



Are your clients looking for an alternative to their Indian Ocean favourites?

Laura French rounds up three of the best new resorts for the year ahead

Electric-blue waters and snow-white sands, bright-emerald palms and bath-warm lagoons; those idyllic images might sound like distant dreams, but if you've ever been to the Indian Ocean, you'll know its array of islands are every bit as romantic as they sound.

And if clients have been, they'll likely have realised that too – and be wanting to go back at some point in the future, whether it's to mark an anniversary at the hotel they honeymooned at, to revisit the spot where they got engaged or

to bring the kids to the point where they tied the knot.

But what if they want a different experience this time round? While there's something to be said for revisiting those time-honoured favourites, they might well be looking to branch out a little with a new resort – and that's where your knowledge comes in.

So we've put together a guide to some of the best new openings to suggest as alternatives to the big-hitters for those looking to book a dream-worthy break for the coming year and beyond.



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ONE & ONLY REETHI RAH, THE MALDIVES

The Maldivian shores aren't short on resorts that make the jaw drop, and one of the top resorts is One&Only Reethi Rah, in the North Malé atoll. Overwater and beachfront villas come together with an impressive dining scene and spa, while watersports and other activities bring you face-to-face with rays and turtles. Families and couples are equally well catered-to, and 12 beaches means it's never hard to find a quiet spot.

OZEN RESERVE BOLIFUSHI

Down in the South Malé atoll there's a new contender joining the ultra-luxury club: Ozen Reserve Bolifushi, which is due to open in October. Every villa has a private pool with some featuring a slide into the sea. Several will offer direct beach access, with two-level options for families, but the highlight has to be the Private Ocean Reserve – a huge, overwater residence with a massive deck, sunken seating and overwater hammocks. An overwater restaurant, beach grill and trendy cabana bar are among the culinary options, with dishes spanning Maldivian, French, Indian and beyond, and it's all set on a talcum-white beach with palms covering the island.

BOOK IT: Rates for an Earth Pool Villa Sunrise on the all-inclusive 'reserve' plan (including meals, drinks and some activities) start at \$1,235 per villa. ozenreserve-bolifushi.com



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SALT OF PALMAR, MAURITIUS

Hip resort SALT of Palmar marked something of a game-changer when it opened on the east coast in 2018, with the aim of putting guests in touch with locals through unique experiences – from learning how to basket-weave to heading out with a local fisherman – and a real emphasis on sustainability. Food is grown on site, there's no single-use plastic and supporting the community is at the heart of its ethos.

LAGOON ATTITUDE

For an alternative take on the sustainability scene, look to the adult-only Lagoon Attitude, which opened in December with an array of eco-credentials: upcycled decor, locally-grown food and a zero single-use-plastic policy are among its impressive list of draws, while eco-workshops teach crafty skills (from tote-bag-making to DIY sun cream). There's a team of marine biologists to take guests out to learn about the reef, while non-motorised watersports – kitesurfing, windsurfing, paddleboarding and kayaking – are offered to limit environmental impact. Excursions themed around all things local are available through its Otentik Experiences arm, including Mauritian music classes, cooking workshops and the chance to dine at a local family's home.

BOOK IT: Kuoni offers a week's all-inclusive from £1,549 per person, including flights from Gatwick and based on travel in June 2021. kuoni.co.uk



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RAFFLES, THE SEYCHELLES

When it comes to Seychellois luxury, few places are quite so iconic as Raffles' exotic outpost, set by the Baie Sainte Anne beach on Praslin island and home to a cluster of private pool villas surrounded by tropical gardens. A spa, four à la carte restaurants and 24-hour butler service make this something of a go-to for exclusive escapes. The famed Anse Lazio beach and Vallée de Mai palm forest nearby offer plenty beyond the beach.

ANANTARA MAIA SEYCHELLES VILLAS

The latest addition to the luxury set is Anantara Maia Seychelles Villas, set to open in September. Taking over the existing Maia Luxury Resort & Spa, close to Anse Louis Beach, the 30-villa resort will have an open-air spa pavilion, a pool, fitness centre, restaurant as well as dine-by-design options. Villas, set on the hill or on a peninsula by the beach, promise idyllic ocean views, with family options and hosts for every guest. Its 'beyond all-inclusive' concept will offer unlimited scuba diving, wellness activities and non-motorised watersports alongside à la carte dining and premium drinks. Mahé's main attractions – from the capital Victoria and its markets to Mission Lodge, a former school for liberated slaves – are within easy reach.

BOOK IT: All-inclusive rates for an Ocean Panoramic Pool Villa start at £2,100 per villa per night. anantara.com



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