

Linger at Long Beach

By [Rod Baker](#)

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'Long Beach Resort is not so much a hotel or resort as a village - a village in which we set out to have something for everyone - to create a holiday destination to which guests will return, time and again' - Nicolas de Chalain, Long Beach's first GM.

This was our third stay at Long Beach, on the east coast of Mauritius... We had been there for the opening and then I managed to win a trip, so our return was pretty much a case of *déjà vu* - but that was useful because having seen the hotel right from the very beginning, we've been able, to some extent, to watch it 'mature'.

So, how was it?

First of all, the service is unchanged - excellent.



Feel like a dip? There are pools aplenty.

When we arrived, having been chauffeured over from Ambre, courtesy [SummerTimes Excursions and Cruises](#) Pooja Jhinni Awotar, Sales Coordinator, was on hand to meet us, book us in and get us settled. A Long Beach trademark upon arrival is a cool, refreshing beverage and a cool towel. Both were most welcome as we stepped out of air-conditioned comfort of our limo into the tropical humidity of a Mauritian March.

Soon thereafter, we met Daren Moodley, Executive Assistant Manager who made absolutely sure Pooja hadn't missed a thing. She hadn't... I got the feeling she would remain cool, calm and collected - and very efficient, come what may.

Jumping forward a few hours, that evening we also met Vladimir Scanu, General Manager, when he did his rounds, checking on the guests at around dinnertime.

This is one thing that we noticed right from both our earlier visits... then it was the hotel's first MD, Nicolas de Chalain, who was doing the rounds, checking the details and the service, making sure everything was 'just so' and this time Vladimir was doing the same.

I'm pretty sure it's quite a common practice in many hotels, but it still makes a very good impression... that top management is not resting on their laurels, but it keeping staff on their toes.

Later we also met Clyde Vacher, Communication & Public Affairs Manager; also playing his part to ensure we would have the best stay possible.

Hence, it's no surprise that since its grand opening in April 2011, Long Beach has won an impressive number of awards and that has helped ensure a constant flow of happy guests through the resort's doors and the accommodating and hosting of many groups, events and weddings. See the foot of the article for more on weddings.

Back to the present...

Long Beach has gained a reputation for excellent levels of service and quality, and for having a staff that takes great pride in the resort and its smooth operation.

Once in our suite, which was really comfortable and had bags of room, we settled in prior to an exploration to see what had changed and what had not. On our previous visit, management had provided us with a complementary bottle of rum, as the hotel staff knew we were celebrating 36 years of me being ordered about. This time... well, perhaps they reckoned that one bottle was enough.



Very comfortable, great pillows, comfy bed...

As per our previous visits, our Long Beach suite scored 10/10 on comfort, my only reservation being that while we had a sea view, we were on the ground floor, and behind the beachfront suites, so the wet stuff was some way out... I'd suggest that if you value a fuller sea view, either go for a top-floor suite or a superior room on to the beach.

The large flat screen TV came with some DStv channels and the local channels as well. I soon gave up on the local French channel as that language is Greek to me, but while on our previous visit we were able to keep up with events in Libya, this time it was Crimea and Ukraine, but ... with tears in my bloodshot eyes, given the risk of a major punch-up north of the Black Sea, what was top of the news?

You guessed it... Oscar.

And more Oscar...

And then a little more...

That's right... come on, you remember *the* trial... it was in **all** the papers, on **all** the news sites, and everywhere you looked, and will be again. But for crying out loud, am I the only bloke wanting to be free of it... at least for a while?

None of which has anything at all to do with Long Beach, so pardon the rant.

What *does* have something to do with Long Beach is the tea and coffee in the room. Now don't get me wrong, but as we were on half-board - according to Pooja, about 70% of guests go for half board - tea and coffee in the suite is NOT included in the price.



"Why, hello... You want some coffee? You'll need to wait awhile... but if you can't, don't worry, the coffee in your suite is really good" ... A palm civet peers out of a tree in his home state of Kerala, India. (Image: [Raveenp](#), via Wikimedia Commons)

Now I am sure both are great... tasty and refreshing, but in the case of the coffee, I would understand it being charged as an extra if our furry friend the Asian palm civet (*Paradoxurus hermaphroditus*) had had a hand in its provenance and that the brew we'd have been eagerly sipping had been kopi luwak.

But I am pretty sure it isn't, and I really feel that complimentary tea and coffee, rather than having to pay for it on departure, having selected half-board, won't break the Long Beach bank account and would ensure that Long Beach would add even more awards to its already impressive trophy line-up.

I found it a bit, you know... *Paradoxial*, if you get the pun.

