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VOL 81 | April 2023 | www.islandchief.com

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EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW
with
MOHAMMED HUSSEIN ALSHAALI
CHAIRMAN
GULF CRAFT INC.

&

ABEER ALSHAALI
DEPUTY MANAGING DIRECTOR
GULF CRAFT INC.

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News & Press Releases to be shared by email to :
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Dear Readers,

Ramadan Kareem!

The 81st edition of the Islandchief continues to brim articles and information to help you enjoy our wonderful country and get the best out of your visit - be it an island hop, a weekend break, a guided tour, or a vacation in a live aboard or guesthouse.

We would also like to remind you that this section of our tabloid magazine is dedicated to connecting with our readers and paying heed to their ideas, suggestions, and questions. We welcome and nurture these thoughts, which serve as the seeds for the tabloid magazine's growth. We shower them with love and care, ensuring they flourish with plenty of attention and sunshine.

Since you have read this far, we are curious to know your thoughts. What more would you like to see in the Islandchief? Who would you like to know more about from the pages of our magazine? Do you have a travel or tourism-related query that our industry experts can help you with?

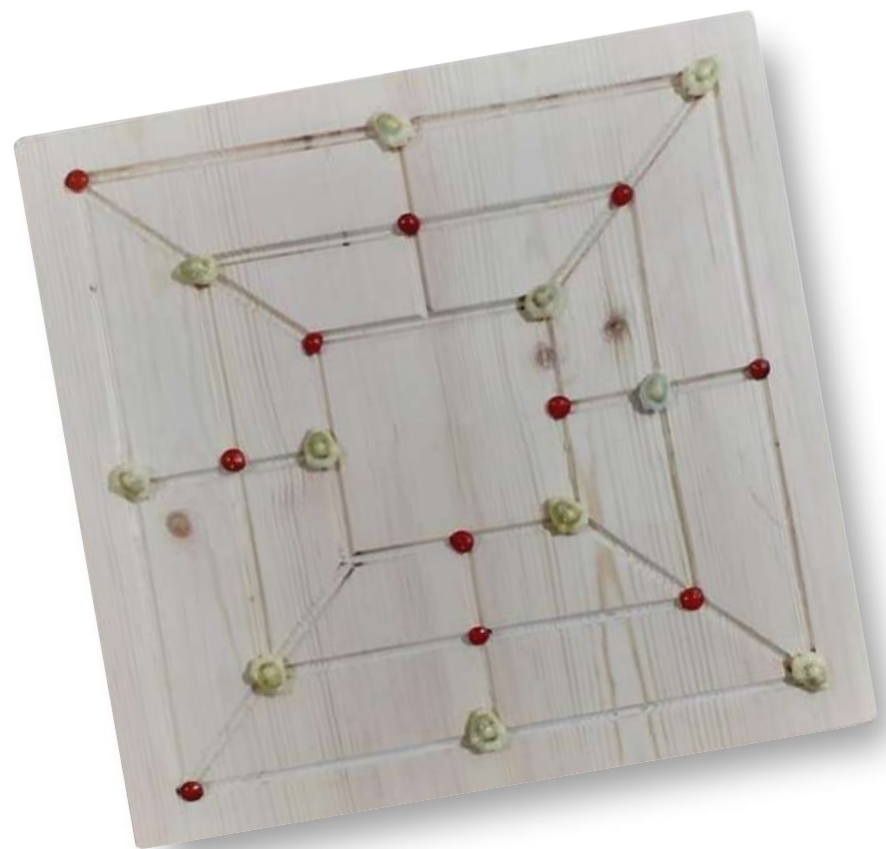
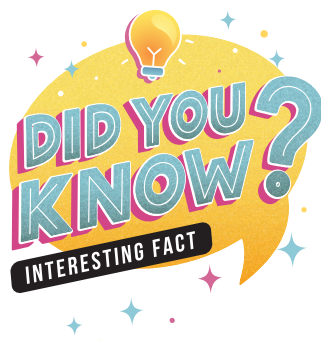
The front cover of April's edition features an interview with Mr. Mohamed Hussein AlShaali, Chairman, and Ms. Abeer AlShaali, Deputy Managing Director of Gulf Craft Inc. In this insightful conversation, the amiable duo provides our readers with a comprehensive overview of the current state of the Maldives' marine industry, including the challenges and opportunities. Abeer sheds light on Gulf Craft's new strategic theme, "Legacy in Motion," in a broad discussion.

In our scrumptious section, "Bon Appétit", you'll find the recipe for Kadhuru Kanamadhu Pudding, a Maldivian fusion of a classic British dessert "sticky toffee pudding" highlighting the flavors of kanamadu and everyone's favorite pandan leaf and coconut combo, courtesy of Ahmed Nashaath, Private Pastry Sous Chef, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

And lastly, in Frankly Speaking, our industry experts share their opinions on the positive contribution to the southern region of Maldives with the recent launch of integrated tourism and enhancement plans of Gan International Airport.

Until next time,

The Islandchief Team



THIN HAMA

Thin Hama is a timeless board game that requires strategic thinking. In the olden days, our ancestors used to draw a grid on a wooden square and play with shells (Boli) and red seeds (Madhoshi) from the Adenanthera Pavonina plant. Passed down from generation to generation, this game is a true treasure of the Maldives.

The goal is to get three in a row and capture your opponent's pieces. All you need are nine pieces of two different items such as buttons, shells, seeds, or pebbles. Draw a grid with three squares, and connect them with lines. Then, take turns placing your pieces on the board until all 18 are on the grid.

After that, move your pieces vertically and horizontally to an empty intersection. Once you get three in a row, remove one of your opponent's pieces and keep going. The winner is the player who captures all but two of their opponent's pieces. With its simple yet challenging gameplay, Thin Hama is a game that has stood the test of time.

Photo credit: **LAYERS Maldives**

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Emirates Expands Flight Training Academy's Aircraft Fleet

Emirates Flight Training Academy (EFTA) continues to live up to its promise of offering cutting-edge tech and state-of-the-art aircraft to train pilots of the future and help close the industry's skills gap. The Academy is now bolstering its current fleet with an order for three twin-engine DA42-VI and its corresponding flight simulator from Diamond Aircraft Industries – a leading manufacturer of aircraft in general aviation, based in Austria. The total deal is worth EUR 4 million in list prices.

The AUSTRO jet-fuel powered DA42-VI aircraft is slated to be the flagship that ushers in multi-engine piston (MEP) training at EFTA.

Capt Abdulla Al Hammadi, Vice President Emirates Flight Training Academy, said: "Our new fleet from Diamond Aircraft is part of our larger strategic intent for our cadet programme. It helps us design a bridging MEP programme for cadets to gain more flying experience while progressing from a single engine to a light jet aircraft. It strengthens our offering and makes it more unique,

rounded and robust. Our cadets will benefit hugely as they gain experience on three different types of aircraft, even before they're licensed. The new fleet also helps us go above and beyond on complying with the new GCAA guidelines. The DA42-VI is reliable, eco-friendly and a practical platform for MEP training. We're confident we've made the right choice."

"We are thrilled that our DA42-VI is the choice for Emirates' flight training. This, once again, solidifies the aircraft's position as the industry leading multi-engine piston trainer," said Liqun (Frank) Zhang, CEO Diamond Aircraft Austria. "With Emirates we are adding another premier flight academy to our long list of renowned training operators and are looking forward to supporting them with the most advanced and eco-friendly aircraft available on the market today."

The 4-seat DA42-VI is the newest version of Diamond's technology leading light piston twin-engine aircraft. It's the first certified general aviation piston aircraft to combine modern technology airframe, avionics, and power plants.



With its unique combination of performance and utility, the jet fuel powered DA42-VI is designed to make transitioning from single to twin engine much easier. The aircraft generates fuel savings of up to 50% compared to conventional AVGAS powered twins, and its panoramic canopy provides excellent visibility during all flight maneuvers.

Since its introduction, well over 1,100 DA42 aircraft have been delivered, outselling all other certified piston twins combined. The all-composite DA42-VI is

equipped with efficient, silent, clean and reliable 168hp jet fuel AUSTRO engines AE300, Garmin G1000 NXi with 3-axis Automatic Flight Control System and optional electrically driven air conditioning.

Aircraft delivery is expected to commence soon, with all three slated to be received by EFTA in the first half of 2023. More than 100 cadets have successfully graduated from EFTA since 2020, creating a strong pilot recruitment pipeline for Emirates and the industry.

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ACROSS THE SKIES

Saudi Arabia's flynas Announces Operation of Flights to the Maldives Starting this Summer



Saudi Arabia's low-cost airline, flynas, has announced adding 10 new destinations and routes in Asia and Europe during the 2023 summer season as of next June, boosting its ever-growing flight network.

