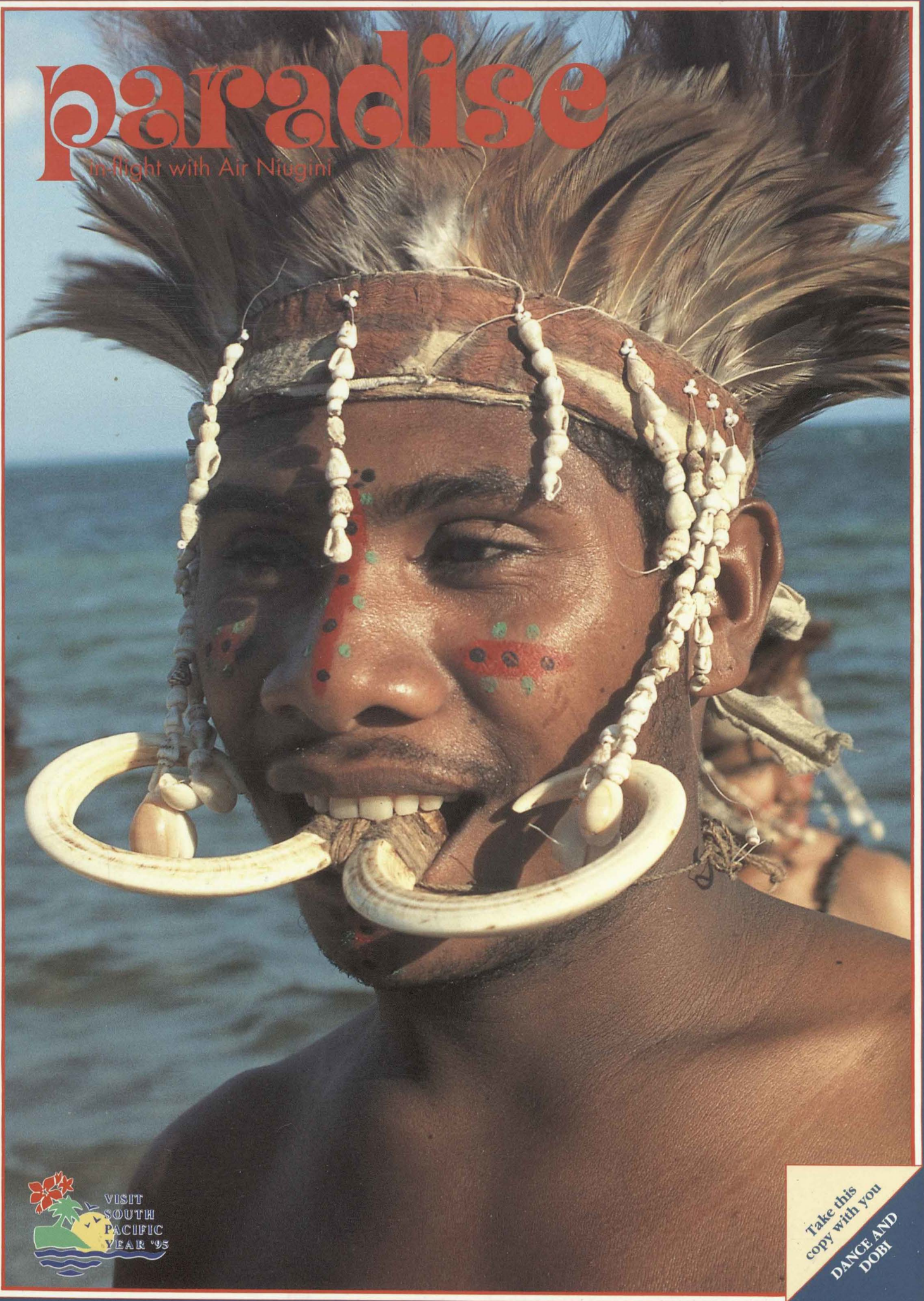


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China Strait separates three islands of historical interest in Milne Bay Province. Remnants of the colonial past can still be seen by visitors who are drawn now by the beauty of the area and the wonderful scuba diving sites.

Enjoy these and other stories and have a pleasant flight.

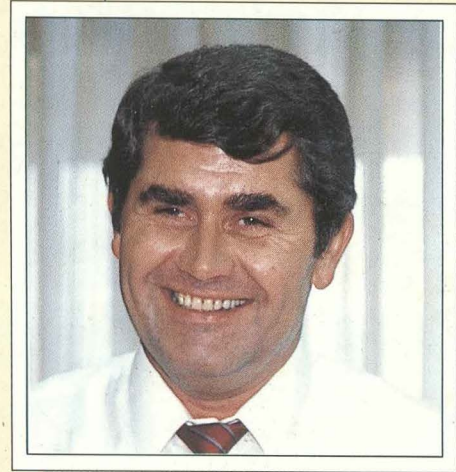
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Chief Executive & General Manager  
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Cover: Ovia, a member of the Taurama Dance Group (see Page 5).  
Photograph by Liz Thompson.



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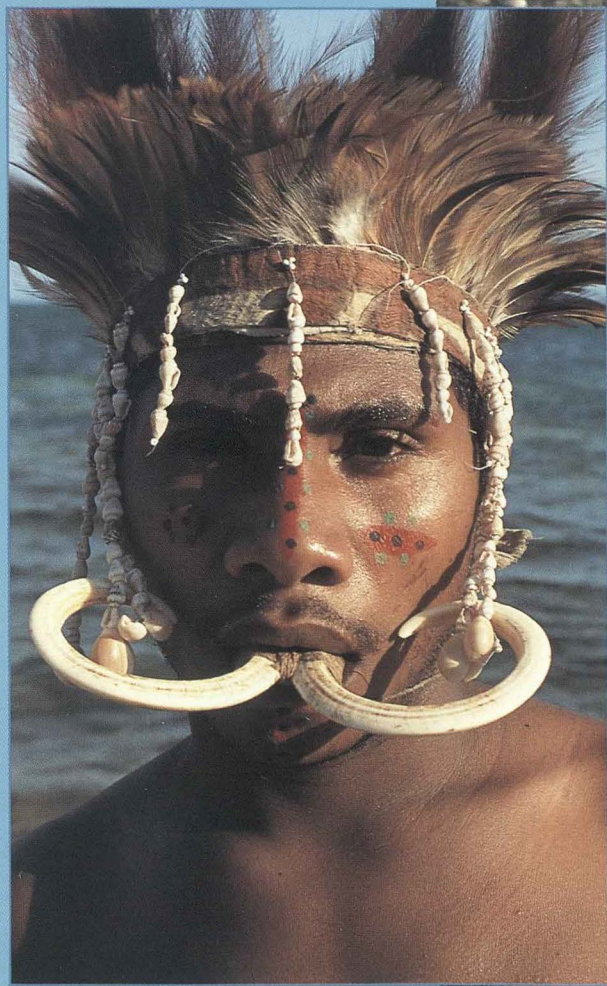
# DANCE and DOBI

**D**obi Kidu is an inspirational young Papua New Guinean woman. She has recently returned from Florida, USA, after taking a group of dancers from Port Moresby High School to perform in the International Music Festival. Dobi choreographed, directed and performed in 'Senemai' or 'Our Ancestors' held at the Performing Arts Centre.

Based in Port Moresby, Dobi is a member of the National Theatre Company

working as a performer, dancer and choreographer. She has long been concerned with the retention, and continued teaching, of a traditional culture as well as the evolution of an original contemporary Papua New Guinean dance form. Dobi has expanded her repertoire to create her own dance troupe, Taurama Dance Group. Dobi works closely with her mother, Carol Kidu, when writing scripts and developing conceptual ideas.

Story and photographs  
by Liz Thompson



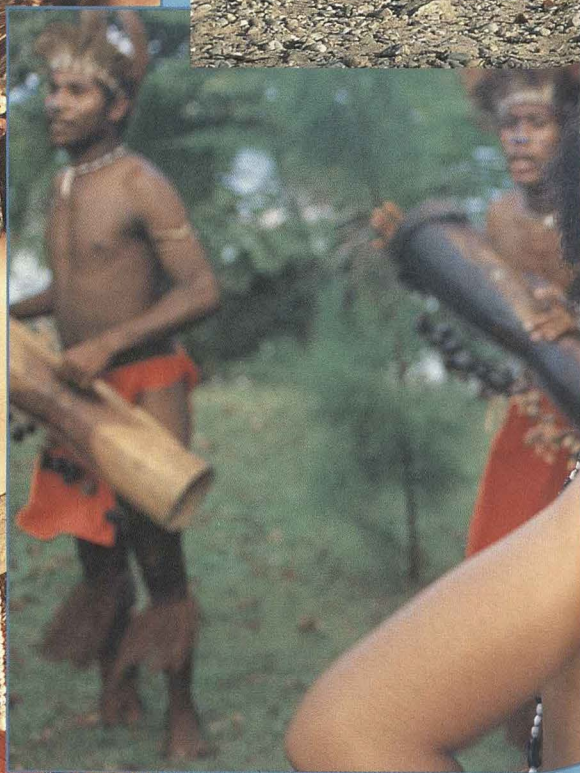
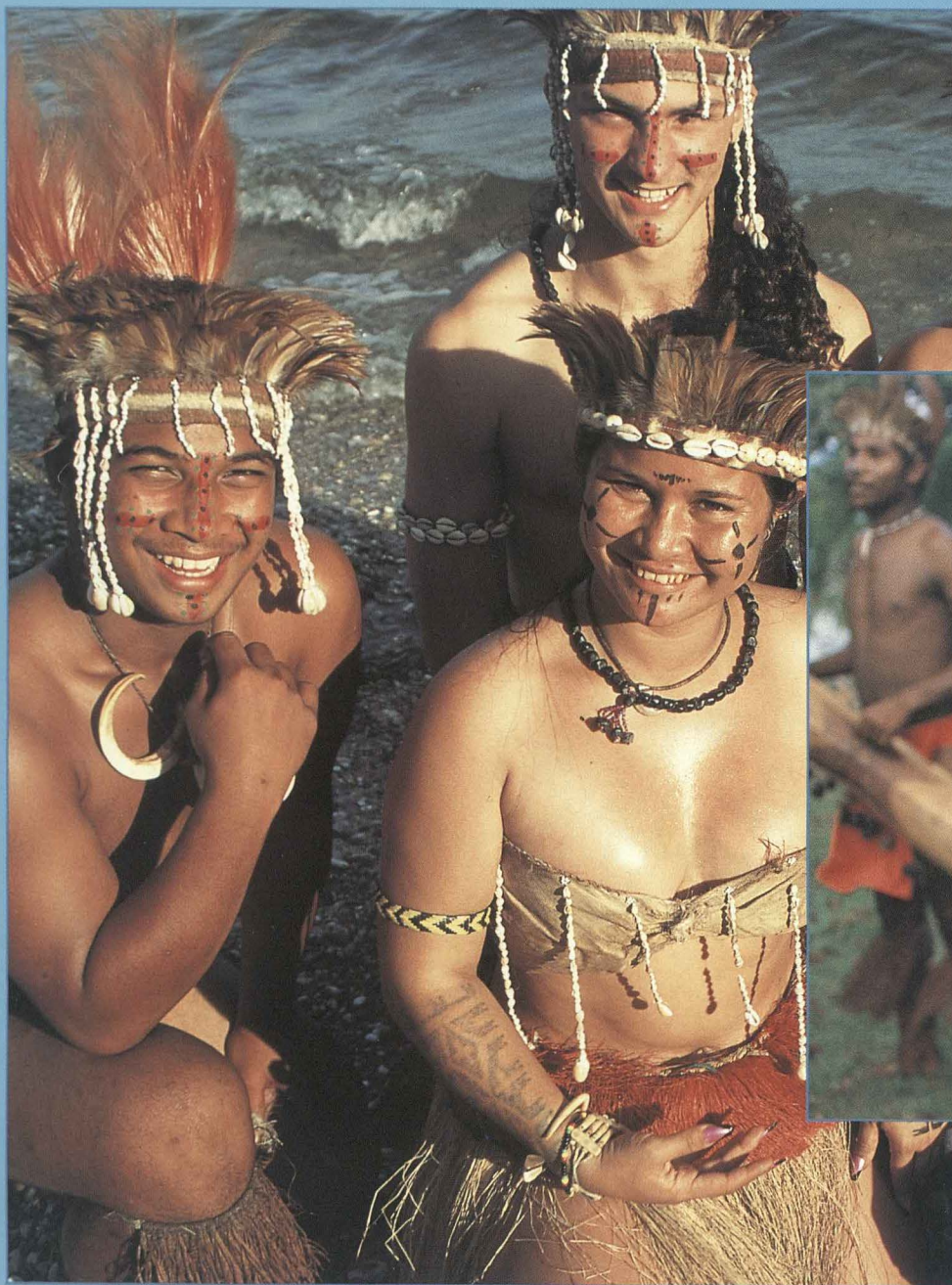
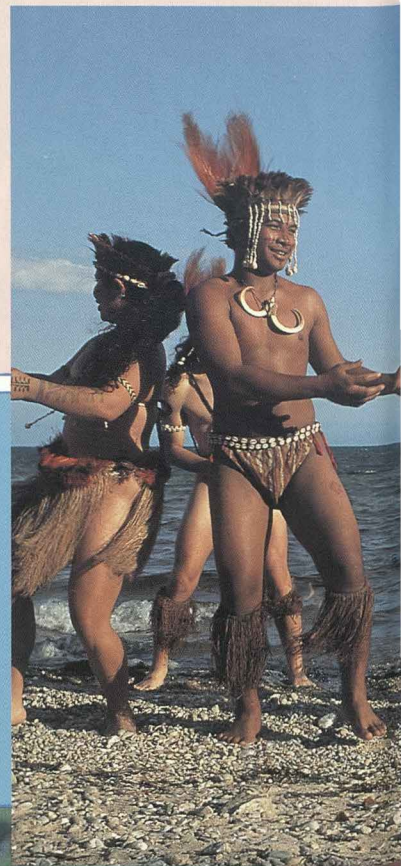
*Above* Pig tusk ornaments are part of the traditional costume worn by Dobi Kidu's Taurama Dance Group. *right* Dobi kneeling to show off her traditional headdress, grass skirt and tapa bodice.

**Below** Dobi Kidu with members of her dance troupe. **top centre** Taurama Dance Group rehearse at Taurama Beach in front of the Kidu family home. **lower centre** Taurama dancer with traditional tattoo marks made with a pen. She wears kina and cowrie shells, feathers and seeds.

