



north island

facts



Some 30km from the main island of Mahé, Ile du Nord, or North Island, enjoys private isolation within the Inner Island group of the Seychelles. Its luminous white beaches surround a tropical interior of coconut palms and takamaka trees in turn cradled between three granite outcrops, and surrounded by the azure ocean. Such natural beauty is added to by thoughtful and environmentally friendly architecture.

THE ISLAND PIAZZA

This is the natural focal point of the Island, where elegant buildings cluster about a magnificent Indian almond tree. The dive and activity centre, located on the beachfront and housing both indoor and outdoor tuition areas, changing rooms and interesting displays, is where many of the Island's land and marine activities are coordinated. Adjacent to the deck of the centre is the library. Built of coral blocks, it is undoubtedly one of the most spectacular examples of architecture on the Island and was already standing when construction of the lodge began. Now, with its exterior walls renovated and its roof replaced, it houses a collection of books on topics of interest, various relics and artefacts, as well as a computer offering Internet. Some twenty metres distant from the library are the lounge and dining areas, offering a high degree of comfort and also unforgettable views of the sea and mountains.

From here, a walkway over the pond leads to the wine cellar, followed immediately by a private dining sala. The bar joins the dining area and the lounge stands not far away in the restful shade of a takamaka tree. Further up the mountain and hidden from the lounge and dining area is the main pool, a 45m long pool that looks over the pool deck to the horizon of the sea, creating views of heart-stopping beauty.

HOME AWAY FROM HOME

North Island is unashamedly aimed at providing the very best in privacy, location, accommodation, services, facilities and experience. Its 11 Villas have been built using, where possible, materials reaped from the rehabilitation process. In doing this the aim has been to capture the essence of "barefoot luxury".

Each Presidential Villa measures 450 square metres (4 890 square feet) giving guests enough room to spread out and enjoy a unique, private, island-style experience to the full. Each was individually handcrafted by Seychellois and African craftsmen on the Island from wood, local stone and glass, with thatched roofs that complete the magnificent design and is completely self-contained, raised over a metre off the ground to catch the cooling island breezes.



north island facts

Each Villa has two bedrooms, a main bedroom and a second bedroom-cum-lounge and study. Whilst the Villa is primarily occupied by one or two guests, they may have a requirement to use the second bedroom for children and this is available at an additional cost. This space is set up as a luxurious, air-conditioned lounge room with deep, slouchy sofa beds in crushed velvets, linens, chenilles and complemented by woven coffee tables where you can take your tea or an island snack; it's a great space to relax, read a book, catch up on the news of the world or send a quick email. At night the lounge can be changed into a private cinema complete with projector, screen and surround sound. A luxuriously proportioned master bedroom with change-room and dressing table leads onto a large en-suite bathroom with marble bath and two showers, one indoor and one outdoor. The bedrooms are air-conditioned and all rooms have overhead "punkah punkah" fans. The fully retracting sliding doors allow for uninterrupted views onto the lawns and the turquoise seas in front of each Villa. There is satellite television, a DVD/CD system and wireless Internet access. The kitchenette leads off the lounge/dining area. A private plunge pool and sala are the finishing touches to this private sanctuary.

Villas 1 to 10 are nestled discreetly in the tree-line, facing onto Anse d'est Beach. Villa North Island has been designed differently to accommodate the incline along the extreme northern side of the Anse d'est Beach and is secretly tucked away in the takamaka forest. The beach view from this

Villa is truly spectacular from every angle and it is this, together with the unique manipulation of the deck design and 750 square metres of space that separates this remarkable Villa from the rest.

THE SPA

The North Island spa is located in inspiring surroundings, overlooking turquoise waters and dramatic cliffs. North Island's spa provides a unique treatment offering specially designed for North Island and its guests. We incorporate all local products into our treatments which in turn are tailor made to suit the specific needs of the guest.

In keeping with North Island's concept of tailor made service, guests can receive certain treatments in the privacy of their own Villa on request.

ACTIVITIES

The activities on offer at North Island are designed to allow our guests to enjoy the Island and its magic, either under guidance from one of the staff, or alone. You have the freedom to move around the Island at your own pace, either on foot, on North Island mountain bikes, or by Island Buggies. These activities have a minimal impact on the environment whilst providing the enjoyment of entertainment and exercise.



north island facts

SCUBA DIVING: Seychelles forms part of the world's longest coral reef system and has some of the world's best scuba diving sites. Numerous dive sites have been identified around North Island and its nearest neighbour, Silhouette Island. North Island offers a "guided" scuba experience and the dive masters are not only experts in scuba practices but also in the underwater world. The North Island dive school and fishermen are experienced professionals who inspire confidence with both uninitiated and seasoned guests alike.

