



Kurumba Resort, Maldives

Even back in 1972, there were few islands in the world that could truly be termed deserted. But, when George Corbin and Mohamed Umur Maniku opened Kurumba that October, the Maldives' first resort felt like the very end of the earth, with no phones, banks or airports nearby – just a morse code line and shipping route to faraway Sri Lanka. In keeping with the desert island theme, Maniku became a Man Friday, masquerading as cook, chamber maid and gardener for the first guests. Much has changed since then: Kurumba grew into a large hotel, and last year's £10 million overhaul created a swanky spa and new low-key-chic rooms posh enough to attract VIP Crusoes such as Bill Clinton and Kofi Annan, yet still affordable. Nevertheless, as the stillness of sunset creeps into the air and the last of the sunbather stragglers leave the white sand for the evening, it's still possible to feel entirely alone here.

Kuoni Worldwide (01306 747738, www.kuoni.co.uk) has seven nights at Kurumba from £1,058pp, room only, including flights from Gatwick. Regional add-ons from £55.

PHOTOGRAPHY: MITCH JENKINS