

FREE COPY



www.transmaldivian.com

INFLIGHT

ISSUE 01 | 2014 **MAGAZINE**



Maldives
an aerial point of view

The Maldives on a budget

From spearfisher to
conservationist

The Maldives are
Calling

Exploring Baa Atoll



**Palm Beach Resort & spa
Maldives**



Come to Palm Beach, come to Maldives

***Palm Beach Resort & spa
a real “Made in Italy” resort since 1999***

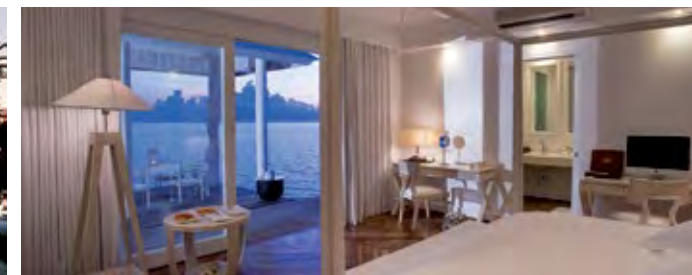
www.palmbeachmaldives.com

DIAMONDS: ATHURUGA & THUDUFUSHI - ARI ATOLL
TREASURED MOMENTS



For more information and bookings
www.diamonds-resorts.com

DIAMONDS
HOTELS & RESORTS

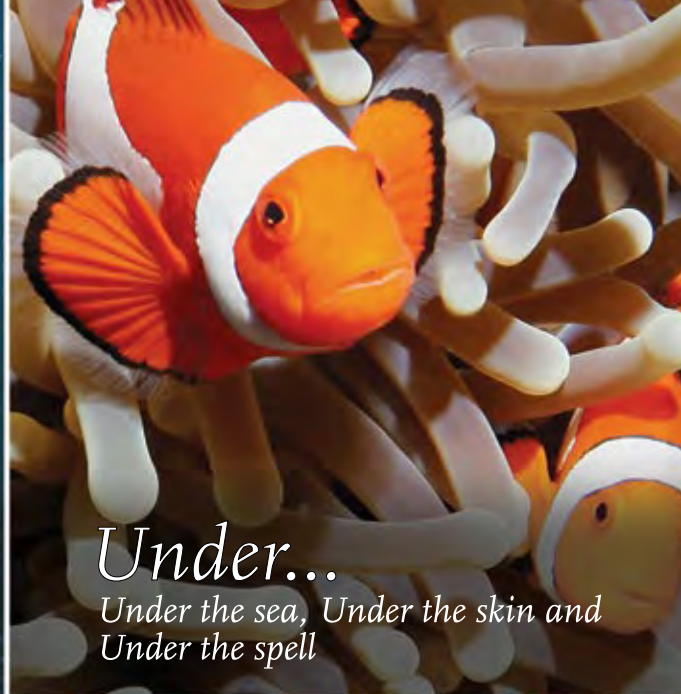


KENYA | MALDIVES | TANZANIA | ZANZIBAR

 Managed by PlanHotel
Hospitality Group



Over...
Over the skies, Over your worries,
Over the moon!



Under...
Under the sea, Under the skin and
Under the spell



Together...
Together in paradise,
Together is spirit and Together forever!

Cinnamon
HOTELS & RESORTS

Email : sales@keells.com.mv
Tel: + 00960 331 3738
Web: www.chaayahotels.com

Chaaya Island Dhonveli

Chaaya Reef Ellaidhoo

Chaaya Lagoon Hakuraa



INFLIGHT

TMA INFLIGHT MAGAZINE

EDITOR'S NOTE



Welcome to this new edition of Inflight.

As you fly over the emerald isles and the turquoise lagoons of the Maldives, and if you have some time away from the mesmerizing view from the window, take a peek into the Maldives' people, history culture and the vast horizon of activities that you can enjoy during your stay in the Maldives.

In this issue we bring you pieces written by well-heeled writers, who have lived here and experienced for themselves what they have written about. A dive before breakfast written by Adrian Neville narrates the first hand experience of a dive safari while Wrecked in the Maldives by Donna Richardson looks at some well-known wreck dives that spot the reefs of the archipelago. We are the Champions by Sarah Harvey looks at the surf scene that is becoming increasingly popular with the international surfing community. Two articles A Brief History of Maldives and A Unique Perspective by Thomas Pickard gives a glimpse of the life in the Maldives today and in the past.

If you are on your way to your resort we wish you a great holiday in the Maldives and if you are returning from your resort we hope it has been the holiday that you have wished for.

Enjoy your flight!

Adheel Ismail
Editor



INFLIGHT
MAGAZINE ISSUE 01 | 2014

Published for



Trans Maldivian Airways Pvt. Ltd.
Male' International Airport, Republic of Maldives
Phone: +960 331 52 01, Telefax: +960 331 52 03
www.transmaldivian.com

Published by



Think Associates Pvt. Ltd.
3rd Floor, M.Chaandhanege,
Majeedhee Magu, Male', Republic of Maldives
Tel: +960 334 2640, Fax: +960 334 2642
Email: info@thinkmaldives.com
www.think.com.mv

Please address all enquiries to:

Ahmed Fazeel, Business Development Manager
Mail: fazeel@transmaldivian.com

AUTHORS



Thomas Pickard is a freelance photographer and writer who lived in the Maldives for two-years, producing over twenty articles on the country.



Sarah Harvey is a British travel journalist and resort reviewer based in Male'. She has lived in the Maldives for almost three years.



Verena Wiesbauer Ali is a marine biologist and environmental consultant, working for Eco Islanders Maldives Pvt Ltd.

Disclaimer

TMA Inflight Magazine is published for Trans Maldivian Airways Pvt. Ltd. by Think Associates Pvt. Ltd. No part of this magazine may be reproduced without the written permission of Trans Maldivian Airways Pvt. Ltd. All rights reserved. Copyright © 2011 by Trans Maldivian Airways Pvt. Ltd. Opinions in Inflight are the writers' and not necessarily endorsed by Trans Maldivian Airways Pvt. Ltd. Trans Maldivian Airways Pvt. Ltd. and Think Associates Pvt. Ltd. accepts no responsibility for unsolicited manuscripts, transparencies other material. Every effort has been made to provide accurate information in the magazine and kindly please contact the publisher to call to attention of any errors or omissions in the TMA Inflight Magazine.



A PREMIUM



All-Inclusive Holiday Plan!

A short **30-minute sea plane** ride from Male international airport, amidst an expansive turquoise lagoon in the sparsely populated Lhaviyani atoll sits the beautiful island of Kanifushi. Surrounded by long uninterrupted stretch of pristine white sandy beaches and palm trees, **Atmosphere Kanifushi Maldives** offers a hassle-free five star resort experience with genuine value-for-money!

LHAVIYANI ATOLL, THE MALDIVES

TEL: +960 662 00 66 | FAX: +960 662 00 77

EMAIL: SALES@ATMOSPHERE-KANIFUSHI.COM

ATMOSPHERE-KANIFUSHI.COM

Contents

www.transmaldivian.com

TMA INFLIGHT MAGAZINE

ISSUE 02 | 2014

11 Welcome on board

34 Exploring Baa Atoll

Ut qui volessitam, cus enda dernasqui dem intur, ut repraestet pos verro odi culpario

12 Maldives; beyond the sun, sea and sand

Fact, figures and information that may be of interest when you are in the Maldives.

40 The Maldives on a budget

Ut qui volessitam, cus enda dernasqui dem intur, ut repraestet pos verro odi culpario

18 Maldives an aerial point of view

Ut qui volessitam, cus enda dernasqui dem intur, ut repraestet pos verro odi culpario

50 The Seaplane

22 From spearfisher to conservationist

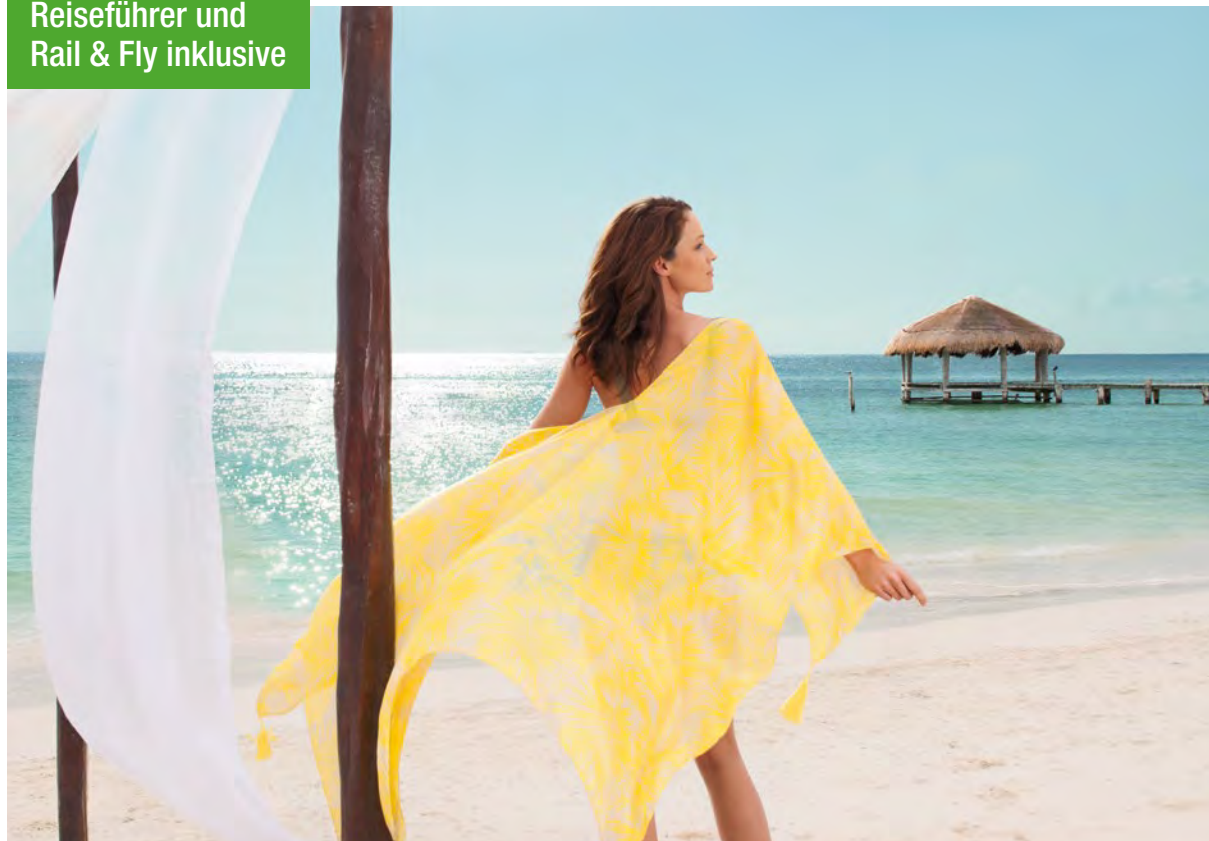
Ut qui volessitam, cus enda dernasqui dem intur, ut repraestet pos verro odi culpario

54 TMA Route Map & Destinations

24 The Maldives Are Calling

Ut qui volessitam, cus enda dernasqui dem intur, ut repraestet pos verro odi culpario

Reiseführer und
Rail & Fly inklusive



MALEDIVEN | WO INSELTRÄUME WAHR WERDEN

Aus der Luft betrachtet eröffnet sich ein grandioser Ausblick auf das etwa 2.000 Inseln und Inselchen umfassende Archipel im Indischen Ozean. Wie herrliche Juwelen erscheinen die Eilande im tiefen Blau des Meeres. Doch auch aus der Nähe halten die Malediven, was sie versprechen. Strahlend weiße Strände, im Wind wippende Palmen und tropische Vegetation – die Malediven gehören zu Recht zu den Traumzielen dieser Erde.

