

B A Z A A R

RESORTS
IN ASSOCIATION
WITH **LUX***
ISLAND RESORTS

Deep Calm

Idyllic island hideaways and state-of-the-art retreats: we round up the top spots for decadence and relaxation – many of them new to the international scene

Luxe for
LESS

Relaunch

1

BEST FOR **UNPRETENTIOUS LUXURY**

Lux* Maldives

MALDIVES

Flying into Lux* Maldives by seaplane, one of the first things that will strike you are the tones of iridescent green. At a mile-and-a-quarter long, the island of Dhidhoofinolhu, in the South Ari Atoll, is unusually large for the Maldives – and spectacularly verdant, with its own sizeable natural lagoon to boot. The real selling point of this patch of the islands is the diving: as the resort is set within the Maldives' first fully regulated Marine Protection Area, it features some of the most thrilling in the world, and is particularly good for spotting whale sharks.

The scale of the facilities matches Dhidhoofinolhu's natural beauty. You have seven restaurants to hang out in, including sushi and teppanyaki restaurants; six bars (one an over-water cocktail bar); a water-sports centre; and a boutique. The north end of the island bustles with activity and eating spots; the southern end has a grown-up feel: an elegant infinity pool is framed by the restaurant and bar. Poolside, you can order from a menu that features infused vodkas

*A beach at
Lux* Maldives*



and fruit-flavoured sheeshas, and enjoy views of the quiet shallows of the ocean. The island is also big enough for both families and couples: the quieter 'adults only' section includes a tranche of over-water villas. The kids' club is huge, with dedicated indoor and outdoor space for three- to 12-year-olds, and such novelties as a children's buffet and a 'siesta lounge' for afternoon naps; and the spa is one of the biggest in the region, with 15 treatment rooms.

All the accommodation at Lux* Maldives has a strong connection to the ocean, whether the rooms open onto a shaded terrace right by the beach, or access the water through a private garden or wooden humpback bridge. Wide over-water sun terraces cooled with fans invite guests down into the sparkling lagoon. Bathrooms merge into private, enclosed gardens with bougainvillea-fringed outdoor showers. Inside, under thatched roofs, the palette is pale, with bold splashes of tropical colour.

You can pootle around on the island bikes or buggies, and somnolent sunbathers are catered for with no end of lounging spots. This is an island home that's perfect for those attention-deficit holidaymakers who want a *Robinson Crusoe* vibe without the attendant boredom.

Seven nights, from £1,499 a person B&B, including flights and transfers, with If Only... (0141 955 4040; www.ifonly.net).



Travel essentials
Glamour-to-go products you shouldn't leave home without

£30, Estée Lauder

Top, £95; bottoms, £90, both Heidi Klein

KÉRA SKIN ESTHETICS
OLÉA-SCRUB GEL [pre-shave]
£31, Kérastase

EDITOR'S TIP: HOLIDAY BEAUTY PREP

Get resort-ready in a flash with a customised Rush Hour Beauty package in London's best and biggest spa, Espa Life at the Corinthia hotel. In less than two hours I was buffed and honed by two therapists. The shellac pedicure retained its gloss even in the sea; the lash extensions removed the need for mascara on the beach; the waxing was pain-free. As it's a holistic spa, you can visit for acupuncture, nutrition advice, osteopathy and anti-ageing treatments. Afterwards, trot along to the Daniel Galvin salon for a trim and blow-dry. Rush Hour treatment packages, from £175 (020 7321 3050; www.corinthialondon.com).

BEST OF THE REST **NEW MALDIVES RESORTS**

Niyama (www.peraquum.com) is the much-awaited next move by Per Aquum, which created the award-winning Huvafen Fushi. With a 24-hour spa, underwater nightclub, 24-hour room service and OTT technology in its cool modern villas, this resort promises to be seriously cutting-edge.

