

DESROCHES IS A
DREAM ISLAND.
PARADISE IS
LOST NO MORE

PARADISE FOUND

Michelle Russell enjoys a family holiday on Desroches Island

The Seychelles has been all the more in the spotlight as a holiday destination following the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge's decision to honeymoon there. And one of the most exclusive resorts is Desroches Island, a stunning private island accessible by plane, 45 minutes from the main island of Mahé.

Many hotels and resorts in the Seychelles focus solely on couples, but Desroches Island welcomes families of all sizes. Beach suites are generously appointed and perfect for two adults with one child, while luxury beach villas comfortably sleep up to six adults and have their own private pool, living and dining areas and fully-equipped kitchens.

Larger groups can stay in a dibwa residence, large enough to sleep up to eight, with three private pools and expansive living and entertaining areas.

The boys could hardly contain themselves as our plane made its descent onto Desroches. On the beach a small army of smiling staff welcomed us to the island. We felt like VIPs from the moment we stepped onto the sand. ►



Inside our luxury beach villa the boys were delighted to find four bicycles, and they enjoyed hours of fun cycling around the island. During our week we relaxed in the pool, snorkelled in the crystal-clear turquoise waters of the Indian Ocean, fed giant tortoises at the Giant Tortoise Breeding Sanctuary and enjoyed a private fishing trip.

Despite some protest from my eight-year-old that a nature trail with a member of the island Conservation Team was not his idea of holiday fun, he was absolutely engaged throughout the two-hour walk, where we learned about the island's flora and fauna. Our guide pitched his tour at just the right level for the boys and was soon being inundated with questions from them both.

Our next bike ride proved to be a lengthy one as the boys were keen to explore further, eager to retrace the walk we had done with the guide and spot new things for themselves. This was so much more rewarding for everyone than a morning making collages from dried pasta, which is often the stuff to be had at holiday kids clubs.

There were no arguments about trivial things that week and our older son became much more tolerant of the younger. Our shoulders relaxed, we ran barefoot on the sand and enjoyed real quality family time.

The lack of a mobile signal at Desroches keeps work firmly off limits. And while all public areas, dibwa residences and luxury beach villas have complimentary wi-fi, we did not even consider logging onto the internet to check emails.

Desroches' Escape Spa is the first in the Indian Ocean to offer the exclusive range of Elemental Herbology treatments and is unlike any spa I have ever been to. Designed to reflect the island's

natural beauty, it's flooded with natural daylight and utterly still, allowing you to be totally at one with your surroundings.

The spa offers taster sessions for children over seven years old and we booked the boys in for an early evening session. They were too relaxed to go to the restaurant that evening and instead we enjoyed a delicious meal served in our villa.

A butler and chef can be arranged to take care of you privately at any time on Desroches, and on the last night I booked their services for a romantic meal of freshly-caught seafood, fine wines and a sumptuous dessert.

Desroches is a dream destination if there ever was one. As a family we enjoyed blissful days full of laughter. As a couple, my husband and I enjoyed precious, peaceful time together. Paradise is lost no more. ■

A seven-night all-inclusive stay in a beach villa with a pool for a family of five costs from £3,949 per person in July/August. The price is based on two adults and three children under 12 years and includes one night free, an early-booking discount, a children's offer, plus return international flights from London and inter-island flights to and from Desroches.

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