The carrier will launch four new

destinations out of King Khalid International Airport in Riyadh, including the Maldives, Yerevan in Armenia, Antalya in Turkey, and Tivat in Montenegro. Meanwhile, six new routes will be launched, including four from Dammam to Salalah in Oman, Istanbul and Trabzon in Turkey, and Tirana in

Albania. Two more routes will operate from Jeddah to Salalah and Bodrum in Turkey.

Flynas will also re-operate its summer destinations and routes, which include Prague in the Czech Republic, Vienna and Salzburg in Austria, Baku in Azerbaijan,

Tbilisi and Batumi in Georgia, Sarajevo in Bosnia, and Hurghada and Sharm El-Sheikh in Egypt.

The new destinations and routes reflect flynas' commitment to growth and expansion, according to CEO Bander Almohanna. He said that the airline aims to become the best low-cost airline in the Middle East and one of the top 10 airlines in its category globally. Almohanna added that flynas aims to align with Saudi Vision 2030 and the civil aviation strategy to attract 100 million tourists and reach 250 international destinations annually.

Flynas reported record growth in performance and operations during 2022, with passenger numbers increasing by 91% to 8.7 million, flight numbers up 45% to 66,000, and seat capacity growing by 46%. The airline plans to upscale its fleet by 50% in 2023 compared to 2021, with 19 new A320neo aircraft set to be delivered in the next 10 months.

Sunland Journeys - Your Passage to the World

Sunland Journeys is a travel agency in the Maldives that provides affordable holiday packages in the Maldives and worldwide destinations with add-on tours and experiences. The company offers personalized packages to Discover the Maldives and Explore the World. Sunland Journeys grew to adapt to the fast-growing changes in the industry and brought together the ultimate team of travel experts to create personalized packages that perfectly fulfill all customer needs.

Sunland Journeys began as a ticketing office and later became a major travel agency. It represents eleven major airlines as a Passenger Sales Agent, including Singapore Airlines, Sri Lankan Airlines, Qatar Airways, US-Bangla Airlines, Indigo, Fly Dubai, Scoot, and domestic airlines Maldivian, Manta Air, and Villa Air. Sunland Journeys is the General Sales Agent and the Cargo Agent for Bangkok Airways as well.

The Maldives is a highly sought-after and high-demand travel destination, with tourism being the largest economic industry in the country.

Sunland Journeys provides budget-friendly packages that fit individual preferences. Whether you need to be frugal or have money to spare, Sunland Journeys has an option that is worth considering.

Sunland Journeys takes care of every aspect of the trip, including visa assistance, travel insurance, and 24-hour customer services to ensure customers' comfort and safety from their departure point till they reach their destination. The company relies on preferred vendors to establish relationships to better assist and cater to every need of its customers. At present, they are in partnership with over 100 resorts and guesthouses in the Maldives and conduct bookings for hotels and tours all around the world.

Sunland Journeys celebrates 24 years of service in 2023. The company has a great team of employees wholly loyal and dedicated to the company, and a management team that is always open to new ideas and changes to ensure the company's growth and development.



IN A NUTSHELL

The Ritz-Carlton Maldives, Fari Islands Hosts National Geographic Explorer And Award-Winning Shark Scientist Gibbs Kuguru



Committed to environmental education and as part of the resort’s ‘Visiting Heroes’ programme, The Ritz-Carlton Maldives, Fari Islands will introduce National Geographic Explorer and award-winning Kenyan shark scientist Gibbs Kuguru from March 27 to April 12. An inspired educational residency will include exclusive guest experiences from shark snorkeling to Q&As with Gibbs, while the deployment of new equipment and shark tagging will support ground breaking conservation research to protect Blacktip Reef Sharks in the Maldives.

The seafaring explorer and scientist will undertake key fieldwork as part of his Doctor of Philosophy in Genomics at Wageningen University, revealing the causes behind a rare skin disorder affecting Blacktip Reef Sharks in the Maldives. A series of events will engage both guests and scholars, inviting Natural Science students of the University of Maldives to join the shark tagging programme and analyze data from the scientist’s inaugural visit. Gibbs will also install a Baited Remote Underwater Video (BRUV) to monitor long-term the Blacktip Reef

Sharks in their native habitat.

Led by Gibbs, guests of The Ritz-Carlton Maldives, Fari Islands will have a once in a lifetime opportunity to snorkel up close and personal with some of the Maldives’ 26 species of sharks, and a chance to witness the gentle and sometimes elusive Blacktip Reef Shark inhabiting the shallow reefs surrounding the resort. Exclusive insights into the scientist’s latest research will be shared

in intimate talks and workshops hosted at the dive centre – home to the resort’s Jean-Michel Cousteau Ambassadors of the Environment Program – and sundown debriefs at the resort’s Beach Shack restaurant.

Gibbs Kuguru has honed his shark wrangling and seafaring skills working with Great White Sharks, Hammerheads, Threshers, Blues, and Sand Tigers. Studying the DNA of sharks, Gibbs is using genetic research to better understand the unique elements in DNA that shape the populations of sharks in

the blue wilds of the world. His work on the reefs of The Ritz-Carlton Maldives, Fari Islands may reveal insights into how these animals survive in the face of extinction, threatened by overfishing and climate change. Gibbs was honored just last year with the 2022 National Geographic Wayfinder Award.

The work of Gibbs joins a progressive research community whose impact can be experienced by guests through The Ritz-Carlton Maldives, Fari Islands’ Jean-Michel Cousteau’s Ambassadors of the Environment Program. Designed for adults and children, this exclusive programme led by marine naturalists, collaborates with world-renowned oceanographic explorer and environmentalist Jean-Michel Cousteau, and leading global scientists, to provide unique activities with the preservation of our planet at its core. Guests are able to explore the ocean depths in the legacy of the great Cousteau and join newly formed research teams in their ground-breaking work to monitor ocean plastics with drone technology.

The programme inspires guests to discover, explore and engage in nature not just beneath the water, but through the fascinating fauna of the Maldives, and high above sea-level to the wonders of the galaxy.



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IN A NUTSHELL

Hard Rock Hotel Maldives Holds 'Rock & Soul Month' – the Ultimate Wellness and Lifestyle Experience



Hard Rock Hotel Maldives, the five-star beach resort in the Indian Ocean, invites its global explorers to experience the ultimate tropical wellness and lifestyle retreat with the launch of “Rock & Soul Month” – a full 31-day health and fitness festival that helps every guest feel fantastic!

Running until April 7, 2023, Rock & Soul Month features an action-packed schedule of activities for every wellness seeker, from gym bunnies who love high intensity workouts to those who desire more mindful moments. With sessions running from sunrise until sunset, including morning runs, beach yoga, martial arts, self-defense, dance fitness, aerial arts, aqua gym, strength sessions, nutrition and lifestyle classes, and even snorkeling, every guest can create a personalized program to suit their unique needs.

Guests are encouraged to join at least two daily sessions to maximize their wellness journey, and little Rostars also have a fun-filled calendar of health-focused activities to keep them entertained, from fun games such as hopscotch, hula hoop and juggling to dance classes, martial arts, kids' yoga, aerial arts and more.

To give guests an extra boost, Hard Rock Hotel Maldives has invited two leading professionals, Danny O'Sullivan and Kristie Walker, to uplift this wellness experience. Danny is an expert in mobility

and strength training who can help athletes move more freely and reduce the risk of injury. Kristie meanwhile, is a nutritionist and lifestyle consultant who has spent 15 years helping people create healthy lives and eating habits.

These two pros will join Hard Rock Hotel Maldives' onsite health and fitness experts, including Amanda, a dance fitness instructor who brings a burst of energy to every class; Xenia, an aerial arts instructor who specializes in elegant gymnastics such as trapeze, rings, silks and more; Mooza, a yoga teacher who brings a blend of meditative and challenging exercises to each class; and Rafa, a black belt Brazilian jiu-jitsu instructor who leads empowering self-defense techniques.

Throughout Rock & Soul Month, guests can soothe their aching muscles and achieve complete pampering with the new “Aloha Package” at the Rock Spa®! This serene spa journey starts with a 30-minute body scrub, followed by a relaxing 60-minute massage, and ends with a refreshing 30-minute mini-facial. This immersive package can now be enjoyed for just USD 185++ per person or USD 345++ per couple. Rates start from USD 525 per room per night.

“We are delighted to invite guests from around the world to our Rock & Soul Month, as we elevate



health and fitness to new levels of luxury. What could be more invigorating than feeling fit and healthy in a spectacular setting, overlooking the Indian Ocean? Whatever your wellness goals, our experts will help you to enhance your physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing. Don't miss this exclusive opportunity to push your boundaries and discover a new way to stay in shape,” said Tolga Unan, Managing Director, Hard Rock Hotel Maldives.