Hier finden Schnorchler und Taucher herrliche Korallenriffe und eine faszinierende Unterwasserwelt. Die modernen Urlaubsresorts bieten besten Service und verfügen über eine breite Palette an Sport-, Wellness- und Unterhaltungsangeboten.

Genießen Sie die Ruhe und Abgeschiedenheit der Malediven – und freuen Sie sich auf einen Traumurlaub im Inselparadies.

48 Inseln

Mit JAHN REISEN können Sie die herrliche Inselwelt der Malediven entdecken. Jede Insel ist einzigartig – sicher ist auch Ihre persönliche Trauminsel dabei.

URLAUB, WIE ICH IHN MAG.



Dear Guest,

Maruhaba! Welcome to the Maldives, its idyllic islands in the sun, sand, sea and sea planes!!

We are grateful that you have made Maldives your preferred destination for this holiday and we are sure that you will go through an experience like no other, especially beginning and ending with a breath-taking flight on our Seaplane.

You may not know that you are flying with the largest Seaplane Airline in the world (our fleet size is 44 Twin Otter Seaplanes). You and your dear ones probably fly on airlines frequently and we want you to know that, as you fasten your seatbelt, you are flying on one of the safest airlines in the world. Safety, Reliability and Quality are the foundations on which this Organization was built and remains our Top Priority.

We are continually working, behind the scenes, to further strengthen all aspects of Safety, Engineering, Maintenance, Flight Operations, Ground operations, Passenger / Guest Experience etc. through rigorous initiatives, in close collaboration with the Authorities and our Customers. Recent feedback has confirmed that our transformation efforts to improve the total customer and guest experience has borne fruit.

With humility, we wish to claim that what TMA has done for Maldives is what highways and railroads did in the early stages of development in Developed Economies. We have been the glue that held the economy together, we helped open up and connect isolated islands in a unique and reliable manner. We continue to knit together all corners of this country which in turn strengthens the backbone of the country's economic development.

All this would not have been possible without the huge support and goodwill we have received from the Government, our partners, and you. This connect with the government, customers and above all you, our loyal guest, has been the bedrock of our lasting association with and the positioning of Maldives as a preferred Tourism Destination.

Thank you once again, for choosing Maldives for your special holiday. We hope you will truly enjoy yourselves.

Have fun and be safe!

Best wishes,

Richard B Saldanha
Chairman



ADAARAN
Luxury . Boutique . Wellness . Resorts



ADAARAN
Club
HUDHURAN FUSHI
MALDIVES



ADAARAN
Club
MEEDHUPPARU
MALDIVES



ADAARAN
Club
RANNALHI
MALDIVES



ADAARAN
Prestige
WATER VILLAS
MALDIVES



ADAARAN
Prestige
VADOO
MALDIVES



ADAARAN
Prestige
OCEAN VILLAS
HUDHURAN FUSHI - MALDIVES

At Adaaran, we keep everyone in mind. From the discerning traveler who seeks nature's wonders, the busy executive in need of a rejuvenating holiday and those traveling for a fun filled vacation. Each and every Adaaran property is built for the maximum holiday experience. Let us make your holiday dream come true!

7th Floor, S.T.O. Aifaanu Building, Boduthakurufaanu Magu, Male', Republic of Maldives,
Tel: (960) 6640375, Fax: (960) 6640379,
Email: info@adaaran.com.mv, Web: www.adaaran.com



Welcome on board!

Welcome to Trans Maldivian Airways, the largest seaplane operator in the world and the ideal way to experience the Maldives, the last paradise on earth.

It has been an exciting yet challenging journey since we began twenty years ago. At start we were flying to only a few selected resorts with just 2 aircraft. However today, we have become world's largest seaplane operator with 44 aircraft that currently flies regularly to over 60 resorts. On certain busy days, we even operate up to as many as over 200 flights per day which helps in transporting to over 900,000 passengers per year!

To meet the challenge of ensuring our close to a million visitors a safe and enjoyable experience, we are constantly increasing our levels of service. Though we started with a very small team 20 year ago, today close to 1,000 staff work at Trans Maldivian Airways from customer service representatives to maintenance crew and pilots in ensuring that you get the best experience of Maldives both in the air and on the ground. In 2013, we partnered with Blackstone, the global private equity fund manager, to strengthen our company and take this company to the next level.

The fact that you are reading this magazine shows that you have chosen a Resort destination that cares about providing you the highest quality transportation. If you are on your way to your chosen Resort we wish you a pleasant holiday! If you are on your way home, we wish you a safe journey.

Sit back, relax and enjoy the beautiful Maldivian views and remember, when you book your next holiday in The Maldives to insist on a transfer with Trans Maldivian Airways.

A.U.M Fawzy



Maldives

*beyond the sun,
sea and sand*

Geography

The Maldives consists of approximately 1,190 coral islands grouped in a double chain of 27 atolls, spread over roughly 90,000 square kilometers, making the country one of the most unique destinations in the world. The islands stretch over a distance of 800 km from north to south.

Climate

The temperature of Maldives ranges between 24°C and 33° C throughout the year. Although the humidity is relatively high, the constant sea breeze helps to keep the air moving. The average sea temperature is around 26°C.

Population

The population of Maldives has increased rapidly during the last few decades. However with a popu-

lation of approximately 360,000, the country still remains one of the smallest independent nations in the world.

Religion

Maldivians are devout Muslims and rigorously follow the basic tenets of Islam. The Islamic Center which accommodates more than 5,000 worshippers dominates the skyline of the capital city Male' with its shining golden dome and minaret. Several mosques are dispersed throughout the capital and each inhabited island is graced with at least one or two mosques where the people attend to their daily prayers.

History

Archeological remains excavated in different parts of the country prove that people were living here as early as third century BC. The Maldives and its people are mentioned in several mariners' logs and records of naval expeditions by the Chinese and the Arabs and later the British and other European explorers.

Culture

A proud history and rich culture evolved from the first settlers who were from various parts of the world travelling the seas in ancient times. The Maldives has been a melting pot of different culture as people from different parts of the world came here and settled down. Some of the local music and dance for instance resemble African influences, while other cultures and traditions reflect East Asian and South Asian characteristics and traits.

Language

Dhivehi spoken throughout the Maldives is a language belonging to the Indo-Iranian group of languages. The language is spoken only in the Maldives and Minicoy Island in the Lakshadweep Atoll (India) to the north of the Maldives. The present script, Thaana was introduced in the late 16th century and is written from right to left. English is widely spoken by Maldivians and visitors can easily make themselves understood getting around the capital Male'. In the resorts, a variety of languages are spoken by the staff including English, German, French, Italian, Japanese and Chinese.



Capital Island

Male', which is about 2 sq kms is the capital of the country. It is the center of administration and the hub of trade and commerce. More than 100,000 people live in Male'.

Economy

In the last quarter of the twentieth century, the economy changed from the age-old traditional system based on fisheries and agriculture to a modern economy that rode on the success of the newly established tourism industry and a modernized and mechanized fishing industry. Maldivians enjoy the highest GDP per capita in South Asia today.

Currency

The local currency is Rufiyaa. At the time of publication, the exchange rate is pegged between MVR.10.25 and 15.42 to a US Dollar. If you are heading to a resort, you need not worry about

local currency as all your bills at the resort can be paid by US Dollar, Euro or any other European currency. All major credit cards are also accepted at the resorts. However, if you are visiting Male' or any of the local islands, you may need to hold local currency for purchases you may wish to make.

Education

Maldives boasts one of the highest literacy rates in the world with 98% of the country's population being able to read and write. Educational standards are among the highest in the region and schools follow the British system of education.

Health

The Indhira Gandhi Memorial Hospital (IGMH) in Male' is the state run general hospital in the country providing a high standard of medical care. ADK Hospital is one of the private health care facility in the country among several other private hospitals and clinics. Most resorts have a resident doctor and a decompression chamber is within easy reach in case of a diving emergency.

Business Hours

The working week in Maldives begins on Sunday and ends on Thursday. Government offices are open from 08:00 to 15:00 hours and the private sector from 09:00 to 17:00 hours. Most offices in the private sector open for business on Saturdays. Weekend falls on Friday and Saturday.

Communication

All resorts offer IDD telephone services. Mobile telephone services in the country are offered by Wataniya Telecom Maldives and Dhiraagu. Both companies have roaming agreements with various operators across the globe, which will enable you to use your home number while in Maldives. All the resorts in Maldives offer Internet services. Some resorts offer broadband connections in the room while others offer Wi-Fi zones at key locations on the island.

Shopping

The northern end of Chaandhane Magu in Male' is the place to be if you are looking for souvenirs to take home. A range of batik sarongs and wraparounds, wooden handicrafts, candles and other knick knacks are available from the shops lining the street. You will also be able to find some souvenir items if you visit the neighboring islands near your resort. Lookout for genuine Maldivian hand painted t-shirts and lacquered boxes, miniature dhonis and reed mats if you really want to take a piece of Maldives with you as a memento.

Country Dialing Code +960

Electricity 240 Volts AC

Local Time +5 GMT



SCUBASPA
MALDIVES



Paradise Holiday for Two in the Maldives

SCUBASPA invites you to unforgettable cruises in the Maldives on board the new vessel SCUBASPA YING with professional diving centre and 300 sqm Asian style Spa on board.

Holiday packages:
SCUBA - diving on the most beautiful diving spots and SPA - complete relaxation in a luxury Spa. The perfect solution for couples to combine SCUBA and SPA on holiday together.

www.scubaspa.com
sales@scubaspa.com

Kayaking event in the Maldives in support of Charity

Prodivers & Ocean Watersports are proud to announce their support for The Atoll Challenge: Raising funds for The Maldivian Thalassaemia Society

The Atoll Challenge is being held between the 4th and 8th of May, where 6 team members from Prodivers and Ocean Watersports from Kuredu Island Resort will attempt to kayak around the Lhaviyani Atoll in the Maldives. This event is to help to raise awareness and funds for the Maldivian Thalassaemia Society. We are also working closely with the Ministry of Health and the Maldivian Blood Services to achieve the goals.

Thalassaemia is a genetic blood disorder, which affects the body's ability to produce red blood cells. The Maldives has the highest incident rate in the world, with 18% of the population being carriers. If untreated, it's deadly serious, leading to liver fibrosis, hepatitis, cardiac arrest and death. Thalassaemia patients need regular blood transfusions, following which the blood needs to be 'cleaned' of excess iron. One effective method of 'cleaning' is through the use of a desferal pump. The Maldives is currently short of approx. 50 pumps for its patients. The event goal is to raise MVR 1,000,000 (approx. US\$ 65,000) to purchase these 50 pumps. Prodivers has already helped to raise over US\$ 18,000, the team is training hard, and there are 8 weeks to go! We

would like to thank all our sponsors that has joined us already.

The next goal for 2015 is to take the Atoll Challenge Nationwide to spread even more awareness and raise even more funds. Every Dive Centre, Watersports Centre and Resort in the Maldives will be invited to partake in their own Atoll Challenge.

The infrastructure needed to treat patients in the Maldives is insufficient. With the help of events like these and spreading the event Nationwide will only add to the continuous work of the Maldivian Thalassaemia Society to help the citizens of the Maldives.

Please join us in the adventure as the Atoll Challenge team paddles a distance of 165kms while they overnight on deserted Islands and live off the land and the ocean. A feat that has never been achieved before. The team is new to the world of kayaking and May month is the beginning of the Monsoon Season which may bring storms to these kayakers. The Lhaviyani Atoll is known for its strong unpredictable currents which can change in minutes.

SPONSORS

In order to help achieve the goal, the Atoll Challenge is relying on the support of corporate sponsorship, as well as the donations of generous guests and visitors to the Maldives. Corporate sponsor packages are available for interested parties.

