

JOY OF SAILING
Royal Huisman's Wisp

CONSERVATION VOYAGES
Save the oceans from your yacht

LUXURY LOWDOWN
Top adventure watches

ShowBoats

International

**EXTREME
DESIGNS**
12 superyacht concepts
to inspire you



April 2015

NEW LOOK
more lux
& lifestyle

THE ULTIMATE POOL PARTY

Graceful's 50-foot feature makes a splash

PARADISE FOUND

Fiji's hottest boutique resorts – by boat

FIJI: FROM BOAT TO BOUTIQUE

When you are ready to trade the yacht for some time on dry land, Fiji gives visitors plenty of luxurious options. But which is right for you? *Kara Murphy* visits four boutique resorts.



LAUCALA ISLAND

Guests at 3,500-acre Laucala Island might consider stopping by the Rock Lounge, which occupies a spectacular position overlooking Seagrass Bay, to say hello to lonely bartender Joeli. One of five bars at this 25-villa exclusive private island resort – and the farthest from the resort's five restaurants – Joeli has limited opportunity to welcome guests with vitamin shots and cool, scented towels and create delicious signature cocktails such as the Essence of Ginger. How many cocktails does he make per day, on average? "About two," says Joeli. So how does he pass the time? "Talking to the orange doves."

With 385 staff and a maximum of just 72 guests, Laucala has one of the highest staff-to-guest ratios in the world – plus it tends to have only about 30 to 40 percent occupancy



BY BOAT

As a private island, Laucala only welcomes yachts with guests staying at Laucala Island for at least one night. Yachts of any size can moor close to the resort and the island is accessible by tender. The closest marina is Savusavu in Vanua Levu (approximately five nautical miles away). Berths can accommodate up to 79 yachts with a maximum length of 131 feet. The marina offers electric, sewage pump-out and freshwater.



BEST FOR adventure

FIJI BOUTIQUES



FIND IT

Laucala Island is 12 nautical miles east of Taveuni, Fiji. Laucala's King Air B200 makes the 50-minute flight from Nadi and is also available for private charter from Nadi or Suva. The island can handle private jets and can organize international arrivals as well. www.laucala.com

The inclusion of three varieties of Red Bull in mini-bars is clearly appropriate... and guests may find they need the boost. An 18-hole, David

McLay Kidd-designed championship golf course, set against the mountain, with a PGA-circuit professional on site to assist, tempts some. Others sign up for the farm tour, where they explore the resort's 240-acre organic farm and learn about its role in Laucala's 85 percent self-sustainability. Eight horses take guests through coconut groves and along a deserted sandy beach. Plus, there's game fishing, sailing, a cultural village, a 20,000-square-foot-plus lagoon-style swimming pool (the largest in Fiji), round-island Jet Ski tours, hiking tours and proximity to some of Fiji's most celebrated scuba diving sites, including the Great White Wall. But nothing says "exclusive adventure" more, perhaps, than the resort's DeepFlight Super Falcon Mark II submersible, which takes one lucky guest at a time on a James Bond-style in-water journey along the house reef, where human explorers and turtles exchange fleeting looks of mutual fascination.

except during Christmas holidays and island buy-outs. Its owner, publicity-shy, multi-billionaire Red Bull co-founder Dietrich Mateschitz (known as DM on the island), seems more interested in offering Fiji's finest luxury experience than turning a profit.

He purchased Laucala from Malcolm Forbes' heirs in 2003 as a personal retreat, and the resort, which covers about 15 percent of the island's northern section, opened in 2008. DM's personal residence, the \$40,000 (plus tax) per night, three-bedroom, 360-degree-view Hilltop villa "Delana," is only available upon application. The other 24 villas – each with its own golf buggy, red and green coconuts to indicate privacy preferences, a Lali drum instead of a doorbell, an infinity edge pool, indoor and outdoor bathing areas and relaxed, organic designs incorporating local sago palm leaf thatch roofs, dogo timber and Fijian mahogany furniture – are more easily secured. While all villas are exquisite, a couple boast unique features: the two-bedroom over-water residence "Wai," where the private pool cuts into the rocks, and the multi-level, one-bedroom Peninsula mansion "Udu."

Encouraging spontaneity, chefs at all restaurants, including the colonial-style, degustation dining Plantation House, are prepared to receive guests, no reservation required. And in-villa dining from any menu is also an option.



