



HARTLEY'S SAFARIS

FINDING YOUR AFRICA



Seychelles

Mahé
La Digue
Praslin
Aldabra



INTRODUCTION

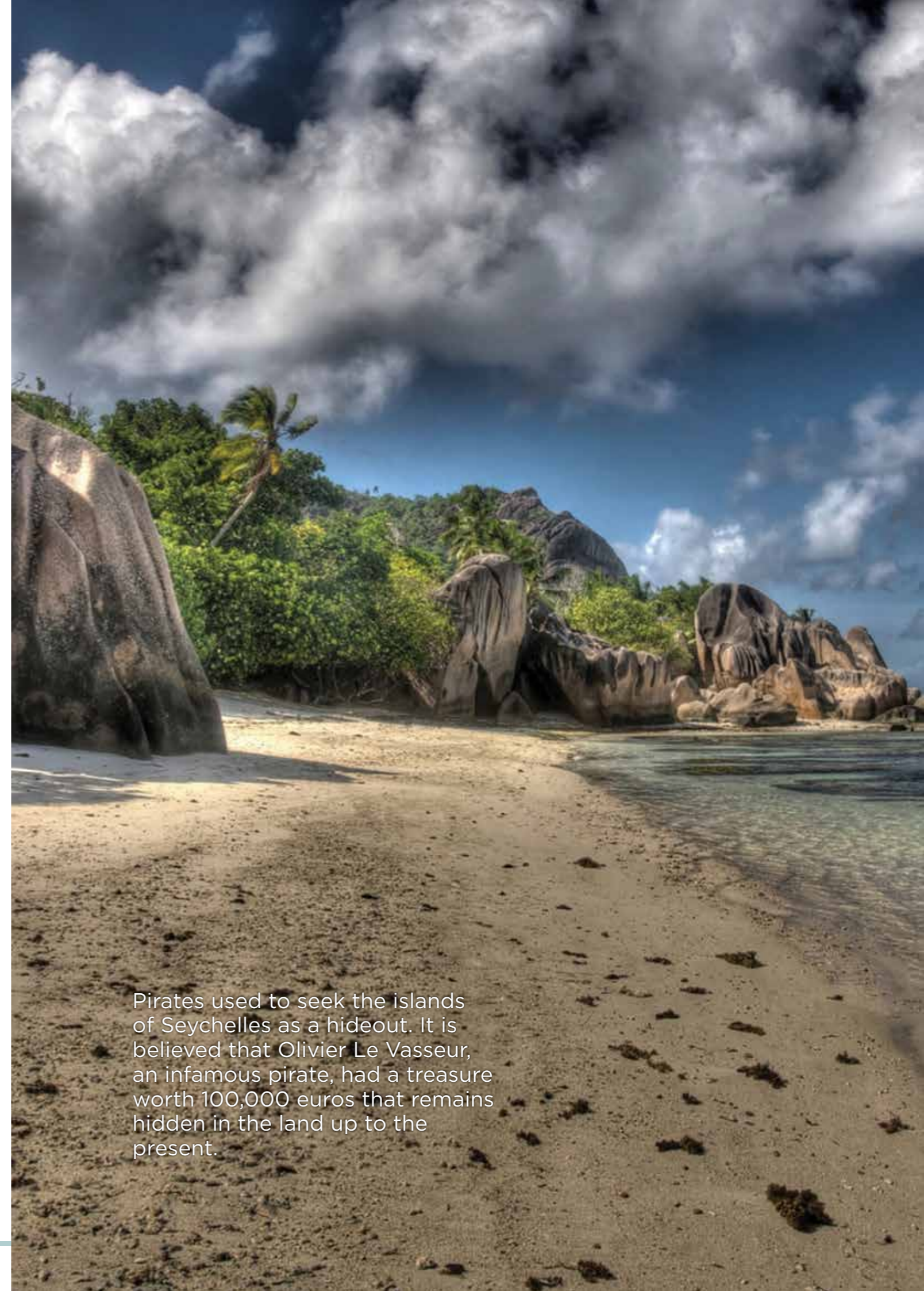
The Seychelles is an archipelago in the Indian Ocean situated northeast of Madagascar consisting of more than 120 islands of which 83 are named and 46 are permanently uninhabited. These are the oldest and amongst the most beautiful oceanic islands to be found anywhere on the planet, a kaleidoscope of untouched forests, bird sanctuaries, exotic hideaways, virgin fishing grounds and spectacular diving spots - one of the last true tropical paradises in the world today!

