



“Going Beyond Chocolate” with Alistair Birt, Head Pastry Chef of Harrods London at Vakkaru Maldives

Male, Republic of Maldives, July, 2019 – Vakkaru Maldives will be opening its shores to Alistair Birt, Head Pastry Chef of Harrods London this 22 – 25 October 2019 for an extraordinary experience with chocolate. Guests on island will be in for a treat as they embark on a journey to discover this ancient food of the gods with Alistair through a series of experiences curated exclusively for Vakkaru Maldives. From “Bean-To-Bar Chocolate Masterclasses” and “Cacao Cocktails” overlooking the Maldivian sunset, to a “Chocolate Degustation” and an afternoon in the sun with Alistair’s “Chocolate Ice Cream Pop-up Parlour”, Vakkaru Maldives will transform into an immersive chocolate playground for guests of all ages. As an Ambassador for Cacao Barry® – a gourmet brand of the Barry Callebaut group – world renowned chocolate producer for professionals since 1842, Alistair will be using Cacao Barry® chocolates and the recently discovered ruby chocolate by Barry Callebaut – the first new type of chocolate in 80 years, for this exclusive island experience.

Alistair’s rise in the culinary world began in 2010 when he won the Royal Academy of Culinary Arts’ Annual Awards of Excellence. During his time with renowned British chocolatier, “William Curley”, Alistair rose through the ranks to become Head Chocolatier and went on to represent the UK at the 2015 World Chocolate Masters Final. In 2015, Alistair was Awarded the coveted Acorn Award – a 30 under 30 award for individuals making waves in the hospitality industry.

Alistair joined Harrods – the world-famous department store in Knightsbridge, London in 2016 as Head Pastry Chef. He oversees a large talented pastry team and multiple award-winning outlets. He is heavily involved in the continued roll out of Harrods’ new food strategy and the historic food halls redevelopment programme where he completely redeveloped over 200 lines of bakery and patisserie items. Now successfully training and coaching his own team into competitions, Alistair is developing the next generation of young chocolatiers and Pastry Chefs. Very recently, one of his protégés at Harrods, Benjamin Dufour, won the 2019 UK & Ireland Junior Chocolate Masters competition under his coaching.

22 October 2019

Alistair Birt’s Bean-To-Bar Chocolate Masterclass at Vakkaru Reserve

Hosted in an intimate setting at Vakkaru Reserve, the resort’s wine cellar surrounded by rare and vintage wine, this very exclusive masterclass by Alistair will take guests on a journey through the origins of chocolate from around the world, from the preparation of the beans in the cocoa plantations to the roasting of cacao beans. Guests will also learn about conching – a process where cacao butter is mixed under heat into a fine chocolate liquor, and tempering, a crucial step to achieve the perfect gloss and shininess of chocolate.

Throughout the masterclass, guests will also learn more about Cacao Barry®’s commitment to “Thriving Nature” – a sustainability program addressing the challenges facing the cocoa industry where the brand is on a mission to become carbon neutral by 2025 by creating enough of an impact to offset its carbon footprint. Cacao Barry®’s goal is also to become forest neutral



by that time by eradicating deforestation in the supply chain and participating in reforestation efforts in cocoa-producing areas.

Through its core range, “Pureté”, is how Cacao Barry® is best expressing this commitment where 100% sustainable and traceable cocoa is sourced. For every kilo of Pureté sold, a premium goes towards training the farmer to protect plantations and increase their income in partnership with the Cocoa Horizons Foundation.

Ending the masterclass on a sweet note, Alistair will work with each guest to create their very own personalised chocolate truffles using Cacao Barry®’s line of Origins – the Mexique 66% Origin Dark Chocolate Couverture, the Tanzanie 75% Origin Dark Chocolate Couverture, and the Ghana 40% Milk Chocolate Couverture.

23 October 2019

Alistair Birt’s Cacao Cocktails at Lagoon Bar

Whilst overlooking a surreal Maldivian sunset at the resort, sip on chocolate-infused cocktails like the “Cocoa Old Fashioned” made with cocoa nib-infused whiskey, bitters, sugar and a twist of orange or the “White Chocolate Pina Colada” made with Cacao Barry®’s Zéphyr 34% White Chocolate, white rum, coconut cream and pineapple or take the plunge with the “Plantation Fever” – a chocolate liquor, dark rum, lime juice and chipotle syrup cocktail. Guests will also have the option of trying Alistair’s take on the classic Margarita with his “Frozen Chocolate Margarita”, a cocktail laced with delicious chocolate liquor, tequila, cream, orange and lime. Also on the list, will be the refreshing “Chilled Mint Chocolate”, made with Cacao Barry®’s Tanzanie 75% Origin Dark Chocolate Couverture, mint infused milk and vanilla, making it the perfect mocktail for our Parrotfish Club members – Vakkaru’s exclusive club for very special guests between the ages of 3 and 12.

