

The Maldives Ultra-Luxe Collection



**An insiders guide to the top 10 Resorts
- and how to choose the right one for
you, based on your travel style**

The Art of Choosing Well

There are over 170 island resorts in the Maldives, scattered across its stunning atolls. Each promises powder-white sands, turquoise lagoons, and the iconic over water villas the Maldives is known for. So how do you begin to narrow down such a dazzling array of choice to find the one island that's perfect for you?

The differences between these resorts are far greater than they first appear. To make a confident decision, whether it's your first or fifteenth time in the Maldives — you must first understand your travel style and match it to the right resort.

But what exactly is a travel style? And how do you know yours?

Beyond the obvious expectations of a five-star resort — faultless service and immaculate accommodation — luxury is deeply personal. It's about how you *feel*.

To some, luxury is formality: dressing for dinner, attentive service, and a sense of occasion. For others, it's the opposite — barefoot luxury, no structure, and quietly intuitive service. The same contrast applies across every aspect of a resort; while some find calm in sleek, contemporary design, others feel most at home in authentic, hand-crafted spaces that reflect a true sense of place.

Your travel style isn't fixed, either. It can depend greatly on who you're travelling with. The wish list of a couple, for example, will look very different from that of a multi-generational family of twenty made up of children, teenagers, parents, and grandparents.

In this guide, we take a closer look at the Maldives' top 10 resorts — The Ultra-Luxe Collection — the very best of the best. And even at this level, not every resort is right for every traveller.



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FOLLOW



Joali

Muravandhoo Island, Raa Atoll

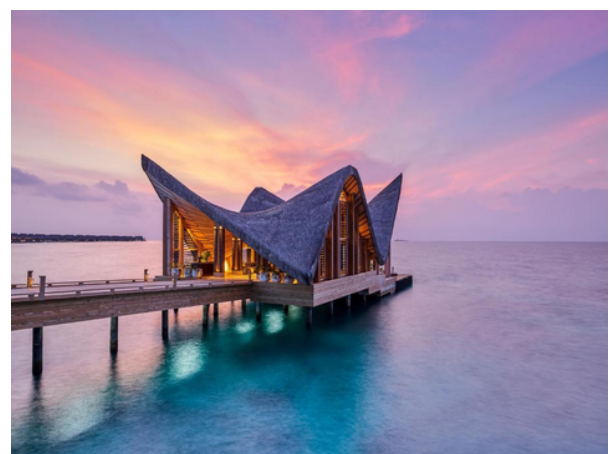
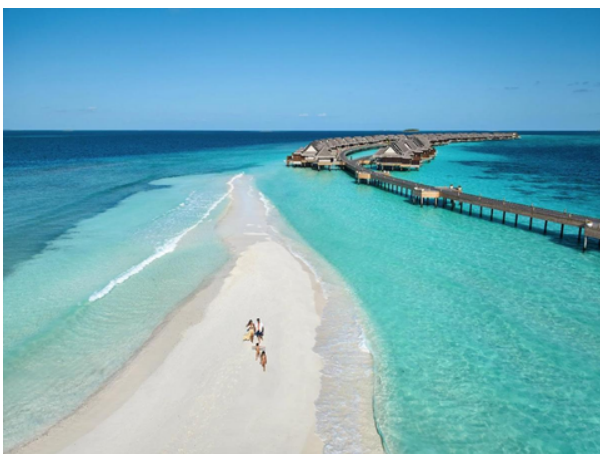


Joali is the passion project of Turkish entrepreneur and art patron Esin Güral Argat, a visionary businesswoman who had visited the Maldives countless times but never found a resort that truly spoke to her vision of luxury. So, she created her own.

Joali is a celebration of joy and artistry (the name “Joali” is derived from “joie de vivre”)—a space where every detail, from architecture to service to the scent of the air, would evoke beauty, story, and soul.

