

PHILIPPINES

Crowd pleaser

Just
opened

The idea of heading to a private island in the Philippines with 17 family members or friends in tow might sound foolhardy – until you weigh everything up. Owned by a British couple, 50-hectare **ARIARA ISLAND** is 56km off Busuanga Island at the northern tip of Palawan, whose waters are known for great diving among Japanese wrecks, fan corals and dugongs. The resort's design is low-key and accommodation is in jungle and beach villas, some with trees growing through them. True, the island takes some getting to (London to Manila via Hong Kong, Manila to Busuanga, Busuanga to Ariara), but you can do it all in 24 hours, cruising the last stretch on Ariara's lovely 30-metre yacht. And the cost of having your own private island (serving whatever food you choose) with 30 staff is eminently reasonable, starting from US\$295 per person per night, with only yacht transfers, motor fuel and alcohol payable on top. International flights start from about £500 return. www.ariara.island.com

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