



## A JOURNEY THROUGH TIME

*Champa Brothers*



MOHAMED  
MOOSA  
(UCHU)



HUSSAIN  
AFEEF



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Dear Readers,

We warmly greet you to the newest issue of your favorite monthly tabloid magazine. In this edition of Islandchief, we commemorate Maldives' National Tourism Day, observed on October 3rd, to honor the achievements and contributions made in our ongoing exploration of the vibrant world of tourism and hospitality in the Maldives. An industry that holds significant influence in driving innovation and progress in our small island nation.

Contained within these pages is a voyage through the annals of time, accompanied by two extraordinary personages, namely Mr. Hussain Afeef and Mr. Mohamed Moosa, colloquially known as the "Champa Brothers." These luminaries have etched indelible marks upon the chronicles of the nation's tourism and hospitality sector. Their illustrious odyssey has not only reshaped the very visage of the Maldivian terrain but has also served as a wellspring of inspiration to countless aspirants within the tapestry of tourism and hospitality. Through an exclusive interview, we explore their experiences, triumphs over challenges, and their visions for the future of Maldives' tourism.

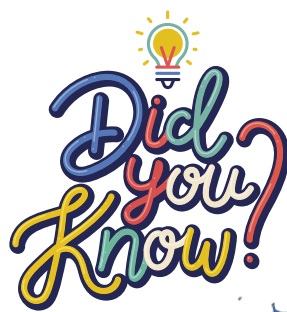
Furthermore, in this special edition dedicated to Maldivian tourism, we recognize the significance of local cuisine. To shed light on this, we turn to Chef Ishaq, a culinary expert who began his journey in 2002 at Soneva Gili by Six Senses Resorts and Spas. With a prestigious career, including roles at Royal Island by Villa Hotels, Chef Ishaq, now the Executive Chef at Royal Island Resort, offers an innovative twist on the traditional Maldivian dish "Masbaiy," featuring skipjack tuna, providing a tantalizing glimpse into Maldivian culinary excellence.

Finally, in our "Frankly Speaking" segment, industry stakeholders express their perspectives on the direct flights that were initiated in January, connecting the Maldives and China. They also delve into their predictions regarding China's performance in relation to passenger arrivals, comparing it to India and Russia.

As our team eagerly prepares to cover the 2023 South Asian Travel Awards (SATA) in Bangalore this October, we hope you find enjoyment on every page of this edition.

Until next time,

The Islandchief Team



## MAAYA THILA - Hot Dive Spot in Maldives

Maaya Thila, nestled in the North Ari Atoll of the Maldives, is a diver's paradise and a designated Marine Protected Area. It consistently ranks as the #1 dive spot in the Maldives, enticing adventurers with depths ranging from 121 to 130 feet and remarkable visibility averaging 101 to 110 feet.

Easily accessible by boat, this underwater gem lies just five miles northwest of Ukulhas Island. Maldives Exclusive-affiliated resorts extend the convenience of boat transfers and personalized charters to Maaya Thila, ensuring an elite diving experience. Maaya Thila frequently secures its place among the world's top 10 diving destinations.

This site offers unparalleled encounters with marine life, including graceful white-tip reef sharks, barracudas, Moorish idols, and a vibrant array of tropical species like the blue face angelfish, butterflyfish, parrotfish, tall fin batfish, and charming clownfish. Immerse yourself in a sea of turquoise, and be captivated by the cobalt blue and neon yellow hues of the enchanting blue-hippo tang, all in dazzling, shimmering waves. Maaya Thila truly embodies the allure of diving in the Maldives.

Photo credit: Werner Lau

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5 UNITED NATIONS AGENCIES

# Maldivian Enters Interline Partnership with Emirates

Maldives becomes more accessible to travelers from around the world as Maldivian partners with Emirates, strengthening its position as the leading airline in Maldives.

Emirates customers can fly to airports in a selection of the popular atolls via Male' including Dharavandhoo Island (DRV), Faresmathoda Airport (FMT), Funadhoo Airport (FND), Fuvahmulak Island Airport (FVM), Gan International Airport (GAN), Kooddoo Island (GKK), Hanimaadhoo Island Airport (HAQ), Kulhudhuffushi Airport (HDK), Hoarafushi Airport (HRF), Kaadedhdhoo Island Airport (KDM), Kahdhoo Island (KDO), Madivaru Airport (LMV), Maafaru International Airport (NMF), Maavarulu Airport (RUL), Thimarafushi Airport (TMF) and Ifuru (IFU).

Furthermore, customers spending their holidays at other resort islands can also enjoy the convenience of traveling to the closest point in the

interline network and are within reach of their final destination with only a short ride, by seaplane or boat.

As the partnership between both airlines evolves, more benefits and convenience will be added to enhance the customer experience when traveling to the Maldives.

Emirate has supported the development and growth of tourism as well as trade in the Maldives for more than three and a half decades. The award-winning global airline commenced operations to Male' in 1987 and now operates 28 flights a week between Dubai and the Maldives. With a choice of four flights per day to Male', customers from across Emirates' network of almost 140 points have the flexibility to choose flights and enjoy the convenience of minimum connection times.

Through its 29 codeshare, 11 intermodal and 117 interline partners,



Emirates boasts a global footprint that encompasses destinations far beyond its own network, offering

increased connectivity and convenient options for travelers.

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## ACROSS THE SKIES

# Emirates and SriLankan Establish Reciprocal Interline Partnership



Emirates and SriLankan Airlines have signed a reciprocal interline agreement to boost connectivity for passengers of both airlines. The partnership will enable access to new points on each other's networks via Colombo and Dubai, utilizing a single ticket and enjoying the convenience of baggage transfers.

Tickets are now on sale for travel effective immediately as the interline partnership unlocks 15 regional destinations operated by SriLankan Airlines via Colombo, for Emirates'

passengers to choose from. The interline network includes two new Indian destinations, Madurai and Tiruchirapalli, in addition to Gan Island in the Maldives, for customers to travel seamlessly on a single ticket while enjoying the convenience of a generous baggage policy and hassle-free baggage check-through to the final destination. Far East and South Asian destinations also include Cochin, Chennai, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Malé, Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur, Singapore, Jakarta, Guangzhou, Seoul and Tokyo.

SriLankan Airlines' passengers are also set to benefit from access to Emirates' global network and connect to 15 cities operated by Emirates beyond Dubai. The interline network includes points across the Middle East, Africa, Russia and the US. SriLankan's customers will enjoy a premium travel experience and partnership benefits while flying on Emirates to Bahrain, Amman, Dammam, Medina, Cairo, Muscat, Nairobi, Moscow, Tel Aviv, and a host of US cities including New York JFK, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago, Boston and Houston.

Travel itineraries can be booked immediately on [emirates.com](https://www.emirates.com), [srilankan.com](https://www.srilankan.com) and preferred online and offline travel agencies.

Adnan Kazim, Emirates' Chief Commercial Officer said: "We are pleased to activate an interline partnership with SriLankan and provide our customers with more choice and access to additional destinations to suit their travel plans. This partnership enables customers to seamlessly fly to unique destinations in India and the Maldives, via Colombo. We look forward to further developing our cooperation in the near future and enhancing the benefits that customers can enjoy when traveling with Emirates and SriLankan on one ticket."

Richard Nuttall, Chief Executive Officer of SriLankan Airlines stated: "We are happy to announce our renewed interline collaboration with Emirates. SriLankan is committed to providing connectivity to Sri Lanka from around the world and we work with many partners to access cities we don't fly to. Emirates is a truly global airline and has a long history in Sri Lanka and it gives us real pleasure to work with them. The partnership provides more options to connect to and from Sri Lanka, assisting both Sri Lankan passengers at home and abroad, and supports tourism growth to the Pearl of the Indian Ocean."

Sri Lanka continues to be an important part of the Emirates network spanning almost 140 destinations. Emirates launched its services to Sri Lanka in 1986 and since then has carried more than 11 million passengers to and from Colombo. The airline currently provides two direct daily flights to Colombo, utilizing the Boeing 777-300ER, as well as an additional daily service via Malé, providing customers flexibility to choose flights and enjoy the convenience of minimal connection times. It is the only international carrier to serve the country with First Class services – offering passengers world-class products and superior comfort in the air and on-ground.

## Beond Airline Announces Riyadh, Munich and Zurich as its First Launch Cities to the Maldives

Beond, the world's first premium leisure airline, announces that Riyadh, Munich and Zurich are the initial origin cities for the airline, flying to Malé, Maldives. The inaugural flights are scheduled for November 2023, with the Riyadh inaugural departing November 9, the Munich inaugural departing November 15, and the Zurich inaugural departing November 17.

Beond's Chief Commercial Officer, Sascha Feuerherd said: "Making the Maldives accessible to travelers is key for Beond. We are delighted to make this happen by offering our premium experience to travelers from Riyadh, Munich, and Zurich. The Maldives is a destination renowned for its natural beauty and serenity, and we aim to complement this with our exceptional in-flight services."