Esin brought in a global team of designers, artists, and artisans—including Istanbul-based Autoban and Tokyo's Noriyoshi Muramatsu—to craft a resort that felt more like an emotional experience than a property. The result is an island that doesn't just look beautiful—it feels intentional, deeply personal, and emotionally resonant.

For guests who've "done" the Maldives, Joali often becomes the resort they return to for the feeling they can't quite put into words.



Joali occupies a large island in the relatively quiet Raa Atoll, renowned for its rich underwater ecosystem.

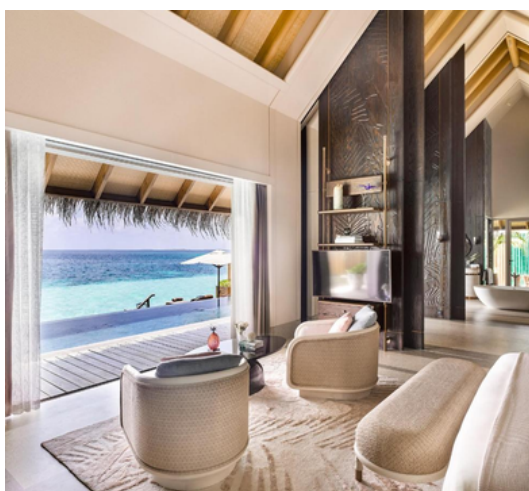
Reached by a 45-minute seaplane or private charter from Malé, design is the heartbeat of Joali. Interiors blend hand-carved woods, rose gold fixtures, and creamy stone textures. Villas are feminine, refined, and curvaceous, thoughtful objects and curated artworks tell stories at every turn.

The island's natural lush vegetation creates a strong sense of seclusion across the 78 villas, a relatively low villa count for such a large island, which is a key part of Joali's sense of space, privacy, and exclusivity.

A short 15-minute speedboat ride away lies Joali's sister property - Joali Being. Entirely dedicated to transformative wellbeing, many guests choose to split their stay between the two islands.

Effortlessly elegant, Joali strikes a beautiful balance between refined luxury and relaxed warmth. Service is intuitive, and there is no formal dress code.

Who it's for: Design lovers and dreamers. Those who notice detail and appreciate visual storytelling. Perfect for mothers and daughters, couples, friends and solo travellers.



Soneva Fushi

Kunfunadhoo Island, Baa Atoll



Soneva Fushi is a pioneer of barefoot luxury in the Maldives, blending rustic charm with ultra-luxe amenities in a setting that feels untouched, private and serene. Founded in 1995 by Sonu and Eva Shivdasani, the visionary couple behind the concept of “no news, no shoes”— the resort encourages guests to literally disconnect from the world and embrace a simpler, more conscious way of living. As one of the first eco-conscious resorts in the region, Soneva Fushi has long been the gold standard for sustainable luxury and remains a global leader in the industry.

Located in the Baa Atoll, Soneva Fushi offers one of the Maldives’ finest house reefs, accessible directly from the beach. Arrival is by seaplane or private charter, just 30 minutes from Malé. Villas are crafted from sustainable materials in natural woods and earthy tones, echoing the island’s wild beauty. The atmosphere is relaxed and informal with exceptional service that never feels overbearing.

Who it’s for: those drawn to an authentically Maldivian escape—grounded luxury in a castaway island setting - where nature leads the experience. Children especially love the Water Retreats, with slides from the top deck, straight into the lagoon.



Soneva Jani

Medhufaru Island, Noonu Atoll



Soneva Jani is the epitome of opulent escapism. As the sibling property of Soneva Fushi, it offers sleek, modern luxury in a pristine, natural setting. Located in Noonu Atoll – home to some of the Maldives most exclusive resorts and known for its rich marine life including swarming fish and playful spinner dolphins – Soneva Jani blends comfort, privacy, and striking visual design with the Maldives' unparalleled natural beauty.

Villas boasts state-of-the-art touches like retractable roofs for stargazing and glass floors for watching vibrant marine life in the lagoon below. Access is by seaplane or private charter, just 40 minutes from Malé.

