

# Hotelier

M A L D I V E S

## Maldives Hotel Pipeline

HOTELIER.MV | VOLUME 8 | ISSUE 55

RESORT REVIEW  
A BALANCED VACATION  
— PULLMAN MALDIVES  
MAAMUTAA

FIRST LOOK  
SIYAM WORLD

THE GM'S VIEW  
OZGUR CENGIZ,  
JOALI BEING

WELLNESS  
POST-PANDEMIC  
WELLNESS TRENDS



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The ability of body systems to gather, process, and deliver oxygen.

**ACCURACY**  
The ability to control movement in a given direction or at a given intensity.

**RESISTANCE**  
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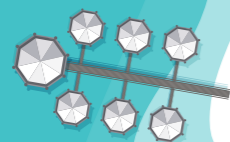
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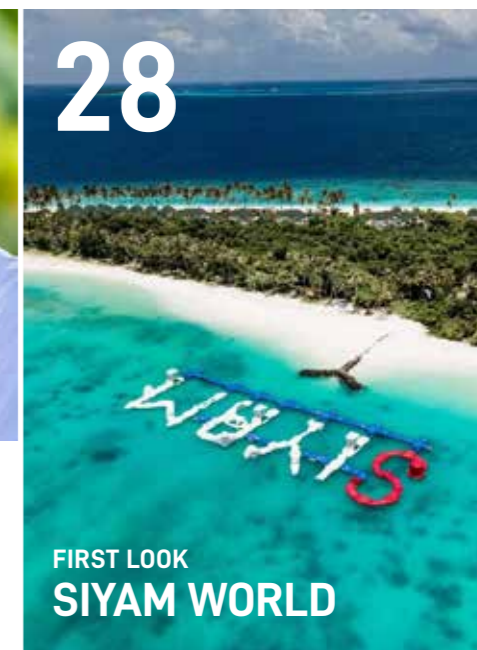
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## Maldives Hotel Pipeline

Dear Readers,

Welcome to issue 55 of Hotelier Maldives.

Global hotel pipeline at the end of 2019 was at an all time peak and this was also reflected in the Maldives. With the halt of many projects we look at the updated Maldives hotel pipeline forecast as well as assess the progress of global projects in this context.

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic and the temporary closure of the country's borders for three months, three resorts opened in 2020 with 336 rooms; Radisson Blu - 128 rooms, Kagi Maldives - 50 rooms, Brennia Kottefaru - 158 rooms. And in 2021, eight new resorts opened with a combined inventory of 1172 rooms; Patina Maldives, Fari Islands - 110 rooms, Ritz Carlton Maldives, Fari Islands - 100 rooms, Kuda Villingili Maldives Resort - 99 rooms, Le Meridien Maldives Resort and Spa - 154 rooms, Joali Being - 69 rooms, Cora Cora Maldives - 100 rooms, Siyam World - 500 rooms, and Cocogiri Island Resort - 40 rooms.

In 2022, we expect to see a further nine resorts open, adding another 1300 rooms. They are Avani + Fares Maldives - 200 rooms, Nova Maldives - 75 rooms, Zazz Island Maldives - 100 rooms, OBLU Xperience Ailafushi - 268 rooms, OBLU Select Lobigili - 68 rooms, Madifushi Private Island - 200 rooms, Alila Kothaifaru Maldives - 80 rooms, Amari Kudakurathu Maldives - 200 rooms and Hilton Amangiri - 109 rooms.

In our regular segments, our contributing writer Aminath Shiuleen has reviewed Pullman Maldives Maamutaa in Gaafu Alifu Atoll in the south of the Maldives. We also feature the newly opened Siyam World in the First Look segment and interview Ozgur Cengiz, general manager at Jaoli Being for the GM's view segment.

Continuing with Siyam World, our feature on Ausy Waseem and Sara Siyam, the management couple at the resort, is certainly one of our favourites in this issue.

In the Buyer's Guide, we have an exclusive feature on Raidha Shafeeg, the icon behind the Maldivian fashion label Raidhas Maldives who recently launched her new collection.

In Supplier Spotlight we feature Ocean Group and in Suppliers You Should Know, you can read about International Food Solutions (IFS), Tropicico and Deli United.

If you would like to comment or publish an opinion article, please email them to mamduh@hoteliermaldives.com or info@perspective.mv

Sincerely,



Mohamed Mamduh  
Managing Editor



# Hotelier

MALDIVES

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## Agoda Partners with Maldives Border Miles Loyalty Program

Agoda, one of the fastest-growing online travel booking platforms has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Maldives Border Miles, the world's first destination loyalty program for tourists.

The online signing ceremony took place on 22nd November 2021 and was honoured by Controller General of Maldives Immigration, Mr. Mohamed Ahmed Hussain; Deputy Minister of Tourism, Dr. Naushad Mohamed; Chief Executive Officer of Agoda Company Pte. Ltd., Mr. John Brown; Deputy Managing Director of Maldives Marketing and Public Relations Corporation, Mrs. Neesha Shahid; Director of Global Government Affairs of Agoda Company Pte. Ltd., Mr. Daniel Gelfer and the Country Manager of Agoda Company Pte. Ltd. to the Maldives, Mr.

Mohamed Amaan.

The partnership between the Maldives Border Miles and Agoda aims to increase benefits to the members and partners of the Maldives Border Miles program. As associate partner, Agoda will be sharing their expertise for the development and will also facilitate to promote the partners of the program through their global network. Furthermore, Agoda will use their best-in-class technology and provide exclusive savings to Maldives Border Miles members when they book the hotels through Agoda.

CEO of Agoda Company Pte. Ltd., Mr. John Brown said "From my perspective, I have seen COVID-19 bring many different people together, and when I look in to travel in particular, the way that governments have



been working together with companies like Agoda; the way that Agoda has been working with suppliers; and the way that we're all working together with customers, we've really come together in an unprecedented way to get through the crisis,

and to deliver innovative solutions." Expressing specifically about the Maldives Border Miles, Mr. Brown stated "I'm very optimistic about innovation and the benefit that it's going to bring in particular to the Maldives."

## SO/ Maldives Officially Launched by S Hotels & Resorts Public Company Limited



S Hotels & Resorts Public Company Limited has held the official launching ceremony of SO/ Maldives, the vibrant new beachfront resort situated on the third island of CROSSROADS Maldives.

Set to open in 2023, this exciting new project is a joint venture between S Hotels & Resorts and Wai Eco World Developer (WEWD), in partnership with Accor, whose luxurious and rebellious SO/ Hotels & Resorts brand will be

introduced to the Maldives for the very first time.

SO/ Maldives will offer a unique collection of beachfront and over-water villas crafted by renowned designers, as well as an audacious array of dining and entertainment offerings. Nestled on its own island overlooking the azure Emboodhoo Lagoon, the resort is set to become a hotspot for adventurous and free-spirited socialisers who can easily jet in from regional centres for a

weekend or longer, thanks to its convenient location close to Malé's Velana International Airport.

The private island of SO/ Maldives will become a playground for those seeking unconventional yet stylish spaces to eat, drink, work or kick back and relax. The speciality restaurant will serve up Levantine cuisine exuding the aromatic fragrances and flavours of an Arabian night, with panoramic views across the ocean from its location above the arrival pavilion. Over at the poolside, guests will discover an art deco-inspired beach club with serious Miami South Beach vibes and an innovative plant-based menu. The vivid colour scheme is set to make it one of the coolest places to hang out in the archipelago, and is sure to impress those attending the brand's pool parties - a popular event at SO/ addresses across the world.

The resort will introduce a central cooking suite with various culinary theatre concepts. A chef's table will be discreetly tucked away for those seeking an exclusive dining experience, while outdoor areas will be blessed with warm and fresh Maldivian air. The pan-Asian design will feature neutral terracotta palettes, elevated with accents of polished brass and rattan. Unforgettable events can be brought to life at the oceanfront wedding venue and meeting spaces.

The globe-trotting guests at SO/ Maldives will also be able to take advantage of the world-class facilities at CROSSROADS Maldives. The Marina @ CROSSROADS is an 800-metre beach walk lined with cool cafés, refined restaurants, a chilled-out beach club, upmarket boutiques, a spa, the Marine Discovery Centre and a 30-berth yacht marina. Just 15 minutes by speedboat from the international airport, this breath-taking integrated

resort has redefined tourism and hospitality in the Maldives since it launched in 2019.

“This is a momentous day as we officially launch SO/ Maldives, the latest jewel in the Maldivian tourism crown. With SO/ Hotels & Resorts, Accor has created one of the hotel industry’s most expressive and individual luxury brands, catering to style-conscious travellers in some of the world’s most sought-after destinations. This makes it a great fit for CROSSROADS Maldives, our game-changing multi-island leisure complex. SO/ Maldives will complement our two other five-star resorts and further raise the standard of hospitality in this idyllic archipelago,” said Dirk De Cuyper, Chief Executive Officer, S Hotels & Resorts.

“It gives us great pleasure to join hands with S Hotels & Resorts and Accor as we break

ground on such a prestigious project. CROSSROADS Maldives is one of the most significant developments in the history of the country – and the entire Indian Ocean region – so we



(Left to right) Chadi Farhat, Brand Chief Operating Officer at Ennismore; Zaw Win Maung, Managing Director, WEWD; Dirk De Cuyper, Chief Executive Officer, S Hotels & Resorts

are honoured to have been tasked with the wonderful transformation of its third island. SO/ Maldives will attract trend-setters from all around

Chadi Farhat, Brand Chief Operating Officer at Ennismore said: “We are delighted to see development kick-off for the audacious SO/ Maldives, a

resort which will be the place to see and be seen for travellers that live vibrant lives and are seeking something truly avant-garde on their journeys around the world. We look forward

to seeing this high-energy resort come to life and working alongside S Hotels & Resorts and WEWD.”

## Marriott International Resorts in Maldives Sign MoU with The Maldives National University



The seven Marriott International resorts in Maldives and The Maldives National University signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on 16th November 2021. This represents a significant step towards enhancing the existing relations between Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism Studies (FHTS) and the tourism industry towards human capacity development.

The MoU was signed by the Vice Chancellor of The Maldives National University, Dr. Mohamed Shareef and the respective General Managers of the seven Marriott Bonvoy Portfolio of resorts in the Maldives. The resorts include

JW Marriott Maldives Resort & Spa in Shaviyani Atoll; The Ritz-Carlton Maldives, Fari Islands and Sheraton Maldives Full Moon Resort & Spa in North Male’ Atoll; The St. Regis Maldives Vommuli Resort in Dhaalu Atoll; W Maldives in North Ari Atoll; The Westin Maldives Miriandhoo Resort in Baa Atoll and Le Méridien Maldives Resort & Spa in Lhaviyani Atoll.

The agreement facilitates the capacity development of students and staff of both establishments in terms of knowledge exchange, internships, collaborative technical expertise between the two parties. It aims to

strengthen, promote and develop cooperation between the two establishments based on the intention to effectively contribute to the nation building strategies.

The agreement brings forward and promotes shared excellence and development strategies between both parties. This exciting partnership will support, strengthen and develop mutually beneficial collaborative activities that would both contribute to the industry and academia positively.

“We are honoured to collaborate with The Maldives National University and be

a part of the journey as the students begin and grow their careers in the thriving hospitality industry in the Maldives. Marriott International values and believes in the substance of learning and training – beyond what we do, we are committed to empowering future hoteliers to hone their skills and reach their full potential. Through this collaboration, it is our hope that the youths of the Maldives are not only equipped with skills, but are poised to be on the forefront of successful careers in the industry,” said Rivero Delgado, Marriot International Area Vice President for Singapore, Malaysia & Maldives. “This collaboration is set to play a pivotal role in strategically expanding our talent pool, where we look forward to making a difference in the areas where we operate.”

Through this partnership, students will have access to a vast variety of learnings and trainings across departments, from operations to marketing and branding as well.

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## Mohan Mutha Group and Waaree Energies Launches Solar Power and Energy Storage Solutions in Maldives

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About Mohan Mutha Group

- Conglomerate operating in Infrastructure Development, Trading, Shipping.
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About Waaree Energies

- 2 GW Module Manufacturing Facility
- 3 GW + Modules supplied globally
- 600 MW+ commissioned



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• Solar With Battery Storage



**Custom Solar Solutions**  
• Solar Carports  
• Building Integrated PV



**Floating Solar Plants**  
• Inland lagoons  
• Open Sea Projects

INHOUSE CAPABILITIES



# Maldives Tourism Reboot 2021



Students from the Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism Studies (FHTS), Maldives National University, organised a Maldives Tourism Reboot event on 20th November 2021. The networking event gathered various tourism industry professionals to interact and share ideas regarding revitalization of the industry.

The event started off with the recitation of Quran by one of the students, which was followed by a brief introduction about the event by the host Nuha Ali. She also introduced the Chief Guest, Minister of Tourism Dr. Abdulla Mausoom. Two other notable attendees included Health Minister Ahmed Naseem and Minister of Arts Culture and Heritage Yumna Maumoon.

to the protocols throughout the whole pandemic due to the changes in severity of national security. He also highlighted the



Minister Dr. Abdulla Mausoom was invited up on stage to say a few words. Minister noted the changes that were brought



Organised as a requirement for their Bachelor's Degree, the event was mainly focused of discussing the "New Normal" as a result of the pandemic. The event team consisted of students from two courses: Bachelor of International Tourism Management, who handled the event management aspect and Bachelor of International Hospitality Management, who hosted a cocktail reception for the guests of the event.



importance of the relationship between the Health Ministry and the Tourism Ministry during these times.

This was followed by a speech from the Health Minister Naseem for the students of Maldives National University, motivating them to persevere through hardships to achieve their goals and to never give up on them. He also mentioned that he deeply hopes the young generation creates a better Maldives in all aspects.

The event was concluded with a presentation made by the students of Tourism Management. This gave more than enough time for the guests to mingle and network, offering a great opportunity for stakeholders to discuss a way forward in the 'New Normal'.

## THE 4 STEP SALES SYSTEM: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### WHAT IS THE 4 STEP SALES SYSTEM?

The 4 Step Sales System is a Content Marketing Solution tailored for the specific requirements of a company. It helps to create brand awareness among a target market, generate engagement, generate sales leads and over time develop and maintain a 'permission asset base' composed of high value customers.

### WHAT ARE THE 4 STEPS OF THE SYSTEM?



#### STEP 1 INTERRUPTION

An online article about your company, an interview or product or service review with an offer to download a company profile or product or service brochure.



#### STEP 2 FREE OFFER & CALL TO ACTION

In exchange for their email addresses and contact details and 'permission' to receive more information about the company or product.



#### STEP 3 FOLLOW UP

Send out more information about your company, product, or service. Request for more permission if required.



#### STEP 4 CONTENT MARKETING

Offer useful content on a regular basis; this could be a regular email with updates, a periodic newsletter, etc.

### HOW MUCH DOES IT COST?

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The introductory offer for this tool is USD 800/- for all 4 steps which includes writing of the article, Creating the Call to Action and Follow up with - and first piece of content marketing sent out to respondents to the campaign.

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# Six Senses to Add Kanuhura as Second Branded Property in the Maldives

*“Six Senses Kanuhura is a unique opportunity to combine our three best-loved ideals in life: sustainability, wellness and locally themed experiences...”*



**Six Senses will add Kanuhura in Lhaviyani Atoll as second branded property in the Maldives, starting in late 2022. This is Six Senses' second collaboration with Singapore-based Hotel Properties Limited (HPL).**

A 40-minute seaplane flight from Velana International Airport, Six Senses Kanuhura will offer 80 private overwater, beach and spacious family villas offering sunset or sunrise views. Encompassing three private islands – two deserted neighbouring islands and Kanuhura itself – this laid-back retreat is the epitome of white sands, turquoise lagoons, lush tropical greenery and gently swaying palm trees to doze under.

“Six Senses Kanuhura is a unique opportunity to combine our three best-loved ideals in life: sustainability, wellness and locally themed experiences,” says Six Senses Chief Executive Officer Neil Jacobs. “By day, your feet will be sandy and your hair salty. By night, surrender to the spa and your skin will be smoothed, your soul will be soothed, and your mood will be as sparkling as your sundowner.”

Kanuhura has already been recognized as the Best Luxury Resort in the Maldives at the Luxury Lifestyle Awards and Best of the Best in the TripAdvisor Travelers' Choice. Sensitive enhancements are planned over the coming months including an upgrade of the overwater villas to include private pools, new family suites, new dining concepts and a pioneering wellness offering – all with the Six Senses brand's sustainability ethos in mind.

HPL owns 41 hotels & Resorts in 15 countries with eight in the Maldives. Stephen Lau, Executive Director of HPL and Chairman of HPL's Hotel Division, added: “We are delighted to collaborate with Six Senses on our latest acquisition in the Republic of Maldives. Kanuhura is one of the few pristine islands blessed with amazing natural beauty. We are confident that Six Senses will be able to bring to Kanuhura what it has achieved at its sister resort, Six Senses Laamu: a high degree of sustainable sophistication in a natural environment coupled with unparalleled service.”

Until late 2022, the resort is available for bookings through [www.kanuhura-maldives.com](http://www.kanuhura-maldives.com) and [www.ihg.com](http://www.ihg.com), and guests can earn and spend IHG Rewards points and experience exclusive benefits as the resort joins the award-winning loyalty program.

# Faarufushi Maldives Now Emerald Collection's Second Property in the Maldives



Emerald Faarufushi Resort & Spa is expected to open to guests on 1st May, 2022. Located at the northern tip of Raa Atoll, the property is conveniently accessible via a 50-minute seaplane journey from Velana International Airport (VIA), as well as via a domestic 40-minute flight to Ifuru Airport, followed by a short 10-minute speedboat ride to the island. With 80 independent villas, the resort also features a private dock that leads to 39 Water Villas with Pool and three Superior Water Villas with Pool. There are also 27 Beach Villas, 10 of which are with private pools, along with 10 Family Beach Villas with Pool and one Presidential Beach Villa.

*“It is significantly different from Emerald Maldives Resort & Spa, both in design and in the concept, which in this case is characterised by what we call ‘Barefoot Elegance’ luxury and modern in style.”*

**JLL Hotels & Hospitality Group has completed the sale of Faarufushi Maldives, an 80-room upper-upscale resort that opened in 2019. The buyer of the property is the Italy-based Emerald Collection, who agreed to purchase Faarufushi from the Maldives-based Universal Enterprises. This marks Emerald Collection's second property in the Maldives, following their entry into the region through the Emerald Maldives Resort & Spa.**

In a press release issued on 24th October, Nihat Ercan, Senior Managing Director, Head of Investment Sales, Asia Pacific, JLL Hotels Hospitality Group said: “JLL is proud to have facilitated the sale of the Faarufushi Maldives, completing all elements in the transaction in 2021. This transaction further reinforces the belief

from many investors that leisure travel is poised to rebound strongly given the pent-up demand and further reaffirms the Maldives position as one of the most liquid hospitality markets in Asia Pacific.”

Adam Bury, Executive Vice President, Investment Sales & Head of Debt Advisory, Australasia, JLL Hotels & Hospitality Group said: “The forward-looking vaccination and border policy in the Maldives enabled the transaction to take place, with numerous members of purchaser team and their advisors flying into the country from Italy. Furthermore, the same policy gives investors' confidence that the Maldivian market will be one of the quickest to rebound given the introduction and implementation of progressive policies.”

Speaking with TradeArabia, Aldo Scarapicchia, Partner & Managing Director, The Emerald Collection said: “It is significantly different from Emerald Maldives Resort & Spa, both in design and in the concept, which in this case is characterised by what we call ‘Barefoot Elegance’ luxury and modern in style. Starting from next Summer, our guests can experience island hopping in a Deluxe All-Inclusive offering on two islands whose landscape and facilities will be complementary, mainly with the combined accommodation packages between the sister properties.” Emerald Faarufushi Resort & Spa is just a 25-minute journey by boat from Emerald Maldives Resort & Spa.

# Atmosphere to Open Two Resorts in Maldives Under Colours of Oblu Brand



Located in North Malé Atoll, both resorts offer activities for families, couples, honeymooners, or global nomads. The pristine beaches, turquoise lagoon views, stand-out culinary concepts, and pure escapism represent an impressive lifestyle to lure in explorers who are becoming confident in travelling again and both are just 15 minutes speedboat ride away from Velana International Airport.

Opening in February 2022, Oblu Select Lobigili is an adults-only haven. Lobigili translates from Dhivehi as 'Island of Love.' With 68 vibrant chic beach and overwater villas, Lobigili island is ideal for a chilled-out getaway. Idyllic tropical vistas complemented by stylishly designed spaces create a secluded, castaway feel.

Atmosphere Hotels & Resorts' new brand Colours of Oblu is set to open two new resorts next year. These include the highly anticipated Oblu Select Lobigili in February and Oblu Xperience Ailafushi in March.



to our guests rich and vivid alchemy of experiences. Each resort with its own personality and distinct story comes together. An experience collective that awakens the senses, brings balance and provides the gift of a lifetime of memories."

