

Winner: America's Best Travel Magazine

# A FAR

WHERE TRAVEL CAN TAKE YOU

BALI

QUÉBEC

SOUTH AFRICA

GREECE

MOZAMBIQUE

MEXICO

## INSPIRED TRAVEL

10 PLACES  
TO EXPERIENCE  
THE LOCAL  
CULTURE  
(AND RELAX)

SET SAIL ON  
THE ITALIAN  
COAST

THE SOUL  
OF PARADISE

HIDDEN TOKYO

*The  
Wellness  
Issue*

# AFAR

On our Cover

## 28

The Mysteries of the Maldives hotels it had been around for a long time. It has everything you can think of.

## 46

A Great Paradise with a lot of new deals seafood restaurant which is right on the waterfront. It is for everyone.

## 57

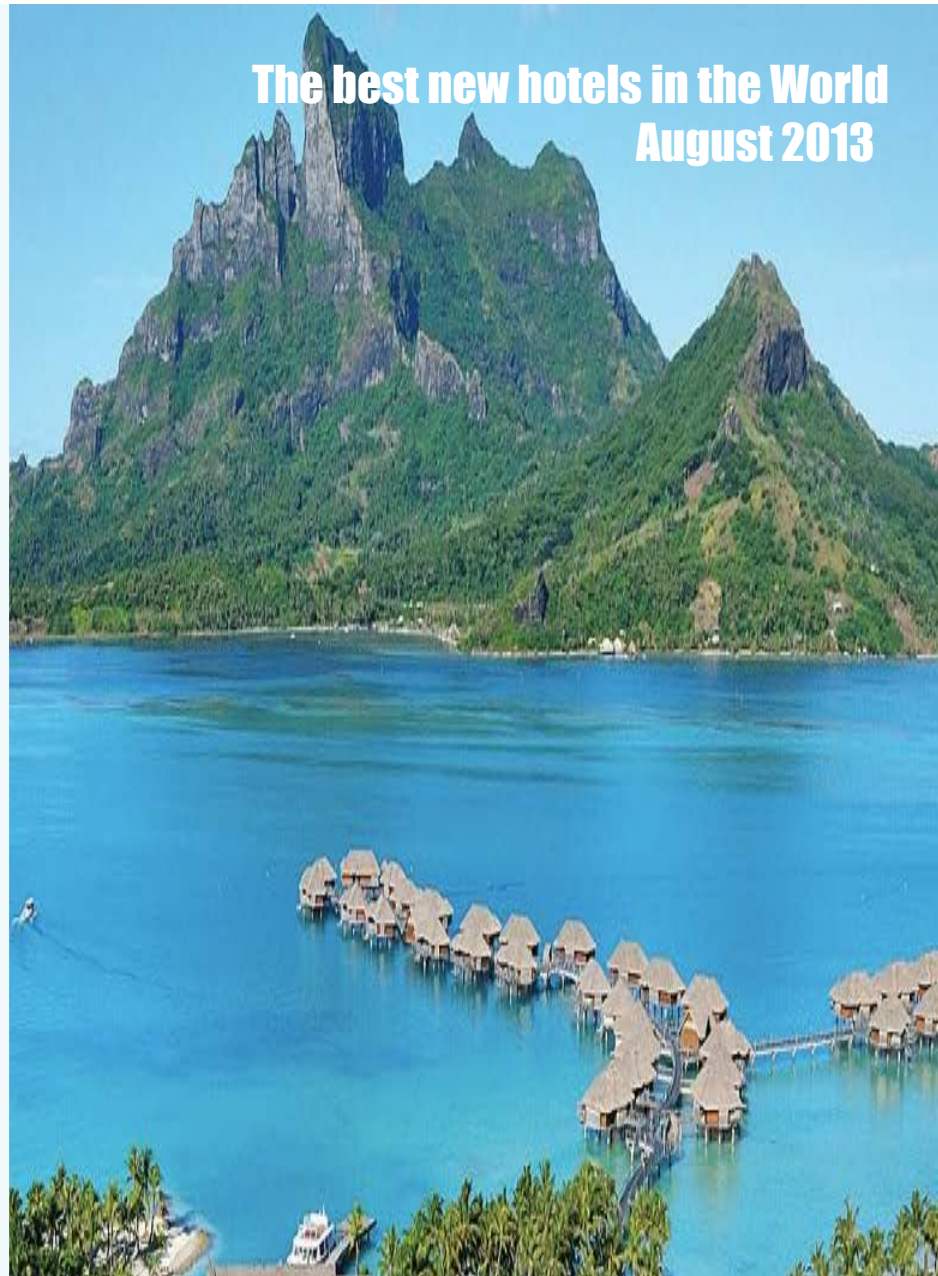
Travel Destinations for people to explore Frank Gohry will take you on a tour of the islands and shows you where you can snorkel.

