

The islandchief

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Flavours of Leadership

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

with

Chef Ishaq Solih

Executive Chef, Royal Island Resort

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with International Flights to India
Starting from 2024

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Dear Readers,

As December arrives abruptly, it's time to look forward to the year ahead. Before we do, let's take a moment to recognize the triumphs and breakthroughs of the past year—acknowledging those who have overcome challenges and epitomized excellence.

Speaking of excellence, the Maldives secured its position as the World's Leading Destination for an unprecedented fourth consecutive time at the prestigious World Travel Awards (WTA) Grand Final Gala Ceremony 2023. The grand event unfolded at the iconic Burj Al-Arab in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, on December 1. Facing fierce competition from 17 globally acclaimed destinations, including Dubai, Indonesia, New Zealand, Spain, and Vietnam, the Maldives emerged triumphant at the WTA's prestigious 30th-anniversary celebration. Adding to the accolades, the Maldives Marketing and Public Relations Corporation (MMPRC) clinched the title of the world's most esteemed tourism board for the second consecutive year.

Dive into this edition's cover story featuring an exclusive interview with Chef Ishaq Solih, the Executive Chef at Royal Island Resort. Chef Ishaq's journey, marked by resilience, leadership, and an unwavering commitment to sustainability, unfolds from humble beginnings to culinary mastery. Explore his insights on the ever-changing Maldivian culinary landscape, uncover his extraordinary creations, and delve into his vision for a sustainable future—all on page 12.

As we close out the year and look forward to celebrating the holidays with family and friends — while also taking a much-needed pause in our daily frenetic lives — we hope you get to enjoy the wonder of the season. We'd like to wish all our readers and advertisers alike the very best of the holiday season. Though the world continues to spin faster every day it's more important than ever to pause, reflect and cherish what we have, while always hoping for better in the world.

On behalf of the entire Islandchief team, we wish you good health, happiness and, as always, a touch of magic during this holiday season. And, with a new year upon us, we hope it holds great promise and potential, while continuing to dream big in order to realize a brighter future filled with hope, fulfilment and the ability to fuel positive change.

Happy New Year!

Until next time,

The Islandchief Team



Whale Shark Point in South Ari Atoll

Whale Shark Point, located at the southern tip of Ari Atoll and recognized as one of the premier destinations globally for swimming with whale sharks, spans a vast area facing Maamigili and Fenfushi inhabited islands, as well as the resort island of Sun Island. This region, renowned for its abundance of plankton and nutrients, serves as a year-round haven for dozens of whale sharks. Staying in the southern part of Ari Atoll provides convenient access to this extraordinary experience, with all hotels in the vicinity capable of arranging the whale shark tour. This is a marine protected area. The individuals found in South Ari Marine Protected Area (SAMPA), have a high site fidelity rate, meaning that the same individuals are often re-sighted in the area. SAMPA has the highest re-sighting rate of any whale shark hotspot in the world.

PHOTO CREDIT: Maldives Whale Shark Research Programme (MWSRP)

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ACROSS THE SKIES

Manta Air Elevates to New Heights with International Flights to India Starting from 2024

Manta Air, the Maldives' leading airline, proudly announces that it is starting direct flights from India to the tropical paradise of Maldives. The momentous announcement took place at a prestigious event hosted at the chic Bang at The Ritz-Carlton hotel in Bangalore.

In a move aimed at redefining air travel between India and the Maldives, the airline will operate direct flights from Bengaluru's Kempegowda International Airport to the Maldives' Dhaalu Airport, allowing visitors to avoid the hassles and additional expense of transiting through the main Velaana International Airport at Male, and gaining direct access to many luxury resorts located in Dhaalu atoll.

Manta Air is the Maldives' leading seaplane and domestic airlines operator and prides itself on providing its passengers with a seamless travel experience and exceptional customer service. By flying directly to Dhaalu airport, customers going to resorts located in that atoll are able to save on the usual transit time and additional transfer costs incurred when entering Maldives through the traditional Male' airport route.

Dhaalu Airport will provide convenient

immigration processes exclusively for Manta Air guests, enabling quick transfers. Dhaalu atoll is host to some of the country's best resorts, including Kandima Maldives, Niyama Private Islands, St. Regis Maldives, RIU, Baglioni, Angsana Velavaru, and Sun Siyam Iru Veli. The Charter flight schedules have been designed to allow guests to maximize their stay duration in the Maldives, with all flights arriving in the Maldives in the mornings and departing late in the evenings for India.

The flights are scheduled to commence in January 2024.

Mohamed Khaleel, CEO of Manta Air comments "This announcement marks a pivotal moment in our company's trajectory – we are progressing from being the leading domestic and seaplane carrier in the Maldives to an international airline operator. With Manta Air's expansion through a new direct flight route from India to the Maldives we anticipate a surge in travel interest and bookings from Indian tourists. This strategic move aims to enhance the guest experience and boost bookings for resorts in Dhaalu atoll, particularly Kandima, RIU Hotel, and Niyama Private Island, which are all located



in close proximity to the airport. By facilitating easier and more affordable travel access to the Maldives, we foresee a substantial increase in travel demand from Bengaluru and across India in 2024 and beyond."

This strategic initiative signifies a major milestone for the homegrown Maldives' airline and recognizes India as a pivotal source market for the Maldives. Manta Air, in collaboration with premium partner resorts, will curate combined exclusive

packages for the respective properties that are conveniently connected to the Dhaalu Airport. These thoughtfully designed offers ensure end-to-end convenience for international travelers from India, resulting in significant savings on flight time and costs. With this initiative Manta Air aims to enhance the in-flight experience, streamline international travel processes, and eliminate the need for intermediary travel requirements or connecting domestic flights within the Maldives.

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ACROSS THE SKIES



Emirates and Condor have announced the activation of their reciprocal interline agreement which will boost connectivity for customers to 70 routes operated by both airlines across Europe, Africa, Asia, Australasia and the Middle East, with a single ticket fare and hassle-free baggage policy. The two carriers also signed a frequent flyer programme agreement enabling Emirates Skywards members to earn and redeem Miles on all Condor-operated flights.

The agreements were signed by Adnan Kazim, Emirates Chief Commercial Officer and Jens Boyd, Condor Commercial Director at the Dubai Airshow. Starting from today, Emirates' passengers will enjoy seamless access to new and exciting European and Caribbean destinations operated by Condor including 24 regional points via Frankfurt, 12 regional points via Dusseldorf, 9 regional points via Hamburg and 12 regional points via Munich. Some of the most popular cities available for Emirates' customers

include Malaga, Ibiza, Cancun and Havana, among others, all with a single ticket and convenient baggage check-through to the final destination.

The interline agreement will also provide Condor's customers convenient additional access to Emirates-operated flights between Frankfurt and Dubai, as well as beyond Dubai to 12 points across Asia, Australasia, Africa and the Middle East including Auckland, Bangkok, Male, Muscat and Mauritius, among others.

Tickets are now on sale for travel immediately, itineraries can be booked on www.emirates.com, www.condor.com, with Online Travel Agencies (OTA's) and all major GDS' via travel agents. The new partnership will expand Emirates' footprint in Europe by an additional 57 points via its existing four gateways in Germany, providing more options and connectivity for the airline's customers to popular destinations in Europe and the Caribbean for both business and leisure travel.

Emirates and Condor Activate Reciprocal Interline Partnership

Emirates has been serving Germany since 1987 and currently operates 63 weekly flights to Frankfurt, Hamburg, Dusseldorf and Munich. The airline continues to expand its global footprint to meet customer demand, working with strategic partners to offer customers seamless access to many points beyond its own network of 144 destinations. With the addition of Condor boosting its partner-airlines network to 30 codeshare and 121 interline partners, Emirates' customers can seamlessly reach more than 1,500 cities across 6 continents.

Earn and redeem Miles on Condor's network

Emirates Skywards members can now earn and redeem Miles on all Condor operated flights. Members can earn up to 1 Skywards Mile per miles flown on Economy Class; 1.25 Skywards Miles per miles flown in Economy Premium Class; and up to 2.15 Skywards Miles per mile flown in Business Class.

Members can also redeem Miles on Condor operated flights starting from 8,000 Miles for a one-way Economy Class ticket and starting from 16,000 Miles for a one-way Business Class ticket. More than 1.4 million German nationals and residents are enrolled in Emirates Skywards and benefit from exclusive privileges including, flight rewards, upgrades, hotel stays, and

money-can't-buy-experiences.

About Condor

As Germany's most popular leisure airline, Condor has been taking its guests to the world's most beautiful holiday destinations since 1956. Every year, more than nine million guests fly with Condor from the eight largest airports in Germany, from Zurich in Switzerland and from Vienna in Austria to around 90 destinations in Europe, Africa and America. Condor operates a fleet of over 50 aircraft, which are maintained by the company's own maintenance operation, Condor Technik GmbH, according to the highest safety standards at the Frankfurt and Dusseldorf locations. At the end of 2022, Condor, as the German launch customer, took delivery of the first new Airbus A330neo long-haul aircraft. An average of one new long-haul aircraft will be flown every month until 2024.

Thanks to state-of-the-art technology and maximum efficiency, the latest-generation 2-litre aircraft is the European front-runner with 2.1 litres per passenger per 100 kilometres and the highest level of customer comfort. Moreover, Condor will receive 41 brand-new short- and medium-haul aircraft of the A32Xneo family from 2024. Further information and images are available at www.condor.com/downloads.

