

The Vallée de Mai

a world class experience



Photo Credit: www.jameswarwick.co.uk.jpg

The Vallée de Mai welcomed over 83,000 visitors last year alone and is the most visited natural site in Seychelles. Under the management of Seychelles Islands Foundation (SIF) since 1989, the Vallée de Mai became a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1983. Famed for the opportunity to see the towering Coco de Mer and the enigmatic Seychelles Black Parrot, the Vallée de Mai offers a distinctive and world class experience. But what is it that attracts an increasing number of visitors and makes this place so special? We spoke to SIF Visitor Management Coordinator Ms Evadney Lafortune to find out.

WHAT DO YOU THINK MAKES THE VALLÉE DE MAI SUCH AN INCREDIBLE EXPERIENCE FOR VISITORS?

I think that visitors are amazed by the beauty of this World Heritage Site and the diversity of life that is found here. The Vallée de Mai offers a unique opportunity to see the endangered Coco de Mer in its natural state, this is not something that can be replicated anywhere else!

THERE MUST HAVE BEEN SOME CHANGES DURING THE TIME YOU HAVE WORKED AT THE VALLÉE DE MAI, INCLUDING THE RE-DEVELOPMENT OF THE VISITOR CENTRE.

Yes this is true. When I first started working here in 1990, there was only a small shelter to welcome visitors. Since it's redevelopment in 2009 we now have an excellent visitor centre with a cafe, souvenir shop, bathroom facilities and an education and information centre. We also have a small part of the forest accessible by wheelchairs. I think the expansion of these facilities and improvement in customer service has really enriched the experience for our visitors and firmly placed us as world class tourist attraction.



Photo credit: L Chong-Seng

The Vallée de Mai has welcomed many distinguished guests including H.R.H Prince Edward

YOU HAVE BEEN WORKING AT THE VALLÉE DE MAI FOR 24 YEARS. YOU MUST HAVE SEEN SOME INTERESTING VISITORS COME THROUGH THESE GATES?

We receive visitors from all over the world – Russia, Germany, China, France, Kenya, Singapore – young and old. We have also had the pleasure of welcoming some very distinguished guests such as H.R.H Prince Edward of Great Britain, H.R.H Princess Anne of Great Britain, the President of Sri Lanka Mahinda Rajapaksa, the President of Cape Verde Jorge Carlos Fonseca, the former President of France Francois Mitterrand and French international footballer Paul Pogba. I think the important thing to remember is that the Vallée de Mai is a place that everyone can enjoy and appreciate, irrespective of where they come from or their age.



Inside the Vallée de Mai

Photo credit: www.jameswarwick.co.uk

The home page of the app for the Vallée de Mai



WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE ASPECT OF WORKING AT THE VALLÉE DE MAI?

My favourite part of working at the Vallée de Mai is meeting our many international visitors on our guided tours. I enjoy sharing my passion for this forest with them and showing them the wonderful animals and plants that make this place so special and valuable.

HAVE YOU GOT ANY TIPS OR ADVICE FOR PEOPLE VISITING THE VALLÉE DE MAI?

To make the most out of any visit to the Vallée de Mai you should certainly take a free guided tour with one of our SIF visitor attendants. These tours are available twice a day and provide a much more detailed insight into the forest and the plants and animals you will find there. Afterwards you will still have time to explore the forest for yourself, armed with the knowledge you have gained on the tour.

You can also download our electronic guide for the Vallée de Mai which is available in the iTunes store or on Google Play. This guide is an excellent accompaniment both before and during your visit to the Vallée de Mai and gives information on the wildlife you can expect to encounter and the facilities available.

Evadney Lafortune, Visitor Services Coordinator at the Vallée de Mai



Photo credit: SIF



Last year the President of Sri Lanka visited this UNESCO World Heritage Site

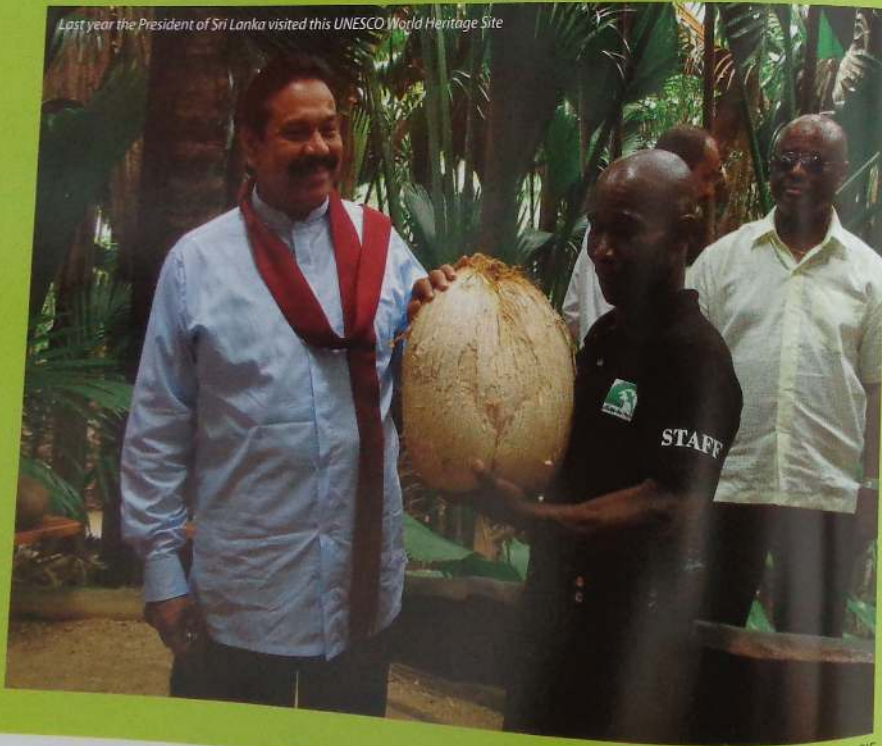


Photo credit: SIF

The Seychelles flag



The flag of the Seychelles was adopted on June 18, 1996. The oblique bands symbolize a dynamic new country moving into the future. The colour blue depicts the sky and the sea that surrounds the Seychelles. Yellow is for the sun which gives light and life, red symbolizes the people and their determination to work for the future in unity and love, whilst the white band represents social justice and harmony. The green depicts the land and natural environment.

Source: wikipedia.org