## 65

What's New in Amsterdam? Cultural festivals, performing arts, luxury hotels and an applied technology for destinations.

AFAR.COM

## The best new hotels in the World August 2013



# 72

### Nicaragua's Emerald Coast

Denise jungles, white sand beaches, and an abundance of spas featuring soothing ancient wellness rituals beckons you at San Juan del Sur



Since Hawaii is the only state to be completely surrounded by water, that fact adds to the sense of seclusion, almost like being marooned, which is a feeling that permeates every view... water for dozens of miles in every upward glance. A tremendous geyser from one resort located in centuries-old volcanic ash and a pristine Pacific ocean view beach is the ultimate destination, the Four Seasons Hualalai at historic Kai'iopulani named for the distant volcano craters miles behind the resort and also believed to have been the names of the wife of one of the early navigators to Hawaii in the pre-to-plant those days.

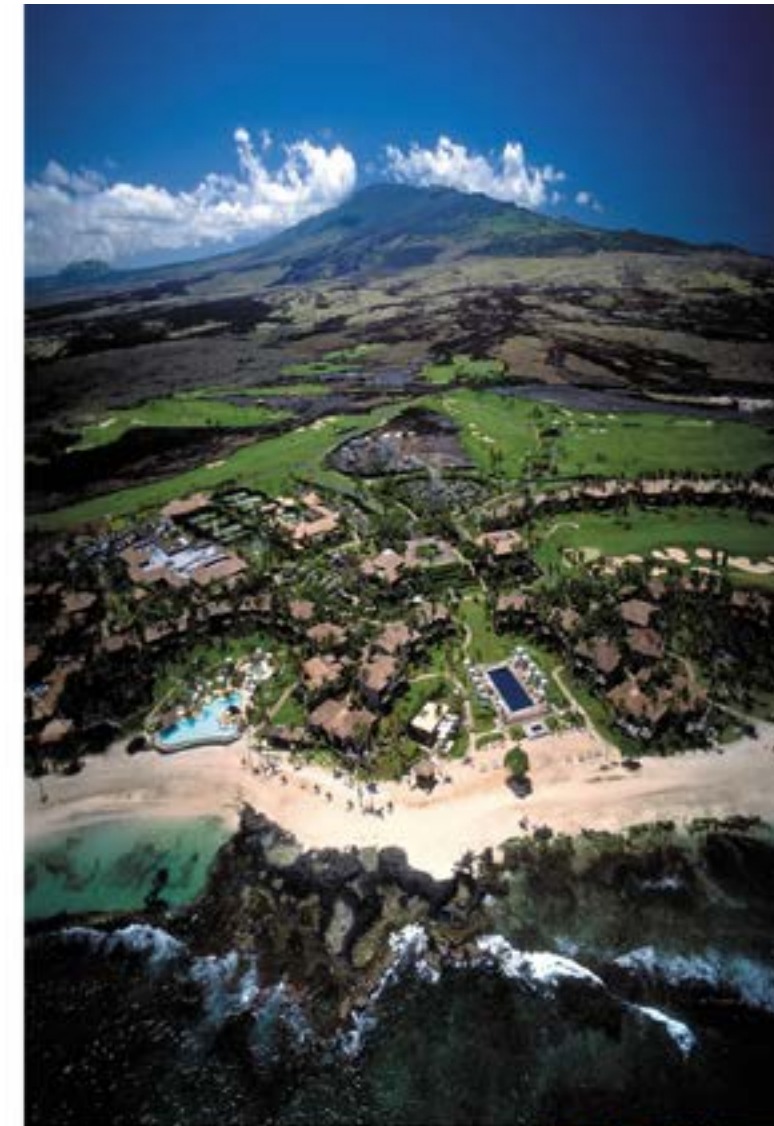
#### CELEBRITY PICKS

The Hollywood crowd always flock to Hawaii, since the flight takes less travel time when the lanes direct on United than any other tropical destination. Upon arrival at the Four Seasons Hualalai, it's easy to see why the resort is a favorite for CEOs and celebrities. Regular guests include the likes of tech titan Bill Gates, actress Morgan Freeman and designer Terry O'Quinn, to name just a few of the wide variety of high-profile celebrities. Sarah Silverman, politician, is just the way most of the resort's jet-set guests prefer it. She, along with plenty of Ari O'Quinn, Julia O'Quinn and other chic, well-heeled guests that the resort restaurant that seems like a regular from nearby.

From a Texas history perspective, it is interesting to note that Austin-based tech titan Michael Dell's MSD Capital, LP co-owns the resort, as well as several other Four Seasons resorts in Hawaii. According to Bloomberg News, the 860-acre resort on the Big Island, which also includes a massive planned community, is seeing increased demand amid a travel rebound that has seen Hawaiian tourism revenue in a record and a one-night stay here costs at about a thousand dollars.