Confirmed sponsors so far includes;

PADI EMEA, Trans Maldivian Airways, TV Maldives, Haveeru Online, Prodivers Maldives, Ocean Watersports, theconcept, Kuredu Island Resort, Komandoo Maldives Island Resort, Palm Beach Resort & Spa, Kanuhura Maldives, Atmosphere Kanifushi Maldives, Fourth Element, Dhiprint and Ooredoo Maldives!

Further information concerning sponsorship can be obtained by emailing donate@atollchallenge.com

MORE INFORMATION

The Atoll Challenge website:
www.atollchallenge.com

Maldivian Thalassaemia Society:
www.thalassaemia.org.mv

Facebook Page: www.facebook.com/AtollChallenge



Paradise Vs. Paradise What will it be?



Two islands with their own distinct experiences. Mount Lavinia Hotel Sri Lanka, offers an island steeped in history and blessed with vibrant colours while Vakarufalhi offers the sleepy splendour of The Maldives with infinite pristine beaches and aquamarine sea-scapes. What will it be?

Mount Lavinia Hotel

- Choice of Rooms - Colonial, Direct Ocean View, Ocean View
- Luxury Dining in an old Ceylonese style restaurant
- The Terrace - One of the best gathering places in the world
- Seafood Cove - Paradise Island's seafood restaurant
- Spa Facilities
- Evening Entertainment with three bars to choose from

For Reservations

Email: info@mountlaviniahotel.com
Tel: +94 112711 711 Fax: +94 112730 726
Find us at www.mountlaviniahotel.com

Vakarufalhi - Maldives

- Choice of Villas - Beach | Villa | Garden | Pool
- Star Class Cuisine - Bar | Private Dining
- Spa Facilities
- Diving and Excursions
- Evening Entertainment

For Reservations

Email: reservations@vakaru.com
Tel: +960 668 004 Fax: +960 668 007
Find us at www.vakaru.com

MLHG



Vakarufalhi
MALDIVES



A member of the Mount Lavinia Hotel Group, Sri Lanka
www.mountlaviniahotelgroup.com



Your Perfect Escape

Designed for pure relaxation with its sun kissed powdery beaches, crystal clear waters and mesmerizing underwater life, these perfectly located retreats are a true escapist dream.

Riding with the dolphins, alfresco dining by the beach or indulging your senses at the spa, discover Maldives at your own pace. When you stay with us, our promise to deliver an affordable luxury holiday stays true.



SUN SIYAM
RESORTS

SUN SIYAM RESORTS Pvt Ltd
H.Maley-thila, Meheli Goalhi, Male', Rep. of Maldives
Email: info@sunsiyam.com
www.sunsiyam.com



OLHUVELI BEACH & SPA RESORT
MALDIVES

www.olhuvelimaldives.com



VILU REEF BEACH & SPA RESORT
MALDIVES

www.vilureefmaldives.com

Maldives an aerial point of view

BY: THOMAS PICKARD

The Maldives has one of the world's best tropical landscapes and the best way to see it is from the air. Writer and photographer Thomas Pickard, explains why.

At ocean-level the Maldives provides visitors with a majestic vista - an infinite vastness of ocean with a sprinkling of idyllic tropical islands. While it is a view that most people never tire of, if you head to the sky the vista takes on a whole new meaning. From the air, the watery landscape of the Maldives provides visitors with a once in a lifetime perspective of one of the world's most spectacular tropical landscapes.

Looking at the Maldives through the window of a sea plane quickly makes one realise how fragile the island nation really is. With land accounting for a minuscule 0.01 percent of the country's 90,000 square kilometres, an island in the Maldives is really an oasis in a watery desert. From above, buildings and resort take on a more toy like appearance, while over-water bungalows appear to be floating on the turquoise waters beneath them.

With land accounting for a minuscule 0.01 percent of the country's 90,000 square kilometres, an island in the Maldives is really an oasis in a watery desert.

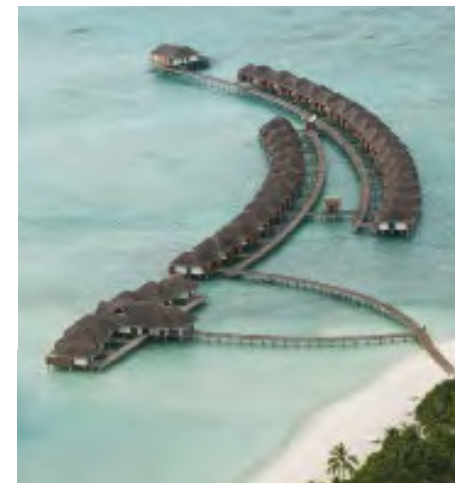
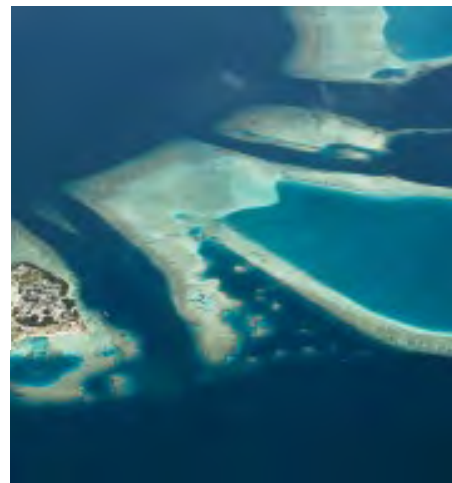
While it is hard to picture today, eons ago the Maldives was actually a very long string of volcanic islands sitting on top of an under sea plateau. The mystery of how this landscape evolved so dramatically to its present day view wasn't solved until 1842. The person responsible is the infamous Naturalist, Charles Robert Darwin. It was during Darwin's five-year voyage on the HMS Beagle, that Darwin first observed coral atolls and coral growth in the Pacific Ocean.



Darwin believed that coral reefs began along the outside edge of volcanic and non-volcanic islands, until such time that an external barrier reef formed. With time and natural sea level change, the island itself would slowly erode and sink into the ocean below. At the same time, the living outer reef edge continued to grow upwards towards the sun. Eventually an outer barrier reef was created, which allowed for the formation of a lagoon between the outer reef edge and the slowly sinking island. As the lagoon continued

to grow and the island eventually became fully submerged, an atoll was formed.

What is left is what nearly a million visitors to the country see each year - an island nation made up of countless atolls spread over a huge area of the Indian Ocean. Not only does the Maldives contain the largest atoll in the world - Huvadhoo Atoll in the southern part of the country - it also contains





what is widely regarded as the finest examples of coral atoll formation in the world.

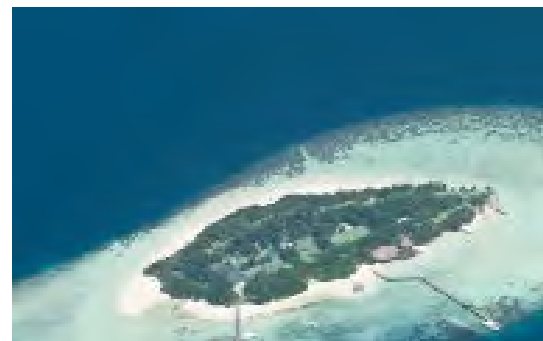
Heading into the Sky

Without doubt the best way to fully appreciate this unique landscape is from the comfort of a sea plane. Trans Maldivian Airways or TMA is now the world's largest sea plane operation, with a fleet of 44 De-Havilland Twin Otter's, flown by 162 pilots and supported by hundreds of operational staff. TMA flies daily to resorts, transferring arriving and departing passengers from Male' international airport to a variety of resorts scattered around the country.

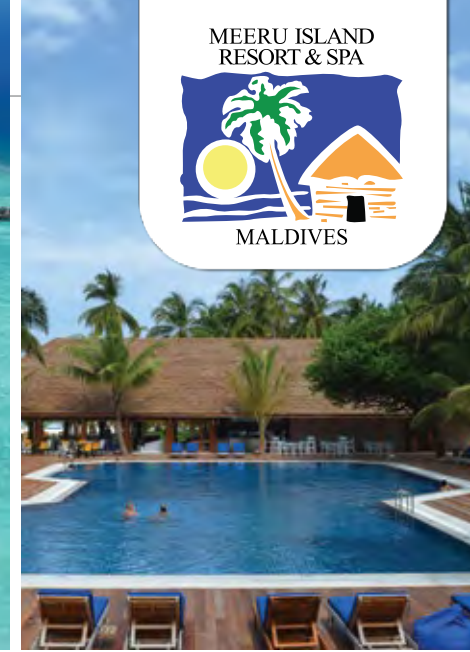
If you are fortunate enough to have a sea plane transfer to your resort, you will be provided with a great opportunity - at no extra cost to you - to view first hand the amazing landscape of the county. The biggest challenge after a long haul flight though, may be in actually staying awake long enough to enjoy the view!

Alternatively, you can sign up for a scenic photo flight directly with TMA or through your resort. If you are going to sign up for a scenic flight and want to return with some great photos, then make sure you follow these guidelines to get the best shots:

- **Arrange a flight on a day and time when there is little cloud cover overhead and the sun is high in the sky. A high sun will provide you with maximum contrast, which means the colours of the ocean and the islands will look great**
- **Make sure your camera batteries are fresh, your lens is clean and that you have loads of spare memory cards ready to go**
- **If your camera takes video, take some video footage, but hold the camera as still as possible**
- **Generally speaking, the best place to sit in a seaplane is the front two seats, as the windows tend to remain splash free during take off and landing**



Thomas Pickard is a writer and photographer who spent two years living in the Maldives and has enjoyed numerous sea plane flights whilst on magazine assignments.



Meeru.....Magic.....only 55 minutes by speed boat
Meeru Island Resort & Spa, surrounded by a beautiful lagoon and long stretches of white, sandy beach

reservations@meeru.com
www.meeru.com





"I realized, that if you want to find out what fish are, how they live, and what their behaviour is, one must oneself behave like a fish-like creature. So I invented the first underwater breathing equipment."
In memoriam: one of the greatest legend for modern marine biology, Prof. Dr. Hans Hass.

From Spearfisher to Conservationist

BY: VERENA WIESBAUER ALI

Flying over the Maldives in a seaplane is a unique experience. One can get a bird's eye view of the thousand of coral reefs, some of which had given rise to the roughly 1200 islands. By now, 40 years after the beginning of tourism in the Maldives, all of the hotel resorts in the Maldives give us the opportunity to explore many of those coral reefs by using SCUBA gear, the "Self Contained Underwater Breathing Apparatus". Virtually anyone in a good physical condition can dive and experience how it's like being "eye-to-eye" with a fish. Using disposable or digital cameras, we take it for granted to even take picture memories of this magical place back home. But, how did it all begin?

As early as 1937, when the 18-year old Austrian Hans Hass undertook his first trip to France without his parents, he was grabbed by a strong passion for

spear fishing. Since his friends back home didn't believe his stories about the underwater world, he had a blacksmith develop the first waterproof housing for his photo camera and used it during a trip to Dalmatia in 1938.

When travelling to the Caribbean in 1939, he dared to do something that most people at that time wouldn't have even thought about: swimming with sharks. The young man and his friends learned that these sharks were interesting, beautiful animals, contrary to the then heavily feared "man-eaters". Not much later, he had rebreathers made for him by the German diving gear makers Dräger with the breathing bag on his back, compared to the - then - common "frog-man look" at the front. Those revolutionary oxygen rebreathers allowed him and his friends to stay underwater longer than ever and

with the use of flippers, he turned it into a "swim-diving" apparatus, gliding through the water similar like a fish. When the Cousteau team heard about him using pure oxygen in the rebreather, they predicted him to die after three minutes. However, Hass proved them wrong and stated in an interview with X-Ray Mag 2008 "Not at all! You can go 20 meters deep and stay an hour underwater."

