



REETHI FARU RESORT

Leading eco-tourism in the Maldives

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Dusk is approaching and dramatic clouds takeover the paradise sky – filled with shades of hope of a sustainable tomorrow! While cities around the globe are still adapting to the ‘new normal’, Maldives has been blissfully blessed to shelter the new wave of travellers into its safe haven. It is one of the most visually stunning destinations where shades of aquamarine blend seamlessly with the white sand amidst the tropical foliage. This unique blend has been drawing visitors for decades to explore its waterscapes and landscapes and the quintessential underwater magic. Taking the responsibility of maintaining that fine line of responsible tourism, many resorts across the region are including sustainable practices going forward.

One such eco-conscious resort, dedicated to the cause of sustainability is **Reethi Faru Resort**, translating to a beautiful reef in Dhivehi – the Maldivian language! A stunning **bio-luxury resort** on the secluded, private island of Filaidhoo, Reethi Faru has been dedicatedly working towards maintaining the perfect harmony between all the elements of nature - from marine life rehabilitation to planting of coral reefs, from incorporating the biggest solar panel installations to wastewater treatment plants. This resort is a forward-thinking establishment taking the right steps today to ensure

that tourism and one of the world's most fragile ecosystems can both coexist in harmonious sync with each other in days to come.

Established in 2017, its alluring 150 secluded hideaway villas are surrounded by breathtaking land and waterscapes. Their meticulously thought through a channel of construction, ensured that no trees are cut down during the course - the ones that had to be removed, were safely relocated to other parts of the island. The mobilization of machinery, which would harm corals in the lagoon was also avoided. While setting up the beams for the jetties and water villas, the corals were safely relocated within the house reef as was the case during the placement of wave breakers. To tackle the issues of beach erosion, wave-breakers have been placed in critical areas around the island.





Sustainable initiatives - recovering, growing and diversifying house reef

The island boasts of a charming lagoon, with its house reef just thirty to eighty meters from the shore. As an on-going mission to restore its house reef, ever since the development phase, the resort has conceived various methods and techniques, in sync with its marine biologist, towards coral growth and conservation, and continue to do so. Upon carefully observing the changes in the ecosystem, the resort team has been modifying and using techniques to create artificial reefs and transplant corals to coral nurseries. Coral nurseries and artificial reefs are forms of active reef restoration aimed at increasing coral health, diversity, and abundance.

The artificial reefs were established with the aim of salvaging corals that have been damaged by coral bleaching and natural storms. Accumulated in one area, these artificial reefs form a coral garden that has been given the name 'Reethi Garden'. The transplantation process includes collecting broken or damaged pieces of live corals and attaching them to coral frames. This gives the corals a chance at survival and aids in the enhancement of existing reef habitats.

The team's new goal is to increase and improve the diversity of the coral species in the reef. Resilient coral species that have overcome and survived the bleaching are being identified and categorized as either abundant or non-abundant species. Currently, the focus is on breeding and growing the non-abundant species in their coral nursery that will eventually be replanted in the natural reef.

“The impacts of climate change have been devastating on the coral reefs around the world. Therefore, it is imperative to focus on finding solutions to this problem. At Reethi Faru, we have been restoring the coral reef around the island using various methods - from creating artificial reefs using metal frames to rope nurseries, and also went one step further by setting up our very own land-based coral nursery. We hope that all these efforts, along with our ongoing sustainable initiatives for energy and waste management, will help us get back on track with protecting and conserving our natural environment.”

--Marine Biologist - Smrutica Jithendranath





Reethi Day

Celebrating and conserving the environment

Mindful of protecting the environment, both marine and terrestrial, conceived their monthly event - Reethi Day (Beautiful Day in Dhivehi) - to celebrate the environment and help conserve it through education and activities. Interestingly, their in-house guests actively participate in coral planting, reef and beach clean-ups, tree plantation, educational presentations, guided awareness snorkels and more! Their Environmental and Marine Center serves towards marine research and plays the part of a useful educational tool to impart the importance of marine biology/ conservation.

It's pretty safe to say that the one thing people around the globe have missed the most in the past year has been the opportunity to travel and discover new places. And it doesn't come as a surprise that travellers are consciously opting for sustainable choices, to feel safer, and comfortable and in some sense giving back to the environment.



“We sleep better knowing that when we are wide awake, we are doing all that we can to care | contribute | conserve the world that we owe our very own existence to!”

Resort Manager - Vittoriano Ummarino





Sustainability at its core

The plush villas here demonstrate opulence right from the entrance, and what makes them more righteous is the core principles they are built upon. Constructed using a combination of soil stabilized earthen blocks and aerated cement blocks (made in-house) - both eco-friendly materials - functioning as natural heat insulators that help keep the carbon footprint as low as possible. This eco-conscious resort synonymous with sustainability - in principle and practice - boasts of six restaurants, six bars, an infinity pool, a sports complex and gym, a dive and watersports centre and a spa. Sheer seclusion and splendour are what you'll get at this ultimate escape. With over 400 staff members, Reethi Faru has employees from diverse backgrounds and locals alike.



“A business must exist for a greater purpose than just shareholder returns - there lies a greater responsibility of respecting the land and its resources. From generating the highest capacity of solar power (1 megawatt) in the Maldives to producing our mineral water on-site - from producing fuel through biogas plant to using wastewater for irrigation - Reethi Faru Resort has implemented effective ways to conserve and protect the environment.”

-Director of Engineering - Kasi Rao Pothamchetty





At any given day 60%- 70% of the overall load of the island, during the day, is met by using solar energy, resulting in a reduction of carbon footprint significantly. The remaining electricity required is produced by state-of-the-art energy-efficient diesel generators fitted with a heat exchanger system that helps produce hot water for the entire resort, helping them avoid the use of electrical or gas boilers. Furthermore, they have 3 in-house RO Plants that desalinates seawater and converts it into freshwater.

Recycling Waste and banishing single-use plastic

Committed to reducing the impact of waste generated by their operations, Reethi Faru Resort has a dedicated waste segregation facility on its island. They strongly believe in implementing the 3R's of waste management – Reduce, Reuse and Recycle – with a dedicated waste segregation facility on its island. All food waste generated in the resort is segregated and directed to their in-house biogas plant, which generates biogas from food waste, which is in turn used for cooking- thereby reducing the need for traditional, non-renewable cooking gas.

The resort is working towards managing and recycling plastic waste on the island, to avoid and intercept their entry into the marine ecosystems. Additionally, they have implemented the use of paper straws instead of plastic and switched from

plastic bottles to glass bottles in all the guest areas. 99% of the lights around the island are LED as part of the resort's conservation plan. The refrigerant gas used in refrigeration and air conditioning is eco-friendly which is free of CFCs. Electric bikes and carts are used to commute and baggage transfer within the island.

Accolades for its efforts

Reethi Faru Resort won the Indian Ocean's Leading Green Resort 2020 award and was nominated for the World's Leading Green Resort 2020 and Maldives' Leading Green Resort category at the World Travel Awards 2020. Additionally, the resort became the proud winners in two categories – Luxury Eco Resort (Regional) and Luxury Spa Resort (Continent) – at the recently concluded World Luxury Awards.

Tourists want to get back in the air, employees want to return to business as usual, and families want a holiday. But the new normal is more ecologically aware, more responsible towards cause and effect, and more cautious. A single person or a standalone resort can start the journey towards sustainability, but a revolution takes people. And keeping that in mind Reethi Faru has been relentlessly promoting responsible tourism by creating ecotourists. With continuous direct engagement in various activities and a professional technical tour, guests at this resort get to soak in the sustainable and eco-friendly practices spread across the island.