Jorge Amaro, the general manager of Oblu Select Lobigili and Oblu Xperience Ailafushi brings over 31 years of experience ensuring a smooth opening. He keeps the 'joy of giving' spirit alive through an authentic and refreshingly friendly hospitality culture.

Along with the two new resorts, the Colours of Oblu portfolio also features two rebranded resorts – Oblu Select Sangeli, known earlier as Oblu Select at Sangeli, which opened 2018 and Oblu Nature Helengeli, formerly Oblu by Atmosphere at Helengeli which opened in 2015.

Adding to the indulgence is the Only Blu Underwater Restaurant, opening in February 2022. The unique, multi-sensory culinary journey features gourmet cuisine set against a colourful backdrop of marine life. Residents at Oblu Select Lobigili can also choose to stroll over to neighbouring Ailafushi island and experience a different world of enchanting sights, sounds, and culture.



Atmosphere Hotels | Resorts is a dynamic and fast-growing hospitality company currently operating six resorts within the Maldives and is set to further expand in India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Bhutan.

There are three distinguished brands: THE OZEN COLLECTION, COLOURS OF OBLU, and By Atmosphere, offering a rich diversity of experiences.

Oblu Xperience Ailafushi, opening in March 2022, is all about immersion in a free-spirited Maldivian vibe. In the local language of Dhivehi, 'Aila' means family and 'Fushi' means island. True to its name, this 268-villa resort brings a fresh, experiential environment where guests can enjoy an island escape.

A fun and chilled-out balance is at the heart of this tropical getaway. Guests can join a group Zumba class or book a 3D movie at The Dome, a futuristic 15-metre entertainment centre available from July 2022. Alternatively, they can choose to socialise with like-minded souls at La Promenade, offering exhilarating retail and café options, or experience alfresco dining at The Copper Pot Truck, offering fresh seafood.

Stephane Laguette, chief commercial officer at Atmosphere Hotels and Resorts said: "We are delighted to announce the official launch of our Colours of Oblu brand. Through this brand, we bring



**Ted's Technology Summit 2022**  
In Person and Online

**TED'S TECHNOLOGY SUMMIT 2022**

Friday - February 11, 2022

The Fullerton Hotel Sydney  
Sydney, Australia

As the impact of COVID-19 continues across the hotel and accommodation industry, the challenge to return to profitability increases. The forecast is that recovery will stall until mid-2022 when the vaccination program manages to reach 80% of the population and state governments open their borders. In the current situation, hoteliers must develop a long-term strategy to rehabilitate themselves in the market and make up for losses once the crisis is over. New technologies and especially their rapid implementation will - and must - play a key role for hoteliers more than ever.

Following on from our successful Summit in November 2020, Ted's Technology Summit brings a global perspective from leading international hoteliers sharing their strategies and thoughts on what technologies are relevant for their organisations with the new reality that faces us post COVID.

The Summit also features a high-level leadership panel moderated by industry icon, Patrick Imbardelli discussing important issues affecting hotel owners and operators.

We would like to extend our thanks to our 2022 Sponsors for their continued support during this very difficult time for the industry.

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**HI DESIGN MEA**

September 14 - 15, 2021

Kempinski Hotel Ishtar Dead Sea  
Aman, Jordan

Think about all the hotel project people you really want to meet. Now picture them all in one place, relaxed and ready to talk. Imagine the conversations you could have. Or just come and get on with it! This is where MEA's hotel project people meet, and if you work hard you can meet them all. HI Design MEA is organized by dmg Events

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**ITB**  
BERLIN

The World's  
Leading  
Travel Trade  
Show\*

**ITB BERLIN 2022**

March 9 - 13, 2022

Organisers in Germany have recently confirmed that ITB Berlin is scheduled to take place as an in-person event from March 9-13 next year. The announcement follows the successful hosting of the digital event this year, titled ITB Berlin Now, which welcomed 65,700 users over the past week. The trade show gave participants a virtual meeting place, with 3,513 exhibitors representing destinations, hotel chains and tech companies from nearly 120 countries making use of the new format.

ITB Berlin 2022 is organized by Messe Berlin GmbH



**INDEPENDENT HOTEL SHOW AMSTERDAM**

March 16 - 17, 2022

Amsterdam RAI  
Amsterdam - The Netherlands

Independent Hotel Show is the industry event dedicated entirely to the need of independently spirited hoteliers. We strive to deliver a guest experience above and beyond that of the typical trade show so whether you're looking for inspiration from our sublime designers, innovation from leading technology suppliers, or simply to discover something new for your hotel, we're confident you'll discover the solutions you are searching for!

Join us for the next edition, 16-17 March 2022.

Independent Hotel Show Amsterdam is organized by Montgomery Group

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**ITB**  
INDIA

**ITB INDIA**

April 4 - 6, 2022

Mumbai  
Mumbai, India

The 1st live edition of ITB India will take place from 4 to 6 April 2022. This 3-day business-to-business travel and tourism trade fair for India has been put together to bring different facets of the Indian Travel Market together.

Every segment of tourism will be represented at this international travel & tourism exhibition in India with industry leaders, important buyers and key service providers from across the country meeting and interacting in one place. International players in the MICE, Leisure travel and corporate travel segments will also attend to learn more about the tremendous Indian outbound travel market that is quickly emerging as an important global market

ITB India is going to be more than a travel trade show in India but rather an important platform where the most influential organizations in the International and Indian Travel and Tourism industry can meet, build strong partnerships or strengthen existing bonds.

What to Expect from ITB India

India is the Second Largest Outbound Market in Asia and the 8th Largest Travel Market in the World. The value of the Indian Outbound Travel Market in 2024 is estimated to be around 42 Billion USD. These tantalizing numbers show that India is one of the most promising travel markets in the world but it remains untapped in large parts. Travel events in India need to address the key factors that will increase outbound travel the country.

ITB India 2022 is going to be the travel and tourism fair in India that does just that with fascinating content that covers a wide variety of topics that drive travel in India. Our proposed agenda includes specific topics that pertain to MICE, Corporate and Leisure travelers in India in the vein of Travel Technology, the future of MICE, Global Consumer Trends, Social Media & Influencer Marketing, Destination Marketing and so many more topics. This India travel fair will work to access the markets that go well beyond the established metropolitan cities by bringing in buyers from tier 2 and tier 3 cities in India with the Hosted Buyer's Programme. We ensure that the buyers meet the service providers and exhibitors through our pre-scheduled appointments, so that they can focus on building great relationships at the event itself.

ITB India is also going to be a truly innovative tourism conference for India as we strive to bring the newest ideas and concepts in travel and tourism that are set to change things in the future. The discussions, panels and presentations at ITB India are going to be attended or presented by esteemed individuals that have distinguished themselves in the travel and tourism industry.

ITB India is organized by Messe Berlin GmbH

**ibtm ASIA PACIFIC**

**IBTM ASIA PACIFIC**

April 5 - 6, 2022

Marina Bay Sands Singapore  
Singapore, Singapore

Brought to you by the most experienced name in MICE events, IBTM Asia Pacific provides a gateway to the Asia Pacific meetings, incentives, conferences and events market. Meet with a curated mix of industry suppliers and pre-qualified hosted buyers and be inspired by content that will help elevate your events.

IBTM Asia Pacific is the leading event for the meetings and events industry in the region bringing together a high calibre group of international, APAC regional and local meeting planners and exhibitors for two days of pre-scheduled one-to-one business meetings, education and networking. The event is underpinned by IBTM's sophisticated, industry-leading Hosted Buyer programme which creates personalised appointment diaries for Hosted Buyers and exhibitors to ensure that delegates only meet people with whom there's a very good chance of doing business.

IBTM Asia Pacific is organized by Reed

# A Balanced Vacation

## – PULLMAN MALDIVES MAAMUTAA



It is no doubt that we all want our vacation to be as stress free as possible. One that is amusing and filled with wonderful memories and exciting adventures. A place where all our worries would

disappear and where we are spoiled with heart-warming hospitality and luxury. Look no further as Pullman Maldives Maamutaa might just be the one. This place is for everyone be them

a couple, a solo adventurer, a family or even a group of friends. You can choose to take it easy and enjoy the slow pace of island life or embrace your inner energy and fitness whilst embarking

your journey at one of the best fitness retreats in the Maldives. The resort has more than your heart could desire.

### LOCATION

Pullman Maldives Maamutaa is located in one of the most untouched parts of the Maldives in South – Gaafu Alifu Atoll. You can reach this piece of haven surrounded by crystal clear turquoise water through a one-hour Domestic Flight journey to Kooddoo Airport followed by a scenic 10-minute speedboat ride.

The island itself is abundant in nature but also showcases a wide range of modern art in every corner of the island offering a perfect balance of nature and art throughout your stay. The island is a rare gem within Maldives as the middle of the island is occupied by a natural freshwater lake which is uncommon among islands. What is more exciting is getting to cross this calm lake through a hanging bridge where you can view the colourful fishes swimming underneath or enjoy the gentle breeze touch your skin or just cross the bridge to get to the other side of island. Moreover, at the tip of the island you will find the biggest stripe of sandy beach and during low tide you could even walk over to reach the nearby sand bank to an untouched piece of paradise where you can stay and enjoy your very little private beach.

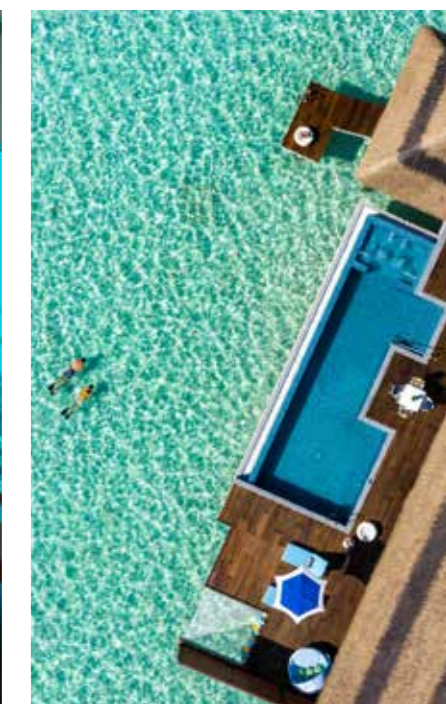


### A LUXURY ALL-INCLUSIVE RESORT

If you are learning about the resort for the first time, you may also want to know that they are, if not, the most generous All Inclusive resort in the Maldives. Be it minibar at the room that is equipped with

snacks and an exclusive choice of spirits and wines or chilling by the sea at the bar/restaurant sipping your favourite cocktail and watching the magical sunsets of Maldives, it is all included in the All Inclusive Package. Few of the selected items such as Hookah which is not included in the All Inclusive

package is also available free of charge during their happy hour. This is a resort that would spoil every one of its guests with their generosity.





## ACCOMMODATION

A combination of stylish contemporary design, retro art with a touch of luxury is definitely what describes the villas at Pullman Maldives Maamutaa. The resort consists of 122 spacious villas located each offering privacy and a sense of belonging. All the Villas are carefully set up with an expanded outdoor deck area where you can relax be it beach or over water villas. Beach villas offer direct access to the beach

whereas you could stay in the water villa and watch the rich marine life underneath your feet without taking any steps outside the room through the illuminated glass window on the floor. For those looking for out of ordinary experience, the resort also has option of living under the water. Pullman Maldives Maamutaa offers two Aqua Villas where one bedroom is located under the water where one could witness the absolute peace and quiet while watching the rich marine life



around this beautiful island. This Villa also has another bedroom located over water for when you would like to admire beauty above water.

## DINING

The resort consists of six F&B outlets throughout the island. However, majority of them are placed very close to each other, making it very easier for everyone to move around. Mélange is the main restaurant where buffet breakfast, lunch and dinner are served in a way regardless of number of times you eat there, they would still have something you have not tried yet. With unobstructed views of the beach and the option to eat indoor or outdoor, it is a foodie's heaven and an exciting food adventure for everyone as every meal comes with a great number of varieties such as Italian, Middle Eastern,



Indian, Japanese and Maldivian. Should this unlimited choices of food get overwhelming for anyone, they have options right across the island at Souq Oven, where you can enjoy Italian and Mediterranean cuisine for lunch and Turkish for dinner or Phat Chameleon, the resort's vegetarian restaurant located in an organic garden. Should you crave for anything rest of the day, you could very well relish light bites at The Hub and Sol Rising, or Saffron Affair for local tapestry.

## WELLNESS

Pullman is also highly focused on fitness and wellness whereby they offer a great number of fitness activities that is open for everyone. The resort has its own fitness ambassador, Kunchok Yeshi who ensures everyone spends a fun and healthy vacation at their resort. The resort conducts an annual fitness event as well during the festive season, where guests enjoy fitness and wellness activities and beach workouts such as fit trail, sunrise yoga and Zumba, to name some. In addition, some may wonder if travelling during Covid-19 to the resort would, in any way, reduce enjoyment or make it dull. The answer is, definitely not. Regardless, they have you covered completely with their special Covid-19 preventive measures and a strong cleaning protocol, called ALLSAFE, with the highest global standards of hygiene. Pullman Maldives Maamutaa sure knows how to provide a safe and balanced vacation in every aspect, be it food, fun or fitness.



# Malddives Hotel Pipeline

Global Hotel Pipeline at the end of 2019 was at an all time peak, which was reflected in the Maldives. However, the pandemic caused a slow down or complete halt to many of these projects across the globe. This report will highlight global hotel construction trends, overview of the Maldives tourism sector, current and upcoming new developments in the Maldives, the implications and outlook.

## World Trends in Hotel Construction

The Travel & Tourism sector's continued sluggish recovery will see its year-on-year contribution to global GDP rise by less than one third in 2021, according to new research from the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC).

In 2019, the Travel & Tourism sector generated nearly USD 9.2 trillion to the global economy, however, the pandemic brought Travel & Tourism to almost a complete standstill which resulted in a 49.1 per cent drop, representing a punishing loss of nearly USD\$ 4.5 trillion in 2020

In 2020, WTTC revealed the loss of 62 million Travel & Tourism jobs around the world and as some areas are still struggling to recover, the forecast is that jobs will only rise by 0.7 per cent this year.

Whilst the travel and tourism sector is still reeling from the effects of the pandemic, the construction of new projects is moving ahead regardless. Top countries by project count in global pipeline stats are USA and China accounting for 10,241 / 61 per cent of all global projects. UK, Indonesia and India trail behind with a combined 945 projects (141,759 rooms), which is barely 18 per cent of those in the USA

The top five hospitality franchises leading global construction are Marriot, Hilton, IHC, Accor and Hyatt; these five companies account for 59 per cent of all projects in the global pipeline, and all of these chains have been strengthening their presence within the Maldives. Marriot has opened two properties in Maldives this year (2021), while Hilton and Hyatt is set to open one in 2022.

In the first half of 2021, 1100 hotels opened worldwide, accounting for 161,734 rooms. LE research analysts forecast a total of 2,802 new

hotels/414,696 rooms to open by year-end. In 2022, 3,122 new hotel openings/476,185 rooms are expected to open, for 2023 the forecast is 2,890 new hotels, accounting for 468,645 rooms, opening around the world.

## Economic Performance & Outlook

The World Bank predicts a slow recovery as the global economic growth is expected to expand at 4 per cent in 2021.

However, a strong rebound in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is presumed for Maldives, despite the severe 33.5 per cent contraction in GDP in 2020 as per Maldives Monetary Authority (MMA). The revised figures by MMA in October gives a projected 31 per cent growth in GDP for 2021. This is mainly due to the strong performance in the tourism sector, as tourism is a major contributor to GDP, and tourism land rent is the third strongest revenue stream.

## Maldives Tourism Landscape

The Maldives, known for its crystal-clear waters, endless white sandy beaches and some of the best diving and snorkelling sites in the world, has been attracting tourists in increasing amounts since 1972 with 2022 being the Golden Jubilee Year of Maldives Tourism.

According to the Maldives' Ministry of Tourism (MOT), international visitor arrivals have experienced steady positive growth during the past decade before the pandemic, reaching approximately 1.7 million visitors in 2019 and had high hopes for 2020.

Despite the positive projections for 2020, the pandemic and its unparalleled global economic shock lead a drop of 67.4 per

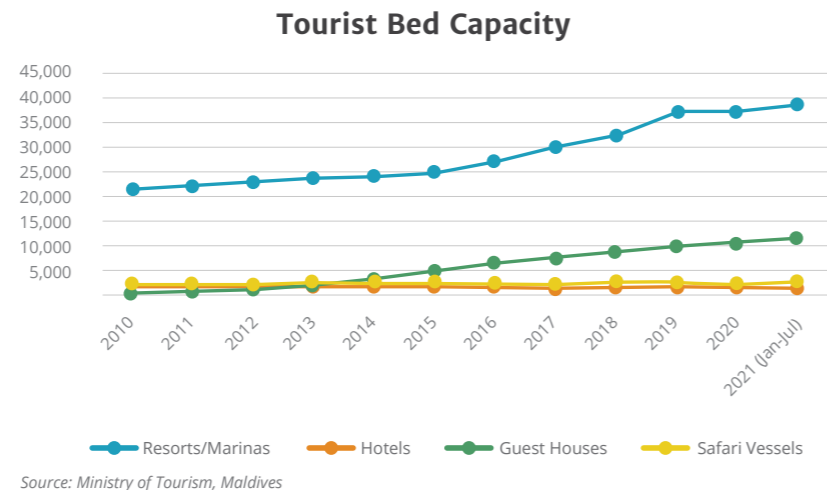
cent in arrivals in the Maldives for 2020.

The Maldives reopened its borders on 15th July 2020, and slow, but gradual arrival growth was observed for 2020. Interestingly, in 2021, the recovery of the Maldivian tourism sector appears to be swift compared to many other key destinations reaching to over 1 million tourists in October. As of 13th December, daily updates by MOT showed a total visitor arrival of 1,223,117, which is just a -23.3% reduction compare to 2019. Also, the average occupancy reached 52.4 per cent as of October 2021, while average duration of stay lengthened to 8.9 days from 6 days in 2019.

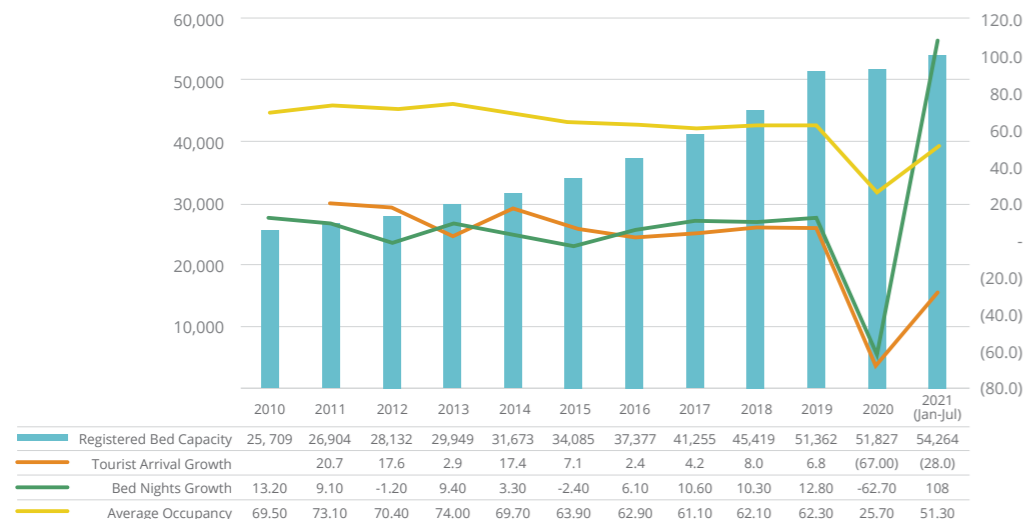
Due to the social distancing measures imposed globally, the Maldives has capitalised on its unique concept of "one-island-one-resort" to emphasise its exclusivity to promote the destination.

Looking at the sector's operational side, as end of 13th December 2021, the operational bed capacity was 52,106 out of 56,918 registered tourist beds in the Maldives. These operational capacity as of December 2021, accounts for 160 resorts/ marinas, 601 guesthouses, 144 safari vessels and 10 hotels.

A large majority of the tourist bed capacity in Maldives comes from resorts, although, the number of guesthouses grew significantly in recent years. It is observed there is a strong, steady increment in registered bed capacity over the years, while the bed nights growth and average occupancy followed a similar pattern with tourist arrival trends.



### Registered Bed Capacity, Tourist Arrivals, Bed Nights Growth, Average Occupancy (2010 to 2021)



### Hotel Transactions and Investment

Generally, the Maldives' hotel investment market has been dominated by foreign investors.

