

NOVEMBER 13, 2004

★ ANNIVERSARY ISSUE ★

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TIME

60

YEARS OF

HEROES

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MARIA CALLAS by Cecilia Bartoli FRANZ BECKENBAUER by Boris Becker

And many more heroes of our time



BAROS

maldives



HIT THE DECK: Baros' Lighthouse Restaurant is built over water.

CHECK IN

INDIAN SUMMER

DOES YOUR IDEA OF A great tropical vacation include tequila slammers and dance contests? Then the Baros resort in the Maldives is not for you. Like the coral reef that encircles the tiny private island in the North Male Atoll, Baros is so serene you'd never guess that it's teeming with life. Despite a 97% occupancy rate during my stay (in low season, no less),

I sometimes felt I was on my own island. Frigate-palm, hibiscus and towering coconut palms camouflage the resort's land villas—where a staff of 330 serves up to 150 guests—and sand forms a soft white carpet throughout. This is barefoot country, so leave your heels at home.

But don't take quiet to mean boring: Baros is water-sports nirvana. You could easily spend

every waking moment in your awinsuit, fishing and sailing, scuba diving and snorkeling. Sepp Zedelmayr, the dive-school owner and a 26-year Baros veteran, says his favorite dive site is like "fish soup." He's not exaggerating. During one dive, I found myself pleasantly disoriented by seemingly thousands of shimmering yellowfin fusiliers swishing past me. The marine life is abundant, from space-shiplike manta rays to the venomous yet showy lionfish.

And some of what

swims underwater also pleases when it lands on your plate. Aussie chef Damian Barrett's menu features such treats as grilled Maldivian lobster, spicy mud crab and straight-out-of-the-water yellowfin tuna sashimi. If you're an adept fisherman, the chefs at the Cayenne Grill, one of three excellent restaurants, are happy to throw your catch on the barbie.

Baros is locally owned, and its Maldivian-designed villas feature natural materials like stone, teak and coconut-thatched roofs.

This is barefoot country, so leave your heels at home

Water villas come with four-poster beds and stairs that lead directly into the Indian Ocean. Deluxe villas include lush landscaped outdoor bathrooms. And if you need further opportunity to slide into a stupor, check out Sun Spa, with such packages as a white-sand-and-coconut scrub followed by a massage that almost put me into a coma.

When I ask my villa neighbors, Giuseppina Orlanducci and Agrisfin Vazquez, both 39, what they like about Baros, Vazquez leans back on his outdoor daybed, grins lazily and replies, "The silence. The beach. We talk. It's perfect." If the young Italian couple suddenly got an urge to down some tequila, the bartenders at Baros' Sail Bar do mix one heck of a margarita. But under no circumstances will there be a dance contest. www.baros.com

—By Michelle Palmer



TO MARKET: From left, Zaki, Zakiem and Maass hunt for fish.



For most, Arabian cuisine conjures up conical images of heaping portions of everything from meat tagine and curried vegetable mixtures to various succulent takes on lamb.

and Syrian Khalil Zakiem, Maass—who has built a reputation for successfully inventing new takes on old standards during his decade-long tenure in the United Arab Emirates—has created an informative, user-friendly tome with 120 culinary creations. The 254-page book applies a Euro-fusion ethos to classic Arab cookery, incorporating new in-

FOOD FASHIONS

Not Your Mother's Couscous

Not so far Ingo Maass, the German-born executive chef at Dubai's JW Marriott is out to change the traditional culinary take on the Arab world in a cookbook titled *Dubai: New Arabian Cuisine*, written by Lutz Jäkel. Along with his counterparts, Frenchman Christian Jean, Egyptian Amgad Zaki and Syrian Khalil Zakiem, Maass—who has built a reputation for successfully inventing new takes on old standards during his decade-long tenure in the United Arab Emirates—has created an informative, user-friendly tome with 120 culinary creations. The 254-page book applies a Euro-fusion ethos to classic Arab cookery, incorporating new in-

gredients (lobster with baba ghanoush ravioli, courgette-aubergine salad and cream of red peppers) while respecting regional Muslim customs that disallow alcohol in cooking. Oenophiles are not forgotten, though: selections like an hors d'oeuvre of orange-flavored prawns on a flan of pine nuts, colorful pome and cream of olive oil get paired with top-notch regional vintages. In this case a La Dame Blanche from Lebanon's Chateau Kefraya. But if whipping up that combination seems too involved, just book a flight in either first or business class to the Middle East aboard Lufthansa, where you'll be able to savor Maass's handiwork. Now that's taking Arab fare to new heights. —By Farhad Meydani