Beond will begin operations this fall with Maldives as its first hub. The service launch from Saudi Arabia and Europe will begin with an Airbus A319 aircraft with 44 state-of-the-art lay-flat configuration, and a premium on-board experience including fine dining. The airline recently received its Air Operator's Certificate in Maldives from the Maldives Civil Aviation Authority.

Beond believes in forging collaborative relationships that enhance guests' vacation and invite resorts to reach out and explore exciting partnership opportunities. Resorts interested in partnering with Beond to offer unforgettable Maldives experiences for guests are encouraged to contact [marketing@flybeond.com](mailto:marketing@flybeond.com).





IN A NUTSHELL

# Experience Exotic and Elegance this Festive Season at Baglioni Maldives



Baglioni Maldives celebrates this festive season with exotic, evocative, and elegant entertainment. This year's festive highlights include a magnificent and mythological Santa Arrival event with an underlying sustainability message.

Other spectacular highlights include the gorgeous Buon Natale and the Buon Anno Aperitivo Italiano events featuring surreal, graceful, and sophisticated marine-themed Italian performances inspired by our Island Paradise's spectacular rose-coloured sky and candy floss-like clouds at sunset. Retro-style parties will merge with Maldivian vibes. Guests will experience authentic Italian emotive catering, fashionably inventive and participatory performances, with breathtaking, electrifying, and exquisite parades as we usher in the New Year.

From sustainable decorations to creative Christmas crafting activities, to fun-filled beach and pool parties, expect an exotic festive season with an unforgettable Italian touch, brimming with elegance, zest, and exuberance for the entire family.

Baglioni Maldives Luxury All Inclusive offers an exquisite fusion of exclusive experiences and breathtaking natural beauty. Nestled in the stunning Dhaalu Atoll, this barefoot luxury destination promises an unforgettable getaway.

When it comes to accommodation, Baglioni Maldives offers a range of choices to suit every preference and desire. Whether one prefers a charming villa right on the pristine beach or a water villa suspended above the turquoise ocean, the resort provides the perfect retreat for a restful stay.

The resort also caters to guests' desire for relaxation and entertainment, with a host of amenities and activities. Stay connected with resort-wide Wi-Fi, groove to the beats of a live DJ every night, and let the little ones have a blast at Baglioni Kids Club (ages 3 to 15). A state-of-the-art gym is available for those seeking to maintain fitness routines. In addition, Baglioni Maldives offers wellness activities, such as meditation and yoga classes, which allow guests to rejuvenate mind, body, and soul. Thrill-seekers can explore the vibrant marine life of the Maldives while snorkeling, enjoying a serene canoe ride, or attempting stand-up paddleboarding.

Baglioni Maldives truly redefines the concept of all-inclusive luxury, offering an idyllic blend of exceptional dining, luxurious accommodations, and a wealth of activities and amenities. Embrace the beauty of the Maldives and immerse in a world of indulgence and relaxation at this remarkable resort.



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## IN A NUTSHELL

## Nova Maldives Launches its First Vibrant Local Market



The bright new star among resorts in the Maldives, Nova will host its first local art market on October 6 and 7, 2023. To commemorate the Maldivian underwater world, talented local

artists will bring a vibrant display of creativity and craftsmanship to the Nova guests.

Nestled in the heart of South Ari Atoll,

the soulful island has always been committed to sustainable development within the local community. As Nova's brand stands for being rooted, this unique event will be a platform for six Maldivian artists to showcase their work and promote their growth while taking guests into a captivating world of local artistry.

Nova guests will have the opportunity to explore an exquisite collection of handcrafted goods, ranging from intricate jewelry pieces and stunning hand-carved sculptures to captivating paintings of the vibrant underwater world of the Indian Ocean. Each item will tell a story of marine life, reflecting the distinct style and passion of the artisans who lovingly create them.

During the event, workshops will be conducted where guests will engage

with the artists, learn about their techniques, and gain insight into their creative processes. They will be able to create one-of-a-kind works inspired by the mesmerizing underwater beauty.

Moreover, culture enthusiasts will have the opportunity to learn the native language through Dhivehi language classes, feel the captivating beats of the traditional Maldivian music, BoduBeru and even master the local games of "Thin Hama" and "Ohvalu Gondi" through the weekly activities. At Nova, guests can discover the authentic local lifestyle and tantalize their taste buds with Maldivian themed culinary journeys. Nova is dedicated to crafting unique experiences for its guests and immersing them in an artistic journey while embracing the island's natural beauty.

## Anantara Kihavah Maldives Villas Launches Stunning Scientific Based Book on the Island's Unique Coral Reef Ecosystem

After two years of extensive research and studies, Anantara Kihavah Maldives Villas is launching the 'Wonders of Kihavah,' a ground-breaking research-based publication unveiling the breath-taking beauty and rich biodiversity of the island's renowned house reef. This is the first time a resort in the Maldives has undertaken such an extensive reef assessment and scientific research-based study.

The publication, combining a scientific approach, compelling narrative, and stunning visuals, showcases the enchanting underwater world of Anantara Kihavah's pristine marine ecosystem which was recently crowned as the Best House Reef in the Maldives in the 2023 Travel + Leisure Luxury Awards Southeast Asia.

The study, led by Australian Marine Conservation Society's Director, Dr. Selina Ward, alongside fish and coral experts, Dr. Storm Martin and Dr. Hannah Markham, all who have conducted extensive research work on Australia's Great Barrier Reef, worked on the book highlighting the spectacular array of Kihavah's marine life and the delicate equilibrium of the reef and the urgent need for marine conservation efforts, especially in the age of global warming.

Regarding the hospitality industry's

role, Dr. Ward stresses the utmost importance of urgently reducing carbon emissions to save coral reefs for the future. "In the period until emissions reductions become effective, we can work towards enhancing reef resilience, improving water quality, addressing land use impacts, removing threats such as overfishing and destructive fishing practices, and engaging in innovative restoration techniques for priority areas, such as beloved locations around resorts and essential regions serving as sources for coral and fish larvae. There are many innovative restoration techniques now that require the use of very small volumes of existing corals and targeted use of reared coral larvae."

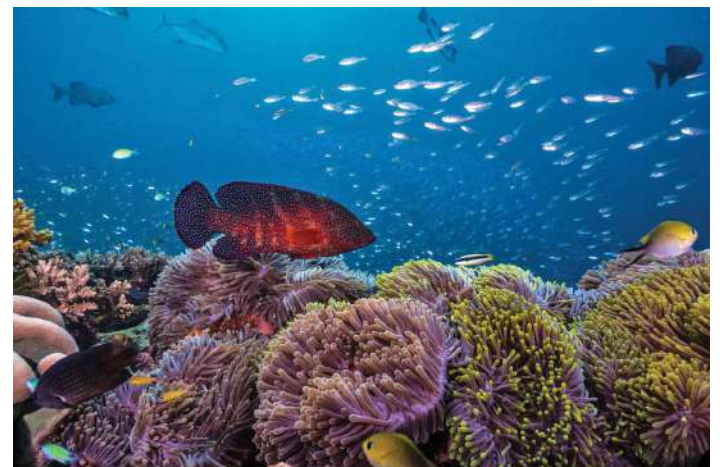
Dr. Ward emphasizes the severity of marine heatwaves as a threat to coral reef health and survival worldwide, causing bleaching events with potentially devastating consequences. Reef recovery is possible, but the frequency of heatwaves is critical for their effectiveness. Intensified cyclones, sea level rise, and ocean acidification also damages and hinder reef growth.

Among the study's fascinating findings is the recording of an astounding 300 fish species on Anantara Kihavah's house reef, proving its status as the

best for snorkeling, where guests can encounter different species every time they enter the water. The study also includes a comprehensive fish index, indicating the areas around the island where these species are found.

Another captivating aspect is that as many as 160 of these species can be observed from the resort's SEA Underwater Restaurant in a single day, providing non-divers with a fantastic opportunity to enjoy the mesmerizing fish and coral sights. With different fish species being most active at various times throughout the day, diners are treated to an ever-changing display through the restaurant's windows, making dining at SEA an unforgettable bucket list experience.

The publication also features the reef's renowned Yellow Wall, a major attraction for divers and a contributing factor in making the reef a sought-after destination for diving enthusiasts in the region. Beyond the resort's shores, the Baa Atoll offers countless world-class dive sites, and the chance to swim with manta rays in Hanifaru Bay is a must-try, once-in-a-lifetime experience.



By showcasing the beauty and fragility of Anantara Kihavah's house reef, "Wonders of Kihavah" aims to inspire budding conservationists and serve as an inspiration for ongoing marine conservation efforts, emphasizing the need to protect the wonders of Kihavah and other reefs around the world for generations to come.

Anantara Kihavah offers a complimentary e-version of the publication for download on their website, while physical copies are exclusively provided for guests during their villa stay. Take-home copies are available for purchase at the resort, with a portion of the proceeds allocated to Anantara's 'Dollar for Deeds' programme, with the resort matching each donation to support marine and coastal protection, environmental education, and community welfare.



