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INSIDER

- 46 Cruise Aeolian Islands
- 52 Check in Queenstown
- 54 Room reporter Cook Islands
- 58 Eco Greenland
- 64 A Taste of Penang

State of mind: The Honeymoon Pool Villa at the Aitutaki Lagoon Resort & Spa, page 54.



November 2008 travelandleisure.com.au 45

INSIDER ROOM REPORTER

Room 26 AITUTAKI LAGOON RESORT & SPA COOK ISLANDS

This luxury retreat, on one of the South Pacific's most beautiful private islands, is ideal for a getaway, be it romantic or just to escape the hectic pace of modern life. By Paul Chai.

A secluded Polynesian-style retreat in the stunning surrounds of the Aitutaki Lagoon Resort & Spa, the Royal Honeymoon Pool Villa (Room 26) is so inviting it needs a vista as breathtaking as the Aitutaki Lagoon to draw you out of its woven-reed walls. Three pavilions across and contained in its own walled garden, the villa is a new addition to the resort which stands on the champagne sands of Motu Akitua, a small islet off the Cook Island of Aitutaki.



The entrance to your secluded island hideaway.

54 travelandleisure.com.au November 2008

INSIDER ROOM REPORTER

Room 26



56 travelandleisure.com.au November 2008

First impressions The initial thought when you enter the huge wooden doors is: "Why would someone want to hide away with such a beautiful beach a few metres away?" But then you have your answer: a lush private garden, plunge pool and daybed are just the beginning. Thatched-roof pavilions are decorated with prints by local artists; there are giant clam shells brimming with fresh-cut flowers; and a pair of showers stand sentry, inviting you to wash off the sand before entering your luxe abode.

A closer look

1. Make my day One pavilion has a four-poster queen-size daybed draped in elegantly tied mosquito netting. Recline and watch the plasma screen TV at the side of the bed, or slip into the plunge pool at your feet.

2. Net gain The villa is set in its own tropical oasis with soaring palm trees - sans coconuts, flowering hibiscus and rock formations. And strung in the corner is a hammock where you can spend some quality island time.

3. Bathing beauty Decorated with curtains of locally collected coral and watched over by a wooden carving of Tangaroa, local god of the sea, this plain air spa bath has own-brand toiletries such as tangipani shampoo. An outdoor rain shower is attached to the main bedroom, hand built from coral collected from nearby Heron Bay.

4. Breakfast club Not content with a fully functioning kitchen, the villa has a separate breakfast room with a Nespresso machine and an indoor-outdoor dining space with table and chairs hewn from ancient tamanu wood.

5. Ocean sounds The primary sleeping space - with a king-size four-poster, a couch and a recliner - is decorated with shell inlay, woven ceiling beams and, of course, contains a fully loaded iPod (with some surprisingly good Australian tracks). Bose stereo and a second plasma TV. Just what you need in paradise.

Checking out Aitutaki is one of the most beautiful destinations on the planet, so why not do it in style? Rates start from \$1070 per night including a tropical breakfast. Aitutaki Lagoon Resort, Motu Akitua; +682 31203; aitutakilagoonresort.com



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