

# Sugar Beach... where time stands still



By [Rod Baker](#)

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Good old plantation (colonial) architecture, good old plantation hospitality. Sugar Beach is the ultimate resort to relax... Where a couple of days feels like a week - and you could be excused for not falling down if you saw Rhett Butler lugging Scarlet past you up the stairs and telling her 'Frankly, my dear, I don't give a damn - you're coming upstairs to check out my new luggage. And that's an end to it!'



Olde worlde charm coupled to unbeatable service adds up to an unbeatable experience.

I said as much to Andrew Slome OBE, Sugar's beach's general manager... that I wouldn't die of surprise to see a buggy and pair draw up and Rhett to leap out; he smiled quietly and said, "We're not quite that formal."

And the resort isn't that formal, so if you're looking for a better refuge to get away from it all, fall out of bed and virtually fall on to the beach, then you will have to long, hard search to find better.

As to what it offers, it is a five star, so the short answer is "a lot".

We - my financial director (i.e. Heather, my wife) and I - were at Sugar Beach for a few days to see what the resort has to offer. SummerTimes picked us up from Ambre and took us on a roundabout tour of the island's north shore, taking in Grand Bay and the quaint Catholic Church with its red roof and splendid views of Gunner's Quoin. And then it was on to lunch at the Chateau de Labourdonnais colonial house restaurant - the house itself has been restored to its former glory to show colonial house that has been restored to show how the families lived there in the nineteenth century - and finally to the capital Port-Louis.

The fort is worth a visit, as is the Waterfront - and if you have visited Cape Town's V&A Waterfront, do not be too quick to give a snort of derision... When you pop out of the subway having visited the local market, you are confronted by what looks like a smallish work shed that is filled with a few stores and a single escalator.

This is not the Waterfront... well not all of it.

Go left, keeping the harbour on your right, and you will come across some rather lekker shopping, and the odd bar and restaurant or three. OK, nothing really compares with the V&A, but Port Louis' waterfront is worth a visit.

Now, back to Sugar Beach - which is the whole point of this soul-searing saga...

Sugar Beach opened in 1996 and was renovated in 2008, with an upgraded public area, renovated decor and 20 extra rooms. The renovations also saw the addition themed buffets.



The beach is great and you have plenty of space to wander off and find a spot just for yourself.

## Great beach

The resort has more than 500m of sandy beaches and covers more than 12ha with beautiful landscaped tropical gardens with contemporary plantation-style architecture. The buildings comprise the central reception, the Manor House and 16 villas - 10 with 12 rooms each and 6 with 10 rooms each. Guests have access to the facilities of La Pirogue, which is within walking distance.



Say no more...

of water and land sports and activities by day, the romance of the starlit tropical sky at night and glorious food with a feast of Mauritian, Mediterranean and world flavours. The range of facilities makes the resort ideal for incentives, as well as couples and families experience the best of famed Mauritian hospitality.

Tides, right on the beach, offers great food while you get the sand between your toes, and as the resort is on Mauritius' west coast, you can sit and enjoy a few sundowners as the sun sets.

The resort is divided into three residential areas for guests - The Manor House, South Villas, and... wait for it... North Villas. The former are arranged in a crescent and back on a natural body of water and if you're a birdwatcher, you will spot a pelican or two, a brace of flamingos

- pretty in pink, and on one leg as always\*, plus assorted swans - white and black - and ducks. I am sure local avian species also visit from time to time; where else can you sit in one of the rooms facing the lake, with drink in one hand and binoculars in the other?

Incidentally, the lake is swarming with fish, mainly koi, it seemed to me.

Also close to the North Villas - just behind them in fact, is the Sun Kids Club. It is free for all children from 2-11 years and provides world-class attractions including exciting, ultra cool and imaginative daily fun programmes, age-appropriate activities, facilities and amenities, twelve hours a day. Members of the club can enjoy golf, tennis, windsurfing and swimming clinics as well as environmental excursions with a focus on educational enrichment throughout their stay.

Also catered for are youngsters up to the age of 17, but as we all know these beings are from a different planet, like duh! Hence, their entertainment is tuned to their needs.

So while Mom and Dad are soaking up the sun and the G&Ts, they can relax safe in the knowledge that the kids are safe, having a great time, and - one hopes - will be collected later absolutely clapped out and ready for bed after dinner... whereupon Mom and Dad can enjoy some more quiet time... or not.

The South Villas are close to another pond and back on to the spa - an oasis of calm within a bigger oasis - the resort itself - and there is a gym, tennis courts and sports bar all within a few steps.

What I find great about all the Sun Resorts establishments we have been to is how the residential areas are removed from the central public areas, or, where closer to the latter, are largely shielded from the sounds of the other guests having a grand old time.



I blame these guys and their mates for my clothing being a great deal tighter on the way back than when we arrived.