Committed to Papua New Guinean culture, Dobi recalls days at the United Nations school when her grandmother or 'bubu' would dress her in full traditional costume and make sure everything was done properly. Dobi was given traditional tattoos and taught how to do them using the traditional methods of boiling plants to create the dye and hammering the design into the skin with a tiny thorned branch. She was taught traditional songs and dances

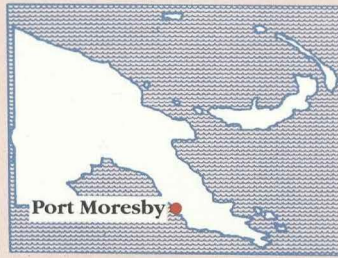
by her grandmother and other relatives from a young age. Dobi is committed to teach young Papua New Guineans of their traditional culture through traditional dance and song and to the evolution of contemporary dance and performance.

Working with both traditional and contemporary influences, Dobi describes traditional dance as more repetitive, hypnotic and monotonous than contemporary forms of dance which are more energetic and complicated.



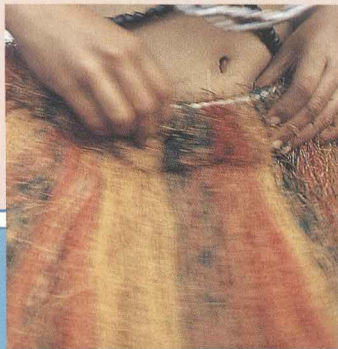
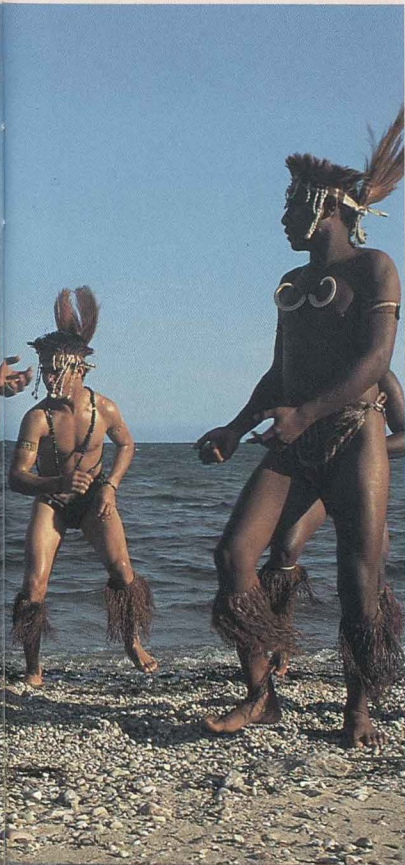
Dobi hopes that as dance in PNG evolves, various dance groups develop their own style which draws on elements of traditional movement. In doing so, Dobi believes they will stamp the contemporary with something uniquely Papua New Guinean.

While constantly choreographing innovative performance, Dobi also teaches traditional dance. She is concerned that young people are losing their cultural base and suffering a loss of identity.

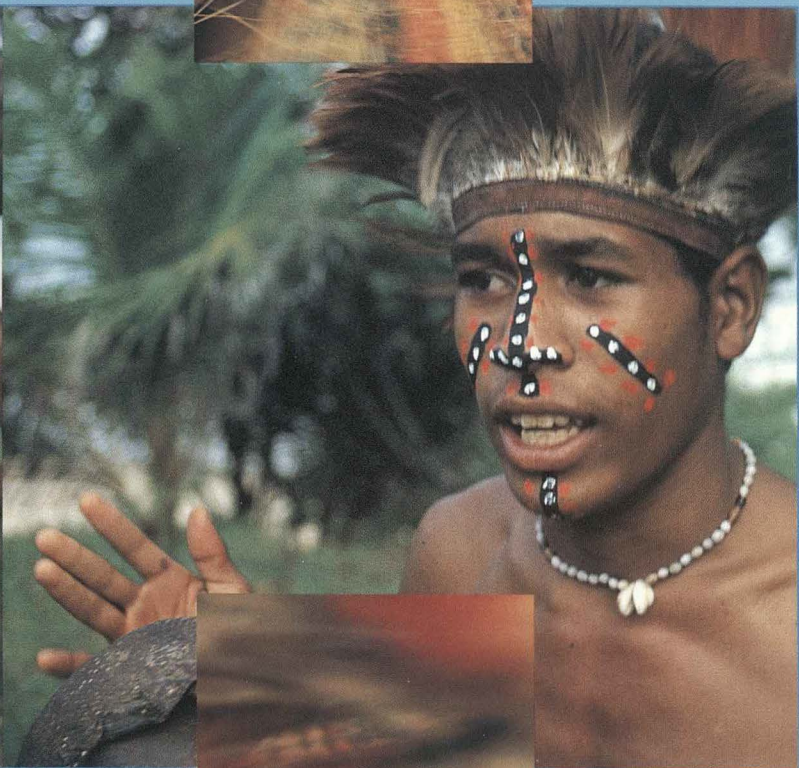
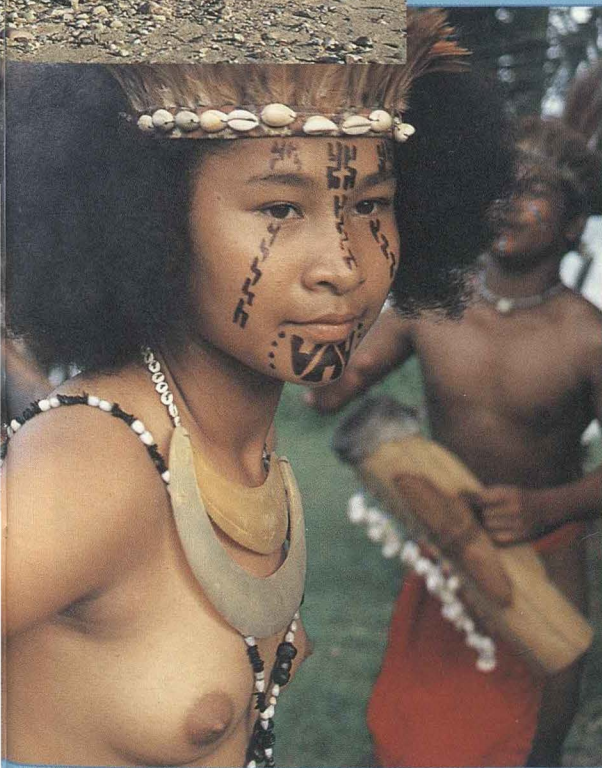


Dobi believes that as Papua New Guinea develops, there is sometimes an association that modern is good and tradition is to be left behind and to be ashamed of. Taurama Dance Group is concerned with stylistic evolution and retaining knowledge, appreciation and respect for traditional dance forms.

Dobi is currently involved in three productions. She is choreographing the musical scenes and acting as the female lead in a Nigerian



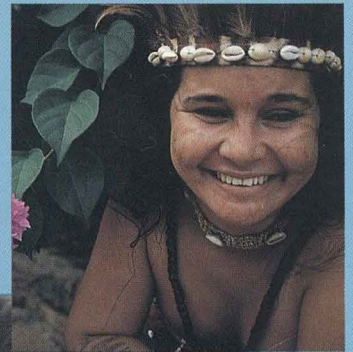
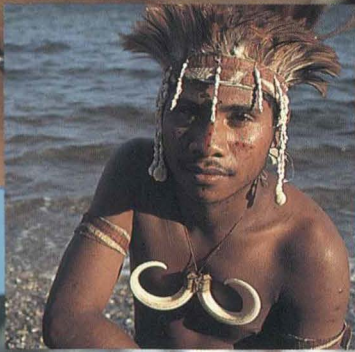
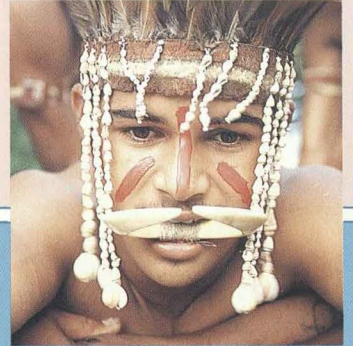
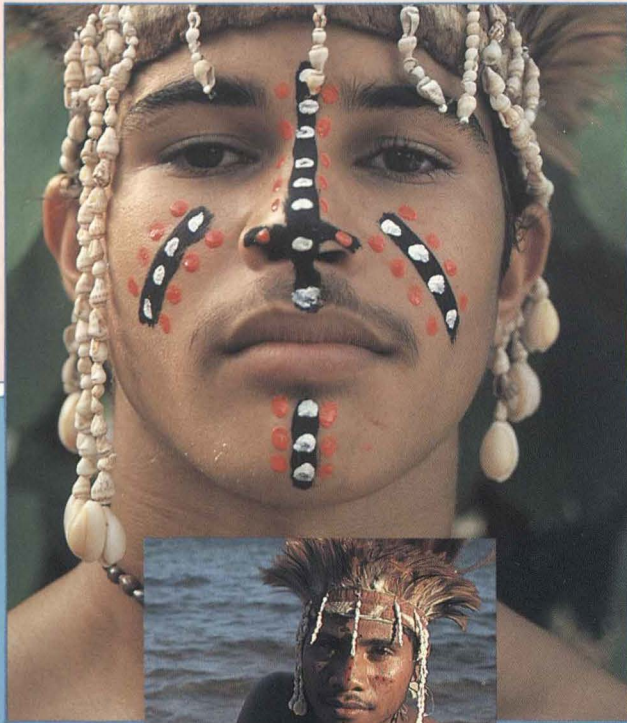
**Above, left and left and bottom**  
Flying colors of a traditional dyed grass skirt. **below** Andrew Kidu decorated for dance.



play, 'The Trials of Brother Jero'. She is also working on a piece called 'The Little Mermaid' where she is directing and choreographing a cast of 60 children and one adult.

Dobi also teaches at the Siale Dance School which was established in 1986 by her mother. Having to hire the premises, both Dobi and her mother hope to be sponsored in order to firmly establish the school and make it possible for more Papua New Guineans to learn dance as a discipline.

Dobi's long-term goal is to open and be in charge of a theatre and establish a travelling contemporary dance troupe which performs internationally, showing people throughout the world the innovative and diverse nature of Papua New Guinean dance.



**Left** Andrew Kidu decorated for dance. **lower left** Taurama Dance Group member Ovia with traditional jewellery. **below** Snake skin drums provide the rhythm for the dance **right** Shells and pig tusks complement dancer's feathered headdress. **lower right** Dobi Kidu with cowrie shell and feathered headdress.





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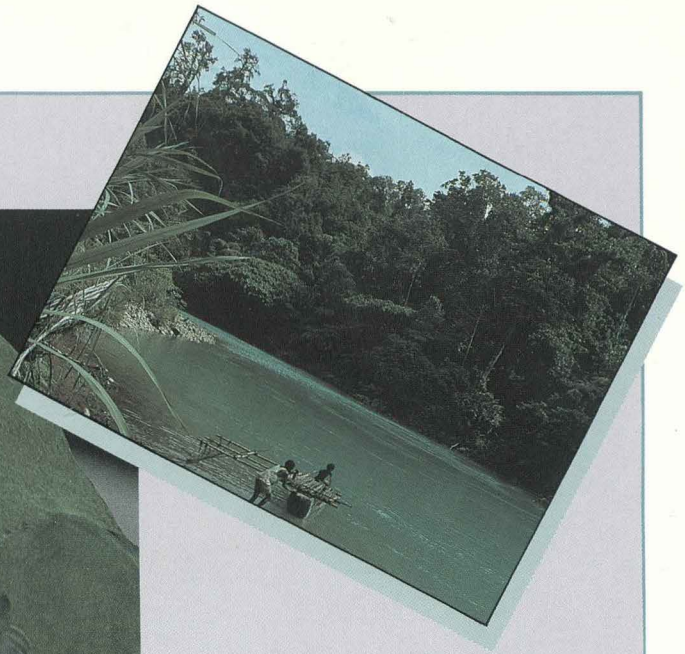
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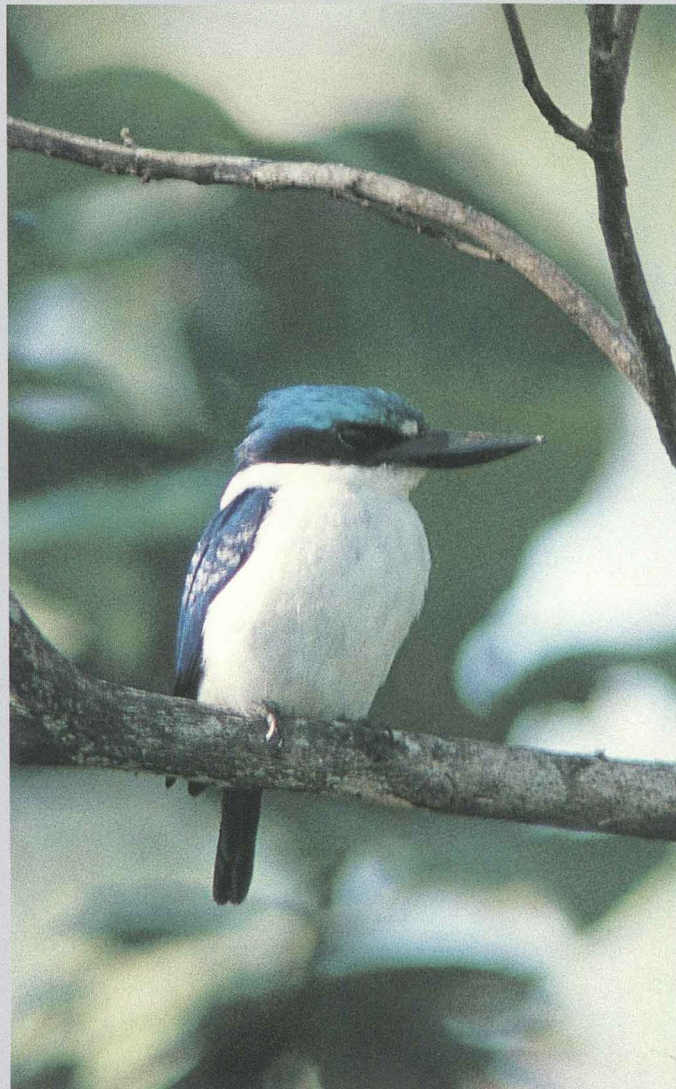
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Far left Variable goshawk caught in a mist-net while chasing a bat. left White-bibbed fruit dove. above Canoe used to carry the expedition across the Pandi River, New Britain.



# NAKANAI

## expedition

Trapped in the mist-net, a male variable goshawk struggles to free itself. Cautiously I untangle the bird, first freeing the legs, taking care to avoid the needle-sharp talons. Then I release the long grey wings, and lastly the few remaining lines are removed from the head. A photographic record is made of the hawk and vital statistics recorded before it is released, unharmed, back into the jungle.

