

MALDIVES MADNESS!

by **Suzanne Duckett**

Bungalows on the water, huts in the trees, a cinema under the stars — this is luxury of a crazy new kind



Straight out of the box: The new resort at Amilla Fushi, where you can try watersports (Inset)

up (freshly caught) fish fingers. Normal people on normal budgets would not bring their children here. But, then, Amilla Fushi is not a normal place.

TRAVEL FACTS
 Cleveland Collection (020 7843 3531, clevelandcollection.co.uk) offers seven nights' half-board in a Lagoon House at Amilla Fushi from £2,998 per person. Price includes return flights and transfers, all water sports, and a daily 50-minute spa treatment per adult. Price based on travel between May 11 and October 15, 2015.

WHAT will they dream up next in the Maldives? We have done thatched villas on stilts, glass-floor spas and underwater restaurants. Now along come macho-minimalist white boxes.

It's as if a chunk of Miami Beach has floated east and left white cubes lining up over the turquoise water. Among them, huge tree houses stand sky-high amid canopies of coconut trees. There are no ocean views but, instead, greenery for scenery, with glass-walled plunge pools jutting out into the treetops.

Designed for people who live large but demand a proper bang for their buck, Amilla Fushi is the latest super-luxe resort making waves in the Unesco-protected Baa Atoll.

Forget rustic Robinson Crusoe hideaway, this place is James Bond territory: super slick, masculine, sexy with all the pre-requisite mod cons, and softened with a woman's homely touch.

And the whitewashed, over-the-water private residences, which include up to six bedrooms, are not the only showstoppers.

The vast timber treehouses, complete with chunky wooden bunk-beds for children, have raised the bedroom bar, too.

Yes, it is pricey, but you get more included in your daily room

rate than anywhere else in these waters — bigger accommodation, including watersports, unlimited fast internet, and a children's club. You even get a top-notch, 50-minute spa treatment per adult every day.

This called for a lot of packing. My suitcase was stuffed to the gills with more kaftans and floaty dresses than a Monsoon showroom and enough Factor 50 to last a lifetime.

I needn't have bothered. The glam squad here rock a cooler, more effortless look; more Kate Moss than Kim Kardashian. Think

tousled hair, maxi dress or faded cut-off jeans and white T-shirts.

Friendly, unpretentious British families wafted around in cheerful kaftans (which they even wore more than once), while chilled Aussies relaxed in the bar.

The island restaurateur is Luke Mangan (Australia's Gordon Ramsay with less Botox and fewer swear words).

Lonu, his signature restaurant, is at the end of a jetty with ocean views and killer sunsets. Feast on sashimi of kingfish with ginger and shallot and Persian feta (though the iPad menus

are absurd). Life here centres on a 'boulevard-style' social hub of restaurants and bars.

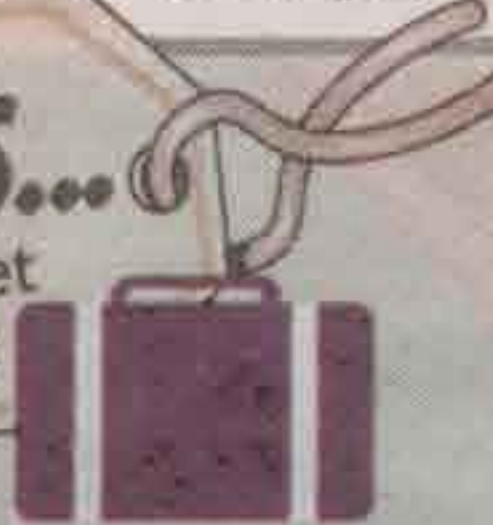
There is also the ingenious little grab-and-go, deli-style counter serving charcuterie, cheese and cakes.

Even honeymooners were happy to untangle their limbs, congregate and chat with fellow guests on oversized beanbags, necking cocktails while the resident pool-side DJ was spinning her tunes.

Meanwhile, children are kept happy watching movies on the giant outdoor cinema minded by kids' club nannies, on hand to cut

Travel Notes...

What's new and how to get the best from your holiday



share recommendations on a map, thanks to new app BackTracker. Released three weeks ago and already rated 'best new app' on the App Store website, BackTracker is a realtime travel guide, blogging space and social network arena all in one.

Available free for iPhone and iPad, and soon for Android (backtrackerapp.com).

ONE FOR THE BOOKS

PAVILLON des Lettres in Paris is the city's original literary hotel, with 26 rooms each dedicated to a great European writer. From June 1, guests can book in for a two-night experience, including a walking tour of St-Germain-des-Pres and a whizz around the city in a 2CV. From £283pp B&B. (0033 1 4924 2626, pavillondeslettres.com)

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WILD ABOUT PHOTOGRAPHY?

CAPTURING wildlife on camera can be tricky, but not if you've got a professional photographer to guide you. Adventure holiday specialist Exodus has called in pro snapper Paul Goldstein to accompany its Kenyan safari game drives. One week in a luxury camp from £3,699pp inc flights and meals (0845 863 9600, exodus.co.uk).

TRACKING YOUR BACKPACKING

BACKPACKERS on the move can plot their experiences, track newfound friends and