The 40 or so inner islands that cluster around the principal islands of Mahé, Praslin and La Digue are really mountain peaks of the ancient super-continent of Pangaea. They are thought to have erupted from the earth's core around 750 million years ago. Madagascar, Seychelles and India separated as one landmass some 75 million years ago, carrying with them certain species of fauna, such as the flying fox, that remain common to both locations, before the Seychelles finally split from India about ten million years later.

The capital city, Victoria, is situated on Mahé, the largest island of the archipelago which is where the majority of the population resides. Praslin and La Digue are the only two other islands with any significant permanent populations. Praslin is best known for 'Vallee de Mai', a UNESCO (United

Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization) World Heritage Site and for 'Coco de Mer', the largest known seed, which looks a bit like a giant double coconut, in the plant kingdom. Also listed by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site and protected from human influence, is Aldabra which is the largest atoll in the world and home to 152,000 giant tortoises and exceptionally rich coral reefs.

The islands experience a sub-tropical marine climate that is generally warm and humid throughout the year, with most rain falling around November to March. The cooler season is during the southeast monsoon (late May to September) while the warmer season is during the northwest monsoon (March to May). Because most of the islands lie outside the cyclone belt, severe storms are rare. There are excellent hotels on all the major islands.



Pirates used to seek the islands of Seychelles as a hideout. It is believed that Olivier Le Vasseur, an infamous pirate, had a treasure worth 100,000 euros that remains hidden in the land up to the present.



HISTORY

Although the Seychelles remained uninhabited until mid 18th century it seems likely that Arab sailors had visited the islands and collected the Coco de Mer fruit for centuries before that date. Portuguese sailors visited the island in the early 16th century but people only began settling there in the mid-18th century when French planters and their slaves began establishing plantations.

Britain and France disputed control of the islands at the start of the 19th century but the British finally took possession of them after the 1814 Treaty of Paris. Britain controlled the archipelago for the next century but the Seychelles was only formally declared a British Colony in 1903. The islands finally gained independence in 1976. A coup was staged the next year and an attempted coup in 1981 failed. The Archipelago is now run as a constitutional democracy.

PEOPLE, CULTURE AND ECONOMY

The citizens of the Seychelles have a diverse background, many people tracing their origins to Asia, Africa and Europe. Creole is the major language of the islands and most people are Christians.

There are many buildings of colonial origin but many dances, cultural beliefs and cuisines can be traced to Africa or Asia. These days cuisine and culture has taken on a uniquely Seychellois character. Tourism is the largest sector of the local economy, employing a significant number of people. The fishing industry also contributes substantially towards exports. Cinnamon and vanilla are exported.

SEYCHELLES IN BRIEF

- Capital City: Victoria
- Area: 455 km² / 175 mi²
- Population: 91,000
- Time zone: GMT +4
- Currency: Rupee (SCR)
- Electricity: 220-240V
- Geography: Archipelago of small islands. Mahé group granite based, others are coral.
- Language: Creole and English



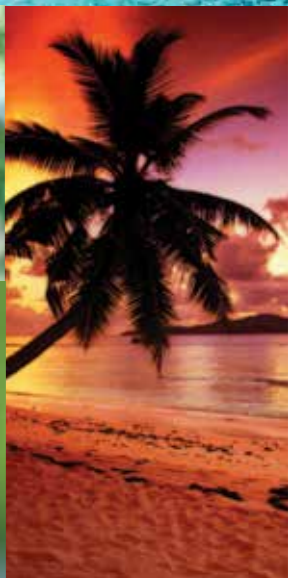
WHEN TO GO

The Seychelles enjoys a tropical climate all year around - there are no extremes of weather and, except for some really outer lying islands, it lies outside of the cyclone belt.