Velana International Airport Upgrades Aeronautical Message Handling System for Enhanced Efficiency

Velana International Airport (VIA) proudly announces the successful upgrade of its Aeronautical Message Handling System (AMHS), a significant leap toward technological advancement in air navigation services. This strategic move reflects VIA's commitment to staying at the forefront of cutting-edge technology.

The AMHS, designed as a

next-generation technology platform, plays a crucial role in facilitating the seamless exchange of aeronautical information among stakeholders involved in flight operations, air navigation services, and airport operations. Key information communicated through this system includes details related to flight plans, NOTAM (Notice to Airmen), and meteorological updates.

This transformative upgrade automates previously manual processes, streamlining tasks such as flight plan approvals and filing procedures through a secured internet network. Developed at VIA with an investment of approximately USD 500,000 the newly integrated system is provided by IDS AirNav, a globally recognized leader in AMHS services. IDS AirNav has also played a pivotal role by delivering necessary consultancy and training for MACL staff.

The adaptation of AMHS underscores MACL's continuous commitment to advancing air navigation services, enhancing operational efficiency, and ensuring the steadfast safety of air navigation services. This pivotal



service will be delivered by Maldives National Air Traffic Services (MNATS), the primary air service provider in the Maldives and a subsidiary company of MACL.

IN A NUTSHELL

Sheraton Maldives Full Moon Resort & Spa Embraces a Leading Role in Propagating Coral Spawning Research Alongside Maldivian Marine Experts, Reefscapers



Sheraton Maldives Full Moon Resort & Spa announces its integral involvement in advancing the field of coral spawning research. The esteemed resort is collaborating with Reefscapers, a distinguished Maldivian marine consultancy that specializes in the vital realm of coral restoration. Sheraton Maldives Full Moon Resort & Spa, known for its commitment to preserving the natural beauty of the Maldives' underwater world, is proud to play a pivotal role in supporting Reefscapers' groundbreaking research endeavors.

This groundbreaking study, which spans two Atolls for two years, focuses on observing the spawning patterns of 22 species of Acropora corals, a genus highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. The research, led by Reefscapers' marine biologists, has unveiled fascinating insights into the spawning behavior of Acropora corals in the region. The study reveals that the Maldives experiences two distinct spawning seasons throughout the year, with spawning events occurring over an extended period of eight months. The exact timing of spawning varies between species, with some corals spawning close to sunset and others later in the evening. Furthermore, the date of spawning differs between Atolls, with corals in North Male Atoll spawning earlier compared to Baa Atoll.

Coral restoration in the Maldives is of paramount importance for ecosystem recovery following previous declines due to rising ocean temperatures. Sheraton Maldives Full Moon Resort & Spa is honored to contribute to the success of this research by providing a comprehensive venue and all the

necessary resources for Reefscapers.

Kate Sheridan, the resort's marine biologist and one of the key researchers, expresses her enthusiasm about the project, stating, "Studying the spawning patterns of Acropora corals is crucial for understanding their reproductive cycles and developing effective conservation strategies. The support of the resort has been significant in the success of this research, and we are excited about the positive impact it will have on coral restoration and research efforts in the region."

The collaborative effort with Reefscapers signifies a commitment to marine conservation. General Manager of Sheraton Maldives Full Moon Resort & Spa, Mohamed El Aghoury remarked, "We are proud to be part of a project that not only contributes to the scientific understanding of coral spawning but also aligns with our commitment to environmental sustainability. This research is a testament to the positive outcomes that can be achieved through collaboration between the hospitality sector and environmental experts."

In its continued efforts towards sustainability, the resort recently celebrated its milestones of planting over 520 coral frames, and successfully restored more than 27,000 coral colonies. Aligning with Marriott International's "Serve 360: Doing Good in Every Direction", and "Good Travel with Marriott Bonvoy" initiatives, guests who stay at Sheraton Maldives Full Moon Resort & Spa can participate in Adopt a Coral, an interactive coral-fragment plantation activity to promote reef habitats.

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IN A NUTSHELL

10 Reasons to Visit Maldives in 2024 - WTM Special

Picture this: It's late afternoon. You've had a big lunch and are lying on a lounge on a pristine white-sand beach. The temperature is just right, there's crystal clear turquoise waters all around, and you fall asleep to the soothing sound of the gentle waves crashing onto the shore. Upon rousing, you see a long-legged heron in the distance, and the sky is ablaze with glorious hues of purple and orange. The number of things you can do in the Maldives are endless, so are the reasons, but here are some for now to get you thinking. Once you're done with the thinking, start planning, booking and getting ready for your best ever adventure for the coming year.



Fly to the Maldives in 'private jet'-style with Beond

Prepare for an unparalleled journey with Beond Airlines, a business-class-only airline based in the Maldives, promising a bespoke and meticulously designed flying experience with upcoming routes connecting Munich, Riyadh and Zurich to Malé. With an Airbus A319 aircraft initially and A321neo planes to follow, Beond is set to offer a selection of 44-seat and 68-seat configurations, adding diversity to the journey experience.

While the airline sets its sights on expanding to 60 cities and acquiring 32 aircrafts within the next five years, its primary focus remains on the Maldives.

Did someone say Boat Trip?

Embark on an extraordinary adventure across the breathtaking Maldives seas. Picture the serenity of cruising along crystal-clear waters, navigating 510 miles north-south through stunning atolls and islands that form this tropical paradise. Experience the enchanting beauty of this unique destination where every wave tells a story, offering a perfect retreat for those seeking both tranquility and adventure. Indulge in the luxury of exploring the hidden gems of the Maldives aboard a cruise, discovering its rich marine life, vibrant coral reefs, and the captivating essence of this maritime haven.



Unleash Your Inner Mermaid at Pullman Maldives

Experience the enchantment of Maamutaa island as it welcomes mermaids to its shores in 2024. Not only can you spot these mystical beings around the resort, but you can also live out your mermaid fantasy. Pullman Maldives is breaking the mold by offering the innovative PADI mermaid program, making it the first resort in the Maldives to do so. Seize the exclusive opportunity to learn the art of becoming a mermaid during your vacation while earning a certification in PADI mermaid program – an extraordinary adventure not to be overlooked in 2024.

Beyond Romance

Let's clear up a common misconception. You don't have to be in love or commemorating a honeymoon or anniversary to make a trip to the Maldives worthwhile. Bringing along a loved one, someone with whom you want to share this special experience, can indeed enhance your visit. However, it's essential to remember that love can be expressed in various forms.

In short, the Maldives is stunning and can evoke a sense of romance, but the breathtaking scenery is not limited to the affectionate gazes shared by a couple in love.



Drive on the waters around Maafushi

Seize the moment on an aquatic journey across the stunning blue waters around Maafushi. Promising an adrenaline-fueled and entirely novel experience crafted for those seeking an adventurous thrill beyond the ordinary. Every Jet car ride guarantees an unparalleled, hassle-free, and unforgettable saltwater adventure. Step into a different world the moment you set foot inside these luxurious jet cars!

Maldives' First Floating Villa Resort with Soneva Secret

Named Soneva Secret for good reason, this upcoming retreat nestled in one of

the Maldives' most secluded regions, Haa Dhaalu, promises an escape like no other. Scheduled to open its doors on January 10, 2024, this floating villa resort vows to deliver on its commitment to sun, sea, and sand, accentuated by a remarkable element of privacy. With an array of 14 overwater and island villas, including clandestine hideaways reachable solely by boat and the Maldives' premier floating villa, guests can anticipate an ultimate overwater stay surrounded by lush tropical gardens. Each room and villa is dedicated to offering personalized services, ensuring an indelible immersion in nature, all while being meticulously designed with sustainability in mind. Notably, the overwater villas are intentionally structured to remain unaffected by wave movements and can solely be accessed via the sea.

Embrace Holistic Healing in the Maldives

Choose Maldives to experience a one-of-a-kind wellness retreat, where a fusion of expert healers from across the globe converge to curate tailored programs designed to rejuvenate your mind, body, and soul. These high-end resorts are committed to offer top-tier service and amenities exemplified through an ever-evolving lineup of visiting practitioners, spanning reiki specialists, Watsu therapists, acupuncturists, crystal sound healers, and more. With a focus on holistic well-being, the practitioners guide you through an array of practices, from sound healing to naturopathy to the aqua therapy methods of Watsu.



Plunge into blue

Embark on an exhilarating journey in 2024 with a thrilling adventure awaiting at Ifuru Island in the Maldives. This stunning destination hosts the Maldives' exclusive permanent skydiving spot, a result of a collaboration with the 21k-jump World Champion skydiver, Will Penny. Complemented by its very own private airport, Ifuru Island promises an unforgettable skydiving experience within a tropical paradise.

Take a leap boldly into the skies above Ifuru Island in the Maldives, ascending to the heavens before plunging into the endless blue. Absorb the breathtaking 360-degree panorama, where the vast expanse of the Indian Ocean, the scattered jewels of islands, and the

vibrant reefs combine to create a mesmerizing spectacle, offering a unique perspective on this paradise.



Dive into Marine Conservation at SHELL

Embark on an educational journey at the Sea Hub for Environmental Learning (SHELL) in Six Senses Laamu, an innovative space designed for immersive marine conservation experiences. Host to the Maldives Underwater Initiative (MUI), a collaboration between Six Senses Laamu marine biologists and partner NGOs, it offers a central exhibition area showcasing diverse marine life and various facilities such as a gallery, marine laboratory, cinema, and children's zone—all integrating state-of-the-art technology with conservation-inspired art. The MUI team leads interactive activities, research, and supports sustainable resource management in Laamu, catering to researchers and advocating for the protection of marine ecosystems—a vital focus in today's world.



Our big-hearted welcome and famous faces...

