



Main: Snorkeller on House Reef. Pic by Walt Stearns.
Inset: Wakatobi Villa. Pic by Didi Latze.

Here, *Traveltalk* profiles the Wakatobi Dive Resort. Words by JULIETTE MYERS.

REMOTE AND pristine need not mean hard to reach. At least, not in the case of Wakatobi Dive Resort. This premier vacation destination sits on a small island in the southern edge of Indonesia's Sulawesi Sea. A decade ago, it required a full day of air and sea travel to reach this site from Bali; now, it's just a short flight away via direct charter service to the resort's private airstrip on an adjacent island.

Wakatobi has earned international recognition as one of the finest diving and snorkelling destinations in the world, with a renowned house reef that begins just steps from the resort's beach. It lies within a private marine reserve in the centre of the planet's most bio-diverse coral habitat. And though it is far from civilisation, the resort provides a wide range of luxury comforts, while operating on ecologically and socially-conscious principles.

The property occupies a point of land bordered by one of the region's finest white-sand beaches. A collection of beach bungalows and villas provide privacy, but are within easy walking distance of the central resort facilities, which include a spa and open-air dining pavilion with beachfront views. Though handsomely rustic in appearance and fabricated with native materials, each dwelling provides

full amenities such as air conditioning, high-speed internet service and spa-style shower rooms.

Resort activity can include beach time, water sports and tours of surrounding islands, but typically centres around daily trips to area reefs aboard a fleet of 20-metre, custom-built dive boats. There is also easy access to the House Reef, which stretches some six kilometres to either side of the property. This world-renowned site can be enjoyed day or night by simply slipping into the water from the beach or the resort's pier, or engaging one of the dive centre's on-call taxi boats.

The resort also operates a dive yacht, the 36-metre *Pelagian*. Carrying a maximum of just 10 guests and offering spacious and luxurious accommodation, this vessel provides access to an extended range of dive sites in the Wakatobi archipelago and southern Buton island. Many guests opt to complement their resort experience with a cruise on *Pelagian*.

In addition to the world-class underwater environment, Wakatobi is recognised for its emphasis on guest service. This attitude extends from the resort staff, who commit to knowing each guest by name, to the executive chefs, who gladly accommodate special

dietary needs and requests. The resort's dive guides devote personal attention based on each individual's skill level and interests.

Among the diving services available are SCUBA courses, support for advanced diving practices and unique programs such as nighttime Fluo-diving and snorkelling, which uses special lighting to reveal the hidden fluorescent qualities of marine life. There are private dive or snorkel guides available to assist with anything from showing new divers and snorkellers the wonders of the reef to guiding serious photographers to rare or hard-to-find animals.

The Wakatobi staff also provide concierge travel services for transits through in Bali. Guests arriving at Denpasar airport are provided assistance with transfers and paperwork, and those wanting to add a stay in Bali before or after visiting Wakatobi can avail themselves of a whole range of offerings that include private drivers and personal itineraries.

For more information, visit wakatobi.com or contact Wakatobi's Australian Guest Relations Manager, Juliette Myers, at juliette@wakatobi.com or call direct 0407 900 266.



"We felt like rock stars! Not only is the diving premier but we were also impressed with the five-star quality and comfort of a resort so remote. The impeccable service and awe-inspiring dives exceeded our expectations. We will be back!"

- STEVE AND SARAH SMITH, MARCH 2014



wakatobi

www.wakatobi.com