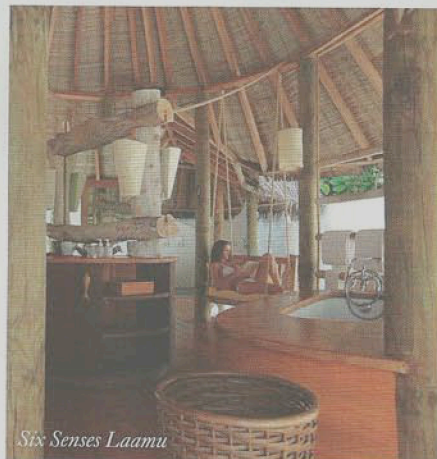
Hyatt has unveiled its first Indian Ocean venture: the sleek, eco-chic **Park Hyatt Maldives Hadahaa** (www.hyatt.com), featuring a five-star dive centre.

Constance Moofushi (www.moofushi.resort.com) defies preconceptions of all-inclusive holidays with its clean-lined and modern barefoot elegance.

The just-launched **Ayada** (www.ayadamaldives.com) is family-friendly, with seven restaurants and a kids' club.

Viceroy Maldives (www.viceroyhotelsandresorts.com) is the first project outside the Americas from a chain that specialises in chic builds and interiors.

Six Senses returns to its spiritual home with the new **Six Senses Laamu** (www.sixsenses.com), on an island visited by dolphins, where you'll lap up the chain's usual package of organic food grown in the resort gardens, and a sensational spa with typically surprising design: this time, four 'nests' lining the beachfront.



Six Senses Laamu

PHOTOGRAPHY: GRAHAM WALSH; HEIDI KLEIN; WWW.HEIDIKLEIN.COM; KERASTASE (0800 316 4400)

NEW

Luxe for LESS

Long Beach
Mauritius

3 BEST FOR LAID-BACK CHIC Lux* Ile de la Réunion LA RÉUNION

The newly rebranded Lux* Ile de la Réunion, formerly known as Naiade, is the only five-star resort on Réunion Island, a luscious tropical atoll east of Madagascar that, because of its proximity to Mauritius, is often overlooked, but is equally beautiful. An antidote to the glossy five-stars on Mauritius, the simple Creole-style villas dotted along the island's only white coral beach are the epitome of understated, 'light' luxury. There are discreet bars on the beach and retro ice-cream parlours; bare feet are de rigueur. Guests really are encouraged to do as they please, and go where they like. Lux* is not for those who want bells and whistles; this is for travellers who want Mauritian beauty and authenticity mixed with a little laissez-faire living.

Seven nights, from £2,295 a person B&B, including transfers, with Rainbow Tours (020 7226 1004; www.rainbowtours.co.uk).

Lux* Ile de
la Réunion

2 BEST FOR FAMILY-FRIENDLY LUXURY Long Beach Mauritius MAURITIUS

Hotel brands tend to live by the 'if it ain't broke, don't fix it' mantra, so you'd expect the sister hotel to Mauritian grande dame Le Touessrok to be cast in the same refined luxury-honeymoon mould. But Long Beach, which opened in April further up the north-west coast from its sibling resort, is a completely different, rather refreshing option. Mauritius is bursting with blingy five-stars, but what the island was missing was something a bit more up-to-date and laid-back; somewhere you can take the children without worrying about them crumpling the bedding. With its chilled Miami Beach vibe, Long Beach nicely fills that gap, and it's set to become the hotel of choice for fashionable families. Instead of the standard polished teak and marble, you'll find roughly hewn wood, fresh-as-a-Polo-mint whitewashed walls and rooms decorated in shades of charcoal and zingy aqua. Rather than a token kids' club, there are proper five-star facilities, including the super-equipped sports centre, where little ones will lose days playing beach tennis, water-polo and scaling the climbing wall. Which leaves parents with time on their hands for a massage in the superb spa, lunch in one of the five restaurants, or afternoons spent lying flat out with a curried mojito (much nicer than it sounds).

Long Beach Mauritius (+230 401 1919; www.longbeachmauritius.com), from about £160 a person a night half board.



