes pleasure in assisting his colleagues across departments, when needed. With a broad mind that's constantly thinking of ways to elevate and curate memorable experiences for guests, Nazleen is there to attend to it all.

A sought-out hotelier, who believes in working together as a team and hides from the limelight to highlight his team and their efforts makes him a true leader at heart. And today Reethi Beach Resort celebrates yet another talent with a soul and passion to both encourage team members to rise up and grow alongside him to bring out the best in them.

When he takes time for himself, he loves to self-reflect by exploring the natural wonders of the world and work on his artistic side of life, when time



permits. Having been bred in the leading by example ways, he owes his career success to great leaders in his career for molding him into the individual he is today.

Located on a small island in Baa Atoll, a mere 35-minutes seaplane ride from

Male', guests can still find tranquility paired with a true Maldivian jungle feeling at Reethi Faru Resort. Its standalone and semi-detached villas are thoughtfully designed, offering a unique service in the comfort of a distinctive environment.



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MOVERS & SHAKERS

# Sheraton Maldives Full Moon Resort & Spa Announces the Appointment of Mohamed El Aghoury as General Manager

Sheraton Maldives Full Moon Resort & Spa has announced the appointment of Mohamed El Aghoury as General Manager. Aghoury brings with him over two decades of experience in the hospitality industry attained across numerous reputable brands within different markets. In his new role, Mohamed will oversee all operations for the award-winning 5-star resort.

In addition to overseeing all aspects of the hotel's operations, Aghoury will oversee strategic commercial plans to further strengthen the resort's positioning in the market as a place where the world comes together. Moreover, he will continuously guide and lead the team to consistently provide service of utmost excellence.

Boasting over 25 years of diverse experience, Mohamed began his hospitality journey in 1993 at Sheraton Montazah Hotel, Alexandria. He has since paved his way up and embraced the challenge to accept his first

General Manager position in 2011. Being dedicated to his role, Mohamed prides himself on distinctively leading operations and having a proven track record of enhancing revenue over the years.

Prior to his latest role, Mohamed had settled in the multicultural city of Dubai where he had acquired the role of General Manager for several renowned brands in the United Arab Emirates such as Four Points, Al Sondos Suites by Le Meridien, Meydan Hotel, Bab Al Shams Desert Resort and lastly, the Sheraton Jumeirah Beach Resort and Aloft Palm Jumeirah, where he held the prestigious position of a Cluster General Manager.

Speaking of his appointment, Aghoury said: "I am extremely honored and delighted to be a part of this hard-working team and look forward to further elevating the unparalleled service which makes this five-star resort renowned. We hope to begin the new year by providing the utmost level of service our devoted guests continue



to appreciate."

Aghoury's leadership throughout the years has brought honor and stature to the properties in which he had worked, where he was recognized in the prestigious Hotelier MEA's Top 50 General Manager Power List in the United Arab Emirates. Additionally, he was awarded as Best General Manager

by Luxury Lifestyle Awards and Hospitality Excellence Awards as General Manager of the Year.

To maintain a healthy work-life balance, Mohamed likes to indulge in sports and watersports in particular and looks forward to taking on the azure waters in Maldives for his share of thrill.

# Villa Resorts Appoints Ahmed Saeid as Director of Human Resources at Sun Island Resort & Spa



Villa Resorts has announced the appointment of Ahmed Saeid as Director of Human Resources at Sun Island Resort & Spa. In alignment with the Villa Resorts transformative journey, Ahmed Saeid will support the brand to deliver outstanding hospitality and enhance the overall guest experience with a passionate team of hoteliers that lead with exceptional and authentic guest

service, which the Villa Resorts group is well-recognized for.

Prior to his new role, Saeid was part of the Sun Island team from 2020 as a Training and Total Quality Assurance Manager. With an impressive hospitality career spanning over 13 years working in the luxury tourism industry, he has previously worked with leading Maldives resorts including Furaveri

Maldives, Dhigali Maldives, and Sun Siyam Vilu Reef.

"I am thrilled to progress within the team at Sun Island and develop my career in Human Resources in this exciting new role as Human Resources Director at Sun Island. My appointment comes during an exciting stage in Villa Resorts' transformative journey. I have been a part of the Sun Island team for the transformation and in my new appointment I aim to further support hiring and training local talent to be part of our passionate Sun Island family." Says Ahmed Saeid.

Providing invaluable knowledge from his extensive experience, Saeid will lead the Sun Island team to enrich the brand's luxury service standards while supporting local talent to foster a strong team with warm and authentic hospitality at the heart. Moreover, he will play a key role in supporting the brands' sustainable philosophy by

driving participation in key sustainable initiatives and maintaining the resorts' Green Key certification to preserve and protect the natural environment.

