

LINGER LONGER

Words Nicky Manson
Photographs courtesy Long Beach

*If there were ever a book written about Long Beach resort in Mauritius, it would be titled **The Long Walk to Paradise***



Opposite This magical beach and clear ocean waters are all yours when you stay at Long Beach Resort. **Above** It's a true case of aqua vitae as the water of the infinity pool appears to meld with the sea.

Situated on the east coast of the sunshine island, Long Beach sits among a number of top holiday resorts primed for romance or family fun in the sun, but despite its prestigious neighbours, there's something about Long Beach ...

For starters, it's situated on the Belle Mare Peninsula, on the longest and widest beach of the entire Mauritian coastline, offering secluded sun lounging, thanks to its size. Guests will appreciate having 109m² of beach per ground-floor room.

There are 255 rooms to choose from, and you can rest assured that they are all designed so as to enjoy ocean views. Keith Mehner of Keith Interior Design was responsible for the interiors of the hotel, and one thing you will notice is that, thanks to his clever 'open-air living' design, even when you are indoors you feel as if you are outdoors.

Long Beach's architecture is definitely a talking point, as it does not follow the typical Creole design. Sun Resorts' newest brainchild's architecture and design and its shared relaxation spaces are unique on

the island. The project architect was Kevan Moses of Stauch Vorster Architects, a South African firm.

Taking a fresh approach to resort design, Kevan has produced a striking, contemporary aesthetic softened by natural forms. The genius is in the detail, such as the adjustable windbreaks that modulate the offshore breezes. The building materials were locally sourced and include volcanic stone, Balau wood (a durable tropical hardwood) and black and earth-coloured basalt rocks from neighbouring fields. The thatched roofs, made from dried sugar cane leaves, add the



Clockwise from top left The hotel rests in a paradisaal garden that's planted with some half a million plants; the lobby features the ingenious adjustable windbreaks designed by Kevan Moses of Stauch Vorster Architects, who also designed the rest of the resort; an exotic ambience mixes with modern aesthetic leanings at Shores cocktail bar and lounge; a 64m² superior beachfront room.

occasional Mauritian accent. These hard building materials are juxtaposed against the soft tropical flora. The gardens feature almost 500 000 plants, with 26 varieties of endemic species. The resort is done up in shades of grey, mint green, sea blue and coral, with small accents of tropical colours to arrest the eye. The effect is strikingly urban, especially against the white beach and natural surroundings of palm trees, natural brush, and, of course, the dramatic blue backdrop of the Indian Ocean.

The resort is suited to families and honeymooners, and because of its size, the two groups may never meet. In fact, even though the hotel was 80% full when I stayed over, there was never a crowd, and you would be forgiven for thinking that you were living on your own little private island.

There are so many areas for relaxing that you are spoilt for choice when deciding where to spend your day. Sit by the serene freshwater horizon pool, at the large heated-pool bar, on the beach or alongside the nearby lagoon. Choose to chill out on a sun lounger, a double daybed or a hammock-style bed that's big enough for the whole family, or while away the hours on your private balcony.

Facilities are top class and include a climbing wall, lap pool, gym and the beautiful Sea Spa, where treatments like the Ocean de Soleil and Soufflé de Satin will have you begging to stay longer. There is also a hair and beauty salon on site.

For the adventurous, activities include two daily snorkelling trips to enjoy the wonders down below, underwater walks incorporating an astronaut-type helmet, as well as sailing on catamarans, skiing and parasailing ... You name it, the hotel has it.

Golf enthusiasts can enjoy a round at the nearby Le Touessrok's 18-hole golf course, designed by Bernhard Langer.

For most, holiday dining is almost as important as the rest of the recreational activities, and Long Beach does not disappoint. Here the dining experience is centred on an urban-style piazza with restaurants, shops and bars. Le Marché is the traditional and international delicacy buffet. It celebrates the art of open kitchens, revealing all the cooking spaces and

creating a theatre of food. Next door is Sapori, with its delicious Italian delights, such as gnocchi and pizza. Across the courtyard is Hasu, a Japanese fine-dining restaurant, and Chopsticks, a Chinese culinary treat. So much choice and so little time ...

The piazza comes alive at night with live music, curios for sale and local dance entertainment. There is also Tides pool and beach bar for casual lunches and splendid high teas – indulge in the sweet sensation of traditional homemade macaroons and warm sugared crêpes – and the main cocktail bar and lounge, Shores, which is perfect for pre-dinner drinks.

If you plan on leaving your little slice of paradise, then Port Louis is the place to go to experience the hustle and bustle of a Mauritian city. Mauritius has a host of beautiful sites that beg to be visited. However, should you choose to stay home, Long Beach is the perfect choice. Wrap yourself in the gentle embrace of turquoise waters, white sands, lush coconut trees and the sweet scents of bougainvillea, and just be. ☺

With thanks to ...

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