Who it's for: Those drawn to cutting-edge design, vast lagoon vistas, and a lighter, dreamier version of barefoot indulgence – a contrast to Soneva Fushi's rustic charm and castaway spirit. Ideal for travellers seeking a world-class Maldivian escape with the same sustainability and eco-conscious values that define the Soneva brand.



The Nautilus

Thiladhoo Island, Baa Atoll



The Nautilus is an intimate, privately owned resort located in the heart of the Baa Atoll. The resort's founding philosophy is that time should never be a restraint, this ethos flows through every detail of the guest experience.

There are no clocks at The Nautilus. No set dining hours. No rigid schedules. You'll find no pressure to follow a routine, only the freedom to do whatever you want, whenever you feel like it. Order breakfast at 4 p.m if you wish, or book a spa treatment at midnight.

The Nautilus aims to create an experience that feels both elegant and spontaneous, where guests feel like they are the sole occupants of their own private island, with an emphasis on freedom of choice and bespoke experiences.

The resort is ideally located for guided snorkelling excursions to the nearby Hanifaru Bay, a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve renowned for its seasonal plankton blooms that attract large numbers of manta rays.



Arrival at The Nautilus is by a scenic 35-minute seaplane, or private yacht from Malé. With just 26 ocean and beach houses — many tucked into their own secluded nooks — this boutique island offers exceptional privacy, perfect for those seeking absolute peace and stillness.

Interiors are styled with bohemian beach-house elegance: warm natural textures, driftwood accents, and curved architecture inspired by the spiral of a nautilus shell.

Life on the island is deliberately unhurried. Shoes are optional. Dining is spontaneous, unscripted, and often under the stars. Service is intuitive and deeply respectful of privacy — present when needed, invisible when not.

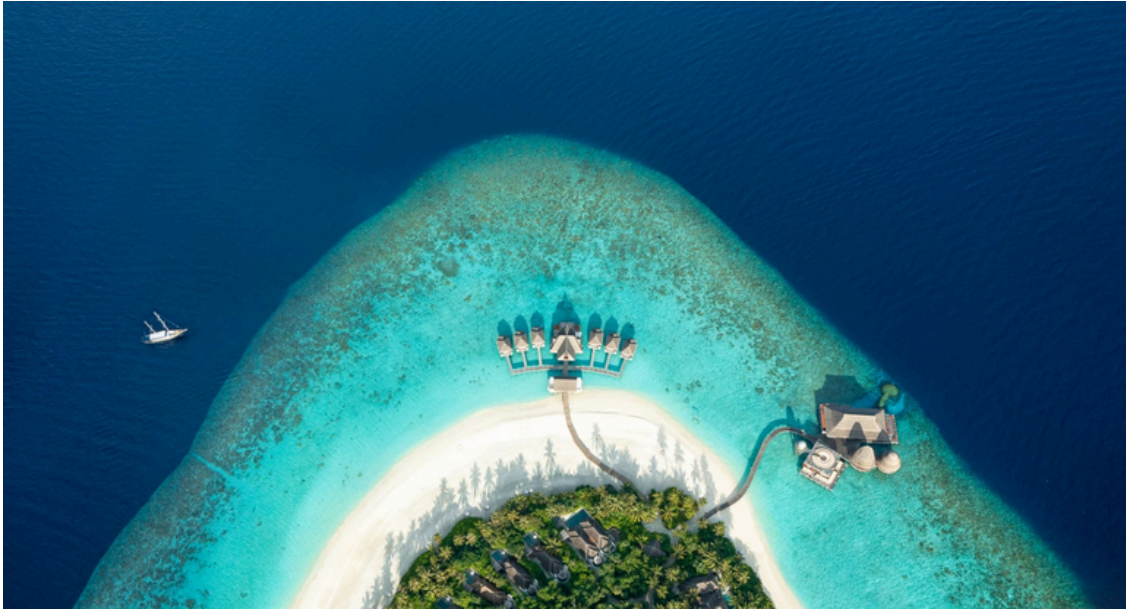
The Nautilus offers rare access to some of the Maldives' most extraordinary marine life. Its house reef is ideal for relaxed snorkelling straight from the shore, while nearby Hanifar Bay becomes a mesmerising underwater spectacle between May and October, with hundreds of manta rays gliding in formation.