Sun Island Resort & Spa, awarded Leading Green Resort in the World Travel Awards, is set on one of the largest Maldives islands measuring 1.6KM long, located in the Southern tip of South Ari Atoll in the South Ari Marine Protected Area (SAMPA).

A magical resort offering guests an abundance of freedom and unprecedented privacy to reconnect with nature surrounded by the azure waters of the Indian Ocean. Situated a short 20-minute domestic flight from Velana International Airport followed by a boat journey, the resort is a tranquil setting where natural beauty meets vibrant interior design awash with unique features and luxurious indoor-outdoor living spaces.



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# Designing a SMARTER Living



EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

with

**AREEF SAEED**

General Manager, OXON Tech

&

**MARKO BOGDANOVIC**

Marketing Executive & Export Manager, Peštan

“We are spending more than 4 million to procure a 3-bedroom apartment in Maldives, then why not spend a fraction of that investment amount to enhance the experience and acquire a host of conveniences.”

Areef Saeed

“Today we are facing with the time and period that more of the construction companies and the government are committed towards environment friendly solutions. That is one of our biggest objectives we pledge for and that which we are planning to achieve in the Maldives as well.”

Marko Bogdanovic

With the introduction of tech savvy brands like Orbita and TIS, Oxon Tech is bringing a new dimension to automated homes and smart living in the Maldives. With real-estate booming in this tourist hub of a nation, this perhaps could be a game changer when it comes to opting for luxury living. Today, we are more than exhilarated to meet the man responsible for initiating this dynamic addition to living and lifestyle.



**Mr. Areef, kindly tell us about yourself and what inspired you to tap into this market?**

I am the Director of Oxon Pvt Ltd, which is a tech company in Maldives with different portfolios. One of them being Oxon Tech under which we are presenting two brands, TIS and Orbita. I believe that with a lot of high-end residential and corporate complexes emerging in Hulhumale', and overall, in this region, we would like to go into automation for better living and witness modernization at its best with high-tech products incorporated into the existing homes and upcoming high-rises.

**Tell us about the brands Oxon Tech represents and why you chose to partner with them?**

The two brands currently in association with Oxon Tech are Orbita and TIS. Orbita is one of the leading brands in the international hotel industry. They have all amenities required by hoteliers, from hotel management systems to a wide range of hotel door lock systems. As for TIS, it is an Australian brand and is manufactured in Australia and China as well. TIS has been in the market for a decade and is also one of the leading brands of automation in the Middle East and other regions.

**Do you believe that the local homeowners are ready to welcome automation into their homes and integrate smart technology in their day-to-day home living?**

Yes, we do. We believe we are absolutely ready. We are spending more than 4 million to procure a 3-bedroom apartment in Maldives, then why not spend a fraction of that investment amount to enhance the experience and acquire a host of conveniences.

**You have introduced 'home automation packages' in association with your brand 'TIS' for homeowners. What kind of R&D was carried out before coming up with this offer package and how successful have you been in reaching your target audience?**

As I mentioned earlier, TIS has been in the market for over a decade and has garnered huge popularity in similar overseas markets such as Dubai. The hotel owners and homeowners of Maldives now demand for their properties to be automated as well. Hence there is an inherent desire for smart living.

As for the R&D, it is carried out by the brand themselves while we engage in the role of intermediaries by facilitating and customizing their solutions to our market. With orders and inquiries coming not only from resorts and hotels, but also from homeowners, we believe we are achieving our targets.

**With Maldives being one of the biggest tourist attraction centers in the world, resorts and hotels have been a very well-established industry for almost half a century now, with guest houses being the current and latest norm. Are you currently supplying to any of the local resorts/guest houses and what is your marketing plan to penetrate this industry?**

Of course, we have been working with different resorts and other hotels in the country. Currently more than 85% of hotels are having Orbita lock systems. Also, we are working with hotels with TIS as well.

It's an advantage for us to market these products as they have been around. They are very much present in the market and have been globally acclaimed for long now, so their reputation precedes themselves.

**How long will it take to implement smart technology into an existing apartment?**

It won't be much difficult as there won't be much difference compared to traditional wiring, especially if it is done during the construction period. Application of smart wiring to a finished apartment however is going to require some effort.

**Through your tech enhanced products & services, you are adding 'smart' to the lifestyle of 'luxury living' in Maldives. What is the ultimate goal?**

My ultimate goal is to bring ourselves to the European standard. To raise the bar, since we have the capacity to enhance our lifestyle to that standard through the utilization of these innovative products.

