

VIESTRA

summer 2020

M A G A Z I N E

Taking You to New Heights in St. Moritz

Nature Adventures
in Madeira

Explore and Relax
in Mauritius

Essaouira
Morocco's
Windy City

A Taste
of Tbilisi



WIN
a trip to
Oman



Maradiva Main pool

Explore and Relax in Mauritius

BY KATIE SAUNDERS

Sitting in Coast2Coast, the all-day dining area at Maradiva Resort and Spa Mauritius, I was happily taking it all in. With views of white sand, palm trees, the most inviting blue sea and majestic mountains topped off with a tropical climate making this a truly magical destination.



Aerial shot of resort



Presidential Suite



Maradiva Spa - Treatment room

At Maradiva there is a lot to do and experience. The five-star luxury resort is a member of the exclusive 'Leading Hotels of the World' group, perfect for those seeking a stunning and private personalised Mauritian experience. Synonymous with romance, given the island's renown for honeymooners, the resort does cater for everyone. Boasting 46 Luxury Suite Pool Villas, 11 Beachfront Luxury Suite Pool Villas, 6 Exclusive Suite Pool Villas and two Presidential Suite Pool Villas, you're spoilt for choice, at a price that guarantees privacy and faultless service.

The resort has a wonderfully welcoming and relaxed atmosphere. My room was a perfect and private sanctuary, elegantly decorated throughout with beautiful bedding, spacious bathroom, stylish bathtub, a huge walk-in shower and a separate outdoor shower. The private pool is an added bonus - taking a dip first thing in the morning is compulsory and hopping into the pool again late at night whilst looking up at the stars is blissful.

There are three restaurants at Maradiva Villas Resort and Spa. Coast2Coast, an all-day-dining restaurant serving Mediterranean, Mauritian and International cuisines. It operates in buffet style for breakfast and à la carte for lunch, whilst for dinner the chef presents a special menu every evening. Cilantro is the temple of modern Indian gastronomy enhanced by a wide selection of international wines. The design is romantic. Guests can dine indoors or outside, and enjoy drinks in the lounge before or after dinner. Classic Indian sitar music is played three times a week. Teppan offers an exciting Japanese dining experience with a kitchen in the centre; watch as one of the best Japanese chefs on the island prepares your food. Thai and Indochinese dishes are also served, all cooked from fresh with great enthusiasm and masterful technique.

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If you can peel yourself away from the resort, there is plenty of culture and history to discover on the island of Mauritius. It's not often you get to see where an Island 'came from', but here you can see where it all began. Mauritius has four main volcanoes, thankfully they lie dormant and have done for many, many years. One of the four volcanoes that created Mauritius is called Trou aux Cerfs. It's a monogenetic volcano, which means it has only erupted once. It's now a beautiful 80m deep overgrown green crater approximately 605m high located in Curepipe - a must-see for anyone visiting the island.

See the beauty that is Ganga Talao, commonly known as Grand Bassin, a crater lake situated in a secluded mountain area in the district of Savanne and considered the most sacred Hindu site in Mauritius. Hindus visit to meditate, chant, make offerings and pray. It serves as an important pilgrim site during Maha Shivaratri. It's also home to cheeky little monkeys who show their intelligence and funny nature as they join in on the action and feast on the fruit offerings left by visitors. Visit the temple to receive an optional personal blessing and enjoy the tranquil lake. It is free to visit.

Immerse yourself in the island's history by visiting Château de Labourdonnais, a restored Victorian mansion on a sugarcane plantation. It's incredible walking through the house, with its 19th-century colonial architecture - a place of grandeur. Exploring and strolling along the impressive balcony that winds around both floors, then gazing across the beautiful gardens to admire the stunning red-flowered flamboyant trees. There is a fantastic cooling system with large doors in each room that open on both sides of the house to keep the air circulating. Take time at the end of your visit to take a seat at the estate's tasting bar and sample their delicious range of rums and fruit juices made by the estate's distillery.

Visit the capital city, Port Louis, busy like any other city across the world, it is the country's economic, cultural and political centre. Furthermore there are traditional eateries, modern shopping, and an authentic market. We visited La Bonne Marmite for a taste of traditional Mauritian dining and visited the market shortly after, full of magical trinkets! You'll be able to pick up hats and other handmade designs for a third of the price compared to the main shops in shopping centres. It's well worth a rummage!



Grand Bassin, Ganga Talao, **photo: Ly Hoang Long**



Grand Bassin, Ganga Talao, **photo: Jeremy Wermeille**



Black River Gorges National Park, **photo: Fabienne Sypowski-Meyer**



To see Port Louis from a different viewpoint, take a drive up to Citadel Fort Adelaide. From this height, you can see across the whole city, the mountains, the port and the sea. Citadel is the only one out of the four forts in Mauritius that hasn't ended up in ruins and still resembles a fortress with cannons. Built by the Brits in the 19th Century when William IV held land in Port Louis, it was built in a Moorish style to protect the British Army from the enemy. Nowadays it's a wonderful place to visit and experience the history of the Island – and it's free to visit.

For nature lovers, bird watchers and trekkers, the Black River Gorges National Park is one of the most diverse environments on the planet. Facilities for visitors include two information centres, picnic areas and 60 kilometres of trails. The views are breathtaking and make for a beautiful afternoon outing.

My stay at Maradiva was special; time slows down, the days are long and the island itself offers the visitor so much. The choice is yours - relax in the luxurious surrounds at the resort or get out and let your inquisitive side run free by exploring the island. Either way, you'll want to come back again.

FIND OUT MORE

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