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DESTINATION: FRENCH POLYNESIA

UNSPOILED EXCESS

THE BRANDO IN FRENCH POLYNESIA IS SIMPLY ONE OF THE BEST RESORTS IN THE WORLD. BY BILL SPRINGER

The Brando Resort delivers unparalleled luxury and unspoiled natural beauty.

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Lots of tropical resorts have beautiful beaches. And many tropical resorts boast exquisite villas, decadent plunge pools and large private decks that are shaded by picture perfect palm trees. And of course, every ultra-luxe tropical resort features ocean views of some kind.

But, as I learned for myself during a visit last fall, The Brando Resort, located on a remote private atoll in French Polynesia is way more than just another tropical resort. In fact, I was lucky enough to see for myself why it's consistently named one the "best resorts in the world."

LOCATION. LOCATION. LOCATION

The Brando is located on the private island of Tetiaroa—an atoll comprised of a dozen small islands surrounding a crystal-clear lagoon 30 miles northeast of Tahiti. It's where the Tahitian royal family vacationed for centuries and it's the tropical paradise Marlon Brando fell in love with (and eventually signed a 99-year lease on) when he was filming *Mutiny on the Bounty* in the 1960's.

As you might have guessed, I fell in love too. But, I had a feeling The Brando was going to be something special as soon as I stepped aboard the resort's private plane in Tahiti. I knew for sure when I saw the sparkling shades of blue water surrounding the atoll when we came in for a landing 20 minutes later. And when I experienced the Brando's special brand of private luxury in my villa, it almost felt too good to be true.

PRIVATE LUXURY

Each villa is more than just luxurious. They blend into the environment while also providing guests with every amenity. Large walls of glass can be opened to eliminate the boundary between inside and outside. Rich wood decks lead out to not only to your own private pool, but to your own private beach as well. In fact, the dense vegetation and generous space between each villa created a comforting cocoon of privacy that allowed me to connect to the natural beauty of my surroundings unlike any other tropical resort I've ever experienced.

I can't even believe I'm writing this but, I



Top to bottom: The villas have pools right on the beach, the dining at Les Mutinés by Guy Martin is legendary and the spa is heavenly.



felt so contented, and so connected, and most of all, so private and protected in my villa, I didn't even feel compelled put on my bathing suit when it was time to cool off in the pool. I just slipped in au naturel.

NATURAL WONDER

The intoxicating feeling of being connected to the natural beauty of Tetiaroa was only magnified when a group of us toured the outer islands on the other side of the three-mile-wide lagoon with a naturalist guide. These remote islands are home to diverse and important populations of birds, fish, and sharks. Whales often stop outside the reef during their annual migration from Mid-July to Mid-October. And the Brando's

famous beehives out on these outer islands make an exclusively pure brand of honey.

Other outdoor pursuits that will restore your body as well as your mind include, snorkeling, diving, and exploring the lagoon in a traditional Polynesian canoe or on a stand up paddle board. But, then again, you may never want to leave the private luxury of your villa. And it's possible to own a large residence on Tetiaroa as well. Turn to page 88 for a glimpse of a Brando private residence.

WORLD-CLASS GASTRONOMY

There may be more remote and more unspoiled islands in the world. But I'm pretty sure none can boast the level of cuisine that The Brando is famous for. The resort's two main restaurants feature Polynesian-inspired dishes, East/West fusion and classic French cuisine, created by Executive Chef Cédrik Ollivault. Meanwhile, the cuisine of Guy Martin of the Michelin two star restaurant Le Grand Véfour in Paris is featured in Les Mutinés by Guy Martin dining venue.

But for me, the Brando is not only one of the most exclusive resorts in the world because of its amazing dining, stunningly private villas, long list of activities or even its royal or even movie star connections (full disclosure: Lady Gaga, President Obama and many other A-list celebrities have visited). It also offers visitors a rare gift of luxury and unspoiled natural beauty at a resort that's committed to preserving and protecting its fragile habitat and providing *sustainable* luxury with a minimal carbon footprint.

I'm counting the days until I can return. And next time, I'm bringing my wife! It's just too romantic to experience alone! +



PRIVATE POLYNESIA

The “residences” at the Brando on the Tahtian atoll of Tetiaroa are more than just on the other side of the island from the resort. Each can provide approximately 6,000 sq ft of living area, (around 3,000 sq ft of enclosed air-conditioned space and around 3,000 sq ft of outside deck and pool area). Owners will also enjoy full access to resort activities and amenities including The Brando’s award-winning restaurants and spa. But since each residence (like the one pictured here) is set on a stunningly private beach and built so owners and guests can commune with the spirit and natural beauty of this very special atoll, you may never want to leave. **BY BILL SPRINGER**

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT thebrando.com/resort/accommodations/the-residences/