**If you get the opportunity to advocate this product to the millennials and youngsters, would you be interested in partaking in a panel discussion or give a keynote speech?**

Definitely, I would love to. They are the future of this nation and prospective consumers of these products.

*Oxon Tech has launched another international brand during the Maldives Living Expo 2022 held in December, 'Peštan'. We have with us the Marketing Executive & Export Manager, Mr. Marko Bogdanovic who is enthusiastic to give us an insight into their brand.*

**Pleasure to meet you Mr. Marko. Please enlighten us about the brand and products of Peštan, and your target market demographics?**

First of all, thank you very much for your time and I would also like to thank all the visitors of the expo and those that visited our stall. Peštan company is a European producer, mainly from Serbia and our portfolio is dedicated to more than 8500 articles. We produce plastic pipes and fittings used for various purposes, from drinking water, sewage, drainage to rainwater collection for above the ground and below the ground projects. Mostly we are dedicated towards exporting; we export to more than 80 different countries over 5 continents. Owning one of the biggest factories in Europe with over 1200 workers, all our portfolios are produced in-house in Europe, from PVC, Polyethylene, Polypropylene, and PPR.

**What would you say is the UPS of the Peštan products?**

Today we are facing with the time and period that more of the construction companies and the government are committed towards environment friendly solutions. That is one of our biggest objectives we pledge for and that which we are planning to achieve in the Maldives as well. So, we are proposing to provide the Maldivian market with revolutionary solutions to the plastic pipe and fitting requirements in the country.

**What kind of research did your company indulge in before deciding to affiliate with Oxon and entering the Maldivian market?**

As mentioned previously, the presence of the brand in more than 80 countries worldwide gives us a lot of knowledge of this market. We have carried out successful projects in surrounding countries like Sri Lanka, India, and African countries like Ethiopia and Kenya. From time to time, we have been getting more and more enquiries from Maldives and we

finally decided to approach with market research and analysis that made us realize there is huge space for our solutions that we are providing since the materials utilized in the Maldives construction industry that are aligning with our product portfolio seems to be outdated, and what we offer is that of the European standard. So, we hope to introduce this new technology to Maldives through our partner and change this trend.

**Could you share with us your marketing plans to launch your brand and challenges you perceive to face in Maldives?**

When it comes to marketing, it is strictly connected to our local partner, I believe that is one of the main agendas for this affiliation, for them to convey the solutions we bring forth as they being the local focal point of the project, are more closely aware of the problems that need to be catered to.

For example, in Maldives above ground infrastructure projects are using PVC for sewage which has not been used in Europe for over 25-30 years because PVC is a highly flammable material. We offer a product with better technical specification; Polypropylene as better modern solution. Further solutions like using rubber material instead of gluing connection which is easier to adopt and implement whilst keeping the overall cost low.

**Do you see Peštan as a revolutionary product that can enhance the construction industry of Maldives?**

Already it is, as we are offering different solutions that enlarge the heritage of the construction industry of the Maldives. Through this expo as well, we have received a lot of positive feedback which again gives us a clear indication that we are on the right path.

Besides the piping solutions which is more than 95% of our assortment, we provide bathroom solutions as well. So, when we speak about complete installation in terms of bathroom, it means that we provide everything from one place, one company. It's a hassle-free synchronized solution for your bathroom.

**Lastly how would you promote your product to the coming up generation of entrepreneurs of the industry?**

We will be using a similar strategy and mission that we have been implementing in other global markets as well, which is introducing and innovative new technologies and products that would make the work of the representing industry easier and efficient. What I saw personally together with Mr. Areef from Oxon company is that on local market they are presenting material and solutions that has been in the market for many years and therefore, there is nothing new in the market. In some cases, it can be good but considering how the technology is rising and the new generation is coming, the new knowledge of the new technology we must be willing to present; the last living technology we are having in our factory and that we have in our company, we would like to share with the many markets in the world. With Maldives, I believe not only we can provide the good solutions to this market, but I also believe this market will educate us on how to make it better and that is the synergy we can share with the local companies and the generation that is coming.



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NEW OPENINGS

# Kaani Hotels to Build a 250-Bed City Hotel in Ukulhas



Kaani Hotels, a brand with an extensive guesthouse business in the Maldives has signed an agreement to build a 250-bed city hotel in Ukulhas.

Chairman of Kaani Hotels and President of the Guesthouse Association of Maldives (GAM), Abdulla Nasheed said that a 10-storey hotel is being built on a large area of 8,000 square feet. The hotel, located on the beach front, will be the largest ever built in Ukulhas.

The island's largest guesthouse currently has only 40 beds. Nasheed said he had decided to build a guesthouse on the island as it was popular with tourists from Russia, Spain and Italy.

