



Honeymoon's over for honeymoon testers: P14



**HEAVENLY** Mauritius, in the Indian Ocean. Photograph: Getty

## MY HOLIDAYS

**BILL HUGHES - TV PRODUCER**



One of the best holidays: Bill Hughes and his partner Gary Hodkinson on holiday in Cape Town, South Africa

### What's your earliest holiday memory?

Going to visit my grandparents in Borrisokane, Co Tipperary. We fed chickens, gathered turf in the ass and cart and collected raspberries. We also used to go on holiday to a caravan site in Ardamine, Co Wexford. It was a lovely drop down a hill to the beach and I remember sitting in the water for hours.

### What was your worst holiday?

Hostelling on the Isle of Wight in 1976. It had the worst food I ever remember in greasy spoon cafes. It's a hideous place. It's so trapped in a time warp, it's like an episode of *Bergerac*.

### What was your best holiday?

I met my partner on holiday in September 1997 in Sitges outside Barcelona, so that's up there. We also had his 40th birthday in South Africa on a safari and wine trip two years ago before the world collapsed.

But now my favourite holiday is Provincetown in Cape Cod. I've been going there for a few years, you take a 90-minute ferry from Boston.

It really feels like a different planet, so relaxed, anything goes. There is no sign of corporate America, there's local food in the restaurants and great bars. There's no high-rise and the houses are made of wood with picket fences and rose bushes. It's a civilised grown-up place. It's very gay and it's nice to feel part of the community.

### If budget or work were not a restriction, what would be your dream holiday?

I'd love to travel Argentina from top to bottom for a month. I'd go to Patagonia, learn the tango in Buenos Aires, ride with gauchos in pampas, drink the local wine, eat their great food.

### If you had your pick, who would you bring on holiday with you?

My partner and closest friends are best if going on holiday for an extended period. For good weekends I'd pick my family. If you want to completely relax with no judgements then not family. But if you to be corrected and reminded of my shortcomings then a weekend with family!

### What's your favourite place in Ireland?

I often visit my brother, his wife and children in Clonakilty, west Cork. We go walking in Inchydoney Beach and it's so beautiful there.

For pampering I go to Monart Spa in Co Wexford. It is fantastic and you go there to be looked after.

A mud treatment, a massage, a meal in the evening and the bed is so high you have to climb into it.

I did all my caravanning and camping as I child and I have no aspiration to return to those days.

### Your recommended holiday reading?

I always bring biographies of heroes or heroines, people you look up to in life. I fell out of bed three times laughing reading *My Trip Down the Pink Carpet* by Leslie Jordan. I have met him and I like that he's certain of who he is and has a sense of self.

### Where will you go to next?

I've been invited on holiday next year with a friend who is turning 50 to Luxor and the Valley of the Kings in Egypt. I can't wait. It's something I've always wanted to do and it would be rude to say no!

■ Bill Hughes is a founder of Mind the Gap Films and has produced *Hallelujah Broadway* which is out on CD and DVD.

■ In conversation with Genevieve Carbery

ble science, and the utopian theme, the course is environmentally green too, maintained using 70 per cent organic produce, and you'll often spot salt being used as a herbicide as you make your way around. The clincher here is another forward-thinking concept, and again we stray into science fiction: night golf. Using a system of special flares and specifically-designed luminous golf balls, you can tee off at sunset and whiz your way around a luminescent galaxy of struck stars under a jealous moon.

The influence of Telfair is also at the heart of the available excursions to the Frederica Nature Reserve, a botanical paradise that is home to myriad species of plant and wildlife. Just inland of the resorts, Frederica offers a range of activities from meditation walks, nature trails to be trekked or cycled, quad bike excursions, or 4x4 tours of the terrain. Frederica is 1,300 hectares of lush and rugged mountainscape, dotted with waterfalls and roamed by wild deer below the trees and fruit bats above.

The essence of Mauritius is here, and it is for honeymooners, of course, and certainly for families or golf excursions too, but it's a utopia for everyone, and as hopeful a vision of the future as you're likely to find under the sun.

■ Danny Denton flew to Mauritius with Air Mauritius and was a guest of the Veranda Group

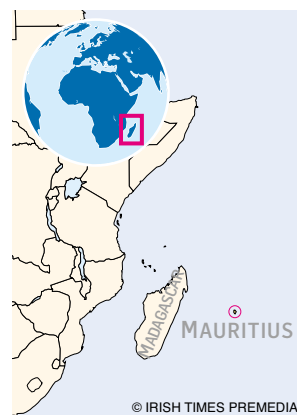
## Where to stay and what it costs

### Where to stay

■ Guests at Heritage Le Telfair, Heritage Awali and Villas Valriche have access to the Seven Colours Spa, Golf du Chateau, a range of watersports (from kayaking to kitesurfing), various on-location swimming pools and restaurants, the Timono Kids Club, the C Beach Club (which caters for oft-forgotten teenagers) and the fabulous Frederica Nature Reserve.

■ Heritage Le Telfair. Named after the prominent naturalist, this colonial resort is secluded, luxurious and right on the beach. On top of the brilliant facilities, you can avail of cooking classes at Gin'ja restaurant, or learn to massage at Seven Colours Spa. Superior rooms with ocean view are €373 in the high season and €191 in the low. Keep in mind that Mauritian winters still average at about 22 degrees, while it goes up to the mid-30s in the summer, so really it's a year-round destination.

■ Heritage Awali. Slightly livelier than Le Telfair, and perhaps more suited to families, Awali is a tribal oasis further



down the shore. Deluxe beach front rooms go from €205 to €357 per night depending on the season, while a family can enjoy total luxury in a suite from €459.

For more rates and information on both see [heritageresorts.mu](http://heritageresorts.mu).

■ Villas Valriche. This seems like the kind of place desperate-to-impress celebrities would rent out if they were appearing in an episode of *MTV Cribs*.

There are four styles of villas: Veranda, Terrace, Village and Courtyard. You will want for nothing here, except the time and finances to stay on indefinitely. If you've somehow avoided the recession and decide to stay on, these can be purchased starting at €950,000, but try them out first.

See [villasvalriche.experience.com](http://villasvalriche.experience.com) for party-specific holiday rates.

### Package deals

Virgin Holidays ([virginholidays.co.uk](http://virginholidays.co.uk)) is offering a 10-day holiday at Le Telfair next year, based on economy fares, for £2,719 (€3,200) per person. This is based on departure on April 22nd, returning May 2nd, with flights out of London Heathrow with Air Mauritius and return transfers included. During the high season (November to April), Luxury Holidays Direct ([luxuryholidaysdirect.com](http://luxuryholidaysdirect.com)) offers seven nights at Heritage Le Telfair Resort & Spa starting from £1,499 (€1,770) per person.

### Exotic: the Mauritius lowland forest day gecko.

Photographer: Roger de la Harpe/Gallo Images