All across the Maldives, you'll see people hard at work. It's in our blood. There's always fish to be caught, trails to be walked, tunes to be played, tales to be told and infectious smiles to be had. And we're more than happy to share all of that with you.

These little things represent our essence - our boundless passion, genuine warmth, profound respect for tradition, and a strong connection to our land. Each facet encapsulates a unique narrative, intricately enhancing the tapestry of your journey in the Maldives.

Whatever experiences you choose, our big-hearted hosts are eager to welcome you as you wholeheartedly embrace the immense spirit that thrives within us.

Contributing Writer: Ahmed Ijaz

IN A NUTSHELL

Ifuru Island Maldives Adds an Amazing New Addition to Its Team: Its Very Own Skydiving Plane

The Maldives' exciting new premium all-inclusive resort Ifuru Island Maldives has just added an amazing new addition to its team: its very own skydiving plane. The Cesna 208B was the winner of the extensive selection process and is now equipped with a rear door ready for skydiving operations. The plane flew from the United Kingdom and landed at Ifuru Island Maldives on November 8, 2023 at 16:48 after a 3 day journey.

Leading the charge is the legendary Will Penny - a world champion freestyle skydiver with over 20 years of experience and more than 21,000 jumps under his belt. Will and his team of six will ensure that guests have a safe, scenic, and unforgettable experience.

Ifuru Island Maldives has now become a destination for adrenaline junkies and adventure seekers with the opening of the only permanent skydiving drop zone in the Maldives. From November 2023 until March 2024, guests will have the chance to leap out of a plane and free-fall over the turquoise waters. The resort provides all necessary needs, state-of-the-art equipment, and

guidance to ensure that seasoned and first-time jumpers have an awesome and exhilarating experience.

To introduce Ifuru Island Maldives in the British market, the resort partnered up with iFly London, an elite indoor skydiving company, and hosted British media journalists on 3 November 3, 2023. Attendees were given a sneak peek of the SkyDive plane landing at Ifuru Island via live feed.

"We had the pleasure of hosting some of the elite travel media in London and watched a live feed of our skydive aircraft landing on Ifuru Island!! A great introduction as we shared the adrenaline of that free flying feeling. Great day and a great time to talk about all things magic at Ifuru Island." said Ifuru Island Maldives Island Vibe Boss (General Manager) Rochelle.

So, if you're keen to live the dream and tick off the ultimate bucket-list adventure, you know where to go. Ifuru Island Maldives is ready and waiting!

Ifuru Island Maldives is offering up to 50 percent off stays until December 23, 2023.



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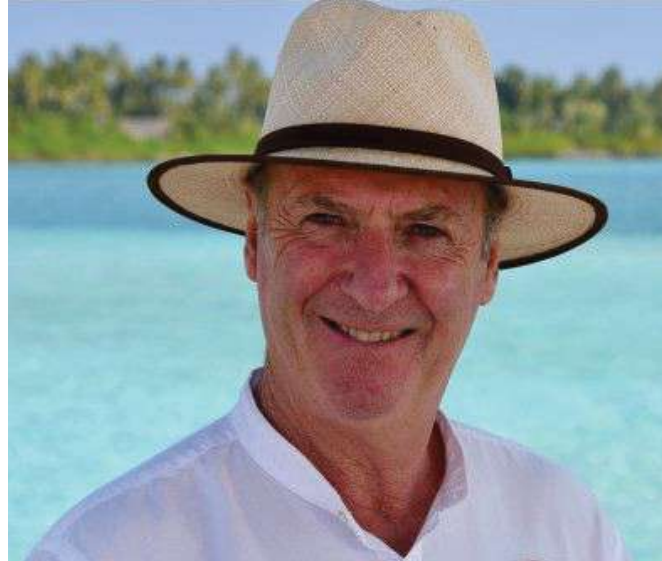
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MOVERS & SHAKERS

Atmosphere Core Announces Strategic Management Moves and Hires



Rikard Nilsson (VP – Culinary)



Philippe Claverotte (Special Task Force)



Mei P Pun (GM – VARU By Atmosphere)



Ram Bhoyroo (GM – Atmosphere Kanifushi)



Lisa Gerosa (GM at OBLU SELECT Sangeli)



Christopher Baker (GM – OBLU SELECT Lobigili & OBLU XPERIENCE Ailafushi)

Banyan Tree Vabbinfaru proudly presents its latest architectural gem, Madi Hiya, an exceptional standalone overwater Yakitori Restaurant and Bar, featuring an incredible sea saltwater infinity pool, breathtaking sunset panoramas, caressed by the gentle sea breeze, and offering an authentic Japanese culinary experience with a Maldivian influence, all crafted from locally-sourced ingredients. Crafted meticulously with bamboo, this architectural wonder seamlessly blends nature's elegance with contemporary design to provide the utmost comfort and relaxation. Guests can unwind in style, lounging on oversized hammocks adorned with luxurious throw pillows, indulging in the plush comfort of spacious daybeds, and finding solace in the inviting ambiance of a cozy sitting area. Anticipated to open its doors in November 2023, Madi Hiya is set to redefine destination dining at Banyan Tree Vabbinfaru.

Innovative and Eco-conscious Design

Inspired by the Dhivehi language, where Madi symbolizes “ray,” and Hiya signifies “shelter,” the name

Madi Hiya pays heartfelt tribute to the graceful rays of the ocean. The newest addition to the resort's elevated epicurean journey not only acknowledges the ocean's majestic rays, but also provides a tranquil retreat, much like the rays of the ocean find refuge.

The naming of this exceptional architectural creation was an extraordinary celebration of teamwork and creativity. Associates from across the resort enthusiastically participated in a naming competition, exemplifying Banyan Tree Vabbinfaru's commitment to fostering a sense of community and collaboration among its dedicated team members.

The award-winning Nomadic Resorts, headquartered in Rotterdam, The Netherlands and renowned for sustainable architectural projects, plays a pivotal role in bringing the Madi Hiya project to life. Their expertise in innovative and environmentally responsible design ensured that the architectural vision seamlessly blended with the natural beauty of the Maldives.

Japanese Cuisine with Maldivian Essence

Madi Hiya offers a symphony of flavors that will tantalize the guests' taste buds. Drawing inspiration from the finesse of Japanese gastronomy while deeply rooted in the essence of the Maldives, a team of expert chefs has artfully curated a menu that harmoniously blends local ingredients with Japanese culinary expertise – allowing the guests to embark on a gastronomic voyage that embodies richness in every delectable bite. Furthermore, a dedicated mixologist is crafting innovative and alluring concoctions that complement the exquisite dining experience.

Guests can satisfy their palates not only with diverse selections of sushi rolls, sashimi, and Madi Hiya's signature yakitori creations but also with authentic Japanese classics. They can also revel in the delectable Omakase set menu, using local fishers' catches and freshly harvested herbs from the resort's garden. Highlighting our passionate chefs' creativity, each meal will be concluded with mouthwatering desserts like Anmitsu, Japanese

cheesecake, or Shinsen'na Kattofurutsu featuring locally grown organic fruits. To enhance the dining experience, wine pairings will also be available.

Impeccable Stewardship

Alongside Madi Hiya's opening, the resort's new Food and Beverage Director, Karim Boulet, of French descent and a distinguished figure in the hospitality and fine dining industry, boasting nearly two decades of invaluable experience and exemplifying a commitment to outstanding stewardship in culinary experiences will oversee the entire food and beverage operations.

“I am thrilled to be part of this charming property with a dynamic team. With the upcoming launch of Madi Hiya in November, my team and I are preparing to introduce a captivating selection of Japanese Whisky and Sake options. We are also planning to offer enticing cooking classes and live training sessions under the impeccable stewardship of the Japanese-specialty chef, inviting guests to immerse themselves in this culinary experience,” expressed Karim.

MOVERS & SHAKERS

Crossroads Maldives Appoints Frederic Lebegue as General Manager of Hard Rock Hotel Maldives

Crossroads Maldives has announced the appointment of Mr. Frederic Lebegue as the General Manager of Hard Rock Hotel Maldives. With a distinguished career spanning over four decades, Mr. Lebegue brings a wealth of experience and an impressive track record of success in the dynamic realm of the hospitality industry.

Hailing from France, Mr. Lebegue is renowned for his value-driven leadership approach, and his ability to foster development within diverse multicultural teams. His illustrious career includes pivotal leadership roles at esteemed properties such as Paradis Beachcomber Golf Resort & Spa, Dinarobin Beachcomber Golf Resort & Spa, and Harmonie Golf & Beach Estate in Mauritius, as Cluster General Manager, Hilton Fiji Beach Resort & Spa Fiji Islands, DoubleTree by Hilton Fiji, Sonaisali Island as Cluster General Manager, and Hilton Cabo Verde Sal Resort, and Conrad Bali in Indonesia, as General Manager.

His invaluable expertise has also significantly contributed to the Maldives tourism industry, notably during his



tenure as General Manager at Waldorf Astoria Maldives (JA Manafaru Maldives), and as the Director of Operations at Conrad Maldives, Rangali Island. Mr. Lebegue's ability to orchestrate high-performing teams that resonate with the unique rhythm of Hard Rock culture and the wealth of Maldives' experience he brings as a seasoned senior hospitality professional are truly remarkable.

Mr. Lebegue has consistently demonstrated his expertise in driving

commercial, financial, and sustainable performance. His accomplishments extend beyond the conventional notes, encompassing successful tenures at renowned properties, large-scale renovation projects, innovative team development strategies, and the implementation of resonant corporate social responsibility programs. Beyond the spotlight of his professional accolades, Mr. Lebegue is not just a maestro in the hospitality industry; he is a dedicated advocate for community initiatives. As a board member actively

engaged with various foundations supporting education and sustainability goals, he sets a standard that perfectly harmonizes with the ethos of the Hard Rock brand as well as one of the core pillars of sustainability goals for the brand – Save the Planet.