"There is 1.5 hectares of beach area on the island. Ukulhas is popular with tourists," he said. According to Kaani Hotels, the construction of the guest house on the island will be completed within two years.

Kaani Hotels currently operates four guesthouses in K. Maafushi. There are a total of 400 beds in these facilities. It also operates a 26-bed guesthouse in the capital Male' city. Kaani Hotels provide affordable holiday packages for budget travelers and let them experience all the luxuries of this tropical paradise.

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## EVENTS &amp; AWARDS

# Maldives Living Expo 2022 Concludes to Great Success



Maldives Living Expo 2022, held at Dharubaaruge, Malé City, from December 15 to December 17, has concluded to great success, attracting thousands of attendees and showcasing the latest products and trends in home and living.

Attendees had the opportunity to browse and shop a wide range of products, from furniture and appliances to home decor and DIY supplies. Additionally, safety and security services for homes and financing options were highlighted through insurance and banks. Innovative technology-infused solutions were demonstrated for the visitors from international brands as well.

The showcase featured a variety of exhibits and activities, including demonstrations, keynote speakers, and panels led by industry experts. The two panels held on the 2nd day discussed 'anything and everything you need to know prior to buying your home' and 'how and what to focus on when financing your dream home'. Composed of experts from respective fields, the panel discussions extended key information and insight to home business.

"We are thrilled with the turnout and feedback from this year's expo," said Highrise Pvt Ltd, the event organizer. "It was a great opportunity for attendees to discover new products and get inspiration for their own homes, as well as for exhibitors to connect with potential customers and showcase their latest offerings."

Highrise further thanked all exhibitors and partners for the support and participation. LUXAONE by TATA Housing participated as the main sponsor, with MM Exports and Prime Group as the co-sponsors. The event was also supported by the Housing Development Corporation (HDC), the Ministry of National Planning, Housing and Infrastructure Maldives, and the Business Center Corporation (BCC). Allied Insurance Company is the insurance partner and Ooredoo Maldives is the digital partner.

Maldives Living Expo has established itself as a premier event for anyone interested in home and living in the Maldives, and it is not to be missed. Look forward to next year's expo and don't miss out on the opportunity to see the latest and greatest in home and living products and trends.





# NBAM Successfully Concludes Maldives Boating Awards 2022



The National Boating Association of Maldives (NBAM) hosts the flagship awards event, Maldives Boating Awards 2022 ceremony recognizing talent and workmanship in the boating fraternity. This year's ceremony was held on Monday, December 12 at Dharubaarugé, Malé and was attended by almost 200 stakeholders of the local boating community.

The National Boating Association of Maldives (NBAM) has been recognizing and celebrating the achievements of local boaters since 2015. This year's winners were selected by a panel of industry experts and local boating enthusiasts, representing the best and brightest in the Maldivian boating community.

Some main categories of this year's

boating awards include:

- Best-Built Liveaboard or Yatch
- Best Boat Design of the Year
- Most Preferred Marine Engine Brands of the year, for Outboard and Main Engines separately - and more.

In addition to these awards, the association also presented a special category under the theme 'Faces of Boating', who have made significant contributions to the local boating scene.

The National Boating Association of Maldives (NBAM) congratulated all of the winners and thanked everyone who attended this year's ceremony. "We are already looking forward to next year's awards and the continued success of the Maldives boating community."



# Fushifaru Maldives Attains Four Awards at the Prestigious LUXE Global Awards



Fushifaru Maldives, an exquisite resort known for its Maldivian flair and unparalleled genuine hospitality in Lhaviyani Atoll, was recently handed four awards at the prominent 2022 Luxe Global Awards. Adding to its growing list of accolades, the boutique resort was granted the global winner for the following categories: "Best Luxury Island Resort", "Best Luxury Boutique Resort", "Best Authentic Experience Resort" and "Best Luxury Sustainable Resort" this November.

LUXE Global was established in 2021 to empower and showcase the most luxurious hotels, spas and restaurants from around the globe and dubbed as the most exclusive award in the world.

"We are immensely proud to be recognised not only in one but in four

important categories. This is a testament of the trust that our guests have in us. Winning the awards is an affirmation for the dedication and hard work that our team puts in every day in ensuring every guest's stay is memorable", quotes Ahmed Siaar, the General Manager of Fushifaru Maldives.

On the far North East border of Lhaviyani Atoll, Fushifaru Maldives is a 35-minute breath-taking seaplane flight away from Velana International Airport. Fushifaru Maldives offers a wide range of services and facilities for guests. Whether for a romantic honeymoon or special family getaway, the resort combines the intimacy of a small boutique resort with an upscale service tending to your every need and comfort.







