

DESTINATIONS OF THE WORLD

# news

## C'EST L'AMOUR

*Top hotel suites that  
set the mood for love*

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## TABLE FOR TWO

*Unforgettable dining  
experiences*

# Romantic Escapes

**30+** ISLAND BREAKS,  
SPA HOLIDAYS,  
ADVENTURE ITINERARIES & MORE





# THE SEYCHELLES ISLANDS

*another world*

Seychelles Tourism Board  
Headquarters (STB)  
Espace Building  
PO Box 1262  
Victoria, Mahé, Seychelles

+248 4 67 13 00

[info@seychelles.travel](mailto:info@seychelles.travel)  
[www.seychelles.travel](http://www.seychelles.travel)





*~ Get thee to an ~*  
**ISLAND**

CRAFT YOUR OWN FAIRYTALE AT THESE TROPICAL HIDEAWAYS,  
FROM SECLUDED BEACHSIDE LOCALES TO PALATIAL  
SUITES WITH SUNSET VIEWS

**Words:** Becca Hensley





**Room with a view**  
Tropical hideaways at Bulgari Resort Bali (left) and One&Only Hayman Island (main)

### BALINESE BLISS

Over the course of hundreds of years, Indian and Arab traders have left their legacy in Bali, a mystical island province in distant Indonesia. With emerald-green rice paddies, verdant jungles and ethereal volcanic peaks at the island's heart, Bali is framed by crescents of sugary sand, raucous cobalt-coloured waves and jagged, black lava promontories. Be coddled with the island's infinite charms at the **Bulgari Resort Bali** (+62 361 847 1000; [www.bulgarihotels.com](http://www.bulgarihotels.com)), situated atop a cliff on territories that once served as the Balinese royal family's hunting grounds. An idyllic setting for a romantic break, the resort is walled with white coral and manifests classic Balinese exteriors with coconut thatched, sloped rooftops, carved wood and hand-cut local stone. Inside, each suite channels sleek, urbane Milan — thanks to the property's Italy-based designers. Sit beside your other half and dangle your feet in your private plunge pool as you swoon over the panorama. Both Italian and Indonesian restaurants tempt, and an ESPA provides muscle-melting treatments on site. Staff can also arrange visits to Ubud — of *Eat, Pray, Love* fame — and the social hotbed of Jimbaran Bay is just 20 minutes to the north.



### A MONTH OF (WHIT)SUNDAYS

Caviar munched in a pool-side cabana. A massage bed floating in the Coral Sea. Beach-side suites that offer the sound of crashing waves as your personal symphony. Dinner with pressed-linen tablecloths, crystal and silver amid a leafy rainforest. Vistas of the water, gleaming in hues of lapis lazuli. That's what you should expect to find at the newly refurbished **One&Only Hayman Island**, (+61 7 4940 1234; [hayman.oneandonlyresorts.com](http://hayman.oneandonlyresorts.com)) a barefoot sophisticate's port of call. Off the coast of Queensland, Australia, and the northernmost point of the Whitsunday Archipelago, this public island has just one hotel. Stay here and you may feel like they who lord over the bounty of the Great Barrier Reef. Couples can gaze at the transforming canvas of the sea from their arrival helicopter, hold hands as they snorkel Blue Pearl Bay, and cuddle up as they race across the waves on the resort's catamaran.