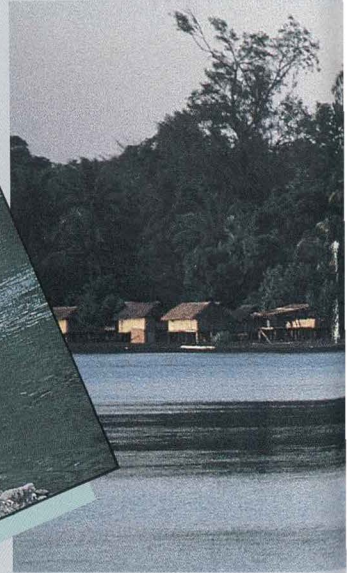
This process was repeated many times in different parts of the island of New Britain by members of the Nakanai Expedition from the University of Oxford, England, and the

University of Papua New Guinea. The aim of the expedition was to conduct the first bird survey of the remote and inaccessible Nakanai Mountain Range. This work was to provide much needed information about the distribution of some of Papua New Guinea's remarkable bird life and possibly also lead to the identification of new species.

Left New Britain kingfisher, symbol of the island.

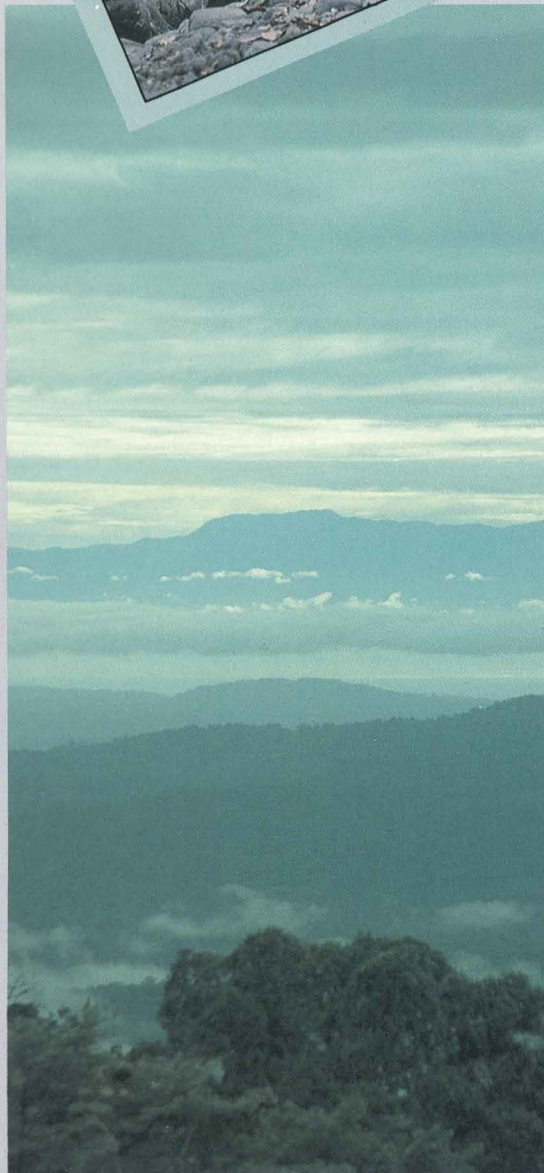
Story and photographs by Jonathon Clay

**Right** Expedition members with Aimola villagers. **lower left** New Ireland seen from the expedition's camp in the Bainings **lower right** Blyth's hornbill at Mount Talawe.



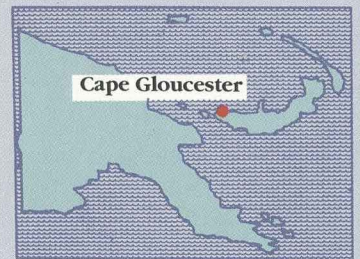
With these goals in mind we set off from Hargy Oil Plantation, the expedition's base camp. The next day, after arranging porters, we began the arduous climb on foot to the base of the Nakanai Mountains. We trekked through the forest on poor muddy tracks, climbing many steep ridges and crossing numerous rivers. The hardship was compensated by the thrill of venturing further into a little-known and incredibly beautiful land with views that included a not-too-distant smoking volcano cloaked in rainforest. Furthermore, we got to know many of the birds we were going to encounter during the following weeks.

It soon became apparent that the first bird survey of this beautiful part of the world was not to be. The porters would not go any further: the mountains were the domain of spirits and ghosts. They were quick to point out the all-too-obvious steepness of the ridge facing us and the many land-slide sites. We had three such ridges to cross before reaching the true plateau and not one of the villagers had ever been beyond the top of the first one. After having travelled some 20,000km around the world, we were defeated by the last few. We had no choice but to turn around and return to our base camp.





spent 10 days at Wild Dog mining camp and during our stay saw many species of birds, several of which had never before been reported at such an altitude (1,000m). We also compiled many audio tapes of previously unrecorded birds.

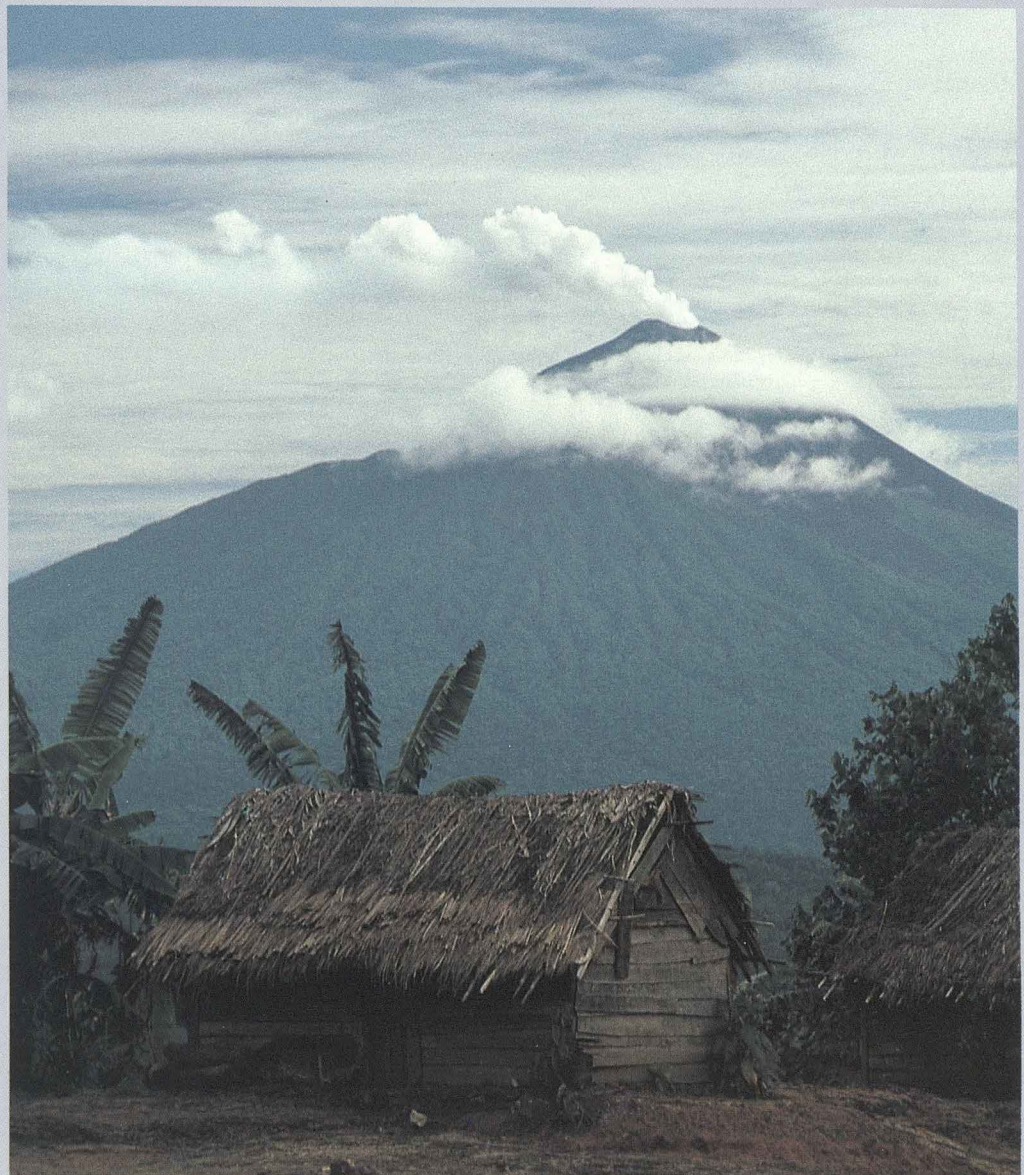


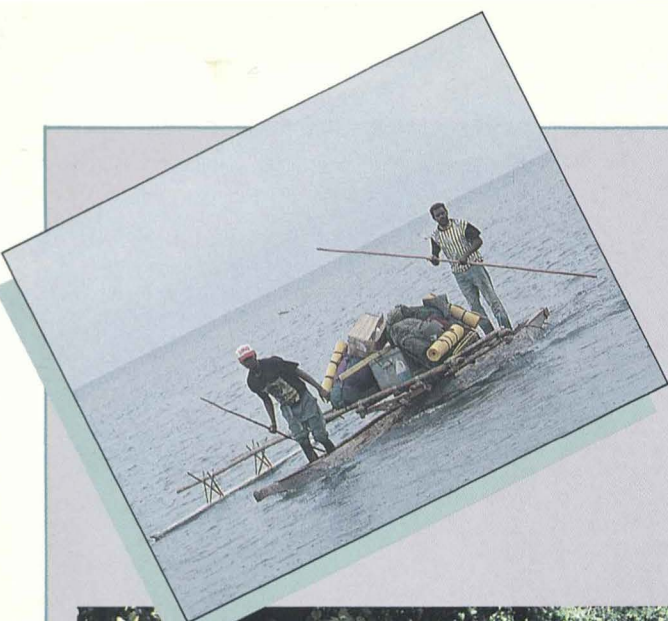
**Above** Sagsag village from Hornbill Point. **below** Smoking volcano, seen from the Nakanai Mountains.

While travelling towards our unreachable destination, we had received invitations from Max Henderson, the chairman of the Pacific Heritage Foundation, to undertake research at the Wild Dog mining camp, and from Marsha Bermann of the West New Britain Provincial Government to study hornbills at Cape Gloucester. We accepted both, but first we spent a week working at Lake Hargy, a large lake set in an idyllic location at the foot of the Nakanai Mountains and surrounded by rainforest.

After the lake-side camp was established, five days were spent observing the bird life. The highlight of the week was the confirmation that the lake had a crocodile population, after a huge adult was spotted by telescope on the far side of the lake. All swimming and fishing quickly stopped and our local carriers held an all-night fireside vigil to warn away the monster.

Our next destination was the Wild Dog mining camp in the Bainings. After travelling on the M.V.Kondor for 18 hours, we arrived in Rabaul. We





From the eastern tip of New Britain we travelled by boat and light aircraft to Cape Gloucester in the west. Here we spent two and a half weeks investigating the bird life and Blyths hornbills. These birds roost on Kurtavele (hornbill) Point and fly out daily to the rainforest to forage for fruits.

Hornbill Point is a beautiful place: sandy beached, a colorful reef and lush vegetation. It is also a very good birdwatching spot. The large numbers of hornbills are its star attraction, but there is also much to see offshore: hundreds of terns, frigate birds and ospreys, and there is a good selection of species in the forest too.

We were working in an area of forest in danger of being destroyed by logging. We spent our time compiling a species list for the area and assessing the hornbill population density. As hornbills are large birds, and few trees are in fruit at any one time, their future rests on the conservation of

**Top left** Expedition baggage being ferried to Hornbill Point. **above** Bismarck rufous fantail, endemic to the Bismarck Archipelago. **Left** Waterfalls near the expedition camp on Mount Talawe.

large continuous areas of forest. This conservation would protect not only the birds but other animals too and ultimately the people who depend upon them. It was our hope that our visit, and the information we collected during it, would bring the importance of forest conservation to the attention of the local people and governments.



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# China Strait

Story and photographs by  
Dianne Bluett Wellington

A tropical paradise will be discovered when travelling through the China Strait, a passage near the Samarai, Kwato and Deca Deca Islands in the Milne Bay Province.

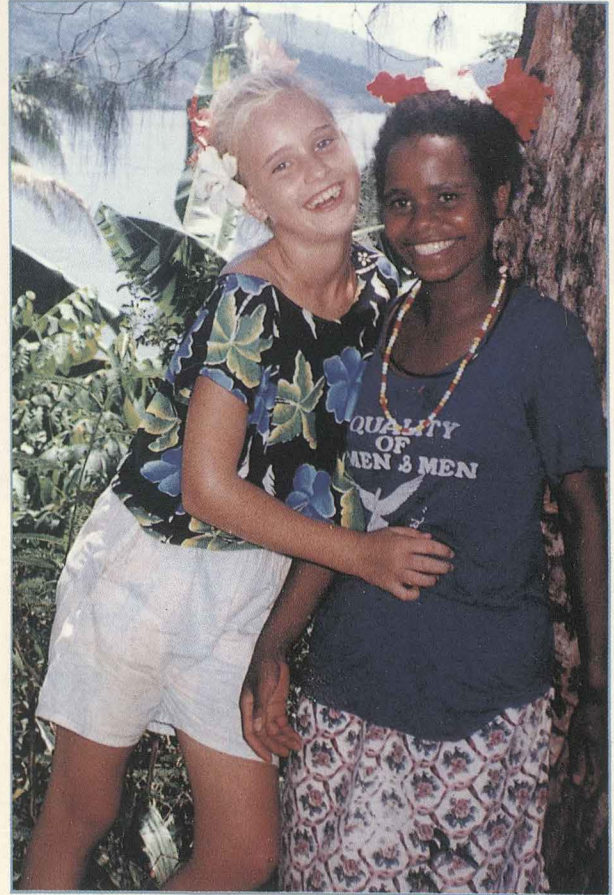
An old historical town which was once renowned as a busy administrative and commercial centre is situated on Samarai Island. Reminiscent of the old capital Levuka in Fiji, remnants of the colonial era still remain. Concrete stairs wind up and around the hills leading to the homes of its people. Frangipani trees, bougainvillea and hibiscus bushes flourish around the houses, adding to the beauty of the island.