The market has been active throughout the past four years, with investment volume peaking in 2019 at USD 438 million, according to HVS. However, in 2020, the global economy slowed down and consumer sentiments weakened as the accommodation market was negatively impacted by travel disruptions.

Notable transactions in 2019:

- 151-room Conrad Maldives Rangali Island at USD 180 million (USD 1.19 million/room)
- 110-room Anantara Dhigu Maldives Resort at USD 97 million (USD 883,000/room)
- 67-room Anantara Veli Maldives Resort at USD 59 million (USD 883,000/room)

As of YTD August 2021, Maldives has recorded one transaction. The 80-room Kanuhura Maldives has been acquired at USD 41.5 million (USD 519,000/key).

From 2016 to 2019, inbound investment in the Maldives was dominated by investors from the United States. They acquired a total of five properties, amounting to a total investment volume of approximately USD 378 million, equivalent to USD 944,000 per unit.

This is followed by Singapore and Thailand, which have acquired three properties each, with a total investment volume of USD 161 million and USD 84 million, respectively. The remaining countries, namely, Germany, Japan, and Sri Lanka have acquired one property each.

In terms of investors' profile in totality, Asia-Pacific leads the way with four out of six countries belonging to the Asia-Pacific region. Europe, the Middle East, and Africa regions are shown to be less active in the Maldives hotel investment market. As of YTD August 2021, the transaction of the 80-key Kanuhura Maldives was made by a Singapore investor.

### New Resort openings in the Maldives

Despite the pandemic three Resorts opened in 2020 with a total of 336 rooms

- Radisson Blu 128 rooms
- Kagi Maldives 50 rooms
- Brennia Kottefaru 158 rooms

Eight new resorts opened in 2021 with a combined inventory of 1172 rooms.

Resorts Opened in 2021 to date

- Patina Maldives, Fari Islands - 110 rooms
- Ritz Carlton Maldives, Fari Islands - 100 rooms
- Kuda Villingili Maldives Resort- 99 rooms
- Le Meridien Maldives Resort & Spa- 154 rooms
- Joali Being - 69 rooms
- Cora Cora Maldives- 100 rooms
- Siyam World - 500 rooms
- Cocogiri island Resort - 40 rooms

2022 sees nine resorts scheduled, adding another 1300 rooms to the pipeline.

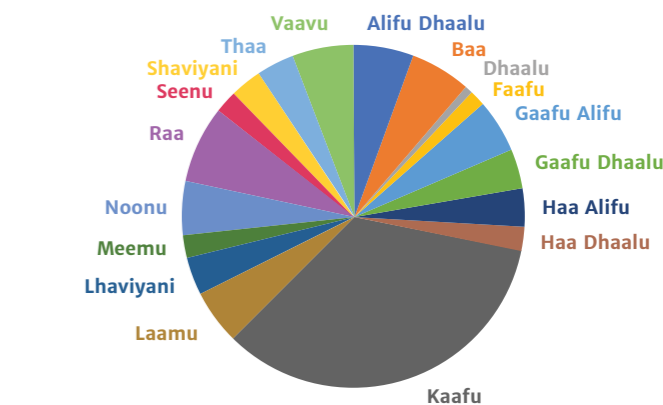
Resorts due to open in 2022:

- Avani + Fares Maldives - 200 rooms
- Nova Maldives - 75 rooms
- Zazz Island Maldives - 100 rooms
- OBLU Xperience Ailafushi - 268 rooms
- OBLU Select Lobigili - 68 rooms
- Madifushi Private Island - 200 rooms
- Alila Kothaifaru Maldives - 80 rooms
- Amari Kudakurathu Maldives - 200 rooms
- Hilton AminGiri - 109 rooms

Therefore, by the end of 2022, another 1300 resort rooms are expected to be available, without factoring in additional rooms on local islands in guest houses, hotels, safari vessels or the new "home stay" initiative. Further, there are nine resorts scheduled with 997 rooms due to open in the next couple of years:

- Gran Melia Huravee, 96 rooms
- Indus Maldives Resort & Spa, 170 rooms
- Centara Kassanaufaru Resort & Spa Maldives, 130 rooms
- Centara Hotels & Resorts Maldives, 165 rooms
- Centara Lagoon Family Island Resort & Spa Maldives, 145 rooms
- Centara Grand Muthaafushi Resort & Spa, 101 rooms
- Novotel Maldives Keredhdhoo, 110 rooms
- SO/Maldives, 80 rooms

### Resorts and Hotels in Development



Source: Ministry of Tourism, Maldives

Inclusive of the above specified openings, according to MOT, a total of 139 resorts and hotels are under development across the country, where most of these properties are located in Kaafu Atoll.

### Implications of added rooms

This potentially means an additional 7000 plus visitors coming through an already congested airport and requiring onward transportation via domestic plane, seaplane, boat or bus / taxi. More people require more resources.

Supplies - MPL is already stretched to the limit with backlogs of shipments reported at peak times. Additional availability and logistical challenges caused by the pandemic worldwide are also putting a strain on the supply line, with hikes in carriage for both air and sea freight

Manpower - increased visitors will create more jobs, not only in construction and hospitality, but in ancillary services as well such as IT, landscaping, engineering, boat crews

Support services such as additional medical facilities, health and safety awareness will also be required.



## Infrastructure Developments underway

### 2020

- Horafushi Airport: A domestic airport in the northernmost Haa Alif Atoll (now operational)
- Funadhoo Airport: A domestic airport that serves the inhabited islands of the Shaviyani Atoll.
- Maavarulu Airport: A domestic airport serving Gaafu Dhaalu Atoll.

### 2021

Madivaru Airport: A domestic airport to serve Lhaviyani Atoll.

Hanimaadhoo International Airport Expansion: The airport expansion is considered one of the largest infrastructure and connectivity projects in the north of Maldives. The project includes the upgrade of terminals, and extension of the runway to 2200 meters, to enable landing of A320s and Boeing 737s.

Velana International Airport Expansion: The ongoing USD 1 billion airport expansion comprises a 78,000-square-metre international passenger terminal building that will have the capacity to accommodate up to 7.5 million passengers a year upon its completion in 2022. The airport handled more than 4.8 million passengers and 54,000 flight movements in 2019. The new 3,400-metre-long and 60-metre-wide code-F runway will accommodate wide-body aircraft such as A380.

Greater Malé Connectivity Project: The USD 500 million ongoing project aims to connect three islands, Villingili, Gulhifahu, and Thilafushi through a 6.7-kilometre bridge and causeway network. The project will promote urban development with the proposed Gulhifalhu Port and the Thilafushi Industrial Zone.



## Outlook

The Maldives already has a strong market of couples looking for a honeymoon destination, diving and water sports enthusiasts and families seeking private and exclusive bonding time during vacation.

The MOT has launched several marketing campaigns to emphasise the safety and unique selling points of the destination, which plus the travel accolades and upcoming Golden Jubilee will help demand generation for the Maldives.

The current development pipeline will provide numerous opportunities for upscale and midscale properties to continue to expand their footprint in the market.

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**FIRST LOOK:**

# Siyam World



Across a 54-hectares lush natural island in Noonu Atoll, Siyam World offers a world filled with unique experiences and unlimited adventures. The idyllic resort opened its doors on 28 October 2021 and is just a 40 minutes' direct seaplane ride from Velana International Airport.

Siyam World features twenty-one different accommodation categories, ensuring that there's a perfect home for every type of traveller. Whether the villa is

just a few steps from the beach or a few feet above the lagoon, guests will find a private pool in every room. Water Villas range from one-bedroom 89sqm to

three-bedroom 352sqm and majority of the villas come with playful water slides. Meanwhile, the Beach Villas range from one-bedroom 190sqm to two-



bedroom 570sqm and offers the ultimate combination of seclusion and beach fun.

The options extend to the luxurious Beach House Collection @ Siyam World, which features one- to six-bedroom residences for families, large groups celebrities and high-end travellers. These spacious nirvanas offer an emperor size bed, direct access to the beach, access to the exclusive Japanese restaurant, Arigato and infinity pool bar, The Orchid along with 24 hour katheeb (butler service). Even the smallest room in this category, the Grand Water Pavilion + Slide is 350sqm and can accommodate five adults or four adults and three children. The most exclusive one is



with free unlimited access for guests aged six years and above. Linked by banked curves and treacherous bridges, the slippery circuit of challenging obstacles include halfpipes, slides, a climbing tower and a 3.2-metre springboard – not to mention 'Flip', the first free-floating human catapult on the water.

After a day of adventures, guests are invited to relax at the Veyo Spa, a sanctuary inspired

by the natural and peaceful surroundings. Veyo is set within the grounds of lush tropical island, complete with spacious treatment villas, relaxation areas, hydro facilities and Himeyn Bageecha a self-service healthy bar.

Every part and corner of Siyam World, Maldives offers a carefree playground like no other. This all-inclusive resort is a striking new vision of the Maldives' rich natural wonders.

The Palace, truly a Maldivian castle that is 3000sqm with six bedrooms and accommodates up to sixteen adults or twelve adults and four children.

The resort's unique WOW! 24hrs Premium All-Inclusive concept offers a tantalising selection of health, fitness and wellness activities; excursions, water sports, kids and teens activities, and more. The all-inclusive concept also includes an unlimited medley of non-alcoholic and alcoholic beverages across no fewer than a dozen restaurants and bars. From Spanish cuisines at Andalucia to cocktails and snacks at the Jungali pool bar, guests will be spoiled for choice when it comes to dining and drinking.

One of the biggest experiences on the island is the Siyam Water World, Indian Ocean's biggest floating water park. Siyam Water World promises endless aquatic escapades



# GM's View: Ozgur Cengiz, Joali Being

JOALI BEING is first and only nature immersive wellbeing island retreat of its kind in the Maldives. With 68 villas, each with its own butler or "Jadugar", the island aims to create wellbeing experiences tailored to individual lifestyles and goals and the man tasked to deliver this concept is general manager Ozgur Cengiz. No stranger to the JOALI brand, he has been in post since February, however, he was the resort director of JOALI Maldives and resort manager before that since 2016. Prior to this, he was director of spa in charge of wellness at One and Only Reethi Rah. Before landing in the Maldives, he took on wellness roles and led pre-opening processes at Jumeirah and Ritz Carlton abroad including his native Turkey for the Ritz Carlton. His passion to wellbeing also made him chosen as a Global Wellness Day Ambassador for the Maldives. As JOALI BEING gets closer to its launch later this year, he looks forward to utilising his vast background at the world's top immersive retreats.

**HM: What is it like to be the GM of JOALI BEING?**

I am excited to be trusted with leading such a unique project, unique not only for the Maldives but for the world as well. Having a chance to develop this concept from the very beginning makes it feel even more special and personal. And of course, being a part of the JOALI brand for years and seeing it grow in the wellbeing direction makes me proud and inspired.



**HM: Do you adhere to a certain management style or philosophy?**

I like to say that to lead people you must walk behind them, to push their limits, trying to make them understand their full potential. A fair leader should always stick to good judgment and to always listen to be able to understand and assist the teammates to get wherever they want to be.

**HM: What are the main changes you have seen during your career can you predict any for the near future?**

Changes and challenges are always there, and you have to be ready to face those with confidence, especially holding a leadership position. And it is important what issues you go through in your career, you must stay true to yourself and your values, not changing or giving up under pressure.

**HM: What are your key priorities at the resort?**

As we are now at the pre-opening stage, my current priority is people's comfort, making sure that the team blends, and the initial excitement is still in place through training to deliver our great service promise.

**HM: What makes your resort unique and how do you market it?**

At JOALI BEING, the only nature immersive wellbeing island retreat in the Maldives, wellbeing is so much more than just an expression – it is a way of life. Our treatments and signature immersion programmes are tailored to individual lifestyles and goals and draw on modern science and time-honoured traditions alike, bringing together curated treatments, therapies and experiences.

The retreat has been built using Biophilic design principles, a scientific system of integrating architecture and design with nature to achieve harmony and enhance the energy flow. Our island offers a collection of unique transformational spaces with endless possibilities for reflection and healing, from sound treatments and hydrotherapy to herbology centre and learning facilities.

As the world is now yearning for

healthier lifestyle and overall wellbeing, we already see a great interest in our concept from all over the world. We are now open for bookings are looking forward to welcoming wellness seekers in the end of 2021, inviting them for a journey of self-discovery and renewal.

**HM: What are you passionate about when it comes to work?**

I love bringing new ideas to life, developing ground-breaking experiences for both colleagues and guests. We are in the industry that delivers joyful and exciting experiences to others, and we should never give up creativity and inspiration, keeping the spark of wonder alive.

**HM: How do you handle difficult and challenging situations?**

The key is to remain calm and focus on the solution. Compassion and patience are also crucial when it comes to challenges, as they help you understand the root causes better and resolve any issue in a prompt manner.

**HM: What are your most memorable Maldives moments?**

Probably, my last day in JOALI Maldives, right before moving to JOALI BEING, when I had a chance to meet every team member, or better to say a resort family member, right upon departure to my new venture. It was a very warm farewell, with ovations, laughter, and tears, and of course an unforgettable experience.

**HM: Do you have any advice for hoteliers joining the industry?**

Every young hotelier should understand that working in hospitality needs a lot of dedication. They need to be aware that the rest of the world's holidays are our busiest working days. Positive mind-set, good social and interpersonal skills are very important not only for day-to-day job but also for personal growth in the industry. Remaining curious is another key and be an expert in

your area, but also learn a bit of everything.

**HM: What hobbies do you enjoy when you are not at work?**

I enjoy active sports, in particular football, mountain trekking, riding a bike. I like photography for being able to capture beautiful life moments. Traveling, for discovering new places and experiences. When I am not on the island, I really enjoy driving, both in the city and across the countryside.

**HM: What advice would you give to hoteliers aspiring to get to your position?**

Never forget where you come from. Remember work ethics and focus on the values rather than temporary success. Even if reached the dreamed career path, always be hands-on, as being on-site in our profession is often more valuable than hours of office work.

**HM: What does your resort offer? How do you consistently deliver on your promise?**

Here we offer a beginning of transformative journeys, from relaxation and treatments to customised nutrition and interactive learning. Transformational spaces and wellbeing facilities of the retreat are an exquisite blend of modern technology and traditional approach, and we always look for unique ways to deliver unparalleled experiences to our guests, collaborating with the great science minds and wellbeing experts from all over the world. Our culinary approach is also special and personalised, with dedicated nutrition professionals and inspired chefs offering Earth-to-Table treats.

**HM: Are there any exciting upcoming events we should know about?**

The upcoming opening of JOALI BEING itself is a great excitement for all of us. And since we are opening right before the festive season, a great inspiring celebration for Christmas and New Year is in plan.

**HM: What luxury experiences are available at your resort?**

All our 68 private beach and ocean villas come with personal "Jadugars", meaning 'skilled magician' in Dhivehi, and feature a private pool and a variety of special inclusions: customised wellbeing bar setups, meditative musical instruments, wellbeing games and more. JOALI BEING also features an exclusive four-bedroom private ocean residence, equipped with personal wellbeing, fitness, and kitchen facilities.

Our wellbeing and culinary experiences include personalised menus, nutrition recommendations and exclusive destination dining offers, and are tailored to individual lifestyles and goals, making a vacation here highly personalised and memorable. The same applies to our signature immersion programmes, which offer a selection of balanced treatments and experiences weaved together by our experts to target specific areas of mental and physical wellbeing of each guest. At JOALI BEING we start the guest's journey with careful diagnostic process and lifestyle analysis to ensure the retreat's programme is perfectly matching.

Taking wellbeing travel to a whole new level, we offer a variety of learning opportunities to help our guests develop mindful approach to self-care and discover their chef's potential and secrets of natural treatments. Another experience worth highlighting is the Cryotherapy we offer at Core. Using low temperatures, down to -80 C, it is known for its positive impact on overall health, restoring energy levels, and skin condition. While it's gaining popularity across the world, here we offer a unique opportunity to try all the benefits of cold therapy in our Cryo chamber, the first in the Maldives.

**HM: What staff development opportunities are available on your resorts and what new developments are on the horizon?**

Now, at the pre-opening

times, our teams are engaged in intense training programs in every area, especially considering a new concept we are delivering. We are bringing recognised experts from all around the worlds to share their valuable knowledge with our team members. Soon we are launching individual mentorship programmes to assist each employee with their further goals with more confident steps.

Take me through each of your Maldives' properties? What has been the guiding force for each?

JOALI Maldives the first brand's property in the region, is an art-immersive resort and follows the philosophy of "Joy of Living". Born in collaboration with internationally acclaimed designs studios, it offers an inspiring story-telling journey through the works of celebrated world artists showcased across the island. The guests are also invited to unleash their creativity in the curated Art Studio that hosts interactive workshops and events.

The upcoming JOALI BEING is a nature-immersive wellbeing island retreat, and here wellbeing is so much more than just an expression – it is a way of life, of being. Instead of traditional resort plus spa experience, we offer transformative journeys and personalised programmes based on the Four Pillars of JOALI BEING, aiming for the guests to leave home renewed, uplifted, and inspired.

**HM: Do you have any exciting projects in the pipeline here in the Maldives?**

The JOALI brand is going to grow further, with our inspired and passionate international team. And though currently we are focusing on the JOALI BEING development and the upcoming opening, there are more beautiful projects and concepts to come.

# AUSY WASEEM AND SARA SIYAM, MANAGEMENT COUPLE AT SIYAM WORLD

The newly opened Siyam World in Noonu Atoll is an island filled with wonders and behind this is an amazing team like no other. Ausy Waseem is the Resort Manager at Siyam World, who brought together a great management team of locals ahead of its successful opening on 28 October 2021. His real-life partner, Sara Siyam is the PR and Marketing Manager, who is constantly working on bold ideas to make sure that Siyam World stays on top of the game and offers unique experiences for guests.

Situated on a stunning 54-hectare natural island, Siyam World features 472 villas in 21 different accommodation categories and fourteen dining experiences, making it one of the largest resorts in the Maldives. Despite the size of the project and challenges of the pandemic, Ausy and Sara have been able to create a new culture within the Siyam World team that's based on individual creativity.



## Handling one of the biggest openings in Maldives

The couple has been married for almost ten years and completed their Masters together in Singapore. They joined Sun Siyam Resorts and started from the bottom to get to the positions they are today. Sara worked her way up from PR executive at Sun Siyam Resorts while Ausy moved up from assistant front office manager of Sun Siyam Iru Veli. "Siyam World will mark the biggest challenge and achievement we have ever undertaken," they said.

"Our age and experience did not stop us from trying new things, we brought in a new kind of energy and culture to the company with the unwavering support of the managing director, Mr. Siyam, our Chief Operating Officer (COO) Aisha Faiz to really bring Siyam World to a new level, implementing the branding, the core values, the experiences and so on. We also received an immense amount of help and training from our consultant director of PR and Marketing, Ms. Claudia Klingbeil, in prepping for the opening, the branding as well as professional and personal growth. We still have a lot to learn and we are growing and learning something new everyday."

"We live and breathe the brand. Despite us being young with only a couple of years' experience, we are true believers that even if you are young, if you have the right attitude, mindset and creativity, you can do wonders. For instance, The PR & Marketing team at Siyam World is very creative as all the team members are young and devoted with little experience but they have proved that they can handle the pressure, bring out that creativity and shoot for stars and create that unbelievable result."



## Working together

Sara says that the two have somewhat similar styles of management; a democratic way of doing things. "What I like about Ausy is his style is very assertive and proactive, he thinks ahead and prepares his team for any kind of scenario. That way, our team at Siyam World is prepared to take on any challenges they may face.

"We always think that hearing out our team and their suggestions may bring even better solutions. We both listen to our team, their concerns, their ideas and find ways to implement it the best way. A similar example would be, when we developed the core values and brand culture, all the head of departments were involved in creating this."

The couple has been on the island since October 2020 and haven't got much free time. However, when they do get some time off their busy schedule, they like to unwind, watch movies and go swimming.

She adds that the best advice she has received in her career is "to venture out or get out of your comfort zone. If you are too comfortable, you are not growing. Challenges

are essential in growing and blossoming personally and professionally."

## Presenting a world of endless escapades

Siyam World features many of the industry's firsts, including the biggest floating water park in the Indian Ocean, the biggest spa in Maldives and the biggest kids club in Maldives. The resort's unique WOW! 24hrs Premium All-Inclusive concept offers guests endless experiences, including an unlimited medley of non-alcoholic and alcoholic beverages across no fewer than a dozen restaurants and bars.

"The most unique part of Siyam world is the experiences, the culture and the vibe that we have created. Siyam World is built on the vision of Mr Siyam and we have based our branding and foundation on his vision and purpose. We are strong believers in our local talent and all in all, I think I speak for the Sun Siyam group when I say it's our duty as a proud local brand to make sure we prepare, develop and train the Maldivian people for these jobs. And the most exciting part is that we encourage our islanders to embrace their creative side and do things out of the norm,

a lot of our experiences and the vibe that we have created is the hard work of our people. The characteristics reflect the character of the Siyam World Family. Those little Maldivian touches we bring to everything, we welcome all suggestions from our islanders and the result has been great!