He wrote about his expeditions in countless books and professional articles, completed his first underwater video "Pirsch unter Wasser" (i.e. Stalking under water), then finally switched from reading law to zoology studies and graduated in Berlin in 1943. His thesis was the first scientific research using an autonomous rebreather diving equipment. Until the end of his life, Hass had been a forefront fighter for the conservation of sharks.



To the Maldives Hass came in 1957 on a sailing trip through the Red Sea into the Indian Ocean to the Nicobar Islands and Singapore with a group of scientists on board the "Xarifa", a three-masted schooner that he acquired ten years earlier. The garden eels that he discovered in the Maldives were named after him and his ship, Xarifania hassi, though the species was later re-named Heteroconger hassi.

Furthermore, an aerial survey of the the reefs in the Maldives made him propose his "Theory of Central Subsidence", a theory of Atoll formation slightly different from Charles Darwin's and others. His adventures on this Xarifa trip can be watched in the exciting documentary "Expedition ins Unbekannte" (i.e. Expedition into the Unknown, 1961), which includes episodes from the Maldives about the formation of coral islands, daily life on the islands in 1958, the technique of diving and underwater filming, as well as introducing Maldivians to the method of remote-filming garden eels on the sea floor while watching the video on board of a ship.



When travelling to the Caribbean in 1939, he dared to do something that most people at that time wouldn't have even thought about: swimming with sharks.

In 2005, he dove in the Maldives for the last time to witness the consequences of the Indian Ocean Tsunami and produce a documentary about it with renowned filmmaker Erich Pröll. With Hans Hass, one of the greatest explorers of the twentieth century and "father" of modern marine science died on 16th June 2013 at the age of 94. "Hans Hass Place", a dive sport at Gulhi Falhu in North Male' Atoll was named after him and will keep us remembering this extraordinary diving pioneer and conservationist.

The Maldives are Calling

BY: THOMAS PICKARD

Winner of the World's Leading Island Destination in 2013, the Maldives attracted over a million visitors last year along. Former resident Thomas Pickard explains why.

Are you planning a romantic escape where you want to experience opulent luxury, from fine dining to the best spa treatments available? Or maybe you are thinking about taking the kids and introducing them to the watery realm of the tropics? What about putting together a group of friends and chartering a weeklong live-aboard, combining diving and snorkelling with local-island hopping? Or how about a week of just laying in the sun listening to the gentle swoosh of the ocean as it unfurls on the shoreline?

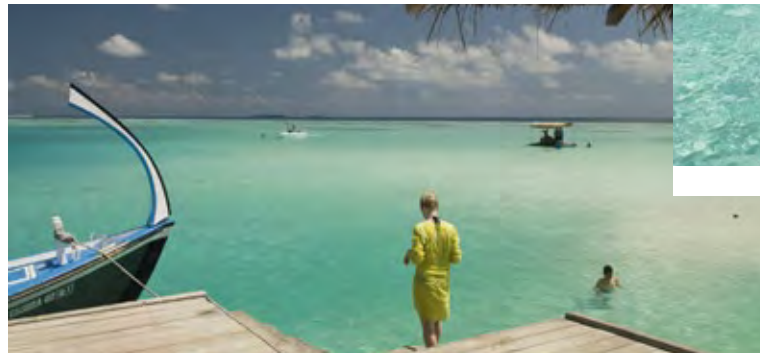
If you answered yes to any of these questions, then look no further than the tropical wonderland of the Maldives.

Situated a stone throw from Sri Lanka and only a four-hour flight from Dubai or Singapore, the Maldives is becoming known as a destination without peer. With 1,190 islands stretching 800-kilometres north of the equator, the Maldives has some of the best examples of coral atoll formation in the world (think: outstanding diving), some of the remotest resorts (think: you won't need to worry about crowded beaches) and a six month dry season (December to May) known for great weather. With the biggest

names in the 5 and 6-star resort business, coupled with a one-island, one-resort policy, the only real problem you will have is actually deciding which of the 105 resorts you should stay at!

Dive the Big Blue

Diving is one of the main draw cards of the Maldives. With a plentiful supply of reefs, thilas, caves, wrecks and large pelagics, diving in the Maldives is never boring. Whether you are a diving newbie looking to learn the basics or a seasoned veteran looking to notch up your thousandth dive, the Maldives is a place that should be on your bucket list.



For newbies looking at completing their PADI Open Water certification, you can't go past ProDivers 5-star Instructor Development Centre at Kuredu Island Resort. ProDivers is one of the largest and best run diving operations in the country. Once certified, don't miss the spectacular Shipyards. This double wreck dive provides interesting history with stunning soft corals and an abundance of fish life.

For more seasoned divers, head to the more remote corners of the country and dive where few others have. Places like Haa Alifu Atoll in the north of the

country contain only three resorts – Island Hideaway, The Beach House of Manafaru and J Resorts Alidhoo – which means only three dive centres and plenty of unexplored diving territory. Diving is so new in this atoll, that it isn't even included in the latest edition of Tim Godfrey's Dive Maldives, considered by many to be the diving bible of the country.

Surf an Endless Wave

Discovered accidentally by ship wrecked Aussie surfer Tony Hinde in the 1970's, it wasn't long before the word got out that the Maldives was a

land of perfect point breaks wrapping around empty tropical islands. Blessed with an 8-month surfing season (March to October), all day off-shore winds, consistent swells and year round warm waters, it is easy to see why globe trotting surfers make a point of visiting the Maldives for a week of surfing every year.

The main surfing areas are concentrated in North and South Male' Atolls and Gaafu Dhaalu Atoll. For resort-based surfers, you can't go past Dhonveli Beach Resort and Hudhuran Fushi Resort. Both offer resort-only waves right off the beach and boat transfers to any of the nearby breaks. The breaks of South Male' Atoll are great for when the swell is too big in North Male' Atoll – Guru's, Kate's, Natives and Last Stops all fire in big swell conditions. For the more adventurous, a weeklong surf safari trip to the seldom-visited Gaafu Dhaalu Atoll in the southern Maldives may be more to your liking. For surfers that are cashed up and wanting to do the next big thing in wave riding, charter a sea plane and go in search of the perfect wave (see side bar for more information).

Lie on a Deserted Beach

While you can come to the Maldives and go diving, snorkelling and surfing, all some people want to do is to find a quiet spot on a pristine white sandy beach, and enjoy a good book while working on the suntan. If this is you, then make sure you find a resort that offers you a beach that you will never

forget. I am talking of course about an empty sand bar or a deserted island.

Rihiveli Resort at the very southern end of South Male' Atoll is a French resort just across from two tiny deserted islands. At high tide, take a complimentary kayak and paddle the hundred metres to your own slice of paradise, or wait for the tide to drop and simply walk across. Complete with a pristine beach and some resident coconut trees, you will quickly understand why so many people succumb to the charms of the Maldives.

Experience Male'

Most people haven't even heard of the capital Male'. With its tiny 1.77 square kilometres and its ever growing population of 105,000 people, Male' is arguably one of the most densely populated cities in the world. It provides a stark contrast to the resort island experience and is definitely one of the world's unique capitals. As such, it is well worth a visit.

Visiting Male' on a day trip is a great way to rub shoulders with the locals and to experience first hand the scooter clogged streets. Favourite sites include the gold domed Grand Friday Mosque; the fish market, where you can watch commercial fishermen unloading tonnes of freshly caught tuna; Artificial Beach where you can mingle with the locals or any of the tea houses that serve up tasty Maldivian short eats.



The land of a thousand colours is a unique destination. With friendly locals, stunning resort locations and enticing tropical waters, it won't take you long to realise you made the right choice. After all, how could million visitors be wrong?

In Search of the Perfect wave

While most visiting surfers base them selves at a surfing resort or go on a surfing live-aboard, there is another option – hire a seaplane.

Though this sounds like the stuff of surfing dreams, it is what TropicSurf offers surfers to the Maldives that want to go beyond the surf breaks of North Male' and South Male' Atoll.

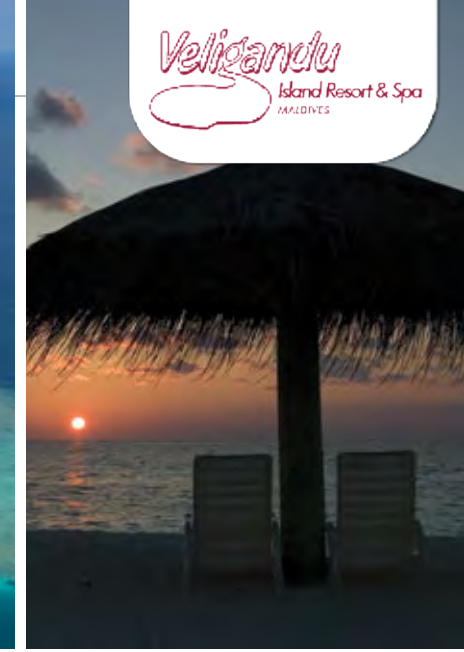
The main advantage of a seaplane is access to some of the least surfed breaks in the country. Finding a

break, landing next to it, and then jumping off the seaplane pontoons to paddle into a session of a lifetime, is one of those experiences that will last long after the day has passed.

Male' Submarine Tour

Ideally suited to non-divers and families, a trip on the Whale Submarine lasts for approximately 45-minutes. After taking a dhoni to the floating dock on the western side of Male', you will be provided with a short safety briefing, before descending into the deliciously cool submarine and taking a front row seat in front of an oversized port hole.

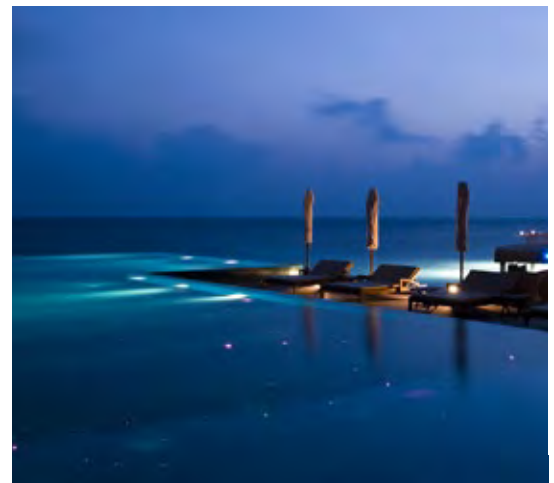
With powerful lights illuminating the reef, the true colours of the corals and fans are clearly seen, while a variety of tropical fish, including surgeonfish, blue-striped snapper, one-spot snapper and unicorn fish are regularly seen.



Veligandu Island Resort & Spa, surrounded by a beautiful lagoon and long stretches of white, sandy beach. Your seaplane transfer from Ibrahim Nasir International Airport is a scenic, 20 minute flight



reservations@veliganduisland.com
www.veliganduisland.com



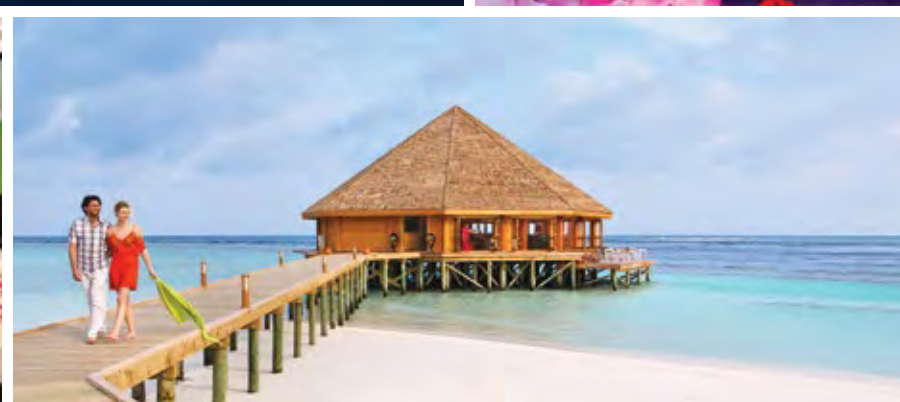
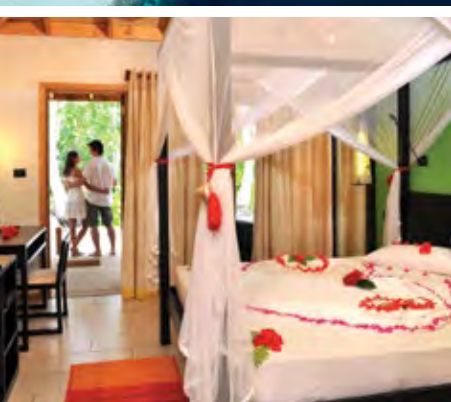


VILAMENDHOO
Island Resort & Spa



maafushivaru

An experience uniquely Maldives...



