

WORLD'S Top 10

Writer Vicki Williams

PRIVATE ISLANDS

For the ultimate beach escape, it has to be an award-winning private island, eco initiatives optional – these are 10 to consider

1

The Brando, French Polynesia

Once the private island paradise of actor Marlon Brando, Tetiaroa is now home to The Brando, which opened in 2014. A luxury eco resort on the breathtaking atoll of Tetiaroa, which is made up of 12 smaller islands, surrounding a stunning lagoon, with the resort located on the island historically known as a retreat for Tahitian royalty. Conceived by Brando in 2004 and realised by his children, the resort is only accessible by private plane (from Tahiti) and offers barefoot luxury at its best, with pristine nature at every turn. There are 35 spacious villas (one, two and three bedrooms) situated on quintessential white-sand beaches, with a design that complements the serenity and beauty of the surrounds. All come with deluxe amenities, a deck and plunge pool. There are also two award-winning restaurants, two bars, and a Polynesian spa, with a treatment room for two in a pod high among palm trees. www.thebrando.com



2

North Island, The Seychelles

North Island is home to another barefoot luxury, eco retreat that also has famous ties. Many rich and fabulous are attracted to this paradise island, including Hollywood royalty Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie, and British royalty, The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge. There are 11 villas on the island, with the ultimate privacy option being Villa 11, perched on granite boulders at the far end of a beach, with the multi-tiered structure set in a coconut grove that leads to a private beach. The experience can be as bespoke as guests require, from in-villa dining with a menu created by the executive chef, to diving and other activities arranged to suit. Sustainability is important and all food is either grown in the organic garden, reared on the island or caught from the sea. There is also a beachside bar and a rejuvenating spa. www.north-island.com



3

Nikoi Island, Indonesia

For something closer to home there is Nikoi Island, a petite private island 8km off the east coast of Bintan, Indonesia, and 85km from Singapore. Ringed with sandy beaches and coral reefs and a coastline studded with impressive white granite boulders, it also boasts a rainforest. Luxury Survivor or Crusoe Luxe sums up the eco resort, with 15 stilted beach houses (up to three bedrooms), metres from the beach using natural materials, such as driftwood and traditional building principles for air-con-free ventilation. Balconies maximise both water views and the cooling sea breezes. For the active there is sailing, snorkelling, diving, nature discovery, island hopping, windsurfing, stand-up paddleboarding, kayaking, tennis, croquet and boule. There are two communal dining areas, one for families, the other for couples. For more privacy opt for in-beach-house dining. www.nikoi.com



4

Turtle Island, Fiji

A vast island that is home to the renowned Blue Lagoon, Turtle Island is a favourite with honeymooners, accepting only 14 couples at a time, which means guests may never encounter another guest during their stay. The 14 Fijian villas have an eco-chic interior, each slightly different, and all come with their own private beach, with breathtaking panoramas of powdery beaches, azure waters and swaying palm trees. Other than soaking in the scenery, favoured guest activities include cruising on a sailboat, experiencing the abundant sea life by snorkelling or diving with a local guide. There is also the option to reserve a secluded beach for the day, indulging in lobster and champagne while working on an all-over tan. The spa is another relaxing option with pampering treatments featuring Fijian ingredients. www.turtlefiji.com



5



Lizard Island, Australia

Situated on the impressive Great Barrier Reef is Lizard Island, the northernmost resort in tropical Queensland, with 24 glittering white beaches and a lagoon, set among more than 1,000 hectares of national park. The resort was given a new look in 2015 and all rooms and suites (40 in total) have been designed by architect OPV and fully refurbished with interiors by leading Australian interior design team Hecker Guthrie. Featuring natural tones and finishes the ambience is serene with commanding sea views, steps away from the beach with access to other secluded beaches, in addition to a plunge pool and the option for a personal chef. There is also gourmet modern Australian cuisine, bar and wine cellar, and indulgent spa treatments, in addition to a host of tailored offerings. www.lizardisland.com.au



