

Robb Report

MONACO & CÔTE D'AZUR



The **Travel** Issue

THE FINEST NEW HOTELS &
SUPERYACHT CHARTERS

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Here, it's hard to tell where the infinity pool ends and the lagoon begins. *Right: gorgeous living quarters.*



Paradise Glossed

Maradiva Villas Resort & Spa, Mauritius, is the perfect base from which to explore an island which offers much more than beaches, lagoons and reefs.

There's more—vastly more—to Mauritius than palm-fringed beaches, azure waters and an extinct bird. This verdant, volcanic dot of land almost 2,000 km off the southeast coast of Africa is also known as “The Switzerland of the Indian Ocean” thanks to its steadily burgeoning economy, stable political scene and generous tax structures. It's also something of a glamour-magnet (by the 1990s, the north-coast village of Grand Baie was considered “The St



Tropez of Mauritius”), as well as being a cultural melting pot—Indian, African, Chinese and Europeans all call it home, which has a profound effect on the island’s culture, cuisine and festivals.

“This is a golf destination, a diving destination, a spa destination, a cultural destination, a gastronomic destination—it plays in a lot of different leagues,” says Arvind Bundhun, director of Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority (MTPA). “It’s seen as a sun-sea destination but the interiors have lots to offer as well: and not



just parks and nature reserves.” Indeed, as well as sugarcane fields, rum distilleries, tea plantations and the frankly spell-binding Chamarel Seven Coloured Earth Geopark, other must-visit gems include estates such as the mid-19th century-built Château de Labourdonnais, with its array of century-old mango trees and many other exotic fruit trees.

But how to take in all this variety and splendour with ease, in luxury and over the course of a single trip, with plenty of restorative down-time in between? JetPrime offers a complete friction-free arrival and departure experience, complete with chauffeur service and matters such as baggage collection, check-in and immigration dealt with while you relax in the business lounge.

As for accommodation, Maradiva Villas Resort & Spa is the only family-owned resort. A member of the Leading Hotels of the World umbrella group, it has just undergone a multi-million Euro renovation carried out by prestigious Singapore design firm HBA, the result of which is a lighter, warmer, cosier and homely vibe that pays tastefully authentic homage to Mauritian heritage.

Each of the 65 private villas—readers of this publication may opt

for the Presidential Suite, which comes with butler service—features a vast outdoor/dining area a heated plunge pool, walk-in wardrobe, and outdoor shower and bathtub.

If you can wrench yourself away from your living quarters—and this won’t be as easy as it sounds—there’s plenty to explore within the resort grounds, including: the Jardin des Stars (former guests Anne Hathaway and Matthew McConaughey have both planted trees provided by Mauritian wildlife foundation); on-site retail options packed with international high-end brands such as Messika and Missoni; stargazing, wine tasting and mixology experiences; and Indian, Japanese, Mediterranean and local culinary venues that are as delectable as they are eclectic.

Most enticing of all, though, is the chance to explore a speck of land so enchanting that the Portuguese (its former colonisers, along with the French, Dutch and British) tried to keep it off world maps so it would remain secret, in the Rolls-Royce Phantom belonging to the hotel. This minuscule landmass is, after all, worth exploring in style.