

cigar aficionado

THE GOOD LIFE MAGAZINE FOR MEN

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**BEHIND THE SCENES
AT THE**

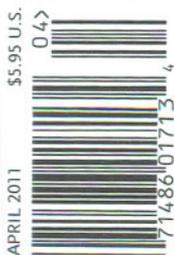
MASTERS

**GOLF
ON THE
SKI SLOPES**

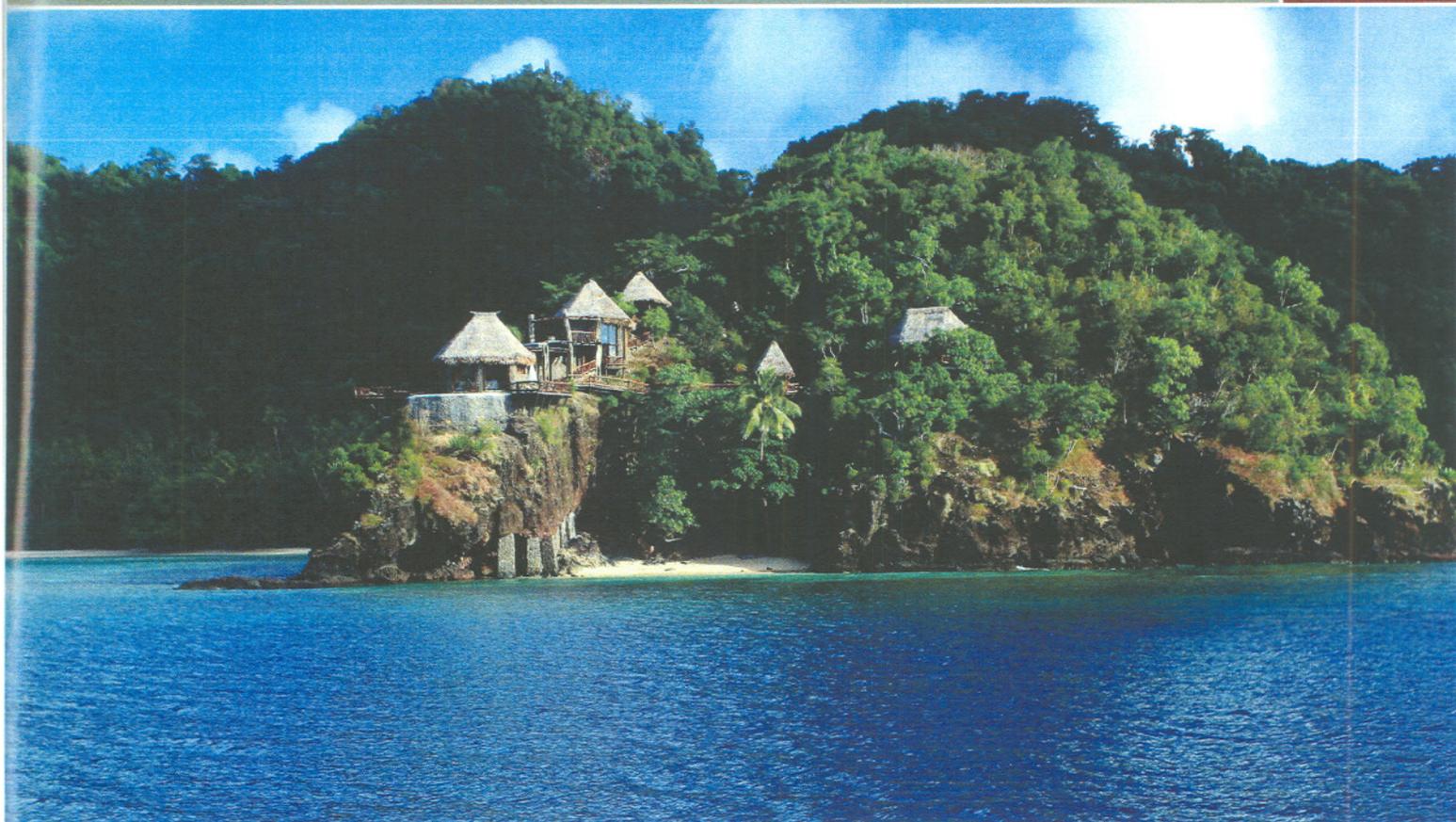
**THE WORLD
OF HABANOS**

**MATTHEW
McCONAUGHEY**
HOLLYWOOD'S LEADING MAN

APRIL 2011



**74
CIGARS
RATED**



Laucala Island

Laucala Island is a name you must remember, because it is a place you will never forget.

If you are looking for isolation without deprivation, for pampering without pomposity, for recreation without reservation, then Laucala Island is exactly for you. Located in the South Pacific's Fijian Islands, a 45-minute flight on the resort's King Air from the main airport of Nadi, Laucala Island is 3,000 acres of pure pleasure and peace of mind.

Laucala Island is the ultimate all-inclusive resort. With prices for the 25 individual bungalows (or *buress*) ranging from \$3,800 to \$30,000 a night, you get what you want: deep-sea fishing, water sports, spa treatments, golf, tennis, horseback riding, not to mention the extraordinary food. Don't want to go to the spa? The masseuse will come to you. Don't want to wear golf shoes on the golf course? Then don't. Don't want to plan ahead for a deep-sea fishing trip? Just show up at the dock.

The island, once owned by Malcolm Forbes, is now the property of Austria's Red Bull energy drink billionaire Dietrich Mateschitz. Mateschitz has turned it into a very real fantasy island. There is a staff of more than 300 people to serve the needs of no more than 80 guests at a time (and there are never even remotely that many). At every turn there is someone offering you a cold towel, an exquisite fresh juice, a joyful service, an engaging smile. Your wish is everybody's command.

The thatched-roof bungalows are both comforting and compelling. Each has as many as six pavilions, including one for outdoor spa

treatments, and a private pool. The organic interior design, by London's Lynne Hunt, incorporates an eclectic Oceania motif with furnishings, rugs and decorative pieces sourced locally and elsewhere in the South Pacific. Bathtubs are chiseled from single granite boulders. Chandeliers mimic jellyfish. Shag rugs are whimsical. The exotically woven rattan chairs are eye-catching, abiding works of art.

The David McLay Kidd golf course was the first project started on the island, and the last one finished. It took five years of hard work and determination to hew this layout from the jungle. Most of it plays through the interior of the island, but you get down to the ocean on the 10th and 12th holes. The bunker for the 12th green is appropriately an extension of the beach on which you could linger for a while and even take a dip. No one will be pushing you.

There are five different places to eat. The main dining restaurant is the Plantation House in the center of the resort. The Seagrass Restaurant clings to a seamount with romantic views of the Pacific. The pool and beach bars offer sustenance from little bites to a substantial menu. You can also pick up something at the golf clubhouse. In every case, the food is world class. Only the reserve wine list costs you extra. There are fine cigars on offer, and the perfect terrace on which to smoke them.

Laucala Island is paradise regained.

Visit laucala.com.

—Jeff Williams