

longbreak



SURF | TRAVEL | LIFESTYLE

MALDIVES : FOUR SEASON EXPLORER

One Last Dance

It has been over a decade since longbreak was invited by Tropicsurf to come on-board the luxurious Four Seasons Explorer as she glided her way through the magical waters of the Maldives, providing all on-board an experience never to be forgotten.

We have been informed that the refurbished Four Season Explorer is about to have one last dance around that crystal blue ballroom of the Maldives.

*We thought we might relive some of our special moments on-board the Four Seasons Explorer with you again ...
just one more time*



longbreak



SURF | TRAVEL | LIFESTYLE

MALDIVES : FOUR SEASONS EXPLORER

There is no better place in our world to cruise a sea of picture-postcard perfect tropical atolls than the Maldives, a nation of islands. By taking a cruise onboard the Four Seasons Explorer one enters a five-star class of surf travel probably unmatched anywhere else on the planet.

For a limited number of weeks each year during April to October, premium waves season in the Maldives, the big luxury catamaran (usually the domain of divers) is given over to a limited number of surfers.

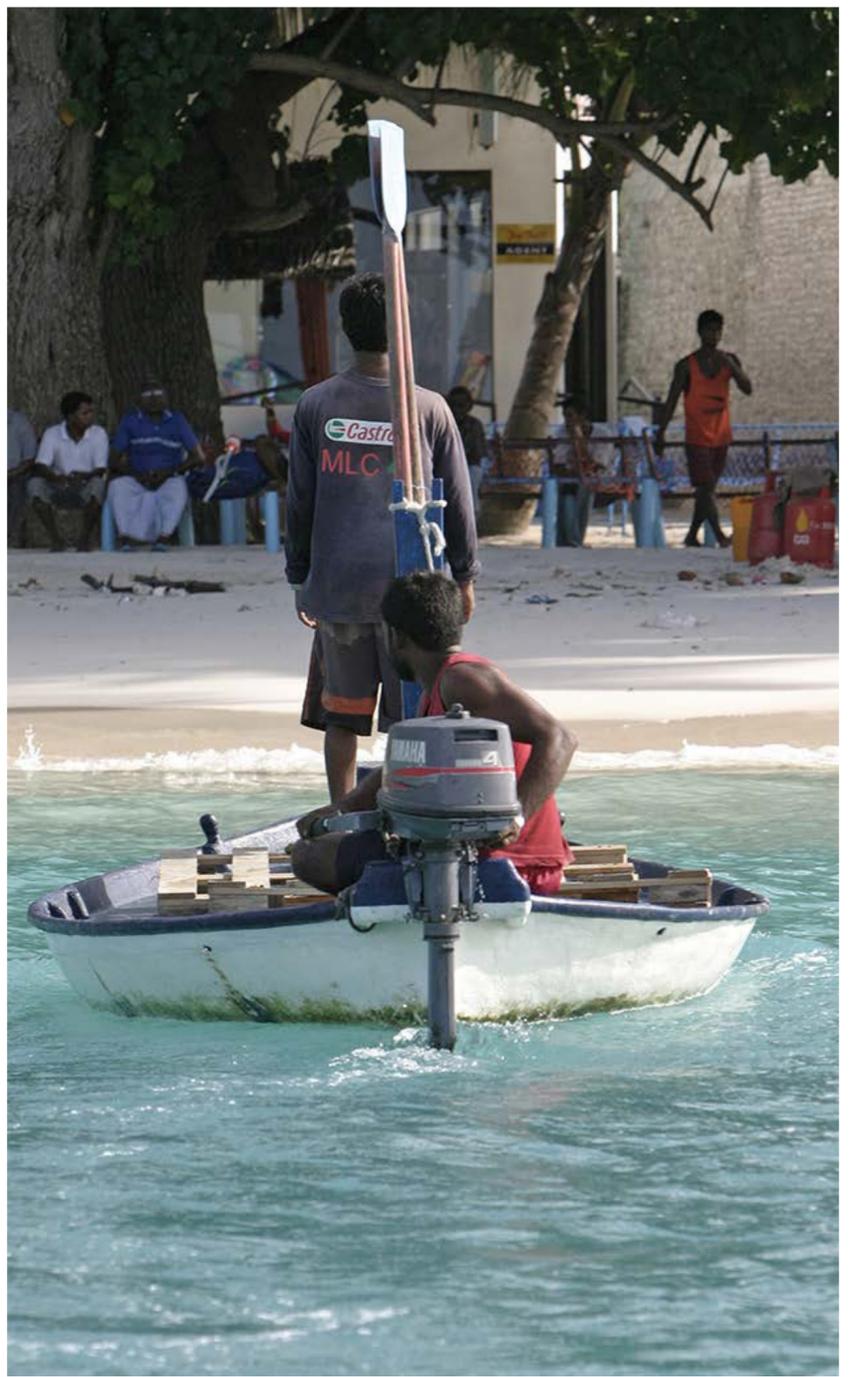
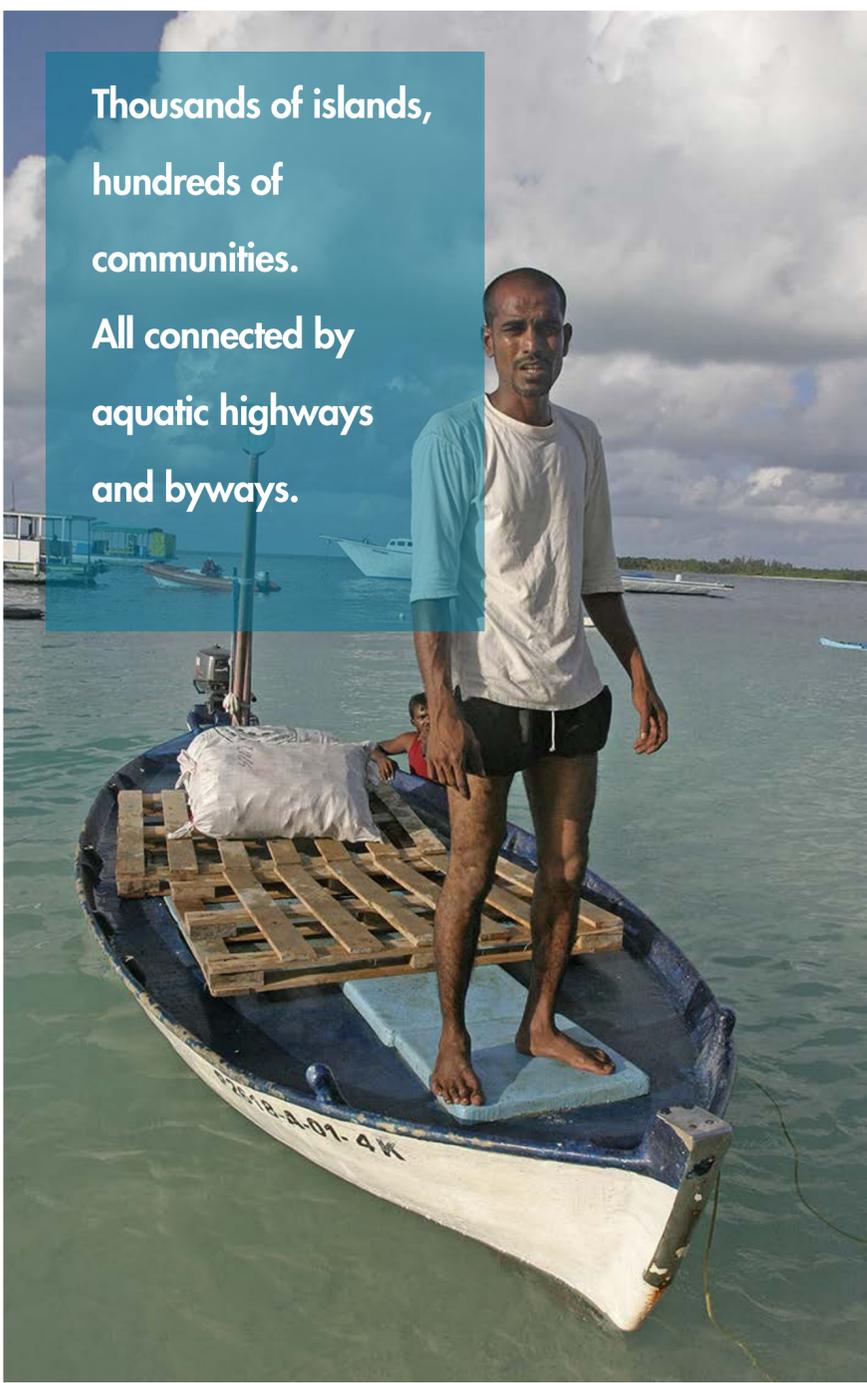
This exclusive package was developed by Noosa-based Tropicsurf. It has some extra special features, including two onboard surf coaches who not only help lift your standard of surfing during the trip but also provide a unique bank of knowledge of a string of secret breaks across the southern atolls of the Maldives. This guarantees an incredible variety of great quality uncrowded waves.

