

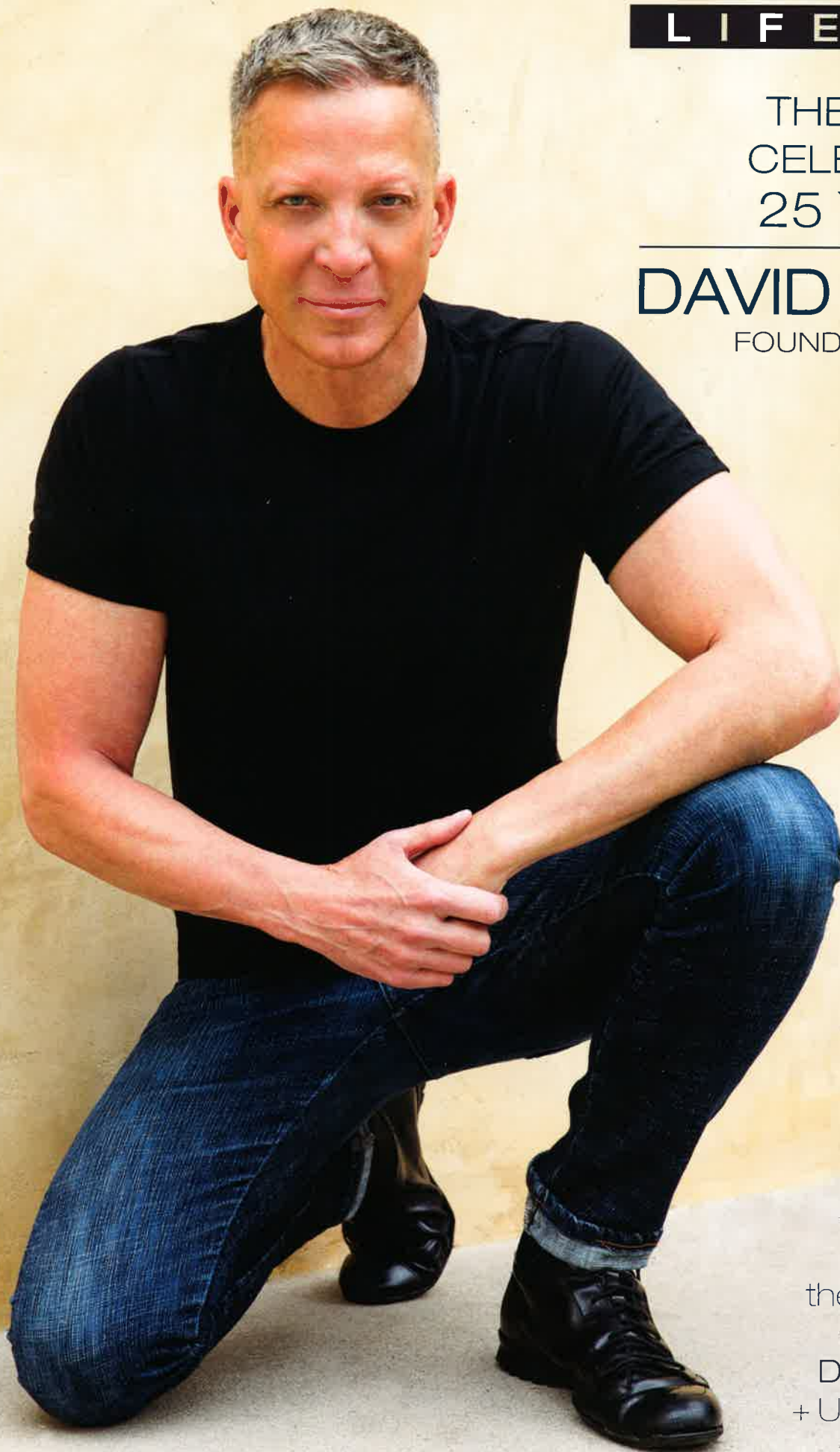
WEST HOLLYWOOD

LIFESTYLE

THE ABBEY
CELEBRATES
25 YEARS

DAVID COOLEY

FOUNDER + OWNER



VINTAGE

Restaurants on
Sunset Boulevard
Circa 1973

ISLAND TRAVEL

the Brando + Maldives

DINING: THE GUILD

+ Updates Around Town

SUMMER 2016



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TRAVELLE



THE BRANDO



FORGET BORA,
IT'S ALL ABOUT

THE BRANDO

By Carole Dixon

Who wouldn't want to be "stranded" on a deserted island surrounded by a deep turquoise blue lagoon, exotic birds and a stretch of powdery sand? Oh, and a French chef planning all your meals while you laze around your villa? Well, legendary actor and activist Marlon Brando had the same idea decades ago. The iconic actor first came to French Polynesia during the filming of *Mutiny on the Bounty* in the 1960s and rapidly fell head over heels in love with the people and culture.