The start of Rock & Soul Month comes hot on the heels of Carnival Week, which brought Latin America's iconic carnival celebrations to Hard Rock Hotel Maldives from February 24 to March 4, 2023, including a colorful Carnival Parade, Masquerade Party, an array of Latin-themed activities, Brazilian dining and more.

IN A NUTSHELL



An Easter Egg Hunt You Wouldn't Want to Miss at Oaga Art Resort

Oaga Art Resort invites you to enjoy this Easter holiday full of whimsy and fun in the tropical setting of the Maldives. The resort's line-up of activities to be held from 8th - 10th April 2023 sets the mood for celebration all throughout the island, from egg hunts to gala dinners and special brunches.

For adventure seekers, the resort's scavenger egg hunt will take you on a journey in search for clues all the way from Sobi Bar, the beer and gin garden located at one edge of the island, to the main pool at Raa Baa on the other. Those who complete the challenge will win gold, silver and bronze eggs - a token to cherish the memory.

The resort also gives a slight nod to Maldivian culture within all the experiences, taking humour from cultural references such

as the practice of "bismalhi dhuvvun" (Dhivehi) where a string is tied to the leg of a chicken in order to find out where it lays eggs.

What's more, the award winning Maldivian Wellness Leader and concept developer for Hoba Spa, Ms Xulfishan (Xubba) will be on the island as a visiting practitioner during the festive period. As a Maldivian 'Beysveriyaa' or healer, Xubba's expertise is rooted in the age-old practices passed on to her from generations; all of which she has poured into the concept of Hoba Spa, bringing an authentic Maldivian meaning to the spa experience.

At Oaga Art Resort this Easter, you can also dress your best for either the Gala Dinner on Easter eve, or the Easter Sunday Brunch at Kaa Kada, showcasing a range of festive

culinary delights. Enjoy a movie or the barbecue dinner by the beach with the sound of waves setting the mood for a peaceful night. Set your intentions for hope, renewal and new life at the morning rituals by Hoba Spa.

Whether to try your hand at creative egg-spressions with the team of Suvasthi Retail & Art Gallery, or to learn music with some bunny at the Take Notes 101 sessions, or to shake up your own drinks as a cocktail apprentice, the resort's Rahvehin team is inspired to cater a merry and jovial celebration to travelers, friends and family of all ages and interests.

To complete the vibe on the island, you can expect buskers, flash mobs, live music performances, a pool party and DJ too, to liven up the spaces throughout this Easter weekend.

Oaga represents an eclectic blend of activities and vivid impressions for curious travelers, with something for everyone around the corner - inspired by the best of Maldivian

history, art, culture and heritage. Explore what the real Maldives has to offer as you create your own story, on the island where the magic of stories comes beautifully alive.

For Maldives lovers searching for an all-inclusive holiday, Oaga Art Resort's Greatest All Inclusive plan re-defines the limits of what All-Inclusive is all about; with inclusions such as Creative Expression (art) classes, Take Notes (music) experiences, Thashibari In-Villa Dining to floating meal, choices of excursions, motorized water sports and many more. Guests looking to book the resort can enjoy great discounts for bookings made through the resort's website, (<http://www.oagaresorts.com/>).

Situated in North Malé Atoll, Oaga Art Resort is 45 minutes by speedboat from Velana International Airport. A small island with 60 villas with beach and over water options, 4 dining venues and a spa inspired by Maldivian traditional healing practices, Oaga Art Resort's artistic and creative spaces offer an immersive experience curated by local and visiting artists, and craftsmen from the Maldives.

A large bridge spans the ocean under a blue sky with white clouds. In the foreground, the stern of a boat is visible, featuring four Yamaha outboard motors. The water is a deep blue, and the bridge's concrete structure is prominent.

The Yamaha logo, consisting of a red circle with a white tuning fork symbol, is positioned to the left of the word "YAMAHA" in bold red capital letters. Below "YAMAHA" is the tagline "Revs Your Heart" in a smaller, italicized font.

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MOVERS & SHAKERS

Sun Siyam Resorts Announces Key Appointments



Mohammed Shihab, Group Director of Sales & Marketing

To boost and strengthen its business development team and to take the company's commercial strategy to new heights, Sun Siyam Resorts has recently promoted Mohammed Shihab to Group Director of Sales & Marketing, and Ahmed Naufal to Cluster Director of Sales & Marketing. Additionally, Sun Siyam Iru Fushi announced the promotion of Ahmed Ali (Adu) from Assistant Director of Sales & Marketing to Director of Sales and Marketing and welcomed Florante Abuton Jr. to the team as Assistant PR & Communications Manager.

In his new role, Shihab will be heading the sales & marketing teams at all six Sun Siyam Resort properties in the Maldives & Sri Lanka by creating and developing strong and effective sales & marketing growth strategies as well as overseeing all global relationships with key partners to successfully drive business.

Shihab joined the company in 2020 as Assistant Director of Sales and Marketing at Sun Siyam Olhuveli Maldives, moved up the career ladder to Director of Sales and Marketing before taking on a new project under the Sun Siyam Resorts umbrella, and to be part of an exciting pre-opening team, when he joined Siyam World in 2021 as Cluster Director of Sales & Marketing.

Shihab started his career as Sales & Marketing Supervisor at Meeru Island Resort and Spa, Maldives in 2011. He then took on a new challenge in the MICE sector, in September 2015, when he joined Westin Langkawi Resort and Spa as Senior Catering & Conventions Manager. Shihab also held the position of Director of Catering & Conventions at the same property before joining The Standard, Huravalhi Maldives in 2019 as Director of Sales & Marketing.

Born and raised in India and proudly half-Maldivian, Shihab speaks fluently Hindi, English & Dhivehi and brings more than 13 years of sales experiences in the hospitality industry with him.

Based at Sun Siyam Olhuveli, Naufal takes on his new



Ahmed Naufal, Cluster Director of Sales & Marketing

role as Cluster Director of Sales & Marketing from March 2023, overseeing all sales & marketing activities for Sun Siyam Iru Veli & Sun Siyam Olhuveli.

He was promoted from his previous position as Director of Sales and Marketing at Sun Siyam Olhuveli, where he spearheaded the three connecting island property's sales activities globally.

His Maldives hospitality career began at One & Only Kanuhura in 2008, where he worked as Reservations Agent and then Baros Maldives in 2011 where he worked his way up for over six years from Reservations & Sales Executive to Cluster Assistant Sales Reservations Manager.

He then joined Dhevanafushi Maldives Luxury Resort in 2017 as Associate Director of Sales and also held the post of Director of Sales at Raffles Maldives Meradhoo from 2017-2018. Naufal later joined the Radisson Blu Resort Maldives in 2019 and Movenpick Maldives 2020 as Director of Sales before taking on his most recent role at Sun Siyam Olhuveli in 2021.

Based on property, Adu has been a key component of the hotel's sales and marketing team for the past five years. In his new role, he will be responsible for developing new business opportunities, creating, and executing marketing campaigns, managing a dynamic team of business development personnel, and leading and executing the sales and marketing strategies for Sun Siyam Iru Fushi.

His outstanding leadership skills, and his extensive understanding of the hotel and the Maldives tourism industry, as well as his ability to interact with clients and partners, have earned him recognition and respect from both his colleagues and key clients. Adu joined Sun Siyam Resorts in 2019 as Sales Manager at Sun Siyam Iru Fushi, and has since then been pivotal in growing sales and increasing revenue for the resort. Prior to that, he had a wealth of experience in the hospitality industry, having previously held several front office and sales positions at Soneva Resorts and South LUX Ari Atoll in the Maldives.



Ahmed Ali (Adu), Director of Sales and Marketing



Florante Abuton Jr., Assistant PR & Communications Manager

Originally from the Maldives, Adu has graduated from Taylor's University in Malaysia in International Hospitality Management. He has a solid grasp of the business and a drive to quality that will help him succeed in his new role.

Florante originates from the Philippines, is based on property as well, and joined the property earlier this year 2023. He will be assisting the Sun Siyam Iru Fushi sales & marketing team in all matters PR, communications, press, media, and marcomm related.

With over 11 years of international experience in the hospitality industry and prior to moving to the Maldives, Florante worked for some of the biggest names in the hospitality and automotive industries, including Jumeirah Hotels and Resorts, Nissan Middle East, Marriott International, Hilton Hotels, Emaar Hospitality, and, most recently, Lapita Dubai Parks and Resorts.