SNORKELLING: There are excellent snorkelling sites around North Island and Silhouette Island. Masks and fins are available at the Dive Centre for guests wishing to explore these sites, either on their own or in the company of a Dive Centre staff member (depending on their snorkelling skills).

SEA KAYAKING: Those wishing to explore the Island from the water are able to do so using sea kayaks, with all necessary tuition and guidance provided. For the more adventurous guests we offer body boards and surf boards.

THE GYM: Situated next to the spa, our gym is air-conditioned and has some of the most spectacular views out to sea. It is well equipped with machines and weights which suit both male and female fitness enthusiasts.

ISLAND BICYCLES: Mountain bikes are available for guest use. These, in adult and children's sizes, are suitable for getting from one side of the Island to the other with ease.

ISLAND BUGGIES: Each Villa has its own dedicated Island Buggy. These electrical powered golf cars give guests the freedom to move around the Island.

NORTH ISLAND SUNSET BAR: A walk along Grande Anse Beach as the sun sets is an experience not to be missed – especially as the Sunset Bar lies at the end of the walk. This simple, rustic bar is located just above the high-water mark on the northern end of Grande Anse. North Island-style cocktails and snacks are served.

CRUISE: Enjoying a private sunset cruise around the Island is another way to view the sunset.

FISHING: A fishing excursion is an exciting way to ensure a fresh catch for your next meal – we trawl for yellowfin tuna, dorado, bonito, trevally, red snapper, amongst others. Typically this is a relaxing half-day activity.

BOATING & ISLAND HOPPING: Boating around North Island or other trips can include visits to Mahé, Praslin, La Digue and the outer islands, including the spectacular bird islands, Aride, Cousin and Cousine. These charter trips can be arranged on request.

THE LIBRARY: An extensive natural history library, lovingly renovated out of the old coral ruins, houses a large selection of books as well as an online computer facility. Presentations on the marine life, environmental programmes and development of the Island are conducted on alternate days in the library.



north island

facts

SLIDE SHOWS & TALKS: These are available for both adults and children, enabling interested guests to learn about Seychelles and North Island, as well as a wide range of ecological and conservation topics.

TURTLES: Depending on the time of the year, guests may be lucky enough to witness Hawksbill or Green Turtles laying their eggs or these hatching on the beaches of North Island. Researchers tag the turtles so that their breeding activities can be monitored.

WALKING: Explore the Island by walking and hiking along its extensive beaches, or by climbing the granite outcrops and crossing the saddle linking the eastern and western plateau.

THE NORTH ISLAND BOUTIQUE: In the central Piazza area, the North Island Boutique captures the spirit of the island and its barefoot luxury experience; it is a veritable treasure trove allowing guests a chance to take the unique quality of the island home with them. Described as 'part souk, part shipwreck' the store has a relaxed gallery-market feel, selling branded North Island clothing, one-off exotic finds from remote regions of the world, including Seychelles, and bespoke products ranging from jewellery, adults' and children's apparel, beachwear, unique homeware, arts and crafts, as well as books on local legends and customs and giftware to remind you of your unforgettable experience on this unique island.

CULINARY CONCEPT

North Island cuisine is based on the very finest natural products lovingly prepared in a sumptuous array of exotic dishes. The Executive Chef makes use of the vegetable and herb gardens on the island to prepare only the freshest food combinations to reach the table in the dining environment of the guests' choice – whether on the beach, in the Villa, restaurant or Sunset Bar. Aside from its exceptional beauty, North Island has long been renowned for its fertility and also for the richness of the fishing grounds wherein it nestles. It is not surprising therefore that North Island's lodge draws upon these exceptional natural resources. The cuisine of North Island is based on the diversity and cultural influences which, in part, make up the Seychellois Créole flavour. We have allowed the food concept to grow from a Créole base with French, Indian and African influences, to one of a more global offering. We define our menus daily with specific Créole, French, Italian, Spanish, Japanese and English flare as opposed to influences on a defined food type. The menus are combined with the tropical, organic resources of North Island and the variety on offer from Mahé. Balanced with simplicity, guests can expect a feast that will awaken all of their senses. There is the "any menu" concept of dining on the island, meaning that the chef speaks to guests during their stay on North Island to explain the cuisine concept and to encourage the guests to tell him about their specific food preferences. Although



north island

facts

a daily menu is prepared using this information gathered from the guests and with an option for each meal, special menus are encouraged and designed for the individual. Another dining experience might be to meet up with the chef at the Sunset Bar, where he prepares a private culinary journey, a barbeque or simply a homemade pizza in a wood-burning oven. North Island promises a memorable culinary experience, complemented by an impressive cellar with some of the world's great wines and champagnes. The wine cellar allows guests, under the guidance of experts if so required, to select a vintage to suit their palates.