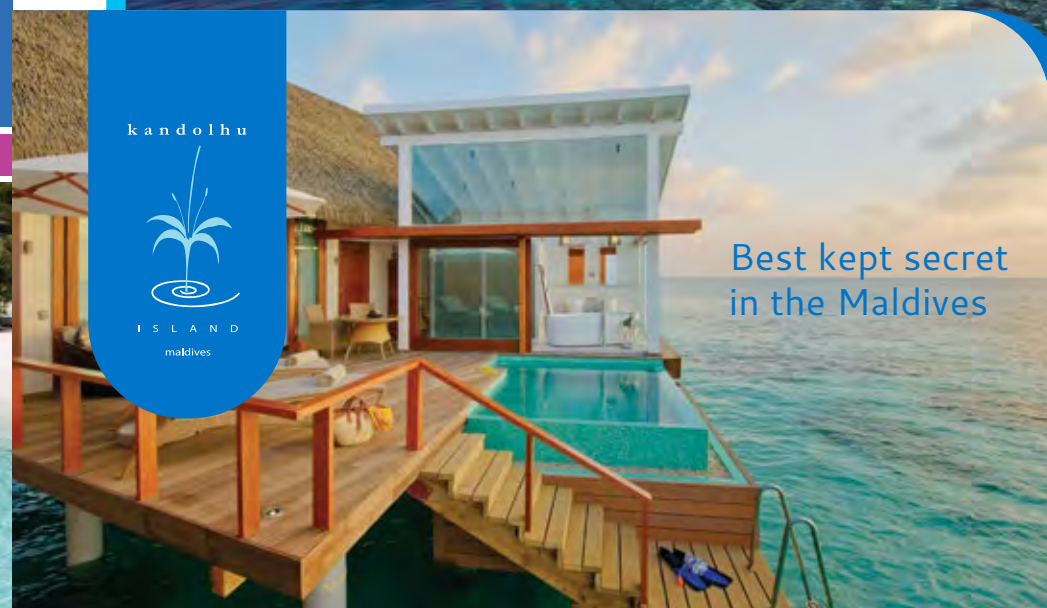
naturally maldives

Kuramathi
ISLAND RESORT

Vilamendhoo Island Resort & Spa, surrounded by a beautiful lagoon and long stretches of white, sandy beach, is the only resort on the island of Vilamendhoo, Your seaplane transfer from Ibrahim Nasir International Airport is a scenic, 25 minute flight



reservations@vilamendhooisland.com
www.vilamendhooisland.com



kandolhu
ISLAND
maldives

Best kept secret in the Maldives

www.maafushivaru.com

www.kandolhu.com

www.kuramathi.com

exploring baa atoll

Whale Sharks, Mantas, Turtles and Luxury Ecotourism

BY: SARAH HARVEY



Luxury tourism and environmental conservation may perhaps at first seem unlikely bedfellows but protecting the beautiful natural environment of the Maldives is something in everyone's best interests. Without clean beaches and a pristine marine environment there is no marine life and no tourists. After all, the biggest attractions of the Maldives are the pure white sand beaches and vibrant coral reefs. The Maldives' Ministry of Tourism reported that in 2013 snorkelling and diving were the top two activities in the Maldives. With this in mind,

many key players in the Maldives' tourism industry are working together to help to preserve the natural beauty and native fauna of the Maldives. A shining example is in Baa Atoll where the luxury resorts are making efforts to protect the abundance of natural gifts the area holds.

The Maldives straddles the equator to the south west of India and Sri Lanka and consists of 26 atolls. Baa Atoll is one of the most beautiful of all these atolls. The next major landmass to the west of Baa



Atoll is Africa, with thousands of miles of limitless blue horizons in-between.

If you could view Baa Atoll from the outer stratosphere you would see that it is the shape of a human heart. Pulsating within that heart is an enormous diversity of life both above and below the water, which is what makes Baa Atoll globally-recognised as a unique natural wonder.

Baa Atoll consists of 75 islands, only 13 of which are inhabited, plus no more than eight resort islands which all-in-all makes it a very exclusive



spot; particularly compared to the resort-jammed atolls closer to Male'. There's a distinct absence of the trappings of civilization, just acres of watery panoramas and distant uninhabited islands. The vast majority are lush virgin islands without a single footprint on them.

Yet preserving this exclusive spot comes with a unique set of challenges. Some of the threats to this slice of paradise are natural, some man-made.

Resort managers, marine biologists and NGOs became concerned about a decline in the local shark population in the early 2000s. They established the Baa Atoll Resorts United project (BARU means 'strong' in the local language) as a forum to discuss this and other environmental issues. The group succeeded in lobbying the Maldivian Government which agreed in 2003 to establish the Atoll Ecosystem Conservation Project with the support of the UNDP and Global Environment Facility.

The idea was to pilot a conservation plan in Baa Atoll because it is an area of such environmental significance. The project would later be rolled out across the Maldives.

After years of collaboration between the resorts, UNDP and the Government, Baa Atoll officially became the first UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve in the Maldives in 2011 in recognition of its globally-significant biodiversity.

Nesting green and hawksbill turtles; whale sharks and mantas; mangrove forests, unique hard and soft corals, vegetation used in traditional medicine, grey and white tipped reef sharks, high populations of IUCN red-listed species of fish and grouper spawning sites are just a handful of the reasons why Baa Atoll has achieved international recognition.



Throw into the mix roosting and breeding grounds for frigate birds, red-billed tropic birds, black-naped terns, greater crested terns, lesser noddies, brown noddies, ruddy ternstones, northern shovelers and nibiligaas; add the wreck of a 400-tonne French ship which was carrying a cargo of silver when it wrecked in 1602, and that in a nutshell is what makes Baa Atoll so special.

The status of UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve gives Baa Atoll a certain level of protection (mostly thanks to campaigning by resorts in Baa Atoll and the Manta Trust). Shark fishing is now illegal in the Maldives and 10 Marine and Terrestrial Protected areas have been established in the atoll. The issue of enforcement, awareness, community engagement, education and conservation is something that the



The jewel in the crown of Baa Atoll is a key protected area known as Hanifaru Bay. During western monsoons when the conditions are right, huge aggregations of plankton trapped in the soup bowl of Hanifaru Bay draws vast numbers of manta rays and whale sharks on a scale rarely witnessed anywhere else in the world. This natural spectacle alone generates around \$500,000 per year as a tourist attraction.

But despite all the progress and tourist dollars, significant challenges still remain. Aside from the double-edged sword of tourism (with damage to corals by floods of tourists and tourist vessels), on-going issues include illegal shark fishing for the shark-fin soup market, coral bleaching, pollution and waste, over-fishing, turtle egg poaching and the removal of shells from the ocean for the souvenir trade.

Biosphere Reserve and Baa Atoll's resorts continue to work on at a grassroots level.

So far, four resorts in Baa Atoll (Soneva Fushi, Four Seasons Landaa Giraavaru, Dusit Thani and Reethi Beach) have signed up to contribute financially to the UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve, while each resort in Baa Atoll also has its own unique environmental programme which varies in its approach.

Soneva Fushi's General Manager, Laurie Burr, says: "It's very important that all the General Managers in Baa Atoll are supportive of Hanifaru Bay and the Biosphere Reserve. The biggest thing we're doing is working on education programmes," he adds.

No resort in the Maldives can be 100 per cent 'green' due to the remote geographical location of the

country, logistics, high expectations of guests and the difficulties of recycling materials on a tiny island surrounded by thousands of miles of ocean. There are no official recycling facilities in the country's capital, Male', which is some 113 kilometres away from Baa Atoll. Certain materials are sent overseas for recycling and the rest is burned or dumped in the lagoon at the country's main refuse disposal site.

However, some of the resorts in Baa Atoll have their own recycling plants and almost all of them have their own water bottling plants (to save plastic bottle waste). Food waste and garden waste is turned to compost and at Soneva Fushi carpentry waste is turned to biochar via pyrolysis and used in the kitchens, pizza ovens and buffet areas. The resort is also experimenting with new solar power technology and educating the next generation of Maldivians about the importance of conservation.

Glass bottles are ground down into powder or chips and turned into cement or mosaic decorations at Dusit Thani and Soneva Fushi, while practically all of the resorts in Baa Atoll gather coconuts from neighbouring islands to eradicate the need to import them and attempt to grow some of their own vegetables, fruits and herbs for salads and cocktail garnishes.

Most of Baa Atoll's luxury resorts also have their own dedicated marine biologists, such as at Soneva Fushi, Dusit Thani, Four Seasons Landaa Giraavaru, Reethi Beach and Coco Palm Dhuni Kolhu, who give guests regular talks on the spectrum of wildlife in the area and lead them on guided turtle and manta-

spotting trips where guests are informed about the importance of conservation. The marine biologists and general managers also co-operate on turtle conservation (threats include ingesting plastic bags which look like jellyfish and poaching).

Dusit Thani and Four Seasons also have coral planting schemes, whereby tiny fragments of coral are planted on frames and as the coral grows it creates new healthy areas of reef.

"Ecotourism is the new tourism," says Lauren Arthur, marine biologist at Dusit Thani. "We get lots of high-end guests who want to know everything about the marine environment here and they bring their kids who also want to learn everything and to see everything."

It's hoped that through a combination of educating guests and local children, continuing to keep conservation a priority at the resorts, collaborating together and pushing for more protection of the environment in Baa Atoll that the unique and extremely special area can be preserved for future generations.

Looking ahead, Reethi Beach General Manager Peter Gremes hopes that the focus of the Biosphere Reserve expand beyond Hanifaru Bay to diverse projects across the atoll. "There are ten marine protected areas which we need to focus upon," he said, adding that BARU hopes to eradicate mosquitoes on every resort island and inhabited island in Baa Atoll through a special chemical-free eradication programme.





welcome to

islands of love



Perched atop Lhaviyani Atoll is Kuredu Island Resort and Spa encompassed by the two faces of Indian Ocean – excitement of open Indian Ocean in the north and tranquility of inner atoll ocean in the south. Spread along the 3.5 kilometers of beach are 6 categories of accommodation ranging from Garden and Beach Bungalows to very personal and tranquil Sulthan Pool Villas. The emphasis is very much on options that our guests could have – 4 main restaurants, 3 a-la-carte' restaurants, 1 tea house, 6 bars, 2 swimming pools, 2 spas, state of art gym, golf club, full size football court, tennis, beach volleyball, badminton, dive center including hyperbaric chamber, large watersports, in-room WiFi, library and indoor games at Entertainment Center, and more. Kuredu offers 3 ambiances to match changing moods of it's guests – main resort for families and activities, Sangu Resort for romantic tranquility with traditional Maldivian touch, and 'O' Resort for tranquility with a modern touch of luxury and style

Tranquility begins for Komandoo Maldive Island Resort with it's idyllic location within the quiet waters of aqua marine enriched Lhaviyani Atoll. A perfect luxury getaway sanctuary for those elite guests whose hearts crave for closer union with whom they share their all. Komandoo is an unique resort designed with a wonderful sense of style and warm feelings emphasising very much on the expression of individual emotions. Embedded in the dazzling white coral beach, overlooking the crystal clear turquoise lagoons are our exquisite villas tastefully crafted combining cozy comfort with modern amenities. The shallow lagoon around the resort is an underwater treasure of exotic aquamarine world, promising addictive experiences of amazing diving and snorkeling. The romantic holiday gets exiting when dining on the beach with candle light, dining overwater in the a-la-carte' restaurant, repeating the wedding vows on the beach during the mesmerizing sunset, rejuvenating mood, body and spirit in the spa, sailing away on a wooden yacht, or even getting cast away on an uninhabited island.