A memorial which is erected on the main road illustrates a tolerance by the people for a time and attitude long gone. The inscription reads:

In Memory of  
Christopher Robinson  
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Upright Judge and  
Honest Man  
Died 20th June, 1904  
Aged 32 years  
His aim was to make New  
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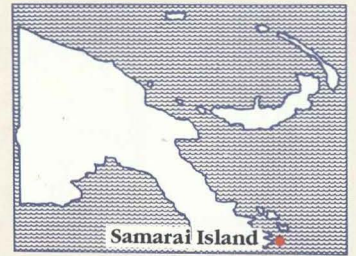
Samarai Island is a popular place. Divers and yachtsmen call frequently, using it as a base for expeditions. The tour ship, Melanesian Discoverer, stops at the island on its way to the Trobriand Islands. Artefacts can be purchased from stalls on the sports oval when the ship is in dock. Modest accommodation at affordable rates is available for visitors to the island.

Below Amelia and Mopsi from Alotau, on Kwato Island over looking China Strait. bottom Swimming near Deca Deca Island.





Left Ship-building at Kwato Island. below Kwato church bottom Samarai Island.



On a 10-minute banana boat trip from Samarai Island, Kwato Island is reached. Kwato is a small island and home for the historic Kwato mission which celebrated its centenary in 1991. Descendants of the founding missionary Abel family still live in the area. The mission established a successful ship building business on the island, still operating today, which provides employment for the Kwato people.

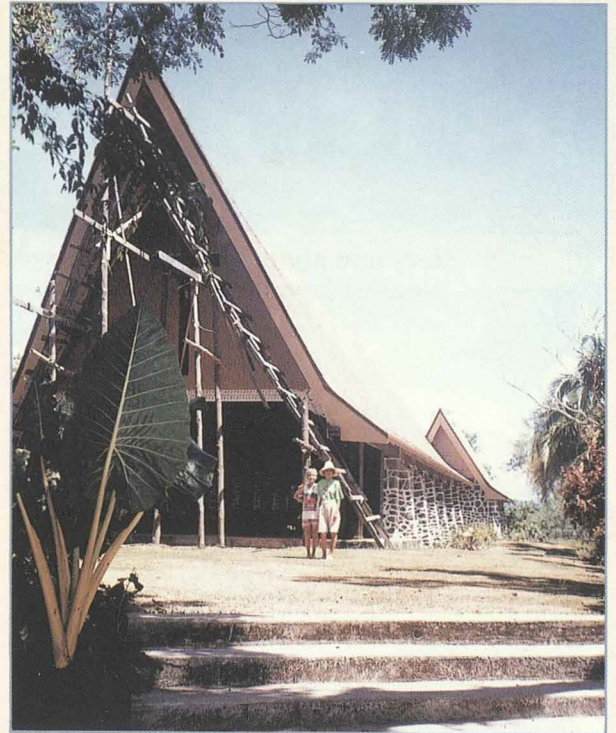
The ancient stone and timber Kwato church, recently refurbished for the centenary celebrations, is on the top of the hill. Breathtaking views of the strait and nearby islands can be viewed from the church.

Uninhabited Deca Deca Island boasts a white sandy beach, aquamarine water and a coral reef. Clown fish weaving in and out of sea anemones are among the many fish species to be seen by visitors snorkelling over the reef.

Nearby Sideia Island has a large Catholic mission with a school whose students make attractive craft items such as baskets, purses and silk screen tablecloths.

The picturesque China Strait is a fascinating destination full of history, scenic beauty and the delights of tropical island living.

*Air Niugini operate regular flights from Port Moresby to Alotau. Charter boats and cargo passenger boats sail to Samarai from Alotau.*



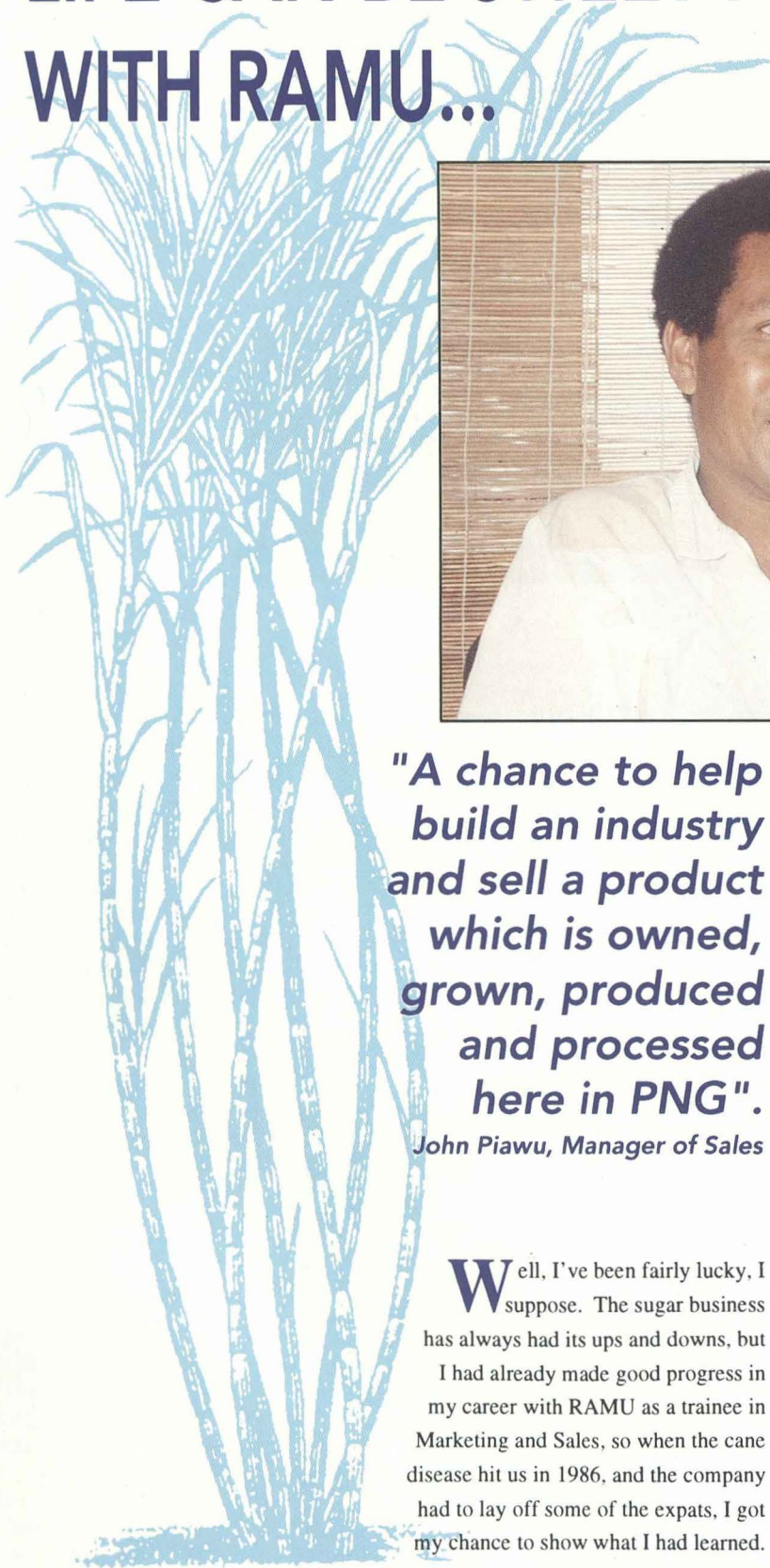


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Left *Vulcan just before its catastrophic eruption in September, 1994.*

# BLAST

Story by Georgie McKie

Photographs by Georgie and Ron McKie

Each year, students studying photography at Port Moresby International School have an exciting assignment to photograph a particular region or event in Papua New Guinea, and to produce a full-color calendar based on the event. In past years, calendars have featured the people of the Southern Highlands, West New Britain and East New Britain.

The 1995 calendar has been the most successful project to date, reflecting the diverse scenery, culture and attractions of the beautiful Rabaul area before it was devastated by volcanic eruption.

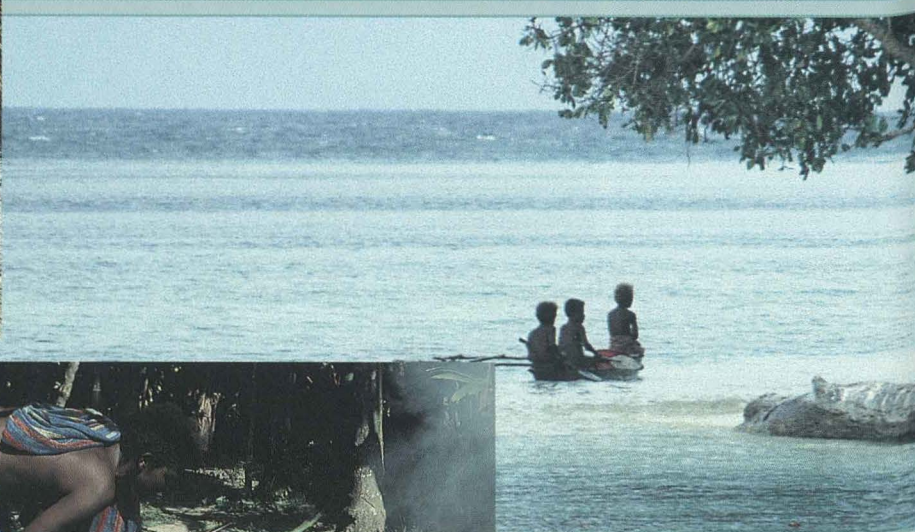
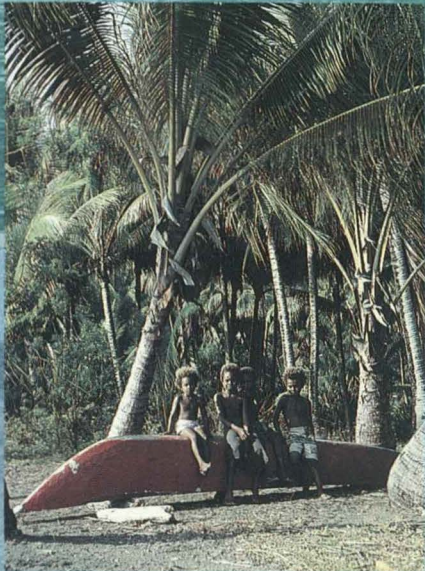
In the months before Mt Tavurvur and Mt Vulcan erupted violently in September, 1994, 13 students and two teachers arrived in Rabaul, to be greeted by their hosts who

draped magnificent leis of frangipani around their necks. The frangipani is a special flower to the inhabitants. It was the first plant to flower after the destructive 1937 volcanic eruption devastated the town. The annual Frangipani Festival celebrated that event.

A very early morning start had most of the group piling into outrigger canoes at Matupit village, and

padding across Matupit Harbor to Mount Tavurvur, even then an active volcano.

A 30-minute walk saw the group on the rims of the three craters. The students explored the area, noticing the strong sulphurous smells of steam issuing from small fissures. In the meantime, three of the party were overhead in a helicopter provided by Pacific Helicopters, obtaining superb aerial photos of the volcano, using their fellow classmates to show the scale



of the craters. From the rim, the helicopter provided a similar scale for the ground photos.

On our way back into town, we detoured into a coconut grove near the airport. We were shown the very well preserved remains of a Japanese Betty bomber, now completely surrounded by coconut trees. Its garden-like setting belies the fact that at the time the plane was struck by the Allied forces, the area was open, and part of the airfield. The



**Inset, top** Bitapaka youth in bilas (finery). **inset, centre** Matupit children before their village disappeared under ash and lava. **above** Preparing a mumu (feast cooked in the ground). **top** Students and host children playing in the shallows. **centre** Near Mioko Palpal.

war relics were of great interest to the students, and later that day, they explored tunnels dug in pumice cliffs, which still house barges which were used by the Japanese.

The museum near Queen Emma's Steps at Kokopo held our interest for several hours. It contained war relics and housed a wonderful collection of historical records. These included arts and crafts of all people who have occupied New Britain from



primitive times to the present.

The role played by the war-time Coastwatchers was recounted as we took in the spectacular views from the Malmaluan Lookout overlooking Simpson Harbor, and Toma Lookout overlooking Blanche Bay, Mt Vulcan and the approaches to the harbor.

Undoubtedly our visit to Bitapaka War Museum had the greatest impact on the group. Walking amongst the hundreds of memorial plates

of identified and unknown soldiers and prisoners of war was a daunting experience for these young people.

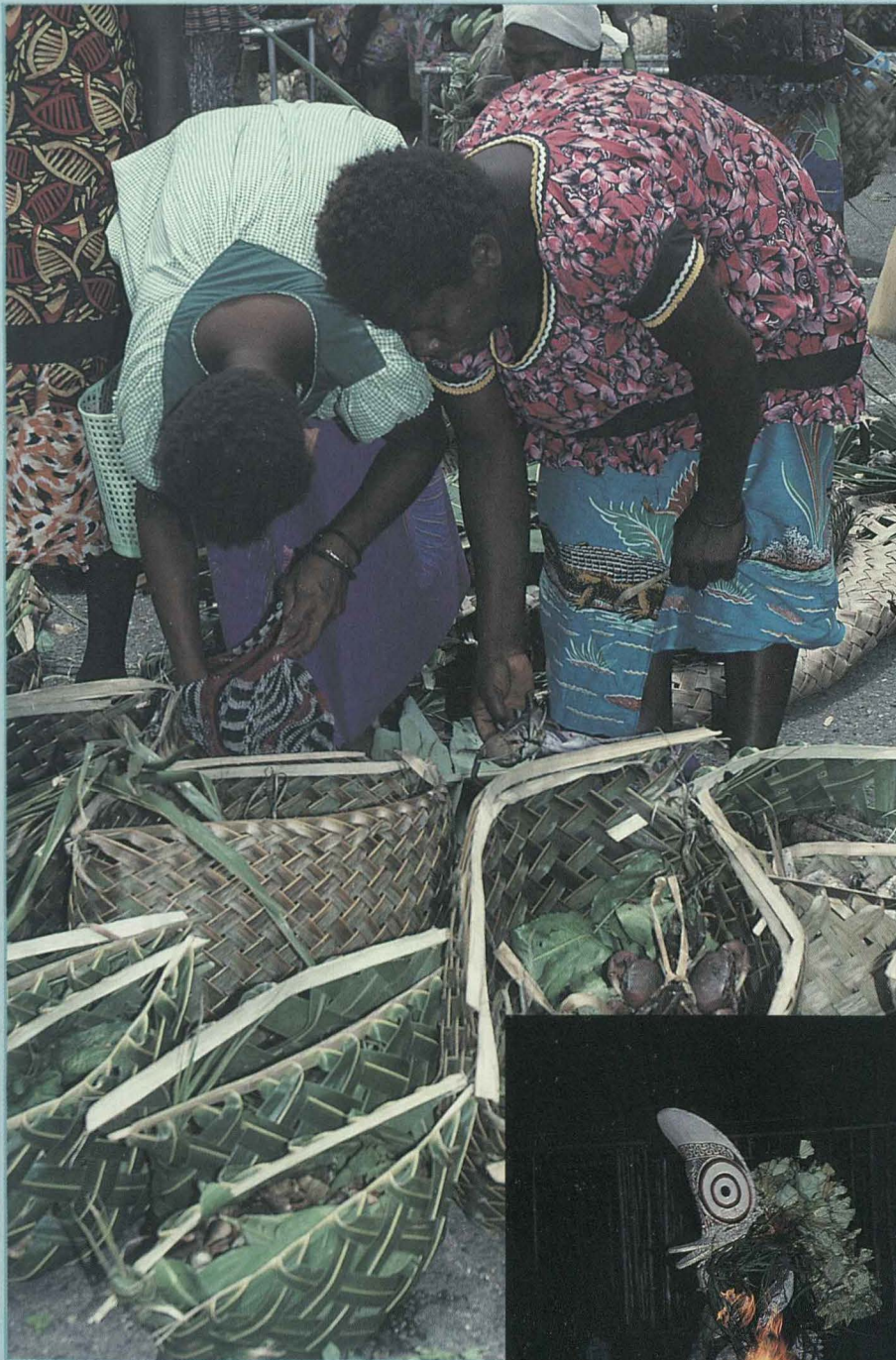
The Saturday market was another experience. Being used to the more restricted offerings of the various Port Moresby markets, exclamations were heard from every mouth as to the size, low prices and variety of fruit and vegetables available. The smell of fresh bread dominated one area and the squawks of

**Inset, above left** Bitapaka children. **top** World War II 'Betty' bomber.

beautiful Eclectus parrots another. Groups of buyers looked over baskets of delicious mud crabs. Sepik and Highlander villagers sold artifacts and bilums and the distinctive palm-frond carry bags all attracted the attention of 15 cameras.

