

*KENSINGTON & CHELSEA*

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# *REVIEW*

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## The Very Merry Issue

Filling your stockings with seasonal gifts, trips, beauty tips and more...



## Editors' Letter

It's here.

You'll have noticed the nip in the air, an added twinkle to the streetlights, the uptick in cheeriness: yes, we're just an ironically hideous jumper and set of reindeer deely-boppers away from Christmas. But, we're no Scrooges at the KCR...no, we've been prepping for the season in earnest. We've been beautifying ourselves in readiness for December's party circuit, found the cosiest, most festive stays in London and beyond, and compiled the luxury gifts we'd like to see under our trees.

Follow us to the north of England and the West Country, or be tempted by a sun-kissed break in Mauritius; learn a little about Chelsea's history; make a wish list; and read all about the tinsel-timed events in the Royal Borough. Wherever you celebrate and whoever you celebrate with, we hope the season is filled with light and laughter.

Ding dong.

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# THE SERENITY OF MAURITIUS

## **JAMES MASSOUD celebrates 50 years of independence in Mauritius**

Mauritius – the home of late bird, the Dodo – celebrated its 50th year of independence from British rule this year, the Indian Ocean island has been in jubilant mood, and rightfully so. The country is thriving economically and the next step in their exciting growth sees them reaching for the stars, quite literally.

### **ECONOMY**

When people think of competitive African economies, they're naturally inclined to think of oil-rich Nigeria or the mining powerhouse of South Africa, both of whom are part of the economic superpowers of the MINT and BRICS nations respectively. But in the last few years the little island of Mauritius has quietly overtaken South Africa and challenged Nigeria as the continent's leading competitive economy. Spanning 800 square miles, with a population of 1.3 million, this beautiful and fascinating country is a religious and ethnically diverse mix of people of Indian, Chinese, African and French heritage who live harmoniously and proudly with one another. The proof is in their political stability; the island has an excellent track record in peaceful transitions of power, with free and fair elections regularly taking place since 1968. So, how does the country make its money? More than 50 per cent of the island's land is arable, with sugarcane taking up 90 per cent of that, making it the country's major export. But Mauritius has been successful in diversifying its economy through salt, textiles and clothing, jewellery and watches, and finance – especially banking and business outsourcing.

### **TOURISM**

Of course, tourism is another huge draw for this tropical island, with honeymooners and luxury-travel seekers flocking to the country's West Coast (the East Coast is less touristy as it's windier – but it's popular with water sports enthusiasts). From the north coast of Mauritius all the way down to the south, you'll find five-star luxury resorts. And yes, it is breathtakingly beautiful, with tropical palm-fringed beaches and cobalt blue seas, and jagged volcanic mountains in the background. But, Mauritius has so much more than postcard-ready scenery. Foodies will love capital city Port Louis and its markets. My Moris is a cultural touring company that will guide you through the labyrinth of stalls and talk you through the cultural background of this special place, while tantalising your taste-buds with new flavours. Tiptle enthusiasts should take a tour of the rum distilleries here, particularly the Rhumerie de Chamarel – an Instagrammable location with an amazing variety of rums. Thrill seekers can get their fix by climbing the equally beautiful Tamarin Falls. I could go on, but I'll leave the exploration to you. So, where should your base be whilst in Mauritius?

### **MARADIVA**

The country's leading five-star resort is independent, unique and also celebrating a milestone: its 10th anniversary. Maradiva is an award-winning paradise, the only resort on the island to offer villa-only accommodation – 65 of them, to be precise – each with its own private pool. Taking inspiration from its surroundings, the hotel's predominant colour is blue, with different shades in the lagoon and private pools made of slate. It's dressed with wood and leather colonial-style furniture and Hermès wallpaper and fabrics which reflect the warm gold and orange tones of the sun. There is a presence of wood everywhere: traditional black basalt of the island, Jaisalmer wood imported from Rajasthan,

**'Yes, it is breathtakingly beautiful, with tropical palm-fringed beaches and cobalt blue seas, and jagged volcanic mountains in the background.'**



palisander wood from the neighbouring island of Madagascar and teak from Burma make Maradiva a melting pot of local and Indian design. Many Londoners will be familiar with Maradiva's Ayurvedic spa after they hosted a pop-up in Harrods, while many others will get to know their superb onsite restaurants, including the Teppan grill and Cilantro, the signature Indian fine-dining venue. But there's one thing that really sets Maradiva apart from the rest...

**HOLLYWOOD**

Maradiva is the first hotel in Mauritius to act as the backdrop to a new Hollywood movie: *Serenity*, starring heavyweight A-listers Matthew McConaughey and Anne Hathaway. It's a neo-noir thriller, written and directed by Steven Knight. Indeed, the first Hollywood production shoot in the country was able to secure a 39 per cent rebate on a budget of \$25 million. It was filmed during the country's winter season (late July to September), and productions can receive a rebate of up to 40 per cent to cover their local expenditure, making it an attractive and lucrative setting for future feature films, documentaries and television series. As producer Jeremy Nathan explained in a recent interview with *Variety*, 'There's a great openness and a great willingness to get the industry up and running. It's an embryonic industry, but it's growing at a very rapid speed.' In other words, watch this space.

For more information and to book a stay visit [www.maradiva.com](http://www.maradiva.com)  
 My Moris - [www.mymoris.mu](http://www.mymoris.mu)  
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