Who it's for: Independent spirits, diving enthusiasts, privacy-seeking families, couples or multigenerational groups who want the feeling of their own private island. The Nautilus is also a strong choice for exclusive hire.



Anantara Kihavah

Kihavah Island, Baa Atoll



Tucked into the pristine waters of the UNESCO-protected Baa Atoll, Anantara Kihavah is a rare blend of natural beauty and experiential luxury, offering guests a sensory journey unlike any other. At the heart of the resort's identity is its signature *Sky, Sea, Land, and Fire* concept — four immersive dining and discovery experiences.

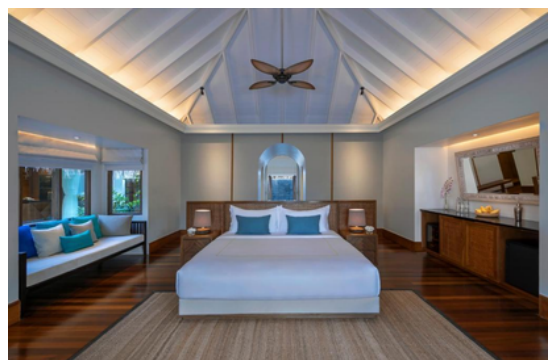
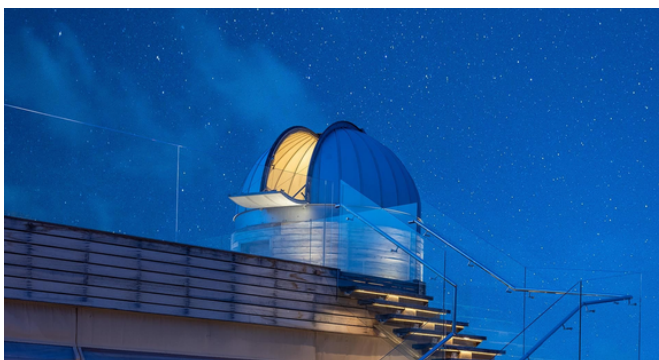
SEA takes guests beneath the waves into one of the world's only underwater wine cellars and restaurants.

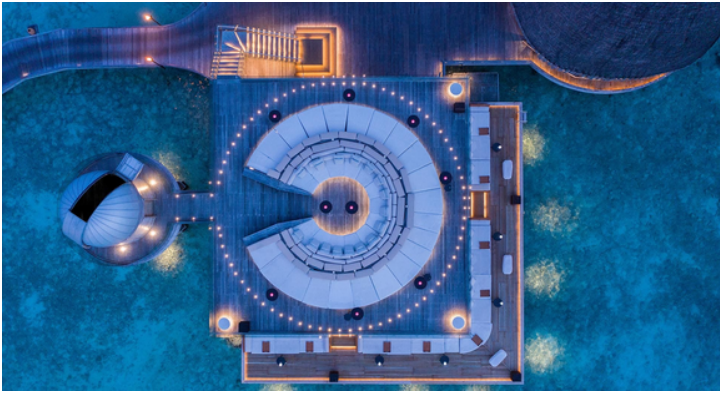
SKY invites you to the Maldives' only overwater observatory, where a resident Sky Guru guides you through the cosmos with a powerful research-grade telescope — an experience as rare as it is romantic.

LAND draws you into the jungle for intimate dining and spa rituals cocooned by nature.

FIRE brings the drama with open-flame cooking at sunset paired with crafted cocktails, and ocean breezes.