The Residence

4 BEST FOR EXOTIC BEAUTY The Residence TANZANIA

NEW

Like Timbuktu or Machu Picchu, the very name Zanzibar evokes exoticism. Unguja, or Zanzibar island, lives up to its magical reputation, with palm-lined beaches, tropical jungle, vibrant coral reefs – and, since April, the Residence, a 66-villa beach resort an hour from historic Stone Town. You don't just stay here for the architecture (rustic cream bungalows): you go for the fabulous interiors, with spacious white rooms and dark-wood furniture; the dreamy glass-walled pool; the private plunge-pools; and the friendly slick service. The food is a knockout (a rarity on this former backpacker island); the spa offers stellar massages and Carita facials. Best of all? The year-round warm sea, and sand so white and soft, it floats like talc. Six nights, from £2,399 a person half board, including flights and transfers, with ITC Classics (01244 355550; www.itcclassics.co.uk).



W Retreat & Spa – Vieques Island

5 BEST FOR ISLAND SOPHISTICATION
W Retreat & Spa – Vieques Island

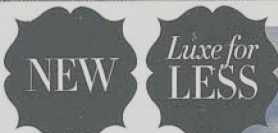


PUERTO RICO

‘What is your wish?’ is how they answer the phone at the W Retreat & Spa, a place where nothing is too much to ask. W Hotels, known for stylish city pads, has a new resort on Vieques, an exclusive island off Puerto Rico’s mainland. The rooms have classic W signatures: vast beds; plasma TVs; and luxe bathing areas. The rest of the hotel is just as cool: the huge lobby, a den for grown-ups; cocktails at the outdoor firepit. As well as 40 pristine beaches, Vieques Island boasts the world’s brightest bioluminescent bay – take a kayak out at midnight and swim with glowing fish.

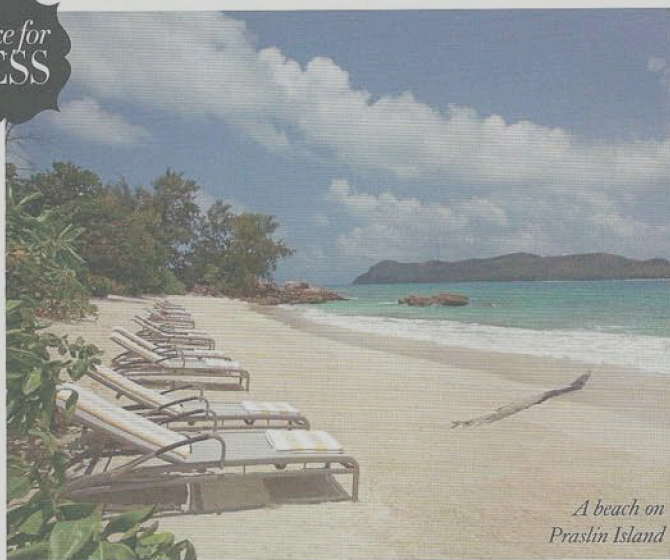
W Retreat & Spa (+800 325 25252; www.whotels.com/vieques), from £292 a room a night.

6 BEST FOR ARABIAN DESIGN
One&Only the Palm
UAE



Dubai’s most stylish resort has raised the game when it comes to design, dining and discreetly chic style. Sleek, white and very, very sexy, One&Only the Palm enjoys a fabulously quiet beachfront location far from the city’s heat, traffic and excess. Children are allowed, but the resort is really geared towards glamorous couples, and you can see why they love it. Everything about the place exudes calm, from the Moorish-influenced decor (intricate latticework, white marble) to the divinely chilled-out spa and the gorgeous central courtyard with sleek day-beds on platforms over a huge pool. The fine-dining at Stay, under Michelin-starred chef Yannick Alléno, is truly sublime. The 91 suites are stylishly designed, with beautiful dark-wood furnishings and free-standing baths, though it’s the four beach villas with private pools that will really appeal to the A-list. This is a hotel popular with visitors and Emiratis alike.

Five nights, from £1,518 a person B&B, including flights and transfers, with Kuoni (01306 747008; www.kuoni.co.uk).