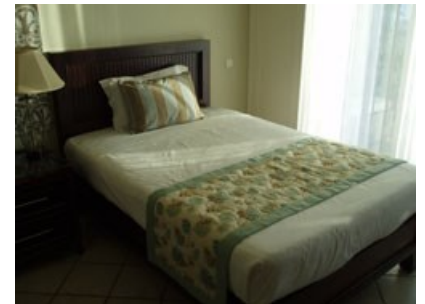
## Clock this...

I didn't notice the antique clock in reception, being somewhat of an antique myself. So, with spectacular incompetence I managed to set my state-of-the-art watch to the wrong time, so when I had to interview some of the staff, for example, I was there before they even had out of bed; it was only on my last day that the penny dropped and I discovered I was going to suddenly age by 30 minutes.

The plus was, I was NOT late for *anything!* Ever!

## And off to our room

Once welcomed by Andre Slome OBE and general manager of the resort and



At my age I put a lot of value into being able to sleep well, and you too should be able to do so on this.

Vincent Cavalot, the executive assistant manager, we were escorted to our room... ground floor and about 15 paces - I counted - from front door to sand between the toes.

The room is really well appointed with comfy beds and great pillows, and flat-screen TV, plus *en suite* bathroom.

Now, being a simple soul, what I tend to like are the simple things in life (my wife tells me that why she married me... I am simple. And I married her because...) and for me, one of the best features was the smallest... A handy multiplug below a little flip-up door on the desk, and under the door... the multiplug with ports for two-pin, SA three-pin and UK three-pin plugs. Brilliant when you discover that you forgot to pack your international adapter.

## Things to do and all that jazz

During the day, there is a range of activities designed to suit you every desire. Feel like a bit of pampering? Then the [spa's the place to be](#). Feel like bunkering down for a round of golf? Try [these courses...](#)

- [Le Touessrok](#) The course covers 38 hectares and is the longest in Mauritius, with the holes snaking up and down the length of the island. All 18 holes have views of the ocean, or...
- [Tamarina](#) Tamarina Golf, Spa and Beach Club aims to be the most desirable golfing spot in Mauritius. It combines an oasis of natural beauty with a world-class course and provides exclusive facilities and services to golfers of all levels.



The Mauritian themed night saw this sort of thing laid out; needless to say it didn't seem to last very long before new stocks had to be brought out.

If you're not into long walks interspersed with hitting dimpled balls, then Sugar Beach has a range of alternative activities [on land](#) ranging from aerobics to martial arts to Pilates (no, not pirates... Pilates), tennis and yoga, and all aching points between.

[If you feel like getting your feet wet](#), then you can try everything from complementary facilities such as kayaks, laser sails, glass-bottom boat trips, snorkelling, windsurfing, fun boat, aqua gym classes, water polo, volley polo and basket polo. Also on offer are non-complementary activities such as scuba diving (PADI open-water courses available), big game fishing, water-skiing, parasailing, and full-day catamaran cruises - we did the latter. Great!



Another shot of the Mauritian themed night delicacies ... The food at all of the hotels we have stayed at has been excellent - as a bulging waistline will attest.

For those of you for whom bedtime is not 2030, Sugar Beach offers a range of entertainment. In the evening the atmosphere changes; the bands come out to play and if you enjoy jazz, then you will enjoy the dynamic and upbeat Dixieland experience.

## Safe, my mate

Lifesavers are on duty from 0700, or when the pools "open", and all of the barman and waiters are trained as well, and all go on refresher courses every three to six months. For those of you who - like my wife - step on piece of coral and cut your foot (wear shoes when wading out towards Madagascar) - there is a nurse on call 0830-1800, and doctors are also on call for anything more serious.

## Tying the knot?

Thinking of getting married? Looking for a romantic location to tie the knot and shuffle off into a future of married bliss, mortgages and kids for Africa? Sugar Beach will be yours for your special day.

"We run no more than one wedding a day, so it is very much the couple's special day, and if they book standard rooms, we try to upgrade them to superior, if not when they arrive, then at least during their stay. The couple is also booked in as Ms X and Mr Y - and that's on their phone displays when they arrive," says Shirley.

"As soon as they are married, the telephone display in their room of choice is converted to Mr & Mrs Y, and there is also a message of congratulations from the general manager,' she adds.

The hotel staff put a lot of effort into ensuring that everything is "just right" for the happy couple. Sugar Beach has conducted Jewish weddings as well as those of for couples of other faiths.

So if you want a day to remember - remember this is where you heard about it. By the way all the group's hotels offer this service.



If you don't fancy the beach, then try the pools.

And then we were off to la Pirogue...

But a final word of Sugar Beach... would we go back again?

In a heartbeat.

[Sugar Beach.](#)

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## ABOUT ROD BAKER

Rod Baker is Content Director at Bizcommunity.com. A journalist since before computers, he worked on a wide range of magazines and, in his youth, rose through the ranks from being a lowly and abused sub-editor, to a high and still abused editor and publisher. He has been editor and publisher of a number of magazines, as well as a newspaper. He has edited many books, and written a number too. Email him at [rod@bizcommunity.com](mailto:rod@bizcommunity.com)

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