Choices are expressions of life style! Kuredu is a resort with many options for a personalised experience!

Tropical tranquility and peace of Komandoo are perfect mediums for expression of emotions, as words would fall short.



www.kuredu.com info@kuredu.com

www.komandoo.com info@komandoo.com



The Maldives on a budget

BY: SARAH HARVEY

Until recently the Maldives has been synonymous only with luxury travel and exclusivity; affordable accommodation was scarce and even the cheapest resorts were beyond the means of many. But a massive transformation is taking place in the local travel industry which means that the Maldives is opening up a wider range of holiday options to meet the needs of all kinds of travellers. In fact today it's now possible to spend just \$100-200 per day covering accommodation, food and entertainment.

There's still no shortage of ultra-expensive accommodation, with some villas costing more

than \$15,000 per night, and they are just as popular as ever. But guesthouses are now rapidly spreading across the country following changes to government legislation that has allowed them to operate for the first time in decades. This means that the Maldives is now within reach of a wider demographic of traveller (and also more options are available to Maldivians wanting to get away for a short break).

The 1,190 tiny islands that constitute the Maldives are categorised into three main groups; 110 "resort islands" (with just one resort per island), 200 "inhabited islands" (islands with local communities

and guesthouses on them) and the remaining islands are classed as "uninhabited islands". These categories all have different laws applicable to them, the most significant of which is that alcohol, bikinis and pork are only available on islands classed as resort islands.

Until recently it was practically impossible to get a room outside of Male' for less than \$300 per night (the average rate for a three-star resort). Guesthouses were banned and it was illegal for tourists to stay overnight on an island with a Maldivian community living on it. Now, there is decent accommodation from as low as \$30 per night in cheap and simple guesthouses. The biggest benefit to Maldivians from this is that money from the guesthouses goes directly into the Maldivian community as they are mostly owned, operated and staffed by Maldivians. Also in turn these guesthouses support an abundance of other local enterprises such as cafes, diving centres, watersports centres and boat companies by creating a new market for them in order to keep the guests entertained.

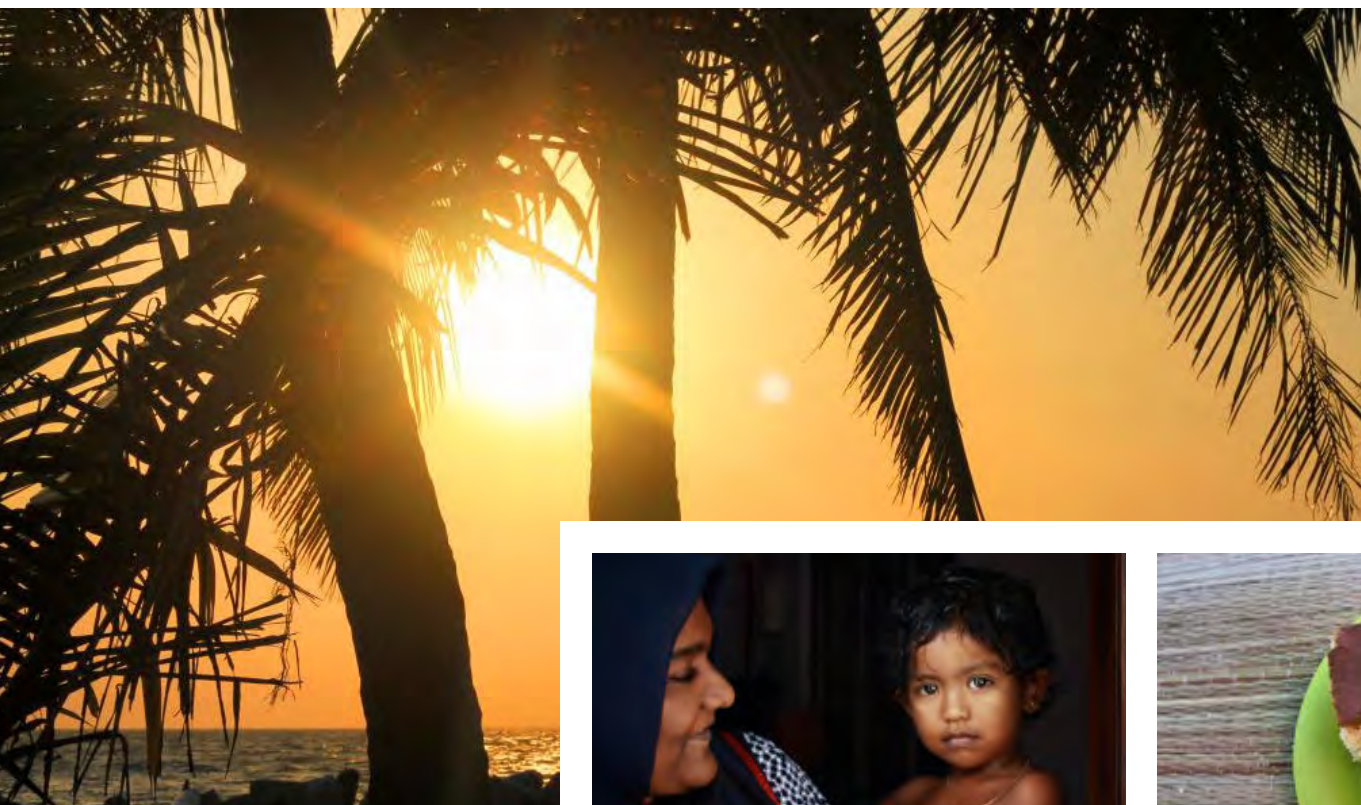
Many of the guesthouses consist of a just few homely bedrooms although practically all of them

have air-conditioning, en-suite bathrooms and an activities and excursions programme for guests. The higher-priced "guesthouses" can cost up to about \$150 per night and are more akin to boutique hotels or holiday rentals – some even have private pools and spa facilities. This type of guesthouse is particularly popular among honeymooners and young families because they provide a higher level of comfort, amenities and facilities. No matter where you stay, and whether you're a millionaire or a backpacker, the thing to remember is everyone in the Maldives gets the same white sand, azure sea and brilliant sunshine.

The chain of Indian Ocean islands that make up the country lie to the south-west of India and Sri Lanka, straddling the equator. The proximity to the equator means that the climate is hot and humid; the temperature hovers around 30c all year-round and it never gets cooler than 25c even when it rains. Wet season is from April to November but there's still an average of 8 hours' sunshine per day. Showers are sporadic (often occurring only at night). Bargain-hunters will find the best accommodation deals during this period.

Many travellers use the tiny 2.2sq km capital city of Male' as a jumping-off point as most of the public ferries to surrounding islands and some overnight ferries to the further-flung atolls depart from Male' although inter-atoll ferries and of course seaplane flights are better options for covering longer distances. The majority of independent travellers tend to opt for accommodation within Male' Atoll or neighbouring Ari Atoll (which reduces costs and travelling time) such as on the islands of Maafushi, Guiradhoo, Himmafushi and Thulusdhoo. Maafushi is one of the most popular islands amongst backpackers due to the location and choice of guesthouses. There are about 23 guesthouses on Maafushi which is remarkable considering the island is 1.2km by 0.2km in size.

a massive transformation is taking place in the local travel industry which means that the Maldives is opening up a wider range of holiday options to meet the needs of all kinds of travellers.



Getting from one island to another without going back to Male' is harder because the network is Male'-centric (and there aren't any 'taxi boats' unlike in Southeast Asia). But there are a few ferries which come in handy for island-hopping, such as the Male-Maafushi-Guraidhoo-Gulhi ferry. Travellers can also sometimes hitch a ride on a fishing boat or cargo boat if they inquire locally – Maldivians are usually more than happy to try to help travellers.

While for the past few decades the Maldives has only been accessible to affluent travellers (the majority of which were honeymooners) the arrival of guesthouses is changing the demographic slightly. Singles in their 20s and 30s, diving and surfing enthusiasts and groups of friends are opting for guesthouse accommodation. Couples and families are also starting to see guesthouses as a more colourful and affordable alternative to resorts and it's not uncommon on islands such as Dhigurah and Maafushi to see foreign couples pushing buggies around the island.

Raki Bench runs the largest website that specialises in Maldivian guesthouses, Guesthouses-In-Maldives.com. "There's definitely been a big increase in demand for guesthouses recently", he said. "Many guesthouses are fully booked during the high season, new guesthouses are opening all the time; people are becoming aware of alternative options to resorts and are taking advantage of the good value that guesthouses offer.

"We've seen an increase in the Asian market, especially Singapore and Malaysia. Couples and families are the main demographic," he says. "Many people are on a budget but many also don't like the idea of being stuck in a private resort island and being limited to only the things which the resort has to offer."

Dhangethi is one of the newest destinations for travellers. The island is home to 1,200 Maldivians and is located 87km from Male', in Alif Dhaal Atoll. Other than tourism; fishing, handicrafts, carpentry and boat-building are the main sources of employment. At Holiday House Dhangethi you can have a picnic on a sandbank or go windsurfing for \$20 (compared to at least \$70 at a resort) or hop on a boat for an all-day diving trip for around \$60 (compared to \$90-\$250 at a resort).



Some inhabited islands also have independent water-sports and diving centres for travellers to choose from, such as Maafushi Dive Centre where it's around \$50 for a 2-dive day trip including equipment rental.

Whale sharks the size of buses, manta rays, moray eels, countless reef sharks and crystal-clear water are just some of the reasons why the Maldives is one of the world's best diving destinations. There are more than 2,000 species of tropical fish and the sheer quantity of sea-life is barely matched



a massive transformation is taking place in the local travel industry which means that the Maldives is opening up a wider range of holiday options to meet the needs of all kinds of travellers.

in any other location worldwide. Divers can either book through their guesthouse or stroll around an island to search for a diving centre and then hop on a boat to track whale sharks and mantas (the Maldives is the only place on the planet with a year-round population of whale sharks). There are also countless opportunities to do wreck dives, drift dives, night dives, thilas, walls and caves.

Those who prefer to stay above the waves can choose from exciting water-sports activities, just as they can do at a resort, including surfing,

windsurfing, paddle-boarding, kite-boarding and fishing.

Cultural activities are also available at some guesthouses. Guraidhoo is home to the newly-opened Islandway guesthouse. It's in South Male' Atoll, just 31km from the capital with a population of 1,459. Islandway has a unique array of cultural activities for guests including Maldivian cookery classes with the only Maldivian female head chef in the country, watching craftsmen at work using traditional skills handed down for generations or

spending the day learning pole and line fishing from fishermen.

Backpacker Michaela Krepela, from the Czech Republic, has visited more than a dozen guesthouses in the Maldives, with the islands of Dhangethi and Rasdhoo being amongst her favourites.

“I had amazing time on the local islands,” she says. “In the resort islands it is only about relaxing on the beach but to stay in a guesthouse in the local islands is to really experience the Maldives.”