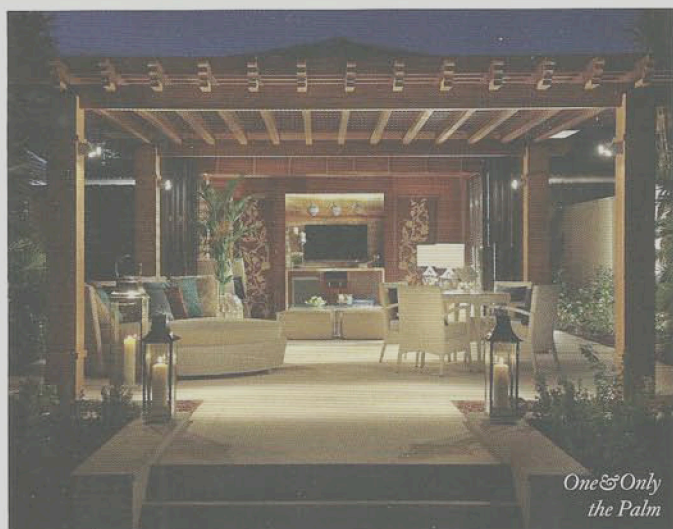


A beach on Praslin Island

7 BEST FOR ALL-OUT PAMPERING
Raffles Praslin
SEYCHELLES

The Seychelles offer all the Indian Ocean allure of the Maldives and Mauritius, but with a lighter tourism footprint, as befits the unspoiled setting. Raffles’ latest resort overlooks Cousine Island, and now that the plants have had a chance to grow, it’s as though the 86 villas, each with plunge-pool and pavilion, have always been here. There is no other development in sight, and it’s down the road from utterly idyllic Anse Lazio Beach. In spite of its size, you feel as though you’ve been taken in by a large, hospitable family, such is the spoiling. The lounging possibilities of the infinity pool and bar area are endless, and the Mediterranean-style food and wines – and bountiful breakfast buffets – are excellent.

Seven nights, from £2,639 a person B&B, including Emirates flights and transfers, with Elite Vacations (01707 371000; www.seychelleselite.co.uk). Emirates (+44 844 800 2777; www.emirates.com/uk) flies from Heathrow, Birmingham, Newcastle, Manchester and Glasgow.



One&Only the Palm

8 BEST FOR MARINE ADVENTURES

Hayman Island

AUSTRALIA

Relaunch

After being closed by Queensland's tropical cyclones in February 2011, Hayman is back – and better than ever. The hideaway island now has eight super-luxe new beach villas (each with pool, oodles of lounging space and direct access to the sea and Great Barrier Reef), and landscaper Jamie Durie has 'rectified' the lush gardens with about 33,000 new plants. The result is a haven of sophisticated style. Despite its expansiveness (210 rooms, suites, penthouses, villas and a butler-serviced beach house), there's an exclusive sense of enclave, and the concierge has dreamt up some seriously alluring activities. Book an 'insider dining' evening at a chef's table in one of the restaurants' kitchens, a guided nocturnal snorkelling expedition, a sunset sail for cocktails on a deserted isle, or a picnic on nearby Whitehaven Beach, with its talcum-soft, unsullied sands. *Seven nights, from £2,865 a person, including flights and transfers, with Carrier (0161 492 1355; www.carrier.co.uk).*