IN THE WIND-SWEPT blue water that surrounds new visitors to Kona, a sense of awe of the deep, deep blue sea and its still surrounding embrace like a warm, welcoming, sun-kissed glow. James Michener, author of Hawaii, captured it beautifully in *Halo of the South Pacific* by noting, "The endless ocean. The infinite specks of coral we called islands. Coconut palms nodding gracefully toward the ocean. Beads upon which waves broke into spray, and inner lagoons, lovely beyond description." It still rings true decades later. All so true in this flip-flop paradise.

Robert Whitfield, regional vice president and general manager of the resort chain, "We're the only Four Seasons and AAA Five Diamond hotel on the Big Island. Our service, the resort's facilities and offerings, food and activities are all done at an amazingly high level.



# SEYCHELLES

■ KHALEEJTIMES / ADVERTISING SUPPLEMENT ■ SUNDAY, JULY 08, 2012



The island is surrounded by beautiful bays and white beaches protected by coral reefs



## LOT MORE THAN SAND, SEA AND SUN

Seychelles is a botanical paradise with more than 2,000 types of tropical and equatorial plants



“Our eco-friendly islands have 50 per cent of the total land area protected as national parks. Our government remains good custodians of the unique assets under our care and we remain serious in protecting these natural assets that continue to attract visitors to our shores

**Alain St. Ange**  
Minister of Tourism & Culture

SEYCHELLES represents an archipelago of timeless beauty, tranquility and harmony that is famous for its world-beating beaches and great diversity, which rolls from lush forests to the warm azure ocean. Of the 115 islands, 41 Inner Islands constitute the oldest mid-oceanic granite islands on earth, while the rest 74 are Outer Islands forming five groups of low-lying coral atolls and reef islets.

Fervently at the helm of tourism in Seychelles is Alain St. Ange, the Tourism Minister. “Our eco-friendly islands now have 50 per cent of the total land area protected as national parks. Our government remains good custodians of the unique assets under our care and we remain serious in protecting these natural assets that continue to attract visitors to our shores,” he says. Fervently loyal and supportive to his local community, St. Ange is responsible for what is considered the main pillar of the Seychelles economy — tourism. In 2011, tourism contributed 24.8 per cent to the overall Gross Domestic Product and employed over 11,000 people — not bad for a country with a population of around 87,000.

However, far from more traditional tourism resorts, Seychelles remained the playground of a relatively rich and privileged group of travellers before an expansion in the number of airlines serving the destination. Today, the country is served by a host of respected international airlines from the Europe, Gulf and Asia.

The archipelago's largest island, Mahé, is home to 90 per cent of the population. It is a cultural and economic hub of the Inner Islands and an international gateway to Seychelles with both the international airport and the nation's capital, Victoria — seat of the government and the chief centre of commerce. Praslin, with a population of 7,000, is Seychelles' second largest granite island. The island is surrounded by beautiful bays and white beaches protected by coral reefs. Praslin is the site of the famous Cocois-Mer priot in the fabulous Vallée de Mai, one of Seychelles' two UNESCO world heritage sites. The island features truly exquisite beaches such as Anse Lazio and Anse George — both appearing on the top-10 list of the world's best beaches. Praslin stands at the forefront of Seychelles' tourism industry. It also provides a base for excursions to neighboring islands where tourists can explore the beauty via trails and paths that meander the indigenous natural flora and fauna. Close neighbor to Praslin is La Digue, the third largest island in Seychelles. Here visitors are transported back in time. The chief modes of transport here are bicycles and ox carts, providing an appealing, leisurely way to explore the most photographed island in Seychelles.

Whenever visitors decide to stay in Seychelles, there is a long list of things to do. The islands are blessed with an abundance of natural beauty, ocean, mountains,



beaches and tropical forests. Seychelles is famous for some of the best beaches in the world, pristine and uncrowded. Age-old granite boulders frame some of the islands, while others offer powder soft sands, turquoise waters and sublime opportunities for swimming, snorkeling or pure relaxation. There are also gulf and guided nature tours to some of the

most species of flora and fauna on earth.

Back on shore, Seychelles is a pristine sanctuary for diverse species of flora and fauna. The islands are home to an exciting and diverse wildlife that can be discovered in the wild or in specially designated reserves. Discover the treasures of this living natural history museum along its nature trails

through its breathtaking landscapes, several national parks and other reserves and its increasing number of eco-tourism ventures.

With more than 2,000 species of tropical and equatorial plants, the Seychelles archipelago is also a botanical paradise. Much of the original coastal vegetation seen by the first explorers is still intact and untouched by man. Picture perfect, heavenly, secluded, the one and only Seychelles is the only true paradise on earth. This is how it will stay, with over 50 per cent of Seychelles landmass being protected. Victoria Botanical Gardens is the ideal place for a short visit to sample a little bit of Seychelles biodiversity.