The Seychelles enjoys stable, humid weather year-round with average temperatures between 20°C and 30°C with 12 hours of daylight and with the heaviest tropical rainfall between December and February. However, as you would expect in such a luxuriant tropical setting, short lived showers can occur at any time! July and August are the coolest months and March to June and September to December is best for divers, with calm waters.

CLIMATE

| Victoria | Temp °C | | Rainfall |
|----------|---------|-----|----------|
| | Min | Max | mm |
| Jan | 25 | 28 | 380 |
| Feb | 26 | 29 | 270 |
| Mar | 26 | 30 | 220 |
| Apr | 26 | 30 | 180 |
| May | 26 | 30 | 160 |
| Jun | 25 | 28 | 90 |
| Jul | 24 | 27 | 80 |
| Aug | 24 | 27 | 70 |
| Sep | 25 | 28 | 130 |
| Oct | 25 | 28 | 160 |
| Nov | 25 | 29 | 220 |
| Dec | 25 | 28 | 330 |





HIGHLIGHTS

MAHÉ

Mahé is the largest island in the Seychelles Archipelago and about a third of the population of the country lives in the capital Victoria, which is also the main port. The northwest coast, about four kilometres from Victoria, has some of the best beaches on the island and the long white Beau Vallon beach is one of the most popular amongst tourists. The entire island only covers 155 km² (59 mi²) but there are many other excellent beaches.

Snorkelling and diving is excellent and a wide range of water sports are offered by hotels and lodges. Seychellois National Park covers a wide range of habitats from mangroves to the thick forests that cover the slopes of the 905 metre (2,986 feet) high Morne Seyclois, the country's highest point.



LA DIGUE

The beaches on this island are of the "tropical paradise" mould - white sand, palm trees and granite boulders thrusting into crystal clear waters. Snorkelling and diving each provide their own window on the prolific sea life that gathers around the coral reefs. On land the huge Aldabra giant tortoise is common. The island's highest point, Belle Vue Mountain, (Eagle's Nest Mountain) which is just over 300 metres (990 feet) high provides great views. The island has plenty of accommodation and activities to offer tourists. There are a variety of hotels and restaurants.

