

Long Beach - long on service, long on... well, everything



By [Rod Baker](#)

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Long Beach, Sun Resorts' new hotel development on the Belle Mare Peninsula, on the east coast of Mauritius, opened its doors to the media in early June to sample what has been designed to be a one-of-a-kind hotel for guests who have had the opportunity to stay there since it opened in April 2011. All pictures by Lettie Ferreira unless otherwise stated.



Come on, be one of the bunch - ride the banana.

Thanks to our sponsors - [World Leisure Holidays](#), [Sun Resorts Ltd](#), [Air Mauritius](#) and [Summer Times](#) we arrived rested and relaxed - and after a bus journey of about a hour and a half or so along a winding road that seemed to be a natural thoroughfare for a large number of what were clearly some very street-wise dogs, arrived at Long Beach.

From the moment we arrived, it became clear that we would have a ball.

The hotel - more of a resort, I reckon - is an upbeat urban beach resort that is vibrant, free and easy, with strong contrasts.

The hotel is still very new and one of the things that struck me first was the service we were able to enjoy. I have said in another article how the Mauritians seem to live to serve; nothing seems to give them more pleasure than to help you enjoy your stay to the utmost.

That includes everything from cleaning your sunglasses to taking your plate of food from you just after you have finished loading it with the delectable goodies on offer.

The latter was a bit strange at first... With your plate loaded to the gills with your breakfast (I gained about 2kg in four days, by the way - now thankfully lost - not the days, the kilos) off you amble to your table at Le Marché, the main restaurant.

But I digress... there I was doing a salivating saunter back to my table, when a rather attractive young lady sort of formatted on me and gently removed my laden plate from my hands.

My first thought was to grab it back with an admonition (in falsetto, I might add) along the lines of: "What... give that back! It's mine! Get your own!"

Fortunately reason prevailed, I kept my yap shut, smiled and handed my plate over and it was delicately deposited on my table, with a broad smile and a "A pleasure, Sir; enjoy your breakfast" farewell.

So, when you spend a break at Long Beach, bear the above in mind... Having one of the many staff carry your plate from the buffet to your table is just part of the service.



Look Ma, no hands.

The layout of the resort means that the entertainment area and restaurants are all in the same area - and the restaurants surround the Piazza, so wherever you are enjoying your meal, you are able to watch the entertainment.

Le Marché is the main restaurant. Then you also have Saponi, the Italian restaurant, which also offers both indoor and outdoor seating; 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. Hasu's mission is to offer a perfect harmony between contemporary design and authentic cuisine.

But that's not all; for those who like an Oriental flavour to their stay (over and above Hasu, that is) try Chopsticks, the modern casual Chinese restaurant of Long Beach 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.



Just the spot to tan your bod - and an ever-present security guard keeps an eye on your possessions while you change colour.

For you seafood lovers, the tide's always in... at Tides, which is the centre for life during the day. Forget your shoes, sandals and flip-flops (I have heard that the French name for flip-flops is Philippe Philoppes (joke)) and enjoy easy living and a very tempting food and bar experience.

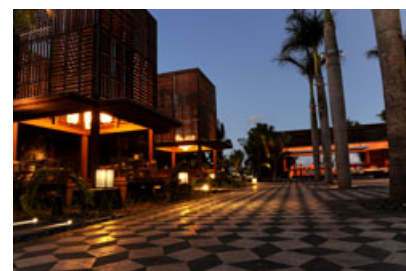
Tides restaurant offers a selection of fresh fish from waters around the world and also close to home - like about 30m away - so kick off your shoes, slops etc, and enjoy.

For those of you who would rather get away from it all even more than usual, beach service at Long Beach will also bring waiter service to your own sun lounger with offers of light lunch and a comprehensive range of drinks. A beach cart also provides refreshments and snacks along the beach for guests to enjoy in the privacy of their thatched parasols.

