

PARADISE FOUND

Maldives or Seychelles? It's the age-old question for those in SEARCH of a dream holiday. Two InStylers discover different takes on ISLAND life

PUBLISHING DIRECTOR *Rita Lewis experiences total relaxation on the romantic Baros Island in the Maldives*

After a ridiculously busy week, I pack my suitcase in a panic and dash to Heathrow. I sink into my plane seat feeling frazzled, with work worries still on my mind. Then, 14 hours later, after a long but bearable flight, including a short stopover in Abu Dhabi, I arrive in the Maldives' capital, Malé. The Maldives are a string of atolls (islands formed of coral) in the Indian Ocean, situated south-west of India. A mecca for divers thanks to coral reefs and abundant marine life, and honeymooners owing to pristine beaches and turquoise lagoons, they are home to many luxury resorts, including my final destination – Baros Island.

I walk a few metres across the road from the airport to the quay, where a smart speedboat is waiting to whisk me away. As we approach Baros 20 minutes later, my jaw drops at the gleaming white beach and swaying palm trees. I'm helped off the boat by a man in a perfectly pressed uniform who already knows my name. En route to my room, I soak up the scenery: the palm fronds cast pretty shadows on the ground, and the bright tropical flowers that line the paths are so perfect, it looks like



AMONG THE ATTRACTIONS OF BAROS IN THE MALDIVES ARE A VIBRANT REEF AND A SERENE SPA, LEFT