There is an onboard video cameraman with his own edit suite who will present you with a fully-sound-tracked, professionally produced DVD movie of your dream surf trip as a parting gift at the end of the week. And that's just one of a number of great



Thousands of islands,
hundreds of
communities.

All connected by
aquatic highways
and byways.



surf gifts and surprises you'll get on the trip as part of the tour package.

The luxurious features of the Four Seasons Explorer, coupled with the other services and activities available onboard, means this is also the one surf tour which will appeal to your partner. 'Once-in-a-lifetime' has become a well-worn travel cliché but this trip more than fulfils that promise.

The type of people you'll share this experience with will be varied, interesting and fun.



**A Four Seasons
Explorer
package
provides
opportunities
to satisfy the
explorer gene
within us all.**



The Neighbourhood:

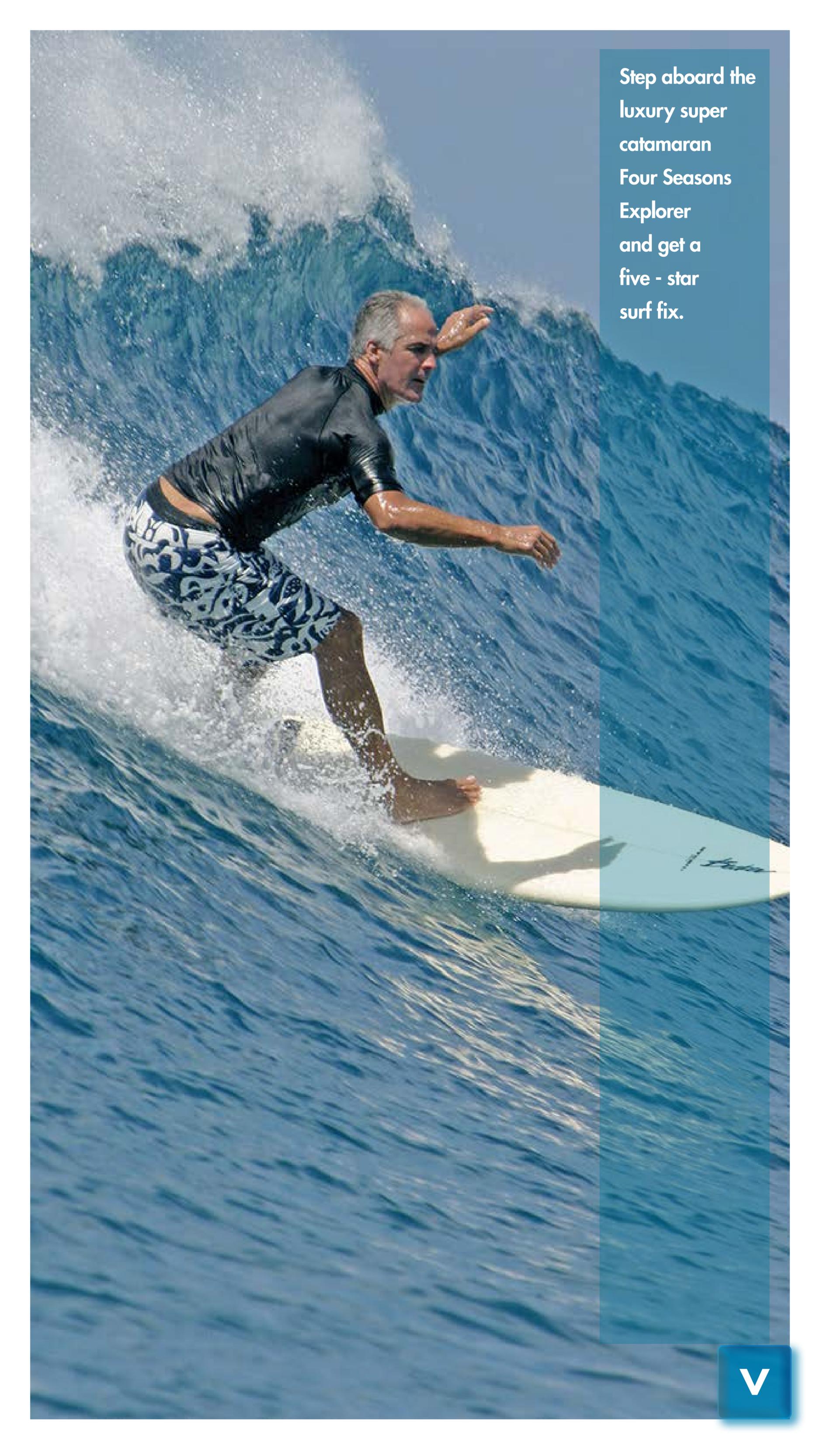
No 4x4s.

No traffic snarls.

No parking meters.

**Just hundreds of
islands and water
views at the end of
every street.**



A man with grey hair, wearing a black wetsuit top and patterned shorts, is surfing on a white surfboard. He is riding a large, blue wave with white foam. The background is a clear blue sky. The image is partially covered by a dark blue vertical bar on the right side.

Step aboard the
luxury super
catamaran
Four Seasons
Explorer
and get a
five - star
surf fix.





Take-off from the edge of one island, race down the line over coral reef and kick out in the channel by the edge of a neighbouring island. Paddle back to the take-off zone and repeat the process until your arms give out or the sun goes down.



A FEAST OF UNCROWDED WAVES

Travellers to the Maldives are always amazed by the water conditions.

The seas are sparkling and the water is stunningly crystal clear. With a year-round air temperature of about 30deg C, sea temperature of about 28deg C, and constant offshore Trade Winds from March-October, you can virtually surf all day, every day, in the surf months. This period is also the rainy season but any wind squalls or showers are generally irregular and tend to pass quickly.

Tides will not stop you surfing in the Maldives because reefs get too shallow. However, the full moon does bring strong currents for a few hours on some days which can cut surfing time.





...on other days
the waves on offer
were of a much
higher adrenaline
rating.



Up until relatively recent times, the mantra had been that North Malé atoll featured the only high quality waves in the Maldives. But the growing reputation of this area has seen increasing crowds from the local island surf resorts and an expanding number of surf tour boats operating in this area.

The Four Seasons Explorer trip will give you a few sessions first-up in these exceptional spots such as Sultans, Jails, Cola's, Honkeys and Chickens – rights and lefts which hold shape from shoulder height to challenging double overhead, or sometimes even bigger. Nearby, too, is Ninja's, if you want to start your holiday with an easy take-off, head-high, long-walling, ideal Malibu wave.





A live-aboard boat journey gives you the flexibility to sample more breaks – mechanically peeling waves over contoured reefs far away from any crowds.