PHOTOGRAPHS: KARA MURPHY (OPPOSITE PAGE, BOTTOM RIGHT, THIS PAGE, TOP RIGHT, BOTTOM)



FIND IT
 Yasawa Island Resort & Spa is located 59 nautical miles north of Nadi, on the northernmost island in the Yasawa group. Island Hoppers (www.islandhoppersfiji.com) operates 30-minute charter flights between Nadi Airport and the resort. Guests can also arrive via private aircraft, seaplane, private yacht or ferry.
www.yasawa.com



JEAN-MICHEL COUSTEAU RESORT

Request a wake-up call at Jean-Michel Cousteau, a sublime 17-acre eco-resort on the outskirts of Savusavu, Vanua Levu, Fiji's second-largest island, and a shrill ring won't halt your slumber. The resort's 25 Fijian-style bures don't have phones – or televisions, for that matter – so the “wake-up call” is a staff member, who ambles up and bellows a deep, somewhat ominous, “Buuuuulaaaaa!” (“hello” in Fiji).

Why ask for a wake-up call? Well, you might want to go for a guided pre-breakfast hike in the lush surrounding hills. Or join a group yoga session. Or enjoy a leisurely a la carte breakfast before a morning scuba dive in the marine reserve just offshore. Or you might just want to have an hour or so of quality time with your children before they insist on abandoning you for the deservedly famous complimentary Bula Club, a kids' club tucked away from the resort's main building and open from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily.

This special club aims to “help children better understand and appreciate the world around them while learning how they can conserve and protect it” – certainly appropriate for a place bearing the Cousteau name. And the lineup of activities is impressive: kite flying, snorkeling, pool games, a hermit crab hunt and more. Club facilities include three pools (a freshwater swimming pool and a kiddies' pool, both with water slides, as well as a toddlers' pool), jungle gym, sandbox, arts and crafts activities center, a zip line and a tree house, built into a mighty tree. Every child ages five and younger receives a dedicated nanny, and children between the ages of six and 12 are assigned a buddy who looks after no more than five kids. And, while parents are welcome at the club, they can spend the day following their own, grown-up bliss.

Spend the morning diving the Koro Sea with the onsite Jean-Michel Cousteau Dive Center. The resident marine biologist, Johnny Singh, accompanies guides and divers to nearby sites such as Alice in Wonderland, where small reef sharks rest beneath mighty mushroom-shaped corals, and, a bit farther afield, the world-class soft corals and drop-offs of the Namena Marine Reserve. Later, opt for a Champagne picnic on private Naviavia Island, a 10-minute boat ride away. Or pass a couple of hours at one of two beachside spa bures, where the sweeping motions of a traditional Bobo massage wash cares away like waves of the sea.

FIND IT
 Savusavu on Vanua Levu is 124 nautical miles northeast of Nadi. Island Hoppers (www.islandhoppersfiji.com) operates one-hour charter flights between Nadi Airport and Savusavu. Pacific Island Seaplanes offers a private charter service from Nadi to the end of the resort jetty.
www.fjiresort.com

BEST FOR beaches
 FIJI BOUTIQUES

BY BOAT

Nadi has the closest major marina, Port Denarau Marin, with 54 berths, 16 of them for superyachts ranging from 98 feet to 279 feet. Water, electricity and WiFi are all available. Adjacent to the marina is a post office, bank and a well-stocked supermarket.

YASAWA ISLAND RESORT & SPA

Lunchtime is a solitary affair in the open-air, ocean-view restaurant at remote Yasawa Island Resort & Spa, the only accommodations on the Yasawa archipelago's main, northernmost island. Most of the guests of the property's 18 bures (traditional Fijian bungalows) have disappeared. Boats whisked them off after breakfast to one of 11 private stretches of sand, where they'll spend several hours relaxing under a shade umbrella with a cooler full of grilled lobster, prawns, fish and salads (or whatever else they want), occasionally combating the heat with a dip in the South Pacific Ocean to spy on the tropical fish below.

Yasawa Island Resort & Spa opened in 1991, thanks, in part, to Manasa Ragigia, a local from Bukama Village, the closest of the island's six villages to the resort. Ragigia had been working at another resort for more than a decade; while there, he became good friends with regular guest Norm Bolitho, who said he wanted to build a small resort somewhere in Fiji. Manasa suggested his home island. First, they had to convince Bukama's chief and village elders to allow them to lease the land and build, and then they sought government approvals. For the latter, they were required to “get permission from every chief in every village on every island in the Yasawas,” says co-owner Erin McCann. Which they did. Staff members share their culture with guests via kava ceremonies, dancing, traditional feasts, Sunday choir, church visits, medicine walks and weaving demonstrations.

