



## DESROCHES ISLAND

Far-flung Desroches is the primary island in the coralline Amirante Archipelago, part of the Outer Islands of Seychelles. Over 120 miles southwest of Mahé, and the furthest afield of the private islands mentioned here, it's an elongated island with a working heartland, surrounded by almost ten miles of coconut-fringed, powder-fine sandy beaches and some lovely coral reefs.

Roughly four miles by one mile in size, and criss-crossed with clear paths, the island is big enough to explore by bicycle and to find complete seclusion, yet small enough to be manageable – and always in easy reach of a cold drink and some pampering.

Historically part of the British Indian Ocean Territory, Desroches was returned to Seychelles in 1976 following the islands' independence. British explorers originally named it 'Wood Island' for its dense tree cover, and its small coconut plantation fast became important in the production of copra, which still employs around 20 people who live in the central village.

### DESROCHES ISLAND RESORT

Desroches Island Resort is a colonial-style retreat with a distinctly European air, contemporary style, a good range of activities and excellent food. It's expanded considerably in the last few years and now has a wide choice of accommodation. The 20 semi-detached 'beach suites', which were part of the original resort, run along Desroches' western beach. Contemporary and tastefully finished, they feature highly polished floors, neutral fabrics and natural *objets d'art*, as well as a partially outdoor bath/shower en suite. In each, a small lounge area leads to a large, shady terrace, the palm-filled garden and the sea.

Slightly north of these, all of the island's newer villas lie along the superb Madame Zabre beach, on Desroches' northwest coast. Four one-bedroom 'beach villas' are, paradoxically, set back from the beach – but each comes with a private pool and butler service. Further along the north coast, there are 23 large 'luxury beach villas' – each less than 100m from the beach. Aimed at large families and groups of friends who want to enjoy their own

company, whilst retaining the option to share the main resort facilities, each villa has four bedrooms and a well-equipped modern kitchen, and is designed around an inviting ocean-view infinity pool. A vast five-bedroom 'Presidential villa' is the most opulent residence on the island.

The resort's main facilities, which are shared by all guests, are arranged around a sparkling T-shaped swimming pool, complete with a bridge between the bar and reception. Surrounded by comfortable, shaded loungers, it's a peaceful spot to while away sun-kissed afternoons, whilst by night, it transforms to reveal a romantic restaurant terrace. Desroches is a 'toes-in the sand' experience – chic without a dress-code, but the stylish setting and superb cuisine mean that smart attire and high heels will not go amiss for ladies who like to dress up!

A new Creole Restaurant is due to open in one of the island's old plantation homes in late 2011. Guests will then have a choice of dining: in the resort's main area, or at the new restaurant just a short buggy drive or walk away.



Explore Desroches by bike: find your own deserted beach

To work up an appetite, activities abound on Desroches, yet the island is big enough that you'll see few other visitors. With helpful island maps, clear paths and a bicycle, you're free to set out in search of stunning beaches or a working plantation. Plus, with a day's notice, tasty picnic lunches can be delivered to you anywhere on the island.

There's good snorkelling close to shore, and the well-equipped PADI dive centre offers beginners' and advanced courses. For keen fishermen, both deep-sea and salt-water fly-fishing (catch-and-release) can be arranged, while boat trips, pedalos, windsurfing and kayaking are further options. There is a floodlit tennis court for fitness fanatics and a team of Balinese massage therapists for those seeking total relaxation. New in August 2011 is the Escape spa offering 'Dr Hauschka' facials and organic island products for body treatments. In a quiet spot, it has four beautiful treatment rooms overlooking the ocean.



Keeping active at Desroches