# Experience Local; The SME Hub

## Maldives Opens Shopping Mall Exclusively for the Maldivian MSME Community



(From right to left) Chief Guest of the opening ceremony, Minister of Gender, Family and Social Services Aishath Mohamed Didi, Minister of Economic Development Uz. Fayyaz Ismail and Managing Director of State Trading Organisation Husen Amru Mohamed Rashad trying samples from vendors at the SME Hub Food Court.

**The SME Hub is an initiative by the Ministry of Economic Development. The project is implemented and operated by Business Center Corporation, with Development Partner The World Bank and Technology Partner Ooredoo.**

### The Opening Ceremony

The SME Hub's official opening ceremony was held on the December 15, 2022. On an invitation by the Minister of Economic Development Uz. Fayyaz Ismail, Minister of Gender, Family and Social Services Aishath Mohamed Didi honoured the ceremony as the Chief Guest of the event.

Business Center Corporation presented a book titled "Kumevi Tharahgeegge Dhathuru" (The Journey Towards The Development of MSMEs) accompanied by a video demonstrating the many projects operated by BCC. The SME Hub is the fourth chapter of this journey; the first Authentic Maldives, the second Seed by BCC and the third Maldives Business Network (MBN). Shadhiya Adam of The World Bank also addressed the audience at the opening ceremony sharing messages from the executives of The World Bank, the Development Partner of the SME Hub.

The opening ceremony also featured the award-winning Maldivian author, Yashfa Abdul Ghanee, who introduced the SME Hub Bookstore and Reading Corner and highlighted the opportunities for aspiring authors and publishers.

### Concept & Objectives

The SME Hub is the second project under BCC's Market Access program — the first being Authentic Maldives. The Hub was conceptualised as a mini-mall model exclusively featuring Maldivian MSMEs. The objective of the SME Hub is to facilitate inclusive economic growth by providing resources and support services for micro, small and medium-sized businesses.

**Ground Floor: SME Hub Bookstore and Reading Corner, SME Hub Plant Store, SME Hub Art Wall and the Garden Café.**

**First Floor: SME Hub Food Court, 19 Food and Beverage Kiosks featuring locally-made quick meals, snacks, desserts and drinks.**



The SME Hub is a three-storey commercial building offering affordable kiosks, shelves and feature walls for MSMEs, especially startups and home-based workers to introduce their businesses to the market and trial their products and services.

### The SME Hub Food Court

The SME Hub Food Court offers a unique experience of locally-made food and beverages. All items at the food court are quick meals, snacks, desserts and drinks, the majority of which are under MVR 100 (under USD 6) and prepared for the on-the-go customer and takeaway.

**Located at the prime location, Malé City Square Allied Building and open from Saturday to Thursday 08:00 to 23:00 hours and Fridays 14:00 to 23:00 hours.**

The vendors of the SME Hub Food Court, the authors and publishers of the Bookstore, the suppliers of the Plant Store and the artists featured on the Artwall, all receive business consultations, social media marketing assistance and PR services from BCC.

### And More Coming Soon

The second floor of the SME Hub is currently being refurbished and is scheduled to be opened soon. With the ground and first floors creating the hype and the momentum of customer traffic the second floor will not disappoint with its cinema, gaming area, recreational activities, music and performance stage and more arrangements for entertainment, art and entrepreneurial opportunities.





## IN THE NEWS

# Ooredoo Maldives Donates Essential Healthcare Equipment to 28 Health Centers

Ooredoo Maldives has donated essential Health Kits to 28 Health Centers in its efforts to provide Health Kits to all Health Centers across the nation. Health Centers that received the donation includes all of the centers in HA and HDh Atoll, B. Kudarikilu Health Center, K. Thulusdhoo Health Center, and ADh. Maamigili Health Center.

The donation was initiated earlier this year as part of its efforts to promote Good Health in line with its commitment to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals ("Global Goals"). The Health Kits includes essential equipment, Stethoscope, Digital Sphygmomanometer, Pulse Oxymeter, Otoscope, Digital Thermometer and a Nebulizer Machine.

"We believe that access to quality essential health care for each and every one is extremely important. Understanding the need for updated digital essential equipment to Health Centers across the nation, it is our utmost delight to donate these kits and enable the Health Centers to provide quality healthcare to its

people. We have now provided Health Kits to 28 Health Centers including all health Centers in HA. And HDh atoll. We are committed to continuing this initiative and provide the Health Kits to all Health Centers across the nation." Ooredoo Maldives Chief Commercial Officer, Hussain Niyaz.

