



1. ONE&ONLY HAYMAN ISLAND, GREAT BARRIER REEF, AUSTRALIA

A camera-ready world of white linen and infinity pools, Hayman Island was named after the navigator Thomas Hayman, who charted the Great Barrier Reef in the 1770s. The island has been famous in Australia as the continent’s most beautiful bolthole since the aviation pioneer Reginald Ansett bought it in 1947 and built a hotel. In those days, visitors arrived by flying boat. Now fans such as Johnny Depp and Oprah come by on helicopter or yacht. When One&Only (founded by “blow-the-customer-away” hotelier Sol Kerzner) took over in 2013, the group instigated a multimillion-dollar facelift. The island is now a 160-room home to the biggest pool in the southern hemisphere – equal to seven Olympic-sized pools – and five restaurants. Basking year-round in tropical warmth, with daytime temperatures hovering at about 27°C, it’s a good base for gathering the workforce or one’s extended family to contemplate one’s good fortune and future direction, before diving into the planet’s most dazzling underwater world.

The One&Only Hayman Island sleeps 320 people and costs from 400,000 Australian dollars (Dh1.1 million) per night; oneandonlyhaymanisland.com

2. VELAA, THE MALDIVES

The newest of the ultra-luxe islands in the Maldives is the seven-bedroom, five-acre Voavah, off the Four Seasons Resort Maldives at Landaa Giraavaru, which comes with the use of a 62-foot yacht. But for maximum boys’-toys-type super-glamour, nowhere outdoes Velaa. Owned by a Czech billionaire, the little island even

squeezes in a nine-hole golf course and enchanting playground, but it’s the water-sports centre that sets the heart racing. Adventurous guests favour the hoverboard, which can make you feel like you’re skateboarding on water. Terrifying and wonderful this may be, yet it’s still nothing compared to using the aquatic jetpack or the flyboard, which can send you almost 30 feet in the air. Afterwards, stories can be swapped in the Bond-movie-worthy glass-floored restaurant. A well-stocked library provides a hideout for the non-aquatic. And of the 43 villas, four are four-bedroom residences, with the master residence reachable only by boat, just to remind everyone who’s who and what’s what.

The Velaa Private Island sleeps 80 and costs from US\$1.18 million (Dh4.3m) per night; velaprivateisland.com

3. NECKER ISLAND, BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS, CARIBBEAN

Thirty minutes by speedboat from Tortola, the world’s most famous private island sleeps 30, not including owner Richard Branson. He decamps to neighbouring Mosquito when Necker is rented out, but a sense of his eager energy permeates the lush, hilly 7½ acres he usually calls home. Party central, where Bill Gates and Nelson Mandela have stayed, and Kate Moss celebrated her 40th birthday, is the 10-bedroom Great House, with a wrap-around terrace arranged with hammocks and sofas, a spa, snooker room and, as you’d expect, a Jacuzzi on the roof. Six Balinese villas are also dotted around the island, each sleeping two. The island teems with wildlife: flamingos, endangered lemurs, giant tortoises and iguanas. Young staff – 80 in all – will



teach you to kite-surf and wakeboard, or point you to the zip-wire connecting the hilltop and beach. Sushi is served from an ice-filled kayak pushed by swimming chefs. A quiet retreat this is not. Fun, fun, fun, though. **Necker Island sleeps 30 and costs from US\$60,000 (Dh220,375) per night; virginlimitededition.com/en/necker-island**

4. LAUCALA, FIJI

A 50-minute flight by private jet from Nadi, the remote Laucala island is a billionaire’s fantasy, owned by Red Bull co-founder Dietrich Mateschitz. Privacy is totally guaranteed, which is probably why model Elle Macpherson and billionaire Jeffrey Soffer chose it for their wedding three years ago. A large volcanic island of 3,500 acres, it comes with pale pristine beaches, a rainforest where the trees are strung with wild orchids, and a vibe that will delight the most insanelly, restlessly demanding lover of super-slick seven-star surrounds. Each of the 25 villas has its own pool, beach or garden. The island is 85 per cent self-sustaining, with its farm supplying fruit, vegetables, chicken and eggs for the four restaurants. The 350 staff means a staff-guest ratio of 5:1. Service is impeccable. And if the lure of the beach, horse riding, playing golf, jet-skiing, sailing or hiking wanes, there’s a two-person submarine for exploring under the waves.

Laucala sleeps 70 and costs US\$150,000 (Dh550,950) per night; laucala.com

5. AMANPULO, THE PHILIPPINES

An hour’s flight by private plane from Manila, surrounded by clear, warm waters heaving with tropical fish and sea turtles, this little island has 62 pool villas, dotted across jungly hillsides or strung along beaches so soft and white that trudging down to the water feels like walking through flour. Each villa comes with a golf buggy and bikes to get around. A smart water-sports centre can arrange all things aquatic. Tennis courts, yoga, Pilates and meditation pavilions, and a spa can occupy those who’d rather stay on dry land. The heart of the resort is a 30-metre pool by the Clubhouse. The culinary choices here are delectably confusing: pizza at the Windsurf Hut? Tapas? Vietnamese cuisine served on a table set up on the sandbar, surrounded by bamboo torches and wicker lanterns? Picnic on a deserted neighbouring island? They’re all yours for the picking. **The Amanpulo island-resort by the Aman group sleeps 222, including the privately owned villas, which can also be rented, and costs from US\$230,000 (Dh844,780) per night; aman.com/resorts/amanpulo**