Speaking about his new role, Florante said; "I am thrilled to be joining this magnificent Maldives resort and look forward to working with the incredible islanders and global teams to contribute to that wonderful and understated luxury Maldivian holiday experience, Sun Siyam Iru Fushi has always been recognized for."

MOVERS & SHAKERS

Seaside Finolhu Baa Atoll Maldives Welcomes Steven Phillips as New General Manager



Seaside Finolhu Baa Atoll Maldives welcomes its new General Manager, Steven Phillips, from the United Kingdom. Steven has a rich experience in working with some of the fast growing, multicultural and international luxury brands in the world including business hotels, golf resorts and luxury private island resorts. Steven has worked all over the world including 10 years in the Maldives, and also London, Japan, Malta, Mauritius, Sri Lanka and Abu Dhabi.

One of the highlights of Steven’s career was as the General Manager at Gili Lankanfushi from 2014 to 2017, an ultra-Luxury Maldivian Resort of 45 villas, including the world’s largest overwater villa complex. In 2015, the property was voted as Reader’s Choice, No.1 Hotel in The World. Steven was instrumental to the success of the opening of Joali Maldives whilst overseeing both Joali Resorts in the

Maldives as Area General Manager from 2017 to 2020.

Steven has a degree in Hotel & Institutional Operations and has earned several useful certificates such as Diploma in Wine & Spirits, Cornell Hospitality and General Manager’s Executive Programme – UK. Moreover, Steven has an outstanding track record in leading ultra-luxury resorts, Strategic Budgeting, PR Media Relations and Organizational Building. He is an accomplished hospitality executive particularly adept in setting up and implementing organizational structures in pre-opening destination resorts.

He enjoys golf and scuba diving, and when the weather is not so promising, he samples international and local cuisine, as well fine wines. Steven is married to Corinne, who also shares passion for nature conservation as well as traveling.

Steven brings along his savior-faire and expertise of the hospitality world, as well as his passion for cultures and people development. In his new position, Steven will ensure that Seaside Finolhu Baa Atoll Maldives continues to create unrivaled guest experiences, and brings a playful twist on luxury.

Owned and managed by Seaside Collection, Seaside Finolhu Baa Atoll Maldives, is a luxury island resort renowned for its two-kilometre white powdery beaches that stretch out across four islands. Firmly established as one of the finest resorts in the Maldives, “Finolhu”, meaning sandbank in Dhivehi, consists of 125 beachfront and overwater villas.

Whilst popular with honeymooners, the extensive resort which is set in a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve is also family-friendly, with a kids’ club and world-famous entertainment.



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MOVERS & SHAKERS

Vakkaru Maldives Promotes Ali Almaas to Director of Rooms

Vakkaru Maldives has recently announced the promotion of Ali Almaas to the position of Director of Rooms. Almaas had previously served as the Front Office Manager, and he will now join the Executive Committee team, responsible for overseeing housekeeping operations.

Almaas has been an invaluable asset to Vakkaru since he joined in March 2019. He has been promoted twice within the Front of House division, and his strong leadership and dedication have helped him navigate the complex challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic with professionalism. His colleagues hold him in high esteem, recognizing his can-do attitude and commitment to delivering the highest levels of service.

In his new position, Almaas will be responsible for managing the Front

Office, Guest Services, Butler Services, Recreation, Kids Club operations, and oversee housekeeping operations. He is eager to take on this new role and is proud of his contributions to making Vakkaru one of the best luxury resorts in the Maldives in the past five years.

Almaas expressed his gratitude to the management of Vakkaru for their support in his professional growth, saying, "As I continue this timeless journey with Vakkaru, I will keep focusing on opportunities to further improve the quality and guest experience by having our team members engaged and motivated to exceed guest expectations."

Overall, Vakkaru Maldives' promotion of Ali Almaas to the position of Director of Rooms highlights the resort's commitment to recognizing



and promoting talented individuals who are dedicated to delivering exceptional guest experiences. Almaas' new role will undoubtedly

contribute to maintaining Vakkaru's reputation as one of the best luxury resorts in the Maldives.

Le Méridien Maldives Appoints Asaf Tasdan as Executive Chef



Asaf Tasdan has been appointed as the Executive Chef at Le Méridien Maldives Resort & Spa. In this role, he will be responsible for overseeing all food and beverage outlets, including the recently renovated Riviera Tapas & Bar. Chef Tasdan has extensive experience working at luxury properties in the Middle East, including the renowned Nile Ritz-Carlton Hotel and JW Marriott Doha.

Chef Tasdan has a strong passion for sustainability and intends to use locally sourced produce in his dishes that is grown on the island.

He expressed his enthusiasm for joining the Le Méridien Maldives Resort & Spa team, praising the beautiful location and the wide range of dining options available to guests. He also shares their commitment to sustainability and looks forward to incorporating locally sourced ingredients into his cooking.

Le Méridien Maldives Resort & Spa resort is a sanctuary for the curious and creative traveler to discover the

European spirit of savoring the good life. Escape to Lhaviyani Atoll, where a pristine tropical forest, gorgeous beach and warm, crystalline water surround the hotel and villas. Overlooking a scenic lagoon, its hotel is a 360-degree canvas inspired by the formation of the Atolls, reefs and marine life.

Spanning nine hectares, the island is a true castaway experience abundant with indigenous flora and fauna enveloped by a shimmering lagoon and coral reefs teeming with marine life, including pods of rays and turtles. From overwater villas to its amenities, every aspect of the hotel's design takes a cue from mid-century design aesthetics and the rich European heritage of Maldives. Savor the sights, aromas and tastes of the Lhaviyani Atoll with six restaurants and bars and Explore Spa by Le Méridien.

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“Ensuring equality is not a one-size-fits-all approach, as different individuals require different support to have equal opportunities. Hence, equity is a better concept as it guarantees equal access for everyone.”

In order to give a limelight into the Marine industry, educate and advocate to have gender equality from the great leaders and a visionary entrepreneur in the Marine & Boating industry; we are very glad to have an Exclusive Interview with few inspirational words from Gulf Craft’s Chairman, Mohamed Hussein Alshaali focusing the Maldives Market along with Deputy Managing Director of Gulf Craft Inc. Ms. Abeer AlShaali.



Chairman, as a marine industry pioneer with over 20 years of successful operation in the Maldives market; we will be very glad to know your feedback on Maldives Marine Expo 2023, flagship event of National Boating Association of Maldives (NBAM)?

It brings us immense pride to share that Gulf Craft is the provider of almost 80% of water transportation services in the Maldives, catering to public transport, coast guard, emergency and ambulance services, resorts, and leisure boats. With a strong presence in the region, we have established a new production facility dedicated to manufacturing vessels for use in the Indian Ocean.

We are thrilled to witness the continuation of the Maldives Marine Expo, which has grown in scale this year. This boat show holds significant importance for Gulf Craft as it provides a platform to showcase our new products and designs to customers and connect with them personally. This year, we are excited to unveil our 45ft boat with a brand-new interior, which we believe will revolutionize the luxury hotel and resort market. However, our vision extends beyond this market, and we plan to collaborate with the government to manufacture vessels for

transportation and military purposes.

Gulf Craft has played a crucial role in transforming the ocean transportation system in the Maldives by reducing travel time. Furthermore, we are currently constructing a state-of-the-art facility in the Maldives to expand our portfolio, enabling us to build larger boats and yachts. This facility will not only serve the local market but also create opportunities for exporting to Asia and Africa. We are proud to announce that we are on track to export the first boat in the next two months, which is an accomplishment that all Maldivians can take pride in!

Chairman, what is your vision and plans in the upcoming lagoon of Gulf Craft Marina in the Maldives?

Our upcoming project involves the establishment of a school and a factory that will serve as a platform for developing the talents of young Maldivians. We will be focusing on carpentry, electrical work, and fiberglass building, providing these individuals with the necessary skills to pursue a successful career in these fields. Upon completing their training, they will have the freedom to choose whether to continue working with

Gulf Craft or explore other opportunities that interest them. Our ultimate goal is to promote talent development, create job opportunities for the local community, and support future generations.

As part of our efforts, we will also be offering training to boat captains and crew members on navigation and safety systems. We hope that this initiative will lead to an increase in job opportunities for young people, and they will be able to establish fulfilling careers. Given that the Maldives is surrounded by water and heavily dependent on it, we believe that this effort will have a significant impact on the community and the economy.

Chairman, what advice would you like to give to the millennials who like to join as Sea farers and other areas of the Superyacht industry? Do you believe gender equality can be balanced in the boating industry?