"We are turning up the volume of excitement as Mr. Lebegue joins us at Hard Rock Hotel Maldives. His extensive experience, strategic vision, and unwavering commitment to excellence will be the driving force behind the continued success and growth of our Hard Rock Hotel Maldives," stated Mr. Michael Marshall, Chief Executive Officer, and Graham Kiy, Area Vice President of Hotel Operations EMEA – Hard Rock International. "We eagerly anticipate the positive impact of this much-anticipated addition to our leadership team." Hard Rock Hotel Maldives is gearing up for a new era of excellence under Mr. Lebegue's guidance, where his passion for the industry will be the main riff in delivering unparalleled guest experiences. This appointment marks a key chord in the brand's commitment to providing a rockin' stay in the heart of the Maldives.

Food Testing



Water Testing



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MOVERS & SHAKERS

Ibrahim Faisal Appointed as Minister of Tourism in the Maldives

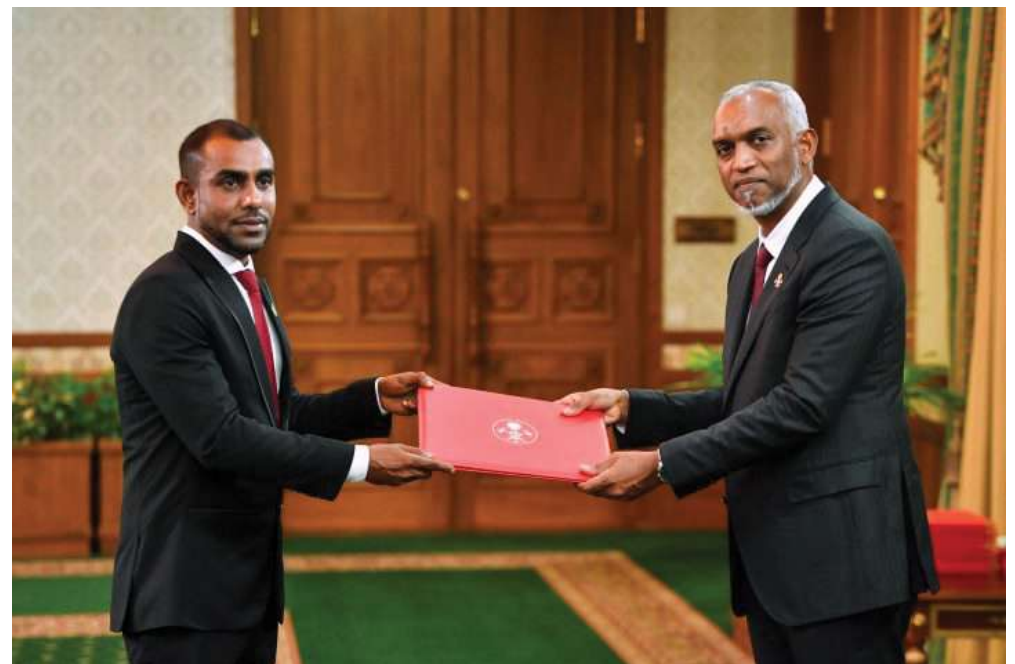
Ibrahim Faisal, the newly appointed Tourism Minister for the Maldives, received the oath of office in a recent ceremony at the President's Office, following the swearing-in of the new President of Maldives.

Having commenced his political journey in 2013, Minister Ibrahim Faisal is deeply rooted in education, having pursued higher studies at Westminster International College in Malaysia, where he focused on business.

His career in public service began in the police force, followed by a role as

deputy minister in the Ministry of Youth and Sports from 2013 to 2015. Subsequently, he served as an additional secretary at the High Commission of Maldives in Malaysia from 2015 to 2018, showcasing a decade of diverse work experiences.

Under the joint leadership of Faisal and President Muizzu, the Maldives government has unveiled ambitious plans to rejuvenate tourism. The commitment includes securing MVR 4 billion in investments and developing 35 new tourist resorts, aiming for a diversified and flourishing hospitality



landscape.

Recognizing the economic challenges faced by the nation, the duo pledges to address the budget deficit and boost GDP, demonstrating a

commitment to financial resilience. Minister Faisal's background in business management and strategic planning positions him well to contribute to these crucial economic objectives.

Sun Siyam Iru Fushi Appoints Marine Biologist Caitlin Rentell to Drive Sustainable Marine Conservation Efforts



Sun Siyam Iru Fushi Maldives announces the addition of Caitlin Rentell, a talented and passionate marine biologist, to their team. Caitlin brings her expertise and dedication to the forefront of marine conservation efforts, focusing on critical initiatives to protect the pristine marine ecosystems of the Maldives. With her arrival, Sun Siyam Iru Fushi is enhancing its commitment to preserving the enchanting waters of this tropical paradise.

Caitlin's primary responsibilities at Sun Siyam Iru Fushi will include spearheading coral restoration efforts, engaging with guests and island team

members in educational outreach programs, creating activities for the younger guest of the resort with the Koamas Kids Club team to raise awareness about marine life conservation, and fostering eco-tourism initiatives through collaborations with NGO and other local islands. Her work will make a significant contribution to strengthening the reef ecosystem, ultimately improving the region's overall ecological health. These initiatives will also serve as an invaluable resource for educational purposes, allowing guests to learn and appreciate the Maldives' unique marine environment.



UK National, Caitlin Rentell, holds a degree in Marine Biology from the prestigious University of Plymouth, United Kingdom, and has dedicated her academic career to understanding the anthropogenic impacts on our precious marine environment, particularly focusing on the menace of plastic pollution. Throughout her studies, Caitlin developed a profound understanding of the challenges facing our oceans and the urgent need for action.

After completing her degree, Caitlin ventured to the Maldives and joined a sea turtle rehabilitation NGO located on a local island in the Lhaviyani Atoll.

During her time working with the NGO, she gained invaluable experience in coral restoration and community outreach. She actively engaged with the local community to address pressing issues such as waste disposal, all while educating future generations about the importance of preserving the ocean and its unique ecosystems.

Caitlin's passion for marine conservation and her commitment to involving local communities align perfectly with Sun Siyam Iru Fushi's sustainable values and dedication to preserving the Maldives' remarkable marine heritage.

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Flavours of Leadership

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

with

Chef Ishaq Solih

Executive Chef, Royal Island Resort

“ In the culinary world, success is a gradual process. Constantly broaden your knowledge, persevere through challenges, and embrace mistakes as valuable learning opportunities — they play a crucial role in your culinary journey. ”

In this issue of Islandchief, we had the opportunity to engage with a culinary master whose path from modest origins to the esteemed position of Executive Chef at Royal Island Resort mirrors resilience, leadership, and a dedication to sustainability. Having earned distinctions such as Chef of the Year and emphasizing a wide array of culinary experiences, Chef Ishaq Solih offers perspectives on the evolving Maldivian culinary landscape, his most esteemed creations, and his aspirations for sustainability.

What inspired you to pursue a career in culinary arts and what are your earliest memories of the kitchen you worked in?

"Culinary" was a term unfamiliar to me just a year ago when I began my journey in 1998. Back then, my culinary exposure was limited to the simple concept of cooking. My uncles, Chef Mohamed Wafir and Chef Ahmed Wafir, who worked in early Maldives resorts, introduced me to diverse dishes. Locals were rare in the culinary field, but my grandmother and the community prepared vibrant dishes for events like Bodu'mauloodhu. My initial kitchen memories were daunting; surrounded by expatriate chefs, starting with no experience as a young kid posed a significant challenge. My education wasn't sufficient for the pressure I faced.

Your tenure at Bandos Island Resort led you to the prestigious role of Executive Chef. What challenges did you face in this leadership position, and how did you overcome them?

Taking charge of the culinary realm at Bandos Island Resort presented unique difficulties, offering valuable lessons for honing my leadership abilities. Before this, I spent over three years as an executive chef at the Royal Island Resort.

Bandos, the second resort in the Maldives since 1972, boasts a 46-year history of serving the

hospitality industry. During its early years, the resort frequently hosted conferences and banquets, filling a void in conference facilities in the Maldives. The culinary team, some with over 32 years of service, was adept at managing constant event preparations. Introducing changes proved manageable through close collaboration with the management team, particularly with Ms. Sheznee Deen, the general manager and owner's daughter.

Transforming the staff's mindset posed a significant challenge, but with robust support from the food and beverage manager, Mr. Ismail, and the management team, we successfully navigated this hurdle. Coping with an older facility, limited equipment, and resources for consistent services presented another obstacle. Despite these challenges, both the culinary and management teams performed admirably, showcasing resilience and dedication.

You've received numerous accolades throughout your impressive career. Could you share one achievement that you are particularly proud of and the story behind it?

Over the years, I've been fortunate to receive several accolades, such as the National Award for Best Culinary and being recognized as Chef of the Year and Best F&B Host at Soneva Gili Resort &

Six-Senses Spa. However, one award holds a special place in my heart—the Most Enterprising Employee of the Year 2001 at Royal Island Resort. This recognition meant a lot because it highlighted the often-overlooked efforts of behind-the-scenes employees. It acknowledged my commitment to extra duties and training sessions for junior staff. None of this would've been possible without the support of Mr. Faisal Naseem, the General Manager (Former Vice President) and Executive Chef Tilaka Sinaratune.