While a lot of the guesthouses have their own dining facilities, a trip to a local cafe is a fun way of getting to know the country through the cuisine. The delicious traditional breakfast of mas’huni roshi is always popular. It consists of tuna, coconut, lime and chilli wrapped up in thin tortillas known as roshi and costs around \$1-\$2 a pop, including tea or coffee. Fish curries and Maldivian tapas known as hedika form the backbone of Maldivian cuisine. Most of the fish curries are fairly mild and are served with roshi. ‘Hedika’ consists of small deep-fried squares, spheres or triangles made from fish and coconut with a handful of other local ingredients such as curry leaves, eggs and onion. All of these dishes can be found in cafes on local islands alongside international classics such as spaghetti bolognese, pizza, pasta, fried rice and

sandwiches.

Dhivehi Malaafaiy in Rahdhebai Magu is one of the most authentic dining venues in the capital city, with a coconut thatch roof, al fresco terraces and quality curries and service. Over on Maafushi, Rehendhi is right on the beach and very popular with locals and travellers alike. New Point Café on Himmafushi is popular with surfers and locals alike and serves excellent hedika.

Michael Ahmed is managing director of Islandway guesthouse in Guraidhoo and has several more guesthouses in the pipeline.

“For tourists, guesthouses offer a chance to experience and share the real-life experience of the ‘real Maldives’,” he says. “Our rich culture and the native livelihoods you can see on the islands show that the Maldives is definitely not about ‘the art of doing nothing’ but rather is a place bustling with friendly, hard-working and very hospitable people who take pride in their way of life. What really makes the Maldives can only be experienced by strolling alongside its unique people and blending in alongside their daily life.”

While guesthouses give tourists the opportunity to live alongside Maldivian communities, a few adaptations have been necessary. It’s a little-known



fact outside of the Maldives but everyone visiting a Maldivian guesthouse should be aware that alcohol, pork and skimpy swimwear are illegal on ‘inhabited islands’ (those things are only allowed on ‘resort islands’). This is because as a moderate Sunni Muslim nation the culture is fairly conservative – Maldivians aren’t allowed to drink and the women usually bathe in the sea fully-clothed. Guesthouse owners realised that many of their foreign guests wanted to have a beer or two and wear Western-style swimwear so they have come up with some ingenious solutions.

No matter where you stay, and whether you’re a millionaire or a backpacker, the thing to remember is everyone in the Maldives gets the same white sand, azure sea and brilliant sunshine.

Take Maafushi for example. The guesthouse owners there have negotiated with the island council to provide a private stretch of beach where bikinis are permitted and it’s available for all tourists to use. It’s discreetly tucked away from public view behind some coconut thatch screens. With Maafushi as something of a model (being the first inhabited island to develop large-scale guesthouse tourism) many guesthouses on other islands have followed suit with private beach areas, such as the stunning beaches at Rasdhoo and Dhigurrah.

Most guesthouses also offer day trips to resorts for discounted rates (such as \$25 for a day pass) so that travellers can sunbathe in bikinis, purchase cocktails and beer and generally see what a Maldivian resort looks like.

However, if you’re quite happy to ‘survive’ a holiday in the Maldives without those things, then there’s no pressure to do so. In fact many guesthouse owners report a significant percentage of backpackers say they don’t feel the urge to drink in the Maldives (although they seem to appreciate the tourist beaches a lot!). After all, the reason travellers travel is to experience a different culture, environment and way of life outside of our normal range of experience (as well as to find the sunshine).





Soneva Fushi, Maldives



Soneva Kiri, Thailand



Soneva Fushi, Maldives



Coming soon - Soneva Gili, Maldives

*there is no place
like home*

YOUR OPPORTUNITY TO OWN OR RENT A SPRAWLING
HOME IN THE MALDIVES AND THAILAND

Enjoy SLOW LIFE* at its finest. Soneva Private Residences showcase at its very best the signature style the Soneva group has become synonymous with; intelligent design, luxuriously spacious accommodation, uncompromising service and environmental sensitivity.

The ultimate beachfront private residences are now available with one to nine bedroom options and a range of ownership and tax benefits.

*Sustainable-Local-Organic-Wellness Learning-Inspiring-Fun-Experiences

For more information, please contact:
Lynn Villadolid
Managing Director, Soneva Private Office
T: +66 (0) 83988 9512
T: +960 660 0304 (Please ask for the General Manager)
E: lynn@soneva.com

www.SonevaPrivateResidences.com


Soneva
PRIVATE RESIDENCES



Palm Beach Resort & spa
Maldives



SportingVacanze
Roma - Italia



www.palmbeachmaldives.com
www.sportingvacanze.it



the Seaplane

The DHC-6 Twin Otter is a Canadian 19-passenger STOL (Short Takeoff and Landing) utility aircraft developed by de Havilland Canada and currently produced by Viking Air.

De Havilland has a history of more than 80 years; the first de Havilland Canada flew in 1925, piloted by none other than Geoffrey de Havilland. The aircraft was called the 'Moth' and was quickly followed by many variations – all of them highly successful.

Development of the Twin Otter began in 1964, with the first flight on May 20, 1965 as a twin-engined replacement for the single-engined Otter had been planned by de Havilland Canada. Twin engines not only provided improved safety but also allowed for an increase in payload while retaining the renowned STOL qualities. Design features included double slotted trailing edge

flaps and ailerons that work in unison with the flaps to boost STOL performance. The availability of the 550 shp (410 kW) Pratt and Whitney Canada PT6A-20 propeller turbine engine in the early 1960s made the concept of a twin more feasible.

The Twin Otter proved to be an immediate success, and became immensely popular for short-haul commuter transportation. The Twin Otter is one of the most versatile aircraft ever produced and could come with floats, skis or tricycle landing gear depending on the needs of its users.

It is our belief that our success and the consolidation of our reputation as a safe and reliable seaplane operator in a country such as the Maldives is primarily due to the fact that the Twin Otter is the most ideal small aircraft to the aviation environment in which we operate.



TMA Fact File

44	No. of aircraft	950,000	Passengers per year
120,000	Flights per year	950 +	Number of staff

Have your Pics Published

INFLIGHT MAGAZINE

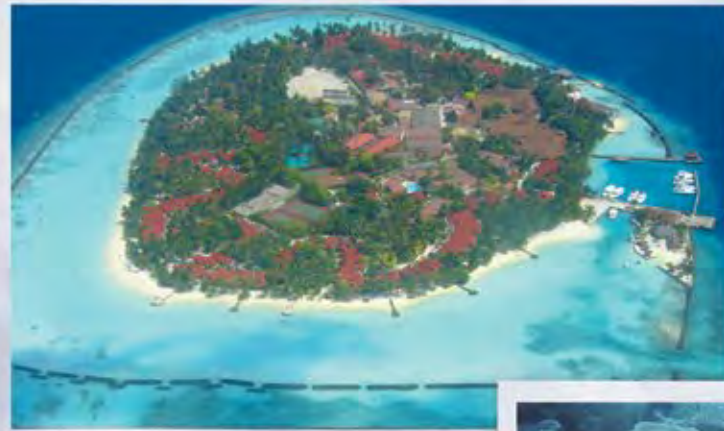
Please send in your pictures to
inflight@thinkmaldives.com with your name
and address, date and the route on which the picture was shot. A few lines
on what you want to say about the shot is also most welcome.