We also wished to explore a slower paced area. Alun Beck, captain of the catamaran Taleo Tambu, offered to take the group cruising to the Duke of York Islands group. Going out under sail was a wonderful and relaxing experience. Anchoring off Mioko Palpal, Alun quickly arranged for two village children to act as our guides, and we all set off to explore the island.

Women in the village taught some of the girls how to weave baskets, and we were all fascinated to see the manufacture of tambu shell money. Tambu is a traditional money form in this area, the shells being threaded onto a piece of cane. In Rabaul market we saw these shells being tendered, as money, for local produce.



The most difficult photographic task set was the recording of performance by Bainings fire dancers. Set in a pitch dark village, the boys of the group were taken to where the men readied themselves for the ritual of fire dancing. Shortly after they returned to the area near the fires we became aware of shapes dancing and leaping around the perimeter. For a split second, the barrage of flash guns illuminated the dancers, who wore a variety

**Top left** Selecting mud crabs at Rabaul market. **top right and above** Bainings fire dancers.

of incredible masks.

Gradually, the initiated men leapt into the fires, kicking the burning coals up as they went. Time and time again they repeated this, and as the fire burned low, more fuel was added to prolong the ritual. The huge bizarre shapes of the masks reflected the color of the flames.

The result of their trip, and the hard work has been a spectacular production which will grace the walls of homes and businesses alike in 1995, preserving images of Rabaul that no longer exist.







# Papua New Guinea



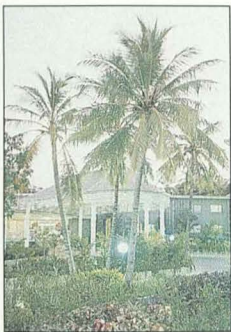
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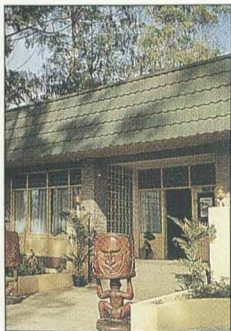


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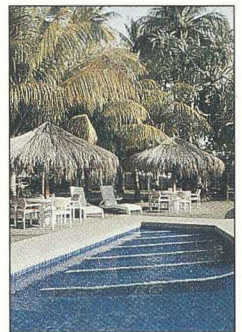


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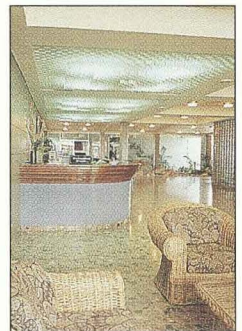
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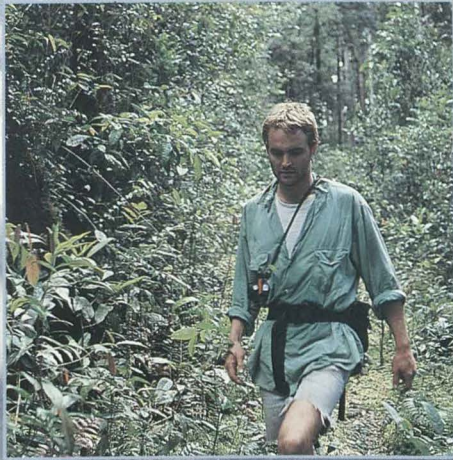
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Story and photographs by Peter Bennetts



# UP & down The Gorge

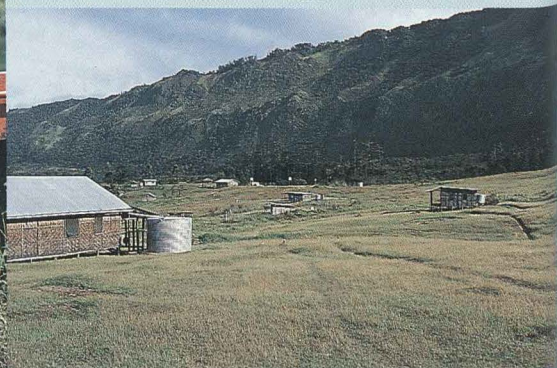
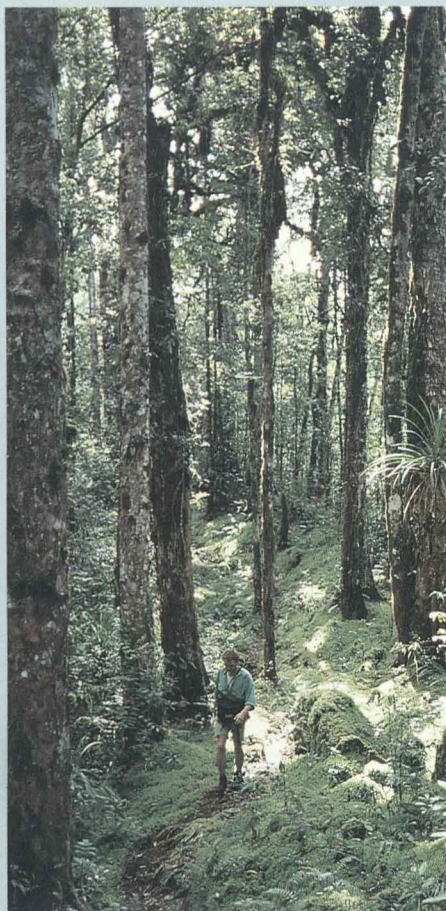
*Above* Western side of the Strickland Gorge.  
*inset* Trekker Jimmy Calder in rainforest.



The Strickland Gorge is one of the world's most inaccessible wonders. In the far west of Papua New Guinea the gorge marks the border of the Southern highlands and Sandaun provinces. Sandaun, formerly the Province of West Sepik, gained its name from the fact that it is the last place in Papua New Guinea to see the sun set. We tramped through the gorge, Jimmy Calder from Australia, David Erapo the Huli wigman, a part time entertainer and sometime student at St Joseph's High School in Tari, and another Australian — me.

It was a three-day tramp from Lake Kopiago west to the gorge or two days east from Oksapmin after we walked from Koroba through lands owned by the previously fearsome and still spectacular Huli wigmen. Midway between Koroba and Kopiago, the land of the Hulis, with their fortifications, gave way to the open land villages of the Duna peoples.

Lake Kopiago is a small inland sea, reflecting the sky and mountains that rise steeply from its banks. Kopiago's comparatively low altitude makes it warmer than the surrounding Highlands. The climate allows the cultivation of the sweetest pineapples and paw paws to be found anywhere. Around the lake people live as fishermen, netting and spearing fish from dugout canoes.



Top left Among the tall timber of the rainforest. top centre Oksapmin children. top right Oksapmin. above Strickland Gorge countryside.

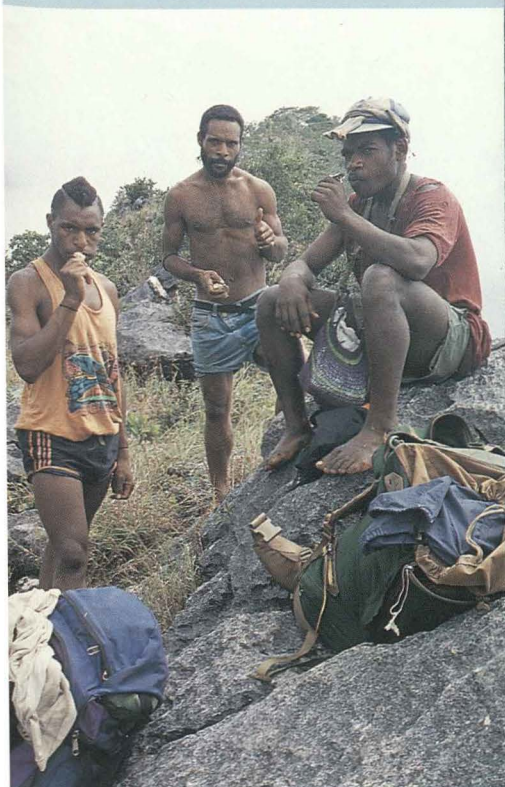
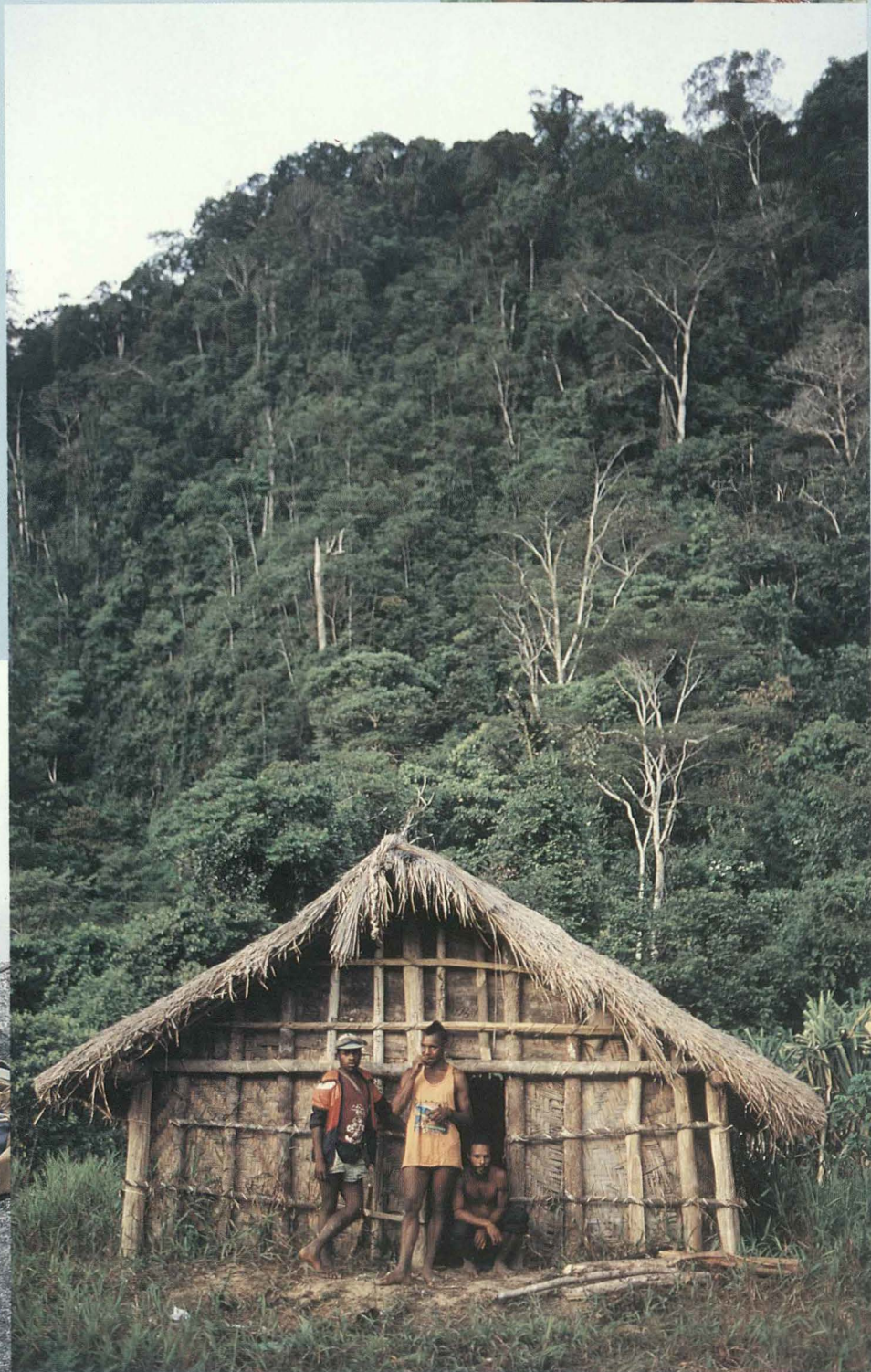
Our guides from Lake Kapiago were Joe Kiru and Michael Porter, Duna men who happened to be heading to Oksapmin to visit friends. For K25 they were happy to carry our sizeable packs and steer us along the multitude of foot tracks that make the route.

It was easy to be led astray. Sometimes it was the most insignificant track that marked the route, and often the wider, well-worn tracks led to a vegetable garden or disappeared into the impenetrable jungle.

Jimmy and I found the walk through the rainforests intense. We tripped on rocks, slipped in mud, strained ourselves walking up the mountains, and slid down every valley. The tramp proved second nature to David, as he ran through the jungle collecting colored leaves, feathers and mosses, arranging them in his hair.

We passed through Kaguene, a picturesque village in a valley surrounded by orderly gardens bounded by forest. We arrived exhausted at Wapia village. Here the people were preparing a mumu in which we took part.

We walked from Wapia through the rainforest to Yokona, a small village perched on the edge of the gorge. From the ridge above Yokona, the gorge became visible through the blue haze of ultraviolet light, and the distance and size were hard to gauge. Here we sat with the locals, eating paw paw before hiking out into the valley.