# Lily Hotels Elevates Guest Experience With its Airport Lounge and Luxury Vehicle at Noovilu Seaplane Terminal

Lily Hotels, a name synonymous with luxury and hospitality which operates Lily Beach Resort & Spa and Hideaway Beach Resort & Spa, is thrilled to showcase its new Seaplane Lounge and Luxury Vehicle at the Noovilu Seaplane Terminal. These innovative additions redefine the travel experience for guests, offering a perfect blend of comfort, entertainment, and culinary delights.

Ensuring the airport experience is flawless and easy, airport representatives in their signature black uniform of Lily Hotels, will guide you to counter C15, for both Lily Beach and Hideaway guests. After which, they will be escorted to Noovilu Seaplane Terminal in the Maldivian resort operator's newly acquired Luxury Vehicle.

Expertly created by international architects, the lounge aims to offer an oasis of serenity before guests travel to their destination. The space is made to be luxuriously minimalistic which exudes a relaxing vibe with its white and beige interiors, intricately crafted deco, and plush furnishing which allows for ample spaces for each group to stake as

their own. With floor-to-ceiling windows well thought out amenities the lounge is a must for weary travelers.

The Lily Hotels Lounge promises guests opting for the ever so popular seaplane transfer – arguably the best way to travel between islands in the Maldives – an exceptional pre-flight experience like no other. Designed to elevate the journey before it even begins, the lounge boasts an array of world-class amenities.

**A Haven for Relaxation:**

The Lily Hotels lounge features two plush massage chairs that will melt away the stresses of travel, leaving guests refreshed and rejuvenated. After a long trip, these luxurious chairs are your ticket to ultimate relaxation.

**Entertainment at Your Fingertips:**

For those seeking entertainment, the seaplane lounge is equipped with a gaming station. Whether you're a parent looking to keep the children occupied during idle hours, or just looking to pass the time, this setup guarantees much fun and excitement whilst waiting for your next flight.



**Tantalizing Culinary Delights:**

The lounge offers a sumptuous spread of delicious pastries, fresh juices, coffees, and a selection of teas throughout the day in operating hours. Whether you're craving a sweet treat or a caffeine fix, there's something for every palate.

**Rest and Recharge:**

Feel at home in our rest area, thoughtfully designed for comfort. Catch up on emails, unwind with a good book, get your vacay go even smoother by checking in via the respective resort's app, or simply enjoy a moment of solitude before your flight.

**Breathtaking Outdoor Seating:**

For those who prefer the open air, its outdoor seating area offers exquisite panoramic views of the Noovilu Seaplane Terminal, and all the turquoise waters surrounding the area. It's the perfect spot to soak in the tranquility of the Maldives before taking to the skies.

The Lily Hotels Lounge at Noovilu Seaplane Terminal is open to all travelers, regardless of the airline or class of service. Lily Hotels invites all their resort guests who opt for seaplane transfer to experience a new level of travel luxury at this one-of-a-kind lounge.



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## IN A NUTSHELL

# Dusit Thani Maldives Celebrates 11th Anniversary with Unforgettable Experiences



Dusit Thani Maldives, the luxurious and enchanting island resort in the heart of the Maldives, is honored to announce its 11th anniversary celebration. Since its grand inauguration in September 2012, Dusit Thani Maldives has consistently exemplified opulence, exceptional hospitality, and a strong commitment to sustainability within the Indian Ocean region.

Over the past 11 years, Dusit Thani Maldives has welcomed countless travelers seeking the perfect blend of natural beauty, world-class service, and sustainable luxury.

Alongside elegantly designed villas and suites offering breathtaking views of the azure Indian Ocean, Dusit Thani Maldives boasts an impressive range of culinary delights, encompassing a diverse selection of international favorites,

exquisite Maldivian delicacies, and authentic Thai flavors. Moreover, the resort offers unique opportunities for guests to 'pause, focus, and grow' with indulgent wellness and spa treatments at Devarana Wellness, plus a wide array of water sports activities and nature-focused fun for families and couples alike.

To mark this special milestone, the resort has rolled out a series of exclusive events designed to enhance guests' experience and celebrate its commitment to responsible tourism.

## Highlights of the Anniversary Celebration:

**Specially Curated Culinary Delights:** Throughout the anniversary month, guests can indulge in a culinary journey featuring exquisite dishes created by the resort's talented chefs. Special tasting

menus, wine pairings, and themed dining events will take guests on a gastronomic adventure.

## Luxurious Wellness Retreats:

The award-winning Devarana Wellness invites guests to unwind and rejuvenate with special holistic packages. Relax and rejuvenate in the idyllic island surroundings.

## Eco-conscious Initiatives:

Dusit Thani Maldives has always been dedicated to sustainability. In honor of its anniversary, the resort team is inviting guests to exciting environmental initiatives, including reef restoration projects, educational programs, tree planting for guests to learn about marine conservation and make a difference today.

## Exclusive Special Offers:

Guests booking stays via the resort's

website will enjoy special rates, complimentary amenities, and unique experiences to make their stay even more memorable.

## Anniversary Night:

The celebration culminated in an evening Anniversary get-together, showcasing Maldivian culture, music, and dance. Guests enjoyed a night of entertainment and a sumptuous feast under the stars, and a special cake cutting ceremony.

"We are incredibly honored by the journey we have embarked upon over the past 11 years. Dusit Thani Maldives has become synonymous with luxury, sustainability, and heartfelt hospitality. We are grateful for the support of our loyal guests, dedicated team members, and the beautiful Maldives community," says Reinhold Johann, the General Manager, Dusit Thani Maldives.

"This anniversary is not only a celebration of our past but also a commitment to an even brighter and more sustainable future. Dusit Thani Maldives continues to receive accolades for its efforts in sustainability and commitment to preserving the Maldivian environment. The resort is known for its innovative initiatives, including coral restoration programs and responsible tourism practices," added Thanthita Nithimetheesanont, the Resident Manager, Dusit Thani Maldives.

# Robinson Noonu Offers Exciting Sport and Well-being Events for Guests

ROBINSON NOONU, the premium resort on the Maldivian island Orivaru, is offering guests the chance to experience innovative concepts and practice them with experienced coaches and experts. The resort's upcoming event weeks include the HOT IRON Event Week, Mindful METIME Event-Week, "BODY POSITIVITY"-Event, and "Your timeout" Yoga-Event.

From October 16 to 21, 2023, guests can participate in the HOT IRON Event Week "Strength meets mobility", led by Sebastian Prahl. This strength-endurance training with the barbell is suitable for all levels and focuses on body toning and fat reduction.

The Mindful METIME Event Week, led

by Peter Praunsmändtl, takes place from November 7 to 19, 2023. Guests can find their inner strength through meditations, breathing exercises, and workout classes, including Pilates and mobility sessions.

From December 22, 2023, to January 13, 2024, guests can participate in the "BODY POSITIVITY" Event with Sava Assenov. This event includes core training, Pilates, and yoga flows, as well as early bird workouts and intensive whole-body workouts.

For those looking for a yoga-focused event, the "Your timeout" Yoga Event with Anja Böhltz takes place from January 13 to 27, 2024. Böhltz, founder of emBODYMINDing®, focuses on



healthy alignment for the body and mind, combining yoga and fascia training with meditation and mindfulness.

"Many of our guests come to our island not only to relax and enjoy the dreamlike scenery, but also to benefit their body and mind during their holiday," said Jan-Hendrik Karliczek, General Manager of ROBINSON NOONU. "With our sport and well-being event

weeks, we offer them the opportunity to get to know new innovative concepts and to practice them with experienced coaches and experts."

In addition to the special event weeks, the resort offers a wide range of activities for all guests to enjoy, including volleyball, badminton, soccer, water polo, table tennis, billiards, snorkeling, diving, fishing, sailing, boat tours, and wakeboarding.



# Canareef Resort Maldives Appoints Aminath Zeena as HR Manager

Canareef Resort Maldives has announced the appointment of Aminath Zeena Mohamed as the new HR Manager. Zeena brings a wealth of experience and expertise to her new role, having established herself as a seasoned professional in the hospitality industry.

Taking up her position on August 27, 2023, Aminath Zeena Mohamed is set to steer the human resources department of Canareef Resort Maldives towards new heights of excellence. With an impressive career spanning various organizations, her appointment signifies a significant milestone for the resort.

One of the standout achievements in Zeena's career includes her tenure as the Human Resources Service Leader at Shangri La's Villingili Resort & Spa, where she served diligently for an impressive nine years. Her contributions during this time left an

indelible mark on the resort, showcasing her ability to excel in the competitive world of luxury hospitality.

In addition to her tenure at Shangri La, Zeena has honed her skills through pivotal roles at various organizations, including the Wakachiku Hithadhoo Ports Project in Addu City, Asia Management (Olderndorff), and Fenaka Corporation Limited. Her diverse experiences have equipped her with the knowledge and expertise necessary to excel in her role as HR Manager.

Zeena's skill set is not limited to traditional HR tasks. Her ability to oversee resort payroll, coupled with her meticulous attention to staff welfare, showcases her dedication to creating a positive work environment. She is known for her commitment to ensuring that the needs and requests of the staff are addressed promptly and effectively.



