



FAR LEFT AND BELOW, A DIBWA RETREAT, AKA HEAVEN ON EARTH



ZEN OUT WITH SUNSET YOGA

one with nature continues outside: the garden leading to the beach isn't perfectly manicured, rather a little wild – dotted with tropical plants and pretty flowers.

I spend the rest of the afternoon basking in the sun on the pristine beach, and in four hours only see two passers-by. There are 50 villas and suites on the four-mile-long island, but they're so discreetly nestled in the surroundings, you feel as though you're a Robinson Crusoe castaway on your very own tropical island.

At dinner that night there's a fun, relaxed vibe, and I'm struck by the distinct lack of couples: out of 40 guests, there's only one pair of honeymooners; the rest are families and groups of friends. I get chatting to some of my fellow holidaymakers, and as they excitedly reel off lists of the activities I have to try – cycling, yoga, feeding the giant tortoises – I start to realise there's a lot more to Desroches than just sun, sea and sand.

As the fishing in the Seychelles is world-class, I make an appointment at Cast Away, the aquatic activity centre, and head out on the island's boat the next morning, feeling slightly worse for wear. Two adrenalin-pumping hours later, we've hauled in a 35kg yellowfin tuna and two wahoo (huge tropical fish). This isn't for the faint-hearted – the sea can be rough outside the reef, and if you're averse to blood, it's best



avoided (especially on a hangover!) – but watching fellow guests tuck into the fish you've just caught for lunch is supremely satisfying.

As Desroches is so remote, it has become incredibly self-sufficient. Solar panels are used as the main source of energy, and the fresh water comes from the on-island desalination plant. Evidence of the huge efforts made to conserve the natural habitat is visible everywhere. Visit the giant-tortoise enclosure to see the breeding programme in action and feed the adorable babies.

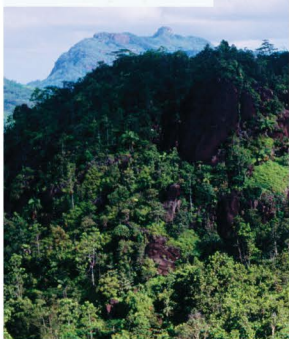
Another must-visit spot is the Escape Spa on the island's eastern tip. Book in for a late-afternoon ayurvedic massage then try sunset yoga in the pagoda overlooking the sea; it has to be one of the most calming experiences of my life.

As I get ready to board the plane back to Mahé, I realise the only sunbathing I did all week was on the afternoon I arrived. Yes, Desroches is a tropical paradise perfect for romance, but with so many experiences on offer, it's much more than a honeymoon destination. □

GETTING THERE

Stay seven nights at Desroches from £3,149 per person, all-inclusive, based on two adults sharing a Beach Suite, including return flights from Gatwick with Emirates and flights to the resort. Or upgrade to a Dibwa Retreat from £5,349. Valid for travel in September 2014.

Book through Just Seychelles (020 8840 0969, justseychelles.com). Find out more at desroches-island.com.



PRISTINE BEACHES AND LUSH HILLS ON DESROCHES



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