With specialised training in diverse cuisines and management workshops in Germany, Thailand, and Vietnam, how have these experiences influenced your cooking style?

My culinary and managerial abilities have been profoundly shaped by training experiences abroad, spanning Germany, Thailand, Vietnam, Singapore, India, and Sri Lanka. These sessions allowed me to explore diverse culinary arts, learning from other chefs and refining my skills, both in group management and various cooking techniques. Notably, my overseas training covered Japanese cuisine, while the management workshops in Vietnam and South Africa enriched my understanding of effective leadership.

As the Executive Chef of Royal Island Resort, what is your vision for the culinary experience you aim to provide to guests, and how do you ensure the team aligns with this vision?

In my role overseeing all culinary aspects at Royal Island, from menu creation to kitchen staff supervision, my primary focus is on sustainability. Through initiatives like the Zero Waste program, we transform fruit and vegetable waste into sustainable dishes. About 25 percent of our main buffet and 75 percent of the afternoon tea for all-inclusive guests feature sustainable options, leaving a lasting impression on our guests, particularly with homemade pickles and preserves.

This commitment extends beyond Royal Island, reaching neighboring island schools and contributing over 3000 trees of pineapple, avocado, mango, and jackfruit to various islands. Throughout my three terms at Royal Island, success hinged on the remarkable support from management, notably from former General Managers like Mr. Faisal Naseem, Mr. Qaisar Naseem, Mr. Muaviyath Umar, Mr. Zameel, and the current General Manager, Mr. Ismail Rasheed.

Out of all the dishes, what has been your most proud creation?

Amid our diverse array of local dishes catering to various preferences, I take particular pride in crafting meals for vegans as part of our zero-waste initiative. One standout creation is the grilled Mas'bayi, which garnered enthusiastic feedback from customers, prompting numerous requests for the recipe. In response, I organized cooking lessons to share the culinary artistry behind this dish.

What is your opinion of the Maldives culinary industry, how has it evolved since you started?

I believe the Maldives culinary industry is progressing positively. In the earlier days, offerings were limited, and there was no competitive market or significant guest demands. However, today, we see a transformed landscape with a competitive market and heightened guest expectations. The service industry now boasts numerous high-end

brands, and a revolutionary change has been witnessed in the culinary sector, where food and beverage have become major selling points in many Maldivian properties.

Considering the number of Maldivian chefs across the tourism and hospitality industry, do you think there's enough opportunities available for locals to excel in this profession?

Reflecting on the earlier challenges mentioned, during those times, the local population was smaller, and there was hesitation within the community about locals pursuing culinary careers. The landscape has evolved significantly since then, with more locals recognizing the importance of skilled workers in the industry. Despite a growing number of highly qualified graduates entering the culinary field, challenges persist in securing senior positions. To address this, substantial support from both the government and the industry is needed to ensure equal opportunities. Currently, approximately 95 percent of senior chefs are expatriates, but the emergence of a local culinary association is actively supporting local chefs in seeking opportunities.

How has the Chefs Guild of Maldives (CGM) evolved over the past nine years, and what initiatives are you planning to enhance connections among chefs in the upcoming term?

Initially serving as the vice president and later continuing as an Executive Committee member, I consider being elected as VP a privilege to serve Maldivian chefs. In CGM's early days, financial challenges were significant, with reluctance from resorts and companies to offer support. Despite these struggles, CGM, established in 2014 as the first non-profit association for chefs in the Maldives, secured its charter from the World Association of Chefs Societies (WACS) within a year, affirming its status as the authorized national culinary association.

Supported by Chef Guild Lanka in its early stages, CGM gained membership from the World Association of Chefs Society. Over nine years, CGM has forged strong community ties, playing a vital role in promoting chefs locally and internationally. Actively participating in WACS congresses, including the first world chefs congress in Thessaloniki, Greece, in

2017, CGM has expanded its presence and engaged an increasing number of chefs.

With over 300 registered members and numerous active participants, CGM has become a significant force, sponsoring two annual cooking events in the Maldives and providing an international platform for chefs with financial and technical support. The association's inaugural award ceremony last year marked the beginning of a biennial tradition, featuring professional chef judges who have excelled at both national and international levels.

Looking ahead, I plan to collaborate closely with the president to enhance connections among our chefs and the Chef Guild of Maldives. This initiative aims to encourage participation in internal competitions through CGM, fostering skill development and providing valuable publicity.

In your opinion, what trends or changes do you foresee in the culinary industry, and how are you preparing yourself and your team to stay ahead of the curve at Royal Island Resort?

I foresee substantial shifts in the culinary industry to align with evolving customer preferences and behaviors, incorporating mega trends to meet changing market demands. The pivotal role of monitoring food quality, safety, and waste management will be crucial. To stay ahead of these changes at Royal Island Resort, my focus is on training the team to be versatile and efficient, ensuring their excellence in a fast-paced environment and timely service delivery.

Given your rich background and experience, what advice would you give to aspiring chefs who are looking to build a successful and diverse career in the culinary industry?

To aspiring chefs, my primary advice is to have faith in your abilities and set concrete goals. Establish clear resolutions, persevere through challenges, and demonstrate respect for your colleagues and superiors. Recognize that success in the culinary world is a gradual process. Constantly broaden your knowledge through experiences, hone your skills by experimenting with various recipes and ingredients, and embrace mistakes as valuable learning opportunities—they play a crucial role in your culinary journey.



NEW OPENING

Now Open: Experience 'Madi Hiyaa' at Banyan Tree Vabbinfaru Maldives



The long wait is over! Banyan Tree Vabbinfaru proudly announces the opening of its latest masterpiece, Madi Hiyaa, an exceptional overwater Yakitori Restaurant and Bar that seamlessly blends authentic Japanese culinary delights with a Maldivian touch. Crafted from locally sourced ingredients, Madi Hiyaa merges nature's elegance with contemporary design, providing unparalleled comfort and relaxation for guests to unwind in style.

Inspired by Dhivehi, where "Madi" means "ray," and "Hiyaa" translates to "shelter," Madi Hiyaa pays heartfelt homage to the ocean's graceful rays. This new culinary journey not only recognises the majestic rays of the

ocean but also serves as a serene retreat, echoing how the ocean's rays find refuge.

The naming of this architectural gem was a celebration of teamwork and creativity. Resort associates participated in a naming competition, showcasing Banyan Tree Vabbinfaru's dedication to fostering community and collaboration.

Renowned for sustainable architectural projects, award-winning Nomadic Resorts played a vital role in bringing Madi Hiyaa to life. Their expertise in innovative and environmentally responsible design ensured a seamless blend of architectural vision with the

Maldives' natural beauty.

Madi Hiyaa presents a delightful array of flavors that captivate guests' palates. Inspired by Japanese gastronomy and infused with the Maldives' essence, skilled chefs crafted a menu merging local ingredients with Japanese culinary expertise. This culinary journey promises richness in every delicious bite, enhanced by a dedicated mixologist's inventive concoctions.

Dive into a variety of Japanese delights at Madi Hiyaa – sushi rolls, sashimi, and signature yakitori creations. Enjoy authentic Japanese classics and the delightful Omakase set with local catches and garden-fresh herbs. Chefs

add a creative touch, ending each meal with tempting desserts like Anmitsu, Japanese cheesecake, or Shinsen'na Kattofurutsu, highlighting locally grown organic fruits. Enhance the experience with wine pairings.

Madi Hiyaa serves as the perfect venue for intimate gatherings, including weddings and vow renewals. It plays a significant role in Banyan Tree Vabbinfaru's ongoing commitment to elevate guest service, establishing benchmarks for luxury and innovation, all while demonstrating dedication to sustainability. This embodies the essence of Madi Hiyaa's promise.

Discover more about Madi Hiyaa | Banyan Tree

Nestled in the serene North Male' Atoll, Banyan Tree Vabbinfaru invites you to a luxurious, laid-back tropical retreat, easily accessible with a short 25-minute speedboat ride from Velana International Airport. With 48 pool villas spread across the island, this untouched paradise welcomes guests to experience the epitome of seclusion and tranquility.

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



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GOOD NEWS....



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Residues after decomposition process:

- Hot flue gas (Non Hazardous)
- Bottom ash (Very less amount generation) Can be used in paver block & Cement industries . Volume of waste reduce to 500% . i.e. 10 Ton waste converts into 50 Kg of Ash.
- **No Smoke**

Advantages:

- Easy operation and not required any high skilled man power.
- Processing chamber does not required any Electricity, Fuel or Solar energy. (Electricity required only for waste handling, Water circulation & Shredder)
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- Installation & Maintenance team (From India) expenses from male International Airport including local Transportation, Food, Accommodation & Medical if require.

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EVENTS & AWARDS

Maldives Secures Four Prestigious Titles in WTA's Indian Ocean Category 2023

Maldives Marketing & PR Corporation announces that the Maldives has achieved remarkable success at the World Travel Awards (WTA) Indian Ocean Category with four prestigious awards secured. The accolades were presented at the illustrious World Travel Awards Africa & Indian Ocean Gala Ceremony, held at the world-renowned Atlantis The Royal in Dubai on October 15, 2023.

