



Make like you're Brando or Branson on your own piece of paradise, writes **Tess Nichol**

A private island is perhaps the pinnacle of luxury holidaying and, if you're forking out the cash you worked so hard to inherit on an island to call your own, it should be the best of the best.

Here are *Travel's* top five private islands to visit in the Pacific.

DOLPHIN ISLAND, FIJI

This 5.7ha luxury getaway is the holiday home of Huka Lodge owner Alex van Heeran, which he has refurbished to provide a "luxury castaway experience". The island has an eight-guest maximum and several different bures for guests to stay in, including a hilltop sleep-out lit by lanterns and candles. The menu is based around tropical fruits and fresh seafood, and the spa incorporates local flora into its treatments. The main bure sits above an infinity pool and outdoor dining area with views to the brilliant blue ocean surrounding the luxury pad. dolphinislelandfiji.com

MAKEPEACE ISLAND, AUSTRALIA

Named after its former owner, Hannah Makepeace, who was bequeathed it by her employer as thanks for her years of housekeeping, the island now belongs to Sir Richard Branson and can be hired by the public when he isn't staying on it. The heart-shaped island is mere minutes upstream from Noosa yet

worlds apart from the busy town, although anyone wanting to head back to the mainland can jump on a private riverboat to get there. Relaxation meets glamour on the island Tourism Queensland chief executive Anthony Hayes calls "barefoot luxury at its very best". makepeaceisland.com

LAUCALA ISLAND, FIJI

Coconut plantations, sandy beaches and rich green mountains make Laucala Island breathtakingly beautiful. There is a huge range of outdoor activities to keep guests entertained, from diving to rainforest tours to 18 holes of golf. The island has a focus on sustainability and all fresh produce is from the island's farms. laucala.com

THE BRANDO, FRENCH POLYNESIA

Formerly the refuge of Marlon Brando, the resort on Tetiaroa Island still bears the late star's name. Twelve islands make up a ring just north of Tahiti and today they are accessible only by helicopter. A special feature of the island is the option to go on a photographic safari with a professional photographer. Before Brando, Tetiaroa was the exclusive and favoured retreat of the Tahitian royal family for centuries; a glowing endorsement to be sure. thebrando.com

RATUA ISLAND, VANUATU

Those who can afford to stay on a private island should have money to spare to help the communities whose livelihoods are bound up in the tourism industry, and a stay on Ratua Island offers the perfect opportunity to give something back.

The Ratua Foundation was set up in 2009 and since then all profits from the island resort are channelled into the foundation, which says its aim is "looking after future generations".

Projects include "one child one bag", which every year distributes 1000 schoolbags filled with stationery to children in Vanuatu, and various school projects to help improve education on different islands. ratua.com



Guests can get active on Fiji's Laucala Island (top); feel like a castaway on luxurious Dolphin Island. Pictures / Supplied