At Kihavah, days shift seamlessly between solitude and spectacle — from private villas shaded by palm trees to vibrant reef explorations, celestial discoveries, and boundary-pushing cuisine.





Anantara Kihavah is reached via a scenic 30-minute seaplane or private charter from Malé.

Kihavah's world-class house reef is a paradise for snorkellers and divers. With crystal-clear waters and abundant marine life — including manta rays and turtles — it's one of the Maldives' most spectacular underwater ecosystems.



While not ultra-remote, Kihavah offers exceptional seclusion at villa level. Villas here are among the most spacious in the Maldives, with expansive decks, oversized pools, and generous indoor-outdoor living. Select configurations can be connected, making them perfect for multi-generational families seeking both togetherness and privacy.



The design blends refined island craftsmanship with a grounded sense of place: thatched-roof villas built from sustainable timber, rich dark woods and soaring ceilings. Many villas feature thoughtful extras such as spa treatment rooms, wine fridges, and panoramic bathrooms with glass-bottom tubs that frame the reef below.

The atmosphere is refined yet relaxed — chic and contemporary with a touch of island charm. Guests enjoy barefoot luxury paired with the highest levels of service.



Who it's for: Sophisticated travellers seeking a sense of occasion without formality. Ideal for couples, honeymooners and families with older children. Particularly well suited to those who appreciate easy access to an abundant house reef.

Four Seasons Landaa Giraavaru

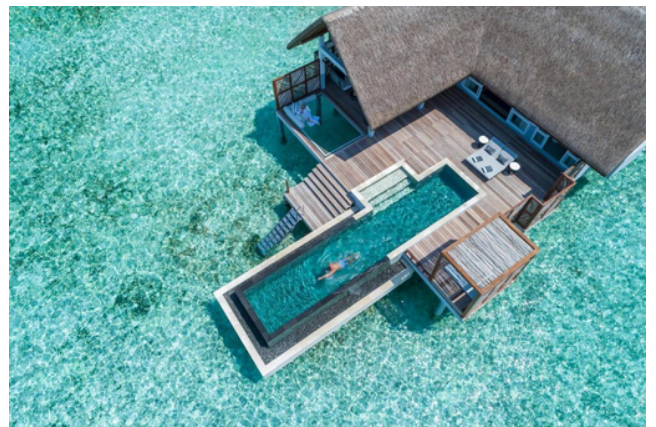
Landaa Giraavaru, Baa Atoll



Four Seasons Landaa Giraavaru perfectly blends world-class luxury with purpose and authenticity. More than a luxury resort; it's a living sanctuary set on one of the most pristine and biodiverse islands in the Maldives.

The experience at Landaa is defined by its intelligent design, serious wellness credentials, and deep environmental commitment. At its heart is the pioneering Marine Discovery Centre, where guests can witness active coral regeneration projects and sea turtle rehabilitation — or even take part — snorkelling alongside marine biologists, or witnessing the delicate return of rescued turtles to the sea.

Guests come here for a deeper connection — to self, to nature, and to the world around them. The atmosphere is quietly purposeful, with a sense of calm underpinned by depth and detail. The tone throughout is polished, warm, and quietly intuitive.



Landaa Giraavaru sits on one of the Maldives' most generous islands — wild, wide, and refreshingly untamed.

Accessed via a 35-minute seaplane from Malé, the island is known for its pioneering approach to wellness and conservation. It's home to the Maldives' leading Marine Discovery Centre and one of the world's most impressive Ayurvedic health programmes, supported by a resident team of doctors, yogis, and marine biologists.

Villas are spacious and intuitively designed for privacy, seamlessly merging indoor and outdoor living. Expect open-air garden showers, breezy decks with infinity pools, and interiors that reflect the raw beauty of the island without distraction. It's versatile accommodations and diverse experiences make it an ideal choice for multi-generational families seeking both togetherness and personal rejuvenation.

Who it's for: Thoughtful travellers. Wellness seekers. Couples and families who value space, privacy, and purpose. Those drawn to luxury that not only feels good — but does good.