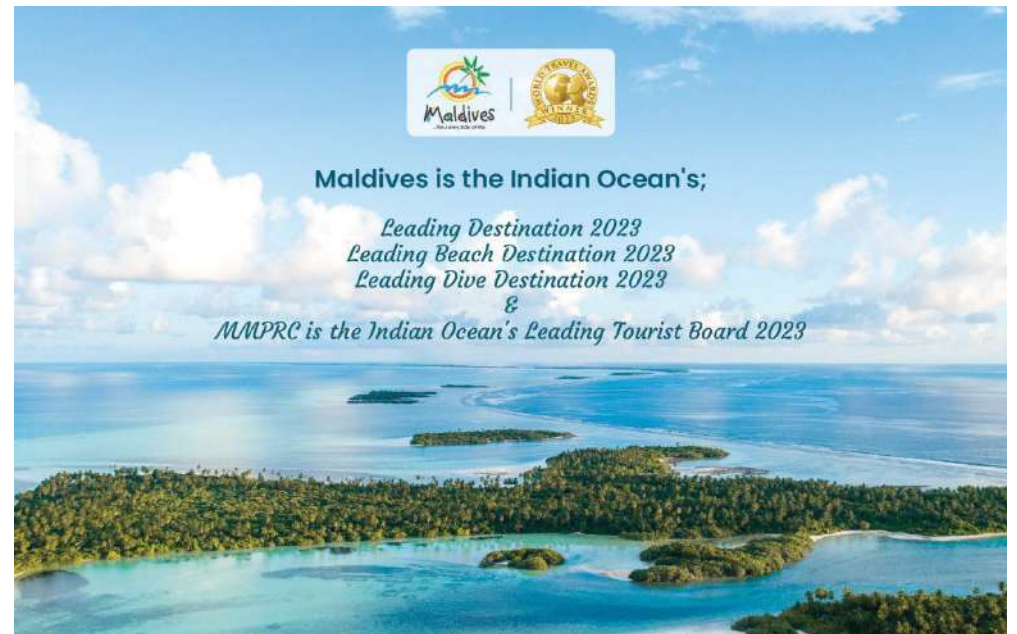
Established in 1993, the World Travel Awards is widely regarded as the most esteemed honors programme in the global travel and tourism industry. Symbolizing the ultimate endorsement of excellence, the awards aim to recognise, reward, and celebrate achievement across all sectors of the travel and tourism industry on a global scale.

The prestigious titles that the Maldives secured are:
Indian Ocean's Leading Destination

2023 (also won in 2020, 2021, & 2022)
Indian Ocean's Leading Beach Destination 2023 (also won in 2020, 2021, & 2022)

Indian Ocean's Leading Dive Destination 2023 (also won in 2020, 2021, & 2022)

Additionally, MMPRC was awarded the title of "Indian Ocean's Leading Tourist Board 2023" in recognition of the hard work, dedication, and unique campaigns through which MMPRC has been marketing the Maldives worldwide. The significance of these recognitions by the tourism industry cannot be overstated. It underscores the Maldives' standing as an unparalleled tourist destination, showcases the country's commitment to delivering unforgettable experiences to visitors from around the world, and reinforces the continued efforts of MMPRC in promoting and developing the nation's tourism sector.



The Maldives has also been nominated for multiple awards in the highly sought-after WTA World's Category, the most prestigious of all WTA categories. The awards for which the Maldives is nominated for World's Leading Destination 2023, World's Leading Beach Destination 2023, World's Leading Dive Destination 2023, World's

Leading Honeymoon Destination 2023, World's Leading Island Destination 2023, and World's Most Romantic Destination 2023. MMPRC has also earned a nomination for 'World's Leading Tourist Board 2023' again this year after having secured the distinguished title for the first time last year.

Reethi Beach Resort Shines Bright with Six Wins at the World Luxury Hotel Awards 2023



Reethi Beach Resort, nestled in the pristine Baa Atoll, of the Maldives, has garnered significant recognition at the World Luxury Hotel Awards 2023, securing an impressive six accolades that emphasize the resort's commitment to providing exceptional hospitality experiences.

Established in 2006, the World Luxury

Hotel Awards stands as an esteemed international entity and is the pinnacle of achievement in the luxury hotel industry. It offers international recognition, with winners selected through votes from over 300,000 international travelers and industry players across more than 100 different categories during a four-week period.

Reethi Beach Resort proudly earned recognition in the following categories:

- Best Luxury All-Inclusive Resort - Maldives
- Best Luxury Eco Resort - Indian Ocean
- Best Luxury Resort - Maldives
- The resort's culinary offerings and dining experiences were also honored, solidifying its reputation as a gastronomic gem:
- Best All-Day Buffet Dining in the Indian Ocean
- Best Luxury Grill in the Indian Ocean
- Best Luxury Hotel Restaurant in the Indian Ocean

Renowned for its culinary excellence, Reethi Beach Resort has established itself as a culinary haven in the Maldives. At the helm is Executive Chef Farish Mukthar, a distinguished certified Master Chef affiliated with the prestigious World Master Chefs Society. With visionary leadership, Chef Farish not only curates the menus for all of the resort's dining establishments but also upholds the elevated standards that discerning

guests anticipate from this exceptional destination. His expertise adds a distinctive flavour to the resort's gastronomic offerings, ensuring an unparalleled dining experience that mirrors the resort's commitment to excellence.

Beyond the awards, Reethi Beach Resort is celebrated for its dedication to exceptional service, offering a diverse range of delectable dining experiences that transcend conventional expectations. The resort's steadfast focus on environmental preservation and sustainability adds an eco-conscious layer to its allure.

These six prestigious awards underscore Reethi Beach Resort's devotion to delivering outstanding services and crafting unforgettable experiences for its guests. It solidifies the resort's position as a standout destination in the Maldives, showcasing that exceptional hospitality goes hand-in-hand with a dedication to authenticity and sustainability.

NBAM and Allied Insurance Host Campaign Promoting Life Jacket Safety



On the afternoon of November 2nd, the National Boating Association of Maldives (NBAM) along with Allied Insurance held a compelling initiative to raise awareness about the importance of wearing life jackets. The engaging campaign, held near No.1 jetty, attracted boat crews and locals.

From 4 pm to 6 pm, enthusiastic participants, including boating enthusiasts and concerned citizens, gathered to learn about the critical

role life jackets play in ensuring safety during water activities and sea transport. Representatives from both NBAM and Allied Insurance were on hand to provide insightful demonstrations and offer valuable information on the best practices for utilizing life jackets.

The event not only succeeded in highlighting the significance of adhering to safety protocols but also underscored the collective

commitment of NBAM and Allied Insurance towards fostering a culture of responsible boating and water recreation.

The success of the roadshow serves as a testament to the growing awareness of maritime safety within the Maldives community, emphasizing the importance of such collaborative efforts in promoting a secure and enjoyable boating experience for all.



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EVENTS & AWARDS

SATA Honors Mr. M.U Maniku for Outstanding Contribution to Maldivian Tourism



The South Asian Travel Awards (SATA) recognizes and celebrates the remarkable journey and unwavering dedication of Mr. M.U Maniku to the Maldivian Tourism Industry. In acknowledgment of his outstanding service, Mr. Maniku is presented with a prestigious recognition plaque at an exclusive ceremony at Kurumba Maldives.

Mr. M.U Maniku has played a pivotal role in shaping and enhancing the tourism landscape of the Maldives. His unwavering commitment, innovative contributions, and tireless efforts have not only contributed to the growth of the industry but have also set a benchmark for excellence. The award ceremony, set against the breathtaking backdrop of Kurumba Maldives, will be a fitting tribute to Mr. Maniku's significant achievements. SATA, in collaboration with industry leaders, is privileged to acknowledge his stellar career and express gratitude for his enduring commitment to the Maldivian Tourism Industry.

The recognition plaque symbolizes the collective appreciation of the tourism community for Mr. Maniku's exceptional contributions. SATA extends its warmest congratulations to him and looks forward to witnessing the continuation of his impactful journey in the years to come. The South Asian Travel Awards have become one of the most prestigious and coveted awards in the travel and tourism industry, recognizing excellence in the region. With the endorsement of KHARA, the awards ceremony is set to become even more important in promoting the region as a top travel destination and showcasing the best that the industry has to offer.

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)

South Asian Travel Awards

The South Asian Travel Awards (SATA) has been recognizing the best of South Asia's hospitality and travel industry since 2016. The prestigious annual event honors stellar organizations and individuals in a wide array of categories.



EVENTS & AWARDS

Oaga Art Resort Congratulates Chef Ibrahim Zuhair for His Achievements at the 1st Indonesian Halal Chef Competition 2023



Chef Ibrahim Zuhair, fondly known as 'Zuzu,' Executive Sous Chef at Oaga Art Resort, has made his team proud with his recent achievements at the 1st Indonesian Halal Chef Competition 2023.

The competition was held in conjunction with the Indonesia Sharia Economic Festival (ISEF) at the Jakarta Convention Center (JCC), from October 25th to 29th, 2023. The event brought together top talents from various countries, including Singapore, Malaysia, Jordan, the Maldives, and Indonesia.

Chef Zuhair, representing the Chef's Guild of Maldives, showcased his culinary expertise in two categories: The International Individual and the Black Box challenge. In the International Individual Category, Chef Zuzu secured the second place, earning a silver medal for his impeccable skills and creativity. He also achieved fourth place in the Black Box category, a

testament to his composure under pressure and the depth of his culinary knowledge.

Guests of Oaga Art Resort are in for a treat, as Chef Zuzu's culinary magic weaves the flavors of the Maldives with international techniques, from the theatrical dining experience at the resort's specialty restaurant, Samaasaa, to the vibrant street food stalls at Kaa Kada, the main restaurant. Chef Ibrahim Zuhair's journey is a culinary adventure that's just begun, and we can't wait to see what he cooks up next.

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, In-Villa Dining to floating meal, choices of excursions, motorized water sports and many more.