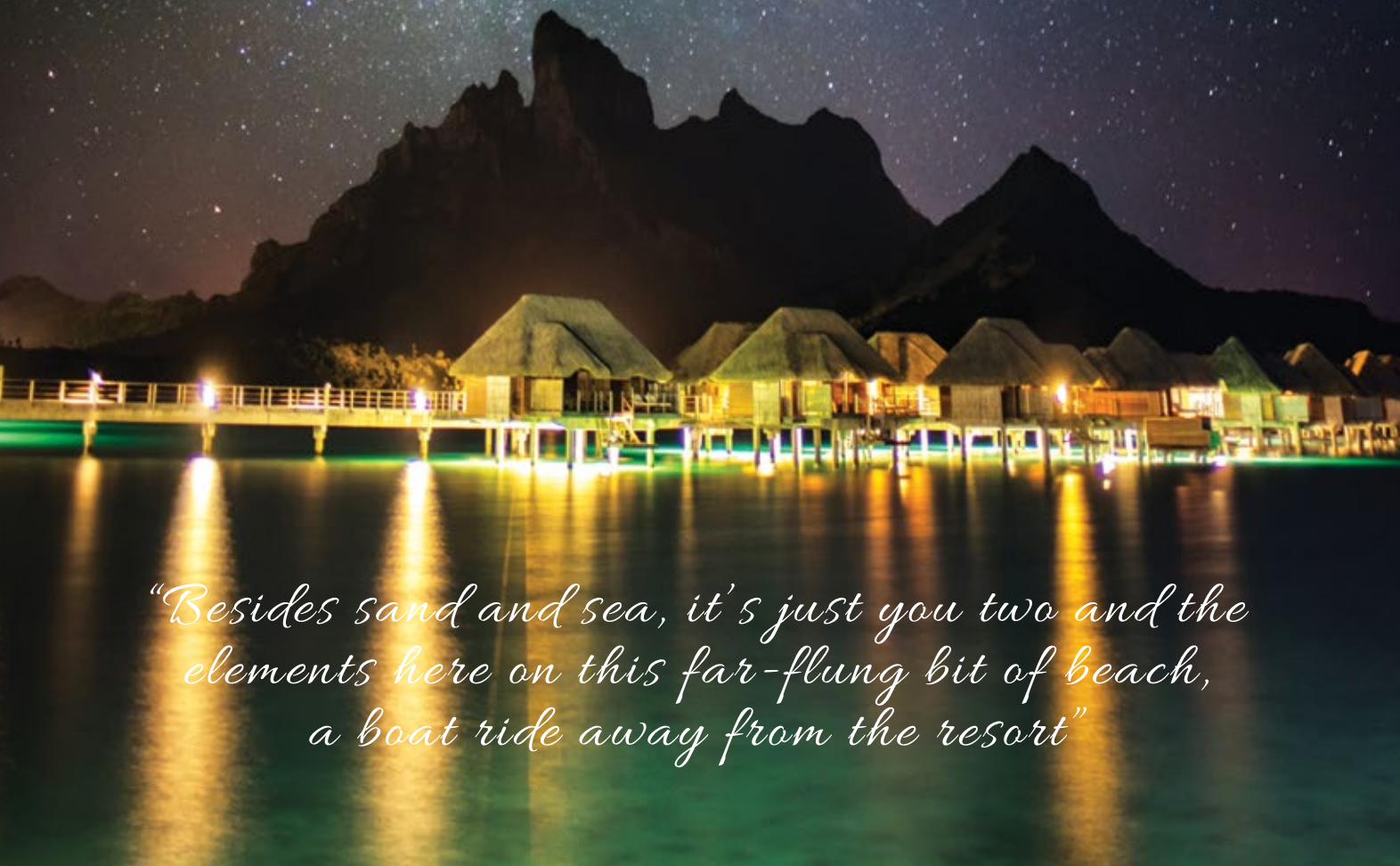
*“Caviar munched in a gauzy pool-side cabana. A massage bed floating in the Coral Sea. The sound of crashing waves as your personal symphony.”*



Celestial skies make  
a stay at The Brando  
truly memorable

#### HOLLYWOOD MAGIC IN FRENCH POLYNESIA

Marlon Brando called it the “tincture of the South Seas.” It was on Tetiaroa, once the summer retreat for Tahitian kings, where the actor sought his bliss, eschewing the throngs of Hollywood for island simplicity. Now, that pared-down opulence, dubbed **The Brando** (+689 40 866 320; thebrando.com), can belong to you. Share it with your loved one when you dally on this atoll, composed of a dozen sugary sand-covered islands. A homage to carefree elegance, the resort follows an all-inclusive agenda. Meals, spa treatments, mini-bar, bicycles and sea-faring activities are part of the plan. Pandanus, miki miki and coconut trees set a tropical tone, and indoor/outdoor villas sprawl commodiously over their individual stretches of beach. In each villa, a hidden garden holds a plunge pool, while an outdoor tub, flanked by greenery rests behind a graceful screen. Windows the size of barn doors embrace the sunlight as its light graces the scenery. Like Brando, you probably won't want to return home.



*“Besides sand and sea, it's just you two and the elements here on this far-flung bit of beach, a boat ride away from the resort”*



**The Life Aquatic**  
The main sunrise pool at Viceroy Anguilla and the striking entrance to Anantara's Banana Island Resort, Doha

#### CARIBBEAN HIDEAWAYS

You don't know long you've been on Sandy Island. Just long enough to drink up the contents of the cooler and gobble down the biggest grilled lobster you've ever seen, but not long enough to get sunburnt. Your hotel, **Viceroy Anguilla** (+1 264 497 7000; www.viceroyhotelsandresorts.com) has given you (and your beau) the gift of the Robinson Crusoe experience. Besides sand and sea, it's just you two and the elements here on this far-flung bit of beach, a boat ride away from the resort. Well, there's a makeshift

shack and two ready-to-please butlers, as well. It's a similar story over at **Four Seasons Resort Nevis** (+1 869 469 1111; www.fourseasons.com), where the AfterGlow and SeaScape suites boast elevated views all the way to St. Kitts across two balconies. Breezy living spaces, palatial marble bathrooms and uninterrupted views of gently swaying palms and the ocean will make you not want to move an inch—you don't have to, with an extensive in-room dining menu available. That said, the picnic baskets on offer make it all too tempting to take your loved one by the hand and bask in the sun in your own secret paradise.