ENVIRONMENT

One of the reasons North Island was bought was because of its potential to become a sanctuary where natural habitats could be rehabilitated and where critically endangered Seychelles fauna and flora could be reintroduced and given a place to regenerate, a concept we call "Noah's Ark." The essence of North Island is the sustainable, ecologically sensitive utilisation of a precious natural treasure.

When North Island was abandoned in the 1970s following the collapse of the coconut industry, many unwanted and intrusive species of flora and fauna remained behind, such as coconut trees, casuarina trees, cows, rats, pigs, Indian mynah birds, cats, barn owls and an especially invasive weed called lantana. Together, these unwanted elements held North in a stranglehold that threatened to stifle its very life force, smothering the indigenous plants, decimating the bird life and drying up the marshland that is the lifeblood of the Island.

After the alarm bell had been sounded by prominent ecologists, North Island undertook the challenge, not only to reverse the Island's sorry decline, but to take the long road towards the restoration of the Island to its former glory. A cornerstone of this bold initiative has been the "Noah's Ark" concept, where tortoises and certain bird species are gradually being reintroduced to the Island along with indigenous trees – including six species of palms, Premna, Canthium, various Ficus species, Scavola and the legendary coco-de-mer palm.

The concept of eco-sensitivity on North Island was preceded by years of painstaking research and coordination with government conservation bodies committed to ensuring the protection of the natural environment and biodiversity. Such considerations have not only placed numerous checks and controls on the nature of the project itself, but have also ensured that maximum efforts are made in the direction of the recycling of materials and the rehabilitation of existing structures. They have steered North Island's architects down the road of limited development, limited noise, the preservation of historical sites, the eradication of alien fauna and flora, and the reintroduction of lost species, as well as the conservation of water, energy and the installation of an ecologically sensitive sewerage plant.



north island

facts

The conscientious pursuit of such policies is now reaping rewards and has contributed much to the extraordinary way in which the lodge's Villas blend seamlessly into their surroundings and also to the eco-sensitive aura that now pervades the Island.

Felled alien trees such as the casuarinas, as well as dead takamaka trees, have been used in the building, their serpentine roots now snaking their way through roofs, their bleached limbs adorning balustrades and stairways. In one inspiring marriage of past and present, two of the original copra shacks have been turned into the library and dive centre while the quest for excellence has brought together artisans from as far afield as Bali, Malawi, South Africa and of course, Seychelles.

The ongoing process of conservation is at the very heart of North Island's philosophy and, as part of the Island's continuing endeavours to safeguard its environment, a programme of rat eradication was undertaken. One of the biggest challenges that we face on North Island is to retain our "rat free" status which we achieved in September 2005. Very strict control measures have been put in place to ensure that no rodents or other invasive fauna or flora are reintroduced onto the island and thus endanger our current environmental situation. Thanks to the eradication programme, North Island is the largest tropical Island in the world free of the tree-dwelling black rat (*Rattus rattus*).

This programme has paved the way for the successful reintroduction of species that were destroyed in the past. In 2007, the endangered Seychelles White-Eye was reintroduced and is flourishing; and in the future we hope to see the return of a further three indigenous bird species. All of them on the Endangered list: Black Parrot, Seychelles Warbler and, most important of all, the Seychelles Magpie Robin – one of the world's rarest birds.

North Island will continue to honour the policies that are enabling it to realise its goal of offering the highest standards of hospitality against a backdrop of sustainable, eco-friendly practice.

CHILDREN IN THE WILDERNESS

Children in the Wilderness is an environmental and life skills educational programme, run through Wilderness and in all areas in which Wilderness operates, that focuses on the next generation of rural decision makers. It is one of few programmes aimed at bridging the divide that exists between communities and wildlife.

For a few days each year, North Island closes its doors to guests and, together with The National Council for Children, hosts children from Mahé on this incredible programme, the only project of its kind in the Seychelles. The Children in the Wilderness North Island programme is designed specifically for the children of the Seychelles and includes educating them in marine and land-based environmental issues pertinent to Seychelles. It also aims to educate the children on social, health, environmental and moral issues.