One of Zeena's core passions is fostering an employee-oriented, high-performance culture. She is dedicated to empowering the Canareef team and elevating the quality and productivity of the workforce. Her vision includes creating an environment where excellence is not just a goal but a benchmark that sets Canareef Resort Maldives apart from the competition.

With Aminath Zeena Mohamed at the helm of HR operations, Canareef Resort Maldives is poised to further solidify its reputation as a haven of hospitality. Her leadership and expertise will undoubtedly contribute to maintaining a workforce that is second to none. The resort looks forward to an era of continued growth and excellence under her guidance.

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MOVERS & SHAKERS

# Mohamed Sobir Appointed as Resort Manager at Le Meridien Maldives Resort & Spa

The pristine Le Meridien Maldives Resort & Spa announces the appointment of Mohamed Sobir as the new Resort Manager. With a distinguished career spanning two decades in the hotel industry, Sobir brings a wealth of experience and expertise to his new role.

Sobir embarked on his journey in the hospitality sector in 2003 as a Room Service Server at Four Seasons Resort Maldives Kuda Huraa. He honed his skills and passion for the industry at various prestigious properties, including Four Seasons Hotel Shanghai and Four Seasons Hotel Hong Kong, Four Seasons Resort Maldives Kudahara, Four Seasons

Hotel Riyadh and Alila Villas Hadahaa Maldives.

In recognition of his remarkable contributions, Sobir was entrusted with key positions at renowned resorts in the Maldives such as Shangri-La's Villingili Resort & Spa, Maldives and his last venture was as a Resident Manager at Adaaran Select Meedhupparu where he demonstrated his prowess in managing resort operations. As a native Maldivian, his extraordinary career and achievements proves to be an inspiration to many.

Thomas Schult, the General Manager of Le Meridien Maldives Resort & Spa, expressed his excitement about Sobir



joining the team: "We are thrilled to welcome Mohamed Sobir to our team at Le Meridien Maldives Resort and

Spa. His extensive experience in the hotel industry, especially in the Maldives, makes him a valuable addition to our leadership team. We believe his passion for excellence and commitment to guest satisfaction will be instrumental in enhancing the resort's reputation as a premier destination in the Maldives."

Sobir's vast experience and proven track record in the luxury hospitality sector make him the perfect fit for his new role as Resort Manager at Le Meridien Maldives Resort & Spa. His leadership and dedication are expected to contribute significantly to the continued success and growth of the resort.

# JOALI Announces Exciting Changes in Leadership



Enver Arslan - Area General Manager of JOALI and BIJAL

JOALI, an immersive lifestyle luxury hotel brand, is delighted to announce a series of exciting appointments set to begin a new era of hospitality, effective from September 1, 2023.

Enver Arslan is promoted to Area General Manager from the General Manager of JOALI Maldives. In this role, Enver will be responsible for overseeing JOALI Maldives, JOALI BEING and BIJAL Turkey. Enver has been a pioneer leader of JOALI Maldives since pre-opening and has made a tremendous impact on the success of the brand. A seasoned hotelier, he has brought a keen understanding of true luxury and a lifelong passion for travel to the Island of Joy.

Enver's professional journey began with Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts and his career path has taken him around the globe, from the majestic ski slopes of the Grand Teton to the sparkling lights of Las Vegas, followed by the desert plateaus of the Middle East, and finally to the tropics of the Maldives.



Shifaz Hassan - General Manager of JOALI Maldives

In 2017, Enver joined the opening team of JOALI Maldives as Resort Director, taking charge of the property's operational departments. His warm demeanor and strong work ethic soon made him a favorite among guests, team members and industry peers alike. He was promoted to General Manager of JOALI Maldives in 2021.

Meanwhile, Shifaz Hassan, who has been the Resort Manager of JOALI Maldives since March 2022, has been named Enver's successor as General Manager. With over a decade of dedicated service to the hospitality industry of the Maldives, Shifaz has played a vital role in JOALI Maldives since its inception. In 2018, he joined the resort as a Front Office Manager and was promoted to Rooms Divisions Manager in 2020, eventually becoming the Resort Manager.

With his keen eye for detail and expertise, Shifaz brings a wealth of experience in the guest services and rooms division. He has a deep understanding of hospitality in the



Graeme Freeman - General Manager of JOALI BEING

Maldives and has worked with guests and hosts from all cultures and nationalities. As a leader, he is dedicated to providing exceptional service and curating memories for the guests at the resort.

JOALI BEING announces the promotion of Graeme Freeman om Resort Manager to General Manager. Graeme joined JOALI BEING during its pre-opening stages, bringing a new era of wellbeing to the Maldivian tourism landscape. His career commenced with a pivotal role as part of the management team at Karma Group, a renowned international travel and lifestyle brand celebrated for its excellence across diverse regions. Building on his initial achievements, Graeme transitioned into operational leadership, progressing on his role as Resort Manager and subsequently assumed the General Manager position at Karma Jimbaran Resort.

Demonstrating a seasoned and international perspective, Graeme's career path extended to Hua Hin,

Thailand, where he assumed a leadership role overseeing the operations of Aleenta Resort & Spa. Adding to his impressive portfolio, he further excelled as the Resident Manager at Six Senses Laamu in the Maldives, showcasing his exceptional ability to curate unparalleled guest experiences within this luxurious tropical haven.

Graeme Freeman's expertise spans a spectrum of vital competencies, including orchestrating day-to-day operations to ensure the realization of operational goals, cultivating guest engagement strategies, and fostering professional growth paths for his team members. His dedication to nurturing talent and driving business development aligns perfectly with JOALI BEING's commitment to redefining the concept of wellbeing in the Maldives.

The new appointments come at an exciting time for JOALI, as the brand prepares for an exhilarating festive season. Over the past years, JOALI has continued to garner recognition as a top destination for luxury travelers seeking unparalleled hospitality service, and with the new roles of Enver, Shifaz and Graeme, the coming year is set to be a memorable one.

"At JOALI, we believe in fostering talent within and providing opportunities to grow and thrive. The newly appointed leadership will undoubtedly play a pivotal role in shaping the future of JOALI as we continue to grow in this very competitive industry", said Hakan Öztürk, Tourism Group General Director of Gurok Group.



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*In the Maldives, two influential figures, Mr. Hussain Afeef and Mr. Mohamed Moosa, known as the "Champa Brothers," have played pivotal roles in shaping the nation's tourism and hospitality sector.*

*Hussain Afeef is a visionary with extensive experience in the Maldives' tourism industry. His unwavering dedication to creating exceptional guest experiences has made him a cornerstone of the sector, bringing innovation and authenticity to all his endeavors.*

*Mohamed Moosa is a trailblazer in the Maldives' tourism industry, known for driving it toward excellence. His deep understanding of tourists' evolving needs and unwavering passion for his work have established him as an iconic figure in the Maldivian hospitality scene.*

*Their remarkable journey has not only transformed the Maldives' landscape but also inspired many individuals in the tourism and hospitality field. In an exclusive interview, we explore their experiences, challenges, and visions for the future of the Maldives' tourism industry.*

**MR. MOHAMED MOOSA (UCHU)**

*Mr. Mohamed Moosa, as a trailblazer in the Maldives tourism industry, can you provide an insight into the current state of the tourism landscape in the Maldives compared to the time you got involved in the tourism sector?*

Indeed. In stark contrast to the present, one salient challenge during the nascent days of the industry centered on the procurement and transportation of perishable commodities. I can vividly recollect the era when Kurumba Island Resort was still in its formative stages. Even post-launch, my brother, Hussain Afeef, would frequently engage me regarding operational and logistical requisites, particularly the procurement of essential fruits and vegetables. At that juncture, our options were limited to relying either on Air Lanka for cargo transportation from Sri Lanka or sourcing from the inner atolls. Both methods, from a logistical perspective, were biweekly occurrences, thus underscoring the intricacies we confronted. This predicament sometimes led to inadvertent substitutions, such as papayas supplanting cucumbers in salads, as cucumbers were a rarity in Male', where I sought them.

Recollections of our endeavors in establishing Meeru Island Resort also come to the fore. We grappled with a solitary operational well known as 'bandiyaa valhu,' complemented by a solitary vessel named Gaakendi. With a small team of 2-3 individuals, we embarked on

a six-hour round trip to Male' to secure essentials like bread and fresh produce. Subsequent to these supply runs, our evenings were filled with guiding diving excursions, followed by night fishing to secure the evening's fare. The dinner, incidentally, was often made by our own hands. Depending on our fishing fortune, dinner might feature fish steak alongside potatoes and salad or, alternately, a modest rice dish incorporating leaves from a specific coastal plant. Our roles encompassed multifarious responsibilities, obliging us to optimize the resources at our disposal. Despite the formidable labor, the gratification derived from these experiences endures palpably. Notably, our vessel, Gaakendi, stands today as a symbol of our journey.

An encouraging development from that epoch was the advent of the British telecommunications company, Cable & Wireless Plc, which introduced a public telephone booth. The cost per minute for calls was significantly high at MVR 42, a substantial sum during that period. Our communication requisites were modest, and we had previously relied on walkie-talkies. Consequently, this technological leap in communication was warmly embraced.