"We will constantly be introducing new and never seen before experiences in Maldives, continuously innovating and creating to make sure that our guests are well entertained, relaxed, and have the time of their lives when they visit us and we become part of their hearts and endless memories. We want to make a positive and lasting impression on our guests, our islanders, our people."

# Haanif Abdullah, Training, Health & Safety Manager at Sun Siyam IruFushi

Haanif Abdullah, 30, is the recently appointed Training, Health & Safety Manager at The Sun Siyam IruFushi Maldives. We interviewed the AHLEI Certified Hospitality Trainer to learn more about his inspiring journey, his role at The Sun Siyam IruFushi and his advice to aspiring hoteliers.

**Hotelier Maldives: Could you tell me about your role at Iru Fushi? What does a Training Manager's job entail?**

Haanif Abdullah: My role here at IruFushi is multi-faceted. I am the Training, Health and Safety Manager. Streamlining the learning and development function of the resort while also working on quality assurance aspects is the main focus. Food safety and hygiene is also a part of my role. I believe L&D and Quality Assurance always go together. I enjoy working with the whole leadership team and co-create with them. There is always something we can work on and improve. I love to bring teams together and create synergy. It is very exciting. Reporting directly to the General Manager and working at the Executive Office is another exciting feature of my role.

**HM: Started as an F&B intern at Four Seasons and now a Training Manager! How has your journey been so far?**

HA: Yes, being a Hospitality Trainer has been amazing. I started out with humble beginnings. The internships at Four Seasons Kuda Huraa and One&Only Reethi Rah

were my foundation which was strong. Then I worked in LUX\* South Ari Atoll as the Training & Quality Assurance Officer. I then realized the need to have more operational experience so I joined Six Senses Laamu in Front Office as a Guest Experience Maker and later at St. Regis Vommuli as a Butler Service Agent. It was followed by my time at Conrad Maldives Rangali Island as an ISEA Management Trainee. Later I returned to LUX\* as the Asst. Training & Quality Assurance Manager. These experiences gave me a strong understanding of the hotel business and I believe such an operational background is crucial in order to be a good trainer. Drawing on from my experiences, I am able to explain to the audience in a way that they can really understand. It is just brilliant! Over time I have learnt from many teachers and from my own experiences. I made some mistakes along the way but I have always learnt from my mistakes and bounce back further every time. I am very grateful for the process I have been through and the process that I am in.

**HM: What's it like working at Sun Siyam Iru Fushi?**

HA: Sun Siyam IruFushi is a beautiful island full of amazing people. The culture here is nurturing and giving. Everyone is just wonderful. My favourite aspect is that there are challenges. Challenges make you strong and I believe discomfort is your friend. My time in this role has started after I have had a good break and re-discovered myself and what I really want. For instance, I used to be a smoker but I quit smoking and took fitness seriously, started eating



healthy and really enjoy being present. The role at the Sun Siyam IruFushi is just excellent and a great opportunity for my career aspirations. I want to be successful so I can help more people because of my success. I move forward with that intention.

**HM: What do you think are the skills required in a good Training Manager?**

HA: Being a good training manager is not only about

delivering trainings. Good hospitality trainers need to have a lot of important skills. Maintaining relationships is one of the most important skills. Being able to communicate clearly and with intention is of utmost importance. Good trainers are facilitators of change and they need to create a good learning climate for learning to happen. It takes a lot of skills, patience and planning. Also we read a lot. It is necessary! As a learning and development professional your knowledge and how you apply

it in real world is crucial. Our job really is to create positive changes in behaviour and attitudes, to help individuals and organizations reach their goals.

**HM: How do you choose new training programs?**

HA: Trainings must be focused and based on needs. Only then can it have the desired effect. At the moment I am creating training sessions to produce Department Trainers. They are going to be crucial in streamlining the Learning and Development function of the resort. Everything I do, I see them as projects and like to see them through. Currently I am also working with the Iru Fushi leadership team and NSURE to get the HACCP certification and that involves many training fulfillments too. We are also working on getting Travelife Sustainability license which is also yet another project that involves creating and delivering sustainability trainings.



plans from the departments and monitoring them on the job training on a regular basis. I keep track of the departmental training hours and always try to find ways to link the trainings and continuous improvement efforts with the changes in behaviours and guest feedback.

lack of a streamlined learning climate and the L&D function. I have been working on it from day one and have seen great changes already. The resort being very large with 221 rooms and more than 550 employees with many sub departments is also a challenge. Finding

**HM: What credentials do you hold in order to be a hospitality trainer and what are your future plans?**

HA: I am a Certified Hospitality Trainer (CHT)® from American Hotel & Lodging Institute and currently I am preparing to sit for the Project Management Professional (PMP)® exam. I think being certified and holding professional licenses is important as it validates your skills. My goal within the next year is to achieve Certified Professional in Talent Development (CPTD) from the Association of Talent Development which is one of the highest qualifications a Learning & Development Professional can obtain. I also have a Bachelor's Degree in International Hospitality Management (Hons) from Taylors University.

**HM: What's your advice to hoteliers who aspire to be in your role?**

HA: Have a goal and work towards it every single day. Get as much experience as possible in various operational departments. Internships in reputable hotel brands are always a good idea. Try and always see what makes you happy and do more of that and become really good at it. Aim to become an expert in the field of your choice and then you will go a long way. Learn to be diplomatic and always try to co-create with others and nurture team work.



Training Session at Sun Siyam Iru Fushi

**HM: How do you monitor and evaluate your team's performance?**

HA: The best indicator of training effectiveness is change in behaviour and attitudes. This can easily be seen in the way we approach problems and how we work together. In order to monitor trainings, I like to start from having the foundations right. That is giving proper orientation to the new hires and then having their training

Every leader in every single department is very important for my mission, which is to achieve the organizational vision. We can only achieve it when we work together and nurture each other.

**HM: What's the biggest challenge that you face in your job? And what do you love most about it?**

The biggest challenge was the

a way to reach most of the Team Members and delivering trainings in a strategic manner is crucial. It is easy to create a good learning climate with everyone's support which I am extremely lucky to have and with skilled Department Trainers I will be able to reach and develop more Team Members. I believe we are on the right track now and will only get better over the days to come.

# Interview with DJ Akram from Kandima Maldives



**HM: What is the best thing about playing to a Maldives market?**

DJA: Playing to Maldives market feels so good. Because in Maldives music lovers is mostly youths. There is always someone in the crowd whose dream is to be a DJ one day. I hope I can be some sort of courage for them to colour their dreams. Maldives is also a one of the world's top tourism destinations. It feels so good to entertain visitors worldwide wherever I play.

**HM: What is the best DJ advice you've been given?**

DJA: Be professional in your profession my parents always advised me. RESPECT all.

**HM: If you could change anything about the industry, what would it be?**

DJA: I would like to see 100 per cent Maldivian DJs be in resort industry. Not only DJs, musicians too. Rules and regulations exist but unfortunately authorities do not enforce it. By strictly enforcing and implementing only we can build creativity and productivity in this industry by our own talented musicians.

**HM: Do you have a music genre preference?**

DJA: My crowd, the vibe and what they enjoy most during my gigs. Hip-hop is a mood which keeps my play interesting and alive

**HM: How do you keep up with the latest music?**

DJA: In my spare time, I enjoy exploring new music.

**HM: How do you prepare before a gig?**

DJA: I keep a positive energy and do check the equipment condition. Mostly, communicating with the clients

and getting to know their preferences.

**HM: What is your strategy for getting a crowd going?**

DJA: Throwing different types of music on and getting to know what the crowd enjoy by syncing to the vibe.

**HM: What first got you into music?**

DJA: Since my father was a seaman, he used to bring music cassettes and CDs around the globe, that made me love music at very young age.



**HM: Who inspired you to make music?**

DJA: Umar, DJ Vifaq and two times Redbull Free Style Thailand Champion, DJ Bomber Selecta.

**HM: What is your creative process like?**

DJA: Listening rare tunes and experimenting more turntablism skills. I do listen DJs around the globe, try to understand each individual's uniqueness. The way they ignite the crowd. And try to develop new techniques the best I can.

**HM: Who would you most like to collaborate with?**

DJA: Paul Murphy, better known by his stage name

Skratch Bastid. He is a beast on turntables.

**HM: If you could go open a show for any artist who would it be?**

DJA: American singer and songwriter Bruno Mars.

**HM: What is one message you would give to your fans?**

DJA: I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who continuously supports me. Especially Rasey bro who gifted me my first DJ gear. Music is food for the soul. You can never be alone if you are

listening to music? Music is the best companion.

**HM: What advice do you have for new DJs aspiring to be you?**

DJA: It is a hustle, your commitment, sacrifice, and effort you put into it. Impossible is nothing, you need will power and consistency to pursue your dream. Nothing is as hard as rocket science; you will never fail if you will never give up. Go make it happen

**HM: What is next for you?**

DJA: To become an internationally recognised DJ. It's my passion and my hobby. I will keep playing. it will make me grow. Let's see where it's going to take me next.

# Meet Kunchok Yeshi, Fitness Supervisor at Pullman Maldives Maamuta

**Kunchok Yeshi, who first joined Pullman Maldives Maamuta as a fitness and wellness ambassador in 2019, is also the fitness supervisor at the resort. He shared his passion for fitness and wellness exclusively with Hotelier Maldives.**

When asked about what fitness meant to him, he said "I spent my whole life engaging in fitness one way or the other. Fitness for me is taking care of both mental and physical health. Although now it has become more of a trend for many. Many of us actually focus so much on finding an excuse or finding reasons why they aren't fit such as Covid-19 or gym when we could actually use our body alone and still be fit. We have this belief that going to the gym makes us fit and that it is how someone can get fit which contributes to finding an excuse when you aren't so motivated. In my experience I have come to realise fitness is about learning how to train your body and having proper discipline which includes food and sleep. In short, fitness is all about understanding what's good for yourself and learning how to keep your physical and mental health at its best."

Kunchok's initial goal in his career was to become a P.E teacher or a fitness instructor. "During my fitness and health management course, I got the opportunity to do internship at Ananda in the Himalayas, which is a wellness-oriented resort. Soon after my internship, I received job offer there so I joined them after graduation and worked there for a year which is what made me realise how broad the wellness and fitness subject can be. I continued studying more about wellness and Thai massage which got me opportunity to work at Six Senses Kazakhstan and from there I came to Six Senses Laamu in Maldives and then Pullman afterwards. I feel

like the concept of Pullman is very different in comparison with Six Senses as Pullman and Accor radiates more of a vibrant, powerful, and energetic vibe and it is more about keeping it balanced which I do enjoy very much."

As a fitness ambassador, Kunchok's services include designing wellness programs and incorporating them with the spa to fit the guest's needs. He also provides consultation whereby the guests could understand what exactly they need in terms of wellness and fitness.

When asked about how his earlier life has shaped his career, Kunchok explained how he has been active since his childhood. "In school I was in basketball team, football team and athletics team. Although I studied business in high school as I was good in Maths but I didn't like it so I would spend most of my time on the sports ground throughout high. I really enjoyed it so after high school I decided to change my career since I realised business was not for me. So, I changed to sports, and I completed Bachelor's in Physical Education and I became a P.E teacher as I wanted to teach sports to kids. During my studies I realised how broad my career was and I decided to do health and fitness management for my post graduate studies as I found myself being more interested in learning about health and fitness rather than teaching. Although I did work as a teacher after working at Ananda for a year where I looked after 500 kids for a year which was a good experience."

Kunchok stated "I have been working at Pullman Maamuta since pre-opening and I have enjoyed it a lot since my work is my passion. So no matter how much I work, I do not feel tired



or stressed. And with Pullman, I have been able to throw in my ideas and get their support with my plans.

"Pullman although is not a wellness-oriented resort, it is very much focused on providing the best fitness and wellness experience for the guests. For instance, we have a Yoga instructor and Zumba instructor and Aerobics instructor as well as fitness instructor which is unlike many even those resorts that are wellness oriented. We have a very big fitness and wellness team here. And we do focus more on outdoor workout and

our signature workout is a feet trail where you run around the island and it includes obstacle stations as well. We have different varieties of Yoga as well as Zumba. Our annual fitness program is like a boot camp and involves activities starting from aerial yoga to teaching how to make healthy smoothies. In short, a healthy lifestyle." Kunchok believes we could eventually change the perception of vacation – break from everything and make it more balanced with elements of wellness and fitness.

# Malsa Maaz, FIRST MALDIVIAN BAREFOOT BOOKSELLER

Back in 2018, Soneva Fushi partnered with Ultimate Library to host the very first popup bookshop in Maldives. The resort began its search for Barefoot Booksellers, highly passionate individuals to run its desert island bookshop. From hundreds of applications from all corners of the world, Soneva would choose only two lucky candidates every year.

In 2021, with a second bookshop at Soneva Jani, the resort found its first Maldivian Barefoot Bookseller, Malsa Maaz. Hotelier Maldives interviewed Malsa to learn more about her work.

## Hotelier Maldives: Tell us about yourself and your career

Malsa Maaz: I grew up here in the Maldives, in Malé. After I finished school, I worked in the heritage industry as a Research Intern, which paved the way for university. For my Bachelor of Arts, I studied Archaeology and Anthropology and I have just finished my Master of Research in Engaged Anthropology at a university in Wales, in the UK. My main focus was on the

documentation of Maldivian cultural heritage and my fieldwork involved learning traditional arts and crafts such as fangi vinun (coconut thatch weaving), roanu veshun (coir rope weaving) and kasabu viyun (embroidery lace weaving) using traditional tools and techniques.

After university, I worked on a project as a cultural anthropologist to help establish a private museum at a resort, researching the pre-Islamic history of the Maldives and Maldives-Chinese relationship to trace the porcelain trade.

Working as the Barefoot Bookseller here at Soneva Jani is my first full-time job after university. It's a true honour to be the first Maldivian in this role.

## HM: What does your job entail as a Barefoot Bookseller?

MM: This job role entails so much more than just selling books and no day is ever the same. I run creative writing classes and biblio-dialogue sessions, offer private tutoring, make personally tailored reading recommendations for guests hailing from all around the world, and reading sessions with those looking for a digital detox and to reconnect with nature. I'm also planning to restart the Barefoot Book Club that was started by my predecessors.

Together with the Barefoot Bookseller at Soneva Fushi, we will be documenting our journeys with weekly blog posts.



## HM: How is it like working at Soneva Jani? What do you like most about the resort?

MM: For me, working at Soneva Jani feels very liberating – it is indeed the place to make a difference. New ideas are readily accepted, giving everyone the chance to grow and thrive.

I really like the 'No News, No Shoes' ethos here which encourages people to disconnect, relax and reconnect with the ground beneath their feet. As the Barefoot Bookseller I am always literally barefoot, and it makes me feel really connected to the natural environment.

I also really like the fact that Soneva as a brand is about breaking barriers – there is a high percentage of women working here in so many different fields, from marine biology to engineering. I am inspired by these women every day.



## HM: Tell us about the book collections at Soneva Jani

MM: The Soneva Jani book collection has been carefully curated by the Ultimate Library, tailored to underline Soneva's

values and sustainable ethos, celebrate the local culture and reflect the diverse tastes of its sophisticated, cultured guests from across the world.

We have an extensive collection of non-fiction, including wellness, relaxation and mindful reading, as well as books on sustainability and eco-conscious living, all which reflect Soneva's barefoot luxury philosophy.

There is also a wide collection of fictional books, including thought-provoking contemporary novels, much-loved classics and children's books for readers big and small.

## HM: What is your favourite book from the collection?

MM: I love books about local Maldivian culture, such as *The Maldives Islanders* and *Folk Tales of the Maldives* by Spanish anthropologist Xavier Romero-Frias. He has lived and done fieldwork in the Maldives for a number of years and has contributed to documenting our unique cultural heritage and history.

When it comes to the classics, *Pride and Prejudice* is one book that I have read time and time again. Elizabeth Bennett is one of my favourite literary characters of all time and I

somehow always associate with her as she is not scared of breaking barriers. That inspires me – so I always end up re-reading it whenever I feel like I need a little motivation boost.

At the moment I am reading *The Goldfinch* by Donna Tartt – recommended to me by a lot of guests. I am also reading *The Apollo Murders*, which is a space mystery thriller by my favourite astronaut Chris Hadfield.

I have had a lot of requests for the new Bill Gates book, *How to Avoid a Climate Disaster*, so we'll have that in stock very soon.

## HM: As a booklover and the first Maldivian Barefoot Bookseller, what is your advice to someone looking to pursue a career in this field?

MM: Always be different and come up with new, creative and innovative ideas. Be willing to learn from people: the more you engage with different people, the more you learn.



# Royal Island Holds an Island Cleanup for Sustainability Day

To celebrate World Sustainability Day on 27th October 2021, Royal Island All-Inclusive Premium Resort held an island clean-up to collect waste materials on the island. The resort team gathered to help make a difference towards a sustainable future. The resort donates the plastic materials for recycling in partnership with Parley for the Oceans.



Villa Hotels & Resorts regularly holds ocean and beach clean ups, with at least one team-building clean up planned each month on the island or at the sandbank located nearby to the resort. The resort team, along with interested guests, will join together to remove plastic and debris from the island and surrounding lagoon.

In an effort to maintain the fragile natural environment, Royal Island All-Inclusive Premium Resort continues to work towards a sustainable future by implementing several forward-thinking initiatives, including energy saving strategies, producing fresh water on the island, recycling plastic and organically growing a selection of fruits and vegetables on the fertile land to serve across the resort's



restaurants. Further, the resort is currently in progress to achieve the Green Globe certification after months of dedication and hard work towards this important milestone.

Guests travelling to Villa Hotels & Resorts collection are invited to contribute to the environmental sustainable initiatives and be a crucial part of the company's sustainable future. Every guest can be involved and experience a deeper connection to the Maldives on their vacation.

# Siyam World Holds First Graduation of Sun Thari Apprenticeship Program

Siyam World, the highly anticipated resort in Noonu Atoll, has held the graduation of the first batch that took part in Sun Thari Apprenticeship program. This new program by Siyam World was launched to develop, train and prepare young locals for the tourism and hospitality industry.

During the graduation ceremony held on 21st October 2021, certificates were handed over to 19 graduates by Mr. Ahmed Siyam Mohamed,



managing director, Sun Siyam Group. At the event, opening speech were given by Tom Mcloughlin, general manager, Siyam World, who highlighted that the resort is close to achieving 70 per cent local employment.

PR & Marketing; F&B and Housekeeping. After completion of the internship, graduates are offered permanent employment at the resort in their preferred departments.

The 3-month apprenticeship program covered 24 modules during 60 hours of classroom time and over 528 hours of practical sessions. Modules included working in a resort; Maldivian culture; Sales,

Following the graduation of the first batch, 25 locals have joined the second batch of Sun Thari Apprenticeship program.



# Women in Hospitality – Laurean Sahilices, Cluster Assistant Director of Marketing at Pullman & Mercure Maldives

As cluster assistant director of marketing at Accor Maldives for the Pullman Maldives Maamutaa and Mercure Maldives Kooddoo., Laurean Sahilices is an expert in hotel marketing, particularly digital, as well as a champion of women in marketing and women in hospitality. Her passion is to help hotels think outside the box by creating digital marketing strategies and understanding the complex digital world. She does this with a decade of international experience working in New Zealand, Argentina, Spain and Mexico.

The Argentine leads the marketing team of both Accor Premium properties from the Maldives and champions a workforce of over 50 women. Her work involves leading on digital marketing strategies, destination marketing, content creation, brand development and website development and optimisation and she uses her wide experience in communication as her muse.

Hotelier Maldives speaks to Laurean about her work in this exclusive interview.

**HM: Why did you decide on your chosen career?**

My background is in Communications and PR. During the last ten years I've specialised in hotel digital marketing because not only I love travelling but also I love to connect with people from different cultures.

**HM: Tell me about your passion for your role?**

As hotel marketers, I believe that we have a special role in people's heart as we are responsible of creating unique experiences and 'selling the dream' moment that people will remember for the rest of their life.

My passion stands on how to connect all the dots in a very saturated digital world, based on the global brand guidelines, clear goals and strategy. Another area of my role that I enjoy a lot is building and growing the team members and sharing the brand passions and digital marketing fundamentals through regular training sessions.

**HM: What does your role entail?**

My role is Cluster Assistant Director of Marketing, where I lead the marketing team for two Accor Maldives properties, Pullman Maldives Maamutaa and Mercure Maldives Kooddoo. I'm responsible for creating an omnichannel marketing strategy for both resorts, that supports sales and is in line with the global brand standards. Also, a big part of my role is making sure the team is happy and updated with the latest updates in terms of digital marketing, so training the team and help them grow is a big part of my role too.