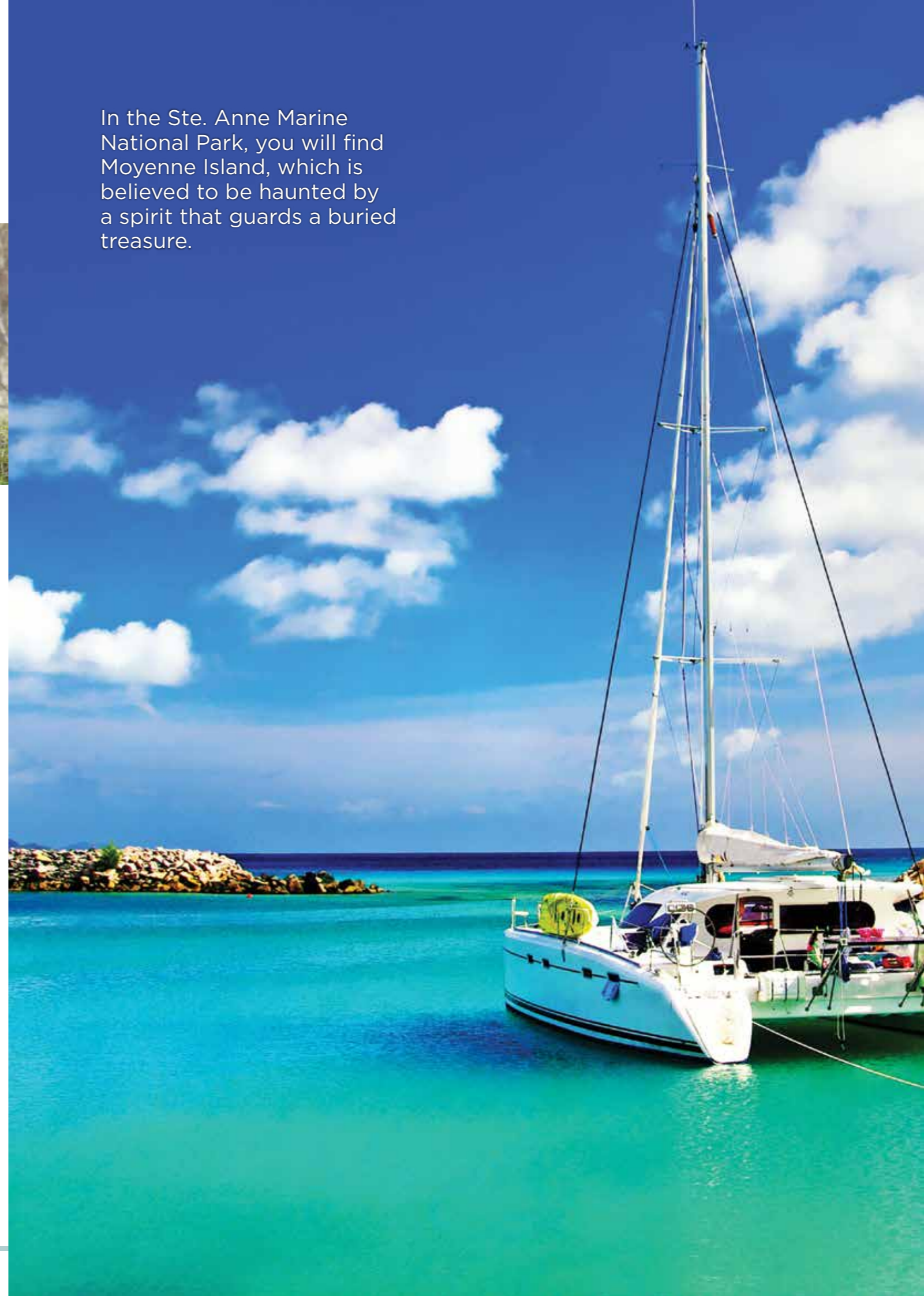


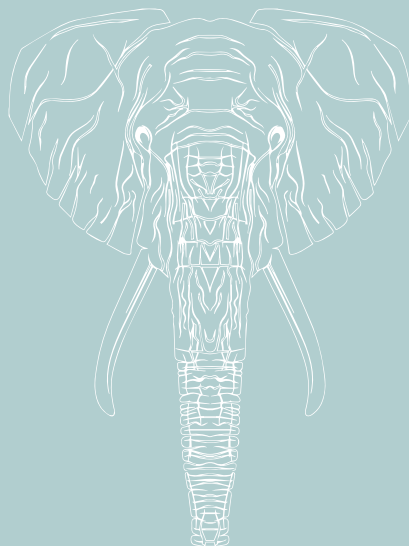
PRASLIN

Praslin Island is about 45 kilometres (27 miles) from Mahé. The 19.5 km² (9.5 mi²) Vallée de Mai has been declared a World Heritage Site and, according to UNESCO, it "constitutes a living laboratory, illustrating what other tropical areas would have been before the advent of more advanced plant families". It has the world's largest population of coco-de-mer palms "a flagship species of global significance as the bearer of the largest seed in the plant kingdom". There are also five other endemic palm species in the small reserve. The island has beautiful beaches and excellent snorkelling and diving sites.



In the Ste. Anne Marine National Park, you will find Moyenne Island, which is believed to be haunted by a spirit that guards a buried treasure.





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