



Paradise lost

Honeymoon, hideaway or holiday, Mauritian luxury resort Le Touessrok evokes romance every which way it can. And it does it so well

My Parisian neighbour murmurs soporifically to me about her anticipated Four-Hand Ylang-Ylang massage. We're alone on loungers in the chill-room, anonymous in soft, voluminous gowns, and increasingly mesmerised by the slow trajectory of fish in the aquarium. The Givenchy Spa at Le Touessrok in Mauritius is worth swimming there for, no matter where you live.

Set on the island's west coast on a curvaceous sweep of coastline, this iconic Mauritian hotel has been cossetting, pampering and indulging guests for over 30 years. The service is superlative – it's that unobtrusive, blue-blood brand of service

which draws little attention to itself and focuses solely on your pleasure. Lying on the beach, if thoughts of 'long, tall drink' or 'smudged sunglasses' edge into your mind, somebody miraculously appears at your side, serving or polishing before you've quite completed the thought. And if by chance your telepathy is faulty, each beach lounge has two flags, one for service, another for peace. Stick the service flag in the sand, and a genie appears instantly.

Decision-making at Le Touessrok is rarely more challenging than, 'Which restaurant, and when'. There are several truly superb fine-dining or laid-back eateries, each with its own distinctive character, décor, food style, even entertainment.

You can smoke cigars and sway to jazzy vocals on a Sunday night, or don a sarong for Sunday's alfresco beach lunch and bar, enjoyed to the sound of Mauritian minstrels on the hotel's private island, Ilot Mangénie, a short boat ride away.

Tonight, dress up for dinner, and dine lavishly at Safran, the heavenly spice-scented Indian restaurant originally created by Michelin-starred London chef, Vineet Bhatia. Here, local ingredients meet classic cuisine to arrive at magnificent meals with a modern, Continental twist. Tomorrow evening, choose Barlen's, designed along feng-shui principles, with a water-filled moat sealed with glass under your feet, and a floor-to-ceiling glass show kitchen. And the day after? Make it Three-Nine-Eight, the main restaurant with multicultural cuisines and a soulful, sensuous view over Trou d'Eau Douce and Hibiscus Beach. The art of romance is alive and well here.

At Le Touessrok, there are so many diverse elements, activities and little secluded coves that getting lost by choice is easy. Occupancy: 95% – yet there's no sense of people. The property is vast, with different, always beautiful pools, beaches,

bridges, niches and lounges spread out or tucked away, so the space is yours alone.

A leisurely swim in the azure waters can take you a little further, to a decked floating platform with leisure beds. Just over there, the sports-oriented Ile aux Cerfs. With its jagged coastline and volcanic outcrops, the 87ha island makes for a breathtaking 18-hole golf course, designed by Bernhard Langer. There, too, is the sports pavilion, where you can scuba dive or snorkel – the coral life is exquisite – windsurf or sail.

For children, the facilities, activities, care and attention given the small and restless at the T-Club is full-time and fabulous.

The flagship hotel of Sun Resorts, Le Touessrok is a member of the Leading Hotels of the World Group and is featured in the *Forbes Traveler* Top 400 Finest Hotels in the World 2008. No surprise. Le Touessrok is the essence of chic and sensuous, a five-star-plus pleasure-island resort. There's no finer place to escape Planet Earth. ☺

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