Due to the amplified the urgency and importance of maintaining good health and wellness post pandemic, Ooredoo Maldives committed to support and promote Health and Wellness as its CSR focus for the year 2022. Ooredoo Maldives continues to extend its support to councils, recreational clubs and sponsored several tournaments across the nation to promote and encourage communities to take on a healthier lifestyle. Every year since 2017, Ooredoo Color Run remains the biggest event where people of all ages participate in a 5km fun run that permeates the importance of staying active. This year, under its "Upgrade Your World" group wide campaign, Ooredoo Maldives upgraded Ooredoo Color Run to Ooredoo Fun Run as the happiest 5k run incorporating fun obstacles, water and foam in addition



to color throws at each 1 km stations. This upgrade was made to make the run even more fun and to encourage more people to participate.

As a community focused company, Ooredoo Maldives has remained a close partner and enabler connecting the people to quality services, enabling access to necessary and important information, especially at times of crisis. Ooredoo Maldives has leveraged on its platforms to spread awareness on measures against outbreaks of preventive diseases such as Dengue, Measles and many more.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, Ooredoo has continued to support the

communities with both digital solutions and relief measures. In addition to critical connectivity support, mass awareness on COVID-19 prevention and relief, as well as digital solutions which enable online education, health services and enterprises, together with Ooredoo Group, Ooredoo Maldives donated MVR 2,500,000.00 to the Government of the Maldives to acquire necessary equipment and supplies to combat the pandemic.

Ooredoo Maldives reaffirms its commitment to the people and will continue to enrich the lives of the people of Maldives with innovative solutions leveraging on its platforms and resources.

# The Cocoon Collection Builds Future with Cocoon Foundation



Cocoon Maldives and You & Me Maldives, under The Cocoon Collection hotel company brand, has launched the Cocoon Foundation. An initiative that is mainly focused on improving the lives of the local community in the Maldives, especially in Lhaviyani atoll and Raa atoll where the two resorts are located.

Held at You & Me Maldives on December 2, 2022, the inauguration event was opened by the Corporate

General Manager of The Cocoon Collection, Mr. Ahmed Jihad (Jay), with an inspiring story of the team's efforts to manifest the three pillars of the foundation, focusing on sustainability in economic, educational, and environmental subjects.

Throughout the year in 2022, both resorts have conducted training and hosted schools' visits from the nearby islands, aimed at building confidence and leadership of the younger

generations, as well as to give the tools and empowerment to the talented individuals who wish to have their career in the hospitality industry. The resorts have also launched programs to increase environmental awareness and the welfare of the communities. The companies' commitments are highly supported by the councils of the atoll, NGOs, and the stakeholders.

Guest of Honor, Minister of Tourism, Dr. Abdulla Mausoom touched on the topic of how the initiatives of the hotel industry are significant to lay a solid groundwork for the development in the region. A synergy from every element that will continue to carry Maldives to flourish and prosper.

The Managing Director of The Cocoon Collection, Mr. Alessandro Azzola concluded with his heartfelt speech, "We feel so lucky to be a part of the Maldives tourism industry and we

want to show our gratitude with a sustainable initiative that will help the community in the long run." Under his visionary leadership, the Cocoon Foundation will continuously make valuable contributions, and become a legacy that can be passed on to the future generation.

The auspicious evening was also attended by the Chairman of The Cocoon Collection, Mr. Asgi Akbarally, Chairman of Bison Maldives, Mr. Abdul Majeed, President of Raa Atoll Council, Mr. Hussain Nasif, and President of Lhaviyani Atoll Council, Mr. Yaseen Abdulla. All the management, team, and invitees gathered at the closing of the event ceremony with a performance of the Cocoon Foundation's official song, written and performed by Maldivian artists to envision the foundation's mission and vision.

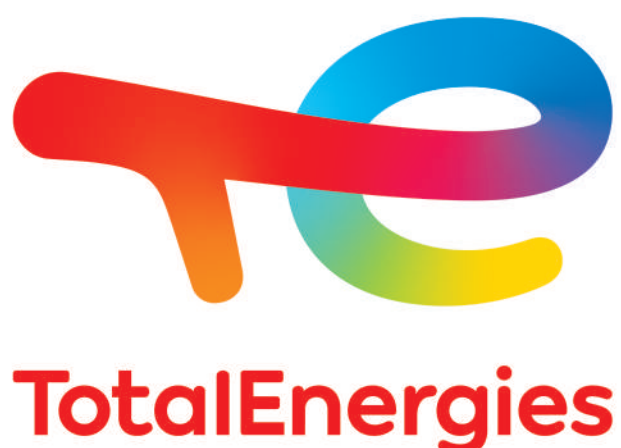


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BON APPÉTIT

Choux Au Crequalin

(Young Coconut, Raspberry, Chocolate combination)



“Who would have thought of a gabulhi, raspberry & chocolate combination? I trusted my instincts and BOOM!”.