Currently, I have observed no significant difference between men and women in Maldives and most organizations. In fact, I have noticed that women are highly committed to their work, and we

have a substantial number of young women working in our offices. Although the number of women working in the operational field is relatively lower, we are prepared to provide them with the necessary training and opportunities if they express an interest in pursuing this path. We aspire to achieve more equitable opportunities for women in the future. It is crucial to join communities, associations, gather information and receive education.

Ms. Abeer, as an iconic woman in the Superyacht industry, how did you first get inspired and began working or joined this industry?

I am grateful for this opportunity to speak about my journey in the boating industry. Having grown up in a family where my father is the Chairman of Gulf Craft, I have been immersed in the world of boating since a young age. I have fond memories of enjoying boat rides with my family, which instilled in me a passion and love for the boating industry.

After completing my first university degree, I was eager to join the industry. However, my father believed that it was crucial for me to gain experience in different industries to broaden my knowledge. I worked in various places and started a family before my father invited me to join the Gulf Craft team as the company grew.

I am currently a part of the Executive Office and report directly to the Chairman. My responsibilities primarily revolve around finance, sales, marketing, and human resources matters within the company. Nonetheless, I am involved in all aspects of the business, and over the years, I have learned a lot from my father's footsteps and my own passion for the industry.

Ms. Abeer, what challenges have you faced and how did you overcome the situations?

In the boating industry, there are always hurdles to overcome due to the complexity of the field. Gulf Craft builds a diverse range of boats, from small vessels to the world's largest super yachts. While maintaining the craftsmanship of our industry, I am constantly striving to implement more lean production practices across all aspects of our business.

In 1982, when Gulf Craft was launched, there was a shortage of marine infrastructure and skilled labor in the UAE. This made it challenging for the team to receive support from local suppliers. To overcome this, we built a vertically integrated shipyard to manufacture our products in-house, which involved navigating issues related to building and training a skilled workforce. The COVID-19 pandemic added an extra layer of complexity, but we were determined to maintain our high standards of quality.

Despite the challenges, we also had opportunities for growth. We successfully delivered two superyachts with less manpower when the global supply chain was disrupted. We also made sure that our 1200 employees and their families were safe and well taken care of during this challenging time. This was a significant period in Gulf Craft's history and we emerged stronger from it.

Ms. Abeer, can you tell us your experience as a Female leader in a Male dominated industry like the Superyacht industry?

I prefer not to dwell on this topic too much, to be honest. It's not something I frequently think about. In this industry, what matters most is putting in the effort and demonstrating your hard work. When it comes to boat building, having all hands on deck is crucial, and gender becomes a non-issue if everyone is pulling their weight. If colleagues within the same company are in competition with one another, it's ultimately a lose-lose situation. Michael Jordan said it best: "Talent wins games, but teamwork and intelligence win championships."

Fortunately, I have never encountered any issues within my company, and my colleagues and I have a great deal of mutual respect. There have been instances where individuals from outside of the company assumed that they would be more effective if they spoke with a man, but I firmly believe that

gender bias is not prevalent in most organizations today. What matters is demonstrating hard work and delivering results. Once you prove that you are capable and work diligently, respect tends to follow.

Ms. Abeer, after talking to you and seeing all of you working together on the same goal, I really think in Gulf Craft you have a balance in gender equality in the top positions as well, is this correct?

I am proud to say that Gulf Craft has many women in top leadership positions. It is crucial to have diversity in leadership, and we strive to make decisions based on qualities like leadership and teamwork rather than gender.

It is essential to never take anything for granted and take the time to learn the business. Speaking to employees at all levels and understanding their jobs is crucial, and I always keep an open-door policy to listen to their perspectives. While I cannot always fulfill their requests, I believe it is important to empathize and understand their needs.

This year's International Women's Day theme is #EmbracingEquity, so what does this slogan mean to you Ms. Abeer? And you have been practicing this within your organization?

Ensuring equality is not a one-size-fits-all approach, as different individuals require different support to have equal opportunities. Hence, equity is a better concept as it guarantees equal access for everyone. At Gulf Craft, we strive to be a leading employer in the region and provide our employees with the utmost support. We take pride in having many families working with us, and we make it a priority to prioritize families in our operations. We hold an annual family gathering event where employees can bring their families, participate in sports, talent shows, and other festivities. Our aim is to ensure that families feel valued and

included in our company culture.

Looking back on the 4 decades of passion, innovation and growth, what made Gulf Craft come up with the new strategic theme; Legacy in Motion?

Legacy in Motion represents our recognition of our 40 years of experience and expertise, while simultaneously looking towards a brighter future where we continue to improve and evolve. As one of the world's leading fully integrated boat and yacht manufacturers, we build on our legacy and strive to innovate and advance in the industry. Our recent successes with the Majesty 111 and Nomad 101 reflect our meticulous market research and trend forecasting for a global market. We focus on sustainability by incorporating technologies that offer better fuel efficiency, smart product design, and emissions reduction. By taking a bold, forward-thinking stance on the future of yacht building, we reflect our commitment to efficiency and environmentally friendly practices.

What are the new markets and countries that Gulf Craft wants to expand and make a mark in the Superyacht business?

At present, Gulf Craft is planning to broaden its reach into various new markets simultaneously. Our primary objective is to enhance our service capabilities and revenue, and also to expand into the United States and Australia. These two markets hold significant potential for our company, and we are determined to bolster our presence there. While we are already operating in these markets, we are focused on expanding and flourishing in these regions.

What are the Community Engagements and Sustainable projects that you envision to work in Asia and Middle East with Gulf Craft team?

Gulf Craft is dedicated to supporting various ocean conservation projects worldwide. As a member of the Super



Yacht Builders Association (SYBAss), which represents superyacht builders globally, Gulf Craft collaborates with regulatory bodies to ensure that the unique nature of superyachts is considered in the development of rules and regulations that impact them.

Moreover, Gulf Craft supports marine conservation programs such as the Water Revolution Foundation, the Important Marine Mammal Areas (IMMAs) Programme, Turtle Saving Programmes, Beach Cleaning activities, etc. The company actively participates in talk shows and panel discussions at leading boat shows worldwide to further promote marine conservation efforts.

Gulf Craft is committed to sustainability initiatives within the company and employs innovative technology that does not compromise on quality. The company is a trailblazer in using lightweight materials in its yachts, which not only improves processes and structures within the industry but also provides information and knowledge exchange. Gulf Craft also welcomes traineeships and educational tours from various universities and technical institutes.

NEW OPENINGS

Avani+ Fares Maldives Opens Doors on April 1



Minor Hotels' Avani brand makes its Maldives debut with the opening of Avani+ Fares Maldives Resort on April 1, 2023. Located in the Baa Atoll UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, the resort is Minor's sixth property in the country, increasing the hotel owner, operator and investors current presence in this paradisiacal setting.

A stunning new private island resort, Avani+ Fares will offer all the attention to detail, experiences and unparalleled service that one would expect of a premium Maldivian escape without the ostentation. A new-build property on a

natural tropical island showcasing the very best that Avani has to offer, Avani+ Fares will be home to a variety of accommodation options. From beach pool villas and four-bedroom beach pavilions to picture perfect three-bedroom over water villas sitting across the island's large turquoise bay, the accommodation will offer a stylish modern sanctuary, maximizing breezy spaces and ergonomic lighting, as well as tech focused amenities to suit the needs of the most discerning guest. Avani+ Fares will appeal to couples, families and friends with an array of dining, fitness, water sport recreation and pampering spa treatments.

Resting on a naturally protected island on the western edge of Baa Atoll, the resort provides easy access to the world renowned Hanifaru Bay, home to what is regarded as the Indian Ocean's best biodiversity and underwater ecosystem and one of the best places to see manta rays. With twelve individual dive sites off the beach at Fares, divers are spoilt for choice. In addition, guests will have access to the Avani house reef, a 220-metre reef teeming with marine life including turtles and dolphins and the nearby Fares reef which is 600 metres off the shore.

One of the stunning islands that make up the Maldivian archipelago, Fares boasts a 2.6-kilometre lagoon in front of the island, offering privacy and serenity as well as playing host to an abundance of reefs and marine life and of course serving as the backdrop for incredible sunsets. Due to the perfect positioning at the edge of the atoll, the resort enjoys zero light pollution for unforgettable stargazing. A picturesque paradise of stunning turquoise waters and white sandy beaches, Avani+ Fares Maldives is only a 35-minute journey by seaplane from Velana International Airport.

Throughout their stay, guests will be treated to a wide selection of Maldivian

and international-inspired cuisines at each of the seven restaurants, in addition to private beach and in-villa dining. Each aims to expand guests' taste horizons with a variety of choices to push the boundaries of island dining whilst minimizing carbon footprint with seasonal ingredients. Organic produce will be sourced from the resort's mini farm and catch of the day delivered daily by local fishermen. Young guests will have the run of the first kids-only restaurant in the Maldives serving nutritious, universally loved food.