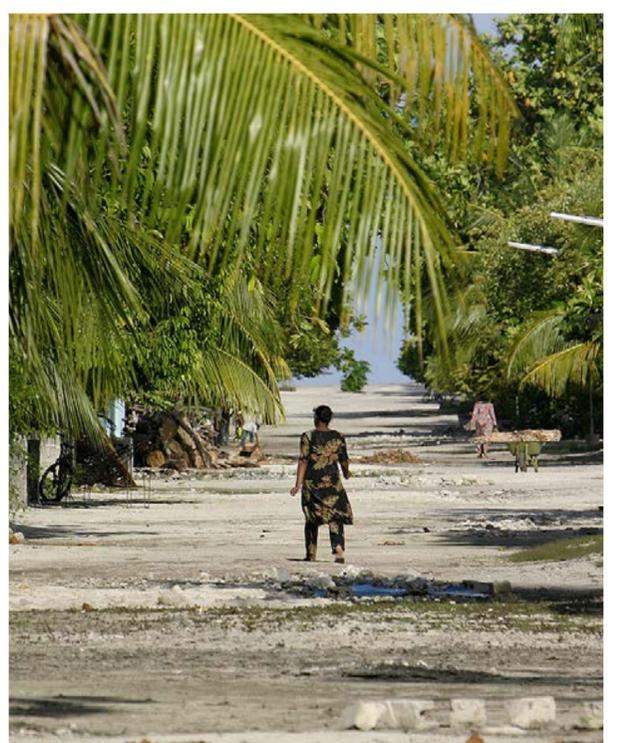
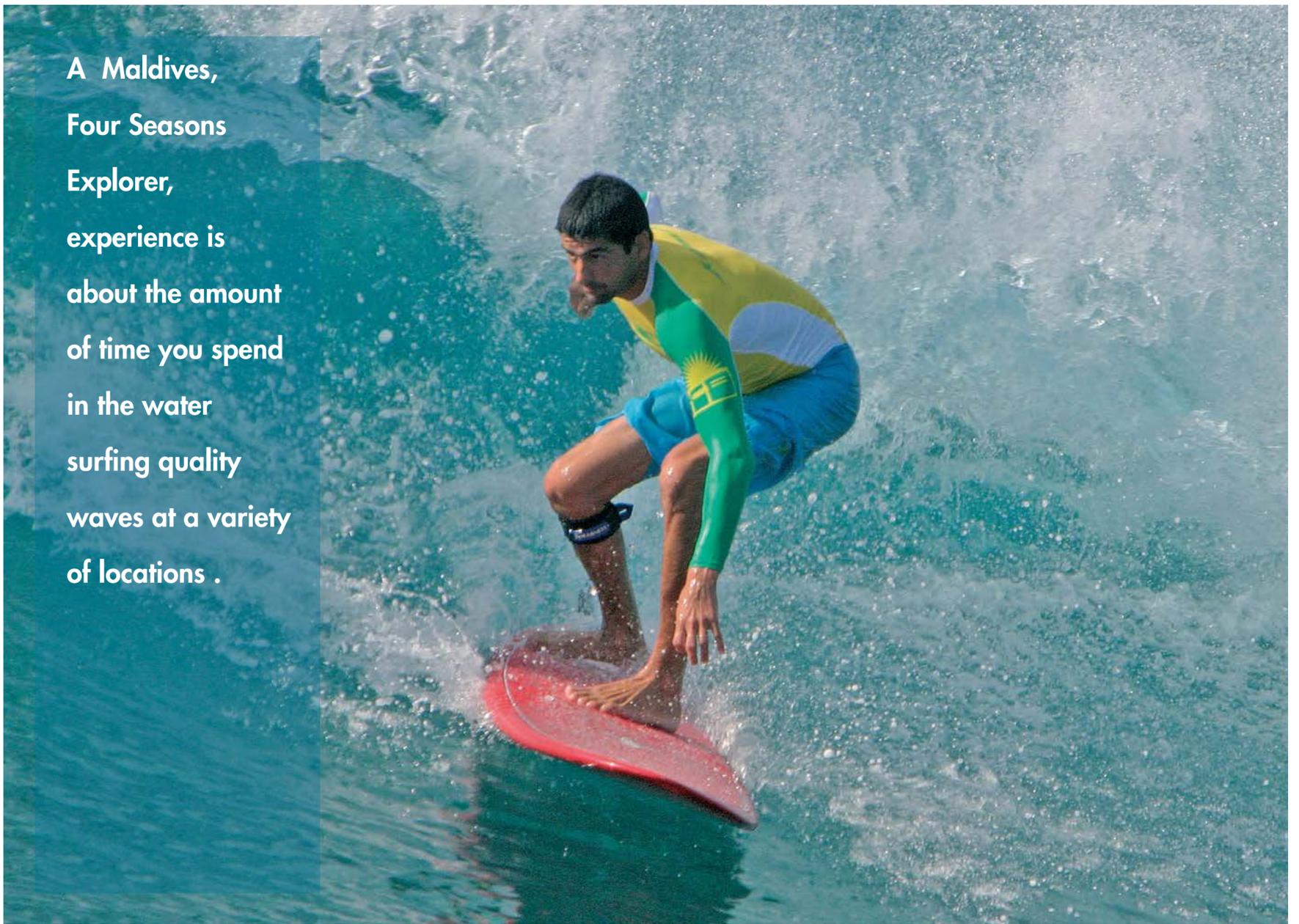
Another aspect which makes the Four Seasons Explorer experience unique is that, every few nights, the skipper weighs anchor and motors while the passengers sleep. In the morning you wake up somewhere completely new with great waves and nobody else in sight.