*Considering your expertise, what recommendations would you offer to industry stakeholders in order to ensure the long-term sustainability of the Maldives tourism industry, specially about increasing new islands within the same lagoons to expand?*



To ensure sustainability, stakeholders should focus on balanced growth. While expanding to new islands is a good strategy, we must also address the challenge of recruiting enthusiastic Maldivians into the industry. Many are drawn to other professions with higher initial earnings, and there are misconceptions discouraging females from joining tourism careers. We should also be mindful of environmental concerns, such as sand extraction from forming islands, which can harm our natural resources.

**What would you describe as one of the biggest challenges you faced and overcame during the beginning of your career in tourism? And what would be one the biggest challenges that you are facing now as a veteran of the industry?**

An exemplary demonstration of the challenges we faced early on revolved around our decision to develop a small island near Huraa, known as 'Dhe Ruhgas Finolhu.' This miniature island, measuring roughly 50 feet in size and adorned with only two coconut palm trees, aptly embodied its name. Financially, we turned to the sole operational financial institution of that era, the State Bank of India. Our loan application gained approval once an Italian company, Italy World Tour, partnered with us as a guarantor, assuming responsibility for lease payments to the bank. Faced with limited options, we acquiesced to a loan amounting to USD 4,000,000.00, astonishingly accompanied by a 22% interest rate. Fueled by our unwavering passion and work ethic, we harnessed this combination to drive ourselves towards achieving our project objectives; of building 10 bungalows and ultimately meeting our repayment obligations. This endeavor undeniably emerged as one of the most formidable challenges we successfully surmounted.



In contrast, a contemporary and substantial challenge revolves around the recruitment of enthusiastic Maldivians for roles within the thriving tourism sector now. A significant portion of the younger generation gravitates towards professions with strong academic orientations, enticed by early-stage remuneration differentials in fields such as medicine, engineering, and aviation. Moreover, a considerable segment of students, choose to commence their professional journeys beyond the nation's borders. Within the remaining pool of young talent, regrettably, prevailing misconceptions frequently discourage females from pursuing careers within the tourism industry as well.

**In terms of competition from neighboring destinations, what are the possible risks that could pose a threat to our vulnerable tourism industry? How can we effectively address these challenges?**

I believe there are several imminent internal issues



that need to be addressed urgently to ensure the sustainable growth of our industry. For instance, unregulated home stay and guest housing options on local islands cater to a high number of tourists. Either the existing legislations fail to comprehensively cover this system, or the enforcement authorities are unable to effectively monitor it. In either case, operators in local tourism can evade compliance with simple laws, from water quality testing to the number of guests allowed at any given time.

Furthermore, the requirement to employ a majority of Maldivians in each resort, while well-intentioned, faces the practical challenge of a shortage of qualified candidates for the increasing number of positions in the industry. Currently in Maldives, the population available to join the workforce will not be able to meet the job requirements of all the industries in the nation. Demand and supply must be balanced and resolved before setting unrealistic employment quotas that may seem appealing theoretically but prove practically challenging, to say the least.

Unfortunately, we seem to exacerbate our challenges by disrupting the natural environment, by undertaking dredging and reclamation projects in close proximity. These decisions need to be made after taking into consideration the impact on the existing ecosystem and whilst ensuring sustainability.

One of the principal reasons for these misalignments between problems and solutions is that decision-makers are often appointed based on political connections and diplomatic arrangements rather than merit and qualifications, leading to suboptimal outcomes.

**What implications could the political instability have on foreign investment in the Maldivian tourism industry and the development of new tourism projects?**

We should welcome foreign investments and the development of international integrated tourism projects with open arms, as this ensures that the industry continually raises its standards. Tourism is a dynamic and highly competitive field on the global stage, and mediocrity is not an option. We should always endorse progress that aligns with our core values.

Regarding the political aspect of the question, I must



admit that I am not politically inclined, as I have no affinity for the field. Therefore, I believe I am not the best person to comment on this subject. In summary, I do not closely follow political updates; instead, I work with the elected government to ensure that the industry flourishes. That's the extent of my involvement.

**How does the Fifth Tourism Master Plan (5TMP) of the Maldives address issues of domestic transportation and connectivity to facilitate the movement of tourists within the country? Does having many airports fulfil the purpose?**

I believe that the government's plans must have been formulated based on extensive data and research and should, therefore, benefit the industry. However, if it were up to me, I would have pursued a different approach. Rather than building new airports, I would have invested in developing the existing domestic airports, which would likely be more financially viable and sustainable in the long term.

**Does Crown and Champa Resorts (CCR) plan to start their own seaplane operations?**

We would be willing to explore this in the future as Lhaviyani Madivaru airport has been developed with a seaplane platform.

**As domestic transport prices are very high as per many tourists and it has become an issue for surfers and divers, while they pay very high prices to carry gears such as surfboards and diving kits?**

The major flaw in the strategy of having numerous domestic airports lies in the fundamental issue they aim to address. The Maldives consists of many scattered islands, each with a small population. Consequently, there are not enough travelers to consistently utilize these airports, making it unlikely that they will recover the costs of development or daily operations anytime soon.

**There's still one international airport in fine operation. What's your opinion and idea on making Hanimaadhoo and Gan to be international hubs? How can the industry achieve it?**

Establishing international hubs becomes meaningful when there are services available to cater to the users of these platforms. In theory, there is immense potential in making these airports international hubs, but a fully developed ecosystem must be in place to meet the supply and demand of such an initiative.



**MR. HUSSAIN AFEEF**

**Mr. Afeef, what were some of the major challenges you faced when starting in the Maldives' tourism industry?**

Well, starting in the Maldives' tourism industry was a challenge in itself. At that time, tourism and hotel management were entirely new concepts to us. We had to learn everything from scratch, from understanding tourists' preferences to providing the best service. It was a time when we had to discover what would appeal to tourists because we had never encountered them before.

**Can we ask how tourism initially started? We have heard of the stories of George Corbin and Mr. Ahmed Naseem bringing the first tourists to Maldives.**

Certainly. Mr. Ahmed Naseem introduced us to George Corbin, and together with Mr. Maniku, they made the first investments in the Maldives' tourism industry. However, the early days were tough. We faced transportation challenges as there were very few mechanized boats available in the country. We even had to mine corals and use local materials for construction since there were limited imported resources. Our first food order for George Corbin's team was a lesson in adapting to their preferences, as they couldn't handle spicy food. They even joined us in fishing, which they thoroughly enjoyed.

**We see Crown and Champa Resorts (CCR) as a prominent stand-alone brand positioned as a premier holder of the finest properties. May we ask about the ideology behind staying as a Maldivian brand of properties while many have integrated with international chains?**

Crown and Champa Resorts (CCR) is owned by a diverse group of individuals, both Maldivian and international. We made a collective decision to establish a management company, led by David Feinberg, the CEO of Meeru at the time. Our vision was not only to manage properties but also to empower our Maldivian staff. We sent them for education and experiences, with the aim of having a majority of Maldivians in senior roles. We believe in nurturing local talent and providing them with opportunities for growth.

**How does having a majority of Maldivian staff add value to the brand and benefit both visitors and the local community, as we see many have worked and gained knowledge at Crown and Champa Properties?**

Having a majority of local staff, around 60%, is invaluable. They have a deep love for their country and a commitment to its progress. They don't need to leave their jobs and families behind, which adds stability. We prioritize our staff's well-being, and we want them to work here because they love it, not just out of necessity. We invest in their education and provide support to their families. This bond ensures they remain dedicated and happy.

**What sets Crown and Champa Resorts (CCR) apart from other resorts in the Maldives?**

While I can't compare us to other resorts, we stand out for our genuine care for both guests and staff. Our commitment to maintaining high service standards and ensuring the well-being of our employees sets us apart. We consider the happiness of our staff and their families a top priority.

**We saw your efforts in bringing tourism to the southernmost atoll. What is the potential for increasing bed capacity in areas like Laamu, Huvadhu and Addu, and how can it benefit the tourism industry? Does Crown and Champa Resorts (CCR) have plans to expand to the South?**

There's certainly potential, but it depends on infrastructure, particularly transportation. Building hotels in remote areas is only feasible if there's a reliable transport system in place. Regional airports can help, but they need to be economically viable. Guesthouse tourism is also a great option for these regions, offering cultural experiences and benefiting local economies.

**Do you think it will impact the resort market if the homestay and guesthouse tourism start to bring more market?**

I don't think so. The Maldives caters to a diverse range of tourists, and there's enough demand to support both resorts and guesthouses. Different travelers have different preferences, and the variety of options available here is a strength.

**What do you foresee for the tourism industry in the next five to ten years? Will it reach a point of maturity and stability? Especially in a time where a lot of integrated tourism projects are in place and some in operation, Champa has always stood out in bringing one-island-one-resort and private island tourism concepts?**

Predicting the future is challenging, but maintaining high service standards will be crucial for the industry's success. Whether it's resorts, guesthouses, or homestays, providing quality experiences is essential. The Maldives can continue to offer a mix of luxury and affordability, catering to a broad range of visitors.

