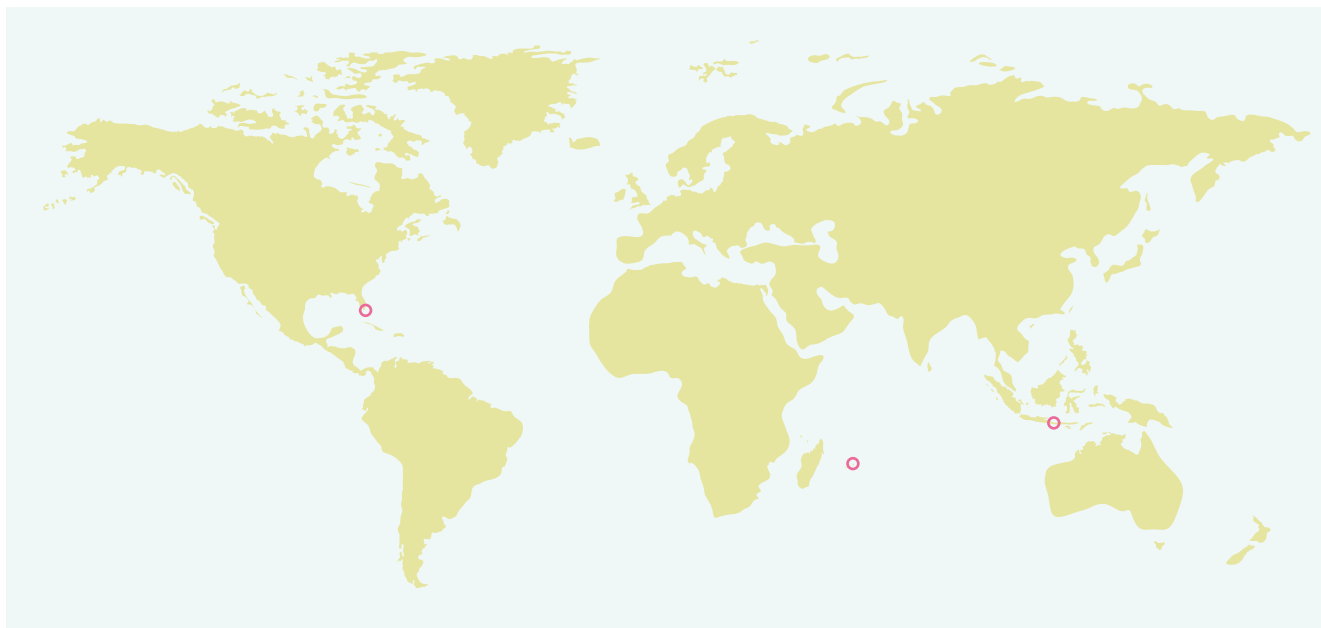


# MY FAVOURITE RESORT DESTINATION

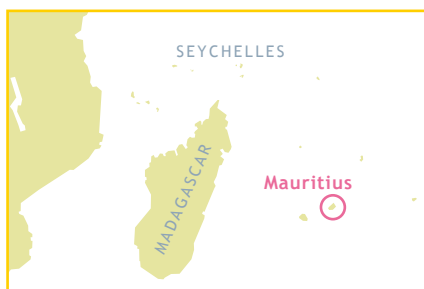


## Flick-en-Flac, Mauritius



**John Goldwyn, Head of Planning,  
Wimberly Allison Tong & Goo,  
London Office**

Deciding on a favourite has been very hard for me. I travel a great deal with work. Last November saw a visit to some undiscovered bays on the Aegean coast of Turkey, another to Sal and Mindelo in vibrant Cape Verde, and a spell in California and Florida. I really do value my time at home – my own garden in East Dulwich really could be my favourite destination! I am tempted to suggest the (John Pawson designed) Cathay Pacific first-class lounge at Hong Kong Chep Lak Kok Airport with its opulent private spa rooms, waterwall and sushi chef, but I feel that this is just a cop-out...



My last real holiday was spent in Mauritius and was quite exceptional. We stayed at the Hilton resort in Flick-en-Flac (designed by the company for which I work, although not my project) and it was flawless. From the laid back check-in to the flotilla of identical, pristine white jet boats and the coral-fringed beach lined with leafy sea grape trees, it was a triumph. For me, operation is so important, and so much thought had gone into the destination: from the architecture down to the finest details, including table settings and staff uniforms. The best-designed hotel can be so let down by poor management, but this resort really excelled.