Each morning the surf guides take a high-speed rubber ducky out to reconnoitre the nearby locations of the uncrowded southern atoll areas which Tropicsurf has identified.

Some spots work on different swell sizes and swell directions.



A Maldives,
Four Seasons
Explorer,
experience is
about the amount
of time you spend
in the water
surfing quality
waves at a variety
of locations .



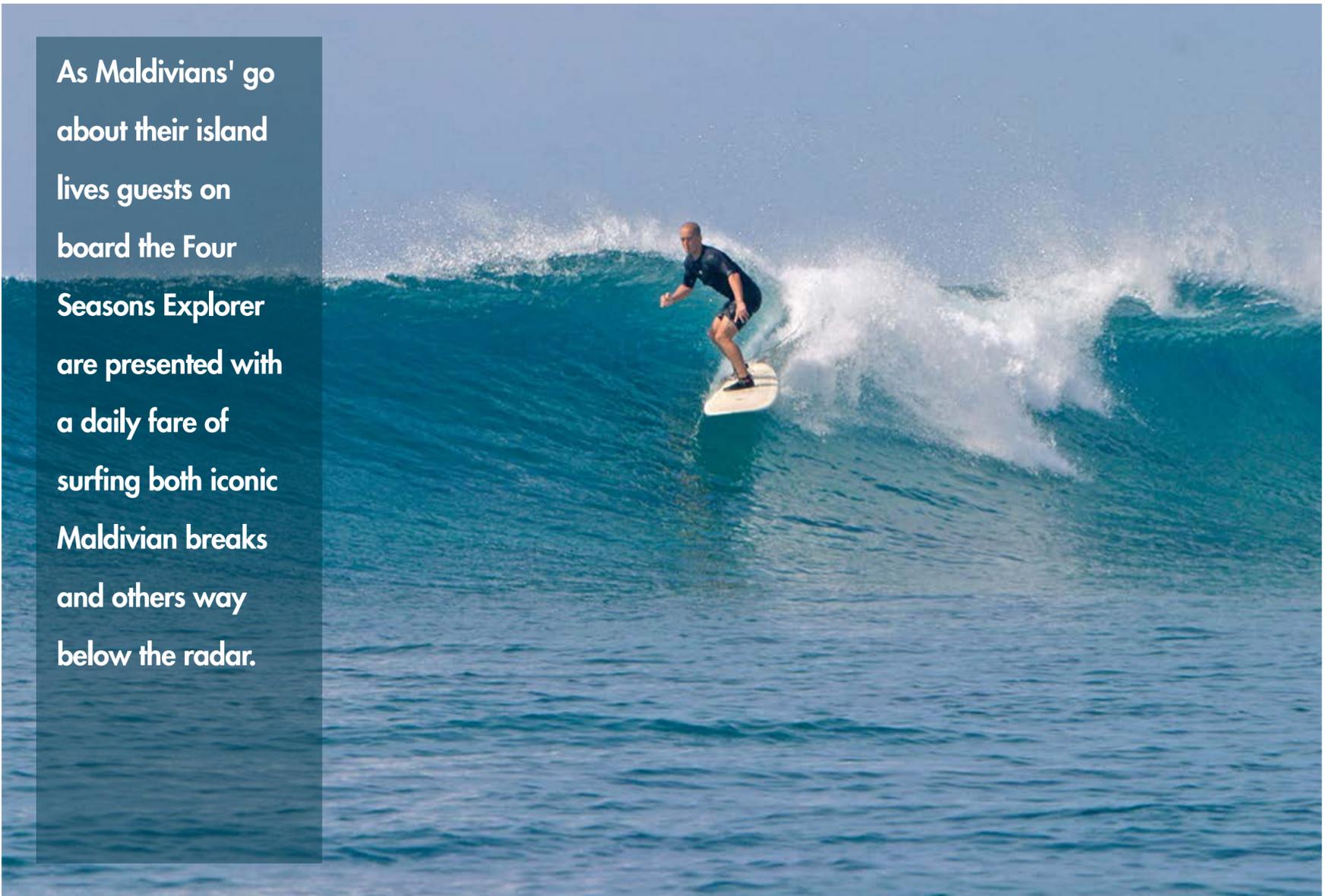
After the passengers have enjoyed breakfast, the surf guides return and offer a selection of two spots every morning: different breaks suitable for longboarders and shortboarders; rights and lefts; some small-to-moderate in terms of size; others bigger with more challenging take-offs and sections.

The biggest was a Sunset-like right peak with some double-overhead sets. Thrilling drops on the take-off and fast sections, but not with body-threatening ferocity or savage reefs.

Other days included: sessions at an offshore reef which jacked up to just above head high and pitched a fun-barrelling right with cover ups and cutbacks for both Mal riders and shortboarders; and then, at another location, a super fast, peeling left.



As Maldivians' go about their island lives guests on board the Four Seasons Explorer are presented with a daily fare of surfing both iconic Maldivian breaks and others way below the radar.