**HM: What kind of things do you do day to day in your role?**

What is quite specific to this industry is that not two days are the same. Some of my daily responsibilities include



reviewing the overall marketing strategy implementation across different channels, supporting the team with the execution, for example reviewing the content strategy, social media and supporting the different departments with any content creation or photoshoot needed.

In addition, I also maintain a close relationship with our head office to ensure not only we are up to date with the latest updates from the global brand team, but also how to find opportunities to feature our two properties in some global campaigns.

Finally I'm also responsible for dealing with our external PR agency, and we have calls every other week, to discuss further content needs and opportunities to get more exposure in the media.

**HM: Tell me about where you are from and where you have worked?**

I've been lucky to live and work in some of the top dreamy destinations of the world. This includes Playa del Carmen (Mexico, where my love for this industry started. I went on to internships in the Canary Islands, Spain, where I met

the five-star luxury industry for the first time doing an internship); and New Zealand, where I call it home as I lived there for five years, and I was the head of digital for a cluster of six hotels across the country. After three years with one of the leading hotel global brands, in April 2019 I received an opportunity to be transferred to the Maldives to work on a pre-opening project. Once I finalised it, I went back to New Zealand and in October 2019 I came back to Maldives



to join Accor and look after the Maldives cluster.

**HM: How has your career shaped you as a person?**

I think that building an international career has helped me in the way I can translate challenges into opportunities by having flexibility and adjusting to different environments and people. To me one of the richest experiences is getting to know different cultures and becoming a world citizen. This has helped me to build resilience and self-confidence.

**HM: What do you love most about the resort?**

I love the ocean and the island life here at Pullman, we have a big and lush island and I could spend hours getting lost in the jungle or reading a book by the beach. My favourite spots is the vegetarian restaurant and our unique Aqua Villas – the underwater bedrooms.

From Mercure, I really like the fact it is a smaller resort, and my favourite part is the marine life beyond the water villas – where I could spend hours snorkelling there and

discovering many colourful species.

**HM: As a woman in hospitality, what challenges and opportunities have you faced?**

I've enjoyed every experience in my career. Some of the challenges that as a young woman in hospitality include not being heard much by males from older generation. The fact I was 30-year-old women in a leadership role, meant I didn't



hospitality is needed and we should all keep growing together whilst we also encourage younger generations too.

**HM: Do you think that the hotel industry is inclusive to women?**

Yes, I think the hotel industry used to be men-led mostly, however during the last few years it's fantastic to see more females in the industry developing their career and getting high roles in the industry. Also as per a report from UNWTO back in November 2020, "women make up to 54% of the tourism workforce".

**HM: Are there many opportunities for women at your resort – you say that you have a high female workforce – tell me about this?**

Here in Accor, the role of women in hospitality is huge and it's a supportive and



inclusive global brand. Here at Pullman we have many women in leadership roles and we are always trying to maintain a gender balance and encourage more females too; for example we have a female executive

chef, which to me is the first time I have the chance to work with a lady chef. We have about 50 women at the resort. The same in Mercure and also in the corporate office, where you can find females in high roles like global directors and VPs.

**HM: What hobbies do you enjoy when you are not at work?**

I'm an ocean lover, so when I'm not working the only place where I can be found is at the beach! I'm either diving, snorkelling, paddle boarding or reading a book under a palm tree.

**HM: What advice would you give to people entering the industry?**

This industry is fun, flexible and will let you discover the world and other cultures if this is something that you're keen. The sky is the limit. Something that I wish I've learned when I started is that being busy is

not a badge of honour, so look after your wellbeing while developing your career and develop a growth mindset based on lifelong learning.

# A Day in the Life of Rosalie Bailie

Rosalie Bailie is the marine educator at Coco Palm Dhuni Kolhu, where she works closely with guests to help them make memorable experiences on the island.

She can be found in the ocean guiding marine excursion trips, managing the coral restoration programme, conducting coral, turtle and manta surveys or holding reef clean-ups. On land, her work includes report writing, survey analysis, and identifying turtles through collaboration with Olive Ridley Project. The resort also collaborates with Manta Trust for surveys on manta sightings and collecting identification pictures. She also works to educate associates about the marine life and how to better protect it. She holds training sessions for new associates, host associate clean-ups and speak at associate events to raise awareness.

“Living on an island means that everything is nearby. It’s just a short walk to the ocean, wherever you are! It’s an amazing experience to work on a tropical beach surrounded by the lush dense jungle. I love the diversity that comes with my job. Each and every day I get to encounter our incredible wildlife. From turtles to sharks and corals to mantas, I get to work with them all and to spread awareness about their threats and human impacts,” said Rosalie.

Here is what a Wednesday might look like for her.

**08:00** – It’s time to prepare for our bi-weekly manta snorkeling excursion. This involves greeting guests in reception and ensuring they have all of the right equipment for a morning

of snorkeling. Then it is time to make our way to the jetty to board on our excursion Dhoni.

The dhoni leaves after a boat briefing about the trip and safety procedures. The journey to the site takes 45 minutes, which gives time to educate the guests about manta rays, information about the surveys



I carry out for the Manta Trust and about how to follow our snorkeling guidelines, to ensure the correct behaviors when interacting with the wildlife.

**09:00** – We are ready to search for manta rays! Standing on the top of the boat allows us to easily locate where in the lagoon the manta rays are feeding, filtering plankton from the seawater. We look for their dark figures gliding at the surface of the water and for the

presence of dorsal and pectoral fins above the water surface.

Once we find the mantas we help the guests into the water quietly and start to observe their amazing feeding behaviors. For me, it’s time to take identification photos of their tummies, which show their unique pattern of spots

which that Manta Trust can use to identify them. These pictures along with recording survey data on the environmental conditions allows the Manta Trust to expand their research sites. Once back on the boat, I will record the survey data, and talk to the guests about what we saw on the trip.

The boat ride home is usually accompanied by visits from neighboring spinner dolphins, who are keen to put on a

show, spinning through the air. Once returning to land, I upload and submit any manta survey data and ID pictures to the manta trust. In addition to manta snorkeling excursions I also take snorkeling with turtle excursions, reef hopping trips and guided house reef snorkeling with guests.

**14:00** – I may have a coral planting session with guests. Here we attach coral fragments which have broken off naturally (mostly due to wave action) to artificial reef frames made by our engineering department. These metal frames provide the hard substrate needed for coral attachment. Guests can adopt their own frame which gets a nametag and then they will receive updates every 6 months on the progress of their artificial reef. Over time the corals begin to attach to the frame, growing over it and attracting new marine life to the area!

Other afternoon duties may include doing turtle surveys, identifying our house reef turtles, working on reports, helping out at our Olive Ridley Project turtle rescue center or conducting coral reef surveys!

**21:30** – Once a week I host a marine biology night at the Conch Bar. I tell guests about our amazing wildlife, discuss how we can protect it and host a fun quiz where guests can win free cocktails! This is usually followed by a lengthy question and answer session with our curious guests, and I am happy to talk all night long about our amazing marine life!

## Paul Elliot King Appointed Executive Chef at Dusit Thani Maldives

Dusit Thani Maldives has appointed British chef Mr Paul Elliot King as the resort’s new executive chef. In his new role, Chef Paul will lead an exciting new era of culinary creativity at Dusit Thani Maldives’ renowned restaurants.

Chef Paul brings to his role more than thirty years of experience leading culinary teams for luxury hotels and resorts in the United Kingdom and Asia. He started his illustrious career in the late 1980s in London, UK, where he honed his skills working for iconic city landmarks such as The Savoy and The Dorchester. Since 2009, he has continued to expand his horizons – and his palate – with executive positions at award-winning properties in Asia.

“We are delighted to welcome Chef Paul to lead our talented culinary team and help to elevate our already high standards by creating exciting new culinary experiences for our discerning guests and customers,” said Mr Thomas Weber, general manager, Dusit Thani Maldives. “Having won numerous awards for the quality of his cooking, he knows full well the recipe for success, and we are sure he will deliver even more accolade-worthy fare at our highly esteemed restaurants.”



## Mark Eletr Appointed General Manager at Holiday Inn Resort Kandooma Maldives



Holiday Inn Resort Kandooma Maldives has appointed Mark Eletr as general manager. In his new role, Mark will continue to drive the resort’s commercial growth, strengthen the resort’s positioning as a leading family resort in the Maldives through continued operational excellence and will lead the resort’s sustainable initiatives in 2022.

Mark brings in over twenty-four years’ experience in hospitality across leading luxury brands such as Banyan Tree Hotels & Resorts, Voyages Hotels & Resorts, Anantara Hotels & Resorts, Akaryn Hotel Group and Karma Group in stunning resort destinations such as Vietnam, Thailand, Abu Dhabi, the Great Barrier Reef and Hayman Island in Australia. In his most recent

role as general manager, Mark spearheaded the opening of the Crowne Plaza Starbay Phu Quoc.

Regarding his appointment, Mark says, “my hospitality journey has taken me to some of the world’s most iconic luxury island destinations and it is an absolute privilege to be here in the Maldives and to work alongside my incredible team to continuously deliver true hospitality that the Holiday Inn Resort Kandooma Maldives is known for.”

## Abdulla Thamheed Appointed General Manager at Siyam World

Siyam World, Maldives has appointed Abdulla Thamheed as the resort's general manager. Thamheed is also the group general manager for Sun Siyam Resorts and the general manager at Sun Siyam Iru Fushi.

Throughout over twenty years in the industry, Thamheed has worked as an F&B assistant, operations manager as well as assistant resort manager. Thamheed joined Sun Siyam Resorts back in 2003 as an F&B coordinator. Since then, it has been a steady stream of promotions; moving from F&B assistant to F&B manager to operations manager to the resident manager. After ten years of continual career development, he became the

group general manager for Sun Siyam Resorts in November 2013 and has now taken the additional role as the general manager of the biggest resort in Maldives, Siyam World.

Having accomplished so much already, Thamheed has his sights set on achieving even greater targets for Siyam World. With a wealth of experience under his belt, the move could prove to be his greatest yet. Thamheed attributes much of his success to his personal passion for the brand and he is optimistic that Siyam World is definitely going to be a game changer in the Maldives tourism industry.



## Jeffrey Tan Appointed Resort Manager at Raffles Maldives Meradhoo



Raffles Maldives Meradhoo has appointed Jeffrey Tan as its new resort manager. Jeffrey will be in charge of the resort's overall operations, ensuring that guests continue to receive unique and extraordinary experiences.

Jeffrey brings in more than fourteen years of executive experience in the hospitality industry. He took on the role of rooms division head in his first overseas assignment in Nanjing, China, before transferring to Jakarta in a similar capacity. He was then offered a position in Shanghai, where he was appointed director of operations, assisting the general manager in managing the hotel as the next-in-line. Jeffrey was also the director of operations at Waldorf Astoria Shanghai on the Bund from January 2019 to June 2020, after he spent over six years with Fairmont Hotels & Resorts as executive assistant manager of rooms in Jakarta, director of rooms in Nanjing and assistant front office manager in Singapore.

He earned his Degree of Bachelor of Arts (Merit), Sociology Major at the National University of Singapore, Certificate in Hospitality Management and Certificate in Leading Customer-Focused Teams at Cornell University.

Throughout these years, he has gained extensive and valuable experience in hotel management, strategic planning, operational excellence, team building as well as several preopening projects.

Speaking of his appointment, Jeffrey said, "I am extremely excited to be part of the incredible team at Raffles Maldives Meradhoo. It is truly one of the most beautiful resorts in the Indian Ocean and I look forward to welcoming guests to this unique destination and provide unforgettable experiences."

## Jad Frem Appointed Commercial Director at Conrad Maldives Rangali Island

Conrad Maldives Rangali Island has appointed Jad Frem as its new commercial director as the iconic twin-island resort prepares to unveil an expansive renovation in Q1 2022. The property is part of Conrad Hotels & Resorts, one of Hilton's global luxury hotel brands.

Frem joins Conrad Maldives Rangali Island from Six Senses, where he held the role of regional director of sales & marketing overseeing the brand's Indian Ocean properties - Oman, Seychelles and Maldives. Prior to that, he spent six years working with Hyatt International in the United Arab Emirates after graduating from the prestigious Glion Institute of Higher Education with a BBA in Hospitality Management.

Frem in his new role as commercial director, will oversee growth initiatives and innovative campaigns, expand the resort's clientele, amplify international sales efforts and lead multi-faceted marketing programs and PR initiatives.

Carla Puverel, general manager, Conrad Maldives Rangali Island said: "I am delighted to welcome Jad to the Conrad Maldives family and I have every confidence that his proven track record within luxury hospitality will play an integral role in optimising performance on a regional and global level. He joins us at a pivotal time and I am looking forward to working with him to build on the resort's acclaimed legacy."



## Brett Muller Appointed Executive Chef at Le Méridien Maldives Resort & Spa



Le Méridien Maldives Resort & Spa has appointed Brett Muller as the resort's Executive Chef. Muller brings in over 20-years of experience in the hospitality industry within Asia Pacific.

Originally from Brisbane, Australia, Muller's career started as a commis pastry chef at the Sheraton Brisbane Hotels & Towers. From there, his career has taken him to all corners of Asia Pacific including Australia, Guam, Philippines, South Korea, China, and most recently Malaysia.

Throughout his career, Muller has displayed his culinary flair as a chef to some of the world's most renowned faces in entertainment including Chris Hemsworth, Katy Perry, Metallica; Danish and Malaysian royalty, Australian prime ministers, Barack Obama, and had the opportunity cook alongside Gordon Ramsay.

Muller will be responsible for overseeing and leading the culinary direction for the resort's six restaurants and bars that includes Tabemasu, Riviera, Velaa Bar + Grill, Latitude, Waves Café and Turquoise. He will also bring to life Le Meridien's distinct culinary programmes that have been especially designed to celebrate the culture of savouring the good life. Signature programmes include "Au Soleil" a weekly culinary pop-up that encourages a summer state of mind with an activation at "Golden Hour", the magical hour at the end of a day under the sun where guests will enjoy European-inspired petit plates, specially designed rosé cocktails and Le Scoop by Le Méridien handcrafted gelato or sorbet, set against a soundtrack of live music and waves lapping at the shore.

# An Interview with Retheesh Mohanan of InterContinental Maldives Maamunagau

Retheesh Mohanan, 39, originally from Kerala, India is currently the head sommelier at InterContinental Maldives Maamunagau Resort. Hotelier Maldives interviews Mohanan about working in the Maldives, different wine varieties in the wine cellar at Intercontinental and his favourite wines.

**HM: Tell me a bit about yourself and your background and how it has shaped you?**

RM: I grew up in the picturesque village of Kumarakom in Kerala, India. I came to Maldives in 2008 as a waiter for an Italian restaurant at Paradise Island Resort and was fortunate to be promoted to a supervisor quickly. As my knowledge, confidence and passion for wines grew, I became the assistant sommelier at Kuredu island resort and soon became sommelier for the 5.8 Under Sea Restaurant at Hurawalhi island resort. In 2019, I joined InterContinental Maldives Maamunagau resort as head sommelier.

**HM: Tell me about yourself and what it is like to be a sommelier on the resort?**

RM: I believe that a resort sommelier is a personal guide as guests navigate through an extensive wine list. I always try and connect with the guests and get to know them as much as I can so I can make better recommendations based on their personal preferences and meal selection. Each guest is unique, and I enjoy sharing my knowledge and passion with them as it's very rewarding when the guests are pleased with their experience. I also responsible for the menu of wines on offer and the costing and budgeting.

**HM: Why did you decide to become a sommelier and how you came to be in the Maldives?**

RM: While I had an interest in becoming a sommelier, it was a mentor of mine that encouraged me to apply for the WSET Level two in the Maldives as the only participant from Paradise Island Resort. I completed this certification with a distinction and with my growing confidence applied myself to achieve the WSET Level three which I did with distinction as well. I later became certified by the Courts of Master Certified Sommeliers.

I was inspired to work in the Maldives by friends and colleagues as its not only a beautiful destination, but it also offers many learning opportunities. We have some of the best restaurants and bars on the planet offering unique experiences that you cannot find anywhere else in the world and I knew I would be working alongside incredibly talented culinary personalities.

**HM: What do you love most about the resort you work at?**

RM: I love meeting new people from all around the world and learning about their experiences. It is also very gratifying to be able to share my knowledge and experience of wines with our guests.

**HM: What is important to**

**understand about wine and how do you select the perfect wine for your clients?**

RM: We have many grape varieties with many wine producing countries. The same grape variety with different characteristic from different regions, I always ask the guest what grape variety or what style of wine they prefer, which will give me an understanding of their likings to recommend, second suggest them wines what food chosen which will enhance their dining experience, I am always happy to recommend they try something different not one grape or one type wine.

**HM: What is the most expensive wine on offer at the resort?**

RM: 1986 Château Pétrus priced at \$9,000.

**HM: How do you keep the wines at the right temperature?**

RM: It is quite challenging to keep our wines in their optimal temperature given the climate here, however with a well-designed wine cellar with proper humidity and temperature controls we can store the wine long term. For service and short-term storage, we have the wine coolers.

**HM: Do you do wine tastings?**

RM: One of my signature

experiences at InterContinental Maldives Maamungau Resort is our "Wine Games" where I lead the guests through a blind tasting. For 90 minutes, they have a lot of fun learning about different wines. Another tasting that I do which is well received by our wine connoisseurs is a tasting comparison of wines from the northern hemisphere vs southern hemisphere. A favourite tasting of the guests is always the Mediterranean wine and cheese tasting.

**HM: What changes have you seen in the industry during the time you have worked at the resort?**

RM: Nowadays, we have many travellers from different parts of the world with different taste and culture which will help me to curate their wine habits. I also offer them to do experiences with some other from their taste.

**HM: What hobbies do you enjoy when you are not at work?**

RM: I love my island life in Maldives and enjoy going to the gym, snorkelling and fishing.

**HM: What steps did you take to become a sommelier**

**and why did you choose the Maldives to work?**

RM: Presently I am a WSET LEVEL two, WSET LEVEL three, Courts of Masters Certified Sommelier,

I choose to work due to the working environment and as well as it is an international tourist destination and truly the best in the world.

**HM: What has been your biggest challenge along the way?**

RM: It was challenging at

the beginning as I had never specialised in wine so even the simple task of pronunciation of French labels was difficult at first. However, I was determined, and I quickly overcame that through continuous practice and along the way I taught myself other important aspects such as the laws and regulations of wine production in different countries, grape varieties and how wine is produced.

**HM: What advice would you give to people entering the industry?**

RM: Nothing is impossible. There are no barriers for learning. Be humble and continue learning.

**HM: Tell me about the wine experiences available for guests?**

RM: Wine games, champagne sabering sessions at Sunset Bar, wine pairing dinners at our signature restaurant – Lighthouse, champagne and cheese tasting, Mediterranean wine and cheese tasting.

**HM: How do you import wines in a pandemic?**

RM: We always maintain ample stocks to ensure that we can cater to our guest preferences. We haven't faced many challenges sourcing wine during the pandemic as we pre-plan in the long term so that there is plenty of time for it to arrive should there be any shipping delays.

**HM: What is the most popular wine?**

RM: Kanonkop cabernet sauvignon from South Africa and whispering angel rose from France.

**HM: Red, white or rose what is your favourite and why?**

RM: Tignanello a super Tuscan red wine from Italy. I love Sangiovese which is the main grape for Tignanello. I love it because from young to mature its taste and flavour is amazing.



## Neos Air Resumes Weekly Flights from Milan and Rome



Italian airlines Neos Air has resumed direct flight operations to Velana International Airport (VIA) from Milan and Rome. The airline will operate three weekly flights on Sundays, Mondays and Tuesdays.

Italy was the top third source market to the Maldives in 2019 with 136,343 arrivals. The country was also a major market when Maldives reopened borders on 15 July 2020, with 46,690 arrivals at the end of December 2020. As of 30th September 2021, Maldives welcomed 8385 tourists from Italy so far this year. Arrivals are expected to catch-up after Maldives moved up to Italy's green list on 22nd September 2021, allowing travelers to travel quarantine-free to Maldives.

## SriLankan Airlines Resumes Flights to Addu

SriLankan Airlines has recommenced operations to Gan International Airport (GAN) from 4th December 2021, states Ace Aviation Service Pvt Ltd, General Sales Agent of SriLankan Airlines in Maldives.

The airline operates flights once a week between Colombo and GAN on Saturdays. Tickets for locals have been priced at USD 271.

Mohamed Mihad, Managing Director of Maldivian, the national flag carrier of the Maldives, said that connection flights will be provided to Gaafu Alifu Atoll and Gaafu Dhaalu Atoll and Male' City when



operations resume.

SriLankan Airlines initially commenced scheduled flights to Addu City on 1st December,

2016 and operations came to a temporary halt due the pandemic. The service is highly demanded as it allows direct travel to Colombo from Addu

(Seenu Atoll) without travelling to Male' City.