One & Only Reethi Rah

Landaa Giraavaru, Baa Atoll



One & Only Reethi Rah is the quintessential luxury resort in the Maldives, offering sophisticated elegance and exceptional service. Set on a private island in the North Malé Atoll, Reethi Rah is famed for its vast villas and world-class dining. Combining natural beauty with luxurious service, the resort's philosophy is to provide an exclusive and personalized experience perfectly tailored to individual guest's needs.

The house reef just steps from the beach is a snorkellers paradise, boasting vibrant marine life including turtles, manta rays and reef sharks. Reethi Rah is celebrated for balancing luxury with family-friendly warmth, offering extensive amenities and high-end facilities for guests of all ages.

Who it's for: Families, multi-generational groups and luxury seekers that value a versatile resort experience with exceptional and varied dining.



Cheval Blanc Randheli

Rendheli Island, Noonu Atoll



Cheval Blanc Randheli is a masterpiece of contemporary luxury nestled in the Noonu Atoll. This resort combines elegance, refinement, and exceptional service, offering an experience that's both indulgent and authentically Maldivian. Known for its ultra-luxury villas, impeccable design, and world-class dining, it offers an unparalleled escape where every detail is crafted to perfection. Synonymous with exclusivity and sophistication it's a top choice for travellers who want to indulge in personalized service and first-class luxury.

Accessible via a 40 minute seaplane from Malé, the resort's remote location adds to its exclusivity and sense of privacy. Guests can explore vibrant house reefs directly from the beach, encountering turtles and reef sharks. Created as a modern reinterpretation of luxury in the Maldives, combining French sophistication with Maldivian natural beauty, Cheval Blanc Randheli has been designed with a keen eye for detail and innovative features. The atmosphere is one of formal elegance and refined style, making every occasion here feel truly special.

Who it's for: Ideal for couples, honeymooners and families who appreciate polished formality, exceptional design and world-class service.



Kudadoo Private Island

Lhaviyani Atoll



Kudadoo Private Island is one of the most exclusive addresses in the Maldives — not merely private, but profoundly personal. Designed by award-winning architect Yuji Yamazaki and the vision of hospitality veteran Lars Petre, Kudadoo offers the Maldives' most generous, ultra-tailored and elevated all-inclusive concept.

This is a resort without boundaries. Kudadoo's *Anything. Anytime. Anywhere.* philosophy allows guests complete freedom to tailor each day. With only 15 overwater residences, each with private butlers and uninterrupted ocean views, Kudadoo ensures complete seclusion.

The island runs almost entirely on solar power, its sleek architecture is designed to harmonise with the natural environment, and the emphasis on space, silence, and minimalism allows you to focus fully on rest, reconnection, or romance. This is not a place to be seen — it is a place to disappear, beautifully.





Located in the remote Lhaviyani Atoll, Kudadoo is surrounded by wide, pristine beaches and exceptional marine biodiversity. Manta rays, turtles, and reef sharks thrive in these waters, making it a favourite among divers and snorkelers in the know. With a low resort density, this is a quieter, more untouched side of the Maldives.

Arrival is via a 40 minute seaplane transfer from Malé. Kudadoo shares an arrival platform with its sister resort, Hurawalhi, before guests are transferred by private boat to the island.

