

## Island Adventure

# Nautilus But Nice

*The spirit of Kosrae*

*Keri Algar washes up in paradise and comes away well fed and rejuvenated.*



**Nautilus is picture-perfect with its own organic garden. And the diving is spectacular and almost exclusively private.**

**M**y hosts, Doug and Sally, say they built Nautilus with a vision for guests to go out and play and have fun all day, then to come back and be cool and relaxed by the pool. I believe it is a mission accomplished.

Framed with the pristine Pacific on one side and jungle-clad slopes on the other, Nautilus is a picture-perfect hotel on Kosrae (Kosh-rye) Island in the Federated States of Micronesia. It caters to whatever is packed in the suitcase – holiday reading, dive gear or hiking boots.

The resort itself is immaculate. Its 16 rooms are well lit, large, comfortable and clean. The restaurant has its own organic garden and partners with other local producers and fishermen. Most of its electricity is generated by a new solar system, keeping Nautilus in line with trending eco resorts worldwide. There is also full access to WiFi and cable TV, not that I managed to squeeze in time to enjoy the facilities.

A fully equipped dive centre and speed boat takes divers anywhere around the tiny island, depending on weather and wave conditions. Salik – Divemaster extraordinaire – fills me in on his favourite dive site, Hiroshi Point. "With a strong current we see so many black tip reef sharks, big ones too!" After 20 years in operation, Nautilus welcomes many repeat divers, though it is never crowded. Usually, as in my case, guests are the only ones here to enjoy their dives in private at their own pace.

Back on land, Nautilus is a skip and a hop across the road

from Blue Hole snorkeling. If the tides permit, take a kayak or standup paddleboard from the resort's 'back yard' and cruise through mangrove canals. Doug and Sally's son, Scott, can also take you stand up paddleboarding south of the island through verdant wetland forests (look out for huge monitor lizards!). In fact, with the friendly and adventurous spirit one could expect of an 'island boy', Scott is happy to take you anywhere, anytime.

To venture a little further, local guides can be arranged – the myths and legends they tell of the 'sleeping lady' island are a treat. Take an outrigger canoe tour through the Utwe mangroves, or walk through Lelu's mysterious ruins, explore the bird cave and take a dip under a refreshing waterfall – all these sights are within minutes of the resort.

Nautilus also offers a unique opportunity to get to know local Kosraeans. The 'morning coffee club' hangs out every day for a chinwag, and on Sundays after church the restaurant fills with families enjoying lunch. Kosraeans may be shy at first, but once approached with a smile they are extremely friendly.

My stay at Nautilus was action packed. But at the same time there is a sense of gentleness and ease in every day. I've managed to tick a lot of boxes and still come away stress-free and rejuvenated. As for Doug and Sally's vision, a look at their visitor's book – dated from 1995! – is testament to their success. •