There were also long, walling, down-the-line classic longboard waves, ranging from shoulder height to overhead and pumping. Friendly take-offs, carving bottom turns, high turns, nose-riding performance and fun. Tropicsurf also took some soft-top boards along for lessons for inexperienced surfers – ideal at these locations.

With 14 surfers onboard our trip (including the two surf guides) and the group usually split between two spots each session – with some locations having two take-off positions – our ‘crowd’ was usually spread out and thinned out.

Waves were shared. If you missed out on a set, another would





**A Tropicsurf,
Four Seasons
Explorer package
offers and delivers
opportunities to test
your quiver and
skills on variety of
waves.**

be along soon. With at least two sessions each day of up to three hours each, everybody got their full waves quota.

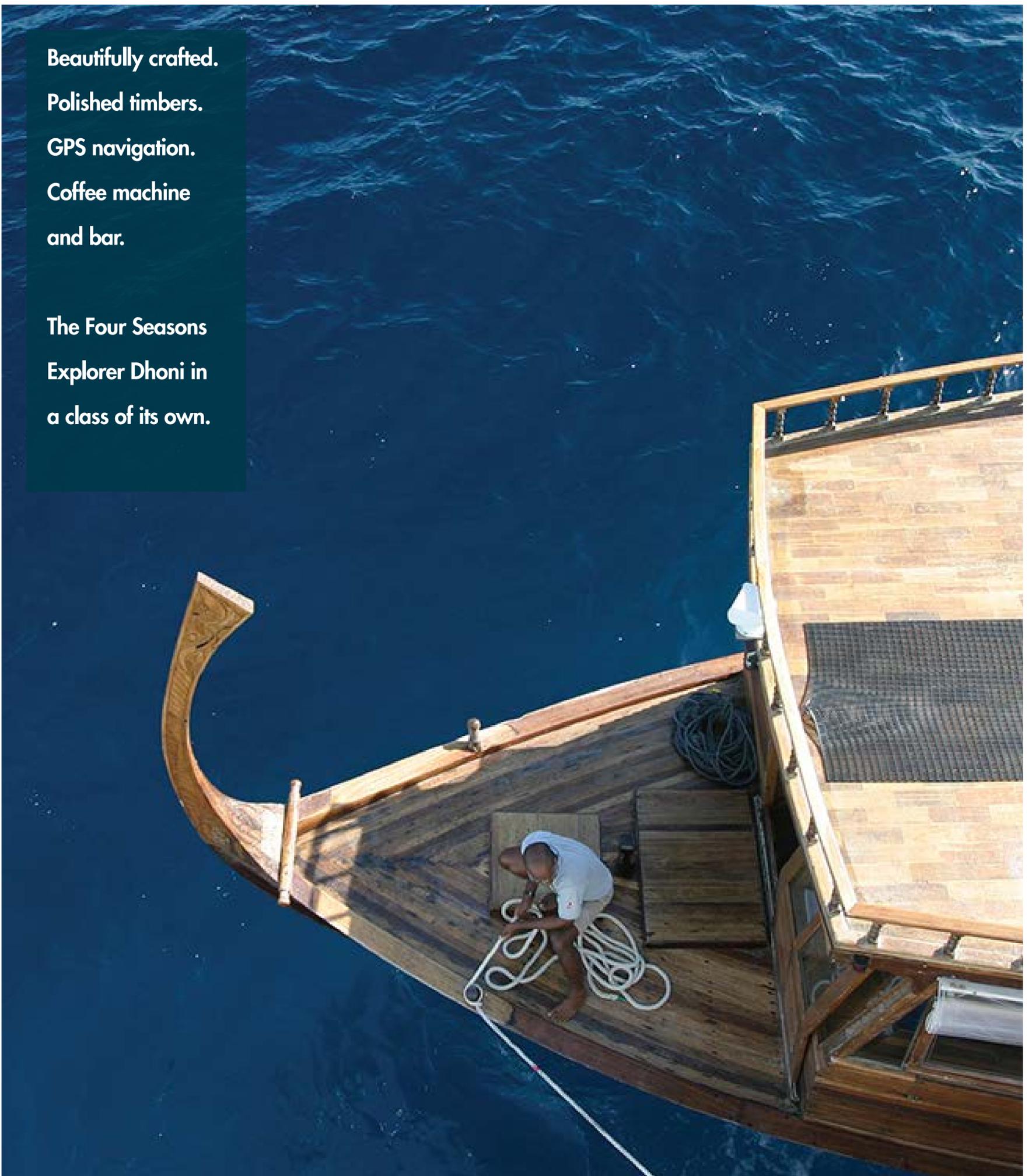
Getting to and from the surf locations was by two rubber duckies, a small whaler or a larger wooden dhoni. A surf guide always accompanies each group in the water and at least one boat stays with each group at all times. Chilled bottled water is available at all times – including while you surf.

The dhoni is the main means of transport for the people of the Maldives. Hand-built locally of painted timber, almost flat bottomed with a shallow draft, a few feet of freeboard, wide deck, broad flat roof for shade and storage and with a low-powered diesel engine.



Beautifully crafted.
Polished timbers.
GPS navigation.
Coffee machine
and bar.

The Four Seasons
Explorer Dhoni in
a class of its own.