Hayman Island

10 BEST FOR MODERN INDIA

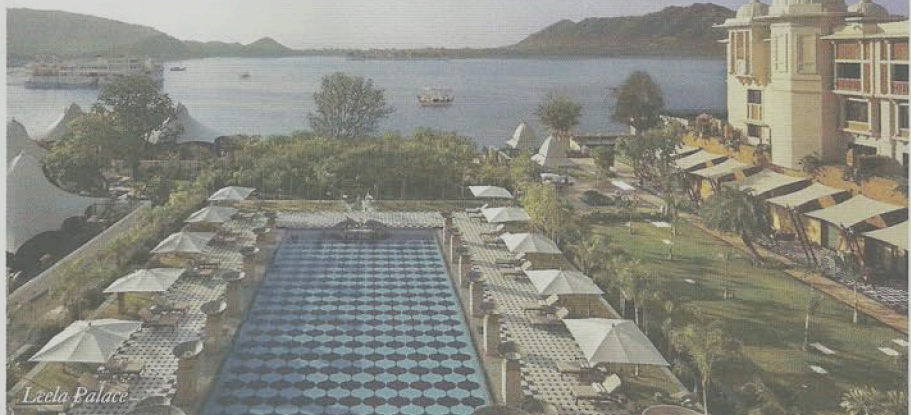
Leela Palace

INDIA

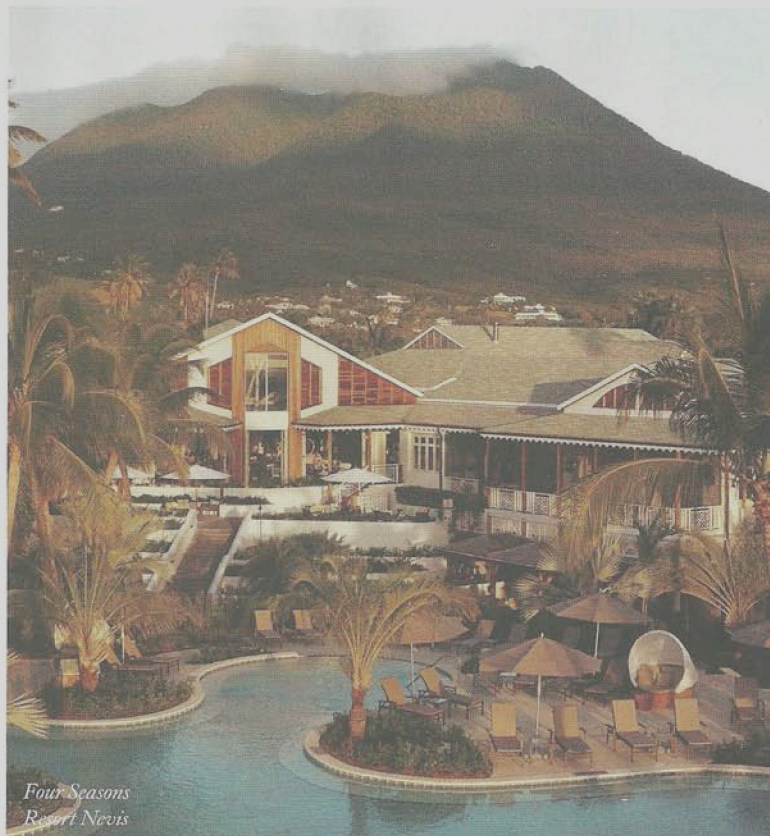
Relaunch

Designed to replicate royal residences of centuries past, Leela Palace combines Rajput artistry with five-star service. Access is by private boat across Lake Pichola; on approach, a traditional band strikes up. The several restaurants include a beautiful outdoor platform with splendid views of the lake, and food both traditional and modern. In the spa, treatments are combined with Indian rituals; and yoga takes place at dawn and dusk. The area is studded with religious and cultural sites, but many visitors choose simply to soak up the peace and colour of Udaipur, spending happy hours rummaging in the wonderful textile and artefact shops of the town.

Three nights, from £1,490 a person B&B, including flights and transfers, with Ampersand Travel (020 7289 6100; www.ampersandtravel.com). □



Leela Palace

Four Seasons
Resort Nevis

9 BEST FOR LOW-KEY CARIBBEAN FLAVOUR

Four Seasons Resort Nevis

SAINT KITTS AND NEVIS

There are two sorts of Caribbean island: those that thrum to a social scene (Barbados, St Barths) and those that don't. Nevis, low-key but spectacular, and spectacularly friendly, heads the second camp. This is the island that has shunned high-density tourism: the preferred escape of discerning castaways, and the place where Nelson got married. As its sole resort, the Four Seasons keeps the island afloat. Destroyed by Hurricane Omar in October 2008, it reopened this year after a multi-million-pound refurb. Evoking a wooden plantation house flanked by cottages and cabanas overlooking the beach, it breathes gleaming luxury. Nevis might be small (36 square miles), but Four Seasons offers golf, tennis, the best-equipped gym in the Caribbean and a landscaped estate of villas in gardens rising up the lower slopes of Nevis Peak – great for views and breezes. *Eight nights, from £1,725 a person, including flights and transfers, with Seasons (01244 202777; www.seasons.co.uk).*

