

FIFTY YEARS OF FURANAFUSHI: A STORY OF AUTHENTIC MALDIVIAN HOSPITALITY WITH SHERATON MALDIVES

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Once a secluded, undiscovered, and rather uninhabited destination in the Indian Ocean, the Maldives has since grown into a hub of world-class hospitality, home to authentic displays of culture and some of the industry's most innovative eco-conscious solutions.

As Furanafushi Island, where Sheraton Maldives Full Moon Resort & Spa is located, celebrates 50 years, we're paying tribute to the dramatic transformation of the country's tourism landscape and the ways in which it continues to support both the preservation of the natural elements and the growth of the local community.

The milestone occasion is a reminder of the hospitality industry's potential to redefine how consumers travel, stay, and experience throughout their journeys. Sheraton Maldives Full Moon Resort & Spa is marking the Island's Golden Jubilee by looking back at where it all began, using key learnings to lay the groundwork for the next 50 years of Furanafushi.

Reflecting on the Evolution of the Island

The Maldivian archipelago was first introduced to the world as a travel hotspot in the early 1970s, at which point it had almost no tourism infrastructure and hardly any investment into it as a destination. Today, the Maldives, which is comprised of almost 1,200 tiny, pristine islands, has become synonymous with barefoot luxury, secluded retreats, and breathtaking scenery.

Furanafushi itself holds a storied history, initially serving as a picnic destination for residents of Malé before being transformed into a resort. It later became known as Australia Island and was widely marketed under the tagline, 'Found! A Lost Paradise'.

In December 1973, the island welcomed the 56-key Sheraton Maldives, originally named Furana, as the fifth resort in the entire Maldivian archipelago. Underscoring the destination's early commitment to enhancing the stay experience, clocks were regularly kept an hour early in Furana to give guests more time than they expected.

In April 1976, the island resort moved under the management of Wayne Reid, one of Australia's best-known sports administrators, in a five-year lease that served as a catalyst for an influx of investment and expansion.

The early days of Furanafushi and Sheraton Maldives Resort & Spa are a testament to the growth of the island and its ongoing influence on the appeal of the Maldives as a bucket list travel destination. As the resort evolves with the industry, it maintains its heritage and remains dedicated to preserving both its own history and the history of its surroundings.

Recognising Our Role

As a leader in local, regional, and global hospitality, Sheraton Maldives Full Moon Resort & Spa has a responsibility to support the community it operates in, positively impacting island life and consciously developing solutions that preserve the island's natural elements.

To foster meaningful connections within the local community, we consistently extend invitations to schools, providing students with valuable insights into the dynamic world of the hospitality industry. This initiative not only aligns with their career aspirations but also serves as a platform to introduce them to our commitment to sustainability. During the beautiful celebration of Ramadan, we extend invitations to organizations such as the Fiyavathi Orphanage in Hulhumale, fostering a sense of community and shared joy.

In an effort to protect the resort's natural surroundings and the island it calls home, we have also implemented several sustainable initiatives. Our famous Adopt A Coral program, encouraging our guests to get involved in the art of coral preservation. Over 6,000 coral fragments from 15 different coral species rescued from Gulhi Falhu, have been given a second chance to thrive and have been transplanted on coral pyramids at the resort. The resort is also committed to reducing plastic waste via its innovative water bottling plant initiative. The hotel's water bottling facility uses cutting-edge reverse osmosis technology to purify seawater, eliminating the need for water transportation from the mainland.

For the last 50 years, Furanafushi has been a home to Maldivian residents and wildlife, and has also served as a temporary sanctuary for visitors from around the world who choose to find rest on its pristine shores. At Sheraton Maldives Full Moon Resort & Spa, we remain committed to fostering that historic sense of peace and belonging as we evolve our offerings to meet the changing needs of the surrounding community and the diversifying expectations of guests.

Staying Ahead of the Hospitality Curve

Around the world, the hospitality sector has recognized an ever-growing need to align with global consciousness around environmental responsibility. Next-gen travelers are increasingly mindful of the environmental impact of their travel choices, inspiring hotels and resorts to adopt sustainable practices that mitigate their carbon footprint and promote ecological rehabilitation.

Sheraton Maldives Full Moon Resort & Spa remains ahead of the hospitality curve in terms of sustainability initiatives, leveraging its synergetic relationship with the natural surroundings to educate guests and elevate its eco-conscious offerings. The resort embraces modern technology to contribute to its efforts, including using AI-powered cameras to identify areas of food waste disposal, innovative Air Conditioning Systems that automatically adapt room temperatures to reduce energy consumption, and gardens that produce vegetables and herbs, as well as watermelon and cucumber crops.

As the bridge between technology and sustainability strengthens, we continue to drive forward-thinking solutions that will pioneer green tourism around the world, with plans to implement a biogas plant to transform food waste into gas for kitchen stoves and a vibrant chicken farm to produce organic eggs and meat on-site.

By using technology to advance sustainability, Sheraton Maldives is shaping a world where environmental awareness is naturally integrated into our daily lives, championing the preservation of the natural island as we look forward to its brighter, greener future.

A Look at the Next 50 Years

Throughout its 50 years, Furanafushi has seen pioneers, people, and policies shape its attraction on the global stage, its position among neighboring islands, and its impact on the local community. In the next 50 years, the same will remain – and it is up to us to actively participate in the protection, preservation, and promotion of the island.

To honor the history of Furanafushi, and to highlight the culture of the residents, Sheraton Maldives Full Moon Resort & Spa stands as a beacon of authentic Maldivian hospitality, inviting guests and residents alike to join its journey of tropical transformation as it seeks to maintain its original beauty while cultivating new ways of discovering true paradise.

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About Sheraton Maldives Full Moon Resort & Spa

Sheraton Maldives Full Moon Resort & Spa is situated on the private island of Furanafushi in the Republic of Maldives, a 15-minute speedboat ride away from Velana International Airport. The resort is among the first resorts to offer complimentary transfers to its discerning guests. The five-star resort offers 176 guest rooms designed to blend into the surrounding turquoise

waters, pristine beaches, and lush greenery. In addition to 7 unique restaurants and bars, the Shine Spa for Sheraton is located on its very own island and 3 outdoor tropical freshwater pools, the resort caters to all guests and is the perfect destination for honeymooners, families with young children or teens, and solo travelers alike.

About Sheraton® Hotels & Resorts

Sheraton Hotels & Resorts makes it easy for guests to feel welcome at over 430 hotels and resorts in nearly 75 countries and territories around the world. As the most global brand within Marriott Bonvoy's portfolio of extraordinary hotel brands sitting at the center of hundreds of communities around the world, Sheraton has a rich heritage in creating a sense of belonging for guests, wherever they are in the world. Sheraton is currently undergoing a major brand transformation, creating a signature community experience for the next generation of travelers and locals alike at properties across the globe. The new vision for Sheraton features intuitive design, tech-forward experiences, and upgrades to everything from public space and F&B to flexible meeting space. For more information, please visit www.sheraton.com, and stay connected on [Facebook](#), and @sheratonhotels on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#). Sheraton is proud to participate in Marriott Bonvoy®, the global travel program from Marriott International. The program offers members an extraordinary portfolio of global brands, exclusive experiences on [Marriott Bonvoy Moments](#), and unparalleled benefits including free nights and Elite status recognition. To enroll for free or for more information about the program, visit marriottbonvoy.com.