

TRAVEL + LEISURE

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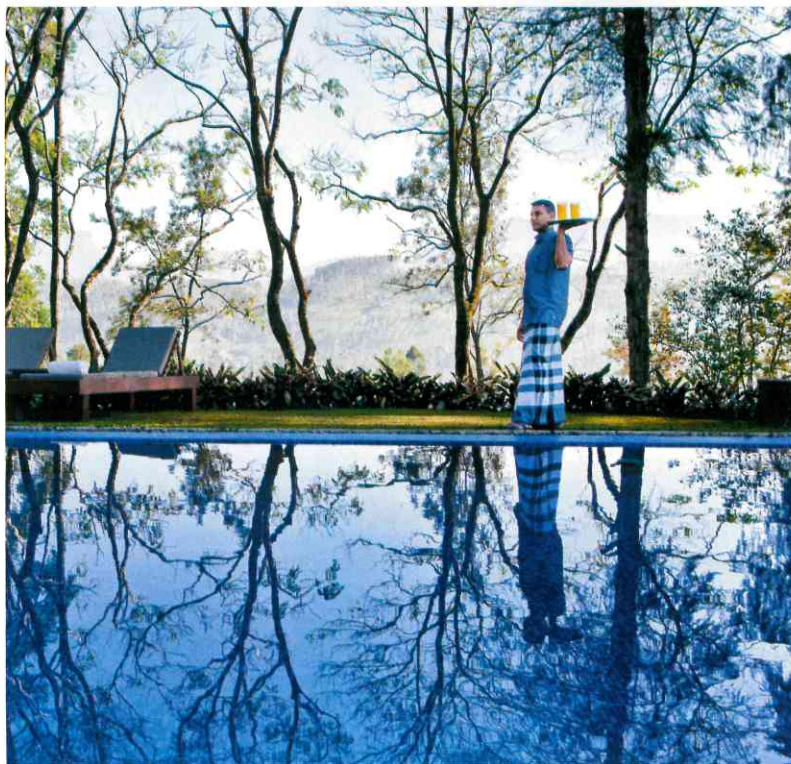
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◀ Butler service at Ceylon Tea Trails, a collection of villas in Sri Lanka.

▲ Mango House Seychelles, where every room is butler-attended.

AT YOUR SERVICE

With sold-out hotels everywhere these days, butler service is worth the splurge. **By Hannah Selinger**

THERE ARE BETTER TIMES to arrive on Providenciales, it turns out, than the middle of spring break. My two kids, husband, and I were on the island for a vacation at the 758-room **Beaches Turks & Caicos** (from \$3,000 for butler-category rooms). But occupancy was at 97 percent, and 2,400 guests were jamming the resort's 15 pools and 21 restaurants.

Luckily, we were booked in a villa, which meant that everything from our arrival to our departure would be expedited by our butler, Moses McKnight, one of 46 such staffers at this resort. Thanks to his handiwork—and in spite of all the other vacationers—we never once waited in a line, scrambled for poolside lounge chairs, or wanted for much of anything at all.

These days, butlers are no longer confined to royal castles and billionaire households, but are becoming essential for high-end travelers.

Just ask Nashville-based Sandy Schadler, the executive vice president of

Vacation Travel Services and a member of T+L's Travel Advisory Board. During a recent trip to **Rosewood Baha Mar** (from \$2,000 for butler-category rooms), in the Bahamas, Schadler fell ill in the middle of the night. Thanks to the 24-hour butler service, which is included for suite guests, she could WhatsApp the staff for immediate assistance.

"They were there so fast," she says. A butler arrived with mineral water and was standing by to escort her to the resort's on-site clinic. "They were very caring. They wanted to make sure that I wasn't just getting the minimum, but that I was really being taken care of." (Fortunately, Schadler says, she felt better the next day.)

At **Mango House Seychelles, LXR Hotels & Resorts** (doubles from \$659), all 41 rooms are staffed by butlers, who can tackle basics like unpacking and pressing clothes, as well as more obscure requests, like procuring a guest's preferred brand of sunscreen—no mean feat in this remote archipelago.

"If you want a booking somewhere on the island, even if that restaurant is full, we will make it happen," says general manager Giuseppe Ressa.

Across the Indian Ocean in Sri Lanka, the butlers at **Ceylon Tea Trails** (from \$1,160 for butler-category rooms), a collection of hilltop and lakeside bungalows that's more than four hours away from the city of Colombo, have made the seemingly impossible possible. "We once got a grand piano up to the property so a guest's child could have one piano lesson," says Maheesha Ratnayake, CEO of Resplendent Ceylon, which manages the retreat.

Butlers work a different sort of magic at Mexico's 324-room **Conrad Punta de Mita** (from \$1,800 for butler-category rooms), which brought on its team of "compadres" in September. They're available to guests in 43 upper-tier suites and take care of just about anything visitors can dream up. "You get a direct line to someone who can coordinate all your needs," says Marco Tabet, the hotel's general manager. "From the moment you check in, you have someone waiting for you at the door—so you don't ever have to go to the front desk." Now that's luxury.