What I love about the island itself is its comfortable, multicultural charm. A mix of Indian, Creole, Chinese and 'Blanc', the place feels very diverse. I enjoyed interacting with the local kids swimming in the waters off the powdery white beach and then eating out with their parents in the same restaurants as us.

The food is fabulous. It ranges from the extravagant local oysters, smoked marlin and crab gratin served with French wine to delicious street snacks such as boulette – a Chinese-influenced dumpling soup.

The capital – Port Louis – is a 'sweet' waterfront city, with a charming walkable core and a sprinkling of well-preserved colonial buildings. It might not have the buzz

of Bangkok or the intrigue of Marrakech, but it has a great 'feel' and that counts for a lot with me.

The Government have been careful to prevent charter flights from touching down on the island, so the tourism that exists is more high-end and there is virtually no 'budget' market at all. This is good news for the place as it has meant that much of the natural beauty, including ecologically rich mangrove, on the island has been preserved. They have ensured that the locals achieve positions at all levels in the operation of the tourism, and this has led to a much better distribution of the wealth than in other less organised destinations.

With the sugar cane subsidies ending, the government is now releasing former agricultural sites for tourism and second home developments. The challenge will be in whether the place manages to retain its current brand whilst finding a sustainable and successful future.



## Disney World, Orlando



**Nolan Young, Aged 7**



It was a nine-hour flight to Orlando, but the movies and computer games on the plane were great fun. When we got out of the airport it was lovely weather

and we had to hire a car. The hotel we stayed in was called Disney's Animal Kingdom Lodge. It was fantastic. The whole resort was African. It had a savannah with giraffes, flamingos, zebras and other animals and a pool outside with a fun slide.

There were lots of Disney Parks to choose from. I didn't have a favourite - they were all great fun. The Water Parks were really cool and my Dad went on the biggest slide in the USA. I went on a really big slide too called the Slush Gusher. Even my little brother, who is two years old, went down some slides in a tube all by himself. We had a wonderful time there.

I was very sad going back to the airport on the last day. My sister and I asked if we could live in Orlando but Dad said no. I liked it because you get to do such brilliant things and I want to go every year.



## Satrian Beach, Bali, Indonesia

**Michelle Groves, Director,  
Investment Market Place,  
Colliers CRE**

To this day, the tunes of the bamboo xylophone and aroma of Nasi Goreng still vividly come to mind when thinking of Bali. With great affection, I can relive the memorable times spent on this special Indonesian island.



From the first glimpse of light, the resort would be caressed with love by the ground staff, replacing melted candles in the waterfalls, scattering fresh flowers amongst the artefacts and replenishing the sweet smelling incense hidden carefully amongst the hibiscus flowers. The tunes of the gamelan would waft through the lush tropical gardens, somehow keeping time with the strutting peacocks gazing at the guests as they stirred, their call heard vividly through the open-roofed bathroom areas filled with sunlight.

Breakfast was a surprise as the initial thought of kecap manis noodles soon passed when the taste buds acknowledged



a new sensation. Re-energised for the day ahead, our driver, Hanif, would collect us from the bougainvillea reception area and sweep us away from the resort. Through the noisy bustling street markets, inland to the tranquillity of Ubud and views of the volcanic cone of Gunung Batur, across the island to watch the dolphins off Lovina Beach, rice paddies tripping down the hillsides to the bottom of a lush valley to visit the ancient shrine of Gunung Kawi and feeding ripe bananas to the greedy grey-haired macaque monkeys at the sacred jungle sanctuary. True to his word, Hanif would eventually wander back along the corrugated roads parallel with deep drains you could lose a bemo in, through the back streets of Sanur to the white sandy beaches of the Indian Ocean lapping our resort.

Dressed in the whitest of white, the Balinese masseur would be waiting, fragrant oils ready, to take the strain from our legs. A sedate paddle across the pool to the sunken bar was the final unwind before settling down for a pre-dinner cocktail or three.

With two restaurants within the grounds to choose from and a plethora of cuisines, we consistently chose the local tastes. Or we would wander from the resort back to the streets where the familiar shops were hidden by food carts, lanterns swaying as they wheeled along. Succulent sates dripping with exotic sauces washed down with a Bintang would ensure we were ready for the evening entertainment. The music of the resort gamelan was met with the graceful moves of the Indonesian dancers, their elegant hands and exquisite costumes stirring emotions. Or perhaps that was another cocktail.

A relaxing stroll along the beach, cooking classes with the resort chef, snorkelling, parasailing, billiards, a game of backgammon, spa treatments ... that's tomorrow's experience then!

