

FT Series **Pink Sand 2017: an FT guide to the 50 best beach hotels**

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Top luxury beach hotels

From a magical honeymoon destination to a favourite Hollywood haunt

1 — North Island, Seychelles



It's the honeymoon destination of choice for A-listers and royalty, with its promise of pampered privacy in a magical Indian Ocean setting. Prince William and the Duchess of Cambridge and George Clooney and Amal Alamuddin are among the high-profile couples to have sought sanctuary on North Island. It's no surprise, then, that this exclusive retreat earned more recommendations from our expert panel than anywhere else.

Eleven beachfront villas set the standard for "barefoot luxury", with thatched roofs, carved banua-wood beds, sunken marble baths and walls that slide open to catch the sea breezes. The resort is rightly proud of its conservation programme, which seeks to restore the island's biodiversity by eliminating harmful non-indigenous wildlife and replacing it with endangered native species such as giant tortoises and fruit bats.

But what really sets this place apart is the highly personalised service, achieved through a ratio of two staff to every guest. Our experts particularly liked North Island's "no menu" policy, with meals being cooked to order. "A questionnaire ensures all your favourite foods and drinks are on site for your arrival: the best caviar, the finest champagne, even your own in-room larder," says Frances Geoghegan of Cleveland Collection. "It's the ultimate in luxury."

From £5,065 for a one-bedroom villa, all inclusive; north-island.com