## Air France Resumes Winter Flights from Paris



The flag carrier of France, Air France has resumed direct flights between Paris-Charles de Gaulle Airport and Velana International Airport (VIA) in time for the

winter season. The recommencement took place on 2nd November 2021, the same day the airline celebrates four years of service to the Maldives.

Air France is operating three weekly flights to the Maldives on the Boeing 787-9, which has a capacity of 279 seats (thirty in Business, twenty-one in premium Economy and 228 in Economy class). The flights operate directly to VIA and return to Paris via Sri Lanka.

France remains an important source market to the Maldives with 18,864 arrivals this year, as of 27th October 2021. France is the tenth top market of 2021, with a share of 1.9 per cent.

## Manta Air Launches Manta Wings Apprenticeship Program

Manta Air has opened applications for its first batch of the Manta Wings Apprenticeship Program. The program is applicable for locals between the age of 18 and 25 who have completed GCE O' Level Examination.

During the six months of the program, apprentices will receive paid on-the-job training, dedicated mentorship as well as four classroom training sessions regarding Leadership in the information age -how to be a leader in digital age, Service Culture, digital tools for modern day workspace and Excel in Presentations



skills. Opportunities are made available in the areas of Ground Operations, Flight operations and Scheduling and Reservations departments.

The first batch will commence in December 2021 and second batch in June 2022. The program will be held twice a year, opening applications for ten apprentices every six months.

Ahmed Maumoon, Deputy CEO, Manta Air said: "The purpose of the Manta Wings apprenticeship program is to create an opportunity for the young local talent in Maldives to gain much needed job experience. Manta Wings program will give the Apprentices a platform for them to learn and develop their skills to get ready for their future careers. We believe this is a golden opportunity for the

locals completing the O'Levels to be paid and get essential job experience at same time to kick start their dream career."

On completion of the program, apprentices will be awarded a certificate and have the freedom of choosing their field of work and the company.

# Pioneering Sustainable Tourism – Six Senses Laamu

Six Senses Laamu is the first resort to open in Laamu atoll in the Maldives. Since its opening in 2011, sustainability has been at the heart of every decision by the luxury resort. From caring for its blessed ecosystem to promoting rich cultures, Six Senses Laamu has been a leading example in responsible tourism in the Maldives. Hotelier Maldives takes a deeper look into the resort's sustainability journey.



Maldives Underwater Initiative (MUI) team with general manager Marteyne van Well

## Sustainability as a Core Value at Six Senses

Adam Thalhat is the sustainability and community outreach manager at the resort, who is responsible for overseeing all of the sustainability-related initiatives at Six Senses Laamu.

He explained that, at Six Senses, sustainability is broken down into three pillars- People, Planet and Profit. "Under the pillar 'People', we make sure our community is inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. In addition, we share artisan stories of local people and aim to leave a legacy for the

local community. Under the pillar 'Planet', we prioritize marine conservation efforts by focusing on maintaining and protecting the wildlife and nature, and find nature-based solution for climate change adaptation. Under the pillar 'Profit', we focus on running a sustainable and impactful tourism operation by practicing zero waste philosophies, energy reduction and following the Six Senses climate action plan."

Adam also oversees the sustainability fund, which is allocated from 0.5 per cent of gross revenue and 50 per cent percent of the water sales for community. This fund is used on projects that directly benefit

Laamu's community, making climate adaptation strategies possible.

One of the six values at Six Senses Laamu is 'Local Sensitivity, Global Sensibility', which means that the resort is part of the local fabric and culture, yet in tune with the wider world.

"For example, a global issue is that the planet is facing a biodiversity crisis and here, at Six Senses Laamu, to address this we are focusing on preserving the natural resources and wildlife to fight this global issue. It was pledged in the 2015 Paris Agreements that 30 per cent of the oceans

will be marine protected areas by 2030, and here at Six Senses Laamu we created the Maldives Underwater Initiative so that we can work with partner NGOs to preserve marine habitats in Laamu Atoll," he explained.

needs and desires have shifted, with an increased interest in sustainability. It seems it is no longer enough to simply admire a pretty view, guests are seeking a deeper understanding of the natural world and what can be

## Sustainable Tourism in Maldives

The Maldives is one of the leading tourist destinations in the world and presented one of

can also mean enhancing what is already here, progressing in education, ingenuity and sustainable economy."

"The lack of awareness has been the biggest challenge for the sustainability in the Maldives (and perhaps globally too)," adds Adam. "It is heartbreaking to realize the amount of work we have to do as a country, given that the climate change is rapidly happening. Sustaining our planet should not be correlated with cost, when we talk about lives of millions of people going in to risk because of climate change. If it continues at its current pace, the impacts will worsen, with rising sea levels and extreme weather leading to the loss of homes and livelihoods, mass migration, and civil conflicts."

## Laamu Atoll

Located in Southern Maldives, Laamu is one of the most remote atolls and offers amazing underwater experiences and natural beauty. Mangrove forests are found on four islands, Hithadhoo, Gan, Maabaidhoo and Gaadhoo.

"Only 20 per cent of the islands in Laamu are developed, which means ecological pressures are relatively low in comparison to other Atolls. Being the first resort, and one focused on sustainability, we hope that new developments will also follow suit, and see the advantage of supporting and being part of the atoll community," said Pip.

Six Senses Laamu recently achieved a significant



The Maldives Underwater Initiative was established by Six Senses Laamu in 2018. "When I look back, the driving force of the team was our general manager, Marteyne van Well. She has a great passion for marine conservation and the sustainability. Over the years, she has helped our team members to develop our passion for marine conservation and the sustainability, and drove the partnerships which developed with the Manta Trust, Blue Marine Foundation and most recently the Olive Ridley Project."

## Demand for Sustainable Travel

A new era of sustainable travel took off in post-pandemic. Expedia Group's latest research with Wakefield revealed that three in five travellers are willing to pay additional fees so that their trip can be more sustainable. Though, how evident is this trend in the Maldives?

Adam said "since the resort's reopening in August 2020, it has become clear that guests'

done to protect it. Our marine biology team, the Maldives Underwater Initiative, provides guided snorkels, workshops and presentations for our guests which are extremely popular. Not only do they share insights into the local marine creatures and ecosystems, they also advise guests on the threats they face, the research being conducted to conserve them and what the guests can do, both at the resort and at home, in order to help.

"The younger generations are extremely passionate and knowledgeable when it comes to the health of our planet, and they also have a heavy influence on the family's decision. So, programs such as Grow with Six Senses, which reconnects kids with nature and teaches them useful life skills through play, are a huge selling point for luxury hotels globally. The Junior Marine Biology program at Six Senses Laamu also embodies this philosophy."

the fastest recoveries in post-pandemic. However, being the flattest country in the world and highly vulnerable to climate change, the island nation still has a lot of improvement when it comes to sustainable tourism.

Philippa 'Pip' Roe, marine head biologist at Six Senses Laamu said that there is a significant need to change the mind-set regarding what development in Maldives means building and construction. But development





properties. We are proud to say that Six Senses Laamu has eliminated almost 80 per cent of these 18 categories while we are on the last quarter of 2021 and we are very hopeful to get 100 per cent before the end of 2022. On the 1st November, our efforts in plastic elimination were recognized on a global stage at WTM London when we won the global prize for the category of Reducing Plastic Waste in the Environment at the 2021 WTM Responsible Tourism Awards.”

Six Senses Laamu has provided over 18,500 local community members with access to safe drinking water from 97 donated water purification systems, protected ten million square feet of seagrass meadows and have partnered with Laamu Atoll council to voluntarily declare five marine protected areas in the Atoll. The resort continues its journey to leave Laamu better than how they found it.

attainment in its journey to develop Laamu. The atoll was declared a ‘Hope Spot’ by the international non-profit organization Mission Blue. Hope Spots are defined as exceptional locations that are scientifically identified as critical to the health of the ocean.

**Future Goals**

One of the major goals at Six Senses Hotels Resorts Spas is to be plastic-free by 2022; to remove and avoid all virgin plastic materials from its hotel and spa operations. The brand’s actions to reduce disposable plastic date back to the 1990s, with their signature water bottled in glass, and more recently with the elimination of plastic straws and disposable F&B containers from all hotels in 2016. In 2021, Six Senses became the first hospitality brand to collaborate with the United States Coalition on Sustainability and SustainChain™.

In 2020, Six Senses as a group, looked in to eliminating the 18 most unwanted plastic categories which are responsible for 80 percent of plastic wastes in hotel

“The Hope Spot designation proves how special Laamu is, not just for biological diversity and abundance, but also for its future. Laamu is currently in a state where it’s natural resources are not yet abused, and environmental pressures are relatively low. Laamu now has the opportunity to demonstrate that development does not mean destruction, and lead the way in sustainable, responsible, community led management. This is the true Hope for Maldives as a whole,” she said.

Speaking about this goal and its progress, Adam said “The amount of plastic waste that the world produces and thrown away is unimaginable. Not only is plastic non-biodegradable, it also has horrible effects on human health as it breaks down into micro plastics and enters our food chains.

“Six Senses has been on a mission to eliminate plastic since 2017. We have looked in to the in-house production to eliminate the plastic packaging, we challenge the suppliers to find alternatives for plastic and implemented take back containers with local suppliers.



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T-105 6V



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# WELLNESS EXPERTS IN MALDIVES TALK ABOUT POST-PANDEMIC WELLNESS TRENDS

Hotelier Maldives interviews four wellness experts in Maldives: Renate Hermes, group spa director, Duniye Spa; Melany Martinez Thomas, director of wellness, Joali Being; Susanne Fisch, wellness manager, Joali Being; Elise Rimbaud, director of spa and wellness, Ozen Reserve Bolifushi.

The global wellness economy, valued at a whopping USD 4.5 trillion by Global Wellness Institute, has seen a remarkable change due to the covid-19 pandemic. The crisis came as a wake-up call for the world to prioritize health and wellness. A survey by the Wellness Tourism Association found that nearly 78 per cent of people across 48 countries reported that wellness travel will be on their list of travel plans when restrictions are lifted. Now that destinations are reopening and recovering, we interviewed four wellness experts in the Maldives regarding their thoughts on post-pandemic wellness trends in travel.

Renate Hermes is the group spa director of Duniye Spa, a multi-award-winning spa management and consultancy company in Maldives and Indian Ocean. Duniye Spa currently operates in thirteen resorts in Maldives and takes a universal approach to wellness, with treatments inspired by ancient and modern traditions and concepts from around the world.

Recently, Renate launched a six-month program called 'Health for the Healer' for the Duniye Spa team. The innovative program covers a wide range of different wellness topics, including immune system, self-care, mindfulness and nutrition. The program helps team members experience self-care for themselves, following the motto 'you can only give what you have'. It enables them to share their wisdom with guests



(left to right) Renate Hermes, Susanne Fisch, Melany Martinez Thomas and Elise Rimbaud

and provide tips and tricks that help guests take some new insight and motivation back home with them.

"People are stressed out. They feel exhausted and disconnected, particularly after long lockdowns and increased home office work. Here is where spa and wellness services can open possibilities and help people to recalibrate their well-being on multiple levels," says Renate.

She believes that, amongst a surge of many new treatments, there is a much stronger need to incorporate mental and emotional wellbeing and health. "One big element of this is stress management and creating sustainable, healthier and meaningful lifestyles. More importantly, to acquire tools that enable us to prevent and how to release stress in a more resourceful, resilient and sustainable way. For instance, we offer sound healing, mindfulness awareness and stress release sessions for both our resort team and spa team as well as for our guests. This guided experience helps the participants to increase

their self-awareness, calms the nervous system which brings them into a deep relaxation mode, where the brain can just function in more resourceful ways. The feedback from guests are confirming that there is an increasing need for this. They need a channel where they can let it go; mentally, emotionally and physically.

"So what we will definitely do at Duniye Spa is offer and develop more programs that address the area of mental stress release and emotional wellbeing that can be experienced in a different way. Even for the employees. I think there is an important area that we, as employers or as a company, should look at. That there is a safe space for the team to feel that their wellbeing is at centre stage."

At the highly anticipated nature-immersive wellbeing retreat JOALI BEING, Melany Martinez Thomas and Susanne Fisch lead the wellness team as director of wellbeing and wellbeing manager. The wellness concept at the resort is focused on the Four Pillars of JOALI BEING: Mind, Skin,

Microbiome and Energy. Here, every guest reaps the benefits of a curated nature retreat Immersive programme that will in turn reinforce each of these Four Pillars.

Speaking on wellness trends, Melany says that relying on ancestral healing traditions on vacation and taking some "time-out" to heal was not something new to 2019. Instead, she thinks the pandemic has highlighted this form of travelling. "People want to feel vital, healthy, and strong. Now, the subject of wellness has come to our living rooms; we have had to stop, pause, and feel our bodies, hear our thoughts. It's not only the curious traveller, but also every single person asking themselves: what makes me feel well, what is important for my own health and sanity? Once one asks oneself these questions, everything changes, including travelling and holiday choices."

Wellness that embrace multi-generational travellers and retreats offering educational components will be in demand, according to Susanne. "During the pandemic, we could see a



JOALI Being

surge in DIY projects ranging from creating our own natural skin care in the comfort of our kitchens to becoming aspiring vegan gourmet chefs cooking with seasonal ingredients from our local farmers. I believe that many people have rediscovered the joy of connecting with their food and the fresh feeling of natural ingredients applied to their skin. Retreat facilities offering long-stay options that offer education, as well as goal-oriented wellness journeys easily tie in with this demand." An important part of the wellness concept at Joali Being includes learning, about oneself, about nutrition, about how to expand the feeling of wellness into all aspects of life. "I believe that travel becomes transformative when we are allowed to immerse ourselves in an environment that enables us to learn and gain new skills. However, personal growth in the information age has its own unique challenges and the term 'Wellbeing' often comes with a lot of confusion, giving a platform to many voices and opinions. However, at its heart, wellbeing is as personal as bio individuality and travellers are seeking elegant and bespoke experiences, under the guidance of trained professionals, who deliver a safe and effortless facilitation that cater both to the physical and mental health," adds Susanne. When asked whether wellness destinations should divert their focus from the usual massages and therapies to more comprehensive experiences, both Melany and Susanne agreed that there's

nothing wrong with the usual treatments. Instead, Melany says that the focus should be on "proper training to the teams, on the proper delivery



Duniye Spa

and relatedness of services including fitness with nutrition and massage therapies. Good leadership with a comprehensive knowledge and the proper training to all teams involved is key to deliver such a vision." "As humans, we are created for connection and wellness creates an intersection that connects both to the guest and the individual offering the service. Coming from a place of support and guidance often takes away the pressure to achieve short-term goals and changes the view towards sustainable lifestyle adjustments that offer deeper contentment – both for our teams and our guests. In such an environment, even the usual massage and

therapy delivered with integrity and the right intentions can transform into a comprehensive wellness experience," says Susanne.

Elise Rimbaud is the director of spa and wellness at OZEN RESERVE BOLIFUSHI, where she is responsible for the creation and execution of bespoke wellness programs. In regard to post-pandemic wellness trends, Elise explains that her vision is to create a nurturing environment where guests can reconnect with all aspects of their being and experience fulfilment and joy.

"The pandemic has been a transformation time. People began to have a deeper understanding of their own wellbeing. People are now taking a preventative and holistic approach to their health. They are looking for a transformative and authentic

wellness journey that connects mind, body and soul," says Elise, adding that the pandemic has also changed the way people consume wellness.

At OZEN RESERVE BOLIFUSHI, wellness programs are inspired by naturopathic and ayurvedic medicines in which therapeutic practices, spa treatments, diet and remedies are personally recommended according to the individual. Bolifushi also has wellness ambassadors that drive employee wellness not only in the Spa, but the entire resort. For the upcoming year, Bolifushi is preparing wellness retreat programs with a focus on emotional and mental wellbeing, energy healing, holistic anti-ageing formula, sleep disorders, woman's health and pain relief. Furthermore, the resort will be introducing wellness programs for guests who have to quarantine and have virtual wellness practitioners enhance guest experience.

With wellness travel taking the centre stage for a vast majority of travellers, it is unlikely that destinations can afford to ignore post-pandemic wellness trends, such as bespoke experiences, holistic treatments and stress management. Global Wellness Summit estimates that, eventually, all travel will become wellness travel as hectic getaways are replaced by slower and more mindful experiences.



OZEN RESERVE BOLIFUSHI

# Opinion: 2022 an Optimistic Year for Maldives Tourism Industry



When we farewelled 2020 just over twelve months ago, the world was excited about looking forward to a better year, to returning to some sort of normality, to being able to live a normal life and to rediscover the pleasures of traveling.

A year later, we seem to have experienced a world of contradictions: a global crisis that seemed endless on the one hand, and a unique success story here in the Maldives, where all expectations were exceeded; by far.

The pandemic, unfortunately, is not over yet. The world's vaccination rates are still erratic, and as soon as we think that we have turned the corner, a new variant comes along and potentially throws a spanner in the works. What does this mean for global travel? Who knows? Travel restrictions and immigration rules will probably still change at the drop of a hat, other destinations will re-open and possibly close again and travellers may still consider the risk of last-minute changes that will affect their plans. There is no certainty in the immediate future of the travel and tourism industry, and it is likely that several destinations worldwide will still be negatively impacted by this pandemic in 2022.

As one of the few paradises open to the whole world for the majority of 2021, the Maldives enjoyed unparalleled successes on all fronts: visitor numbers exceeded all expectations, resorts have reported record occupancies and daily rates, guest houses, once open, have proven to be very much in demand, and the country has cemented itself in the top spot as a destination of choice throughout the year.

Whether we can count on the same successes in 2022 or not is not guaranteed, but the trends we have experienced, the future demand that is still growing and the reputation that the Maldives has nurtured

as a safe haven, should all be indicators that 2022 will still be a successful year for us all. Luxury travel will continue to be strong, and the unique geography of the country will continue to be a draw card for those seeking a safe and memorable experience. We know that Q1 will be strong, and early indications are that Q4 will also be successful. As we compete for the global traveller with the likes of Thailand, Bali, the Caribbean, the Bahamas, Malaysia, Japan, Vietnam, Australia, New Zealand and the majority of European countries, all likely to eventually welcome tourists in 2022, we may face a few hurdles in the summer months. However, everyone rightly talks about revenge travel and pent-up demand, which is so high after nearly two years of isolation that the Maldives should continue to see growth even compared to pre-pandemic numbers. A stronger focus on experiences, culture, sustainability and environmentally friendly practices might mean that expectations will change in coming years, but the Maldives is in a unique position to be able to capitalize on these new trends as well.

Safety measure are likely to remain in place for some time to come, enhanced cleaning protocols are probably here to stay, personal protection by way of masks and sanitizing

will also continue for the foreseeable future, and travel from and to certain countries may still be a little more complicated than in the past. However, none of this will reduce the enthusiasm for globetrotting that has been building up over the past two years of lockdowns and restrictions, and the Maldives should continue to benefit from this well into next year.

We are all hoping for the continued uptake of global vaccinations, we are all thankful for the tremendous work and hardships that health professionals worldwide have endured for the past twenty-one months and for the hard work that is still ahead for them. Whilst no system is perfect, we are all very grateful for the government's handling of the situation, the quick vaccination rollout, and the ability to show the world that the Maldives are as risk-free a country as possible and one of the safest destinations around the globe for those travellers who have been denied the pleasures or exploring exotic locations.

*“Safety measure are likely to remain in place for some time to come, enhanced cleaning protocols are probably here to stay, personal protection by way of masks and sanitizing will also continue for the foreseeable future, and travel from and to certain countries may still be a little more complicated than in the past.”*

# How Google Hotel Ads is Penetrating the Hotel Distribution Vertical, and the Opportunity this Presents for Hotels

Google is taking the hotel industry by storm to gain market share and grow their advertising revenues. We will take a look at how Google is penetrating the hotel distribution vertical with Google Hotel Ads, and what opportunities this gives in terms of hotel revenue management and marketing.

## From Hotel Finder to GHA

Exactly ten years ago, Google launched what Andrew McCarthy, at the time Software Engineer for the Mountain View's company, described as an "experimental search tool designed to help users locate and book hotels." We're talking, obviously, about Hotel Finder.

In that distant summer of 2011, however, Google's metasearch engine looked way different

from what it is today. You may remember how, for example, the ads were shown inside a traditional Google's yellow paid search box, just below the search ads results and above the organic ones. When clicking on the ads, users were taken to a dedicated URL, [google.en/hotelfinder](http://google.en/hotelfinder), a page providing information, reviews, and photos principally taken from Google My Business property listings. Originally, moreover, published rates were solely coming from third-party advertisers (such as OTAs), while the official websites were only visible thanks to a backlink to [brand.com](http://brand.com), not unlike [TripAdvisor.com](http://TripAdvisor.com)'s Business Advantage.