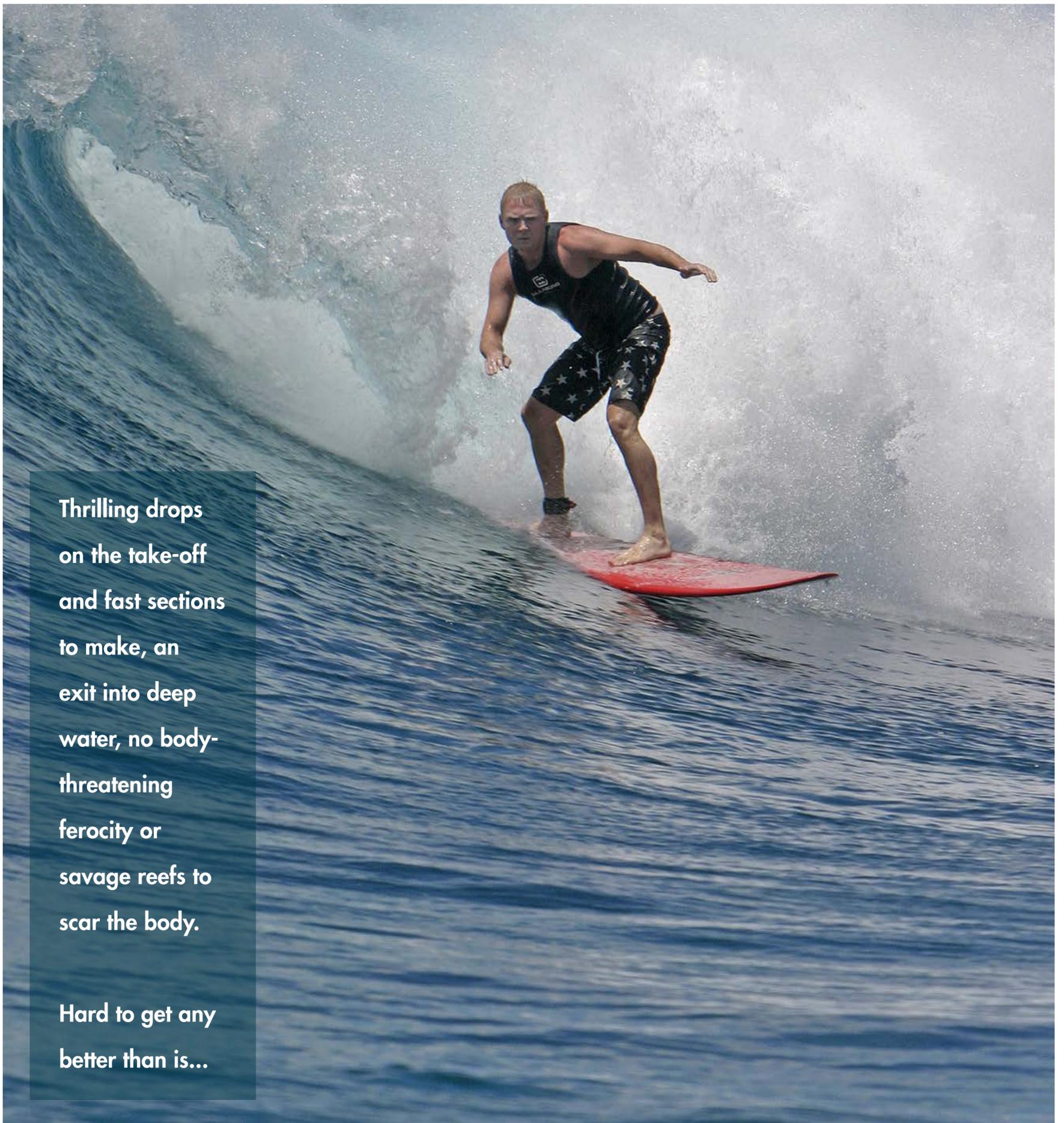


But the Dhoni built for Four Seasons Explorer is in a class of its own. Specially fitted out for carrying surfboards, diving gear and fishing equipment, it is bigger than the usual local craft and features beautifully crafted, high-quality polished timbers. It has a GPS navigation system, echo sounder, state-of-the-art two-way radio communications, coffee-making machine, ice boxes and a toilet.

Climbing back onboard the Dhoni after a session, surfers are offered fresh fruit and cold water and can relax on the roof on rubber mattresses for the gentle trip back to the mother ship.

It's just another unique element on this week in surf paradise.





Thrilling drops
on the take-off
and fast sections
to make, an
exit into deep
water, no body-
threatening
ferocity or
savage reefs to
scar the body.

Hard to get any
better than is...

Arriving back onboard Four Seasons Explorer, deck crew handle the transfer of boards while weary surfers enjoy hot showers from hand-held hoses on the aft deck landing. Rashies and boardshorts are draped on hangers in their own rack to dry in the open air. Booties, wax, wax combs, legropes and any other gear is stowed in boxes under benches and marked with the individual surfer's name.

Then it is upstairs to the outside bar to make a selection from the range of cold, imported beers before dinner.

This is not too hard to take as a daily regimen!

Oh, and if you happen to come back from a surf with a ding in your board, tell the crew and the damage will be repaired by the following morning!





Under the experienced and watchful eye of a retired Australian Navy Commander the Four Season Explorer plied the atolls of the Maldives delivering its guests an extraordinary experience in luxury surfing.



Four Seasons Explorer is a remarkable sea craft. It was built in 2002 in Western Australia. The boat's luxury interior was fitted out and recently refurbished in Singapore.