Fushifaru Wins 'Hotel of the Year' at LUXE Global Awards 2023

Fushifaru Maldives, a 5* boutique Resort in Lhaviyani Atoll, celebrates winning multiple awards, including 'Hotel of the Year' at the LUXE Global Awards. These awards recognise Fushifaru's outstanding hospitality, exceptional service and dedication to creating special experiences and lasting memories for travelers worldwide.

Fushifaru successfully won multiple other awards, including:

- Best Authentic Experience Resort in Maldives at LUXE Global Awards
- Best Luxury Honeymoon Resort Globally at LUXE Global Awards
- Best Luxury Boutique Resort Globally at LUXE Global Awards
- Hotel of the Year 2023 at LUXE Global Awards

Amongst these, Fushifaru also

successfully won multiple awards, such as the Booking.com 'Traveller Review Award', the 'International Sustainable Award' at the Luxury Lifestyle Awards 2023 and the 'Best Hotel Sustainability Progress' Award at the TUI Global Hotel Awards 2023.

"We are absolutely thrilled to have been awarded these international accolades; it is rewarding for all Fushifaru Residents and motivates us to continue striving for the best," said Ahmed Siaar, General Manager of Fushifaru Maldives.

The consistent accolades are testimony of Fushifaru's fantastic hospitality, restaurants and entertainment, all of which have once again been recognised by the traveller community, ranking Fushifaru amongst the best Resorts in The Maldives.



IN THE NEWS

The Chefs Guild of Maldives Holds Annual General Meeting and Announces New Executive Board

The Chefs Guild of Maldives (CGM) has held its highly anticipated Annual General Meeting, a dynamic event that celebrates the achievements of the past year and set the stage for the organization's ambitious plans for the future. The event, held at Champa Central Hotel on November 8, witnessed an esteemed gathering of culinary experts and special invitees who shared a common passion for culinary excellence and innovation.

The welcome address, delivered by CGM Exco Member Mr. Ishaq Solih, emphasized the importance of camaraderie and collaboration within the culinary community, setting the stage for a day of productive discussions and meaningful interactions.

Subsequently, the attendees were treated to an inspiring keynote address by renowned Executive Coach and Mentor, Mr. Afeef Hussain, focusing on the themes of optimism, positivity & creativity. Mr. Hussain's insights resonated deeply with the audience, igniting a collective sense of purpose and determination.



A brief intermission provided attendees with an opportunity to engage in informal discussions and networking, fostering a sense of camaraderie and goodwill among the participants.

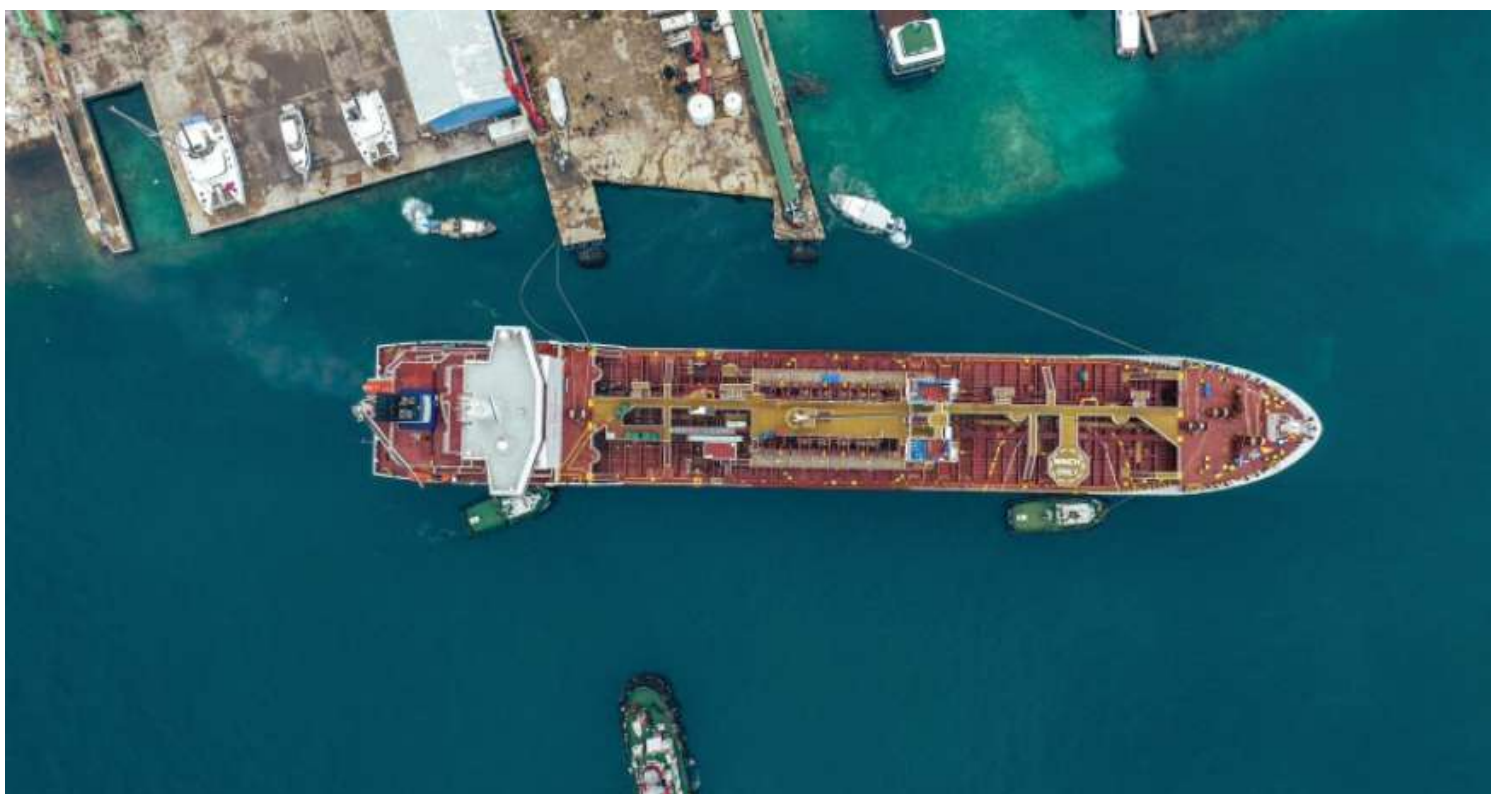
The highlight of the day was the Annual General Meeting, where key agenda items were deliberated upon with precision and foresight. Led by the Secretary General of CGM, Ms. Maha

Naseer, the AGM included crucial discussions on the organization's annual Report, approval of annual accounts, and the endorsement of proposed amendments. The gathering also witnessed the introduction of the new Executive Committee members, who were welcomed with enthusiasm and support from the entire assembly. Mariyam Noordeen, a distinguished leader in human capital development

for tourism in the Maldives, was elected as the President of the CGM (Chef Guild of Maldives).

A notable moment during the AGM was the introduction of the Proposed Draft Strategic Goals and Action Plan for 2023-2026, underscoring the guild's commitment to innovation and progress within the culinary landscape of Maldives.

The Hawks Expands its Fleet by Acquiring Largest Oil Tanker to Date



The Hawks have expanded their fleet by acquiring their largest oil tanker to date, Hawks Progress. The oil tanker

has a capacity of 18 million liters. This addition not only enables the company to deliver fuel more

promptly and efficiently to its diverse clientele but also marks a significant step in meeting the growing fuel

demand in the Maldives.

Apart from its 6 oil tankers, Hawks operates 19 vessels, 14 barges, and 12 bowzers to ensure a seamless fuel supply. Hawks maintain a group of eight fuel stations strategically positioned across the Maldives.

Hawks Pvt Ltd, established in 2007, has emerged as a leading fuel supplier in the Maldives. The company has a diverse portfolio ranging from construction services to transportation and hospitality. The company's success can be attributed to its unwavering focus on quality, reliability, and customer satisfaction.

The Hawks team is confident that Hawks Progress will be an invaluable asset, enabling them to maintain their track record of delivering high-quality fuel to their customers.

IN THE NEWS

National Boating Association of Maldives Holds Annual General Meeting Electing a New Executive Board



- The following were elected to the Executive Board of NBAM for the year 2023-2025:
1. Mr. Amir Mansoor, President
 2. Ms. Aminath Salah, Vice President
 3. Mr. Ahmed Ibrahim, Treasurer
 4. Ms. Mariyam Maaisha, Secretary General & Executive Board Member
 5. Mr. Ismail Hameed, Executive Board Member
 6. Mr. Ahmed Afrah, Executive Board Member
 7. Mr. Ibrahim Shahid, Executive Board Member
 8. Mr. Ahmed Zubair Adam, Executive Board Member
 9. Mr. Abdulla Nasheed, Executive Board Member
 10. Mr. Hussain Aman, Executive Board Member
 11. Mr. Ismail Shareef, Executive Board Member
 12. Mr. Hassan Haleem, Executive Board Member

National Boating Association of Maldives (NBAM) holds their Annual General Meeting on November 21, 2023, at Maagiri Hotel, electing a new Executive Board after conducting a voting session during the meeting where 37 members voted.

The meeting commenced with a video highlight of the association portraying

the vast progress achieved over the past 16 years. Pressing further, former President of NBAM Mr. Ismail Hameed in his welcome remarks expressed gratitude to the members that withstood the test of time, lifting the association on their shoulders in the past decade and a half. He then vouched his support for the new board to be elected in the meeting and requested more

participation from the fraternity as the association has higher goals to achieve and a long road ahead.

Following the welcome address, the Secretary General of NBAM Ms. Mariyam Maaisha coordinated the election process of the new Executive Board, leading to the following selection of members for the prestigious chair.