**Mr. Afeef and Mr. Mohamed Moosa What is your advice for new hoteliers and tourism industry professionals?**

**Mr. Uchu:** My initial advice would be to cultivate the habit of rising early, even during their years of study. This proactive step can deter laziness and inactivity, ensuring a more productive day.

I recall an incident when a young man approached me after opening his own shop, seeking advice on achieving success in his business. I asked him if he woke up early in the morning. To succeed in business, one must seize opportunities when they arise. I suggested that he visit the harbor where goods are transported at 5 am, allowing him to be present during the unloading process. This way, he could procure the goods he resells directly from the source at the harbor, before they reach the local market and prices increase due to intermediaries. By making the most of this window of opportunity, he could earn a higher profit margin.

**Mr. Afeef:** Young individuals entering the industry should learn from both successful and failed ventures. They need to be aware of market trends, adapt to changing preferences, and maintain a commitment to high-quality service. Understanding and respecting the diverse cultures of visitors is also crucial. Overall, staying informed and passionate about the industry is essential for success.



Mr. Uchu receiving the award from the President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih



Mr. Hussain Afeef receiving the award from the President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih





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NEW OPENING

Soneva Secret Revealed – A New, Ultra-bespoke Resort Concept from Soneva in HDh. Atoll



Soneva, the world-leading sustainable resorts operator, has revealed the launch of the new, ultra-bespoke Soneva Secret. Located in Haa Dhaalu, the Maldives’ most remote atoll, the debut Soneva Secret 2024 will welcome its first guests on January 10, 2024. Thirty years in the making, the Soneva Secret resort concept builds upon Soneva’s experience at the forefront of exceptional hospitality, and will set a new, unmatched standard in intuitive, personalized service, exquisite private villas and unspoiled settings, surrounded by nature.

Soneva Secret 2024 features just 14 beach and overwater villas, including lagoon Crusoe Villas, accessible only by boat, and the Castaway, the Maldives’ first floating villa. Each is designed in perfect harmony with the untouched natural setting, with direct access to the white sand beach or sparkling lagoon. As well as vast master suites, including a roof that slides to reveal star-strewn skies, every villa also features adjoining bedrooms, offering ample space for families or additional guests.

Soneva’s superlative service reaches new

heights at Soneva Secret 2024, with a dedicated Barefoot Guardian and Barefoot Assistant for every villa, curating an utterly personalized stay and one-of-a-kind, rare experiences for every guest. The resort’s 14 private chefs, one for each villa, craft bespoke menus and unique culinary journeys, whether savored in the privacy and comfort of the villa or enjoyed in nature at the island’s most picturesque spots.

Other dining experiences will include Out of This World, a castaway dining tower, observatory and wine cellar in the lagoon, reachable by zipline; a toes-in-the-sand fire pit dining experience at So Primitive; and The Living Room, the island hub and casual dining and lounge venue, which is also home to a library, boutique and Soneva’s renowned ice cream, chocolate and cheese and charcuterie rooms.

At Soneva Secret 2024, fully bespoke rare experiences are curated for every guest, reconnecting them with the abundant nature that surrounds the island. An

underwater haven, the crystal-clear waters are home to colonies of majestic manta rays, pods of curious dolphins and gentle whale sharks, alongside shoals of colorful tropical fish. Family experiences go far beyond The Den, whether picnics on castaway shores, sunset dolphin cruises, guided snorkeling with the experienced Marine Biologist, or navigating the night skies with exceptionally clear views of the Milky Way with the resident Astronomer.

Soneva Secret 2024 can be reached via a scenic 75-minute seaplane flight direct from Velana International Airport in Malé, a 40-minute seaplane flight from Soneva Fushi in the Baa Atoll, a 30-minute seaplane flight from Soneva Jani in the Noonu Atoll, or a leisurely full-day cruise from Soneva Fushi onboard Soneva in Aqua. Guests can also fly directly into Kulhudhuffushi Airport in the Haa Dhaalu Atoll and take a one-hour speedboat ride to the resort.

Soneva Secret 2024 is now open for bookings.

FIRST TIME IN MALDIVES - DRY SOLID WASTE THERMAL DECOMPOSITION MACHINE ( SMART GARBAGE SOLID WASTE (DRY) DISINTEGRATION MACHINE )



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# IMTM 2023 Receives Endorsements from Ministry of Tourism, MMPRC, High Commission of Bangladesh in the Maldives, MATI, NBAM and ATA

The International Maldives Travel Market (IMTM) is proud to announce an exceptional show of support from prominent organizations for its upcoming 2023 edition. IMTM, the annual B2B Travel and Trade Fair in the Maldives, is set to take place on October 8 and 9 held at the Manhattan Business Hotel.

The Ministry of Tourism, the driving force behind promoting tourism in the Maldives, has extended its endorsement to IMTM 2023. This endorsement reflects the event's significance in bolstering the country's thriving tourism industry.

Maldives Marketing and Public Relations Corporation (MMPRC), the nation's dedicated tourism office, has been an unwavering supporter of IMTM since its inception. Their tireless efforts have been instrumental in securing prestigious titles such as 'World's Leading Destination' at the 2021 and 2022 World Travel Awards for the Maldives.



The High Commission of the People's Republic of Bangladesh in the Maldives adds its distinguished support to IMTM 2023. This diplomatic mission plays a pivotal role in enhancing interactions between the governments of Bangladesh and the Maldives, further strengthening diplomatic ties.

The Maldives Association of Tourism Industry (MATI) works in close collaboration with the government to elevate tourism standards and provide

expert guidance. MATI's endorsement underscores IMTM's importance in advancing the Maldivian tourism sector.

The National Boating Association of Maldives (NBAM), representing liveaboards in the Maldives, is dedicated to fostering sustainable practices within the industry. Their support for IMTM 2023 reflects the event's role in facilitating responsible tourism. The Association of Travel Agents (ATA) adds its weighty endorsement to IMTM 2023,

highlighting the event's significance within the global travel industry.

Now in its sixth edition, IMTM 2023 continues to serve as an invaluable platform for key figures in the global tourism industry to explore opportunities in both inbound and outbound tourism within the Maldives. The event welcomes tour operators and agents from around the world, providing them direct access to Maldivian tourism accommodation providers and the chance to establish crucial connections.



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EVENTS & AWARDS

# Hotels and Resorts Investment Pvt Ltd Signs as the Main Sponsor of Build Expo 2024 and National Builders Awards 2023

H.A.R.I.M - Hotels and Resorts Investment Pvt Ltd onboards as the Main Sponsor for the National Build Expo 2024 and Maldives National Builder Awards 2023. National Build Expo 2024 is scheduled to be held on January 11, 12, 13 and 14, 2024 at Central Park, Hulhumalé, and Maldives National Builder Awards 2023 is scheduled to be held on October 28, 2023. Both events are flagship events of the Maldives National Association of Construction industry (MNACI) and are organized by MEDIUM Events Pvt Ltd.

H.A.R.I.M - Hotels And Resorts Investment Pvt Ltd is a key developer in the hospitality industry with over 20 years portfolio in development of internationally acclaimed resorts and hotels in the Maldives as well as other parts of the world. And is currently involved in revolutionary innovative business expansion projects in the Maldives. Signatory was completed by Mr. Mohamed Ali Janah, Chairman of H.A.R.I.M



- Hotels And Resorts Investment Pvt Ltd as the Main Sponsor and Mr. Sham Mohamed, Director of MEDIUM Events Pvt Ltd as the official Event Organizer of National Build Expo 2024 and Maldives National Builder Awards 2023.

This participation by H.A.R.I.M - Hotels

And Resorts Investment Pvt Ltd will elaborate years of expertise to National Build Expo which is expected to gather industry professionals and business stakeholders under one roof enabling diverse business networking opportunities. Construction industry is the second largest contributor to the

Maldivian economy, which also includes one of the largest workforces in the nation and is the driving force in all development projects.

National Build Expo is an exhibition targeted for the building and construction industry of Maldives, the event forecasts key stakeholder's participation with regional business representation. The Maldives National Builder Awards is the awards ceremony of Maldives National Association of Construction industry (MNACI) recognizing top performers and industry contributors. Participation for the National Build Expo 2024 is open for interested parties, with a diverse range of sponsorship offers, sponsors and exhibitors are welcome to take advantage of the early-bird offers for this prominent exhibition and platform.

Interested participants can contact the event organizer, Medium Pvt Ltd at +960 799-7974 or sham@medium.mv and proceed with registration procedure.

# The Award-Winning Majesty 120 and Charter Favorite Majesty 100 steer into Cannes Yachting Festival



Gulf Craft, one of the world's leading boat and yacht manufacturers is making a grand entrance at the Cannes Yachting Festival 2023, with its award-winning Majesty 120 and Majesty 100. Both vessels underline the commercial capabilities across the Majesty yachts model line-up.

This year, the Majesty 120 has garnered well-deserved recognition in the prestigious BOAT International's Design & Innovation Awards receiving both the

Eco Award and the Best Naval Architecture Award. Along with the Best Motor Yacht 25-40 Meters at Design et al's International Yacht & Aviation Awards.

