

Spot information for our guests in Mauritius

Spot description Lagoon:

Le Morne in the south-west of Mauritius is one of the only spots in the world where you get all types of conditions combining in one place. From flat-water lagoon to small waves and the famous wave-spot "One-Eye" to the kite-lagoon with its shallow, flat water close by, which offers a perfect playground for kites whether beginner or expert.

All this is possible because of the surrounding reef which cuts the lagoon off from the open ocean in all but two places. This reef protects the lagoon and guarantees flat water almost all of the time. Inside the lagoon the water is mostly shallow enough to stand in while having a rest, but in some parts it can be deeper. This happens especially when there are big tidal differences. At new and full moon the difference between high and low-tide can almost reach a meter. This not only makes the lagoon deep in some parts during high tide but also too shallow to windsurf for a couple of hours at low-tide. Our staff will naturally tell you at what times it is best to go out sailing.

Around half moon there are almost no tidal differences. The sea bed inside the lagoon is mostly sandy but there are some rocks and pieces of coral. Just in front of the center there are four huge blocks of coral which are marked by red buoys. It is impossible to sail over these blocks, so you have to pass between them, but there is plenty of space to do so. The lagoon is about 400 meters long so it offers perfect conditions for everybody looking to improve their sailing.

Due to the depth of the water, our fin and sail range is limited to fins no larger than 32 cm, but we replaced the long fins with shorter ones that have a bigger surface area (freestyle fins) to compensate for the lack of length. The largest sail we offer is 6.9 sqm, but we rarely need anything bigger.

In the local winter (July and August) there is a change of opening times because of the earlier sunset. By law we have to close one hour before sunset to provide the necessary security for our guests.

Wind:

The wind constantly blows east to southeast from March through to November. Normally the wind blows a minimum of Force 4 and can reach up to Force 9 during the local winter (July-August). The wind is the same from December through to February though it can on occasions switch to the north. In this case it is impossible to windsurf in front of the centre, but we can launch around the corner and surf towards One-Eye with the wind on the right. On this side getting through the reef is definitely impossible! Current and wind have the same direction, so please listen always to the advice of our team.

Reef and waves:

As mentioned above, a reef surrounds the whole lagoon. This reef is very difficult to cross because it is very shallow. It also plays host to plenty of marine life, like sea urchins, living corals etc. From the four wave-spots, we have around the lagoon, only two are open and safe enough for our guests. These are the little reef directly in front of our center and Manawa, the outer reef. The little reef breaks to the right, while all the other spots break to the left. Chameaux, left of the little reef, and One-Eye require a very high level of wave riding and local knowledge, because the reef is just inches below the surface and the waves break very powerful and fast. Wipe-outs in these waves always end on the reef with a lot of damage to yourself and your equipment. Getting there with the rescue boat is extremely difficult or even impossible. That is why our guests are not allowed to surf One-Eye and Chameaux. The only place where it is safe to sail over the reef is the little reef directly in front of the center. Just don't go too far downwind, because you'll end up in Chameaux. The nicest wave is definitely Manawa breaking on the outer reef. The problem is getting there, because it is about 1.5 kilometers from the beach and normally the wind blows down to the outside of the little reef. It is also difficult to see people surfing there from the beach which makes surveillance almost impossible. For wind- and kite surfers with enough wave-experience we offer trips for a minimum of 3 people to sail out there. It is very important that nobody goes there without letting the Club Mistral Crew know. That way we can pay extra attention and we can also lend a walkie-talkie for emergency use to each group going there. Without a boat it is impossible to get back alone with broken equipment! The currents pull out to sea. We even offer whistles to our wave-sailing guests, so that it is easier to find and hear them on the water.

Channel and currents:

Even one of the most beautiful spots for wind-and kite surfing does have a down side: the currents. While we can point out the location of the reefs and other potential dangers, currents are difficult to see. But as soon as there are some waves, they push a lot of water into the lagoon, water which cannot flow back over the reef. The water from the lagoon then only has one possible exit – the prairie pass - or as we call it - the Channel. The channel is located between Manawa reef and the little reef. On days with big waves, the currents that pull out of the lagoon in the channel sometimes reach more than 10 knots. Due to that fact windsurfing in the channel is highly dangerous (from little reef to the seaside the wind also drops) - no windsurfing at all is permitted there.

