



Nosy Iranja offers some of the best snorkelling in Madagascar.

Azure waters and cocktails

Adrian Rorvik went diving with turtles in his final instalment on the magic of Madagascar

NOSY (island) Be (big) – this is both the name of the biggest island off the north-west coast of Madagascar, as well as the group name for the string of islands surrounding it, though each island has a name too. Confusing? So was being an hour ahead of everyone outside Andilana Beach Resort.

I never did find out the reason for the time difference – since two days is hardly enough to experience all Andilana has to offer.

Winner of the Indian Ocean's Leading Beach Resort this year at the World Travel Awards, Andilana is the biggest Nosy Be resort. It is thoroughly Italian and it helps if you know a phrase or two. If you don't, a smile, a nod and "ciao" will do, though most of the friendly staff speak at least a little English.

Andilana had been likened to a land-bound cruise ship. Like a cruise ship it is incredibly well run. Splitting two beaches like a prow – it's big, busy and boisterous in parts, with plenty of structured entertainment throughout the day and evening.

All-inclusive packages make it a hit with party-goers. There are plenty of bright bikinis and speedos on predominantly Italian patrons enjoying beach volleyball, Zumba in the pool and other group sport and games and after-dinner shows and parties. But there is another side to Andilana.

The two long beaches angle away from each other, divided by a rocky outcrop with a great restaurant.

The rooms are similarly split. On one side music and adrenalin pumps, while the other is tranquil



Getting There

MadagasCaT Charters and Travel arranged Adrian Rorvik's seamless itinerary. MadagasCaT are the private partner behind Airlink's direct flight to Nosy Be, members of Nosy Be Tourism Board and Yacht Charter Company of the Year for Madagascar. Call 079 149 6438 or visit www.madagascat.co.za

Airlink connects you to Nosy Be, Madagascar on Sundays. Visit www.flyairlink.com or SAA Central Reservations on 011 978 1111.

Airlink connects you to 36 destinations in nine African countries.

and quiet, with a spa on the sand.

Whichever beach you choose, the loungers, the beach-side bar and thatched shade are inviting, day or balmy night.

The sprawling property offers way more than beaches. There is a large kids area with jumping castle, slides and much more. Andilana has its own dive centre, the theatre presents daily shows – starting with fun for the kids, there's a shop with desirable fashion items and gorgeous assistants. And the grounds are huge and park-like, with tennis courts, putt-putt, a fitness circuit and petting zoo



Dramatic sunsets are part of the natural beauty of Nosy Andilana.

(though the giant tortoises wander free range).

From tortoises to turtles, a highlight was an all-day excursion to Nosy Iranja (Turtle Island) some 90 minutes away – two islands actually – bigger Nosy Iranja Be and Nosy Iranja Kely, linked by a fine white sand tongue 750m long that emerges at low tide.

Nosy Iranja beaches are selected by hawksbill and green sea turtles for laying their eggs. Gustav Eiffel, most famous for his Parisian icon, designed the lighthouse, around which is a small village.

Nosy Iranja is a corner of paradise and a delight for the senses and the spirit, with unforgettable colours – white beaches and azure waters. The beaches are surely some of the most beautiful in the world.

While the corals aren't plentiful, they are healthy, as is the variety of the fish. I have never seen so many large unicornfish and parrotfish.

A luxurious lobster grill on the beach – with ghost crabs scuttling about and frigate birds overhead – was super, but bettered by dinner that night at intimate Pily Pily.

The fantastic seafood accompanied by bubbly, the impeccable service in a gorgeous setting atop the outcrop, will remain with me, as will wonderfully staged cocktails in the grounds under trees hung with huge lanterns, dramatically lit mannequin-like beauties striking poses.

Too soon it was back to South Africa, with a night at refined five star D'Oreale Grande.

From the restaurant I gazed longingly at the inviting pool area, a quiet oasis removed from the hustle and bustle of the city that recalled the islands, except that it was mid-winter Joburg. An early breakfast, a convenient shuttle and quick flight and I was home, rested and raring to go, by mid-morning.

● Visit www.andilanaresort.com



A boat ready to launch for the turtle islands of Nosy Iranja.



An aerial view of Andilana, voted the Indian Ocean's leading travel resort in this year's World Travel Awards.



The quiet beach at the Andilana Beach resort. Which offers an array of activities to cater for all tastes.

INDEPENDENT
TRAVELLER

appears in the following newspapers:

DURBAN
Sunday Tribune
GAUTENG
Saturday Star
Pretoria News Weekend
CAPE
Weekend Argus
(Saturday & Sunday)



To advertise, contact
SHARMAINE GOVENDER
Tel 031 308 2534
Cell 082 666 0304
sharmaine.govender@inl.co.za

WIN WIN WIN WIN

MADAGASCAR MAGIC

We are giving one subscriber and partner a seven-night stay including dinner, bed and breakfast at 293 On Komba worth R8660. Another couple will enjoy a seven-night stay at Andilana Beach Resort, with airport transfers and a Nosy Iranja boat excursion, worth R18100.

For each prize, Airlink will sponsor return flights from Pietermaritzburg worth R36 000 and Emperors Palace will provide stay-overs worth R8600 at D'Oreale Grande.



Enter with SMMadagascar as the subject. Provide your name, subscriber number or delivery address and telephone number. What

award did MadagasCat recently win. The competition closes at 2pm, August 16.

HOW TO ENTER

The competition SMS number is 33258 (SMSes charged at R1.50). By entering our competitions you give us the right to contact you for marketing. Prizes are for subscribers only and not transferable. T&Cs apply.

For enquiries, call 031 3082584 during office hours. For subscriber enquiries, and to save 30 percent on the price, call 0800 204711.