Its primary specifications are impressive; length 39 metres beam 12 metres; maximum draft 1.709 metres; average cruising speed 15 knots; maximum speed 17 knots; maximum displacement 230 tonnes; fuel capacity 36,500 litres; fresh water capacity 5,000 litres (from its own desalination plant).

Up to 22 passengers are accommodated onboard – looked after by 25 super friendly crew members. The Main Deck features ten stateroom cabins for 20 passengers, plus the aft diving and recreation equipment areas. The upper deck features the al fresco dining area with bar and outdoor spa/whirlpool, galley, swish indoor dining room and bar and a large, enticingly comfortable, lounge area, plus the Explorer Suite forward. Up one more level the top deck has a sun deck with massage area.

The beautifully appointed air conditioned twin staterooms on the main deck have their own ensuite bathroom and toilet. Each bedroom features two big bay windows, a double settee and includes a small writing desk, in the main lounge, a large library of movies and music is available to borrow and play in your cabin.

On the upper deck, the Explorer Suite accommodates two passengers in a super luxury cabin the size of a small city apartment. It features spectacular views of sunsets and passing atolls through eight large, raked windows looking forward.



A succulent light lunch and an indulgent rich afternoon tea all designed to provide the fuel for long sessions in the picture perfect Maldivian waters.

Available every day with breakfast - a new island and fresh surf...



A CULINARY ADVENTURE

A journey on Four Seasons Explorer is also a culinary adventure.

The first night onboard was a Captain's Dinner, this began with French champagne and hors d'oeuvre on the upper deck at sunset. We were then seated at tables on the outside al fresco dining area for the meal which was accompanied by a selection of fine French and Australian wines ... and what a meal.

Any doubts about this level of exceptional dining being retained were dispelled with lunch the next day and a yum-level which was to be maintained for the whole journey.



G

etting There:

Singapore Airlines
Malaysia Airlines
Sri Lanka Airlines

Where to stay

Four Season Explorer
Malé overnight - Hulhule Hotel

Food

Four Seasons Explorer

Health

Covid 19 restriction apply
Consult your Government
travel requirements
Check Madlive entry
requirements

Gear

As you desire - Tropicsurf find
you the breaks to suit your
talent and quiver

Tips

Explore beneath the water as
well as above - great diving
available

When

April - October

Travel packages

Tropicsurf

Checkout these

www.tropicsurf.net
www.hih.com.mv
www.singaporeair.com
www.malaysiaairlines.com

Explanation

The editorial and images in this story are from the Longbreak archives. They reflect the unforgettable events, people and experiences we encountered on that particular journey. Some parts of the package supplied by the Four Season Explorer and Tropicsurf may have changed or no longer be included.

Story

Eroll Considine

Pictures

Peter Dickson

Production

Glidepath Consulting

inks

Tropicsurf



The Maldives.

Our world has changed so much since our first visit to the Maldives on-board The Four Seasons Explorer over a decade ago.

A comforting thought in these days of constant change is that there are some things we can revisit that have remained in essence the same.

A Maldives, Four Seasons Explorer experience is one of these rare gems. However this also is subject to the winds of change

The Four Season Explorer is scheduled for just one more waltz around the waters of the crystal blue Maldives ballroom

It really is worth saving that last dance for you.



discover the art of luxury surfing



 TROPICSURF



THE RIGHT TO A HEALTHY LIFE



Many of the world's best surf destinations are remote and people in remote areas are often forgotten, as delivering services there is costly, time-consuming and requires serious efforts. SurfAid passionately believes that no matter where you live, you have a right to access quality basic services.

In the Mentawai and Nias, off Sumatra, and Sumba and Sumbawa in Eastern Indonesia, more than 70 per cent of the population lives below the poverty line and there is a poor understanding of what constitutes good nutrition and good basic hygiene.

The local people face many life-threatening challenges, with diseases such as acute respiratory infection, diarrhoea and malaria, plus birth complications, taking a serious toll.

Malnutrition is an everyday reality for both children and adults, and natural disasters in the form of tsunamis and earthquakes add to the challenge of improving the health and wellbeing of the village communities. Community-based development is at the heart of SurfAid's program and approach. Our development assistance model focuses on empowering communities to help themselves and employing local staff to support local strategies and solutions. Almost all our staff are Indonesian nationals who speak the local dialects and understand the culture.

Our staff train and support groups of community health volunteers (kader) who work together with the local health departments to deliver health messages on nutrition, hygiene and sanitation to their neighbours, focusing on at-risk households. These kader are the frontline and they are the link in their own community between the community and the community health services (Posyandu).

SURFAID

www.surfaid.org

DONATE NOW

longbreak



SURF | TRAVEL | LIFESTYLE

MALDIVES : FOUR SEASON EXPLORER

Staff and Contributors

Writer

Errol Considine

Photographer

Peter Dickson

Matt Oldfield

Editor

Peter Dickson

Telephone: +61 418 911 150

Email: glidepath@westnet.com.au

Facebook: Longbreak Magazine

Instagram: Longbreakmag

Production

Glidepath Consulting

Peter Dickson. Keith Anderson. Chavaune Francis.

Thanks

Singapore Airlines

Tropicsurf

Published

Hard Copy Print Edition - 2004

Re-edited and released May 2021