Continuing this trend, a number of Gulf Craft vessels are also nominated at the World Yachts Trophies, with three of their vessels earning nominations in various categories. The Majesty 72 has been nominated for the "Best Layout" category, a testament to its thoughtful and functional design.

Meanwhile, the Majesty 111 is competing for the "Best Interior Design," showcasing the yacht's exquisite and luxurious living spaces. Lastly, the Nomad 101 has earned a nomination in the "Most Achieved Yacht" category, highlighting its exceptional performance and versatile capabilities. The event will highlight the yachts' impeccable suitability for the charter market, groundbreaking energy-efficient technologies, and the company's dedication to sustainable materials.

Gulf Craft Chairman, Mohammed Hussein Alshaali, commented: "I am immensely proud of Majesty Yachts' unwavering commitment to excellence, innovation, and sustainability, particularly in the dynamic European market. Our Majesty 120 stands as a testament to our dedication to crafting vessels that not only exceed expectations but also set new standards in the industry. We see the shift towards composites gaining momentum, and Majesty Yachts, with its expertise in this area, is poised to lead this transformative journey." He added.

The company's unique dedication to commercial-ready vessels is apparent in every facet of design. From expanded cabin capacity and enhanced storage

solutions to meticulous compliance with MLC requirements for crew quarters, each detail is meticulously crafted to cater to discerning charter needs. Owners are granted the extraordinary flexibility to opt for full commercial compliance at any stage during the yacht's lifecycle, enhancing its overall value.

The shipyard is leading the charge in sustainable yachting with its revolutionary energy-saving technologies. Showcased by the Majesty 120 earning the aforementioned Eco Award at this year's Design & Innovation Awards. The company's pioneering energy-efficient HVAC system not only ensures passenger comfort but also efficiently recovers waste heat generated from onboard processes. This recovered heat is then seamlessly redistributed to power various onboard utilities, resulting in a substantial reduction in operational costs.

The Majesty 120, equipped with this groundbreaking HVAC system, boasts savings of over 80,000 kW annually, delivering significant operational cost reductions. In colder conditions, the energy savings soar, reaching up to 50 kWh and resulting in savings of approximately 20,000 euros per month.



IN THE NEWS

# Dhiyaneru to be Developed as a Safe Harbor and Marina for Safari Boats



Urbanco. An area of 24.6 hectares will be reclaimed from Dhiyaneru Lagoon.

During the Maldives Boating Awards 2022, the Minister of Tourism, Abdulla Mausoom revealed the concept design for the development of a harbor at Dhiyaneru Lagoon, which he said will benefit safari operators. Speaking at the ceremony, he highlighted the lack of infrastructure preventing the operation of more safari vessels.

Since then, the government has aimed to develop a harbor and marina with berthing services for safari and supply vessels at Dhiyaneru lagoon. The harbor and marina is expected to accommodate safe mooring and servicing for 500 vessels of different sizes.

Urbanco commented that the expansion of Dhiyaneru lagoon will play a key role in providing a solution for accommodation, meeting the growing demand for marina spaces by vessels.

The Government of Maldives has announced and started the work of Dhiyaneru Lagoon in Kaafu Atoll to be developed as a safe harbor and

marina with supporting facilities. Most recently, Capital Marine and Civil Construction Company Private Limited

(CMC) was handed over the works of land reclamation and infrastructure development of Dhiyaneru Lagoon along with Thilafushi Area D by

# Maldives Butler Academy Concludes Butler Training for Hurawalhi Maldives

Maldives Butler Academy has just concluded their specialty Basic Butler Training to the spectacularly beautiful resort of Hurawalhi Maldives. The president of Butlers Academy and the head trainer for the program was Mohamed Yamaany, who comes from a tourism background and has over two decades of vast hospitality expertise with several worldwide hotel brands. He was accompanied by Butler trainer Ahmed Fazeel.

Total 17 participants from Hurawalhi Maldives took this training and covered important and basic butler modules such as grooming and deportment skills, stress management, service etiquettes and many more.

Good feedback was received from Hurawalhi Maldives in regards to the training program conducted by Butler

Academy. Therefore, we are expecting to see more of next generational butlers in the Maldives receiving exceptional training from Maldives Butlers Academy.

Maldives Butler Academy is the first Butler Academy registered and recognized by the Ministry of Tourism in the Maldives to develop and specialize professionals in the tourism and hospitality industry. With the input of ideas from like-minded veterans of the Maldives hospitality industry, the Maldives Butler Academy will focus on the development of individuals who share the ideals of creating positive once-in-a-lifetime experiences for the people that they will serve.

With the input of ideas from like-minded veterans of the Maldives hospitality industry, the Maldives



Butler Academy focuses on the development of individuals who share the ideals of creating positive once-in-a-lifetime experiences for the people that they will serve. The

content of the training will include more than the mechanical skills of butlers and focus on working with people of diverse backgrounds to achieve a common goal.



## IN THE NEWS

# Incredible India Extends Wholehearted Support to South Asian Travel Awards 2023



South Asian Travel Awards (SATA) announces that "Incredible India," the iconic tourism initiative of the Government of India, has extended its wholehearted support to this year's awards ceremony. This partnership underscores India's unwavering commitment to the growth and prosperity of the tourism industry across the South Asian region, while simultaneously encouraging the elevation of service standards within the dynamic hospitality sector.

SATA, a distinguished platform that acknowledges and celebrates excellence in the travel and hospitality industry across South Asia, has become a hallmark of distinction within the region. This year, "Incredible India" proudly stands by SATA 2023, reiterating the significance of cooperation and mutual advancement within the tourism and hospitality sector.

One of the standout features of this collaboration is the prominent display of the "Incredible India" logo during the SATA 2023 Gala and promotional activities. The iconic logo will prominently feature as a symbol of support from Incredible India, aligning the initiative as a dedicated partner of the event.

The partnership between "Incredible India" and South Asian Travel Awards 2023 is poised to significantly elevate the event's reputation and influence. Together, they aspire to raise the industry's service quality benchmarks and inspire industry stakeholders to achieve greater excellence.

Mr Suraj Khan, Vice President at SATA, expressed his excitement about this partnership, stating, "SATA is honored to have the support of 'Incredible India' for our 2023 awards ceremony. This collaboration not only enhances the event's prestige but also emphasizes our shared dedication to advancing tourism across the South Asian region. We believe it will have a positive impact on the entire industry."

South Asian Travel Awards 2023 promises to be an unforgettable celebration of the travel and hospitality sector's finest accomplishments. With "Incredible India" as a staunch supporting partner, the event is poised to set new industry standards and inspire greater achievements within the realm of tourism.

The South Asian Travel Awards (SATA) is an annual event that recognizes and celebrates the best in the travel and

tourism industry in South Asia. The awards ceremony recognizes the achievements of hotels, airlines, destinations, and other organizations that contribute to the growth and success of the travel and tourism industry in the region.

SATA has been endorsed by over 15 International and government agencies for its work to elevate tourism and hospitality in the region.

- Association of Professionals in Tourism (APT),
- Association of Tourism Trade Organizations, India (ATTOI),
- Association of Travel Agents (ATA),
- Colombo Chamber of Commerce (CCC),
- Confederation of Accredited Tour Operators (CATO),
- Federation of Chambers of Commerce & Industry of Sri Lanka (FCCISL),
- Hotel and Restaurant Association of Bhutan (HRAB),
- Kerala Hotel General Manager Club (KHGMC),
- National Boating Association of Maldives (NBAM),
- Maldives Association of Travel Agents and Tour Operators (MATATO),
- Maldives Marketing & PR Corporation (MMPRC),
- Nepal Tourism Board (NTB),

- Sri Lanka Association of Inbound Tour Operators (SLAITO),
- The Hotels Association of Sri Lanka (THASL),
- Bangladesh International Hotel Association (BIHA),
- Hotel Association Nepal (HAN)
- Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI)

In recent years, the SATA has become increasingly competitive, with more and more organizations vying for coveted awards. The ceremony is attended by top industry professionals and travel enthusiasts, making it a major event in the South Asian travel and tourism calendar.

The SATA not only recognizes the achievements of the winners but also serves as a platform to showcase the latest trends and developments in the travel and tourism industry in South Asia. The event includes a series of networking opportunities that provide a valuable opportunity for industry professionals to share ideas and insights.

Overall, the South Asian Travel Awards play a crucial role in promoting the travel and tourism industry in South Asia and recognizing the contributions of the organizations that drive its success.





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BON APPÉTIT

# Grilled Mas Bai



Introducing Chef Ishaq, a seasoned culinary expert with a journey that began in 2002 at Soneva Gili by Six Senses Resorts and Spas. With a rich background that includes stints at Royal Island by Villa Hotels and a noteworthy tenure at Bandos Island Resort, where he rose to the prestigious role of Executive Chef, Chef Ishaq has cultivated a remarkable culinary career. Currently at the helm as the Executive Chef of Royal Island Resort, he's not only a master in the kitchen but also a prominent figure in the culinary world, having showcased his skills at various local and international food exhibitions and earned numerous accolades throughout his impressive career. With specialized training in diverse cuisines and management workshops in Germany, Thailand and Vietnam, Chef Ishaq's culinary expertise knows no bounds.