AvaniFit's new gym concept keeps guests in tip top condition offering fitness programmes designed in partnership with a high-performance coach. Those seeking to bliss out and indulge in some pampering can hide away from the world in style at AvaniSpa, which will offer various rejuvenating treatments alongside thoughtful wellness options. AvaniKids provides everything to keep children and teens happy and entertained so adult guests can enjoy some 'me' time.

Between swimming, snorkeling and diving at the protected house reef and discovering the island's native flora, guests can fully enjoy a slice of paradise steeped in biodiversity and natural beauty.



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Alia Celebrates Golden Jubilee with Yamaha



Alia Investments counting days to attain the Golden Jubilee statue as the sole distributor of world's leading outboards Yamaha in Maldives along with Alia's 60th anniversary as a trading business. Since the revolutionary introduction of Yamaha Outboards to the Maldives, Alia has sustained to provide superior quality and reliable services to all customers among the vast product line including Waverunners, Motorcycles, Yamalube and Genuine Spare Parts. Alia was awarded as the Most Preferred Marine Engineering Service Provider of the Year (Outboard), Best After Sales Service Provider and Most Preferred Marine Engine Brand of the Year in the recent Maldives Boating Awards 2022.

On this special occasion, Alia has announced various exciting offers and promotions. One of the grand promotion held is a year round promotion offering cash back of Yamaha Four Stroke 60 horsepower outboard engine to one lucky customer among all customers who purchase 60 horsepower engines. Lucky draw will be held bi-monthly till end of the year. Yamaha 60 horse power (Model: FT60GETL) is built with latest High Thrust technology with a strong gear ratio enabling fast acceleration even at heavy load while ensuring a low fuel consumption. The larger lower unit creates up to 60 percent more forward thrust and 70 percent more reverse thrust. This engine is perfect for user applications which require additional muscle.

In addition to this, Alia in collaboration with Yamaha Motors launched a video series titled Outboard Engine Maintenance Guide at the flagship event of National Boating Association of Maldives (NBAM); Maldives Marine Expo 2023. The primary



objective of this CSR effort is to equip boat operators, mechanics and general public with basic knowledge on the routine services of outboard engines that could be performed immediately enhancing operational efficiency. Furthermore, demonstrating the right method to carry out the service and the correct tools to ensure best performance of the engines and safety of the mechanics. A teaser of the video series was released on 2nd day of Maldives Marine Expo by Minister of Fisheries, Marine resources and Agriculture, Dr. Hassan Rasheed. The video series will be uploaded on social media Yamaha pages throughout the year.

Alia strives to continue providing the unwavering and dependable after sale services while investing in technologies to improve customer convenience in daily lives. Alia invites everyone to follow Yamaha Maldives on social media for news and upcoming offers.



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EVENTS & AWARDS

Maldives Marine Expo 2023: A Huge Success in Showcasing the Latest in the Marine Industry!



The Maldives Marine Expo 2023 has concluded with great success, bringing together key players in the marine industry from both local and international markets. The event was held at Central Park, Hulhumalé from March 15-18, 2023.

The event featured four keynote speeches by industry experts, each delivering insights on different aspects of the marine industry. In addition, there were four panel discussions where experts engaged in discussions about topics such as sustainability, safety, and innovation in the industry. One of the highlights of the event was the product launches and highlights from exhibitors, with a wide range of boats, engines, and marine equipment on display. Visitors were able to interact with exhibitors and learn about the latest developments in the marine industry.

For this year’s event, a new component ‘Brand Runway’ was included in which apparels, comfortable beach wear and marine-related items were showcased along with gadgets mainly from international and local exhibitors and other external parties on the 3rd night of the event, March 17, 2023.

The last night of the event saw lucky draws held for attendees, with prizes including boating equipment and other marine-related items. The

Maldives Marine Expo 2023 Awards were also presented to exhibitors in various categories such as Best Stall Design, Best Product Highlight, Most Innovative Product, and Best Customer Service at the Event.

The Maldives Marine Expo is an event that showcases the latest in the marine industry and provides an opportunity for networking and knowledge sharing. This year’s event saw a larger number of exhibitors, indicating the growing interest in the Maldives marine industry from both local and international markets.

The event was organized by Medium Pvt Ltd and sponsored by Housing Development Corporation Pvt Ltd (HDC) as the Official Host, Maldives Transport and Contracting Company Plc (MTCC) as the Main Sponsor, and Gulf Craft Maldives as the Co-sponsor.

Overall, the Maldives Marine Expo 2023 was a great success, bringing together industry experts and exhibitors to showcase the latest developments in the marine industry. The event provided a platform for networking and knowledge sharing and is sure to have a positive impact on the industry in the Maldives. The National Boating Association of Maldives (NBAM) is proud of the success of the Maldives Marine Expo 2023 and the contributions it has made to the industry.



EVENTS & AWARDS

Fushifaru Maldives Wins 'Best Hotel Sustainability Progress' Award at TUI Global Hotel Awards



Fushifaru Maldives, a luxurious, boutique Resort located in Lhaviyani Atoll, has won the prestigious 'Best Hotel Sustainability Progress' award at the TUI Global Hotel Awards 2023. The award recognizes the Resort's outstanding commitment to

sustainability, environmental responsibility, and community development. The award was presented during the ITB Fair in Berlin, the world's leading travel trade show.

The ITB Fair attracts exhibitors and visitors from around the world and provides a platform for industry professionals to network, showcase their products and services, and share the latest industry insights.

The TUI Global Hotel Awards is an annual event that celebrates the world's most exceptional hotels, resorts, and destinations. Fushifaru Maldives has been recognised for its

efforts to reduce its carbon footprint, preserve marine life, and support the local community. Fushifaru has implemented a range of green initiatives, such as a coral propagation project, the elimination of plastic bags, planting trees, and promoting sustainable cooking practices with a chef's garden.

"We are honored to receive this award, which is a testament to our commitment to helping the environment," said Ahmed Siaar, the General Manager of Fushifaru Maldives. "We believe that tourism should be sustainable and responsible, and we are proud to be leading the way in this regard."

On the far North East border of Lhaviyani Atoll, sits the exquisite little island of Fushifaru Maldives, only a

35-minute breath-taking seaplane flight away from Velana International Airport. Nestled between a national Marine Protected Area and three of the Maldives' most iconic dive sites, Fushifaru Maldives is a boutique and intimate resort with an endless promise of adventure, excitement, discovery, and serenity all in one diverse landscape.

Merging quintessential Maldivian design with modern aesthetics, Fushifaru Maldives' 63 beach and water villas exude a sense of cosiness yet luxurious in space and amenities. Each of the spectacular villas feature open-air bathrooms with indoor and outdoor showers, double vanity, daybeds, private verandas with dining areas and breath-taking views of the surrounding crystal clear lagoon, with their own plunge pool for some villas.

JOALI Maldives Announces its Annual Art Week with the April 2023 Imagi-Nature Art Festival

JOALI Maldives, the Maldives' very first art-immersive resort, announces its annual Art Week with the April 2023 Imagi-Nature Art Festival. To host the Imagi-Nature Art Festival, JOALI Maldives has collaborated with respected art consultant Tatiana Gecmen-Waldek. Guests are invited to revel in the creative spirit of nature and engage in creative dialogues between international art forms, impressive installations and local influences at JOALI Maldives.

From April 14-18, guests can experience this innovative project first-hand, harmoniously blending art and sustainability and offering creative collaborations with celebrated artists worldwide, including Aurelie Hoegy, Studio Mameluca, Maja Rohwetter, Barbara Veiga, Jeanne Susplugas, Le Petit Chef and Hajja and Joule. Channeling the natural splendour of JOALI Maldives, each immersive installation is created to engage, ignite and free the imagination. Guests of all ages are invited to interact with eco-conscious artwork across the beautiful island. What's more, special events await guests on World Art Day (April 15). More on each artist is included below.

JOALI Maldives will serve as a gallery in itself as the resort will become a Sculpture Park, housing four permanent installations from the Imagi-Nature Art Festival. Hoegy's fluid art piece, "JOALI Hammock," inspired by natural movement and transcending boundaries between art and design; Studio Mameluca's vicennial installation of the Maldives' "One Egg, One World"; Jeanne Susplugas' virtual reality experience, "Daydreaming" and Rohwetter's multisensory augmented reality app, "Contingencies," will permanently join the resort's collection. Embodying movement through her collections of furniture, Hoegy was inspired to create "JOALI Hammock" by the curves of the island, sumptuous white sand and the movement of the Indian Ocean. The ocean motif continues in Studio Mameluca's "White Tern's Bird's Nest," made with natural resources with ocean life in mind and accompanied by ocean sound customisation. Guests will also be able to dive into the brain's activity with Susplugas' installation, where they can navigate among neurons and synapses through eye movement, and continue their virtual experience through Rohwetter's expanded dimensions of reality.