Concluding the event, the new President of National Boating Association of Maldives Mr. Amir Mansoor congratulated the new board and advocated for achieving and protecting the rights of the boat owners of Maldives. His speech ended with the appreciation of the positive vibe and support received from the members of the association in general as well as the newly elected board.

Sailing Tours to Develop and Operate a Boat Yard in Velidhoo Industrial Zone

Sailing Tours, a revered name in the travel industry, proudly announces a new chapter in its journey. In addition to its distinguished travel services, Sailing Tours Maldives is set to develop and operate a cutting-edge boat yard in the Velidhoo Industrial Zone.

For over two decades, Sailing Tours has been synonymous with unparalleled quality, dedication, and professionalism in travel services. Now, with an unwavering commitment to expanding its offerings, the company is venturing into boat yard development, strategically located in the heart of the Velidhoo Industrial Zone.

This new endeavor aims to

complement our existing services, providing a hub for sailing enthusiasts and tourists seeking a unique maritime experience. From aviation and yacht handling to travel management, Sailing Tours Maldives continues to be the epitome of excellence in the industry.

Founder and CEO of Sailing Tours, Abdulla Ibrahim, expressed excitement about the expansion: "Our commitment to transforming travel into extraordinary experiences extends to the development of a state-of-the-art boat yard. This venture aligns seamlessly with our legacy of excellence, ensuring that our clients receive the utmost in care and attention, whether on land or at sea."



BON APPÉTIT

Tropical Wellness



With over a decade of culinary expertise in renowned hotels and a passion for delivering delectable international cuisines, Chef Hameed seeks a challenging, long-term position in the F&B industry. Armed with a diploma in hotel catering and institutional operation, Hameed is a hands-on chef adept at managing teams and achieving culinary excellence.

The chef has conducted practical training sessions, created enticing menu charts, and demonstrated the ability to deliver quality dishes within stipulated time frames. His professional journey includes notable stints at White Sand Resort and Spa, Bandos Maldives, and an impressive tenure at Four Seasons Maldives, where promotions reflect the commitment and expertise. Recognitions include achievements like the HABC Level 2 Award in Food Safety, Employee of the Year (2012), and various service awards at Four Seasons Resort Maldives.

With a proven track record in overseeing pastry operations and staff training, the chef has continued to excel in the role of Pastry Chef at JEN by Shangri-La since July 2018.

About the dish:

"It's a refreshing dessert combination of coconut, mango, pineapple, passion fruit and ginger."

INGREDIENTS:

Coconut Panncotta

- 300g Coconut Puree
- 200g Whipping Cream
- 75g Sugar 125 Whipped Cream
- 12g Gelatine Leaf

METHOD

- Boil low heat coconut puree with sugar
- Add soaked Gelatine
- Pour whipping cream 200g
- Last fold 125g Whipped Cream
- Apply melted milk chocolate into a mold with a brush
- Keep until set. Pour panna cotta mix and freeze
- Remove core from scoop, and cut into two piece

Cramble

- 100g Butter
- 100g Sugar
- 100g Flour
- 50g Coconut desiccated
- 200g Mango small cubes
- 200g Pineapple small cubes
- 200g Passionfruit compot

METHOD

- Mix everything and make a small ball.
- Bake 180c until Brown, 12 to 15 minutes
- Mix everything and keep in chiller

Ginger Broth

- 160g Sugar
- 300g Water
- 40g Chopped Ginger
- 2g Pectine NH

METHOD

- Boil everything together

Crispy Pineapple

- Two pineapple slice 2mm
- 1 Liter Water
- 150g Sugar 150 Glucose
- Some saffaroons

METHOD

- Boil everything and add slice pineapple
- Simmer for 30 minutes
- Remove Pineapple and put in silpat, bake 90 degrees until crispy.

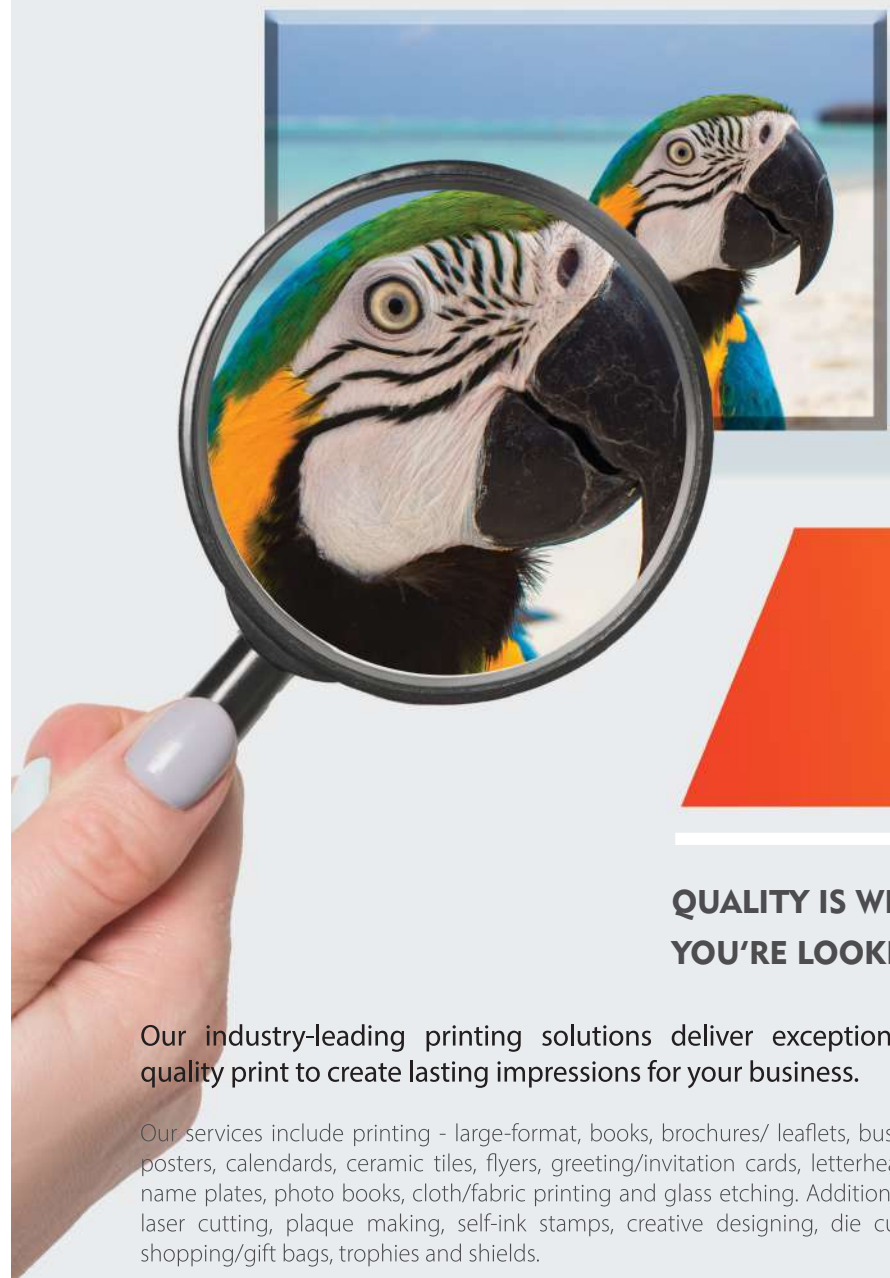


Courtesy of
Chef Mohamed Hameed
Pastry Chef at JEN by Shangri-La



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Frankly Speaking

With 68 percent of the bed capacity occupied by resorts, what challenges and opportunities do you foresee for diversifying accommodation options, considering the current distribution of beds in resorts, guesthouses, hotels, and liveaboard vessels?



Ibrahim Nizam

Brand Strategist | Hospitality Consultant

There are both challenges and opportunities in the diversification of accommodation options available in the Maldives. I have some for consideration.

Challenges:

Maintaining luxury standards: The Maldives is globally well-known for its luxury resorts, hence diversifying options while maintaining the luxury image can be a challenge unless it is properly addressed and strategically positioned in a co-existing manner.

Opportunities:

Attracting a wider range of travelers: Diversifying accommodation options to cater for the demands of various segments of the market such as “BLEISURE” travelers, The “FOODIE” travelers, “KNOWMAD” travelers, and those travelers on ‘TRANSFORMATIONAL’ trips can be a positive step forward if the brand image of the Maldives is the focus when creating a strategy.

Overall, striking a balance between preserving the Maldives' luxury reputation and diversifying accommodation options requires careful planning, sustainable practices, and market analysis.



Abdulla Nasheed

President
National Hotels & Guesthouse Association of Maldives

In my opinion, aggressive marketing is essential to maintain a good occupancy. A good example is Kaani Hotels with an average occupancy for 2023 above 80% and this December we have an occupancy of 87%.



Ismail Hameed

Executive Board Member
National Boating Association of Maldives

Extensive marketing efforts are required. Affordable transport solutions to regional tourism properties have to be established to gain a better occupancy.

Especially guesthouses as they are increasing at a vast speed. However, the occupancy of these new products are challenged due to expensive transport options. This must be addressed.

The demand for affordable tourism is restricted to Male' atoll and islands closer to Velana International Airport due to expensive domestic transport.



Ahmed Zubair Adam

Managing Director
Blue Horizon Pvt Ltd

Sewage, water and electricity in local islands and RTL ferry network combined with 4 international airports provides opportunities to diversify beds in local islands. Liveaboards can start operating from other regions. Local islands land value being zero and SDFC limits makes access to funding and also skilled labor shortages and air connectivity are challenges to address.



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