

Confidence in the future

INTERVIEW WITH JEAN-JACQUES VALLET

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, CONSTANCE HOTELS AND RESORTS (CHR)



JEAN-JACQUES VALLET with his strong experience in the hospitality industry, has been Chief Executive Officer of Constance Hotels and Resorts since January 2012. He joined Constance in 1994 as the Group's Chief Operating Officer. The group, to date, has seven luxury hotels and resorts in the Indian Ocean.

Seychelles' first 18 hole championship golf course

Please tell us about the Constance Hotels and Resorts Group's presence in Seychelles

In 1996, CHR made the decision that over the next ten years, it would focus on developing its interests in the Indian Ocean region. Our experience and expertise enabled us to found our first hotel in Mauritius, which was followed by hotels in the Seychelles and the Maldives.

Two luxury resorts, the Constance Lémuria in Praslin, which opened its doors in 2000, and the Constance Ephélia, which was established in 2010, have enabled us to maintain a strong regional presence in the Seychelles

How would you assess your experience as an investor in Seychelles?

We first arrived in the Seychelles as a Hotel Management Company. We were then approached by our current partner with an investment opportunity to build the very first five star hotel and championship golf course on a much sort after site in Praslin. Although risky, we agreed to the proposal and the luxury resort, the Constance Lémuria, was built. The venture immediately proved successful and helped pave the way for other hotels, such as the Banyan Tree and Beachcomber, to be established in the Seychelles. The Constance Ephélia, in Mahé, was our next important

venture. We are very proud that our hotels have made such a strong contribution to tourism in this region.

How would you assess Seychelles' tourism potential in the long term?

The Seychelles has seen significant growth in its tourism sector. Over the last five years, some of the world's biggest international hotel groups have decided to invest in the country. The open sky policy adopted by the Seychelles Government can be seen as a positive sign for tourism development in the Seychelles. We are therefore very confident about its future potential.

More than a decade on, how happy are you at the reputation the Constance Lémuria has established?

The Constance Lémuria is a luxury complex on Praslin which opened in December 1999. Lémuria has grown in reputation and remains one of the Seychelles' flagship top-end properties. The quality and style of its architecture and accommodation, its extensive guest facilities and a simply stunning stretch of coastline make it a perennially popular choice, particularly with French and Italian guests. It is spread over a beautiful 101 hectares of intricate waterways, lush forest, and three powder-sand beaches, What's more, the size of the landscaped grounds and assorted public areas give a great sense of space, much more than most large hotels do. One of Lémuria's greatest assets is its challenging 18-hole par 70 championship golf course, the only one in the Seychelles, opened in October 2000.

And what would you say makes the Constance Ephélia so special?

We see the Constance Ephélia as making a major contribution to Seychelles' five-star hotel infrastructure. It is located in 120 hectares of spectacularly landscaped gardens on not one but two of the most pristine beaches on Mahé, and overlooking the Port Launay National Park. It was created to meld seamlessly with its natural setting and create a tranquil space to allow visitors to relax. The resort has a beautiful beach, four sumptuous pools, a stunning Shiseido spa set in beautiful tropical gardens, and a childrens' club for 4-12 year olds. There are five restaurants and six bars, each with its own style of cuisine and décor, including traditional Seychelles cuisine, much of which is cooked 'à la panache' – in front of the guests.