6

Pangkour Laut, Malaysia

Pangkour Laut is famous for two things, its internationally renowned Spa Village, which offers Malay, Chinese, Japanese, Indian and Thai treatments, healing and rejuvenation rituals, and the sense of space that is created despite being one of the bigger private island resorts. It is also known for the setting, wild rainforest, glorious sandy beaches and a clear turquoise sea. Accommodation takes the form of Sea, Beach, Spa, Hill or Garden villas, each setting unique. The most popular are the sea villas, standing elegantly on stilts over water, each features a large balcony with sun loungers, a bathroom with an oversized tub and a shower that opens onto the sea. The spa villas, also situated atop the sea, offer direct access to the Spa Village. There are numerous restaurants and bars that take advantage of the scenery, as well as the option for private dining on a secluded beach. www.pangkorlautresort.com



7

Musha Cay, The Bahamas

Musha Cay is owned by illusionist David Copperfield, and is a good option for group celebrations as only one group of guests can stay at any time, whether it be two or (up to) 24 people. The 150-acre island is fittingly magical, edged by 40 sugar-white beaches and enticing turquoise waters. Accommodation consists of five spacious and eclectic guest houses with interiors inspired by British colonial homes and a Balinese aesthetic, set among abundant foliage. In addition to the usual water and leisure activities, that includes a range of motorised (and non) grown-up beach toys, the team can conjure up a range of experiences and activities. One of the most requested is the pop-up movie theatre on the beach that by morning has completely disappeared, through to fireworks and champagne picnics on a sandbar so beautiful it could be a mirage. www.mushacay.com



