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She/Her

ON ENDING
JUDGEMENT,
BEING PRO
CHOICE,
AND THE
IMPORTANCE OF
EQUALITY
FOR ALL

The Gender and Sexuality Issue

LET'S DISCUSS
IDENTITY,
EXPRESSION,
AND INCLUSIVITY



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REDEFINING MALDIVIAN LUXURY



Travel Writer Vishakha Talreja recently spent time at the Finolhu Baa Atoll, Maldives and discovered how this resort has taken the luxury experience a notch up.



With my feet in the sand, I was staring at one of the most spectacular sunsets against gleaming turquoise water and the whitest secluded sandbank. The trance was broken when an affable server in a cool t-shirt that read 'Crab Shack' handed me the menu of what probably is the best restaurant in the Maldives- Crab Shack, located at the luxury resort Finolhu Maldives. What followed was a memorable seafood meal.

So here I am penning down my experience of the Finolhu Baa Atoll, Maldives and I have a trunkful of such once-in-a-lifetime moments.

Probably words wouldn't even justify the experience that is Finolhu.

The paradisiacal islands of the Maldives need no introduction as they have become the go-to destination for Indians amid the pandemic. The resort islands of the Maldives, known for their balmy beaches and luxury experiences, are the soul savers for those battered by the aftermath of the Covid pandemic. After one RTPCR test, four-hour flight and thirty-minute seaplane ride, I could finally breathe like a free bird at the Finolhu Baa Atoll and that too maskless! Was I dreaming? Maybe I was because everything that followed



from the moment I stepped at this luxury resort was like a dream.

Maldives spoils you for choice when it comes to choosing your resort island. I chose right spending a week at the Finolhu Maldives located at the Baa Atoll, a UNESCO protected biosphere reserve, where the color of the corals will charm you and sea creatures will entice you with their magic.

Amid all the spectacular natural bounty, technology was used only to pamper guests. As we waited for our seaplane to arrive at the plush exclusive lounge of Finolhu, a butler handed me over a bar code, scanning which I was connected to the concierge service of the resort. Need a baggy to go to a restaurant? Room service? Make a reservation at the spa? Every message was promptly answered on whatsapp making our stay hassle-free. It was like living a modern fairy tale, albeit with a whatsapp concierge being your knight-in-shining-armor.

The resort island houses 125 private villas across categories,

Our Sunset Ocean Pool Villa had a swanky bathroom, gorgeous infinity pool and an outdoor deck where we practically stayed through the trip. The resort also features a two-bedroom 'Rockstar Villa' located at the end of the jetty, where everything is larger-than-life. I wasn't surprised to hear Hollywood and Bollywood celeb names who booked themselves a rockstar villa when they wanted the best holiday for themselves.

If we were not chasing dolphins on a yacht or snorkelling from our villa, we were busy discovering and experiencing the gastronomic delights that abound at Finolhu. The all-day dining restaurant Beach Kitchen served Asian, Italian and Maldivian cuisine. The modern Japanese restaurant Kanusan, with its breathtakingly beautiful setting, is where we could savour the best of sushi and lobster as the ocean breeze caressed our cheeks. Another great dinner option was the Arabian Grill that serves North African and Middle East cuisine. A grand meal with authentic flavours of the Middle East is another favourite food memory I

have of Finolhu. And then of course I have already spoken about the very dreamy Crab Shack that serves lip-smacking food in a mesmerizing setting.

Are you even on a vacation if you don't unwind at the spa? Jet-lag massage followed by steam and dip in the plunge pool at the blissful Felhi Spa is just what the doctor ordered. While I spent time at the spa or just unwinding with cocktails at the Beach Club, my five-year-old had a blast at the Ocean's Club, which I am happy to report is one of the best kids club I have come across. My little explorer had a very interesting itinerary that included pizza making, kite flying, treasure hunts and variety of outdoor activities.

Days would be marked with rollicking splashes guests made while sipping cocktails at the common pool, long strolls on the beach and nights spent dancing with gay abandon to the cool DJ tunes or swinging away as aerial shows and circus enthralled visitors from the world over with their performances. But I would go back to Finolhu for the cool white party where everyone dressed, yes you guessed that, in white, making their way to the beach stretch where Crab Shack is located. The affable General manager Marc Reader personally greets guests, the bartender makes you best of rosé sangrias and DJ tunes are belted out from the top of a



street truck.

And why should you visit Finolhu? For its enviable location, impeccable service and great food. And because you have a chance to stay in a bubble that can be booked for a night and experience an isolated holiday star-gazing, watching the sunset and sunrise with a private butler on call. Just the two of you in your beach bubble, once-in-a-lifetime experience.

Finolhu Baa Atoll redefines luxury.