Above, left Trekkers atop the western wall of the gorge. top Duna man, Wapia village. above A house in Wapia village.



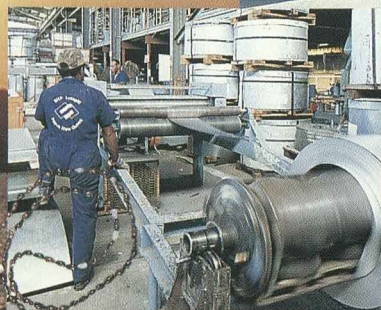
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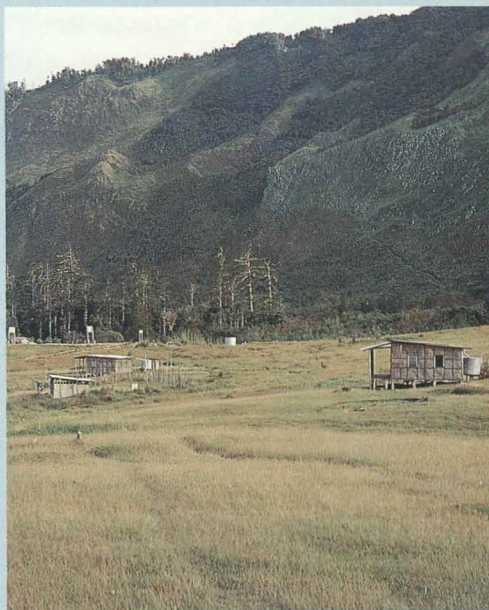
As we descended into the gorge, its depth and heights became dramatic, becoming seemingly deeper as we slid down the jumble of loose rocks to the Strickland River below. With every step down there was a feeling of dread in anticipation of the climb out. The walls of the gorge were 1500m high and vertical. Michael and Joe continued carrying our packs as Jimmy and I struggled.

In need of refreshment after the descent we had to be content to watch the waters rush by. The river flowed too quickly for swimming, sluicing between great boulders, pushing into great vertical plumes. Giant whirlpools formed as the water surged past the boulders at the river bank. The cries of two hornbills could be heard over the sound of rushing water.

A 90-metre vine bridge spanned the Strickland. I could not help imagining the consequences of falling. If given the choice would I fall onto the boulder strewn banks

or into the torrent? The thought horrified me. I breathed a sigh of relief when the swinging ceased and I had reached the other side.

The western side of the Strickland rose through Kunai grasslands (complete with the stirrings of death adders) into a forested mountain wall. In cloud the forest became quiet and color



Top left Oksapmin top right Oksapmin mother and child. above Duna women, Wapia village.

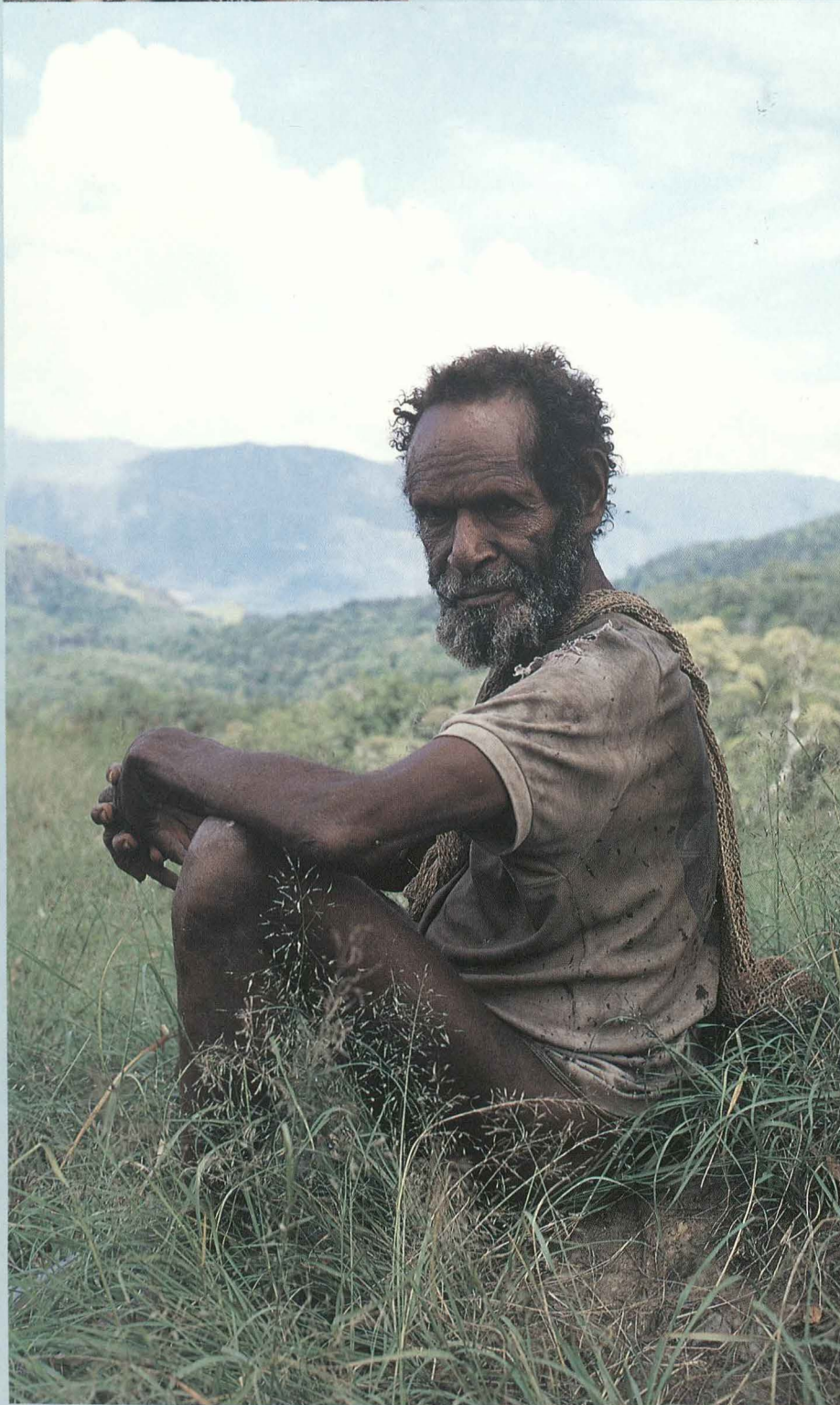


dropped out of the spectrum. Bird of paradise calls pierced the mist, only birds' outlines visible as they flew from tree to tree. I suffered from the effects of altitude on the climb. I felt nauseous and trembled from over exertion. The humidity of around 100 per cent offered no relief.

As we reached the top of the gorge, a breeze cooled us. From here it was an easy three-hour ramble to Gawa, a large village full of friendly people. After Gawa, we headed up a high ridge and down to Oksapmin.

Oksapmin is a dot on the map, where no road exists. Until a road is built, the community is serviced entirely by air. Vegetables grown in the fertile valley are flown out, beef biscuits, soft drinks and other important supplies are flown in from Wewak on the coast.

Michael and Joe left us to find their friends. We waited for a plane to take us to Ambunti on the Sepik. Flying over part of the gorge, I looked down. Strangely, it didn't look so steep from the air.



**Top left** *Preparing a mumu in Wapia village.*  
**above, left** *Duna man, Yokona village.* **above,**  
**right** *Descending into the Strickland Gorge.*



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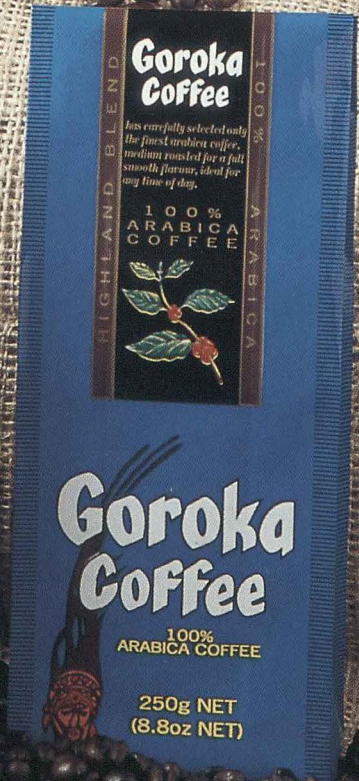
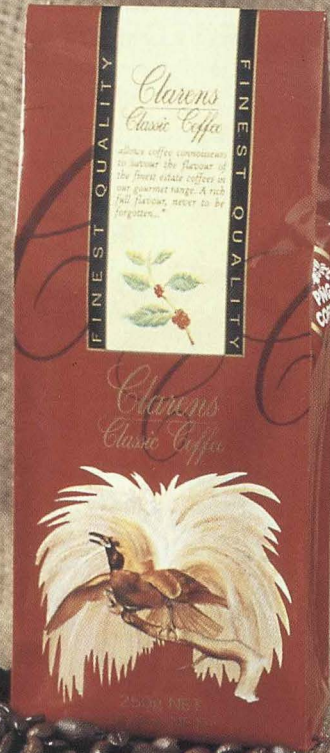
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M A N S A V A

*Magic*

Story and photographs by Georgie and Ron McKie

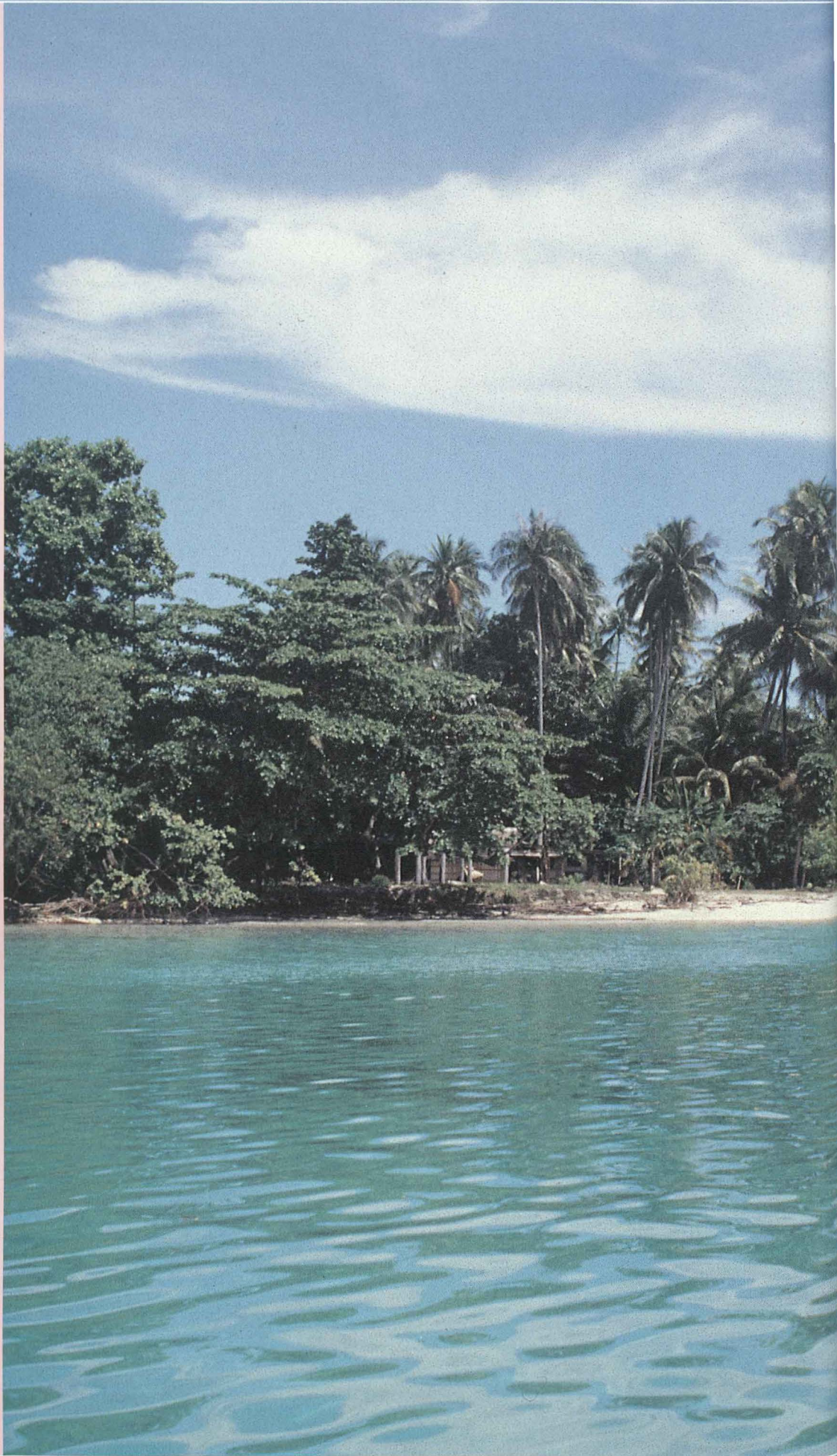
**H**ow often in the stress of a busy week do city dwellers catch themselves daydreaming of a lush tropical island, fringed with swaying coconut palms, glorious white sand, warm turquoise waters lapping gently and a deserted beachfront all to themselves?

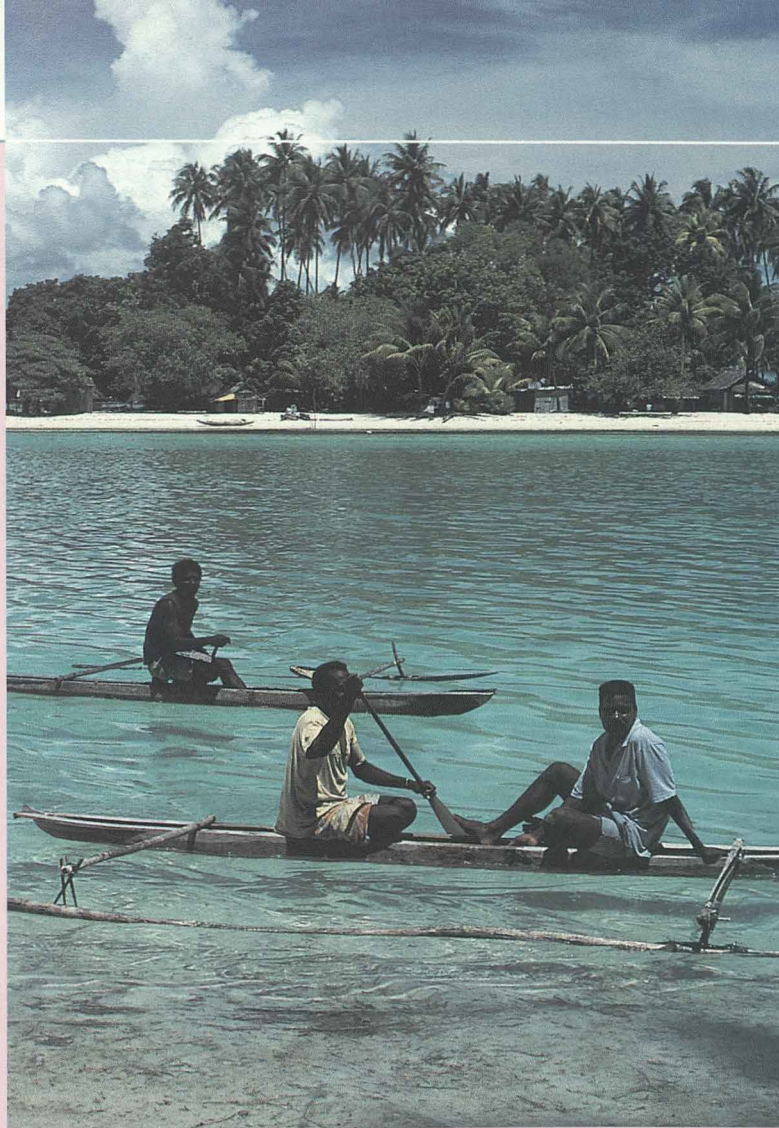
Just a one-hour banana-boat trip from Kavieng, the capital of New Ireland, lies the utter peace and tranquillity of Mansava. Within minutes of wading ashore, visitors experience 'Mansava magic'.