Lux* Belle Mare, Mauritius

As well as a 2,000-square-metre pool, this beachside hotel has an all-suite set-up, plus 12 super-luxe villas with private pool and butler. All rooms and public areas are currently being given the Lux* treatment by designer Kelly Hoppen, due to be completed in September 2012.



Bottles of Lux house water*



The view across the pool at Lux Belle Mare*

PHONE...

home for free from the island's own telephone box and tell your friends all about it

UNIQUE CHIC

For luxury with a light touch – glamorous yet fun, indulgent yet unpretentious – it has to be Lux* island resorts

This year, a new breed of resort is rocking the Indian Ocean. From Mauritius to the Maldives (taking over the former Naiade collection of resorts), Lux* is making its mark with its 'Island Light' philosophy. It's all about giving luxury the light touch – swapping the name-drop labels, fussy cuisine and stuffy decor of many five-star retreats for a more thoughtful, authentic experience. Pop-up dining, retro ice-cream parlours, on-the-beach film screenings, art shows, secret honesty bars and exciting

'house' brands are just a few light touches that set Lux* apart, in a celebration of modern island living.

Far from diluting the indulgent service you'd expect at five-star escapes, Lux* has simply played with the concept to make the experience both exhilarating and unique – the kind of holiday you have always been looking for, but never truly discovered. Until now...

For more information, ring 020 7348 4880, or visit www.luxislandresorts.com.

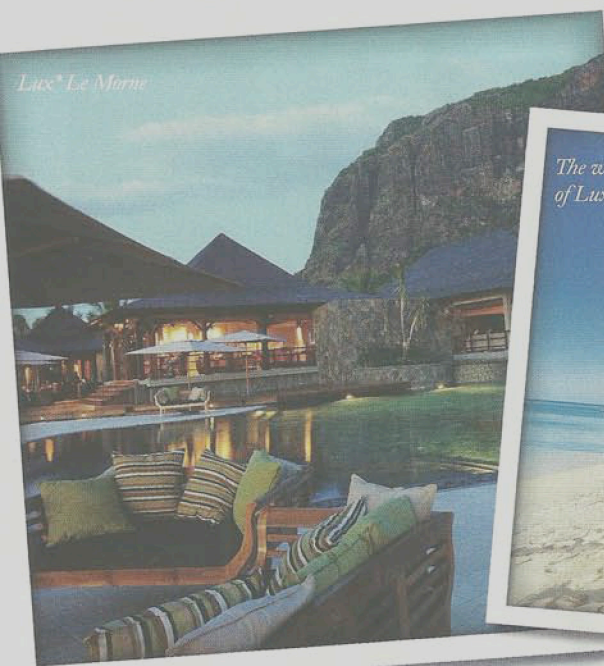


TASTE...

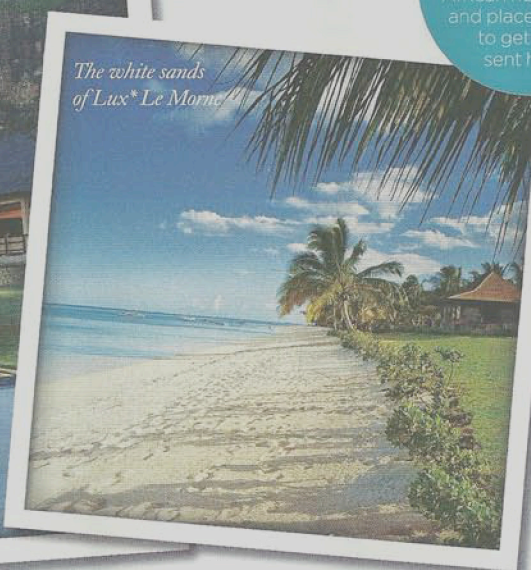
the excellent South African house wines and place an order to get some sent home

Lux* Le Morne, Mauritius

Nestled among lush greenery, this secluded hotel on Mauritius' west coast is sheltered by the majestic Morne Brabant peak – a Unesco World Heritage Site. There are four pools, 600 metres of pure white sand and two world-class golf courses in the vicinity.