8

Vamizi Island, Mozambique

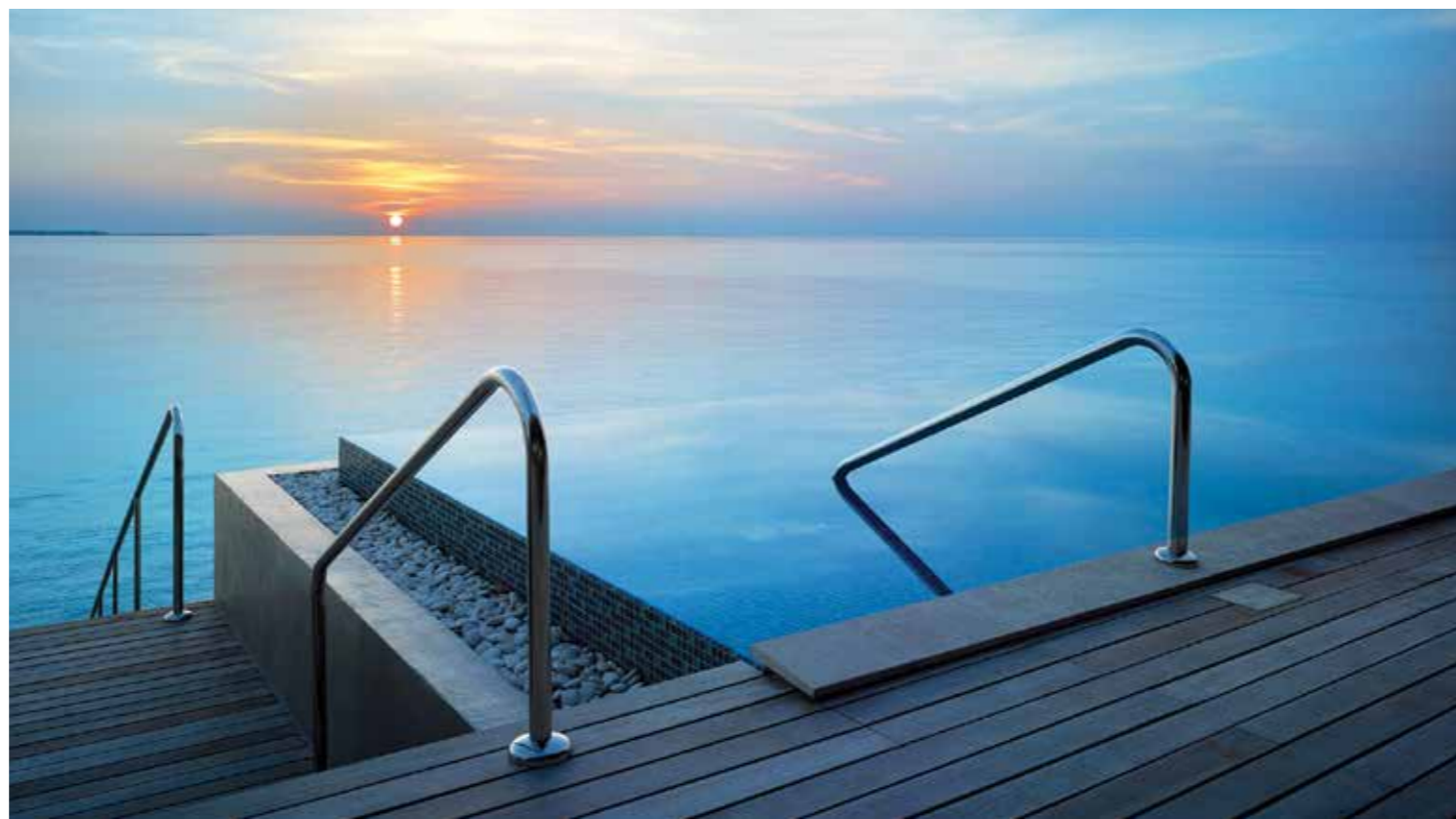
In March, Vamizi came under the management of AndBeyond, a leading luxury experiential travel company. The beautiful island is surrounded by one of the healthiest coral reef ecosystems in the world, over 180 species of unbleached coral and over 300 species of reef fish, and offers some of the best diving in the world as a result. There are six fabulous villas on the island, and each comes with a dedicated team of staff, as well as a vehicle that can be used to visit secluded picnic sites and the mangroves. Each villa is uniquely designed, with wonderful views, and features lounging spaces around private pools or the beach. Speaking of beaches, Vamizi's are considered one of its greatest attractions, and at times the sea is so calm that the only sound heard is your own breath. www.vamizi.com



9

Velaa Private Island, Maldives

The Maldives boasts many pristine private islands; what sets Velaa Private Island apart is that it's a passion project of a Czech financier, who had holidayed in the Maldives for a number of years but decided that the resorts he visited didn't quite give him the 'beyond luxury' experience he was after. Some of what he wanted includes the only snow room in the Maldives (a cold-plunge experience as part of the spa), the only golf course of its kind in the Maldives, and the only semi-covered and air-conditioned tennis court in the Maldives. There is also fine dining and fine wines, butler service, yachting adventures, remote champagne picnics, a spa, and much more. Guests can choose one of 47 exquisite villas (18 over water), and within this there are five four-bedroom residences, each with a private infinity plunge pool. www.velaaprivateisland.com



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Cayo Espanto, Belize

Located off the coast of Belize, Cayo Espanto is often described as a hyper-luxurious resort that offers peace, privacy and personal service as only an exclusive private island can. There are only seven wooden villas on the tiny island, each beautifully appointed, and each with a dedicated butler to ensure your every whim is taken care of. Discerning travellers favour the two-floored Casa Estrella (two bedrooms), the gorgeous interiors are at harmony with the surrounds and its open plan design ensures mesmerising panoramic waters views from every angle. All villas have plunge pools except Casa Ventanas, which is set out over the sea. Its bespoke cuisine is a strong point. Before arrival guests complete a questionnaire, from which an award-winning team of chefs creates a personalised daily menu. A range of spa services is available, with treatments enjoyed in the privacy of the villa. www.cayoespanto.com