Perhaps don't do it by halves

As mentioned above, Pooja told me that about 70% of guests go for the half board, full board tending to be favoured by groups.

My suggestion is: Take a good look at what you plan to eat and drink during the day, and if you have children, how many ice creams and desserts little Johnny will manage before turning green.

While you might not feel a need to go wild, you don't want to have a holiday negatively affected by little Johnny pleading for

another ice cream or cool-drink and you having to refuse it because you want to watch the purse strings.

Even more important, a beautiful tropical setting like Mauritius and a great hotel like Long Beach cry out for a cold beer as the sun ascends heavens... another one as it passes noon, and another when it starts heading west... and another... but you get the idea.

Now get *this* idea... at Rs235 or so per bottle (that's the local Phoenix beer - goes down a treat) and as the exchange rate at the time was about Rs2.7/R1... well, you do the maths.

In fact, a check on TripAdvisor found comments overwhelmingly positive and rightly so, lauding Long Beach for its service, comfort, range of activities, food and so on, but a number of comments point to the cost of the drinks and, to some extent, the cost of the food.



The food is excellent, but consider taking the full board option.

To give an example, a modest but tasty lunch (a shared pizza - and yes, it was big enough for both of us), plus a beer for myself and tonic for my boss - at Saponi for the two of us came in at Rs960.

When I checked [TripAdvisor](#), a total of 581 people had reviewed Long Beach, of which 392 rated it as excellent and 114 rated it as very good, with 44 finding it average. The remaining 31 who were less than impressed must have had a bad hair day or something.

To be fair, the point is made that food and drinks costs are roughly on a par for the island, but all I am saying is, look at both options, check the menus (I'm sure the management would be willing to send you PDFs of them) and then decide given the number of you going, what you reckon you'd like to enjoy. You don't want to skimp, but by the same token, you don't want your bank manager to call you in for an up-close-and-personal discussion about your finances when you get back home.

As to activities...

Some activities are included in the half board, others are extra, so again, check, but if you want to make like a wannabe Jacques-Yves Cousteau, a French naval officer, explorer, conservationist, filmmaker, innovator, scientist, and photographer, try the undersea walk. We loved it.

To recap from a previous article, you go out a couple of hundred metres from the beach to the dive boat, anchored in the lagoon. There you get a brief safety lesson...

And then it's into the water. Make sure you wear sandals as you are walking on coral and bare feet are a no-no.



"Captain Nemo, I presume. Ah!"

Fail to take this advice and you may end up doing your own rendition of the Bee-Gees 'Stayin' Alive' - well certainly the 'Ah Ah Ah' part - but at the bottom of the ocean, what's the point - no one can hear your involuntary and off-key attempt at karaoke.

The diver who goes down before you, and guides you off the ladder, takes shots of you underwater (you can buy the disk afterwards) and then gives you bread to feed the fish - which go wild... scores of them flash in and eat from your hands. Occasionally you feel a little nibble on your fingers, but there are no teeth, so no worries.

You stay down for about 15-20 minutes or so, which I reckon is about 5 hours too short as I enjoyed it so much, in a world that can only be described as one to remember.

After a time that was too short - but well worth what is charged, believe me - the diver gestured to us to return to the ladder and we ended what is a truly memorable experience.

Thanks to the guys at Aquaventure (www.underseawalkmauritius.com - the site seems to be down, temporarily) - and of course to Long Beach, for the experience.

To recap a bit (again!)...

Long Beach's layout has the entertainment area and restaurants clustered around, or close to the Piazza.

Le Marché the main restaurant for breakfasts and dinners, then you also have Saponi, the Italian restaurant, which also offers both indoor and outdoor seating. Then there's Shores, the cocktail and lounge bar, where you can enjoy an international selection of drinks with an accent on tropical cocktails featuring local spirits and ingredients and Hasu, the à-la-carte Japanese restaurant located on the Piazza. Hasu's mission is to offer a perfect harmony between contemporary design and authentic cuisine.

If you like an oriental flavour to your stay (over and above Hasu, that is) try Chopsticks, the modern casual Chinese restaurant from which came some rather lip-smacking aromas - but then ambling through the Piazza ends up with you being assailed from all sides by aromas that will play havoc with any diet.

For you seafood lovers, the tide's always in... at Tides, which is the centre for life during the day.

Long Beach has 255 keys, all with sea views (but bear in mind the point I make above) and a beach that has been brought right up to the resort, and is a contemporary tropical 5-star resort for active guests who appreciate culture and style. It is also a very "family-friendly" hotel: while we were there during this visit there were a number of young families as guests - and the kids seemed to be enjoying themselves.