If you haven't chosen a private beach for the day, having a resort almost all to yourself midday isn't a terrible thing. You can don a mask and snorkel a short stroll from your bure, where you'll find your personal beach hut and hammock. Best of all, fellow guests are unlikely to notice if you indulge in more than one dessert after finishing your lobster salad. Three pastry chefs are on site, and their creations – lemon tart with crème fraiche, chocolate mud cake, ginger crème brûlée – are likely to make you believe that *Yasawa*, one of 15 words in the Fijian language for heaven, is just that.



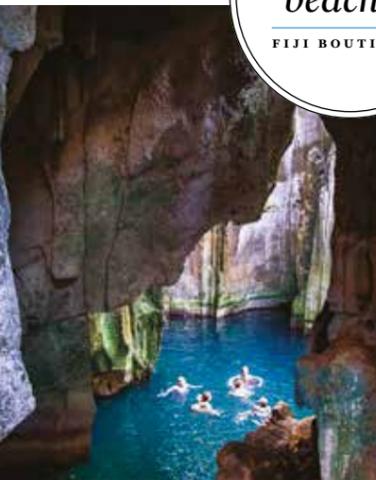
BEST FOR families
 FIJI BOUTIQUES

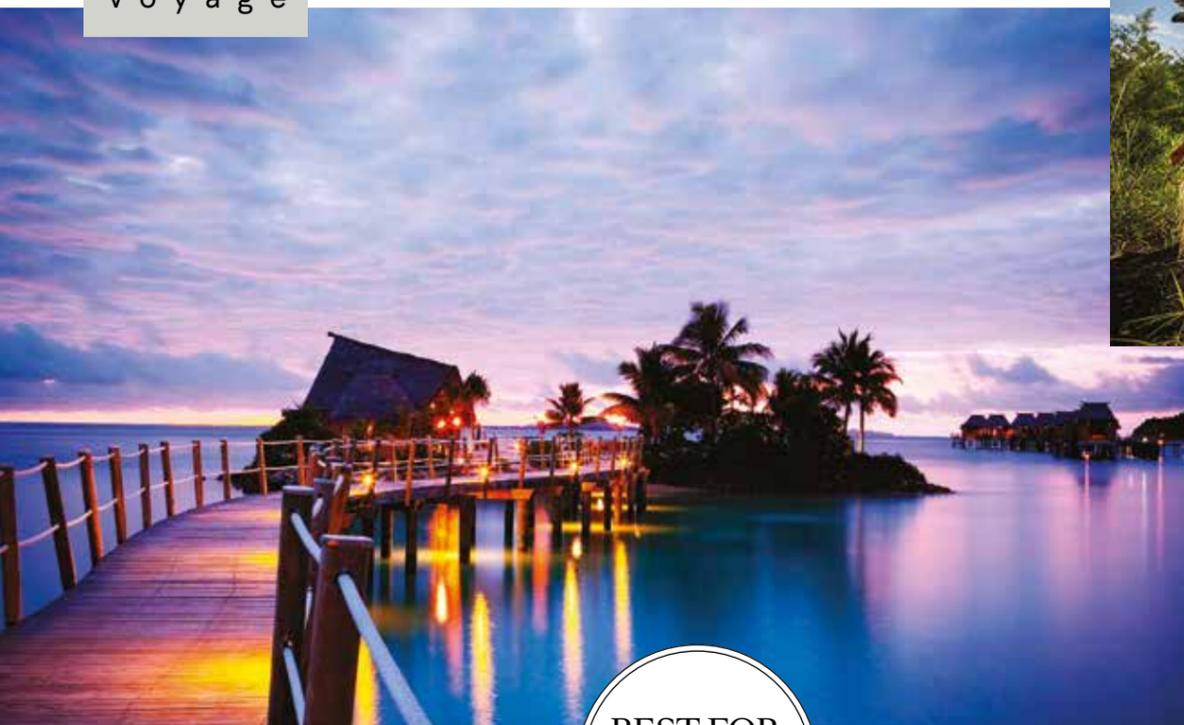
BY BOAT

Copra Shed Marina in Savusavu is three-and-a-half nautical miles away. It has four deep-water stern-to berths for yachts up to 65 feet, 22 moorings for smaller boats up to 49 feet and one that can hold up to a 118-foot yacht. Additionally, there are floating docks that can take 26 yachts up to 65 feet. Services include fuel, Internet and maintenance.