Situated on the tip of remote Tsoi Boto Island, Mansava is the brain-child of Boston and Helen Tusikai. When Boston was a young man, he was a community school teacher, taking postings to Morobe and the Sepik provinces. He met and married Helen, a Sepik girl from the mountainous Telefomin area. As he taught his classes, he read extensively about tourist resorts in the more developed regions of the South Pacific. He dreamed of returning to Mansava village with Helen and his young family.

After resigning from the Education Department, Boston won the North Lavongai seat in the New Ireland Provincial Assembly. He continued to dream. After losing his seat, he decided to quit politics, and to make his dream a reality.

Village elders thought he was crazy. Who would come all that way just to sit on a beach? Such a venture would never pay for itself! With an enormous belief in his dream, Boston committed his life savings, took out a small loan from the bank, and plunged into constructing the most beautiful and well equipped guest house one is ever likely to find.





To describe the lodge as 'bush material' is to understate the beauty of the building. Superb woven rattan screens, airy and spacious day area, a well appointed kitchen and dining area, five comfortable bedrooms for two, all within a few paces of the water. A large 'haus win' with comfortable bench seats and flush toilet lifts this guest house from the norm to the exceptional. Huge shady trees hang over the water, screening the visitor from the sun, but allowing one to enjoy the water without the sunburn.

Boston's family is happy to cater for visitors. Grilled lobster, reef fish, crab, chicken, fresh fruits, kulau (coconut milk) and a good range of fresh vegetables form a typical lunch.

From one side of the lodge a guest can see New Hanover, and a series of tiny atolls. The nearest neighbors are a narrow passage away. They are close enough for guests to admire their clean and tidy village, but far enough away to preserve the sense of isolation. In both directions, spotless white sand beaches stretch, with palms providing shade, and casting artistic shadows over the sand and water. The seas are a dazzling turquoise, so clear it is impossible to gauge the depth.



**Facing page, left** Island in the Tsoi Boto group, New Ireland. **top** Tsoi Island villagers in outrigger canoes. **centre** Mansava Adventure Lodge, Tsoi Island. **left** Lunch is served in the lodge dining room.



For the active visitor, fishing, scuba diving, snorkelling, and village visits are easily arranged. Scuba divers can dive on Four Fathom Reef, and meet the resident tame turtle. Just 10 minutes away from Mansava, lies Silvertip Reef, with up to eight silvertip sharks. For those keen to dive on wrecks, Three Island Harbor offers a Japanese mini submarine and cargo boat.

In the short time that Mansava has been operating, it has been well visited. Visitors from the USA, the UK, Europe and Australia have responded to overseas advertising, and have come to enjoy this unique venture.

Boston's plans are not completed yet. He is preparing a helipad, so that guests may arrive after a spectacular chopper trip over numerous islands and atolls. But to arrive by this method denies the visitor the opportunity of enjoying the skills of a boatman, the greetings from passing fishermen, and glimpses of silvery flying fish as they glide beside and ahead of the boat.



**Above Mansava jetty. right**  
*Tusikai village children with toy outrigger.*

It is a pleasure to see the more up-market lodges and hotels in Kavieng making arrangements for their guests to spend time at Mansava.

Mansava's magic is potent, Boston's early critics are now full of admiration for him, having seen what hard work and a sensible approach to the venture have achieved.





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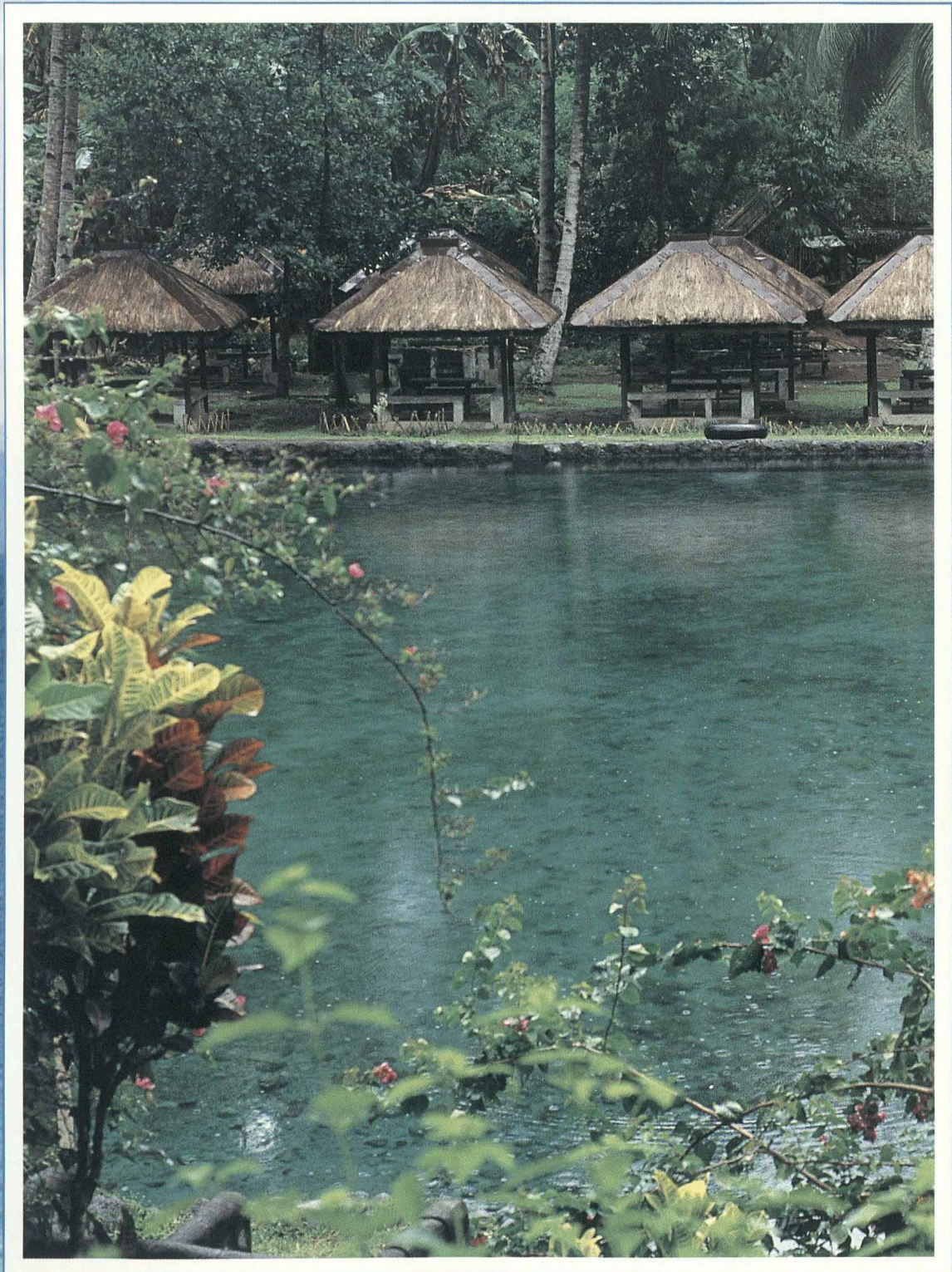


# COME AGAIN



Story and photographs by Tom Cockrem

# CAMIIGUIN



**Facing page, left** *Santo Nino Cold Springs.* **right** *Rooster in home garden.* **lower right** *Camiguin children near Ardent Spring.*

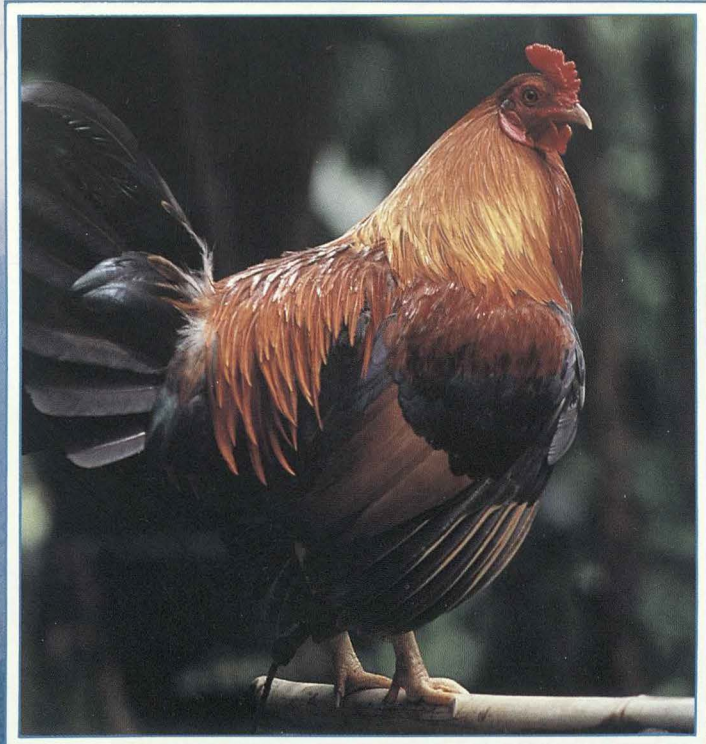
Ferries are good places for travellers to meet. There is something about the shared anticipation, the roll of the deck under the feet, that is good for intimacies. Isol, a genial retired banker from Oslo, had to almost shout above the noise of the sea. "We will be staying for six months - at least," he said. "We have been to many places in the world, but we like it best here."

In his precise English, this regular to Camiguin was extolling the island's virtues as we ferried together from Mindanao, in the south of the Philippines.

"For us it has something spiritual," he said. "The people are so happy and friendly. You will see."

I did see, and I did agree. Camiguin has something different. I felt it the moment I stepped onto the jetty. "Hi friends!" is the greeting you get, and everything about the ensuing stay convinces that the people really mean it.

Camiguin is a small island, and easy to pass over on the map. But do not let its seeming insignificance deceive. Beneath its lavish canopy of soft and misty green lurks a family of dragons - the very ones that heaved this isolated plug up from the deepest fathoms of the Bohol Sea and thrust its lofty head 1,000 metres high into the clouds.



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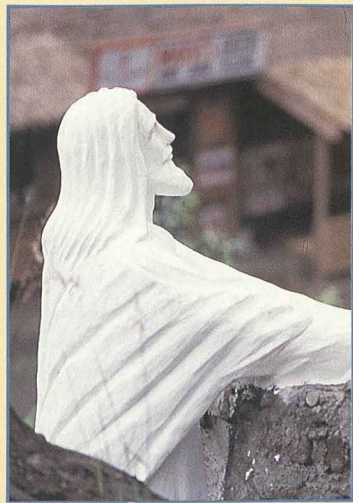
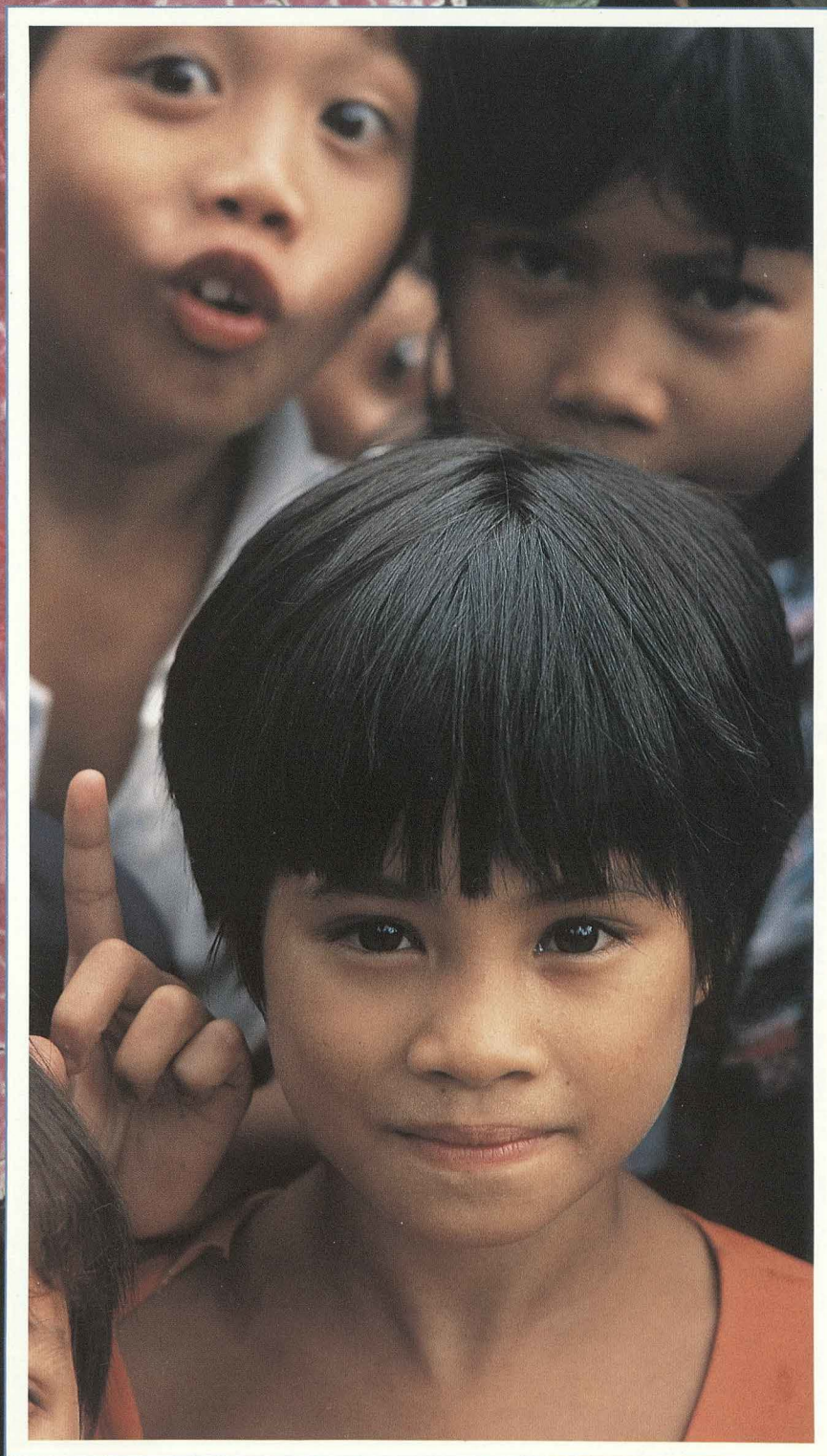
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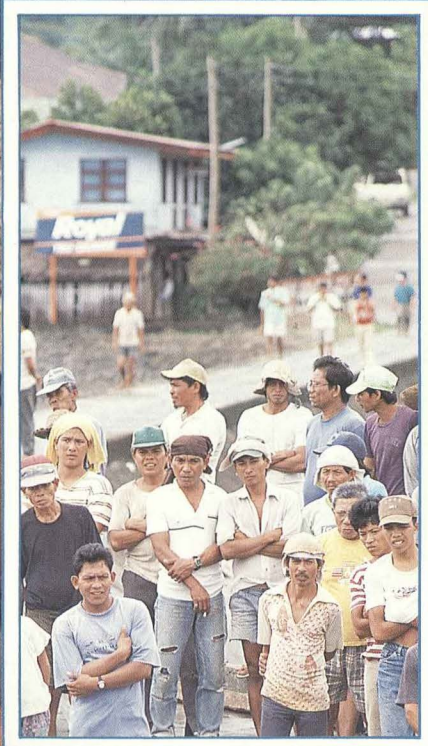
And still these dragons do not rest. Inside Mount Hibok-Hibok they are decidedly alive. In 1951, they snorted out the volcano's molten innards to kill 600 of the island's citizens. These days there is a resort at the mountain's base, where waters gush out hotly from its side. This is Ardent Spring. One can stay here and each morning take a steaming therapeutic bath - a blissful alternative to the chilly shower in the bungalow.

