

June 8 2026, 10:47 (+07)

People Who Inspire: Oriana Migliaccio and the Blue Heart of the Maldives

Anantara's anniversary series meets the PhD marine biologist who is turning holidaymakers into ocean stewards, one dive at a time



▲ Dr Oriana Migliaccio, Resident Marine Biologist at Anantara Dhigu, Anantara Veli and Naladhu Private Islands in the Maldives

The coral-ringed islands of the Maldives have long been a place of celebration. As [Anantara Hotels & Resorts](#) marks 25 years of locally rooted experiences, Dr Oriana Migliaccio, Resident Marine Biologist at [Anantara Dhigu Maldives Resort](#), [Anantara Veli Maldives Resort](#) and [Naladhu Private Island Maldives](#), reaches a milestone of her own: overseeing the planting of the 10,000th baby coral.

With a PhD in Life and Biomolecular Sciences and a lifelong devotion to the sea, Oriana has found herself exactly where she hoped her studies would lead: immersed in nature from sunup to sundown, and often long after, when she guides guests through the otherworldly magic of nighttime dives. For travellers who may arrive in the Maldives seeking luxury above all else, time with Oriana has a way of shifting the focus. Her enthusiasm and deep sense of purpose draw everyone in, from families to spa devotees, inviting them into the beautiful soul of the reef.

Her own journey began in Naples, where beachcombing with her mother and grandmother first sparked a fascination with the ocean. As she listened to stories of a Mediterranean once alive with seahorses and sponges, she wanted to understand the why behind their disappearance. Years later, during her Open Water certification in the Red Sea, that early curiosity crystallised into purpose. Taking her first breath underwater, she descended into a sea of coral polyps, weightless among creatures she had only ever read about. When a Napoleon wrasse drifted past, calmly observing her, she knew she had found her calling.

“Pursuing a PhD was never just about academia. It was about gaining the tools to become a voice for the ocean and dedicating my life to protecting what first inspired me as a child.”

How does one become a voice for a force so powerful, yet so little understood and so vulnerable to human impact? For Oriana, part of the answer lies in education. One of her proudest achievements is the creation of the ‘Reef Hero’ PADI specialty, a course that teaches divers the fundamentals of coral conservation. Under her mentorship, guests often experience a shift in perspective, moving from passive observers to active protectors.

“You can literally see the moment when curiosity turns into care. When a guest realises that their actions—how they dive, what they touch—can protect an ecosystem, they stop being just visitors and become guardians”.

Life on pristine islands can shield travellers from the realities of pollution, a contrast not always shared by local communities. In her workshops, Oriana bridges that gap by showing guests how abandoned ghost nets, among the most recognisable symbols of environmental harm, can be

transformed into bracelets. By turning these deadly traps into keepsakes, she opens conversations about responsibility and renewal.

Her work does not happen in isolation. Oriana is part of a far-reaching network of Anantara sustainability champions whose efforts span the globe. Together, they contribute to Anantara's HARP initiative (Holistic Approach to Reef Protection), and Oriana has personally overseen the growth of more than 10,000 corals since 2017. Guests often check in on their adopted corals through underwater camera streams, but it is the return visits years later that resonate most, when they see their once-tiny saplings transformed into thriving clusters.

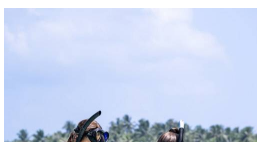
Children find this especially meaningful, as they begin to see themselves as future custodians of the sea. Through Oriana's 'Marine Biology for Kids' sessions, young guests learn to view the water as mother ocean, a living presence that shapes their world and deserves their care. Their questions often stay with her. "If the ocean is alive, can it feel when we hurt it?" shows how naturally children blend science with empathy, something adults could learn from, too.

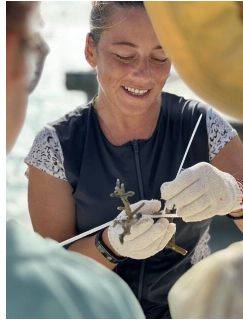
"Their curiosity gives me hope, because they see the ocean not as a resource, but as a living entity worth protecting simply because it exists and is alive. That mindset is exactly what the future needs."

In a nation where rising seas and warming waters pose an ever-present threat, preserving biodiversity offers a rare sense of agency. For visitors and locals alike, taking part in restoration work becomes a way to push back against changes that can feel overwhelming in scale and speed, grounding them in something hopeful and real.

"In the Maldives, sustainability is not optional; it is survival. My vision is to leave behind a lagoon that is healthier, more resilient, and more alive than the one we found."

Learn more about Anantara's 25th anniversary celebrations on [anantara.com](https://www.anantara.com).





Release - People Who Inspire - Oriana Migliaccio and the Blue Heart of the Maldives.docx

677 KB DOCX document

About Anantara Hotels & Resorts

A luxury hospitality brand for modern travellers, Anantara Hotels & Resorts connects guests to genuine places, people and stories in some of the world's most extraordinary destinations. Each Anantara embraces the surroundings and culture of its destination, creating unforgettable memories for every guest since 2001. From city to sea and desert to jungle, Anantara delivers heartfelt, Thai-inspired hospitality at its over 50 hotels and resorts across Asia, Europe, Africa, the Middle East and the Indian Ocean.

Anantara Hotels & Resorts is a Minor Hotels brand and recognises its guests through one unified loyalty programme, Minor DISCOVERY, part of GHA DISCOVERY.

Visit anantara.com for more information, and connect with Anantara on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [TikTok](#), [X](#) and [YouTube](#).

About Minor Hotels

Minor Hotels is a global leader in the hospitality industry with more than 640 hotels, resorts and branded residences in operation and committed development across 66 countries. The group crafts innovative and insightful experiences through its hotel brands including Anantara, Elewana Collection, The Wolseley Hotels, Tivoli, Minor Reserve Collection, NH Collection, nhow, Avani, Colbert Collection, NH, Oaks, and iStay, as well as a diverse portfolio of restaurants and bars, travel experiences, and spa and wellness brands. With over four decades of expertise, Minor Hotels builds stronger brands, fosters lasting partnerships, and drives business success by always focusing on what matters most to our guests, team members and partners.

Minor Hotels is a proud member of the Global Hotel Alliance (GHA) and recognises its guests through one unified loyalty programme, Minor DISCOVERY, part of GHA DISCOVERY.

Discover our world at minorhotels.com and connect with Minor Hotels on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), [TikTok](#) and [YouTube](#).

Contact details

Mark Thomson

Group Director of PR and Communications
mthomson@minor.com
+66 (0)2 365 7678

JJ Minder

Assistant Director of Public Relations & Communications
jminder@minor.com

Copy link

<https://media.minorhotels.com/en-GLO/266710-people-who-inspire-oriana-migliaccio-and-the-blue-heart-of-the-maldives/>

