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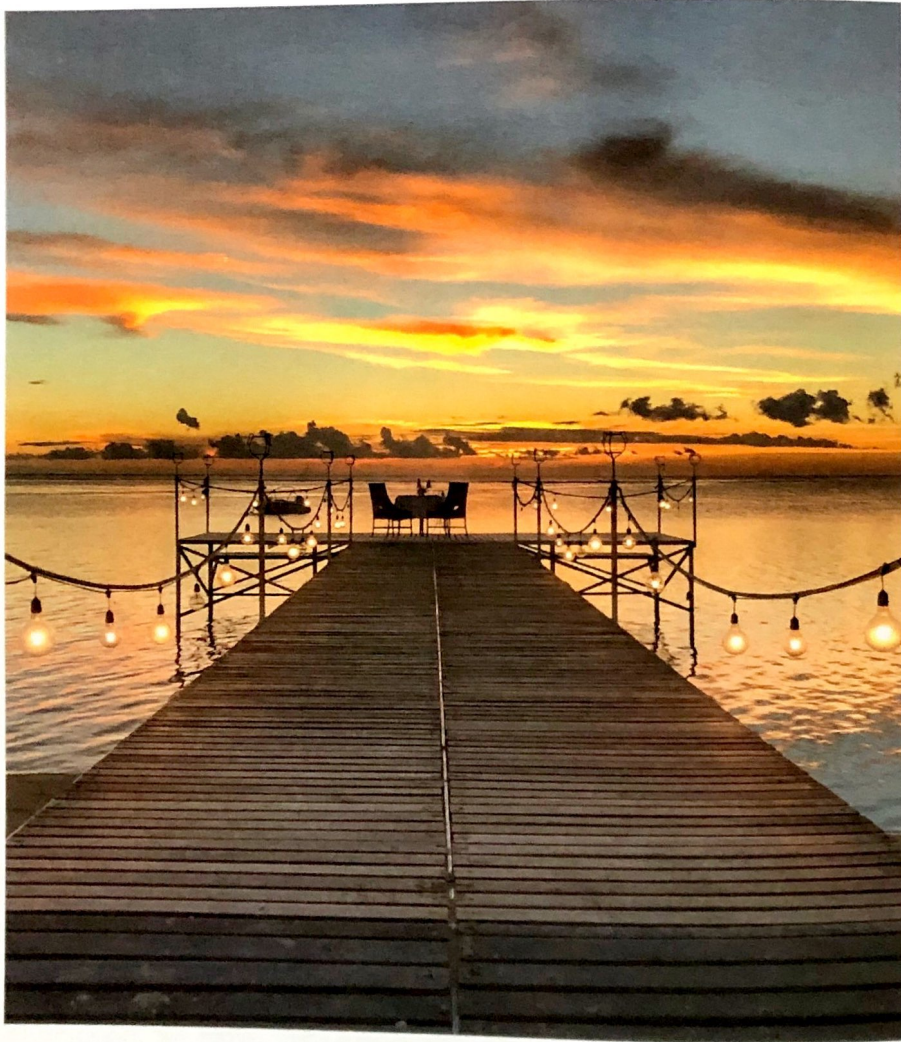


E&I Luxury Lifestyle Section



Image of Maradiva Villas Resort & Spa

Maradiva Villas Resort & Spa



Can travel be a transcendental experience?
E&I sent Mark Southern to the Maradiva Villas Resort and Spa in Mauritius
to find out.

It's said that Mark Twain once wrote, "You gather the idea that Mauritius was made first, and then heaven, and that heaven was copied after Mauritius." He always did like a quote.

However, no matter how divine a honeymoon island may be, can travel truly be transcendental? Can spreading your wings really be a stairway to salvation?

Whilst this correspondent is no ecclesiastical scholar, we touch down on the Indian Ocean paradise's hallowed green lands and golden beaches wondering if we will share Twain's island enlightenment. He and I do share a first name, after all.

Our Mauritian pilgrimage is based at the Maradiva Villas Resort and Spa, located in the South West pocket of perfection, Flic-en-Flec. Unlike the busier (but, let's face it, still pretty wonderful) north, this hidden peninsula carries with it any number of undiscovered and quite beautiful secret charms, but Maradiva stands out as a quite spectacular enclave of peacefulness.

Under the guiding hand of CEO Sanjiv Ramdane, the all-villa complex has become synonymous with the very best of Mauritius getaways, and is a genuine contender for one of the finest hotels in the world.

Much of this comes from the family feel deep rooted in the fabric of the resort, compared to the more generic international experience in some other luxury hotels on the island. This is no accident, as fifth generation Mauritian, Ramdane has worked hard to keep a strong and authentic local flavour, whilst maintaining the quality you'd expect from a genuine 5/6 star escape.

Resort life flows naturally around the private villas, world-class dining options, and, of course, the glorious beach.

The 65 classically elegant villas, each with their own pool, nestle amongst the 27 acres of green spaces and wide walkways, providing pure privacy in their own sun-trap courtyards.

Exteriors are a subtle blend of Indian meets African, but inside contemporary modernity rules, with local twists. One beautiful touch of indulgence is the outdoor shower, hidden amongst your private terracotta garden - a resurrecting way to start any day.

Meanwhile, it's said that Mauritian happiness is food and family, and the resort has made significant strides to bring something new to an island already famed for finding its way to your heart via your stomach.

Coast2Coast, the beachside restaurant brings an international menu, and an outstanding breakfast, while the exquisite Indian Cilantro thrills with its warmth cutting through the cooler Mauritian evenings. However, the pick of the bunch is the Japanese Teppan - an in-the-round dining experience, where phenomenal food meets the sensory theatre of live cookery. Crafted in front of your eyes, the only downside is the FOMO you experience when you see what everyone else is having.

Ultimately, though, there is nothing quite as redemptive as the warm embrace of virgin sand upon your toes, and throughout your stay the soul-enriching beach is the siren calling you towards her rapture. Some resorts lose their sense of space by forgetting the simple bliss of feeling alone with nothing but the ocean and golden sand, but thankfully Maradiva's purposefully intimate number of guests ensures pure sanctuary.

Can travel be transcendent? If done like this, yes it can. And, if Twain is indeed correct, this writer will be behaving a little better in future, just in case.

Discover the Maradiva Villas Resort and Spa at maradiva.com.