To gastronomes' delight, Le Petit Chef will be redefining the culinary arts with its installation, which will be available in Saoke, the on-site Japanese restaurant designed by world-renowned restaurant architect Noriyoshi Muramatsu, for six months. Guests will be able to memorialise this creativity-inspiring experience with scarves created by Rohwetter, which will be available in the JOALI Art Studio and La Maison de JOALI boutique.

With a network that includes internationally renowned galleries, collectors, auction houses and artists, Gecmen-Waldek has worked as a

consultant with greats such as Giorgio Armani, Cartier, Etro, Roger Vivier, Maison Kitsuné Vhernier, Huawei and ACNE. Now, as a valued JOALI Maldives partner, Gecmen-Waldek is poised to bring an extraordinary selection of works by contemporary artists to the resort in the form of exhibitions, performances, limited editions and permanent installations. Born in Austria and raised in Paris, Gecmen-Waldek is passionate about fostering creative collaborations and producing cultural content that inspires the inner artist within each of us. This is embodied through her slogan, "experience art instead of seeing art."

IN THE NEWS

Ooredoo Maldives Brings Innovative Business Solutions with Microsoft



Ooredoo Maldives has announced its partnership with Microsoft, as part of the Ooredoo Group's commitment to providing innovative cloud-based solutions and services for business customers. This partnership will enable businesses in Maldives to take advantage of cutting-edge technology and software solutions, available either individually or bundled with Ooredoo's connectivity services.

Ooredoo Maldives Managing Director & CEO, Khalid Al-Hamadi, said, "Leveraging on our international partnerships we are continuously working to upgrade the lives of our communities across the Maldives. Today, we are thrilled to offer the latest digital solutions to enable businesses to expand and grow, through our partnership with Microsoft. Our mission is to empower businesses to operate more efficiently and effectively, and this partnership is a significant step towards achieving that goal."

The partnership will provide a range of services, from productivity tools like Office365 and Microsoft Teams, Microsoft Teams voice, Microsoft Teams Rooms, Microsoft Power Apps, Mobile Device Management and SharePoint to the efficient execution of business processes. By upgrading their way of work, businesses can

accelerate their digitization journey, build resilience, and cater to their own customers' needs.

"The tech industry is rapidly evolving, and demand for innovative products, services, and solutions is growing exponentially," said Aziz Aluthman Fakhroo, Managing Director and Group CEO of Ooredoo. "Our partnership with Microsoft, a long-standing partner of Ooredoo, enables us to respond to increased market demand for cloud-based solutions and services."

Bin Shen, Vice President Global Communications Partners at Microsoft, said, "Our relationship with Ooredoo Group as a valuable partner in the region spans many years, and as the digital landscape continues to evolve, we are excited to expand our partnership to deliver on the promise of cloud transformation for their business customers across regions, industries, and organizations."

The partnership with Microsoft consolidates Ooredoo's position as a one-stop-shop for connectivity and cloud-based solutions and services, ensuring a comprehensive offering and support for its B2B customers. The roll-out of the partnership will take place throughout 2023 and will encompass all Ooredoo Group's companies.

HONDA MARINE



Marine Vibe

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IN THE NEWS

Ayady Takaful Introduces 'Crop Takaful' for Farmers



Allied Insurance Company's Islamic window; Ayadi Takaful is all set to launch a new 'Crop Takaful' service in the Maldives.

Designed for farmers, the service was launched at a special press conference held at Allied Insurance headquarters in Male'. General

Manager Ibrahim Firshan and Ayadi Takaful Manager Fathimath Nizma briefed about the new service speaking at the press conference.

According to Ayadi, 'Crop Takaful' is a product designed to provide protection to farmers from potential income constraints and help them overcome them. While no documents are required to register for the service, which is taken on time online, the coverage of the service at present will be able to compensate for damage to crops caused by a natural event. Therefore, a farmer who has taken 'crop takaful' will be compensated if he/she has suffered any such loss during the plan period by submitting photographs along with a

report of the incident. The compensation will be calculated by including the cost of building the farm and the expected profits from it.

Allied Insurance, which already offers a range of services that helps people's lifestyle and empower them, hopes that 'Crop Takaful' will also help farmers reduce the impact of climate change on natural resources and enhance quality of life. "We hope that everyone will take advantage of this service, which can be immediately and easily availed through 'My Allied,'" they added. If you want to check the cost, you can check the price through MyAllied, the company said in a statement.

Marriott International, Ministry of Youth and Maldives Institute of Technology Partner to Launch Apprenticeship Program for Local Talents

Marriott International Maldives, the Ministry of Youth, Sports, and Community Empowerment, and Maldives Institute of Technology (MIT) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on March 7, 2023 to launch the Marriott International Maldives Apprenticeship Program for Maldivian youth in the tourism industry. The partnership aims to build the skills of young people and prepare them for the job market through apprenticeship programs that will provide a unique opportunity for the youth to gain valuable work experience in the Maldives' booming tourism industry.

Marriott International is the first International Hospitality brand to collaborate with the government apprenticeship program so it's a milestone for the government as well as for Marriott International and represents a milestone for both the government and Marriott International in their efforts to build local talent for the hospitality market. The purpose of the program is to train young people, especially the marginalized youth, in various skills to allow them to become job-ready and productive members of society. Under the Marriott Apprenticeship Program, MIT will provide the theoretical part of the program, while the participants will receive work experience at Marriott International resorts in the Maldives. The first round of the program will accommodate 50 people and will begin in late April or early May and participants will receive a level-3 certificate upon completion of the program, which will adhere to the Maldives National Skills Development Authority (MNSDA) national competency standards.

The MoU was signed at a ceremony held at Sheraton Maldives Full Moon Resort and attendees of the



event included Hussain Shareef, Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Youth, Sports, and Community Empowerment, Saudath Afeef, Director at the Ministry, Adam Haleem, Director of Programs at MIT, and Emma Jones, Area Director of Human Resources, Marriott International - Singapore, Malaysia, Maldives.

Marriott International will offer youth training opportunities at their portfolio of seven resorts in the Maldives. They include The Ritz-Carlton Maldives, Fari Islands, The St. Regis Maldives Vommuli Resort, JW Marriott Maldives Resort & Spa, W Maldives, Le Meridien Maldives Resort & Spa, Sheraton Maldives Full Moon Resort & Spa and The Westin Maldives Miriandhoo Resort. A total of 250

opportunities will be provided for youth in nine different fields for five years under the agreement.

Emma Jones, Area Director of Human Resources, Marriott International - Singapore, Malaysia, Maldives, expressed her delight at the partnership with the Maldives government, stating "We are both honored and thrilled to embark on these new partnerships which will greatly assist in one of our key Talent strategies, which is to hire and train local Maldivians. This National Apprenticeship Program, which we are adopting and tailoring as our Marriott Apprenticeship Program, will assist our resorts to secure talent from a young age, to home grow, nurture, train and develop them to be our future leaders."

IN THE NEWS

AMDC Life Sciences Lab Launches State-of-the-Art Food and Water Testing Facility in Maldives: Reliable and High-Quality Testing Services in Maldives



AMDC Launches its state-of-the-art food and water testing laboratory, AMDC Life Sciences Lab, in Maldives. The lab is equipped with the latest equipment and instruments and features a modular cleanroom of ISO Class 8, designed to maintain high levels of cleanliness and sterility. As a premier destination for tourism, the Maldives offers visitors some of the most breathtaking views in the world. However, with a growing number of guests comes a need for top-notch services and facilities, including reliable food and water testing. That is where the AMDC Life Sciences Lab comes in.

With the rise of food-borne illnesses and water contamination cases globally, the importance of reliable food and water testing has become more apparent. Therefore, The AMDC

Life Sciences Lab has put in place all the necessary measures to deliver high-quality and reliable testing services. The main purpose of this laboratory is to provide a facility within The Maldives to test for all the microbiology tests such as Coliform, Salmonella, Shigella, Vibrio, Staphylococci and other bacteriological parameters in food, and water and environmental surveillance samples. The new set up is equipped with all the latest technology such as molecular testing of Legionella.

All the tests are done locally by a highly qualified and skilled team resulting in reduced turn-around time and Cost. Inaugurated by the Minister of Tourism, Dr. Abdullah Mausoom, on March 22, 2023, AMDC Life Sciences Lab is committed to providing reliable and



accurate testing services to the food and hospitality industries, institutions, and communities in the Maldives while adhering to internationally recognized standards.