South-swell:

The channel has a second very important aspect: it is also our only exit should we have to rescue somebody outside the lagoon. On very rare occasions – when a big swell comes in from the south or a south-western direction, the channel is no longer protected by the reef resulting in some waves breaking in the channel. On these occasions windsurfing in or even near the waves is too dangerous, because the boat can't rescue in breaking waves. On such days as these everybody has to stay in the lagoon. When the waves and currents get even bigger and stronger, windsurfing might not be possible at all, due the fact that we can't guarantee for your security even inside the lagoon.

These conditions are indicated by a red flag and then the center will be closed!

Wave-rules:

There are three rules for sailing in the waves and for respecting the priority of others:

1. The person sailing seaward (crossing the waves) has priority to the person sailing in or riding a wave!
2. The person who catches the wave first has priority over all coming later on or dropping into the same wave!
3. In the situation where two surfers catch the same wave at the same time, the person closest to the breaking part has priority!

Don't forget there are plenty of waves outside and sailing is more fun if you are relaxed and smile, so you don't need to fight for the waves. Please respect the locals and the surfers.

Kite-lagoon:

The kite-lagoon is located on the upwind-side of the hotel about 8 minutes walk from the Club Mistral and Skyriders Center. The lagoon is perfect for all kites who have not yet fully mastered going upwind or who want to perfect their tricks in very flat water. The wind is onshore, onto a beach, which is quite small and full of trees. This makes launching and landing your kite dangerous. We suggest walking 200 meters from the beach into the water before launching your kite. Also if you lose control of your kite whilst sailing, remember it takes some time to pull your security release – in which time you can get dragged towards the beach and its trees – so keep the same security distance as you would for launching and landing the kite! It is very shallow to the right of the beach; where there are a lot of rocks and corals. The safer side is to the left, where you only occasionally find rocks, and the sea bed is mostly covered by seaweed. If you

have any problems you drift back to the beach and not out to the reef surrounding the lagoon.

In Cases of Emergency:

Should somebody get into trouble and has problems getting back there are some simple things you should do or not do:

- never put yourself in danger
- inform the Club Mistral Centre crew as fast as possible and give clear directions
- if there are several of you, one of you should if possible stay with the person having difficulties as this makes it easier for us to find them

If you are in trouble yourself:

- stay calm
- stay with your equipment, it is like a rescue island
- sit on your board and wave with both arms, then we know that you need help
- don't try to swim against the current, instead try to go with the current and swim out to the side (best towards the reef)
- Follow the instructions of the rescue team

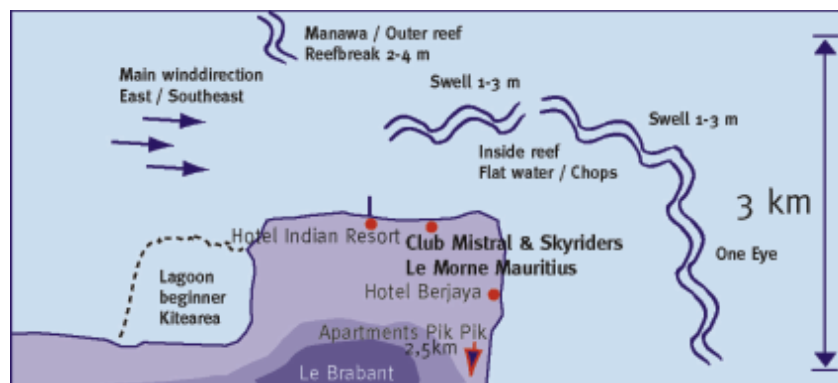
All rental guests are obligated to wear a helmet because in some places the water is quite shallow and there are also rocks. For all private kitesurfers it is also recommended to wear a helmet.

Before you go out on the water:

Please check the wave and current conditions at our office!

These rules and information are for your own safety, and we thank you very much in advance for your understanding and co-operation. Our intention is to ensure that you enjoy a fantastic and unforgettable vacation with optimum support at our Club Mistral Centre!

Your Club Mistral and Skyriders Team



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