Along with marrying a local and starting a family, Brando bought the tiny private island of Tetiaroa—an atoll composed of a dozen small islands surrounding a lagoon just 30 miles northeast of Tahiti—and spent much of his time there escaping Hollywood until his death in 2004.

A few years ago, Pacific Beachcomber took over the island and put the luxe castaway idea into full effect. Now you can experience a secluded stay of your own on the island in the newly built five-star property amid the exotic trappings of multilevel luxury villas with private pools, two French-influenced bars and restaurants, and what will feel like a private escape with only 35 villas inhabiting the island—along with sea turtles and exotic flora.

The current owners have carried on Brando's dream of a better energy future by investing \$12 million into preservation and innovative eco-technology practices. Some of these include seawater air conditioning, which reduces energy demands by 70 percent; solar energy panels along the airstrip, which provide hot water to the resort; and a coconut oil power station that provides half of the property's energy needs—all so you can feel good about the earth while you are basking in the sun. Or, you can delve further and get a peek behind the scenes, a "green tour" that will give you a closer look at some of the impressive practices from the sustainable gardens to more than 3,000 solar panels and a massive recycling station.

Marlon Brando's granddaughter, Tumi, also operates tours around the island and is an official guide for the resort. To help carry on her grandfather's legacy, she is working for the Tetiaroa Society, a nonprofit association that is taking care of all The Brando's guided naturalist tours. She has a preference for the exotic bird tours and the quaint children's lagoon school.

Needless to say, high-profile visitors have flocked to the resort including everyone from the Prince of Saudi Arabia to Leonardo DiCaprio. The latter is a longtime preservationist concerned about global warming and our oceans. During his visit, he not only spoke to staff about its eco efforts but he also spent time on a secluded beach drinking Champagne and swimming in the warm turquoise waters, which was dubbed "Billionaire's Pool" after his visit—he was, after all, on vacation, too.



Beachcomber Cafe

Three-bedroom villa



Photo by Mr. Miyoshi

Other pursuits include a small yacht that will take you over to Bird Island or arrange a private lunch with wait staff and table service at the shore or a more casual picnic in the sand. Back at The Brando, each villa is equipped with two bikes, and it's a really fantastic way to see the island—as is the kayaking option—or to get you to and from the spa, Varuna. Its entrance is a jaw-dropping giant pond overgrown with dense tropical trees and millions of lily pads that looks like something out of a fairy tale. The treatment rooms where they perform ancient holistic Polynesian massages are encased in branches.

When it's time for dining, be sure to book a table at the more formal Le Mutinés. Celebrated French Chef Guy Martin, of the Michelin-two-starred restaurant Le Grand Véfour in Paris, is responsible for the menu at both the fine dining and more casual dining venues on the property. The food is classic French with a Polynesian flair. It changes frequently and seasonally, but you can expect duck foie gras terrine with artichokes, almonds and green tea; or a turbot meunière with bok choy, lemon verbena and chorizo jus. And there is a vegan option by Chef Kelvin Au-leong, renowned chef and owner of Invitation V, Vegan Bistro in Montreal, Quebec. The wine cellar is impressive with many top vintages from France, including Petrus, and they even stock the local Tahitian wines as well. Yes, they make wines in Polynesia that are pretty decent, particularly the whites, but don't overlook the creative cocktails such as the house "Dirty Old Bob" with Jack Daniels, local honey and pineapple that could even sway a non-whisky drinker to love more than one.

You can relax outside long into the evening even on a muggy and humid night without worrying about mosquitos while you dig your feet into the warm sand. This island is shockingly almost free of the annoying pests biting at your heels—another initiative implemented by the team of biologists to stop diseases from spreading and a major perk for the guests. www.thebrando.com

What to Know Before You Go

It's not that far from Los Angeles: The Brando is roughly only eight hours from LAX. From there, the property is reachable via a short 20-minute flight on a private plane or helicopter after you land in Papeete. From there, you are whisked away to a stylish tiny private terminal to await your short journey to paradise.

If this is your first visit to the islands, you might want that dreamy over-the-water bungalow experience, which you will not get at The Brando. Fortunately, they have a sister property that offers a duo package deal, The Intercontinental Bora Bora Resort & Thalasso Spa, which can supply you this picture-postcard experience along with fine dining and one of the best spas to be found on the islands. This is also the first resort in the world to use seawater air conditioning or "SWAC" for all the cooling requirements, so it truly is in the same family as The Brando. www.intercontinental.com