Looking back, the system looked almost clumsy, at least in terms of pure user experience. However, flash-forward to just a decade later, and Google has taken the metasearch world by storm, with a staggering percentage of market share estimated between 64% and 80%. But how did we get here?

## Google in Travel: Some History

Going through the history of Google, it is not particularly hard to identify some of the most significant milestones that

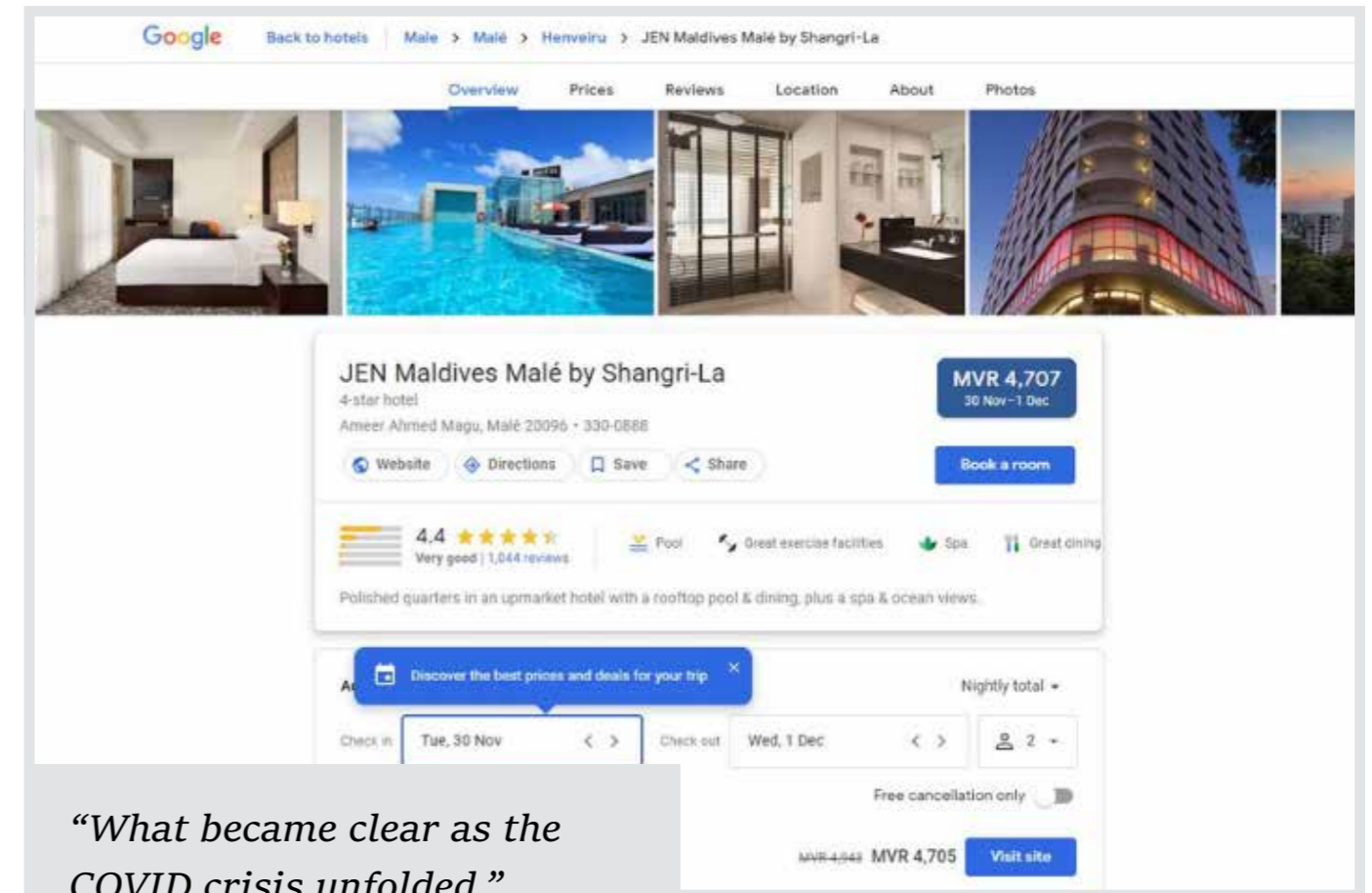
created this "perfect storm." Apart from the abovementioned introduction of Hotel Finder in 2011, there are some other crucial dates that helped the growth of Google in our industry over the last 15 years. Amongst them, it's worth mentioning the acquisition of Where 2 Technologies and the consequent launch of Google Maps in 2004-5; the introduction (dubbed by Search Engine Land as the "most radical change" to SERP) of Universal Search in 2007; the launch of Google Places (later renamed Google My Business) in 2009; the acquisition of ITA Software and the rebranding to Google Flights in 2011, and the release of the, later discontinued, intelligent travel assistant app, Trips, in 2016. All these features opened the way, in 2019, for what may be described, without exaggerating, as "Google's OTA on steroids." Google Travel ([google.com/travel](http://google.com/travel)).

## The Evolution of Google Hotel Ads

Similarly, Google kept improving its advertising system for hotels, with a huge acceleration over the last couple of years. Here are just a few additions Big G made to its hotel ads platform that are

worth remembering:

April 2020: The Pay-per-Stay program (formerly known as Google Hotel Ads Commission Program) became available to all Google Hotel Ads partners globally. Instead of paying for each click or per transaction, advertisers finally had the opportunity to pay Google a commission only after the guest stay occurred. This means that, in case of cancellation, no commission is due to Google. "What became clear as the COVID crisis unfolded," Michael Trauttmansdorff, Google's Group Product Manager for Travel Ads, stated, "was that cancellations especially were a major factor. Helping our partners manage cancellation risk motivated us to prioritize and scale up the "Pay-per Stay" program and accelerate it." Revenue management-wise, adopting a PPS approach is a no-risk opportunity to deal with the last-minute conversions and high cancellation ratios we're experiencing since the start of the pandemic. Moreover, it does not prevent advertisers from switching back to a CPC model if and when the market will recover and stabilize. On top of that, most metasearch advertising management platforms, such as Meta I/O, also give advertisers the opportunity to work in PPS on some markets and in CPC for others, maximizing ROAs and increasing NRevPAR.



*"What became clear as the COVID crisis unfolded," Michael Trauttmansdorff, Google's Group Product Manager for Travel Ads, stated, "was that cancellations especially were a major factor. Helping our partners manage cancellation risk motivated us to prioritize and scale up the "Pay-per Stay" program..."*

March 2021: Introduction of Free Booking Links (FBLs). Thanks to this update, accommodation providers can appear on Google Ads even without bidding on the platform. Free booking links appear just below the "featured" (paid) options in a distinctive tab called "all options" (see below screenshot), which closely mimics the traditional

SERP. An extensive study by Mirai (Google free booking links impact; time for the numbers, 2021) showed that the share of these links is around "17% in clicks and 11% in sales," and PhocusWire published similar results (10%), making it appealing even for properties not interested in advertising on the platform to be listed organically.

July 2021: Launch of the Check-In-Date multiplier. Not unlike traditional Google Ads campaigns, GHA also gives its advertisers the ability to apply bid adjustments (known as multipliers) to their campaigns. Among the most common, there are multipliers based on length-of-stay, check-in-day of the week, booking window, location, device, or even remarketing lists. This made Google Hotel Ads particularly appealing for revenue managers in recent years, excited by all the bidding opportunities. Moreover, the latest multiplier addition is particularly welcomed by RMs, as it allows hoteliers to adjust their bid for specific dates based on variables such as events in the area, pace of pick-up, occupation rate, and so forth.

On top of that, Google is constantly beta-testing new features for GHA. In July, 2021, it started supporting image extensions in the ads.

It's early to say if the feature will be maintained and, here at XOTELS, we were not

able to find a single ad with image extension, anyhow it's interesting to see how Google is always keeping a "trial and error" approach in the way it promotes its travel products. And this happened many times before with Google Hotel Ads: in 2018, for example, Google tested Room Booking Module (RBM) extensively. Thanks to this feature, Google was able to incorporate room photos into the hotel ads results. The same happened with Book on Google. BoG, according to the official support blog, "enables users to complete their booking and payment with partners directly on Google, without being redirected to the partner's site". The possible benefits of BoG are, always according to Google, "simple user experience, convenience, convenience, and easier conversions." As of today, it doesn't seem like either of these features are out of the beta test stage yet, and it's probably unlikely that they ever will. However, this says a lot about the will to innovate that Google is showing in travel.

## Why Is GHA so Important Now?

Direct booking is living its momentum post-pandemic; it's no mystery. "The Website Direct channel," a recent study published by D-EDGE stated, "surpassed Booking and OTAs in Asia (41% share), and is the second-largest in Europe (32%)". SiteMinder comes to similar conclusions, talking about a market share increase of up to 300% (Top Booking Channels Global, 2020). Most vendors agree on what the main drivers behind this historical shift in distribution are. In the abovementioned publication five major factors are identified which, here at XOTELS, we tend to agree with:

"More relevant information on hotel websites when compared to OTAs, especially regarding anti-COVID measures,

More flexible policies on website direct,

Rate disparity favoring direct channels, especially on metasearch engines,

More domestic/local travelers, with no need for air transportation,

The lower overall volume of bookings giving preference to frequent travelers who are more informed about the advantages of booking direct."

Point three is particularly important when it comes to advertising in GHA: with more and more users relying on metasearch engines (especially Google) to find the best available rate, it's not surprising that properties bidding in GHA (possibly with a discounted rate) are seeing their conversions going up. Not to mention that the competitiveness of your rates, compared with other distribution channels, is a key variable to rank on FBLs. According to a recent study by Mirai (How to maintain or increase your direct sales quota after the pandemic, 2021), in fact, FBLs have given "an extra boost to hotel direct channels with an increase of 0.84% to 4.32% in direct sales" even for

those properties not actively participating in the bidding game on GHA. In order not to lose grip over one's distribution (and find ourselves in two years time exactly where we were pre-pandemic: overdependent by Booking.com and Expedia), it's time for hotels, apartments, resorts, and vacation rentals alike to use all the arrows in our distribution quiver, starting from Google Hotel Ads.

## The Gloves are Off

And don't wait too long, because the OTA are all geared up to regain market share, or even penetrate your hotel business mix even further. To give a bit of insight on how they plan to do this, read a recent article by Mirai titled 'What Booking.com was doing to gain market share while we were all in lockdown'. And now they have also just launched Flash Sales promotions. And they are not the only ones. Expedia has also launched options in their extranet which seem to have been activated automatically to break your rate parity.

## Conclusions: Five Tips to Start Getting the Best Out of GHA

Of all the moments in the history of our industry, there is probably none better than this one to start implementing a proper Google Hotel Ads strategy. Over the last ten years, we've witnessed an increasing interest in hotel metasearch advertising. However, only Google was able to consolidate and become THE big guy at the table.

We've already discussed percentages of market share for GHA, and it's not uncommon that when hoteliers talk about "metasearch advertising," they're mainly referring to Google Hotel Ads. GHA is, slowly but steadily, becoming a synonym with the metasearch concept tout-court, not

something to simply add "on top of" the other distribution strategies. If you still haven't started using this channel, here are five tips to get the best out of the platform:

GHA offers multiple bidding options: CPC, CPA, PPS, together with half a dozen bidding multipliers. It's virtually impossible not to find the right fit for your property. Our suggestion is to start with a low/no-risk bidding system (CPA or PPS), and expand from there;

Even if you're not actively bidding on GHA, as long as your booking engine is feeding Google with ARI (Availability,

distribution, and review your OTAs policies (especially virtual card payments, mobile rates, accelerators, etc.) periodically to avoid possible commission cuts;

There is no right or wrong when it comes to metasearch advertising. The only way to optimize results is by testing, adjusting, and testing some more. Luckily, GHA is a pretty "forgiving" platform, unlike more expensive advertising programs, such as Expedia Travel Ads or TripAdvisor Sponsored Placements. Don't be afraid to try new, different approaches.

We see very good ROI results at

*"There is no right or wrong when it comes to metasearch advertising. The only way to optimize results is by testing, adjusting, and testing some more. Luckily, GHA is a pretty "forgiving" platform..."*

Rates, and Inventory), then you can benefit from the extra visibility provided by FBLs, without investing one euro;

Being listed (organically or via paid ads) on GHA with your best available rate dramatically increases your direct revenue. It's not uncommon to see hotels generating over 1/4 of their brand.com revenue through GHA, so why shouldn't this work for you?

Rate leakage is one of the principal obstacles to satisfying ROAs in GHA (and in metasearch advertising, in general). Make sure you work with a proper revenue management company to get better control over your

our hotels bidding 9% to 10% in the main source markets. And in secondary markets we achieve a 90%+ coverage in add exposure bidding 5% - 6%.

And be ready, this is just the beginning, many more updates will be coming our way in travel search on Google. Some of you might already see the hotel carousel showing alternative hotel suggestions when searching for your own hotel.

This is the biggest shift in the power balance of hotel distribution we have seen in the last decade. So I would recommend every hotelier to get with the program.

## BUYER'S GUIDE

### SUPPLIER SPOTLIGHT



Meet the Icon Behind the Fashion Label Raidhas Maldives



Ocean Group Maldives – Taking Water Sports To The Next Level

### SUPPLIERS YOU SHOULD KNOW



IFS – A Pioneering Market Leader In Food Service Distribution



Tropico



Deli United

### PRODUCT REVIEW



Māzū Resortwear – Luxury Swim Wear Born From Hong Kong's Rich Traditions



Luxurious Toiletries for Royal Treatments – Duck Island Maldives



Raidhas Maldives is a Maldivian fashion label specialising in women's clothes. From 'ready to wear' to party dresses, vibrant collections are a direct reflection of owner/designer Raidha Shafeeg.

# Meet the Icon Behind the Fashion Label Raidhas Maldives



Her philosophy poetically combines her appreciation for the traditional and classic with the modern fashion needs of today's woman of style. And her creations particularly appeal to females who are looking for glamour and sophistication for the most significant moments. Technical acumen, tremendous creativity, and attention to detail are the overriding principles that Raidha combines when approaching her work.

Raidha's fashion designing

dreams began at the Academy of Design in Sri Lanka. Here she learned all about creating and launching a new collection. To do this, she developed the concept, created projects and inspirations from all the latest studies and explored new boundaries and pathways to further her career in the field. Having studied both art and design, she sees herself as both an artist and an entrepreneur.

Living and working in the island nation is the inspiration



behind her new collection. Raidhas Maldives SS22 concept is based on Underwater and Heritage, solely inspired by Maldives. The collection features statement pieces such as the Scalloped Coin Bucket Hat, a combination of both brand design philosophies and highlights the Maldives in a conceptual and artistic way through collaboration between Raidha and her brother Mahuroos Ismail Shafeeq who is a visual artist, writer, interior and graphic designer. Creativity runs through the family, so it seems.

Raidha's exciting career has had many memorable milestones and getting the opportunity to showcase in the shows, Amsterdam modest fashion week, international fashion week Dubai 2021 and winning Pret-a-Porter were among the highlights. She also counts winning businesswomen of the year (2018 and 2019) as special moments.

Hot off the catwalk at international Dubai Fashion Week the label received the award for Best Pret a Porter 2021 and Raidha claims the win as not only a win for the company but for the country of the Maldives. She believes that fashion shows and events can be a permanent feature of Maldives tourism and that there can be regular events

for an international audience. She wants to build a fashion community in the Maldives and to help emerge young and talented fashion designers to rise. "I'm paving the future through my brand, for young designers to start their dreams," she says.

Looking ahead to the future she will continue to combine business and art, creating more unique ideas with the aim to be recognised in international platforms. It is her goal to sell her products in many more countries, extending a wider market and customer base. Recently Raidhas Maldives exhibited and visited Dubai Expo. The label has been growing in popularity in the Maldives and she has become somewhat of a fashion influencer with over 12.5k followers on Instagram and over 21,000 likes on Facebook. It is an uplifting time for this brand. Watch this space for this up-and-coming design label which is set to explode onto the international scene in a big way.

To find out more about this exciting fashion brand look on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/raidhasmaldives/>) and Instagram (<https://www.instagram.com/raidhasmaldives/>).



# OCEAN GROUP MALDIVES

## - TAKING WATER SPORTS TO THE NEXT LEVEL



Hussain Zahid, Founder and CEO of Ocean Group Maldives

Founded by a strong passion for the ocean and its sports, Ocean Group Maldives is a leading dive and water sports operator. Over a period of twenty years, the company has introduced many innovative products to the destination and partners with luxury resorts to curate once in a lifetime immersive experiences. Hotelier Maldives interviews the founder and CEO of Ocean Group Maldives, Hussain Zahid, who tells us more about the history of the company, its current operations and future plans.

**Hotelier Maldives: Tell me about Ocean Group Maldives and how the company started. What was the idea behind it?**

Hussain Zahid: The idea is a simple one and that is to harness my passion for water sports and turn it into a business that elevates the level of water sports in the Maldives. Being a dive & water sports curator, my goal is to partner with like-minded resorts who believe in delivering the optimum guest experience in

a fun and safe manner. Ocean Group Maldives started out as a small water sports centre in 1998 and we have since expanded to operate dive, water sports and recreation centres across fifteen five-star resorts in the Maldives, Langkawi (Malaysia) and Da Nang (Vietnam). We have also started an Ocean Conservation program at selected resorts to help raise awareness of the state of the marine ecosystem in the Maldives championed by our group of marine biologists.

**HM: What's the company mission?**

HZ: We strive to be the market leader in curating bespoke guest experiences above and underwater.

**HM: What's the biggest challenge that you faced in establishing the company and making it a successful business?**

HZ: The entire ecosystem of tourism plays a part. From how Maldives is positioned and marketed as a premiere tourist destination, to how our team on the ground engages with guests. Close collaboration with our partner resorts is also a key element and we have received tremendous support from all our partners which makes our job a lot more fulfilling. We resolve issues together as one



team with a laser focus on what guests want.

**HM: Tell me more about the Ocean Group team. Who is handling the daily operations?**

HZ: Every employee is an important member of the Ocean Group family, whether you are a boat crew based at one of our centres or an accounts manager based in our head office, Malè, every employee contributes to the success of the company. We value the contribution and dedication of every employee and as the company continues to expand, there will be more opportunities for our team to progress in their career at Ocean Group. We have a dynamic team of fellow Maldivians and foreign employees from all over the world. The only prerequisite (besides the obvious qualifications) is the love of the ocean. My core management team supports me in all the strategic decision making.

**HM: Tell me about the services and what makes the company unique.**

HZ: Our range of services covers all aspects of water activities. A keen diver will appreciate the comprehensive list of dive activities that ranges from wreck diving to night diving. Our dive instructors are always on hand to conduct Discover Scuba Diving and Bubblemaker programs for new divers and young kids. Our team of multi-lingual dive instructors caters to guests who are more comfortable in their various mother tongues. All our PADI 5-star dive centres are fully equipped with the

latest BAUER compressor system and SCUBA PRO dive gear.

Big game fishing enthusiasts will enjoy setting out at sunrise on VIKING 56, one of our luxurious fishing yachts fully equipped with the latest fishing gear. We have also launched LOOKER 37ft, top of class Glass Bottom Boat at some of our centres. Its unique dome-shaped viewing glass provides a 360-degree unobstructed view of the vibrant marine life. Some of our most popular excursion trips include Dolphin Cruise, Whale Shark Talk & Tour, Mantas On Call @ Hanifaru Bay and Sunset Fishing.

For water sports enthusiasts, the choice of our water sports activities is unparalleled. Besides the usual kayaks, SUPs and catamaran, we bring in the latest high performance gear to satisfy the most extreme enthusiasts. We were the first to launch X-JETS Jetblade and Jetpack in the Maldives a few years ago and they are still hugely popular with guests. We also spotted the global growing trend of foiling sports and have

since introduced LIFT Electric Foil, LIFT Surf Foil, Wing Surfer and Kite Foil to delighted guests. Discerning wake surfers will truly enjoy riding the wake behind our luxurious MASTERCRAFT X26, its Gen 2 surf system is designed to create one of the biggest wakes. We were also the first to launch this yacht-certified boat in the Maldives. Parasailing, SEABOB rides and jet-ski rides continue to be immensely popular with guests.

To alleviate the threats of climate change, we place great emphasis on our Ocean Conservation program. Our team of marine biologists is tasked to educate guests through weekly marine presentations and on-site guidance of the health of coral reefs through snorkelling and various excursion trips.

Besides operating dive, water sports and recreation centres, we also represent many boating brands exclusively in the Maldives such as CROWNLINE boats, LIFT Foils, AIRBERTH boat lifts and X-JETS. All our centres

have also gone paperless even before the pandemic. We have a team of talented local engineers who ensure that all our boat fleets and gear are operating in optimum conditions to reduce any down time.