Far from the madding crowd

What I enjoyed about Long Beach was the whole layout of the resort. All the noise is in a reasonably confined area - from the main reception to the edge of the beach; the rest of the resort, for young and old (i.e. the writer) is far enough away that all we could hear was... well... nothing, while the younger set (55 and below) lived it up down the road.

The new hotel of 255 keys, all with sea views and a beach that has been brought right up to the resort, is a contemporary tropical 5-star resort for active guests who appreciate culture and style. It is also a very "family-friendly" hotel, with spacious family rooms being offered together with an array of facilities and services and even a really impressive play centre for toddlers and up, and - oh heaven - a centre right next door to keep the teenagers occupied.



The Piazza, surrounded by restaurants with toothsome tidbits for every taste.

Now where are we?

What I really did like was the signage. Yes, I know, it sounds like a boring subject, but let me tell you, when you are... er, sauntering... back to your suite in the middle of the night and you are on the outside of some of the best cocktails this side of Perth, you don't want to end up at the wrong door. The paved pathways between the lines of the suites zigzag between them, but the actual signs (illuminated at night for the bleary-eyed) are simple and "straight up-and-down" - along the lines of the London Underground maps - and incredibly easy to follow.

Now, what are we going to do today... apart from nothing?

With the longest and widest stretch of white-sand coastline of any Mauritian resort to date, a spectacular beachfront 700m long and 40m wide and an adjacent lagoon, sheltered by a constellation of rare coral formations harbouring a rich underwater fauna, Long Beach is the sun-lovers home from home.

I, however, did not try sunbathing as I thought with my shape I might risk having some environmentally aware individual to try to get me back in the water in the mistaken belief that I was a Bryde's Whale (I'm always the bridesmaid, never the bride) washed up on the beach.

The resort is, however, a snorkelling and water sports paradise - from snorkelling to paddle boating, which is about my limit, to parasailing, walking along the lagoon bed with a helmet on your head, and glass-boat excursions, Long Beach has it all. For the more daring, you can ride a banana - no kidding - behind a speedboat and also try a tube. This skims and bounces over the surface at serious speed and frequently looks like a training aid for the Folies Bergère because every time the



A room with a view. Well, every room has a view.

tube hits a wave, it takes off for a few metres and the occupants' legs fly into the air, accompanied by loud screams.

The only thing missing was "Oo la la" and the "Dah dah dah dah dah tah dah dah dah dant dant a dah dah. Hey!"

But man, did it look like fun!

You can even have your kayak - but you don't have to eat it - and take a paddle in it around the lagoon.

Some of the activities are operated by the hotel, others by private contractors, but as far as I know all can be booked through the hotel; failing that, the very helpful (what else) reception staff will advise you as to costs, where to book and so on.

Bags of choice when it comes to packages

There is bags of choice when it comes to holiday packages but you need to ensure you know *exactly* what's covered and what isn't in the package you select.

For instance, the trend overseas is to now charge for tea or coffee in your room (we South Africans are used to paying for goodies from the mini bar, but this was a new one to me). So, for some packages at Long Beach that is the case, tea and coffee comes at a cost - given that the beverages are top drawer and to avoid any embarrassment, confirm what's "on the house" and what isn't when you book and/or book in.



Our home from home during the trip. (Rod Baker)

For more information on the hotel go to [Long Beach Hotel offers opening specials](#) - bear in mind that these might have changed and for more background on the hotel itself, read [Beach Hotel Long Beach Hotel, Mauritius: a new experience in Mauritian holiday-making](#).

Having won a trip to Long Beach just before joining the media group - and a great bunch they were too - "may waif and aye" are going back, courtesy two return tickets from Air Mauritius Business Class and five nights at Long Beach so this trip turned out to be a bit of a recce. Who knows, I might even end up doing my high kicks a la the Folies Bergère line-up. Or not.

My 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, GM Nicolas de Chalain, Lettie Ferreira for the great pictures and World Leisure Holidays' PR consultant Melanie Millin-Moore and Dawn Horwitz who organised the whole breakaway - oh, and the lovely Air Mauritius flight attendant who on the return flight gave me *two* beers - and a great smile.

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.

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