Aminath started her career as a Commis one and Chocolatier working in various luxury resorts in the Maldives. Most recently, she worked with Waldorf Astoria Maldives Ithaafushi as its Commis one Pastry Chef. She has proven herself multiple times by winning numerous international and national awards. She found her passion for designing, baking and cooking in the early-stage of her childhood and her family has been supportive since. Her flexibility during difficult and challenging times combined with her “CAN DO” attitude brought great success to Pastry Team. Aminath’s experience as well as her enthusiasm and keenness to grow has made her ready for the next level of her career.

The Ritz-Carlton Maldives, Fari Islands has announced the promotion of Aminath Hameed from Demi Chef – Pastry & Bakery to Chef de Partie – Pastry & Bakery effective from November 1, 2021.

INGREDIENTS AND RECIPE

1. CHOUX PASTE

- 125g Water
- 125g Milk
- 5g Icing Sugar (Red Man brand)
- 5g Salt
- 113g Butter
- 138g Flour
- 250g Eggs

Preparation

Boil water, milk, icing sugar, salt and butter. Add in the flour and mix it to form a dough. Remove from heat and start adding eggs 1 by 1 while mixing.

2. CRAQUELIN

- 150g butter
- 140g Brown sugar
- 190g Flour

Preparation

Mix everything together and roll in to a thin dough. Keep in the chiller and cut out round shapes

3. CHOCOLATE MOUSSE FILLING

- 150g Veliche sensation 72
- 150g Veliche Temptation 64
- 350g Whipping cream 1
- 200g Whipping cream 2
- 6g Red Man gelatin powder

Preparation:

Whip the whipping cream part 1. Heat the whipping cream part 2 and pour over the chocolate. Mix. Add in the bloomed gelatin. Fold in the whipped cream and set in the chiller for 4 hours.

4. RASPBERRY JELLY

- 120g Ravifruit Raspberry puree
- 5g Redman Gelatin
- 25g Sugar

Preparation

Bloom the gelatin. Heat puree and sugar. Add in the gelatin. Set in the chiller.

5. CHOCOLATE FILLING

- 80g Whipping cream
- 80g Veliche Temptation 64

Preparation

Heat whipping cream and pour over the chocolate. Whisk until Its combined.

6. GABULHI FILLING

- 200g Young coconut (gabulhi)
- 100g Sugar

Preparation

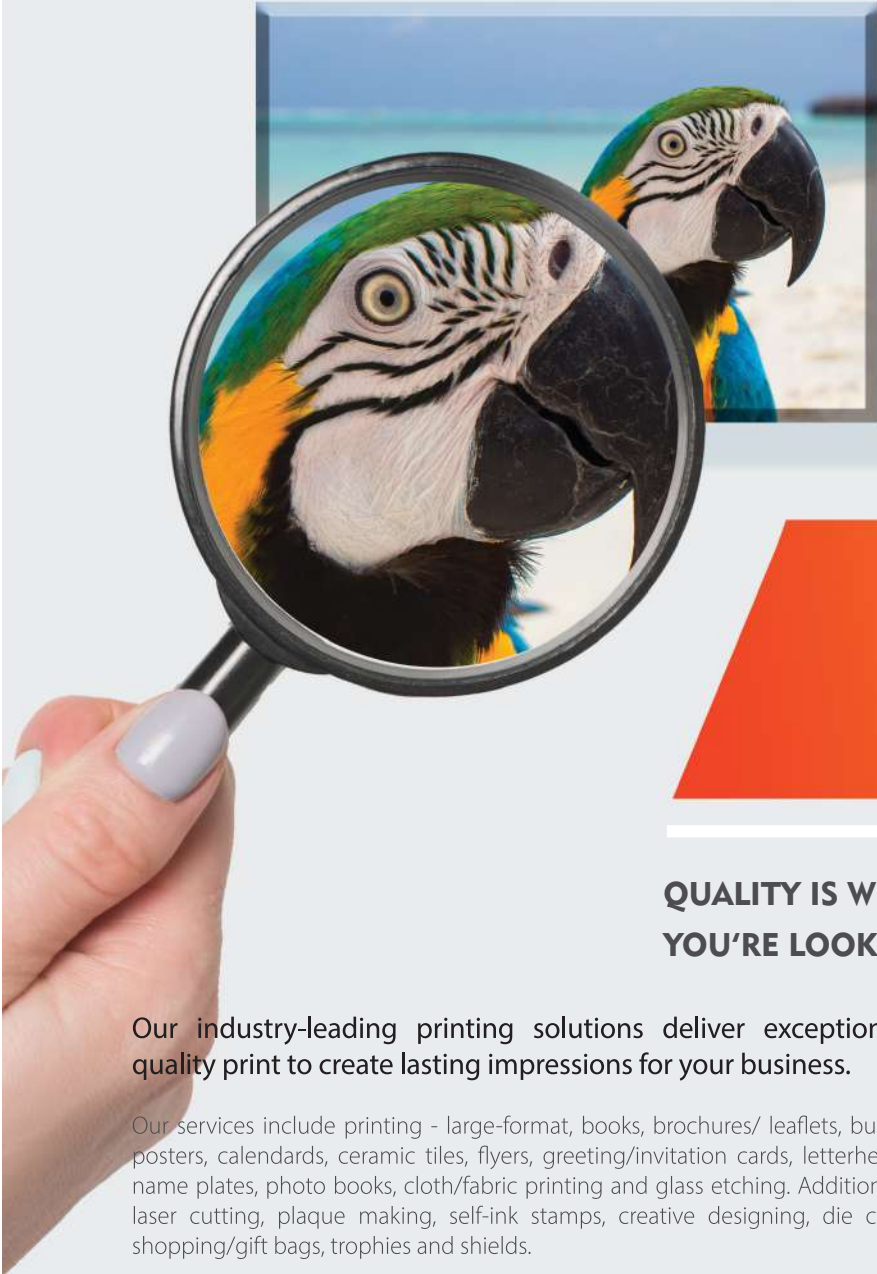
Heat everything together for 20 mins until gabulhi is soft and translucent. Keep it chilled.