**HM: It has been over two decades since you founded the company! How do you feel about this journey so far?**

HZ: The best is yet to come!

**HM: Ocean Group has introduced many innovative products to Maldives. What do you think is the most exciting product you have introduced?**

HZ: I would say it is the DEEPFLIGHT SUPER FALCON 3S submarine project. It was the first 3-man DEEPFLIGHT submarine built especially for the Maldives. We had received tremendous response and support from guests and media alike and proven our hypothesis that the concept of exceptional experience works.

**HM: What are the future plans for Ocean Group Maldives?**

HZ: We want to focus on curating eco-friendlier sports and sourcing for more sustainable gear. It's in our DNA to launch innovative products to stay ahead so we will keep sourcing and researching.

Visit [www.oceangroup.mv](http://www.oceangroup.mv) for more information. For media queries, contact [yasmin@oceangroup.mv](mailto:yasmin@oceangroup.mv).



# IFS – A PIONEERING MARKET LEADER IN FOOD SERVICE DISTRIBUTION

With its inception in 2013, International Food Solution Pvt Ltd (IFS) set out on an ambitious journey to become a 'one-stop solution provider' for food service distribution to the HoReCa and Retail sectors in Maldives.



The company specializes in the distribution of premium food and non-food products from internationally recognized brands, in addition to serving unique in-house brands. Managed by a competent and committed team with over four decades of FCMG expertise, IFS provides comprehensive end-to-end supply chain solutions that are specifically tailored to the needs of clients.

As a HACCP certified premium distributor, IFS guarantees strict adherence to food safety standards according to international standards, thus ensuring the highest quality of products and services.

Besides the quality, as regards the variety as well, IFS makes no compromise. The extensive assortment of products ranges from (while not limited) to: delicatessen frozen beef (including Wagyu/Black Angus) lamb, mutton and poultry, frozen fruits and vegetables, frozen seafood, dairy products, ready-to-cook products, charcuterie specialties, baking mixes and ingredients, cereals, canned goods, dry fruits and nuts, whole spices, lentils and grains, pasta and noodles, rice varieties, food additives, concentrated juices, ethnic food varieties, condiments, spreads and much more.

The company also distinguishes itself by its premium brands, including American Classic, Gourmet Classic, Indian Classic, Royal Classic, Golden Swan, Zaffran, Gardenia and many others.

IFS currently supplies to over 130 resorts in addition to the local market, with the inclusion of guesthouses and local islands. Charles Augustine, who brings over three decades of experience and expertise in the food and beverage industry to enhance the strength of IFS, leads the dedicated and diligent Sales and Marketing team. Every member of the team at IFS shares a deeply instilled passion for high-quality food along with a strong focus on sustainability – unique aspects that make IFS one of the industry's most sought-after market leaders.

Furthermore, IFS is acclaimed for its excellent distribution network and its state-of-the-art facilities. Hence, with systematic supply chain management, excellent coordination with stable

suppliers around the world, and well-planned infrastructure, products are delivered "just in time" to all customers.

With a unified focus on delivering lucrative, win-win solutions to customers and supply chain partners, there is also constant innovation in terms of strategy, process design, including warehousing and equipment, in addition to the apt use of the latest IT and Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems.

Overall, with a successful system based on a strong foundation of professional and ethical values, IFS is today a name to reckon with, owing to the goodwill of all its patrons in both the food service and retail sectors.



# TROPICO



For this Suppliers You Should Know, we're shining the spotlight on Tropico Pvt Ltd.

Tropico Pvt Ltd offers a full-service distribution channel of high-end gelato, coffee and beverage-related supplies to the Maldivian tourism industry. The owners of Tropico Pvt Ltd, bring together a wealth of expertise and experience in the Maldivian Tourism and Food & Beverage industry. With a combined knowledge and experience of over 20 years in their respective industries, the company's vision is to provide a reliable and impeccable service to its clientele and provides a highly personalised service to each one of its customers. With vast knowledge in the market, personal contacts and with a speciality and niche product portfolio, Tropico always offers quality and reliability to their customers and within the past year, has started supplying unique product ranges to several resorts in the Maldives, which is a significant milestone for the company as a fairly new enterprise.

## When was the company established?

Tropico was founded in 2018, with the vision of providing a full-service distribution channel for high end F&B products particularly serving the tourism industry.

## Have you introduced any new product ranges? If yes, what are they

We are always on the lookout for great products in the market that can offer true value and quality to our clients. As of recently we have introduced the Taz Di Bleu mini bar range. This brand offers a wide range of handmade chocolates, sweets and savoury and salty products which come in customised environmentally friendly gift packaging for luxury hotels and resorts.

We have also now launched the speciality wellness range of gelato from Babbi which offers gluten free, dairy free and even sugar free products under this new product line. Most recently, we have introduced

quality is an absolute necessity. This is where we make our mark, and this is how we differentiate ourselves from the rest. We ensure that whatever new products we introduce are highly vetted, tested and tried prior to bringing them across to our clients.

## What makes your products stand out from the rest of the competition?

Our business philosophy revolves around curating a handpicked product portfolio focusing on uncompromised quality, production standards and competitive pricing. Each brand we bring to our product lines are highly researched, tried and tested to ensure quality and value to our customers. Our goal is not to become the biggest supplier in the country, but to build a reputation as supplier who carries a highly reputable product line along with reliable service standards.

We first started out with our gelato range from Babbi Srl and Rubicone Srl sourced from Italy. With close to seven decades in the industry, both brands hold an unshakeable reputation as titans of the gelato industry in Europe. Well-known for superior quality of their ingredients and the traditional artisanal techniques deployed in

Eversys Coffee machines to the Maldivian market. Eversys is a highly innovative swiss born espresso machinery manufacturing company, managed and operated by the stock listed Italian De'Longhi Group. They offer a highly advanced ranged of automatic baristas perfect for the Maldivian high end hospitality industry.

Here in the Maldives, we are dealing with some of the highest standards of luxury in hospitality, where attention to detail and uncompromised



their production process, each brand also represents a variety of unique products designed for niche interest groups. Babbi for instance has speciality range of gelato products created as a wellness range catering for various dietary requirements such as gluten free, dairy free and sugar free range. Rubicone on the other hand carry funky, exciting, and fresh flavours that are very up to date. Some of their unique flavours include the Black Hawaii which is made from coconut water in combination with Hawaiian black charcoal which gives it the signature black colour. Banana Java looks out of this world, with a light blue tint to the cream. Made from real blue bananas from Java along with high protein dark chocolate, this is a great option for fitness fanatics looking to satisfy their sweet temptations with a protein packed ice cream, that might take a little bit of that guilt away on their cheat day.



created for luxury hotels. What's unique about Taz is that the products they offer are not available from your regular supermarket. Each product is sourced from niche speciality product manufacturers are all packaged in environmentally friendly packaging adding greater value to their product line.



Our coffee range includes products from some of the oldest coffee roasters from Italy. Beans and ground coffee from Hausbrandt Trieste are one of the most premium beans you can get in the Maldives. We carry the full range from Hausbrandt, from beans, ground coffee to capsules. Even from from a price point, these products are priced at a highly competitive level in comparison to the traditional coffee brands in the country. Ranges from Mount Hagen have been harvested in Papua New Guinea and packed in Germany and been voted time and time again as the best instant coffee in the world.

We are also the exclusive distributors for mini bar items from Tax Di Bleu specially

The tea range we have on our portfolio are from T2 from Australia. T2 is a soulful and contemporary tea brand embracing the essence of fusion. They carry a wide range of exciting and unusual flavours inspired by people and culture from around the world. Some of their unique flavours include the French earl grey where the classic Earl Grey gets a sophisticated French twist along with T2's ever so popularised tea range. T2 also offers a funky and colourful range of tea wares inspired by tradition and modern art.

## Have you developed any new customer service initiatives?

Our leadership team maintains highly personalised

relationships with our clients, ensuring that all of their requirements are taken care of smoothly and effectively. Our team makes sure that they keep the clients updated on all logistical movements of the stock, from order to delivery to provide a peace of mind to all our customers. We also offer great after care services, especially for our coffee machines where we offer training and servicing for the machine brands we carry.

## What is your product range?

Our product range covers from gelato, specialty teas, mini bar items to coffee machinery and distribution.

The brands we carry are as follows:

- Babbi Gelato and Pastry from Italy
- Rubicone Gelato and Pastry from Italy
- Hausbrandt Coffee from Italy
- Mount Hagen Coffee by Wertform from Germany
- T2 Tea from Australia
- Taz Di Bleu Mini Bar Range from Italy
- Bravilor Bonamat
- Carimali
- Astoria

## Which hotels/resorts have you recently partnered with?

We currently work with the Pulse Hotels and Resorts portfolio along with Kurumba Maldives, The Nautilus Maldives and Manta Air.

## Have you expanded the company? Have you opened a new showroom?

Our operations have been growing quite rapidly over the past six months. However, rather than opening a showroom, our focus has been more towards establishing our presence in the market while growing our client list.

## How many staff do you employ?

We are a relatively compact agency; however, we currently employ a team of six who serve across all facets of our business, from operations, management and servicing.

## What makes your company unique?

Our strong management experience, market knowledge and sales and distribution connections with key resort contacts are vital assets that distinguish and propel our business. Our leadership brings together a wealth of expertise and experience in the Maldivian Tourism and Food & Beverage industry, with a combined knowledge and experience of over 20 years in their respective industries. We are known for high-quality, innovative products and exceptional customer service. We believe our product line-up sets us apart with our exceptional quality aimed at an ultra-niche market.

# Suppliers You Should Know: Deli United

Deli United is a leading exporter of tropical first Grade fresh fruits, and vegetables, a wide array of foodstuff, bakery, flowers, and a large array of Hotel Equipment to Hotels and Resorts throughout the Asia-Pacific region.

Established in 2010, with its head office in Bangkok, Deli United offers an unsurpassed selection of seasonal and year-round varieties of fresh tropical fruits and vegetables. Products are sourced directly from partnered farms and manufactures to ensure the highest quality and freshness at competitive prices.

Andrej Wicke, executive director of Deli United talked to Hotelier Maldives about his business, the challenges of the pandemic and his vision for the future.



**HM: You have been in business for 11 years, has your concept changed much in this time?**

AW: Overall, no, although we are constantly striving to improve our quality control and food safety management systems to give our clientele complete confidence in our products and services

**HM: There are several Fruit and Vegetable Suppliers, what makes Deli United unique?**

AW: Undoubtedly the quality and freshness of our products. We only supply A grade products that are harvested only once we have an order so that products go directly to the client. We don't store or keep anything to ensure the highest quality and freshness possible. We have a meticulous checking system to select only the best for our discerning client base.

**HM: How long have you been supplying to the Maldives?**

AW: Me personally, 24 years, Deli United since its inception in 2010 as I had already established a network of connections.

**HM: You advertise season round for a lot of your products, how do you achieve this?**

AW: It really depends on the weather conditions. We are fortunate to work with farms in all regions of Thailand so if something is going out of season in one area it will be coming into season in another. This is not feasible with everything as some items are definitely seasonal. Clients are informed in advance about any seasonal impacts and availability, plus we have our seasonal chart on our new website.

**HM: Tell me how you ensure the freshness and quality of your products?**

AW: The key is we only harvest to order so products are as fresh as possible. Also, we are meticulous about the packing. We have recently changed to jelly ice to retain freshness whilst in transit and use trays and bubble wrap to protect items with delicate skins, or those that bruise easily as boxes often get thrown around.

We are always looking for better ways to pack, to retain the quality whilst also minimising the environmental impact. It's a fine line to balance both successfully.

**HM: Getting products to Resorts within the Maldives can be challenging, how do you manage this?**

AW: We supply exclusively via airfreight direct to the client who organise the onward transportation directly to their resort therefore minimising handling and delays

**HM: What were the challenges you faced due to the pandemic and how did you overcome them?**

AW: Far too numerous to mention here! The biggest challenge was the reduced international flight schedule making logistics extremely difficult. This in turn meant airfreight rates increased. We were fortunate that our supply of products were unaffected in both availability and price, so it was, and to a degree still is, the airfreight availability and its associated price that are presenting challenges. The situation with airlines can change at a moment's notice depending upon the situation making advance planning extremely challenging.

**HM: The pandemic has changed business everywhere, how have you been affected?**

AW: The main change was the reduced demand from everywhere due to the closure of hotels and resorts when borders closed and tourism ground to a halt. The Maldives has seen one of the best recoveries, so demand has been increasing since the borders re opened in July 2020. The most noticeable difference has been the logistical one as mentioned above.

The pandemic has also made us strengthen our FSMS even further and our QA is even more diligent to ensure the safety of our suppliers, team members and clients.



**HM: The Maldives has a number of resorts under development which will create a much larger demand for fresh products, is Deli United able to cope with this?**

AW: Most definitely. We have large quantities of our product ranges readily available, so we can certainly meet the demand for more, especially once the flight connectivity is re-established which we are confident will happen soon.

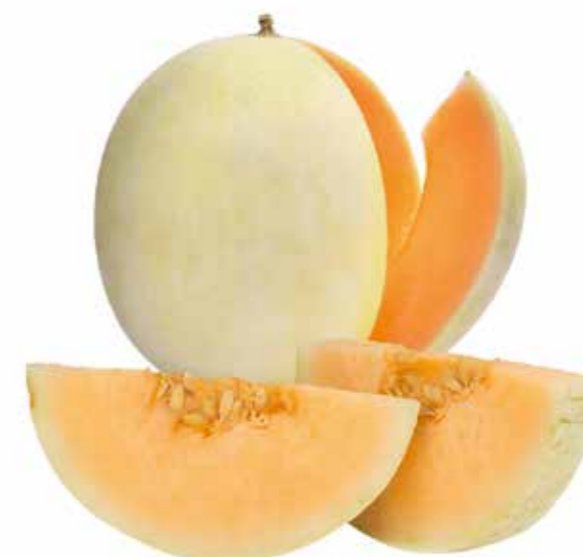
**HM: What is your vision for Deli United over the next 5 years?**

AW: Two fold – as a company, ensure the continuation of existing trade links between Thailand and the Republic of Maldives to help re-establish the success of the tourism industry and support new. Be a strong partner for our esteemed clientele to enhance and maintain the quality of products at the best price. Have a robust FSMS and actively source hygienic packing that complies with food safety requirements and minimises environmental issues.

On a personal level – Participate and attend trade exhibitions once they are allowed to re-establish partnerships and form new ones to create long term relationships with new and existing resorts.

**HM: What are your most popular products?**

AW: We have several, sweet yellow mango, rambutan and mangosteen are probably the top three, with melons of all varieties, honeycomb and



**HM: You have recently launched a new website, was there a reason behind this?**

AW: We launched this at the beginning of June to update our product range, add new images, provide new and detailed descriptions, and make it more user friendly overall. There are even short bios and photos of our team to give our clients a more personalised feel. <https://asiafreshfruits.com/>

authentic Thai dry and fresh ingredients also extremely popular.

**HM: Tell me about the recent additions to your portfolio?**

AW: The newest is our range of authentic Thai products which we had launched shortly before the pandemic hit. They were extremely well received by resorts with Thai menus, and they are growing in popularity as more and more Thai chefs realize what we have. Prior to that we introduced our edible flowers.

# Māzū Resortwear

**- LUXURY SWIM WEAR BORN FROM HONG KONG'S RICH TRADITIONS**

*Inspired by Hong Kong's rich maritime history, Adam Raby founded a luxury men's swimwear brand that celebrates the country's unique relationship with water. Combining traditional colours, local motifs, and unique fabrics, Māzū creates classic swim shorts for the man who understands quality and comfort.*

With an impressive range of more than forty designs, each of these stylish swim shorts have an interesting story behind them. For instance, the brand's best-selling product, the Junk Twilight shorts pay tribute to the historical junk boat, a Chinese sailing vessel that plays a significant role in Hong Kong's maritime history. The shorts are handcrafted and made from 100 per cent soft-to-touch polyamide fabric. The same design is also available on a classic, unisex Hawaiian shirt made with rayon.



**Māzū offers t-shirts made from 75 per cent bamboo that are extremely lightweight and exceptionally comfortable. Available in three different colours- Marine Blue, Tanbark Red and Crew White- the bamboo t-shirts adds a versatile blend of casual wear and athletic wear to your wardrobe.**

Māzū also features swim shorts that are made from recycled plastic bottles to bring an eco-friendly twist to its swimwear collection. The Lei Yue Mun at Sunset was created in partnership with nostalgia photographer, Keith Macgregor. Made from twelve recycled plastic bottles and ultra-lightweight fabric, the Lei Yue Mun allows you to take a trip down the memory lane. The exclusive photograph on the short displays a traditional Chinese junk boat passing through Lei Yue Mun back in 1974, perfectly captured by Keith during sunset.

However, whether you're going for a swim, hiking or simply chilling under the sun, count on the HapaShorts to be your ideal all-rounder. Available in Breezy Blue, Nautical Navy and Gentlemen's Grey, these come with a matte finish and a chic look.

Moreover, for the complete beach attire, Māzū offers t-shirts made from 75 per cent bamboo that are extremely lightweight and exceptionally



comfortable. Available in three different colours- Marine Blue, Tanbark Red and Crew White- the bamboo t-shirts adds a versatile blend of casual wear and athletic wear to your wardrobe. Not to forget its highly breathable and anti-odour feature that makes it ideal for the hot weather outside.

One of the latest additions by the brand is a white Mandarin Collar Linen Shirt, rolled out right on time for Father's Day. Featuring Māzū Resortwear's signature tanbark sail icon, the Shirt is made from 100 per cent sustainable linen, enabling it to be produced using less water.

You can wear them with the HapaShorts for a laid-back city look or pair them with a swim short for a stylish combination.

Māzū's swimwear gained popularity among many resorts and tropical destinations. The products are stocked at five resorts in Maldives, COMO Maalifushi, Cocoa Island by COMO, W Maldives, Four Seasons Maldives at Landaa Giraavaru and Shangri-La's Villingili Resort & Spa. The brand also provides free worldwide shipping.

# Luxurious Toiletries for Royal Treatments - Duck Island Maldives

Bringing London's famous luxury toiletry brand to the island nation, Duck Island Maldives offers a one stop solution for all that your hotel needs.

Duck Island is inspired by part of one of England's oldest Royal Parks, located in the heart of London. The story dates back to 1963, when the King of England, Charles II was gifted pelicans from the Russian Ambassador, one of the most exclusive and expensive presents then imaginable. The pelicans were kept in the park and by 1734, it was described as 'one of the most enchanting summer retreats imaginable ... a paradise in miniature'.

The toiletry brand was created with the purpose of offering guests 'a paradise in miniature', authentic luxury that provides them with an enchanting retreat from everyday life. Duck Island offers products that are distinctive, luxurious and prestigious, perfect for hotels that want to stand out.

The range of luxurious products offered by Duck Island comes in three different unique fragrances that have been



carefully formulated to exceed guests' expectations. These fragrances capture the spirit of nature and convey the very

essence of pure indulgence.

Their signature fragrance and also their very first fragrance, Classic is citrus inspired aroma that balance sweet mandarin with floral bergamot, creating an experience of sumptuousness and indulgency. Meanwhile, Pelican Spa offers an energising balance of vibrancy and purity, inspired by the ocean waves that is guaranteed to nourish the body and the mind. These are aromas of hydrating cucumbers and sea kelp with hints of musk and aloe vera. The third and the last fragrance Paradise offers a rich and invigorating fragrance

inspired by the exotic. It has a rich combination of ginger, pink pepperpods and undertones of patchouli.

All three fragrances are available as 30ML shampoo, conditioner, bath foam and shower gel, body lotion and embossed soaps. There are also 250ML bottles that are refillable from their 5L containers for repeated use.

Duck Island is introduced to the Maldives by a tourism supply company that goes by the name of Lacuna Maldives. This company has affiliated with several well-known companies with quality and luxurious products. This allows Lacuna Maldives to be able to supply its customers with premium products. All of their brands and products are handpicked from all over the world to ensure that the customer is getting the best possible products. In addition to this, their client base consists of over a dozen reputable resorts.



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### ADK Hospital

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3313553

### IGM Hospital

Faamudheyri Magu, Male'  
3335335  
7955511/7961188

### Maldives Islamic Bank

Medhuziyaraidhoshuge,  
20030 Medhuziyarai Magu, Malé  
3325555

### State Bank of India (SBI)

H, Sunleet,  
Boduthakurufaanu Magu, Malé  
3312111

### MCB Maldives

H.Sifa Building,  
Boduthakurufaanu Magu, Malé  
3305656

### Maldives Post Limited

Post Building,  
Boduthakurufaanu Magu,  
Malé 20026  
3321558

### Fed Ex

Bodu Dhaharaage, 4th Floor,  
Kenery Magu, Malé  
3000707

### Sea Gear

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Alhivilaa Magu, Male'  
3302737

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