

ULTRATRAVEL

OUT OF THIS WORLD



A YEAR OF LIVING DIFFERENTLY

Our guide to the destinations, experiences and innovations that will broaden your horizons in 2018

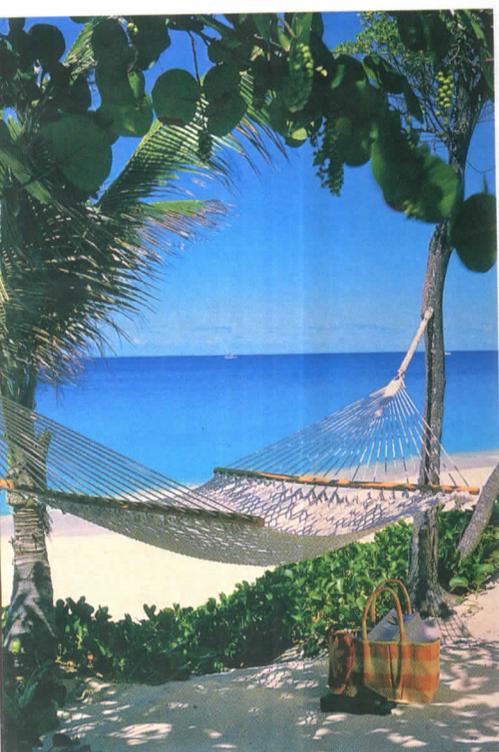


SEYCHELLES A new Eden

By John O'Callaigh

A decade after the last direct flight between Britain and the Seychelles touched down, British Airways is recommencing its service between London and the capital, Victoria, in March. Serendipitously, it coincides with the opening of **Four Seasons Desroches** (above) – the most exciting new property to emerge in a destination that is already home to some of the world's most lavish, progressive beach resorts. A 35-minute flight southwest of the main Seychelles island of Mahé, Desroches is a low-lying stretch of coral, lush with vegetation and sparsely populated. This remote, 933-acre island is enveloped by spectacular dive sites and exceptional fishing opportunities. Its only resort, the Four Seasons, will offer its guests effortless access to the surrounding waters, and there's plenty to discover on land too. A bicycle for every guest means Desroches' trails can be explored at leisure. An animal sanctuary cares for 150 Aldabra tortoises; a Creole village provides an insight into the Seychellois way of life. In the resort, the spa includes its own anti-gravity yoga pavilion; restaurant Claudine serves Mediterranean Riviera cuisine, guests can dine on sashimi at The Lighthouse; outdoor film screenings take place on balmy evenings. As for accommodation, the 71 abodes range from rustic-style suites to bungalows to residences, all with private pool, beach access and garden for enhanced privacy and a true sense of exclusivity.

Four Seasons Resort Seychelles at Desroches, half-board accommodation from £1,150; fourseasons.com



THE CARIBBEAN The survivor

By James Henderson

This year, Hurricane Maria gave Guadeloupe a nasty sideswipe, and Barbuda was hit horribly by Irma. Elsewhere, several fine Caribbean hotels took a beating, and re-opening dates range across 2018. Anguilla was hit hard, but **Zemi Beach** and the **Four Seasons** are expected to reopen in April, while **Cap Juluca** will follow in November. Of course, hurricanes don't just affect hotels. The Anguilla Stronger Emergency Relief Fund has helped with rebuilding of homes. Belmond has matched donations by worldwide staff to its Belmond Relief Fund, which assists staff from Cap Juluca and elegant sister property **La Samanna** (right) on St Martin, due to re-open in the spring. On St Barths, restaurants are reopening, but **Eden Rock** won't be ready until summer. **Villa Marie**, which only launched last winter, suffered significant damage, but while the hotel won't re-open until March, its restaurant, François Plantation, will welcome locals for Christmas. On the BVI, meanwhile, the hotels can't even set re-opening dates yet. Roll on winter 2018.

The Caribbean Tourism Recovery Fund; tourismcares.org/caribbean



JOSE KOECHLIN

The founder of the Peruvian eco-lodge collection Inkaterra, which is developing its first coastal property, Cabo Blanco, on a beach in Peru's northern desert

What's special about your beach?

It's a desert beach backed by dunes and 200-metre mountains – similar to Oman, but more mountainous. Here, the warm Pacific Equatorial Current meets the cold southern Humboldt Current, creating a rich biodiversity that includes 70 per cent of Peru's fish species, several types of whale, and dolphins in their thousands.

What are the main threats to marine life there?

Oil drilling and dramatic levels of overfishing.

What are you doing to conserve the area?

We are working with the government and other organisations to provide running water for the fishing community; to facilitate laws and investment in marine conservation; and to conduct a feasibility study for whale watching. We have two field stations for research in the dry forest and have drawn up inventories both of local bird diversity and indigenous plants such as mesquite.

Los Cabos in Baja California has made flora and marine conservation central to its tourist strategy

What inspires you?

Conservation models in African countries such as Kenya, where private landowners create huge reserves for habitat restoration and an environment where fauna observation is the most appealing thing to do. Motivated by this, the locals are shifting from poaching to ecotourism.

What is currently the big topic for marine conservationists?

Plastic. The fish think the broken-up bits of plastic are plankton. It's decimating numbers.

Where is your favourite beach outside Peru?

Los Cabos in Baja California: it has made flora and marine conservation central to its tourism strategy.

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