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Courtesy of  
Chef de Partie  
Aminath Hameed  
Ritz-Carlton Maldives, Fari Islands



# Frankly Speaking

The growing number of surfers traveling to Southern Maldives are faced with challenges ranging from getting domestic flights with steady flight schedules and assurance on their surf gear and luggage delivered on time during arrival and departure. How can the industry overcome this obstacle? Will it be sorted when the new ATR aircrafts are added to the Maldivian fleet?



**Abdulla Salih**  
Managing Director  
Damas Company Pvt Ltd



**Hussain Hassaan**  
Managing Director  
Perfect Voyage Pvt Ltd

1. The addition of new ATR Aircrafts will definitely help ease the issue.
2. The increase of traffic to the destinations will, by itself, result in more flights, thereby offering more options.
3. Excellent surfing times are also known beforehand and heavily promoted. This is why top class surfers arrive during pre-determined dates. Prior planning and industry collaboration can certainly offer better solutions for these specific times.

I don't think adding ATR aircrafts to the Maldivian fleet will solve it necessarily, its the same for Surfers and Divers combined right.

The issue would not solve unless Maldivian commits to have a certain number of minimum flights on a daily basis depending on the season it's operated in and sticking to that schedule strictly, and increasing the number of flight operated to Deep South especially depending on the demand they get during the season

It's not that difficult for them to figure out from us how many boats will be in the deep south during certain periods and the type of trips we will be conducting and the total load the boats will carry, offering the boats some kind of guaranteed contract of plane operation like TMA has with resorts.

While I think Manta and Flyme should start flying, for Maldivian to start doing things better.



**Mohamed Firaq**  
Managing Director  
Inner Maldives Holidays



**Mohamed Ali Janah**  
President  
National Federation of Maldivian Employers (NFME)

I believe that the liveaboard market has always been left out from the authorities. Starting from bank, LGA, Councils and Domestic Airlines. We all understood and understood there were lots of promises done.

But just a simple example, domestic flight booking. They get the confirmation in very last minutes after filling the resorts required commitment (highly subsidized from the government ) airfare is 60 -65%higher than the resorts or guesthouses). Going more, Yes market is developed and invested by local entrepreneurs. I understand there are more than 1700 beds in the market on Liveaboards which is the size of average 10 resorts. GST -TGST green tax import duty , transport relevant taxes , anchoring fee are also being paid without any concession.

I believe that we should have a dedicated service with appropriate aircrafts that are designed and suitable for the kind of tourists, especially the surfers experiencing and enjoying the southern Maldives. This will help tourism in Southern Maldives grow in multiple ways and in many folds!



**Ahmed Ibrahim**  
Director  
Noo Rani Travels

The new ATRs will certainly increase available seats. It will only provide a solution to surfers, anglers and divers only if Maldivian is able to increase the cargo space available.

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