Lux Le Morne*



The white sands of Lux Le Morne*

Lux* Ile de la Réunion

Lying 170 miles south-west of Mauritius, Ile de la Réunion (a Unesco World Heritage Site) is the place to come for chic seclusion. Dotted among coconut-trees, the resort's villas combine colonial and Creole styles, and overlook the island's only coral beach.



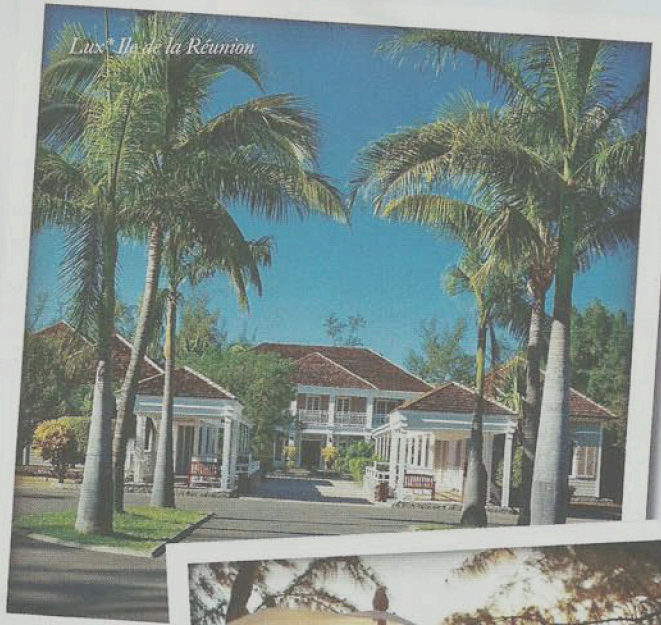
Café Lux*

ENJOY...

a delicious cup of freshly roasted coffee with the Lux* special Island blend



The ice cream parlour



Lux* Ile de la Réunion



Beach beds at Lux* Ile de la Réunion



Lux* Maldives

NOTE...

your memories, idle thoughts and doodles in your complimentary journal

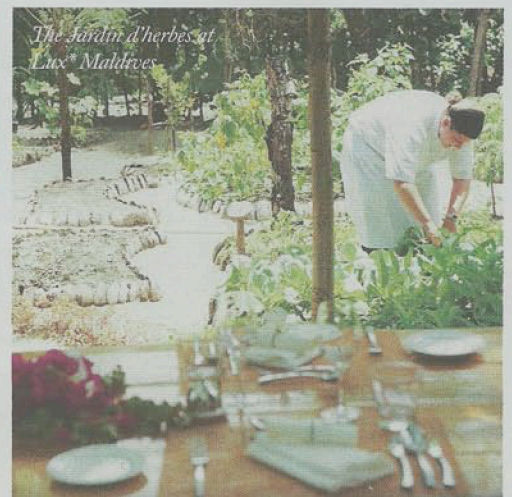
LUX*
ISLAND RESORTS

Lux* Maldives

Located in the beautiful South Ari atoll and ringed by two and half miles of pure white sands and a limpid lagoon, this stunning resort also boasts one of the largest spas in the Maldives. Home to a world-class dive site and marine-biology centre, this is a water lover's paradise.

Lux* Grand Gaube, Mauritius

All 198 rooms at this beautiful hotel have a sea view – which is just as well, given Mauritius' spectacular sunsets. Unfurling along a pristine coastline, Grand Gaube has been voted the world's most romantic hotel in the past – and with Lux* on board, the future is looking rosy, too.



The Jardin d'herbes at Lux* Maldives

* Lighter. Brighter.