#### MIDDLE EASTERN EXOTICA

Stay in Qatar's first-ever villas to hover over the water at **Banana Island Resort Doha by Anantara** (+974 4040 5050; doha.anantara.com). Ideal for active couples, the facilities at opulent Banana Island, a 20-minute ferry ride from Doha, beg to be enjoyed. Learn to scuba dive in a practice pool, and then take your newfound talents out into the turquoise depths of the Arabian Sea. Strut your stuff atop a paddleboard or tee off on the nine-hole golf course. A dedicated wellness centre, the first of its kind in the Middle East, boasts a top-level spa with his-and-her hammams, among other delights. But, maybe all you'll really want is watch the sun set on your private deck before dinner on the stargazing platform, where the night sky competes with the glimmer of Doha's distinctive, futuristic skyline.



**GEMS OF THE INDIAN OCEAN**

The Maldives' nearly 1,200 coral-ringed islands spread across the impossibly sapphire waters of the Indian Ocean like the strewn beads from a pearl necklace. Two of them form the intimate **Jumeirah Dhevanafushi** (+960 682 8800; [www.jumeirah.com](http://www.jumeirah.com)), in the nation's southern reaches. Retreat here by seaplane from Malé to sleep in one of the resort's Sunset Villas on the main, heart-shaped island. Make dusk your personal ritual, tropical drink in hand, when you sit on your private deck with outdoor day beds. Watch as the sun, orange as a tangerine, falls into the violet horizon of the sea. After a morning snorkelling expedition, have the staff drop you at the resort's own Picnic Island, where you'll be the only human beings in residence for the rest of the

afternoon. They'll leave you with umbrellas, water toys and a hamper of gourmet snacks to entertain and curb the hunger pangs during the day.

In the nearby archipelago of the Seychelles, **Maia Luxury Resort & Spa** (+248 4 390 000; [www.maia.com.sc](http://www.maia.com.sc)) sits on the turquoise shores of Anse Louis on Mahé island. The Ocean Panoramic Villas are situated higher up the peninsula on a hillcrest that affords couples a little more privacy and 180-degree views of the sea. Indulge in a light but relaxing '20-dancing fingers' massage performed by two therapists in the open-air treatment rooms of the resort's spa, then spend a long afternoon soaking up the sun and salty sea air on the shores of Anse Louis.

Afloat in the Indian Ocean, some 2,000 kilometres east of Africa, Mauritius is a collage of dramatic scenery with a fusion of Asian, African and French cultures. Delve into that at **The Oberoi, Mauritius** (+91 11 2389 0606; [www.oberoihotels.com](http://www.oberoihotels.com)), which spreads across eight hectares on the isle's north-western coast. It only feels right to check into a low-lying Royal Villa, with its 650 square metres of private space, which boasts a personal pool and a gazebo for secluded dining. Expect to find frangipani blossoms everywhere — in your sunken bathtub, atop your pillows, even in heart-shaped designs on the floor. Spend afternoons swimming in Turtle Bay, or taking advantage of The Oberoi's 'Touching Senses' complimentary programs, which range from cooking classes to guided hikes.



Ocean bliss  
Bathroom tranquility at Jumeirah Dhevanafushi (above), and beachside dining at The Oberoi, Mauritius

**SHARE THE LOVE WITH DESERT PALM**

Desert Palm, a PER AQUUM retreat, guarantees to get make your heart flutter this February, with a range of packages for those daring to be different, whether it's a visionary gourmet dining adventure or a romantic overnight stay in an urban oasis.

**DINING DELIGHTS**

For a memorable experience, Desert Palm is bringing back REVO, the pop-up dining experience from February 11-14. Created by culinary genius, Chef Ray Taylor, REVO brings its playful spin on modern cuisine. The renowned chef will appear at RARE this Valentine's to combine molecular cuisine with traditional techniques in a menu designed to engage you and your partner in a romantic evening to remember. The REVO culinary experience can be booked for AED 595 per person for seven courses including a glass of champagne, or AED 795 per person for 11 courses including a glass of champagne

**A NIGHT AT DUBAI'S URBAN OASIS**

For an extended experience, guests can combine the REVO dinner for two with an overnight stay in a Villa, including an a la carte breakfast in Epicure restaurant.  
From AED 3,870 (for Pool Villa), available February 11-14, 2015.

**ROMANTIC ESCAPE**

Those looking for the ultimate romantic experience can take advantage of Desert Palm's special Valentine overnight packages. Stay in a Suite or Villa and enjoy a turndown service that includes champagne and strawberries, breakfast in bed for two and a 60-minute couple's massage in Lime Spa, as well as an in-room bathing ritual.  
From AED 1,895 (for Palm Suite), available from February 5-14, 2015.

desert palm  
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For more information & bookings please contact:

Desert Palm Retreat PO Box 119171 Dubai UAE Tel: +971 (0) 4 323 8888 Fax: +971 (0) 4 323 8053 [info.pdes@peraquum.com](mailto:info.pdes@peraquum.com) [reservations.pdes@peraquum.com](mailto:reservations.pdes@peraquum.com)