Within its 64km circumference, Camiguin has seven volcanoes - the highest density of craters in the world. The island, deservedly, is a province of the Philippines on its own. It has its own Governor and administrative centre. These are at Mambajao, the island's capital.

Mambajao is far from being a typical Filipino town. With its high-roofed clapboard buildings nestling quietly in the lush greenery, the town could just as well be somewhere in the South Pacific or the Caribbean.

**Right** Camiguin schoolgirl and friends. **below** Stations of the Cross, Camiguin.





Far left Benoni village woman in her garden. left Waiting for the Camiguin ferry. below, left Sand castle building at Agoho beach.

The town's action is centred mainly on the market, where the shopping is done in frontier-like general stores. It is also where the eateries are. These little booths, set in neat rows along the market wall, are popular for breakfast when hot cocoa and rice cakes get the morning nicely under way.

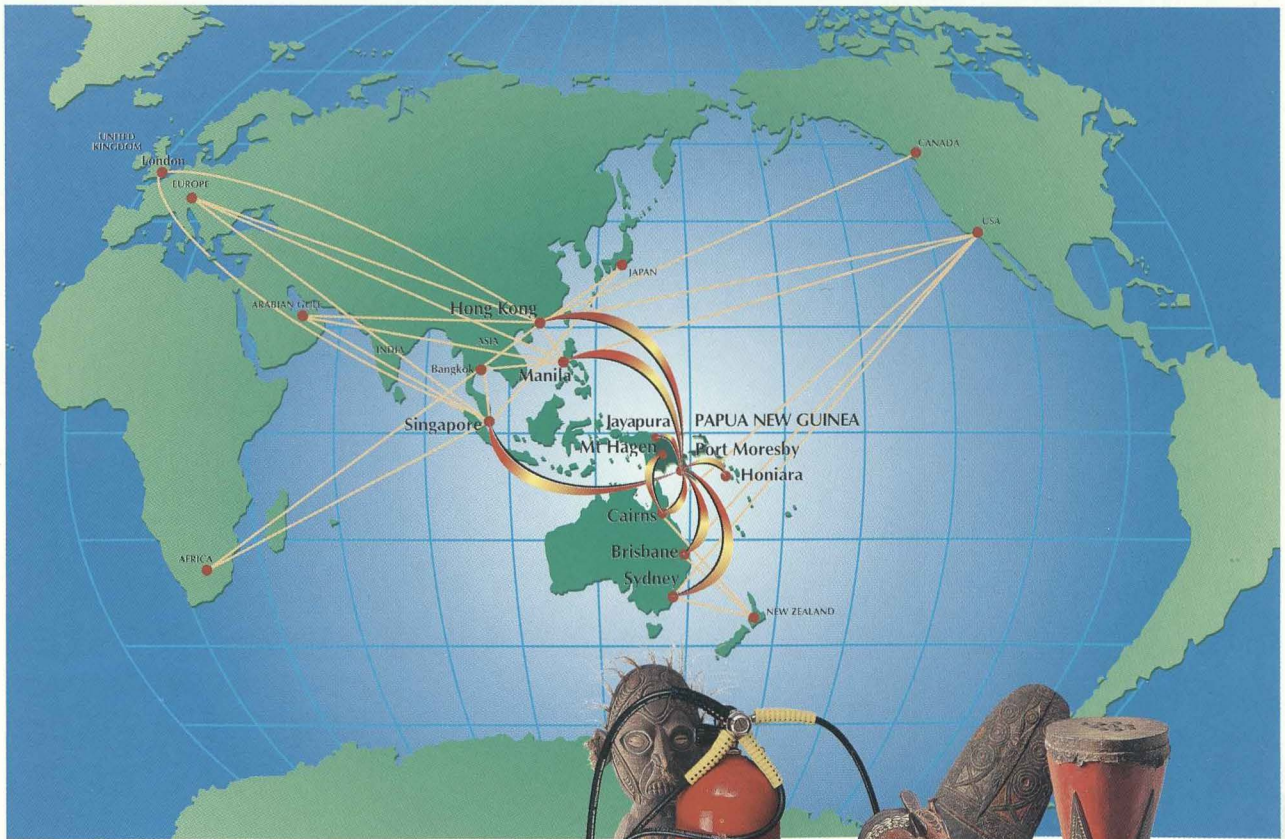
To get around Camiguin, most visitors hire a motorbike (they are quite cheap), or a jeepney with a driver. One can easily tour the island in a day. For my trip I was lucky to have Winston as my guide. A native of the province, he imparted a lot of what it is like to live in Camiguin. He explained how some of the island's uniqueness came about.

"The earliest settlers came from Malaysia," he told me. "The Spanish settled after Magellan visited in 1521. (He was the first Spanish explorer to come to the Philippines.) After an eruption in 1871, most of the Spanish left and the Chinese began to come. There are lots of different dialects on the island.

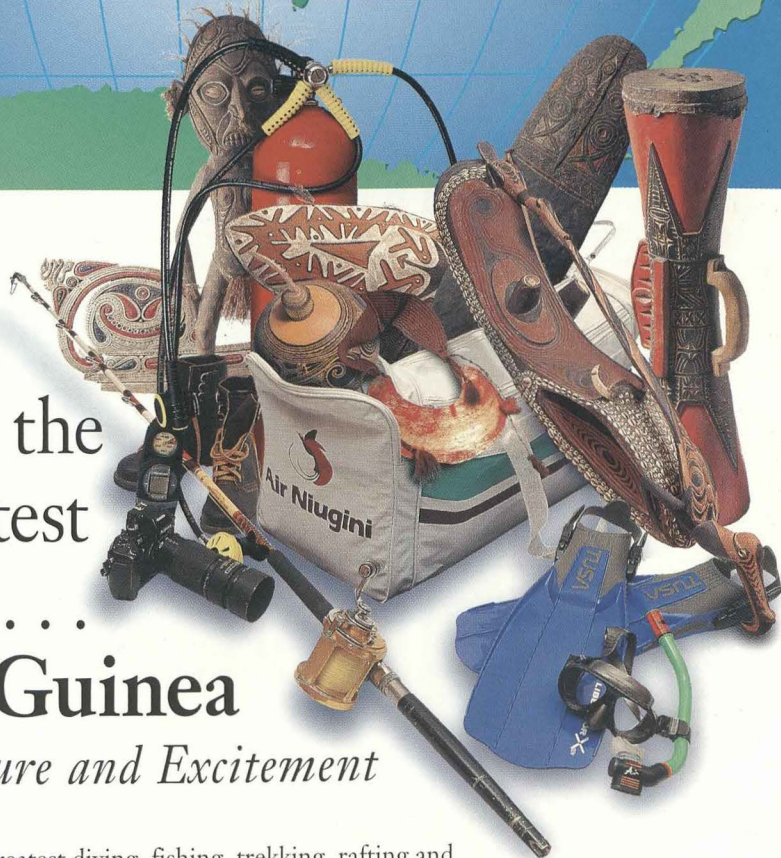
"In Barrio Catarman, west of the island, many people still speak the native dialect which dates back to pre-colonial days. They are only three kilometres away from us but we can't understand some things they say."







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Any tour of Camiguin has to include the Katibawasan Falls. This 50-metre drop is enclosed by a fern-swathed rocky mountain wall with swallows darting in and around the spray. The nearby Santo Nino cold spring is a large man-made pool of natural spring water in an idyllic garden setting.

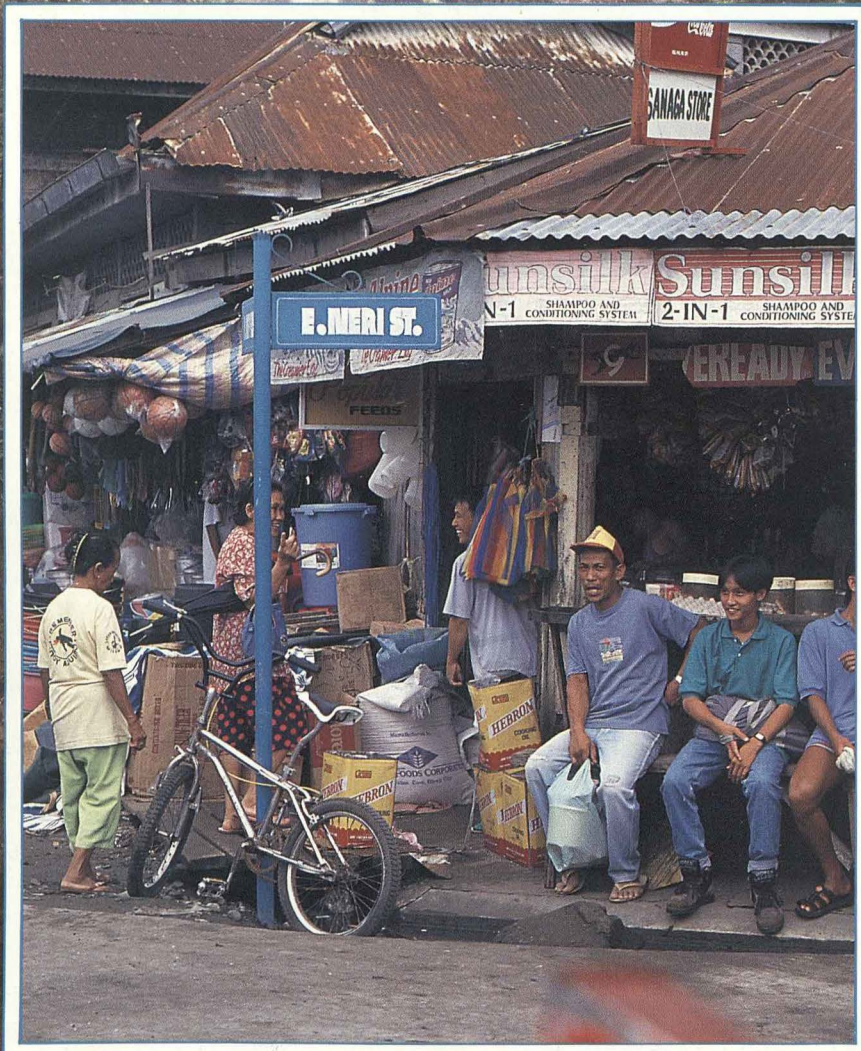
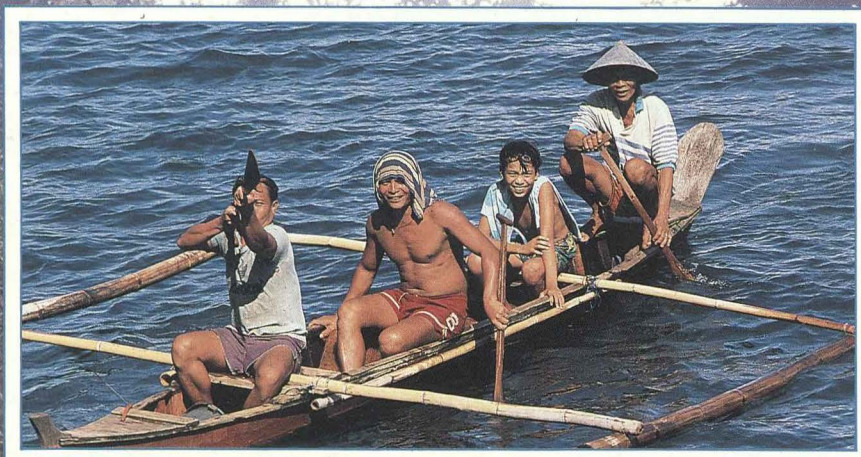
The moist volcanic soils raise most everything they need - hardwood, coconut and bamboo for their houses, and fruits - the best lanzones the Philippines produce - along with mangoes, avocado, jackfruit and citrus. And a delicious drink - soda water bubbles up from underneath the rocks.

Then there are the flowers. The island is a nursery for frangipanies, poinsettias, bougainvilleas, and orchids. The Camiguinos love them.

Clearly, people here have plenty to rejoice about.

*Air Niugini operates a regular service between Port Moresby, Manila and Hong Kong. Connections to Camiguin can be made from Manila.*

**Top right** Camiguin fishing boat  
**right** Mabajao scene. **below**  
Camiguin farmyard.





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