Long Beach has 255 keys, all with sea views, but try for the upper suite if you can, for an enhanced view.

Tours

The choice offered by [SummerTimes](#) is very good, - some give you a shopping experience, you can visit the capital, Port Louis, others take you to the central part of the island, while others are adventures like the undersea walk, deep-sea fishing, snorkelling and even rock climbing* (see below). There's something for everyone. I recommend the one that takes in the rum refinery; it left me with a lovely glow - and I am not talking about my bronzed rippling flab.

If you do not want to go on an organised tour, but rather do your own thing, the hotel reception will arrange for a taxi to take you wherever you want. This is also a good way to explore the island. Even better, though the locals talk French, you drive on the left and give way to the right - just as here in SA (minibus drivers excepted).

Fitness and spa

*If you happen to be into climbing, there is a closer opportunity, however... Pooja showed us the hotel's climbing wall - all climbs are made under supervision, so get out those carabiners.

There's also tennis, and a fully equipped gym... there should be something to keep you occupied, surely.

The 1400m² main heated pool and 343m² fresh pool (both with surrounding decks) and the lap pool, offer exercise and relaxation for all ages. Complementary water sports include kayaks, laser sails, glass-bottom boats, snorkelling, waterskiing, windsurfing, fun boats, aqua gym classes, water polo, volley polo and basket polo.

Guests enjoy preferential access to Le Touessrok Golf Course, the par-72 championship course located on Ile aux Cerfs

and designed by Bernhard Lange.



Pools for Afr... Mauritius, and plenty of loungers.

The Spa introduces what is claimed to be a first in beauty and health care rituals: *Thali'sens* and has 12 treatment rooms, including doubles. It is situated on the natural pond that was left in situ and offers a very wide range of treatments. So whatever your choice of pampering... the spa has it.

Conference facilities

For those who wish to make their business a pleasure, the hotel offers complementary function facilities to all resident groups. Bombora Nightclub is 190m² in size, with an adjoining 110m² function room, and the two - combined or separate - are ideal for smaller events, conferences or functions.

The following high-tech audio-visual equipment is freely available for group events: data projector for PC and video, video player, CD and DVD player, PA system, remote-controlled screen, microphones, WiFi and broadband internet connection, lectern, pencils, notepads and flip charts. Additional technology and conference facilities, for which nominal fees may be charged, are also available on request.

Weddings

Long Beach is eager to encourage couples to tie the knot and/or honeymoon at the hotel and to that end offers a full service designed to leave you the minimum of hassles and maximum of happiness on your special day.

Wedding planners are on hand to take over the nitty-gritty of the wedding and Pooja says that the guests and wedding parties are separated from the hotel's other guests; this helps give the occasion more of a special family-and-friends feel, and also ensures that the hotel's other guests - married or not - can relax and won't even inadvertently intrude on the festivities.

While we were there we saw - and applauded - an Asian groom, resplendent in his dress uniform (he was obviously in some branch of his country's armed forces) hop on a golf cart and depart to swear loyalty and so on to his new commander-in-chief.

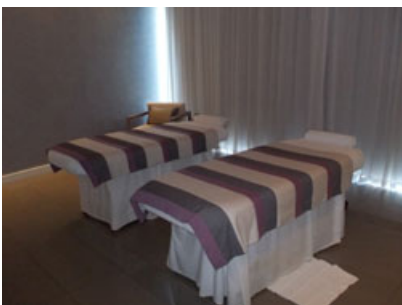
(You'll find a general overview and more about [\(getting married in Mauritius here\)](#) and more about getting married at [Long Beach, specifically, here](#).



Honeymoon couples doing it as it should be done...

We left Mauritius relaxed, and a bit heavier, after a wonderful pampering and relaxing rest.

For more information on the hotel, go to [Beach Hotel Long Beach Hotel, Mauritius: a new experience in Mauritian holiday-making](#).



The spa's just down the way and a haven... in a haven.

Our thanks to [World Leisure Holidays](#), [Sun resorts Ltd](#), [Air Mauritius](#) and [Summer Times](#); it was great, guys and girls. And special thanks to the staff at Long Beach, and mine host, Pooja.

World Leisure Holidays

World Leisure Holidays offers a very wide range of holiday packages in an equally wide range of exotic destinations and, to boot... The hotels at which you would stay are leaders. So don't just sit there... World Leisure Holidays is wholly owned by Sun Resorts in Mauritius and as such owns two Leading Hotels of the World, Le

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The company also owns two 5-star properties, Sugar Beach and Long Beach as well as two 4-star properties, Ambre and La Pirogue, all located in Mauritius.

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