

## Eden Bleu has staged conferences for the UN, African Union and Barclays

## Destination Report



another stream of business: for the third year in a row the Chinese embassy has used the hotel; and the US Army and Navy are becoming frequent visitors.

On the corporate front, the hotel has put on conferences for Barclays and made itself available for luxury product launches (Tag Heuer and Porsche) – the latter using the hotel (and its lengthy lobby) last year to launch the new Porsche Cayenne in the Seychelles, which was attended by 150 people and went particularly well, according to Célia Ponzo, the hotel's sales and marketing manager.

And there are no signs of Eden Bleu slowing down. Upcoming conferences include: an Indian Ocean economic forum, UAE and China National Days, a Mauritius commercial banking conference and a pharmaceutical conference on polio. Eden Bleu's conference facilities are also widely used by the Seychelles Tourism Board for marketing purposes, award ceremonies and gala dinners.

### After meetings hours

For conference delegates wishing to explore Mahe, there's no shortage of places to visit – for example, the island's tiny capital, Victoria, with its miniature Big Ben, a nod to its British colonial past; the Takamaka rum distillery – surely a takeover target for one of the big rum producers in the next few years; the spice garden (and giant tortoises) at Le Jardin du Roi in the south of the

island, not to mention the island's idyllic beaches. Alternatively, if you're into big game fishing or diving, you can charter a boat at the international marina next to Eden Bleu.

Mahe is also an ideal base for exploring the neighbouring inner islands of Praslin and La Digue, only about an hour away using the fast Cat Cocos ferries that leave from Victoria's port.

On Praslin, Vallée de Mai, a Unesco World heritage site and home to the iconic Coco de Mer palm nut synonymous with the Seychelles, is well worth a visit. And if you're a beach lover and simply want to kick back and relax, the aquamarine water and talcum-powder sand of Anse Lazio (on Praslin) and Anse Source D'Argent (La Digue), one of the most photographed beaches in the world, do not come any more inviting!

### Conference cachet

Clearly Eden Bleu is doing something right – for two years in succession the hotel has been named 'Seychelles' Leading Conference Hotel' at the World Travel Awards, and the hotel claims to have had a busy New Year.

And there is good news on the airline front. BA launches a twice-a-week direct flight service to the Seychelles on 24 March, and Air France subsidiary Joon will also be launching direct flights from 5 May. ■

*Simon George travelled to the Seychelles with Emirates, courtesy of Eden Bleu and the Seychelles Tourism Board.*