Tourist Arrivals to the Maldives Surpasses 500,000



On March 26, 2023, Maldives witnessed an impressive milestone as tourist

arrivals surpassed 500,000, with a record of 500,597 arrivals. This figure

represents a remarkable 22.21% increase in comparison to the same period in the preceding year. With this achievement, the Maldives has achieved 28% of its projected target of 1.8 million tourists for this year in less than three months.

Overall, the Maldives tourism industry is well on its way to achieving its projected targets and sustaining its growth in the coming years.

In addition to the impressive tourism arrival figures in the Maldives, the top five markets that contributed to this success are Russia, India, United Kingdom, Italy, and Germany.

Russia tops the list with a total of 60,590 tourist arrivals, followed closely by India with 52,734 arrivals. The United Kingdom, Italy, and Germany round up the top five markets with 45,545, 43,869, and 34,516 arrivals respectively.

These figures demonstrate the Maldives' popularity among travelers from diverse regions worldwide, highlighting the country's ability to appeal to a broad range of visitors. The Maldives is renowned for its scenic beauty, stunning beaches, and exceptional hospitality, which are evident in the increasing number of tourists choosing to vacation in the country.

BON APPÉTIT

Kadhuru Kanamadu Pudding



This is a Maldivian fusion of a classic British dessert “sticky toffee pudding” highlighting the flavours of kanamadu and everyone’s favourite pandan leaf and coconut combo. Consisting of various assortments of textures and having three elements of different temperatures will give your palate a frisky will.

Chef Ahmed Nashaath, known in the industry as Nemy, kicked off his career with four seasons apprenticeship in 2009. Since then, he has worked in two of the most renowned resorts in Maldives, huvafenfushi and luxnorthmale, before taking his journey aboard in early 2021.

After working in Mandarin Oriental Doha, he got an opportunity to work as a private chef for a wealthy family in Saudi Arabia. With his attention to detail and his magical word YES to even the most complex and impossible tasks, he was able to show his profound skill sets and capability to get the job done.

INGREDIENTS AND RECIPE:

1- MOIST DATE CAKE

- 137gr Sunflower oil
- 212gr Dark Brown Sugar
- 5 no. Whole egg
- 280gr Flour
- 15gr Baking soda
- 350gr Water
- 312gr Dates
- 15ml Vanilla essence
- 75gr Tropical Almond (kanamadhu) – slightly toasted

METHOD:

Scale dates and water into a pan and bring to a boil. Put baking soda and whisk just enough to combine all. Wrap the mixture tightly with cling film and leave until cool down. Whisk sunflower oil, dark brown sugar, vanilla essence and whole eggs in kitchen aid until fluffy. Add in the date paste made earlier. And finally, finish off by adding the dry ingredients (flour, kanamadhu) by three parts. Pour into a baking tray with butter paper on the bottom. Bake in the oven at 175c for 8 mins; turn the tray around and 3-5mins. Once baked, cover with an aluminium foil as tightly as possible and leave outside for approximately 20-30 mins. Serve at room temperature.

2- SALTED CARAMEL SAUSE

- 200gr Sugar
- 200gr Cream
- 1/2no. Vanilla beans

METHOD:

Heat the cream and vanilla beans in low heat; caramelize the sugar till golden brown sugar. Pour the cream into the sugar and cook on low heat till the sugar is dissolved completely. Strain and let cool down in the chiller.

3- KANAMADHU CHANTILLY CREAM

- 625gr Cream
- 195gr Mascarpone
- 50gr Sugar
- 7gr Gelatin sheet
- 1no. Vanilla Bean
- 100gr Kanamadhu Puree
- 2gr Salt

METHOD:

Kanamadhu puree

Slightly toast the kanamadhu in the oven for around 8mins at 175c. Grind in a spice blender until it starts to become a paste. If it's looking too thick, add a little bit of sunflower oil. It should look like a thick puree.

Chantilly Cream

Bloom the gelatin. Heat the cream, sugar, salt and vanilla beans. Add gelatin and let in cooldown. Once the mixture is around 35-40c, strain, add mascarpone and emulsify with a hand blender. Let it set in the chiller for at least 12 hours. Whip up in kitchen aid until medium peak when needed to use.

4- COCONUT & PANDAN ICE CREAM

- 1212gr Coconut milk
- 570gr Cream
- 170gr Milk powder
- 300gr Sugar
- 176gr Liquid glucose
- 106gr Honey
- 12gr Stabilizer
- 426gr Water
- 25gr Pandan leaf

METHOD:

Prepare an ice bath. Scale all the liquid items into a pot and start cooking with pandan leaf; meanwhile, scale the rest of the ingredients. When the milk mixture reaches 40c, add the dry items while whisking consistently to avoid lumps. Once the mixture resembles 80c, strain into a bowl, put on the ice bath, and cool down to 4c. Churn in an ice cream machine and store in the freezer.

5- SALTED SHORT BREAD

- 180gr Butter
- 180gr Brown Sugar
- 180gr Flour
- 180gr Almond Powder
- 1gr Salt

METHOD:

Mix all together in kitchen aid using a paddle until it forms a dough. Sheet thinly on a silpad and bake till golden brown colour, at 180c for about 7-9 mins.



Courtesy
Private Pastry Sous Chef
Ahmed Nashaath
Riyadh, Saudi Arabia



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Frankly Speaking

With the recent launch of integrated tourism and plans of enhancement for Gan International Airport, what positive impacts are to be expected on the southern region of Maldives?



Abdulla Salih
Managing Director
Damas

I do not have full details of the Addu Integrated tourism project. However, if the project is implemented, I think it will bring positive impacts on the southern region of Maldives. Such as:

1. Increased employment opportunities in the region. Thereby improving the livelihoods of the local population.
2. The enhancement of the Gan International Airport can lead to improved connectivity and transportation facilities, which can boost tourism, trade and commerce in the region.
3. The growth of the tourism industry can increase the revenue generation for the government and the local businesses, which can contribute to the overall economic development of the southern region of Maldives.



Fawzan Fareid
Country Manager - Maldives
Sri Lankan Airlines

Latest enhancements and developments at GAN certainly renew hopes for tourism in southern Maldives. However as Airline operators, we constantly indicate that domestic transfer cost from Velana to GAN makes southern Maldives one of the more expensive regions compared to identical products offered in Male’ atoll.

I personally believe there has to be a fair share of tourism diverted to the south Maldives. Success story of Maldives Tourism should equally be enjoyed by North to South and certainly should not be secluded to one area or atoll. May it be private or government, above mentioned enhancements and developments in GAN comes at a cost. If these facelifted facilities can not be showcased to the visitors, what is the point in making investments for such facelifts?

Hence, I see the need of an exclusive southern tourism promotion team comprising the Ministry / city councils / community leaders / airport / airlines/ resorts / guest houses / liveaboards. Dilute an exclusive and structured tourism promotion drive to the region with the help of the Ministry as well as MMPRC .

Once the team commences the activities, lifestyle to the low income bracket of the local community, specifically the guesthouses and tourism SME would be uplifted. It would give a new meaning to the integrated enhancement plan. Otherwise, I don’t see the positive side of it without a structured plan to drive tourists to the south.



Mohamed Firaq
Managing Director
Inner Maldives Holidays

First, I believe studying the concept to understand and explain in detail how such tourism development will fit here and evolve in the Maldives is important and in particular, its planning and policy. Study draws extensively on a critical analysis of the official plans for Maldives tourism development as we have also filed such concepts before. I believe we need more information and open up more in required details. As we all know, Maldives has a very well known Name but this may confuse our markets. It's better to plan and do the product presentation in the early days before it's too late.



Gaïs Naseer
Managing Director
Gan International Airport

The southern region of Maldives boasts a plethora of enticing tourist experiences. By introducing integrated tourism to Hankedu, Addu's appeal as a desirable tourist destination is expected to be further solidified. Furthermore, the proposed increase in tourist accommodation in the region has prompted GAN International Airport to improve its facilities and services to accommodate demand. This expansion is anticipated to attract a larger number of international flights to GAN, which will benefit the local tourism industry, businesses, and the residents. We are currently collaborating with Island Aviation to offer seamless and efficient domestic travel options to the southern Atolls via GAN. With these developments, we are optimistic that GAN will establish itself as the gateway to the southern Maldives.



Ibrahim Nizam
Chief Executive Officer
The Grand Holidays & The Grand Associates

Expansion and uplifting of services at GAN International Airport will undoubtedly boost the influx of tourists to all atolls in the southern region. Moreover, integrated tourism is a great value addition to the Maldives’ tourism product and when maintained sustainably, it will pave the way for a brighter future for community-based tourism.

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