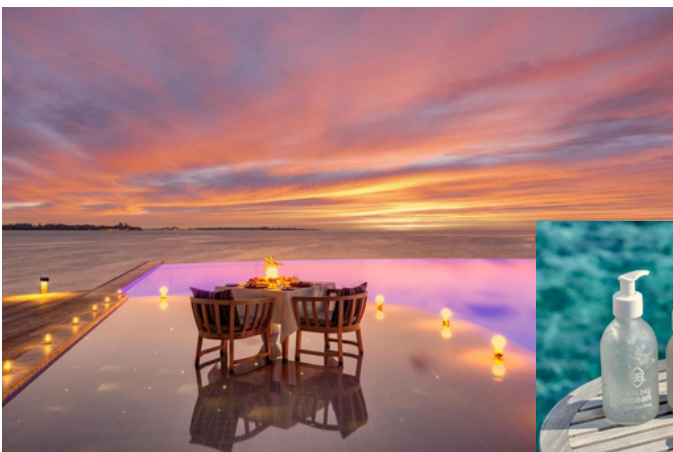


Kudadoo is as exclusive as the Maldives gets. The small island is perfectly tucked away, with no passing sea or air traffic and is strictly adults-only, ensuring total tranquillity. No nearby resorts interrupt the horizon, and with only 15 villas, the chances of seeing another guest—unless you choose to—are minimal. For ultimate privacy, the entire island can be booked exclusively.



Design is sleek, modern, and eco-conscious. Villas are crafted almost entirely from sustainably sourced wood and blend minimalist Japanese influences with warm Maldivian textures. The atmosphere is serene. There's no formality here, only freedom. No schedules, no dress codes, no limitations — just spontaneity.

Who it's for: Kudadoo is for those who value freedom above all, and who seek unstructured days, deep privacy and intuitive service. Ideal for guests who seek barefoot simplicity without restriction.



Velaa Private Island

Noonu Atoll



Tucked away in the far reaches of Noonu Atoll, Velaa Private Island was founded by Czech entrepreneur Jiří Šmejč as a sanctuary he would personally want to return to time and again. This private island retreat reflects his vision — built on exacting detail, flawless service, discretion and total privacy.

Though it offers all the hallmarks of Maldivian beauty, Velaa is unique in its depth of experience and rare amenities: a golf academy, a private submarine, a nine-metre wine tower, and a Clarins spa with a snow room, to name just a few.

Velaa offers something rare and deliberately refined — a level of service and sophistication that feels more like a private members' estate than a resort. It's home to one of the most exclusive overwater villas in the Maldives, accessible only by boat. Here, opulence is instinctive, and no detail is overlooked.





Located in the Noonu Atoll — home to a thriving population of spinner dolphins and known for its dense schools of swarming fish — Velaa offers rich marine life in one of the Maldives most prestigious regions.

Arrival is via a 45 minute transfer from Malé by seaplane or private yacht. For those arriving by private jet, Velaa can coordinate direct international entry into Noonu Atoll's dedicated airport.

Privacy at Velaa is absolute. Villas are meticulously spaced, with some accessible only by boat. There is no passing sea traffic, and the island's location places it far from commercial routes and neighbouring resorts.

Velaa blends Maldivian craftsmanship with elegant European styling. Villas are expansive and layered with quiet opulence, offering seamless indoor-outdoor transitions. Elegant, discreet, and polished, the island exudes a quiet sophistication, attracting guests who favour understated style.

Who it's for: Velaa attracts discerning couples and families who seek privacy, refined service and the highest calibre of luxury. An ideal choice for those who value formality and a level of precision that can only be delivered by a resort operating at the very top of its game.



Thank You

Thank you for reading *The Maldives Ultra-Luxe Collection* – my guide to the top 10 resorts in the Maldives and how to choose the right one for you, based on your unique travel style.

I hope this guide has offered both inspiration and practical insight into the art of choosing well. Now you understand what a travel style is – and why tailoring your journey around yours leads to a sense of true alignment. Luxury is deeply personal – and I understand that. It's why I take the time to get to know you, designing every itinerary around what matters most to *you*.

As a partner of 360 Private Travel and a Virtuoso Travel Advisor, I design bespoke itineraries that go beyond the expected. Thanks to 360 Private Travel's unparalleled access to the world's finest luxury brands, my clients enjoy exclusive benefits and thoughtful touches designed to elevate every trip.

If this resonates with you, I would love to hear from you and help you to design your next extraordinary escape.

Best wishes,

Amy



Amy Armstrong
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