*Fish (mas) is an integral part of the Maldivian diet. Traditional Maldivian Cuisine is based around fish, coconuts, and starchy items. The nation's favorite fish is skipjack tuna, which can be served fresh or dried. The fish is served for virtually every meal of the day.*

*This traditional dish can be prepared either freshly caught, or semi-smoked (valho'mas). The fragrant rice (Masbaiy) I cooked with fresh tuna cubes and served wrapped in banana leaf pocket, finished on the char-griller to diversify its taste to a smoky flavor even using a fresh tuna cube. I believe this way the dish can be uplifted to a modern cuisine.*

*The perfect complement to this dish is with Thelli Rihaakuru which is a fish broth extracts and sautéed with onions and chili in oil with curry leaves and pandan leaves. It can be complemented with sweet bilimbi salad and fried chapati.*

INGREDIENTS:

For the tuna rolls

- 240 grams normal rice
- 1000 ml water
- 500 grams tuna fillet (diced into about 2cm cubes)
- 15 grams habanero chili (githeyo'mirus), cut into quarter
- 3 cloves
- 3 cloves of cardamom, tips open
- 5 grams black mustard seeds
- 5 grams whole cumin seeds
- 2 inch cinnamon, crack into pieces
- 1 tbsp ginger (minced/grated)
- 15 grams pepper corns
- 200 grams onion, thinly sliced
- 30 grams garlic, thinly sliced
- 15 grams ginger, grated
- 10 grams curry leaves
- 40 grams bilimbi, cut into quarter
- 5 pieces of 2 inch ramba leaf
- 5 grams turmeric powder
- 45 ml vegetable oil
- Salt to taste

ACCOMPANIMENTS:

- Small bowl theluli rihaakuru
- Fried chapati strips
- Sweet bilimbi salad

METHOD:

- Rinse rice in a large bowl until water becomes clear; leave to dry in a colander
- In a large pot, heat the oil
- Throw mustard seeds and cumin and fry to pop
- Add and sauté the onions, garlic, ginger, cardamom, cinnamon, curry leaves and ramba leaves
- Add the tuna and stir fry until cooked, do not mash
- Add the rice and the rest of the dry ingredients
- Over a low flame, mix everything for 2 – 3 minutes
- Add the water, mix well
- Add the chili and bilimbi and adjust salt. Cover and cook for about 20 minutes over a medium flame
- Stir the mixture every 4 – 5 minutes until the rice is cooked by 1/3 and remove from the fire
- Tear or cut the banana leaf into 30 - 40 cm (1 foot or a little more) pieces. Prepare about 6 pieces, just wilt to make easy to fold
- Arrange the banana leaves on a baking sheet. Spoon a portion of rice on each leaf. Fold each banana leaf like an envelope and secure it with toothpicks
- On medium heat, grill each packet for about 15 minutes, flipping occasionally. The outside banana leaf wrapper will blister and blacken, but the rice inside will remain protected and absolutely delicious
- Serve with accompaniments

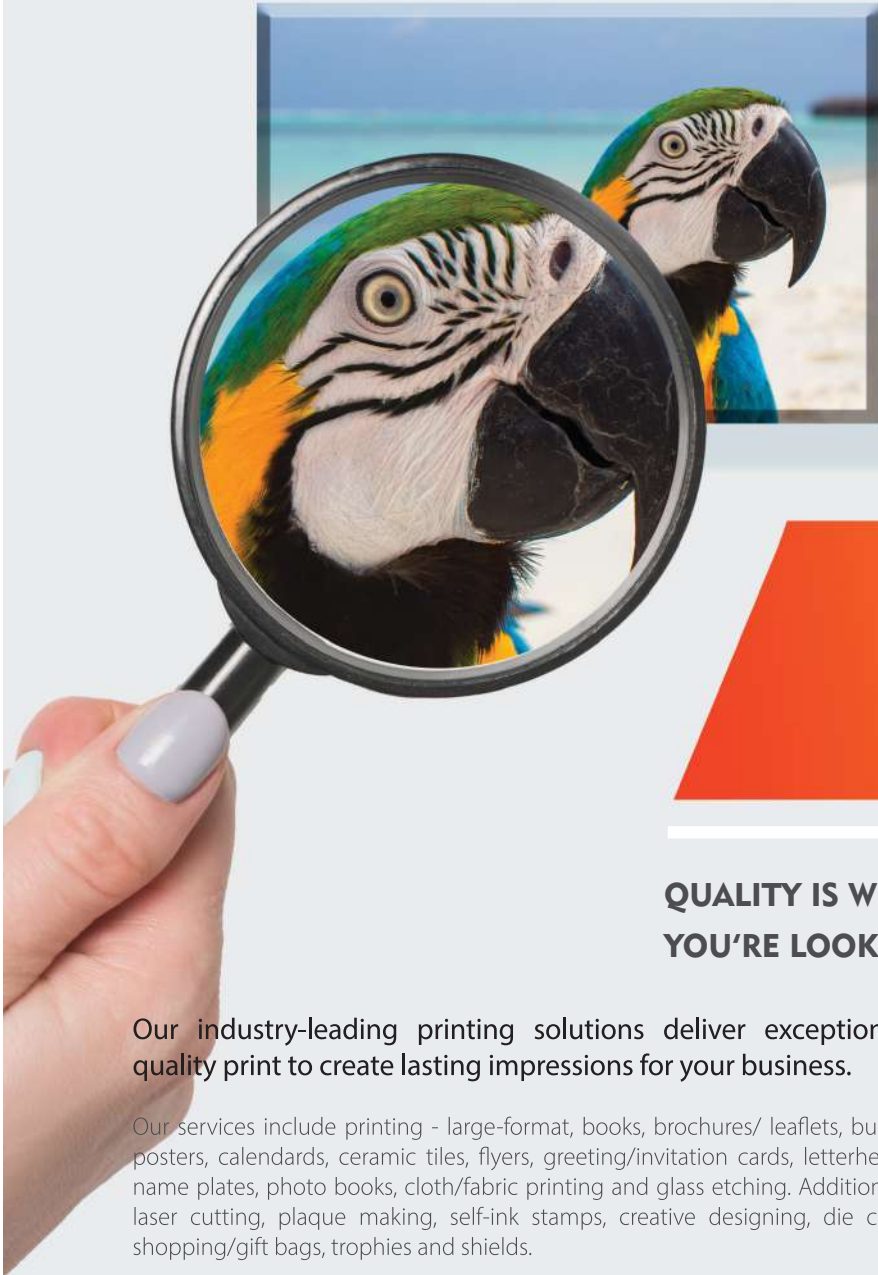


Courtesy of  
Chef Ishaq Solih  
Executive Chef  
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# Frankly Speaking

**Direct flights between Maldives and China commenced this year, January. So far, the Chinese market has climbed up to the top 3 markets to the Maldives in terms of arrivals. Do you think the Chinese market will overtake Russia and India and emerge as the top market to Maldives by year end?**



**Yoosuf Riffath**  
Managing Director  
Capital Travel

*During my recent visit to China, I observed a significant increase in demand from Chinese clients looking for more connections to the Maldives for their holidays.*

*Since China reopened its borders this year, this demand has risen to the 3rd level. While I don't anticipate it reaching the number one spot, it's possible that it might reach the 2nd level by the end of this year. This trend is quite promising for the tourism industry in the Maldives.*



**Ibrahim Nizam**  
CEO & MD,  
The Grand Holidays & The Grand Associates

*The tourist arrivals from India and Russia have been consistent during the past quarters as well as last year. With the new airlines starting to Maldives directly from Delhi/India, we could expect more arrivals from India. Maldives is exceptionally popular among the Indian outbound market and the cost-effective airfare along with short-haul flights are added advantages to India over other destinations.*

*However, if the frequency and number of direct flights from China are steady, and proper promotional activities are maintained, there is a possibility that the Chinese market gain a better position at the top in the Maldives tourism market.*



**Mohamed Firaq**  
Managing Director  
Inner Maldives Holidays

*I don't think sooner the position will change. Percentage remains as it is now, unless we do a huge promotion .*



**Shaaz Waleed**  
Managing Director  
Resort Life Travel

*I think Russia will maintain as the top market, China will be 2nd leading market to the Maldives.*



**Mohamed Ali**  
Chairman  
Moodhu Holidays

*I have a strong anticipation that Chinese tourist arrivals could become the leading category among tourist arrivals in the Maldives by the year's end, provided there are no major unfavorable developments in China.*



**Ahmed Ibrahim**  
Director  
Noo Rani Travels

*Definitely. Chinese arrivals over the recent past has outnumbered other countries, and this is a good outlook for tourism numbers recovery.*



**Ahmed Zubair Adam**  
Managing Director  
Blue Horizon

*Yes. Even now flights are the issue and more direct flights are needed between China and Maldives.*

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