PHOTOGRAPHS: KARA MURPHY (OPPOSITE PAGE: LEFT CENTER, THIS PAGE: SECOND FROM TOP, BOTTOM RIGHT)





BEST FOR
romance

FIJI BOUTIQUES



FIND IT

Malolo Island in the Mamanuca archipelago is 13 nautical miles west of Nadi Airport. A fast catamaran (www.ssc.com.fj), private tender, seaplane or helicopter can get you there. www.likulikulagoon.com



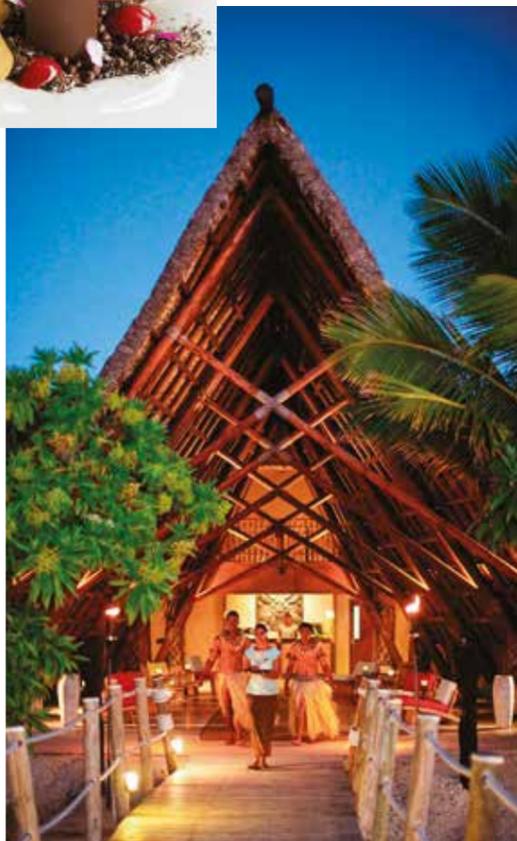
BY BOAT

Musket Cove Marina is approximately four nautical miles from the resort. The marina has 32 stern-to berths for yachts up to 79 feet. Outside of the marina, there are 25 deep-water moorings – two for yachts up to 79 feet and the rest for up to 39 feet. Services include water, fuel, WiFi and a general store.



Fiji's other luxury options. Except for Laucala Island's one over-water villa, these are the country's only accommodations over water, and the only ones boasting floor windows and a down-light, illuminating the tropical fish in the marine reserve below. However, Likuliku's other 35 bures have plenty of features to satisfy romantics. Coconut necklaces hung on each bure's main door indicate a desire for privacy. CD players with mellow Fijian music contribute to the chilled-out vibe. The day beds and, in the case of the split-level deluxe beachfront bures, five-foot-deep personal plunge pools inspire sunset contemplation, best served with a glass of Champagne and a morsel or two from the bure's perpetually full fresh-baked cookie jar. And the Tatadra Spa ("house of dreams"), positioned at the lagoon edge, is a soothing place to enjoy a couples' aromatic massage – particularly at high tide, when the water's gentle lapping against the shore may put you to sleep.

Naps are a reasonable idea, particularly since Likuliku's premier tour is an early one. This three-hour island-hopping trip departs at 7 a.m. and visits several of the Mamanuca Islands, including Monuriki, where the 2000 movie "Cast Away" with Tom Hanks was filmed. Guests return to the resort in time for a late breakfast at the open-air Fijiana restaurant: fresh papaya with local honey from the continental buffet followed by twice-cooked Gruyère cheese soufflé with sautéed mushroom, chili and shallot, perhaps? Even allowing for a nap, you have much of the day to work it off, snorkeling in the picturesque lagoon or on a guided trip to a nearby reef, scuba diving, paddle boarding, kayaking, hiking to Jonas Lookout and maybe playing "chase-the-volleyball" with Coco. You can even call the ball "Wilson" if you want. ☐



LIKULIKU LAGOON RESORT

Two welcoming committees greet visitors when they arrive at Likuliku Lagoon ("calm waters" in the Malolo dialect): a group of talented staff singers and a playful golden Labrador named Coco. The resort general manager's four-legged mate may be too busy playing on the beach to run up and give guests a proper welcome lick; however, the sight of her wagging tail will make dog-lovers feel instantly at home.

An adults-only resort, Likuliku's 10 over-water bures are its most famous point of difference from

PHOTOGRAPHS: KARA MURPHY (CENTER, INSET)

