

# Maldives Hilton Rangali Offers Underwater Dining



Rangali Island, Maldives (eTurboNews) -- The Hilton Maldives Resort & Spa Rangali Island has opened the world's first undersea restaurant, offering guests contemporary Maldivian-inspired cuisine while enjoying 270-degree views of the abundant marine life beneath the Indian Ocean.

Photo Credit: Business Wire

The first-ever undersea restaurant in the world called Ithaa (which is pronounced "eet-ha" and means "pearl" in the language of the Maldives, Dhivehi) sits five meters below the waves of the Indian Ocean, surrounded by a vibrant coral reef and encased in clear acrylic, offering diners 270 degrees of panoramic underwater views.

"We have used aquarium technology to put diners face-to-face with the stunning underwater environment of the Maldives," says Carsten Schieck, general manager of Hilton Maldives Resort & Spa. "Our guests always comment on being blown away by the color, clarity, and beauty of the underwater world in the Maldives, so it seemed the perfect idea to build a restaurant where diners can experience fine cuisine and take time to enjoy the views -- without ever getting their feet wet."

Ithaa's distinctive feature is the use of curved transparent acrylic walls and roof, similar to those used in aquarium attractions. "The fact that the entire restaurant except for the floor is made of clear acrylic makes this unique in the world," continues Schieck. "We are currently planting a coral garden on the reef to add to the spectacular views of the rays, sharks and many colorful fish that live around the reef near the restaurant."



The five-meter by nine-meter transparent arch seats 14 people and provides a feeling of being completely at one with the underwater world while submerged beneath the surface of the ocean. Set with the resort's renowned house reef on one side, and a clear lagoon on the other, diners enjoy their meal within Ithaa's translucent shell as the underwater drama unfolds all around them.

And not to be outdone by the views, the food will be as spectacular as the underwater setting, explains Schieck. "In such a unique restaurant we wanted to create a distinctive cuisine, which is why we've decided to offer 'contemporary Maldivian cuisine' as a theme. We take local spices and traditional flavors and give them a Western twist to create a fusion cuisine that you could find in the best restaurants in London or New York. Nobody else has done this before and we're very excited about it."

While the cuisine is dedicated to the fine balance of western food items with a Maldivian flavor, the wine concept is equally exciting, offering diners the perfect opportunity to discover the wines of the prestigious Champagne house Louis Roederer.



Ithaa is reached by a wooden walkway from the nearby over-water Sunset Grill Restaurant. Diners begin their meal with drinks on a specially constructed deck over the ocean and then descend to the restaurant via a spiral staircase where the a la carte menu is served. Seating only 14 people, Ithaa offers one of the most intimate and exclusive dining experiences in the world.

This innovative restaurant, created by MJ Murphy Ltd., a design consultancy based in New Zealand, is the first of its kind in the world, and is part of a US \$5 million re-build of Rangalifinolhu Island, one of the twin islands that make up Hilton Maldives Resort & Spa. This re-build includes the construction of 79 of the most luxurious beach villas in the country as well as the Spa Village, a self-contained, over-water "resort-within-a-resort" consisting of a spa, restaurant and 21 villas.