24 October 2019

Chocolate Degustation at Vakkaru Reserve

Hosted by Alistair Birt and Island Sommelier Stefanie Weisner, Alistair’s chocolate degustation menu is an experience for the senses with three bespoke chocolate desserts. Starting off the dinner with some of Vakkaru Reserve’s signature dishes, Alistair’s desserts will then begin with “The Vakkaru”, a playful take on the coconut with a Maldivian mango compote centre to celebrate his week at Vakkaru Maldives using a Cacao Barry®’s Mexico Origin 66% Dark Couverture Chocolate paired with a dessert wine. Followed by the Chocolate Moelleux Tart – a heart-warming chocolate moelleux tart using Cacao Barry®’s Tanzanie 75% Origin Dark Chocolate Couverture served with Maldivian chilli and spice-roasted pineapple served with a light sparkling wine.

Alistair will end the indulgent night with his take on a classic British dessert – a ruby Eton Mess. The ruby is a completely new taste and colour for chocolate, born from the ruby cocoa bean – to achieve an intense pink colour with no additional colourants or fruit flavourings.

Presented “live” on the table enveloped in billowing curls of mist from dry ice, the Ruby Eton Mess promises a sensorial high for the epic end to an extraordinary dinner.

Vakkaru Maldives

Baa Atoll, Republic of Maldives

Telephone +960 660 7000, Fax +960 660 7777, info@vakkarumaldives.com

vakkarumaldives.com



25 October 2019

Alistair's Chocolate Ice Cream Pop-up Parlour by the Poolside

A limited-edition collection of Alistair's bespoke chocolate ice cream will be made fresh on island using ingredients from the resort's organic farm. In an interactive and immersive experience, guests will be able to create their very own ice cream flavour using a combination of a very special chocolates.

This 2019, Vakkaru kicked off its collection of curated, ultra-immersive and cherishable guest experiences in partnership with guest experiences specialist, The Magnolia Creative Collaborations. The debut experience in August features fitness guru to the stars and Pilates pioneer, Yasmin Karachiwala. Watch out for more experiences from culinary greats, wellness mentors and scent experts, as well as luxurious fashion collaborations and exquisite artisanal pop-ups. Through these experiences, Vakkaru Maldives aims to inspire guests to create timeless memories, effortlessly.

To experience "Going Beyond Chocolate" with Alistair Birt, guests can book our Beach Villas starting from USD 533++ or Over Water Villas starting from USD 612++ per night including breakfast for two persons. For reservations and general information, please visit vakkarumaldives.com or contact reservations@vakkarumaldives.com. For real time updates, follow us on Facebook at facebook.com/vakkarumaldives and Instagram [@vakkarumaldives](https://instagram.com/vakkarumaldives).

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About Vakkaru Maldives

Vakkaru Maldives is a secluded tropical island resort located within the Baa Atoll, a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, in the heart of the Indian Ocean. Only 30 minutes north of Male International Airport by seaplane, Vakkaru – meaning coconut timber in Dhivehi – is an unforgettable paradise blessed with powder soft, brilliant white sand, crystal clear turquoise water, 360-degree uninterrupted views and sprawling coral reefs with unique marine biodiversity. Keeping the natural beauty of the island as unspoilt as possible – including retaining over 2,300 fully grown coconut trees – and drawing on the rich traditions of the locale, design elements are focused on Maldivian style fused with the finest natural resources and contemporary interior. Guests can revel in the choice of 125 beach and over water villas and suites, as well as four sensational restaurants, two bars, a wine cellar and an outstanding array of treatments in the over-the-water [Merana Spa](#). Facilities also include Splash Dive and Water Sports, two tennis courts, a badminton court, the Parrotfish Club for children below 12 years, Coconut Club for teens and an overwater gymnasium with personal trainer.

For more information about Vakkaru Maldives, contact:

Maria Sadipun

Marketing and Communications Manager

mail: maria.sadipun@vakkarumaldives.com

Phone: + 960 660 7000

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Baa Atoll, Republic of Maldives

Telephone +960 660 7000, Fax +960 660 7777, info@vakkarumaldives.com

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