

DENIS PRIVATE ISLAND

Sixty miles north of Mahé, on the edge of the undersea Seychelles Bank, Denis Island is a small coral island named after the French explorer, Commander Denis de Trobriant, who officially 'discovered' the island in 1773.

Over the years, Denis Island has enjoyed many incarnations: a harbour for Arab traders and pirates; a thriving coconut plantation and part of the copra industry; and, since 1975, an Indian Ocean haven for sun-seeking visitors after a castaway experience.

This fertile island is blessed with coconut palms, takamaka and casuarina trees crowding its centre, white sand around its circumference, and shallow waters that precede the plateau drop-off, sheltering a colourful array of marine life. The protection of native flora and fauna, both above and below the water, is increasingly important on Denis and a number of conservation projects are underway, along with a small island farm to improve sustainability.

DENIS ISLAND LODGE

Along the northwestern coast of the island, 25 island-style cottages are set amid Denis's rich vegetation: three Beach Cottages; 10 Deluxe Beach Cottages; 10 Beachfront Spa Cottages; one Family Villa; and for those seeking extra space and pampering, the Beach Villa honeymoon villa. All are spacious, tastefully furnished and decorated in cool, calm colours, yet with an eye for Creole style and a spacious bathroom with private open courtyard. All lie within about 30m of their own stretch of beachfront, with its dedicated, shaded

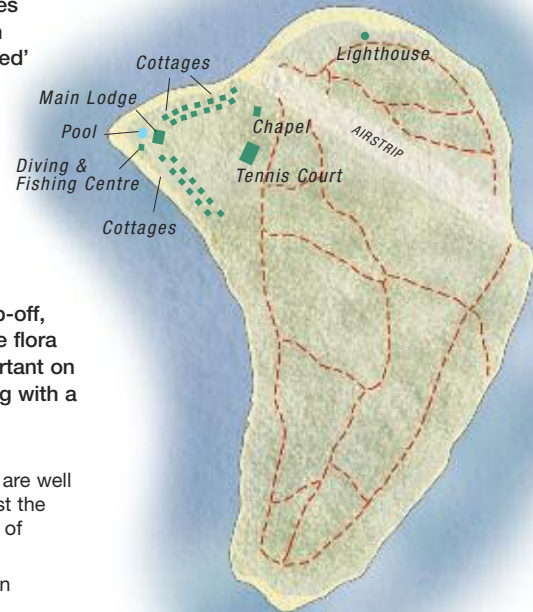


Flying into Denis Island; great views of the reefs

loungers. The cottages are well spaced, dotted amongst the trees, giving the feeling of private-island villas.

The palm-thatched main building houses the restaurant, an elliptical sunken bar for evening cocktails, and a contemporary lounge of exposed coral walls, cream fabrics and funky, nature-inspired *objets d'art*. There is also a billiard table and library, complete with internet points. Meals can be eaten inside, on the beach or by the pool, with a combination of buffet lunches, table d'hôte dinners and themed evenings on offer. Much of the food is seasonal, often produced on the island, and the menus are both varied and tasty.

Guests have free run of the island. Wandering around the forested interior and beaches will lead you past some beautiful scenery, as well as the giant tortoise enclosure, the 1881 lighthouse and the ecumenical chapel, dating to the island's plantation heyday. With the island's focus turning to tourism and conservation, resident environmentalists are available for guided tours, either on foot or by electric buggy. Birdlife includes noddies, terns, plovers, whimbrels, tropicbirds and frigatebirds. For sub-aqua enthusiasts, escorted snorkelling and diving (including PADI courses) can be arranged from the watersports centre, which also supplies kayaks and offers big-game fishing trips. A tennis court, jogging trails, swimming pool



The natural and stylish lounge at Denis Island

and even in-room massages complete the package.

For families, Denis is relaxed and comfortable, with easy access and plenty of activities; for couples seeking a romantic get-away, there are long, secluded stretches of beach with a real feeling of a faraway island idyll.



Many of the stunning, white beaches which fringe Denis Island are often deserted