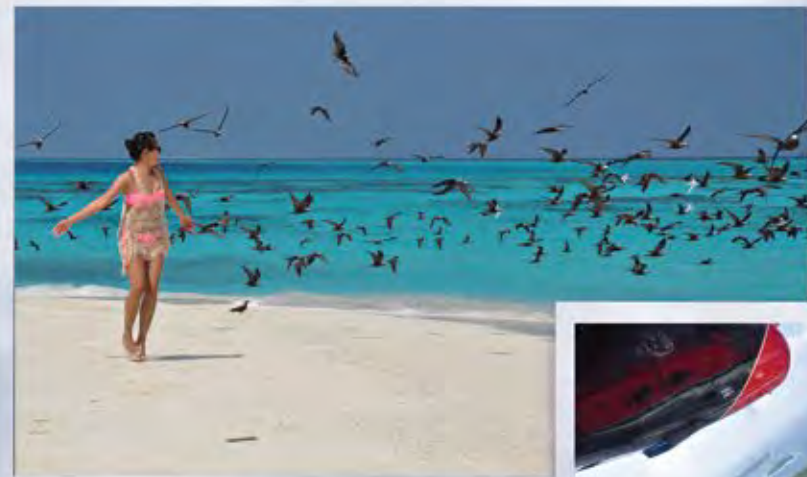
Denise Hickman



Prasanna Somasundaram



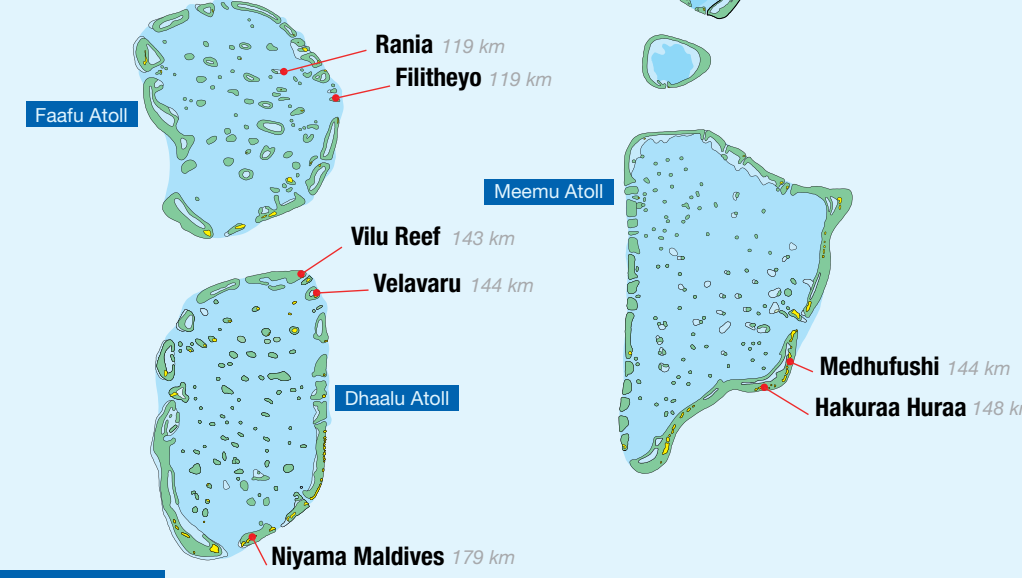
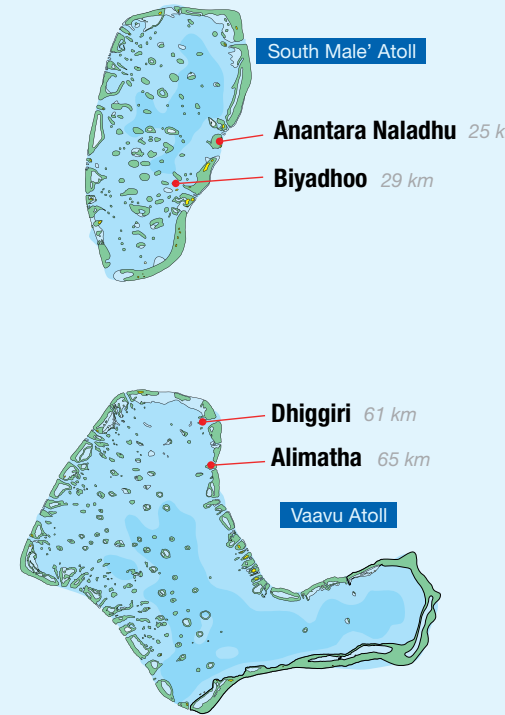
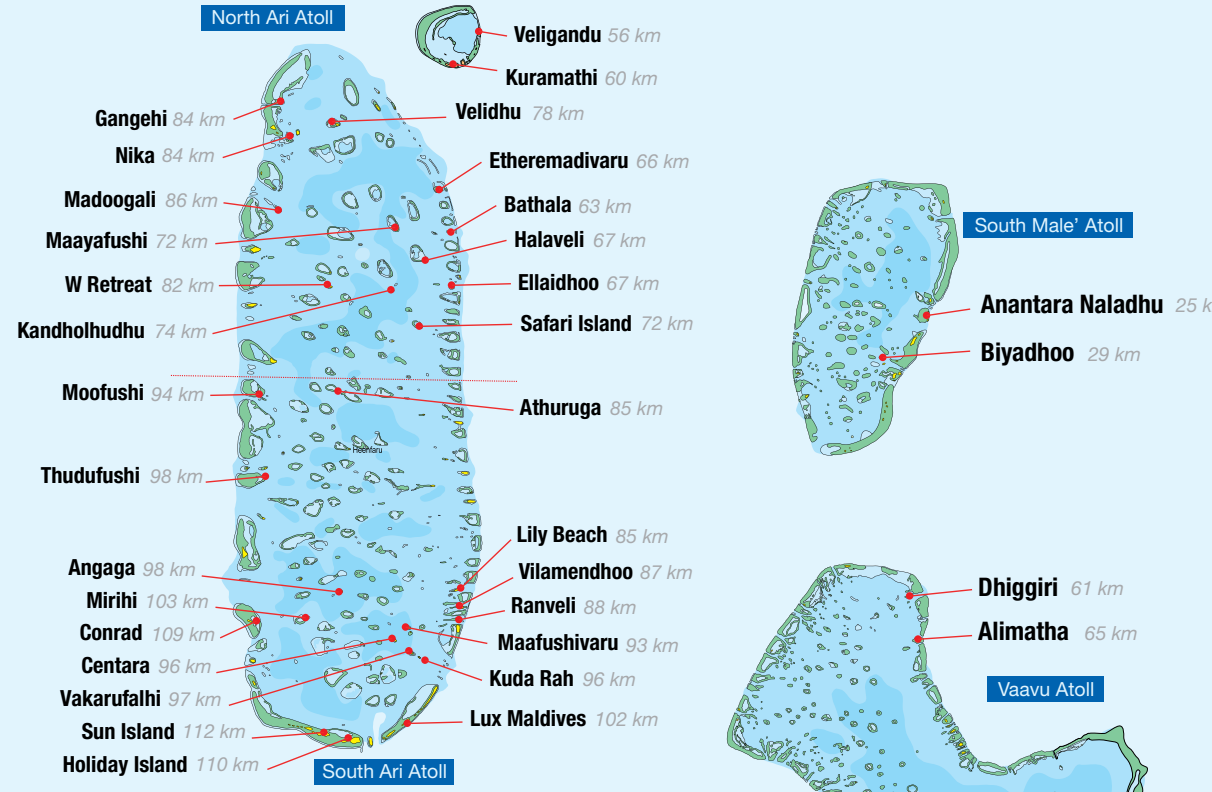
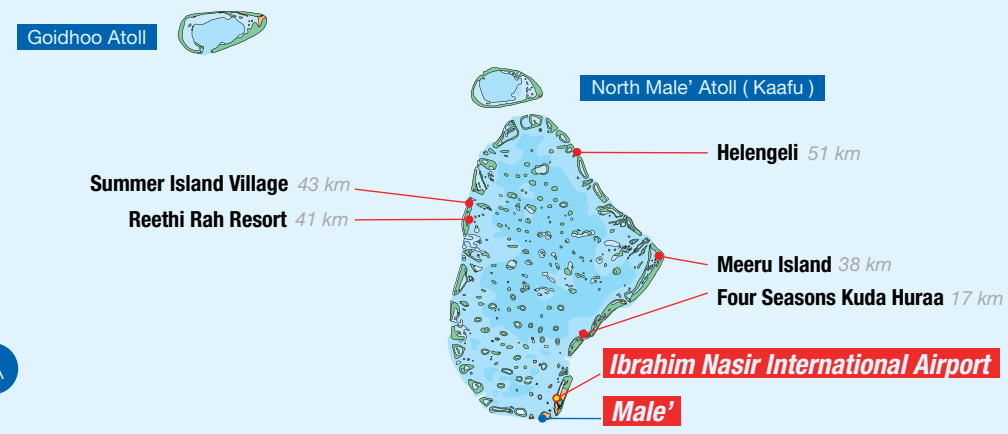
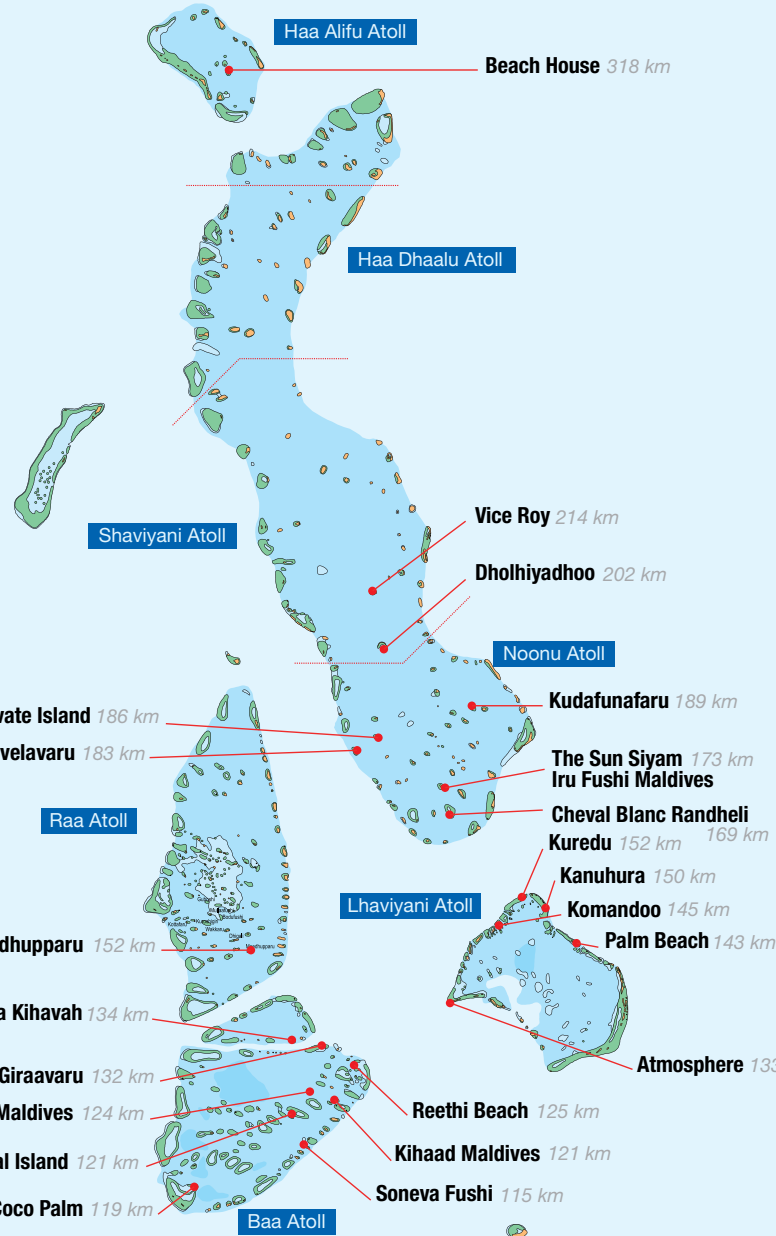
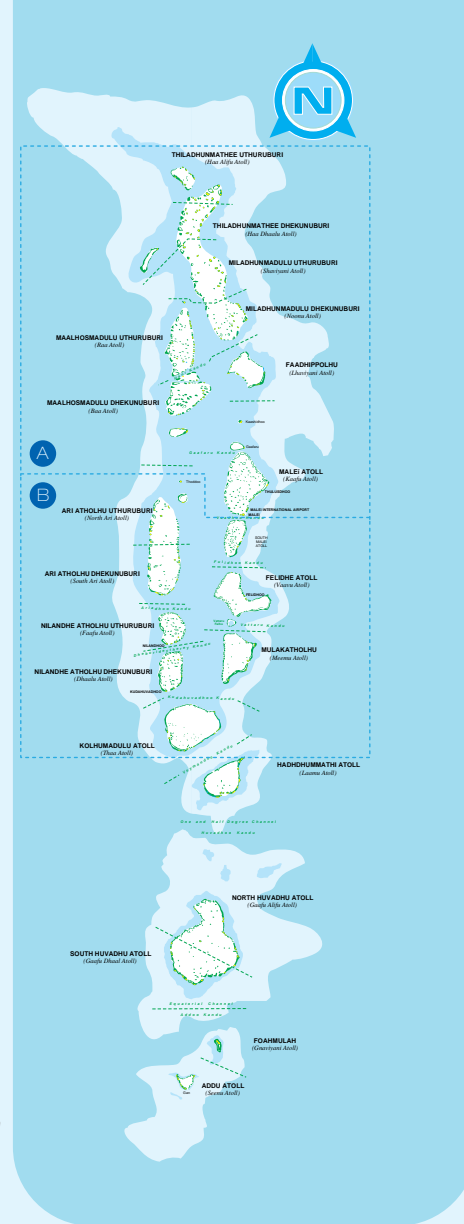
Cindy Tether



Selmar Maribojo

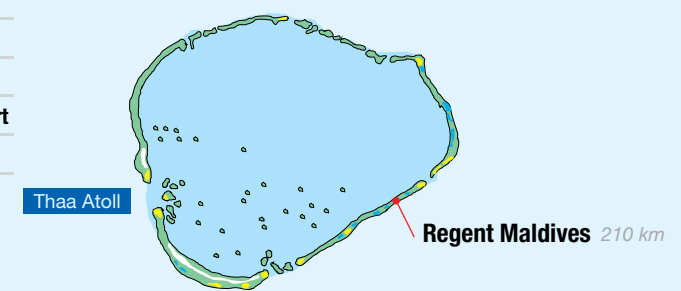


TMA Destinations



LEGEND

- REEF
- ISLAND
- RESORT
- Ibrahim Nasir International Airport
- Male'



A

B




FOUR SEASONS RESORTS
Maldives

DISCOVER MORE
 OF THE MALDIVES WITH
 FOUR SEASONS

With three distinct resort experiences, Four Seasons makes it easier to discover more of the Maldives. Start at Kuda Huraa, a vibrant garden island infused with traditional Maldivian charm, or retreat to the remote natural wilderness of Landaa Giraavaru in the Baa Atoll UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve. Then swap paradises via a complimentary* 30-minute point-to-point seaplane transfer or embark on a marine odyssey between the two on the 11-cabin, three-deck Four Seasons Explorer. **THE ADVENTURE STARTS HERE ... www.fourseasons.com/maldives**

*Guests booking a minimum of three nights at Kuda Huraa and three nights at Landaa Giraavaru will receive complimentary seaplane transfers for two between the two resorts. Quote 'Paradise Twice' when booking.



KUDA HURAA

FOUR SEASONS EXPLORER

LANDAA GIRAAVARU

GUT GESTRANDET?
GERN GESCHEHEN.



Set to sail with us.

An unforgettable journey is about to begin...



Safari Boats . Ground Handling . Aviation Services . Airline Reservations . Resort Reservations

Manta Reisen wünscht Ihnen traumhafte Ferientage.



HEART OF THE OCEAN

solitary · serene · sensual

The only one of its kind, the Water Villas of Shangri-La's Villingili Resort and Spa south of the Equator in the Maldives, are like pearls in oysters offering the choicest decor to the stunning seascapes that surround it, promising a truly sensational, surreal and unforgettable experience.

**Crown Tours**
Your idea of the lifetime travel experience!

Fasmeeru Building 5th Flr, Boduthakurufaanu Magu, P.O. Box 2034, Male, Republic of Maldives
Tel: +960 332 9889 Fax: +960 331 2832 Email: sales@crowntourismaldives.com

WWW.CROWNTOURSMALDIVES.COM