

Islands

The World's Most Ambitious Private-Island Resort Opens in Madagascar

Miavana, a new high-end private-island resort promises to be a game changer for the island's hospitality scene.

By BRANDON PRESSER AUGUST 10, 2017

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This summer, Madagascar's hospitality scene has been disrupted by the arrival of its first ultra-luxe property. Miavana (meaning "to bring together" in the Malagasy language) is an elegant collection of 14 private residences that stretches along the largest island of a protected archipelago in the country's northeasterly recesses.

The property took almost four years to construct, and its design is the latest project by noted South African architects Silvio Tech and Lesley Carstens — the same duo responsible for the coveted North Island resort in the Seychelles, renowned for being the honeymoon hotel of choice for royals Will and Kate. And while Miavana is undoubtedly an attempt to outdo North Island and its Seychellois neighbors, Time + Tide's other main mission is to accelerate conservation efforts in a nation that's in desperate need of assistance.

Room rates start at \$2,500 per person per night, all-inclusive; \$100 of which is directly funneled into the not-for-profit Time + Tide Foundation, which is championing ecological education and health literacy initiatives in northern Madagascar, and has launched an ambitious conservation project aimed at translocating the endangered crowned lemurs from high-risk mainland zones to the quiet forests of Miavana's island. Here's a look inside the exclusive private-island resort.

Nosy Ankao

Miavana is located on Nosy Ankao — the only permanently settled island in a small archipelago just a stone's throw from mainland Madagascar's northeasterly coast.

14 Mega-Villas

Gently positioned along the private island's curving coastline are 14 massive villas — glass pavilions constructed with both sustainable and reclaimed materials. Accordion-style doors and windows flank the multi-bedroom bungalows allowing guests to create a hundred variations of closed- and open-air dwellings.

Million-Dollar Views

Perhaps the villas' best feature is the perfect view of the ocean. Due to the diverse array of foliage of the island, each chalet offers differently decorated vistas — some with swaying palms, and others with growing mangroves and gnarled indigenous trees.

The Lounge

Should you decide to emerge from your private villa cocoon, you'll be treated to a warm hug from the inviting communal lounge; a breezy space awash in soft canvases, locally sourced wood and rattan, and encircled in delicate hand-chipped stone.

Breakfast of Champions

Start each morning right, with breakfast delivered to your private villa by the coterie of linen-clad butlers. Fresh fruit and homemade breads and jams perfectly pair with the eye-catching turquoise patio furniture.

Safari in the Sky

Miavana's fleet of three helicopters that transport guests to and from the resort also doubles as airborne safari cars connecting Nosy Ankaos to the wild expanses of northern Madagascar: fire-red deserts, throbbing rivers, and jungle-clad plateaus home to legions of furry lemurs and neon chameleons.

And Scuba Diving Too

In addition to the kaleidoscope of habitats on land, Miavana is the gateway to some of the most pristine reef systems on the planet. The resort's dedicated activities team provides scuba excursions for all levels — divemasters will be treated to fields of wavy coral decorated with dozens of different nudibranchs.

Don't Forget About the Details

Beyond the villas' sweeping modernist architecture, the resort's decorative elements have also been designed down the most minute detail. Geometric illustrations, featuring elegant animal and plant prints, adorn Miavana's coasters, linen tote satchels, and — our favorite — the wooden slatted fans.

A Good Night's Sleep

After the fiery sun dips below the Indian Ocean, the staff drop gossamer netting around the cloud-like beds. And for the full Crusoe effect, guests doze off to the melodic chirp of distant tropical critters.

How To Get There

Due to the intricate network of transit links required to reach its remote shores, access to Miavana is undertaken through African outfitters who can patch together your flights and layover in Madagascar's capital, Antananarivo. The property readily endorses Mango African Safaris, a U.S.-based tour company with almost 20 years of experience crafting tailor-made itineraries through Africa and the Indian Ocean.

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