

Likuliku Lagoon, Fiji

TWENTY OF THE WORLD'S GREATEST ESCAPES

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PLUS A FEW BIG SURPRISES!

BY EDDY PATRICELLI



Over the Top

A SECOND HOME

LOCATION
Malolo Island, Fiji
RESORT
Likuliku Lagoon
NIGHTLY RATE
\$900 to \$1,512

NOBODY IS TAKING PICTURES. THE GASPS HAVE VANISHED. Our boat has steadied. Husbands and wives who once stood for a better view, leaned for a better photo, now sit beside one another, hands interlaced, cameras forgotten. A group of Fijians is singing to us. They stand on an arrival dock perched on a tiny island nestled in a lagoon. A few of the men wear grass skirts. All of them sing with reminders of a church choir, exuding warmth that carries an unspoken edict: This welcome

is best shared with two eyes, two ears and someone you love. For me, this is a problem. "Will your wife be joining you?" Tom, a bellboy, asks as I step onto the dock. "No," I tell him. Thirty minutes later, while standing in my over-water bure, Tom asks the same question. He's obviously worried. He just finished showing me my over-water hut's bathroom pavilion, its bathtub for two and its dual sinks with unique windows for views into the lagoon, similar to the glass-panel floors in my living room. Tom pointed all this out already, yet he lingers here, not for a tip, but out of concern.

THIS SPREAD AND PREVIOUS: COURTESY LIKULIKU LAGOON RESORT/HAMILTON LUND (3)



Likuliku is a Fijian word for "place of calm waters." For the author, the resort's beauty was upstaged by the warmth of its staff.



Best of the Rests

Ani Villas (Anguilla) Pulling up to this towering cliff-top estate, I have to pinch myself. One of four butlers welcomes me and my sister by gingerly placing a eucalyptus-scented towel in one hand and a tropical drink in the other. For the next three days, we'll flirt with this fantasy life, waking up each morning to breakfast made by our personal chef, enjoying sea views and sunset drinks on all four balconies, getting daily massages at the cliff's edge, and feasting on locally caught ceviche and coconut cheesecake. But like any torrid love affair, it must come to an end, only after a few more rum punches. — AUDREY ST. CLAIR

Anjavy (Madagascar) This place is so remote the resort declared its own time zone. There are no roads to Anjavy, only a private airstrip on a peninsula dripping with wildlife. Lemurs and rare birds linger by the pool and frequent the garden. Stroll through the 550-hectare reserve and stop: A picnic is being prepared on your own private beach.

Huvafen Fushi (Maldives) Arrive by luxury speedboat to find glass-floored over-water bungalows and your own personal butler. The island is home to the first underwater spa and what's said to be the largest wine collection in the Maldives. A-lister Kate Moss is a frequent guest. Actually, anyone who stays here is on the A-list, if only for a few days.

"Namotu is [surfing legend] Kelly Slater's favorite place in the world," Marian boasts just as a giant wave detonates on the island's reef. Her eyes are filled with fear, and a touch of lust. Kelly Slater? She blushes. The crew razzes her. I ask if she finds *sulus* (dresses) worn by Fijian men attractive. "Do they look manly to you? Sexy?"

"Of course," she answers. "Men wear sulu. It's the Fijian way." "What about outsiders?" I tell her my over-water bure offers his-and-her sulu for guests. "Can I wear a sulu? Can I pull that off?" I motion slightly to a crew member's dress. Marion looks puzzled. "I would *not* recommend you pulling his sulu off."

Laughter erupts. A misunderstanding. A good one. An hour later, all of us are shouting "*Wiiillllson!*" We're just offshore Monuriki Island, where *Cast Away* was filmed. Unlike in the movie, the island is a stone's throw from other islands. "I don't know why Tom Hanks befriended a volleyball," says Marian, shaking her head. "He could've swum over and joined us for happy hour anytime. Nobody is alone in Fiji." Indeed.

Likuliku Lagoon's over-water bures are the only ones available in the region. The beachfront bures (below) and dining options are just as indulgent.



FROM LEFT: COURTESY LIKULIKU LAGOON RESORT/HAMILTON LUND (2); EDDY PATRICELLI; OPPOSITE: KIM KYUNG-HOON/REUTERS

THE ICE CAVE

They call it a resort — Alpha Resort Tomamu, to be exact, on Japan's northern island of Hokkaido. You might call it an igloo, or a dare. Inside the 14-degree room (there's only one) are an ice bed (with, oh yes, sleeping bags!), ice plates and ice tables. Guests usually have ice on their lips after trying to warm up at the resort's ice bar, where you're invited to use an ice pick to make your own ice goblet before pouring a drink. No hot teas or toddies; they could melt holes in the ice floors. Outside the ice-block walls is a ski resort, known to be family-friendly for its adventure park, tower suites, Jacuzzi rooms and hot buffets. But hey, you give up a few things for privacy like this.

