

ON YOUR BIKE: CYCLING IS A GREAT WAY TO EXPLORE DESROCHES



DESROCHES'S RESTAURANT AND POOL. ABOVE, A BEACH SUITE



**GO TO THE SEYCHELLES IF...**

- 1. You want more than white beaches.** From mountainous Mahé to lush, green Desroches, the Seychelles offer a diverse natural beauty.
- 2. You're adventurous.** The focus is less on romance, more on activity. Get involved with big-game fishing, cycling, kayaking and nature walks.
- 3. You're into eco-tourism.** The authorities are acutely aware of the importance of looking after the environment. Resorts go to huge efforts to cause minimal stress to their surroundings, and guests are often encouraged to join in with hands-on conservation.

small island is a ten-minute boat ride away. You'll arrive to see a table already set up for breakfast for two; a silver-service meal fit for royalty follows, before you're left to wander the island alone with just a few passing birds for company – heaven.

After a week in paradise, I can barely remember my colleagues' names, never mind the work I was stressing about a week ago, and I leave the island feeling totally rested.

**BEAUTY WRITER** *Jessica Tibbitts discovers adventure and activities galore on Desroches Island, Seychelles*

As I touch down on Mahé, the Seychelles' largest island, about 900 miles east of mainland Africa, the first thing I notice is the tree-covered mountain towering behind the airport. It's completely stunning and unexpected. I was anticipating swathes of sand and sea, not lush, Tolkien-esque landscape. After a short wait, I board a tiny eight-seat plane to my final destination, Desroches – a privately owned island 140 miles south-west of Mahé. As we approach the palm-fringed landing strip 40 minutes later, I spot a group of at least ten staff waving us in,

**“You feel as though you're a Robinson Crusoe castaway on your very own tropical island”**



waiting to greet us with cold towels and big grins. What a welcome.

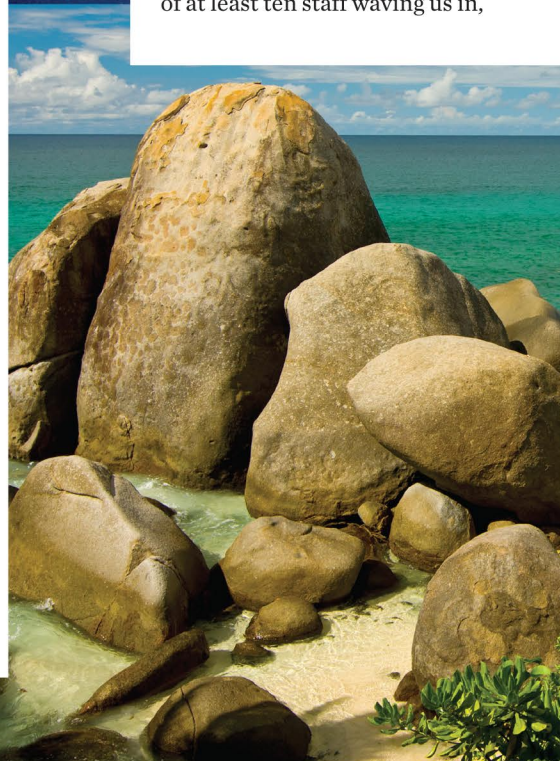
Tourism became the Seychelles' main industry after the international airport opened in 1971. Early on, it gained a reputation as a top

destination with decidedly average resorts, but thanks to major investment over the last few decades, it's well and truly moved on, with five-star service and accommodation to rival the best. Desroches is a brilliant example of that progress. It's immediately clear the resort runs like clockwork as I'm handed a cool,

fresh coconut water; my luggage seamlessly disappears from under my sweaty palms; and I'm whisked away on a buggy to my room.

My home for the week is a Dibwa Retreat, set 100 metres back from the sea. There's a huge kitchen and entertaining area, and a private infinity pool, while the bedroom, wrapped in floor-to-ceiling windows, is about four times the size of my flat.

The decor is luxurious, but in an understated way. It's clear the accommodation has been designed with the natural environment in mind – beautiful furniture made in the island's workshop from the casuarina tree is scattered with linen cushions in a palette of cool greens and blues. The feeling of being at >



THERE'S MORE TO THE DESROCHES COASTLINE THAN SILKY SANDS

